


## Intimacy & Love:

Keys to Promoting Healthy Relationships & to Countering a Sexually Toxic Society &

Cordelia Anderson  
www.cordeliaanderson.com

safe, stable, nurturing relationships (CDC)

## Love story, Mom Porn, S& DV?




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▶ NOTE: handouts do not have all the slides in the full presentation and do not have most of the images. They do provide headlines, key studies and resources to augment the presentation.

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### To Develop in *Healthy* Ways Children Need *Constructive* Supports



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We live in a sexually toxic/pornified society.

\*Talking About It\*, Cordelia Anderson, 2001

Gender socialization  
 SV frequency  
 Hyper-sexualized media  
 Lack of sexual health messages

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### What Do Children & Teens Get?



A steady diet of toxic messages

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## Gender Non-Conformity

Genderfork.com

GENDER NONCONFORMITY, RACE, AND SEXUALITY  
Charting the Course

Participate

- Think Out Loud
- Define Yourself
- Recommend

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## Promoting Healthy Relationships is Complicated by Sexually Toxic/Pornified Environment

How can parents & other caring adults best help to promote sexual health & to develop healthy relationships?

## APA

a person is sexually objectified —that is, **made into a thing for others' sexual use**, rather than seen as a person with the capacity for independent action and decision making; and/or sexuality is inappropriately imposed upon a person.

<http://www.apa.org/pi/wpo/sexualizationsum.html>

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## Resources: Help parents be primary sexuality/relationship educators

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## Impact of Pornography on Children, Youth and Culture

Ending Child Sexual Abuse *web conference*


## Be Informed: Puberty – Growth Hormones – Gender

### Boys Brain

- ▶ IHAH3 (master control hormone)
- ▶ Testosterone (ramps up 1000% increase from beginning to end of puberty)
  - 7 surges per day
  - **“P”** physical
    - r relational

### Girls Brain

- ▶ Oxytocin – bonding, to assist with childbirth
- ▶ “cuddle hormone”
- ▶ Estrogen & progesterone
- ▶ **“R”** relational
  - p physical



Testosterone & Amygdala

Serotonin (MOOD STABILIZER) dips amplify & quick changes drdavewalsh.com

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## Puberty: Brain and Body

- ▶ Just when you need it most, the pre-frontal cortex is still under construction
  - Helps us assess risk, think ahead, think through/about consequences, manage emotional impulses & urges

([drdavewalsh.com](http://drdavewalsh.com))



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## Self Regulation...

- ▶ is **KEY** to success not only in learning but also in life
- ▶ Executive Functioning (EF) is also referred to as **self-regulation & self-discipline**
  - Ability to focus, concentrate and screen out distractions
  - Ability to manage impulses, switch gears, calm self, catch and fix errors, follow directions
- ▶ EF is the orchestra conductor of the brain

▶ ([drdavewalsh.com](http://drdavewalsh.com))

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## Brain Development

"Closer Together, Further Apart"

- ▶ Ages 14–25 represents a period of **imbalance between emotional reactivity & reward seeking** versus **intellectual decision making**.
- ▶ They *are* capable of rational decisions
- ▶ They *understand* risks....

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Confusion: What is helpful? Harmful? Or.... Over reactions & Under reactions

What are we working for? Against?

- ▶ Adolescent with their stage of brain development are like a fabulous sports car with so much power and possibility and itty bitty brakes...

David Walsh, PhD



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## Fear based, Sky is Falling

Power Rangers type education: 28 minute entertaining fighting; 30 second PSA for conflict resolution

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### Why the schism?

- ▶ Repressed
- ▶ Suppressed
- ▶ Oppressed
- ▶ Depressed
- ▶ Inundated
- ▶ Asexuality

**Sex is risky, dangerous, Scandalous, 'slutty', shameful**

**.....Save it for someone you love**

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- ▶ Think of sexuality as a philosophy, not an act.
- ▶ Sexuality is the way our gender and our sexual orientation influence how we act in the world and the way the world reacts to us. Healthy sexuality means having an accurate and positive view of ourselves and using that as a basis for our relationships and life choices.”

