

Creating Sexually Safe & Healthy Environments for Children and Youth

A program prepared for The State College, Pennsylvania Area School District
March 27, 2013

Dr. Janet Rosenzweig
Author, *The Sex-Wise Parent*
National Consultant for Sexual Abuse
Prevention Programs

[Prevent Child Abuse America](#)

Sponsored by

The Pennsylvania Learning Academy for Sexuality Education (PLASE)

A program of Penn State University
with funding from

The Pennsylvania Department of Education.

For more information about PLASE, including on-
line HIV educational modules, please visit :

<http://omcphplive.outreach.psu.edu/omc/plase/>

Dr. Rosenzweig's

Experience Working in Child Sexual Abuse

- First Child Sexual Abuse Helpline in the US, 1978
- Directed 5 federally funded programs in East TN
- Executive Director, Prevent Child Abuse NJ, 2001-2007
- Founding Director, Prevent Child Abuse PA, 2012
- National Consultant for Sexual Abuse Prevention Programs, Prevent Child Abuse America (current)

Core beliefs

- Sexuality permeates every aspect of our lives
- People are sexual from the time they are born, if not before
- Parents need to identify and articulate their own family values about sex and sexuality
- Parents need support in learning how to share these values, along with accurate information with their kids
- A healthy environment allows positive feelings to become associated with sexual thoughts and feelings; **schools can be a tremendously positive influence!**

"Dr. Rosenzweig's work will reduce trauma, save lives, and help families."
—James Hmurovich, president and CEO, Prevent Child Abuse America

THE SEX-WISE PARENT

*The Parent's Guide to Protecting Your Child, Strengthening
Your Family, and Talking to Kids about
Sex, Abuse, and Bullying*



JANET ROSENZWEIG, MS, PHD, MPA

*Because I believe that PARENTS must be equipped to promote
the sexual health and safety of their children!*

Objectives

- Participants will learn how the research of school climate can be applied to promoting a healthy sexual climate in a school
- Participants will identify actions they can take to help maintain a healthy sexual climate in their school
- Participants will discuss strategies and tactics for engaging parents as partners in promoting sexual health and safety

Rationale

A healthy sexual climate promotes the physical and emotional safety of students and school personnel.

A healthy sexual climate supports appropriate integration of sexual issues into curricula for health, art, history, science and related areas.

What is said (content) and how it is said (affect) are equally important.

What is Sexual Climate and Why is it Important?

Part 1

Sexual Climate/Sexual Culture

- Terms borrowed from researchers/scholars in education

*Extensive research on the impact of school climate on discipline, performance, achievement, staff turnover and other issues; see for example Tableman, Betty and Adrienne Herron. "[School Climate and Learning.](#)" *Best Practice Briefs, Number 31 University-Community Partnerships @Michigan State University: 2004**

- “Culture” refers to the written rules, regulations and policies that specify how an organization operates.
- “Climate” refers to how it actually feels to be in a building.

School Climate can be a difficult concept to grasp

- Because most adults have spent time in very few schools!
- Those of you who work in multiple schools can attest to the fact that 2 schools in the same district, with the same formal culture can 'feel' entirely different.
- Climate is specific to an individual school – highly dependant on the PEOPLE

Sexual Climate

Refers to how a group or organization actually deals with sexual issues

- Language and terminology
- Privacy
- Respect
- Boundaries
- Dress Code
- Graffiti
- Others?

Sexual Climate in Schools

- At least 5% of kids report sexual contact with a school employee sometime during their school years
- With young kids, we're concerned with pedophiles.
- By middle and high school we're concerned with adults who exploit their power and status to seduce kids.

The Shakeshaft Report

- Shakeshaft, Carol. *Educator Sexual Misconduct: A Synthesis of Existing Literature*. Washington, D,C.: U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Undersecretary, 2004.

- Access the report,

[Educator Sexual Misconduct](#)

here.

