

Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH)



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Definition of SRH

- Mauritius is a signatory to the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development Plan of Action.
- Reproductive Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its function and processes.
- It implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so.
- Rights of men and women to be informed and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods planning of their choice.

Concept of SRH

- Right to the highest standard of health – having the right and access to the highest quality of health care.
- Right to life and survival – removal of customs and practices.
- Right to non-discrimination on the basis of sex – equality of women including the elimination of discrimination in areas like education and feeding for children
- Right to non-discrimination on the basis of age – right of adolescence and the elderly to a full coverage of their sexual and reproductive needs.

Priority Policy

- Family Planning
- Infertility
- Safe motherhood including breast feeding
- Abortion
- Infant and child health
- Adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health
- Sexually transmitted infection, HIV and AIDS
- Malignancies of the reproductive tract
- Gender
- Male involvement and participation
- Geriatrics including menopause and andropause

Situation Analysis

Premarital conception

- The results of 2002 CPS indicate that premarital conception is on the rise from 8.9% in 1991 to 10.5% in 2002 among currently or formally married women aged 15-44.

Teenage pregnancy

- Among women aged 15-19 years (teenagers) who were interviewed in the 2002 CPS, 8.7% were already mothers and 2.2% were pregnant with their first child.
- Less than 15 years – 27 births per year
- Adolescent fertility – 33/1000

Situation Analysis

Abortion

- 2002 CPS report that the proportion aged 15-44 years who reported having had at least 1 abortion (spontaneous or induced) has increased from 9.3% to 14.4% in 2002

Infant Mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) – 16

Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births) – 37

Sexual Health

Community factors that determine sexual health

- social and economic environment
- physical environment
- personal health practices
- health services
- gender
- Culture