Al Vernacchio

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- ▶ Sexual beings from birth to death
- ▶ Sex only 3 letters in 9 letter word: sexuality (1<sup>st</sup> thing that comes to mind?)

We are so much more than fallopian tubes, sperm & eggs and GENITALS

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### Remember Senses ??????

- ▶ Touch
- ▶ Smell
- ▶ Taste
- ▶ Hear
- ▶ See

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### VALUES inform our decisions (values clarification – not what but WHY)

- ▶ Valuing
- ▶ Respecting others values
- ▶ What guides your decisions?
- ▶ Core values
- ▶ Values show up in language

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### Touch Continuum

- ▶ Touch essential to life; Excuses to touch
- ▶ Somatosensory deprivation
- ▶ “No Touch” rules
- ▶ 1<sup>st</sup> afraid to touch because equated all touch with sex; now .....



Lack of touch G/P/T\* confusing B/N/H\* Lack of touch

\* good/positive/helpful bad/negative/harmful (CSA, 1977)

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## Analogy of Sex & Food

Wouldn't it be nice if talking about sex were as easy as talking about food? In fact have you ever noticed...

(For Adults Only, Illusion Theater, 1980's)

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## The Prize: Al Vernacchio

- ▶ "young people who know their values, who believe themselves worth of love, who feel good about their bodies, who see pleasure as a means to build intimacy and connection with another, and who live their lives not fearing mistakes but using them as lessons to reorient themselves toward success."

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## How do we replace sexual junk food?

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## Robert Sternberg


- ▶ RS: 3 Components of love

Intimacy (emotional)	heart to heart connection
Pasion (body)	body to body connection
Commitment (intellectual)	mind to mind connection

What are you ready for? Look person in eyes?  
Be your authentic self? Talk about it?

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## Al Vernacchio



- ▶ Sports
- ▶ Bases
- ▶ Catcher, pitcher
- ▶ Switch hitter
- ▶ Strike out
- ▶ Winner, loser
- ▶ Limited season''

[https://www.ted.com/.../al\\_vernacchio\\_sex\\_needs\\_a\\_n...](https://www.ted.com/.../al_vernacchio_sex_needs_a_n...)

Why Sports?


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## What's Your Sexual Footprints?



[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckqOn7eG9es](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckqOn7eG9es);  
San Diego, 2013

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Footprints show where you've been where you're going, who you're following

- ▶ Sexual footprint – I the path that's created by decisions that we make not only by our sexual activity but how we think about gender, intimacy, etc.
- ▶ Think of the paths others lay down for us to follow: media, friends, church....
- ▶ What path do we choose, or create by the choices we make?
- ▶ Do we treat others as objects, with force, use sex to bully others rather than to celebrate them

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# Take Back Our Sexuality

Do not allow "sex sells" as a sellout

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## Steps to healthy Sexuality

- ▶ Approach it as nourishing, instead of as dirty, scary, embarrassing
- ▶ "Do you have a sweetheart? "
- ▶ Stop talking about sex as a SPORT (e.g., with rules, equipment, winning, losing)
- ▶ Instead think of it like PIZZA
- ▶ UNDERWEAR TEST
- ▶ Ability to make deliberate and own decisions
- ▶ Media & porn = fantasy; can't base real life experiences on that!!!


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## Caring Connections & Healthy Relationships

- ▶ Developing protective factors does more than reducing risk factors

Dr. Robert Blum  
Dr. Michael Resnick

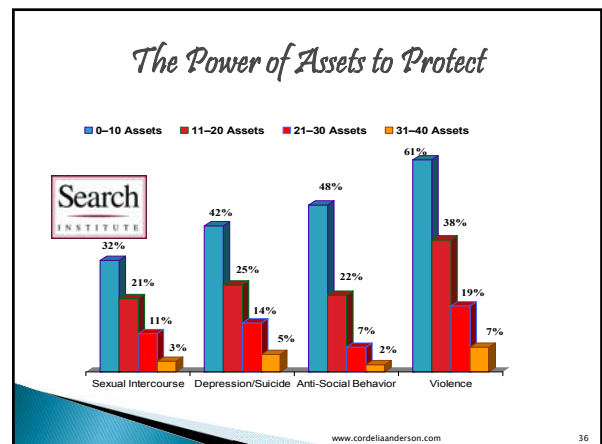
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## Where do you want to end up?