In Pennsylvania

- Exact numbers are not available, but the total number of cases of alleged educator misconduct, including sex abuse, is rising so dramatically, that Governor Corbett placed \$775,000 in the FY 14 budget for more investigators, to be funded from an increase in the fee teachers pay when they become certified in PA
- Source: http://www.yorkdispatch.com/ci_22738025/pa-teacher-conduct-targeted

A National Organization is based in PA

- SESAME
- Stop Educators Sexual Abuse, Misconduct and Exploitation



Good Policies (Culture)!

- New Jersey School Boards Association estimates that 15 to 20 percent of districts now have policies that prohibit teachers from "friending" students on networks. The policies also ban teachers from giving out private cell or home numbers without district approval. All "e-contacts" with students must be made through school computer and telephone systems and communication between coaches and players should be sent to all members of a team.
- The Missouri State Senate has passed legislation banning any social networking relationships between teachers and their students.

Examples of bad sexual climate

- [Bergen Record Story](#), January 2012
 - Statewide, nearly a dozen teachers or coaches have made headlines {in the past 2 months} accused of everything from videotaping boys showering in a school locker room to having sex with teens they were chaperoning on a field trip.

Lawyers on the bandwagon!

- **PA and New Jersey Laws in School/Teacher Abuse, Bullying and Daycare Abuse Cases**
- The laws in PA and New Jersey clearly provide for liability in child molestation, school abuse, teacher abuse, and bullying cases. In many situations, parties other than the perpetrator are legally liable for the abuse. Any person or business acting through its employees, who failed to report or prevent the abuse after suspecting the abuse or who actively concealed the abuse, is a potential defendant. Liability is based on case law in Pennsylvania and New Jersey which establish the standard of care and liability for any of the following actions or inactions:
- failing to conduct reasonable background checks on employees
- failing to conduct a reasonable investigation
- hiding or concealing the abuse
- failing to report the abuse
- failing to prevent the abuse
- failing to protect the victim/student
- failing to intervene
- failing to train employees on the policies regarding mandatory reporting of abuse
- failing to have a policy in place regarding mandatory reporting of abuse
- negligent supervision of children
- negligent supervision of employees
- negligent security resulting in access by criminals

From the website of
[http://www.laffeybuccikent.com/aop/
philadelphia-victims-of-crime/schools/](http://www.laffeybuccikent.com/aop/philadelphia-victims-of-crime/schools/)

Policies.....

ISSUES AND ANSWERS FOR DECISION MAKING: Realistic Solutions to Current Day Problems

2008 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Education Report

- “Numerous college athlete shave been kicked off their teams for criticizing their coaches on student Facebook.com pages. These are not just scattered, once a year incidents. These are every day occurrences that are affecting the lives of students and educators. The numbers are staggering and growing every day.” (page 12)

- “School entities **MUST** develop policies and procedures concerning use and involvement with computers and any electronic data” (page 37)

- These policies must address both students and faculty!

- http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CDMQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.portal.state.pa.us%2Fportal%2Fserver.pt%2Fdocument%2F1288099%2F02__appendix_e_-_akobencs_issues_and_answers_professional_development_manual_-_pde_revisions_pdf&ei=a8hQUaeALlen4APA5IHgAQ&usg=AFQjCNEp3oF7xqwBy0CVbjP3rRkr1KHIYA&bvm=bv.44158598,d.dmg

PA Department of Ed

- http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/unit_4_-_the_connected_teacher/21086/maintaining_professionalism_in_the_digital_world/1239886
- Professional Standards and Practice Commission
- Educators Ethics and Conduct Toolkit
- **Unit 4: Maintaining Professionalism in the Digital World**
- “Module 4 is designed to highlight the challenges posed by technology, reinforce the expectations of teachers with respect to the safe use of technology, and to provide guidance in how to protect one’s privacy and maintain the divide between one’s private and public persona.”

Plays from flash drive, no internet needed



This was not a secret!

- People knew that this teacher routinely made sexual advances towards students.
- In some schools, faculty or staff would be punished for no more than an off-color remark to a student; in other schools men like Andy Bleiler (who was barely 30 at the time!) operate in the open.

The DIFFERENCE IS THE SEXUAL CLIMATE!

