



# ***Being Approachable Adults and Knowledgeable Families***

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island  
sexual  
health

# Be informed, not surprised.



**Victoria (Main)**

101-3960 Quadra St.  
Victoria BC  
250-592-3479

**Camosun College**

3rd Floor, Richmond House  
Landsdowne Campus  
250-592-3449

**Royal Bay Secondary  
School Clinic**

see our website  
[islandsexualhealth.org](http://islandsexualhealth.org) for hours

[www.islandsexualhealth.org](http://www.islandsexualhealth.org)

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- Pap/Pelvic Exams
- Breast/Testicular/Genital Exams
- STI Testing, Treatment, Management, Vaccination, and Support
- Birth Control (Planned and Emergency) at reduced rates
- IUD Insertions and Removals
- Pregnancy Testing and Pro-Choice Options
- FREE safer sex supplies
- Community Education Workshops and Events
- All ages, genders, identities, orientations, abilities welcome – no referral needed.

ALWAYS CONFIDENTIAL

*4 locations serving Victoria, Camosun College, SD 62 @ Royal Bay, and Saanich First Nations*

Think back to your own  
experiences with sexuality  
conversations in your childhood

**What worked?**

**What, if anything, would you do  
differently?**

**What are the most  
important messages you  
would like your children to  
receive about sexuality and  
sexual health?**



# Why is sexual health education important?

## Health

- Helps children to better care for their bodies
- Helps children ask for health care more easily
- Helps youth feel proud of their bodies and confident in themselves

**educated**

**comfortable**

*assertive*

**confident**

*proud*

## Safety

- Knowledge is protection against exploitation/abuse
- Helps children to be taken seriously when asking for help

## Values

- Helps youth to develop an understanding of values and beliefs around sexuality using factual and current information
- Helps youth to situate their understanding of sexuality within family, spiritual, and cultural values and beliefs

***respectful***

# What is Sexuality?

- Sexuality is part of the makeup and personality of every human being. From conception to death, we are sexual beings.
- A Person's Sexuality is connected to:
  - Body Image
  - Body Function
  - Sexual Health
  - Assigned sex
  - Gender Identity
  - Sexual Orientation
  - Relationships
  - Personal Values (including culture, religion, and family values & beliefs)
- Sexuality also includes sexual feelings, emotions, and experiences as well as how a person experiences love, compassion, intimacy, joy and sorrow.
- Sexuality includes far more than sexual practices such as intercourse—it plays a significant role in the way we lead our everyday lives. To understand ourselves and our children and why we behave the ways we do, we must understand the role of sexuality.



**Parents are their  
children's primary  
and most important  
sexual health  
educators.**



# The good news...

**Global Research confirms that students who have access to ongoing comprehensive sexual health education:**

- Have more positive sexual experiences
- Are older when they engage in sexual activity
- Have fewer sexual partners
- Have fewer unintended pregnancies
- Have fewer sexually transmitted infections

Source: [sexualityandu.ca](http://sexualityandu.ca)



# WHAT Children need to know & WHEN they need to know it

## Three to Five Years of Age:

- Differences in sexual/reproductive organs
- The medical terms for the reproductive system( penis, testicles, scrotum, vulva, vagina, uterus, buttocks, breasts etc.)
- How babies are conceived (use scientific terms – sperm meets the ovum cell and baby grows in the uterus and birth process - vaginal/caesarean)
- Respect for own body and for others (personal parts)
- Who to ask for help if there is a problem or concern

## Teaching Ideas:

- Reinforce the medical names for all parts of the body
- Use books to talk about the differences and similarities between bodies
- Continue to teach about bodies and hygiene during bathroom training and bathing
- Positive messages about the wonder of our bodies set a strong foundation for healthy body image

# WHAT Children need to know & WHEN they need to know it

## *Six to Eight Years of Age:*

- Differences between the digestive system and the reproductive system
- Terms for the digestive system (urethra, bladder, urine, etc.) and reproductive system (penis, vagina, scrotum, uterus, etc.)
- Introduction to physical and emotional changes at puberty
- Masturbation is very common at this age – we must reassure kids that it is normal and okay but only for a private place
- Information about different family structures, gender identity, sexual orientation, and non-stereotyped gender roles