- ▶ If you want to be a basketball player when you grow up – do you attempt to get there by skateboarding 8 hours a day?

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**Konopka, (1910-2003)**  
**All Youth Need .....**


- ▶ To **experiment with one's own identity** & points of view
- ▶ To develop feeling of accountability to others
- ▶ To cultivate capacity **to enjoy life – JOY**
- ▶ To get out and have an adventure
- ▶ To **participate in creative arts**, develop self-expression and pull deep feelings from within.

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**The 4 letter word PLUS**  
**Love & Intimacy**  
 Keys to Countering a Sexually Toxic Society

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**Gisela Konopka, 1973**



All youth need:

- ▶ To participate as citizens, members of the household, etc.
- ▶ To **gain experience in decision making**
- ▶ To interact with peers and gain **a sense of belonging**
- ▶ To reflect on self in relation to others (discover by looking inside and out)
- ▶ To **discuss conflicting values** and discover ones own

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**Promote Healthy Relationships:**  
**safe, stable, nurturing relationships** (CDC)


- ▶ **Caring** connections
- ▶ Respectful, Trust, Communications, Openness,
- ▶ Shared power – power **with/not over**
- ▶ Mutual (Consensual) *(Sensual in Consensual)*
- ▶ **Supportive** of each other
- ▶ Multiple levels of intimacy
- ▶ Peer / Relational support
- ▶ Solid problem solving & communication skills
  - **WORK THROUGH THE HARD STUFF**

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**Promote Positive Development**

**3 C's:**

- Connection** (caring adult, school connectedness, positive peers)
- Competence** (pro-social, school)
- Contribution** (resource rather than problem, religiosity)

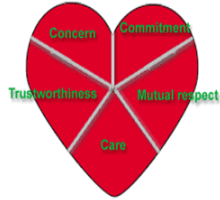


Dr. Martha F. Erickson  
 OJJDP's: Girls Study Group Series Resiliency & Juv. Delinquency

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**What is a Healthy Relationship?**

**That Luvin' Feeling**

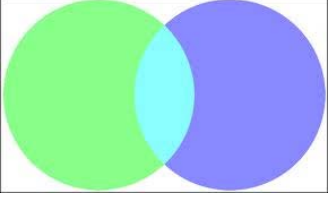


- giving someone else your time, energy, support, encouragement, patience and concern.
- making sacrifices for the other person. **(not totally at expense of self)**
- learning to relate to each other mentally, emotionally and spiritually.
- respecting each other's wishes and feelings

Teen central: A Project of the Health Promotion Board

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1 + 1 = ?



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### Love, Obsessed or Lust?

- ▶ **How do you know?**
  - Your brain in love (your biggest sex organ)
  - Which body part are you thinking with?
- ▶ **Attraction vs. objectification? (Derry)**
  - **Object** of desire
  - *Attraction* does not equal *action*
  - **Arousal** normal and natural and controllable

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### Head Over Heels


OR

### In Over Your Head ?

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### Gender Norms & Non-Conformity



What are alternative/healthy norms that promote intimacy/caring connections?

Challenges for those who are gender non-conforming and/or Queer (LGBTQ 'A')

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### Careful not to bury....

- ▶ **Sexiness of Consent**
  - Pleasure
  - Mutuality
  - Joy
  - Humor
  - Fun

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## Intimacy

**INTIMACY:** when we should have been learning about intimacy we were learning about sperm, eggs and fallopian tubes  
 “innermost” “mask-less-ness”  
 ID all the ways to be intimate: physical sexual is only one > sex can be used to avoid intimacy  
 > intimacy can't be forced

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## Parents fears about technological connections.....