Superintendent removes entire staff of a school after incident reported

- Deasy: “We intend to interview every adult, every adult who works at that school, whether they are a teacher or administrator, or whether they are an after-school playground worker or a custodian or a secretary. I mean every single solitary adult who works at Miramonte.”

This man understands the power of school climate!

Andy has a lot of company

- I have yet to speak to a group where at least one person recalls their school experience including a teacher sexually involved in some way with a student
- [Educator Sexual Misconduct: A Synthesis of Existing Literature](#)

READ THIS REPORT!

Beyond Pedophilia

- **Hebephile:** someone with a preference for children just entering puberty
- **Ephhebophile:** someone with an attraction to older adolescents.
- **BOTH GENDERS**
 - Brittni Colleps, a Texas school teacher charged with having sex with four students at her home, 2012
 - Mary Kay Letourneau, the school teacher jailed for having sexual relations with her 13-year-old student, 1996

School Climate

- [Great article about school climate here](#)
- There is a lot of research on the overall school climate and its impact on everything from student behavior to student achievement.
- These same concepts **MUST** be applied to issues around sexuality

Brand New Resource!

- Carol Shakeshaft, author of the national study on educator sexual misconduct published advice for schools – find the article [here](#)

Group Exercise

- **Institutional Norms Exercise** *For agencies serving young children*
- The following questions can be used to start discussions among staff in child serving institutions as a tool for management to communicate the policies and procedures in place to promote appropriate boundaries. These answers will change with the age of the children being served, the formality of the institution and the experience of the staff.
- Detail on these and related topics can be found in *The Sex-Wise Parent*, (Skyhorse, 2012) Chapter 6.
- **What terms will we use with kids about all body parts? How and when will you use them?**
- *Discussion point:* Children need words for genitalia easily understood by others.
- **Will we have a dress code for both staff and students?**
- *Discussion point:* Privacy, modesty, self-respect

Assessing Sexual Climate in a School

- **Is the school's physical environment welcoming and conducive to learning?**
- **What are the school's policies and track record around bullying and sexual harassment?**
 - **Key conceptual link between bullying and sexual abuse: lack of regard for the impact the behavior has on the victim. Sadly, lack of empathy is developmentally normal during adolescence.**

Important detail...

- Does the policy provide for sanctions for failing to comply?
Is anyone monitoring?
- **The difference between culture and climate.... Just because there's a rule that something has to be done (culture) is no guarantee that it will be done the same way throughout an organization or school district!**

Sexual Climate

- **What is the school's policy and track record regarding teacher-student contact?**

Are student allowed to address faculty and staff by first names?

Are there clear rules for both actual and virtual out of school contact between student and faculty / staff? Are there meaningful consequences for breaking the rules? Are they enforced?

Sexual Climate

- **What is the policy on dress code and how is it enforced?**

Butt cleavage, breast cleavage, midriffs and suggestive slogans on clothing are not conducive to learning. It is perfectly natural for kids to push boundaries and show up to school wearing something that bends -- if not actually breaks -- the rules. School staff should react firmly and without embarrassing or humiliating the student.

Sexual contact between students

How to respond?

‘First Responder’ with younger kids

- Think before responding
 - Contiguity of stimuli”
 - Above all, do no harm
 - Face your own feelings about sexuality and work on keeping a ‘game face’, especially with younger kids
 - Avoid shaming kids engaged in consensual play or self-comforting
- If possible, determine if the act was consensual
 - Consider the **Power Differential**
 - This only applies to kids with kids --- It is NEVER consensual if it’s a child and adult –

First responder with older students

- Sexual interactions should be stopped firmly
- Interview both students independently – even if an act looked consensual there is still a chance that it was not

Responding to sexual acting out

Confront peers you suspect of
crossing boundaries

That's how YOU set the sexual climate – by not tolerating
questionable behaviors.

Boundaries:

Can be.....