## Teaching Ideas:

- Find out what's being taught at school
- Talk more about bodies: how alike & different
- Get books on sexual health and read together
- Let him/her/they know you will answer any question
- More depth on “where did I come from”
- Talk about media messages

# WHAT Children need to know & WHEN they need to know it

## Nine to Twelve Years of Age:

- **puberty** (body changes, menstruation, wet dreams and emotional changes)
- Coping strategies for the not so great days in puberty
- information about gender identity, sexual orientation, and non-stereotyped gender roles

### Teaching Ideas:

- Find out what's being taught at school
- Help them access appropriate resources that they can use for information
- Provide messages about self-protection, relationships, independence requiring responsibility
- Reassure that their body and their sexual development are **normal** and they can trust their own body
- Emphasize communication and relationship skills
- Answer *all* questions

# WHAT Children need to know & WHEN they need to know it

## *Nine to Twelve Years of Age:*

- the media's influence on our perception of gender roles and body image, etc
- reassure them that they are ***normal*** (regarding their sexual feelings, thoughts and their looks, etc.)
- what is a healthy relationship (including friendships, family, romantic)
- need to know that not all teens are sexually active
- decision making and setting limits
- reinforce family, cultural, and religious values

### Teaching Ideas:

- Talk about physical & emotional changes equally
  - Revisit Consent
  - Scenario work (what advice would you give/what would you)

# How to help our kids thrive

- Talk to them often
  - Help them take downtime away from busy lives
  - Make sure they get enough sleep
  - Help them express themselves
  - Keep your sense of humour
- Remind them:
    - They are not alone
    - They are normal
    - They are doing a \*great\* job of growing up





# ***How*** do I begin conversations about sexuality?

- Pick a time that you can talk casually but seriously with your child. It may be more comfortable for all involved when direct eye contact is an option *not* a requirement.
- Be prepared to balance the talking and the listening
- Relax, breathe and pay attention to how you're saying not just what your saying

## Begin a conversation with something like this:

- Have you ever wondered (how babies are born, how a person knows if they're starting puberty, how condoms work...)
- I remember when I was your age, I was really curious about \_\_\_\_ or I thought that \_\_\_\_
- What have you learned/heard about...(puberty, birth control, healthy relationships, etc.)
- I just found this cool website that has tons of info on it. Let's look at it and tell me what you think.

**What if this is my child's response?**



# What if my child does NOT want to talk about sexuality?

- Give your child some time to digest what you've said
- Revisit what you've spoken about before
- Acknowledge the topic is sensitive but important
- Re-assure them you are not trying to scare them
- Use other forms of communication (journals/texting, etc.)
- Identify an adult whom you feel comfortable with as someone your child can connect with

# What if I am Uncomfortable Talking about Sexuality?



- Be open with children about your feelings, beliefs, and values around sexuality.
- When children ask questions, use the L.A.S.T method to guide your response:
  - **L**isten to what they're asking
  - **A**sk for their thoughts
  - **S**ort your reaction, message, knowledge first
  - **T**alk with respect to the child's level.  
Repeatedly.
- Educate yourself – there are many great sexuality education resources for parents!

# What if I am Uncomfortable Talking about Sexuality? 🧐



- Don't wait for your child to ask – bring sexuality up with them
- Respect the need for privacy.
- Use an opportunity in which you're all focused on other things and the conversation can be casual (ie dog walking/laundry/driving)



# Ideas to help minimize the *AWKWARD moments:*

- Pay attention to your child's body language and signals
- Try not to overload anyone with information
- Pick a time when you're all as relaxed as possible
- Use humour and acknowledge awkwardness
- Ask if there's anything you can do to make this more comfortable for them
- Some families use a question journal
- Talk about these topics *often* – practice makes perfect!