- ▶ Most parents of teens are concerned about what their teens do online and how their behavior could be monitored by others. A new survey of 802 parents and their teens shows that:
- ▶ 81% of parents of online teens say they are concerned about how much information advertisers can learn about their child's online behavior, with some > 46% being “very” concerned.
- ▶ 72% of parents of online teens are concerned about how their child interacts online with people they do not know, with some > 53% of parents being “very” concerned.
- ▶ 69% of parents of online teens are concerned about how their child's online activity might affect their future academic or employment opportunities,
  - > with some 44% being “very” concerned about that.
- ▶ 69% of parents of online teens are concerned about how their child manages his or her reputation online,
  - > with some 49% being “very” concerned about that.

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## Intimacy

- ▶ Physical
- ▶ Emotional
- ▶ Sexual
- ▶ Social
- ▶ Intellectual
- ▶ Recreational
- ▶ Political
- ▶ Spiritual-Religion
- ▶ Economic
- ▶ Cultural
- ▶ Community
- ▶ **OTHER:**

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## What makes a relationship be healthy?

- ▶ What seals the deal? What are deal breakers?
- ▶ Equitable levels of power (older/younger)
  - Internet rule (from where???) ½ your age plus seven
- ▶ Allowed to keep individuality vs share a lung couples (can't breath w/ each other)
- ▶ Internet to avoid awkwardness; or to help?
- ▶ Being able to say what you want and need; positives and negatives
- ▶ Reliable

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## Technology Intimacy

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- ▶ “You’re the expert in your own life. When you do something based upon your own values, that’s powerful stuff.”

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## Balance Input

Mutual Sexual Pleasure  
 Appreciation for the  
 Whole Person  
 Intimacy (innermost)  
 Caring & Connectedness  
**IMAGINATION!!!!**

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## Build on Power of Parents



Julie Gale:  
[www.kf2bk.com](http://www.kf2bk.com)

Help to make the  
 healthy choice  
 the easy choice

PCA : PreventionWorks 4 08 see [www.cordeliaanderson.com](http://www.cordeliaanderson.com)

**Dad's Story:** Nightly discussions...

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**Identify or  
 create positive  
 images to  
 counter the  
 "norm" and to  
 provide an  
 alternative**

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## Revolution with Heart for a Collective Change of Heart

Developed by Cordelia Anderson for  
 IMCASA with MDH funds 59

### Dealing with Bad Behavior

Ubuntu African Tribe

- ▶ When a member of the community makes a mistake, causes, they are taken to the center of the village and surrounded by a circle of villagers who surround the person and for 2 days say all the good things the person has done.
- ▶ The tribe believes all people make mistakes and that mistakes are a cry for help. They believe this can reconnect them to their good nature.

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### Can Do....

- ▶ LISTEN Talk, Ask & Help with Values
- ▶ Careful about Adult Carry Over
  - (what's ours vs. theirs)
- ▶ Role Model: Care, Intimacy, Love
- ▶ Work through the difficulties (Verbal Judo, George Thompson)
- ▶ Help think through pluses, minuses
- ▶ Focus on what matters:
- ▶ Relationships Matter, Caring Connections
- ▶ Realistic Expectations

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## Dialogue:

- ▶ What are parents/adults concerns/fear?
- ▶ How can parents/adults help?
- ▶ Where/how did you learn about relationships?
- ▶ How did you learn about love?
- ▶ What does love mean?
- ▶ How do you know when you're in love?
- ▶ How do you know when its NOT healthy?
- ▶ How did you learn what it meant to be intimate?

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## Resources

- ▶ Cordelia Anderson: [www.cordeliaanderson.com](http://www.cordeliaanderson.com)
- ▶ LoveU2: Relationships Plus; [www.dibbleinstitute.org](http://www.dibbleinstitute.org);
- ▶ [www.vawnet.org/Assoc\\_Files\\_VAWnet/NRC\\_Expect-full.pdf](http://www.vawnet.org/Assoc_Files_VAWnet/NRC_Expect-full.pdf); File Format: PDF/Adobe Acrobat – [Quick View](#)  
*Expect Respect. A Support Group Curriculum for Safe and Healthy ... for Disease Control and Prevention: [http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/ datviol.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/datviol.htm)).*
- ▶ [www.misrepresentation.org](http://www.misrepresentation.org);
- ▶ [www.internetsafety101.org](http://www.internetsafety101.org);

[www.cordeliaanderson.com](http://www.cordeliaanderson.com)

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