

Let's Talk About It!

Empowering Faith Leaders for Reproductive Health Conversations

THINK ABOUT IT

TALK ABOUT IT

BE ABOUT IT

Places of worship are instrumental in the spiritual success and decision making of young people. It is a place for guidance and community connection. This guide offers tips and tools for the faith community to provide support in addressing adolescent reproductive health within your congregation.

This guide is not intended to provide all the answers. We encourage you to participate in our educational opportunities to enhance your comfort level by communicating with other individuals in your community of faith. As a person of faith, it is important to clearly define how these topics are viewed within the context of your faith tradition.



Why Talk with my Community about Love, Sex and Relationships?

Talking to youth about love, sex and relationships within the context of faith can help provide clarity for those who have questions. As a faith leader, it is important to clearly define how these topics are viewed within the context of your faith tradition. Communicating openly can:

- » Clearly define faith community values
- » Build communication between parents and young people
- » Help youth feel at ease about who they are and their lived experiences
- » Support youth coping with their feelings and dealing with peer pressure
- » Empower the youth to take charge of their lives and have healthy, loving relationships

Tips For People of Faith

- Acknowledge:** Address the need young people have for spiritual fulfillment and offer them answers to the many challenging problems they face.
- Support:** Encourage parents to talk with their young people about reproductive and sexual health and morality within the context of their faith tradition.
- Clarify:** Make sure youth in your faith community understand what your faith tradition says about love, and sex, and relationships/friendships. Use clear and easy to understand language.
- Cultivate:** Create opportunities where young people are encouraged and allowed to discuss about love, sex, and relationships/friendships openly and honestly with trained youth leaders.
- Educate:** Provide accurate information about adolescent reproductive health to parents, caregivers, and all youth supporting adults in your community.
- Embrace:** Recognize the diversity of lived experiences among the young people in your congregations. Recognize that these experiences may include abuse or neglect, homelessness, neurodivergence, sexual activity, and abstinence.
- Protect:** Implement policies to protect young people from abuse, harassment, exploitation, and violence, both within the congregation and in the community.
- Advocate:** Participate in community advisory groups and engage with your local policymakers to support and promote adolescent reproductive health.

Fact Forward offers training throughout the year for organizations across the state, including faith communities. Visit the Fact Forward website at www.factforward.org to view the available training sessions that can support you in speaking about love, sex, and relationships within your congregation. Here are a few beneficial trainings below to get started.

ASKABLE ADULT:

Learning How to Talk with Teens about Tough Topics

Every moment with a young person is precious. This interactive workshop is designed to help make those rare moments positive and beneficial for youth. This is an excellent opportunity for youth-serving professionals to improve their communication skills so they never miss an opportunity to support a young person in making healthy decisions.

Roots 'N Wings

Learn how to engage parents and/or grandparents in conversations with young people, and help improve their confidence in talking with youth about sex and sexuality. This program also helps parents give young people a solid foundation of knowledge to make positive decisions regarding health and relationships.

Educational Materials and Promotional Items

Fact Forward offers a range of publications such as Tips for Parents, Teen Health Bill of Rights, and Meeting Your Needs (a guide to health centers for young people). You can also request branded promotional items such as water bottles, pens, and more. For more information, contact Carol Singletary at Csingletary@factforward.org

- Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month (February)
- Women's History Month (March)
- National Public Health Week (April)
- Adolescent Health Month (May)
- National Faith HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (August 29)
- Let's Talk Month (October)
- Youth Substance Use Prevention Month (October)
- National Inclusion Day (October 10)
- World AIDS Day (December 1)

Getting your faith community on board



Think About It

Take a moment to consider your role in your faith community when it comes to giving guidance on topics such as love, sex, and relationships



Talk About It

Before young people come to you with questions about love, sex, and relationships, make sure you and the clergy team are familiar with internal and external resources that can help them make healthy and safe decisions.



Be About It

Discuss with members of your clergy team their thoughts and concerns about approaching topics such as love, sex, and relationships with parents and youth in your congregation. Make sure all members of your clergy team agree on a unified message in order to maintain a clear and consistent approach as well as effective communication.

About Fact Forward:

Fact Forward has been at the forefront of advancing adolescent reproductive health education for the past three decades. Founded in 1994 with a vision to empower youth, families, and communities, our organization continuously works to improve reproductive health outcomes by providing evidence-based education, training, technical assistance, and capacity-building consulting services. While our roots are in the Carolinas, Fact Forward's influence and partnerships extends nationwide, reflecting our commitment to improving adolescent health on a broader scale.

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