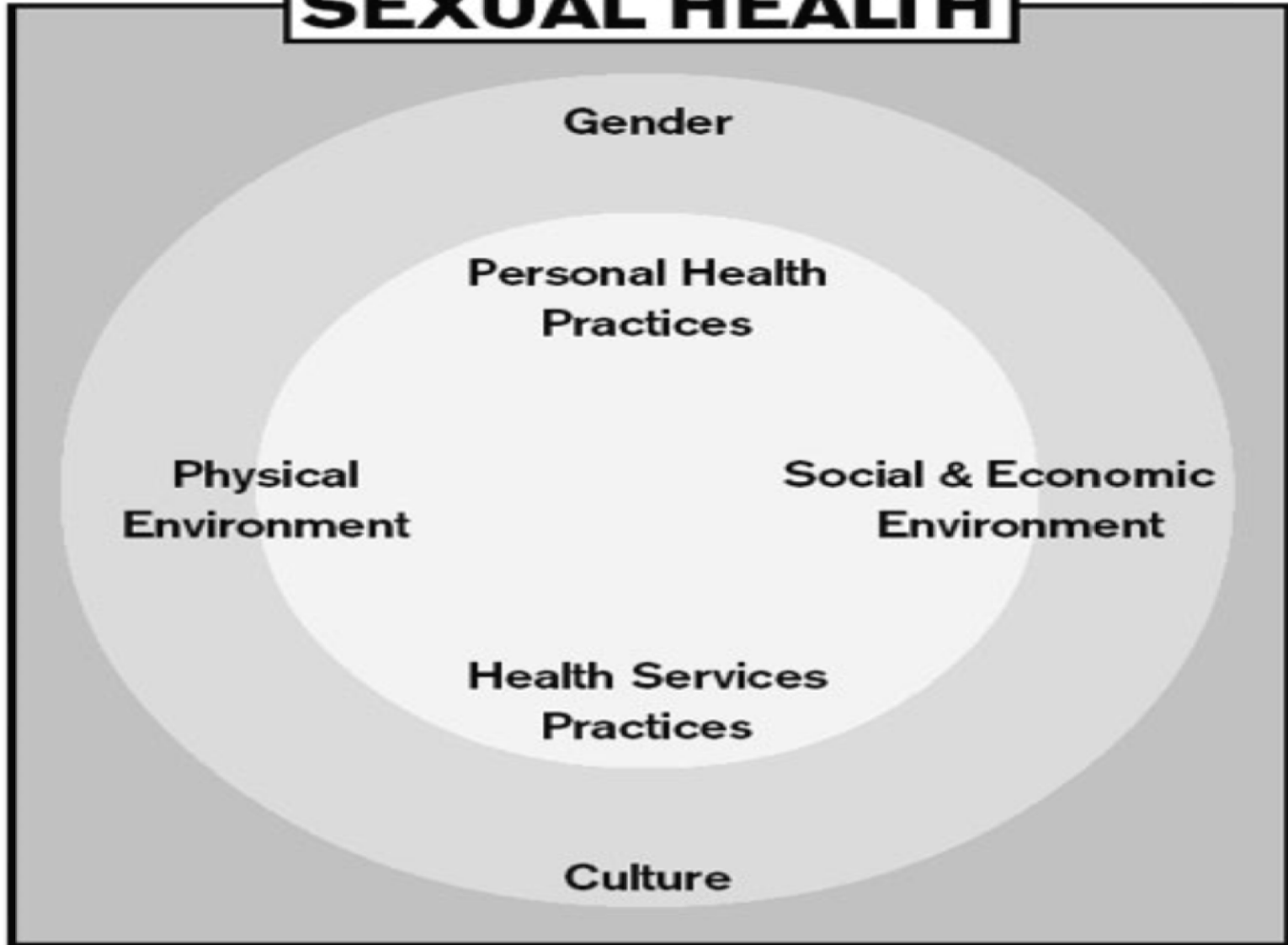
Sexual Health

The importance of an awareness of sexual health

- what is the importance of sexual health
- sexual health is fundamental to who we are
- positive self-image and self-worth are benefits of sexual health
- self concept is a significant influence on sexuality
- everyone is a sexual health educator
- acceptance of youth as sexual beings

Sexual Health

SEXUAL HEALTH



Adolescence

- **Adolescence** (from Latin: *adolescere* meaning "to grow up") is a transitional stage of physical and mental human development that occurs between childhood and adulthood.
- This transition involves biological (i.e. pubertal), social, and psychological changes, though the biological or physiological ones are the easiest to measure objectively.
- The start of puberty has had somewhat of an increase in preadolescence (particularly females, as seen with early and precocious puberty), and adolescence has had an occasional extension beyond the teenage years (typically males). These changes have made it more difficult to rigidly define the time frame in which adolescence occurs.

Puberty

- Puberty is a period of several years in which rapid physical growth and psychological changes occur, culminating in sexual maturity.
- The average onset of puberty is at 10 for girls and age 12 for boys.
- Every person's individual timetable for puberty is influenced primarily by heredity, although environmental factors, such as diet and exercise, also exert some influence. These factors can also contribute to precocious puberty and delayed puberty.

Puberty

- Puberty begins with a surge in hormone production, which in turn, causes a number of physical changes. It is also the stage of life in which a child develops secondary sex characteristics (for example, a deeper voice and larger adam's apple in boys, and development of breasts and more curved and prominent hips in girls) as his or her hormonal balance shifts strongly towards an adult state.

Timing of puberty

- The timing of puberty can have important psychological and social consequences.
- Late maturing boys can be less confident because of poor body image when comparing themselves to already developed friends and peers. However, early puberty is not always positive for boys; early sexual maturation in boys can be accompanied by increased aggressiveness due to the surge of hormones that affect them.
- For girls, early maturation can sometimes lead to increased self-consciousness, though a typical aspect in maturing females. Because of their bodies developing in advance, pubescent girls can become more insecure

Adolescent Psychology - In the search for a unique social identity for themselves, adolescents are frequently confused about what is 'right' and what is 'wrong.'

- Adolescent psychology is associated with notable changes in mood sometimes known as mood swings.
- Cognitive, emotional and attitudinal changes which are characteristic of adolescence, often take place during this period, and this can be a cause of conflict on one hand and positive personality development on the other.