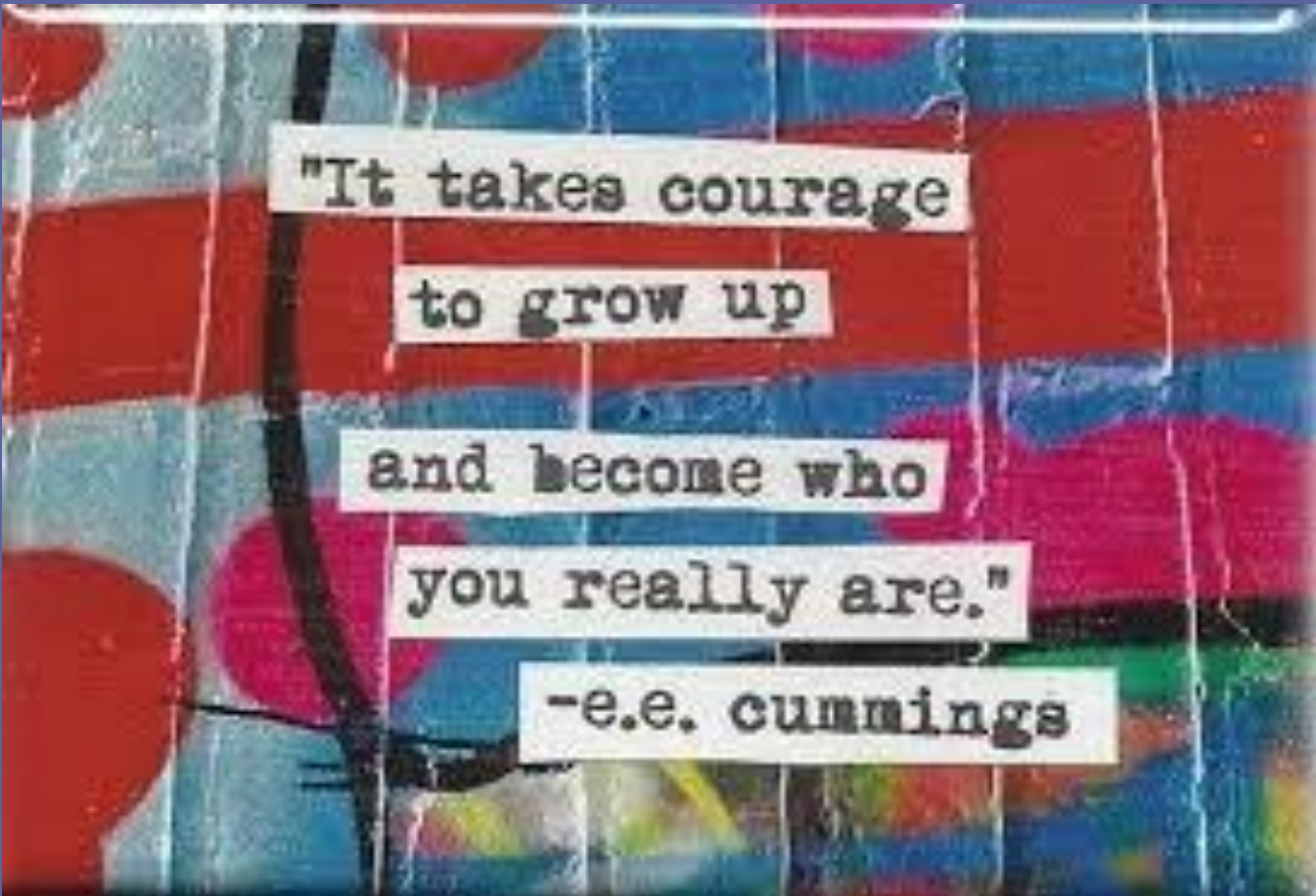
# How do I encourage more conversations about sexuality?

- Check in regularly to see if your child has any questions
- Thank your child for talking/sharing/asking questions
- Revisit what you talked about in your previous conversations and add in additional information
- Relate current life moments back to past conversations

# How does ISHS approach teaching sexual health in Grades 4&5?

- Grades 4 and 5 focused on changing bodies, changing feelings, basic puberty info. Aligns with the PHE Curriculum.
- Intended to continue the maturation conversation and provide opportunity to understand and expect changes – they are normal and healthy.
- No such thing as silly or dumb questions as long as students looking for information
- If students feel embarrassed or uncomfortable, use the term – interesting rather than gross
- Covers physical, emotional and social changes in all bodies using, diagrams, activity and anonymous questions

**What additional tools or  
information do you need to  
help you be *more*  
approachable and  
knowledgeable?**



"It takes courage  
to grow up

and become who  
you really are."

-e.e. cummings



Thank you so much for attending.

Jennifer Gibson

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[beyondthetalk.ca](http://beyondthetalk.ca)

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