- Physical (physical proximity, who can be alone with whom)
- Emotional (e.g. certain feelings aren't shared)
- Social (what we do together)
- Virtual (on-line communication and relationships)

Explaining Boundaries to Young Kids

Concepts:

- Privacy: We know what's going on, but don't have to see it
 - Kids earn the right to privacy as they become more responsible
 - Golden Rule – respect the boundaries of others
- Secrecy: We don't know what's going on
 - Kids NEVER earn the right to keep secrets from their parents

Boundaries and Teens

- Adolescent brains are not fully developed
 - Great reference: Why Do They Act That Way? By Dr. David Walsh
 - Often lacking empathy, or the ability to consider and understand the impact their behavior is having on others
 - They look like they're physically mature so we forget that they are not emotionally mature
- Adolescent sex drive is developing
 - Sex abuse perpetrated by an adolescent often involves a total lack of understanding that the sexual behavior hurt the other person
 - Confounded by potential of 'tonic immobility' in the victim
- Variations on the "Golden Rule"

Explaining Boundaries to Peers

- Occasionally, adults experience events in their personal life that hamper their ability to make good judgments. If poor judgment is bringing a peer too close to a student, speak up before they slip too far down a slippery slope.
- Occasionally, the feeling of being the 'alpha' male or female in a group can cloud the judgment of a teacher, particularly a young teacher in a high school. Again, speak up with a reminder that even though the students look like they could be peers **THEY AREN'T**.

Engaging Parents as Partners

- Parent involvement is a known predictor of student success
- Obtaining parent involvement is easier said than done!
- Even so – attempts to get parents involved with promoting sexual health and safety will reach many!
- Strategic opportunity often posed by high profile cases; we have parents attention.
- Reading materials are good; opportunities to process are better
- Programs for parents must be accessible:
 - Time – location/transportation– language – cost

Parents, Communication and HIV/AIDS

- In June 2011, NPR was among the media outlets covering the thirtieth anniversary of the first cases of HIV/AIDS in the United States. They assigned a teen reporter from Youth Radio to talk to her peers about HIV and AIDS. The narrator shared that she'd had decent sex education in school and that her mother had provided a particularly helpful book to her, but [*never really spoke to her*]. While today's generation of teens cans Google answers to a variety of questions, the teen reporter observed that “no amount of research can prepare a young person to ask their partner if they were tested for AIDS.”

Parents and trusted adults can model appropriate discussion of sex!

- National Public Radio. Youth Radio, June 3, 2011. Accessed at <http://www.npr.org/2011/06/03/136930347/young-people-talk-about-aids>.
- Ibid.

Parental Involvement

- Share all policies around issues relating to sexual climate with parents, suggesting they discuss them with their children.
- Routinely communicate with parents around issues of school health and safety, and include sexuality related issues when appropriate. Use the E-Portal?
- Include the name of a member of the school team available to answer questions in communications to parents.
- Offer them resources! Many to be found in *The Sex-Wise Parent*, for example the values questionnaire in Chapter 6

Spanish Language resources

- <http://www.nsvrc.org/es/saam>
- <http://nsvrc.org/publications/en-espanol>

NSVRC -The National Sexual Violence Resource Center

For more information,

Or a copy of this slide set

- www.sexwiseparent.com/resources

Look for ‘slides from State College Area School District presentation’

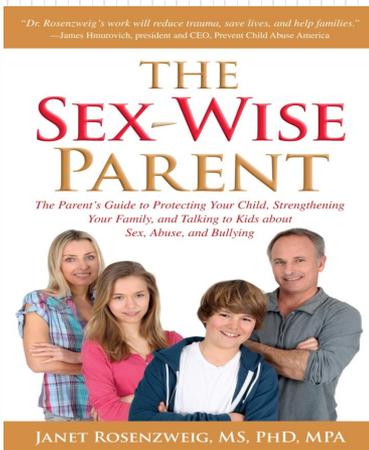
- All links will be live to the items referenced in this presentation

The Sex-Wise Parent

- If you enjoyed your copy of the Sex-Wise Parent, please consider:
- A Facebook Like at <https://www.facebook.com/SexWiseParent>
- Amazon review or stars at <http://www.amazon.com/dp/1616085096>
- Linking to www.sexwiseparent.com and sharing my resources with friends and peers

Thank you very much!

For working to promote a healthy sexual climate in
State College Area Schools!



Dr. Janet Rosenzweig www.SexWiseParent.com