Adolescent Psychology

- Because the adolescents are experiencing various strong cognitive and physical changes, for the first time in their lives they may start to view their friends, their peer group, as more important and influential than their parents/guardians. Because of peer pressure, they may sometimes indulge in activities not deemed socially acceptable, although this may be more of a social phenomenon than a psychological one. This overlap is addressed within the study of psycho sociology.

Adolescent Sexuality

- Adolescent sexuality refers to sexual feelings, behavior and development in adolescents and is a stage of human sexuality. Sexuality and sexual desire usually begins to intensify along with the onset of puberty. The expression of sexual desire among adolescents (or anyone, for that matter), might be influenced by family values and the culture and religion they have grown up in (or as a backlash to such), social engineering, social control, taboos, and other kinds of social mores.

Adolescent Sexuality

- Adolescents also face some risks as their sexuality begins to transform. Whilst some of these such as emotional distress (fear of abuse or exploitation) and sexually transmitted diseases (including HIV/AIDS) may not necessarily be inherent to adolescence, others such as pregnancy (through failure or non-use of contraceptives) are seen as social problems in most western societies. In terms of sexual identity, all sexual orientations found in adults are also represented among adolescents.

Sex Education



Sex Education

- Sex education is a broad term used to describe education about human sexual anatomy, sexual reproduction, sexual intercourse, reproductive health, emotional relations, reproductive rights and responsibilities, abstinence, contraception, and other aspects of human sexual behavior.
- Common avenues for sex education are parents or caregivers, school programs, and public health campaigns.

Sex Education

- Sex education may be taught informally, such as when someone receives information from a conversation with a parent, friend, religious leader, or through the media. It may also be delivered through sex self-help authors, magazine advice columnists, sex columnists, or through sex education web sites.
- Formal sex education occurs when schools or health care providers offer sex education.

Guidelines for Talking about Sexuality

- **BE HONEST!** Be honest about your feelings, your values, what you know and what you don't know.
- **USE TEACHABLE MOMENTS.** There are lots of opportunities which happen throughout a normal day for talking about sexuality with children. Talking about a neighbour's pregnancy, the adoption of a child, seeing a woman working in a non-traditional job, are all situations that provide you with opportunities to discuss sexuality related issues with children. Using teachable moments also lets children know that it is okay to talk about sexuality.

Guidelines for Talking about Sexuality

- **KEEP VIF IN MIND.** VIF stands for values, information and feelings. These are three important elements when talking about sexuality. Communicating information is important, but communicating values and feelings are just as important. We communicate these explicitly (what is said), implicitly (what is implied) combined with our body language
- **CHILDREN LEARN BY EXAMPLE, TOO.** So even if you don't say a word about sexuality, your children will learn about it by watching family patterns about touching, sex roles, nudity, affection, discipline and other family behaviours. If you "don't say a word" about sexuality, then some children might think that there is something mysterious, secretive or bad about the sexual things in life.

Guidelines for Talking about Sexuality

- **BE PATIENT.** Children hear and learn about sexuality from lots of different sources. You will need to clarify, repeat and build on your child's knowledge as s/he grows and matures. You can expect some of the same questions because, as children mature, they will be able to understand more complex aspects of sexuality topics.
- **LANGUAGE IS IMPORTANT.** Give children the words they need to continue asking and talking about sexuality. Whenever it is possible, use the proper terms for the reproductive parts of the body: penis, vulva, breasts, testicles, etc.

Guidelines for Talking about Sexuality

- **LISTEN, TOO!** When talking with your children about sexuality, it's important to listen too! It helps you to learn what they are thinking and what further information or discussion they may need. You can help children talk about sexuality with you by asking open-ended questions like:
 - How do you feel about that?
 - What do you think s/he should do?
 - How do you think we would solve that problem?
 - What have you heard about that?

Guidelines for Talking about Sexuality

- **MAKE A COMMITMENT.** Make a commitment to see that sexuality education happens for children. If you feel nervous talking about it, say so, then go on to say what you feel is important.
- **SEXUAL LEARNING IS A LIFELONG PROCESS.** That means that we need to continue to learn, too. So read about sexuality; talk about it with your partner, your friends.