

Boldly Me Health Week: A student-led initiative to promote healthy sexuality at Oregon State University

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TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Topic: Community-based sexual health promotion programming on a college campus Target Audience: Public Health Professionals, students, health educators and community-based health workers.

ABSTRACT: Student well-being is correlated with student retention and success. Comprehensive sexual health programming is critical in supporting students. Oregon State University falls below the national average for barrier method use in vaginal and oral sex (NCHA, 2016). In an online survey (n=165) respondents reported cultural reasons rather than education as a barrier to safer sex practices. Literature shows that college sexual health programming must include understanding of gender identity and sexual orientation; address social norms and culture; and be integrated with healthy communication and access to safer sex supplies and screening services (Nevers & Eastman-Mueller, 2016). Many on-campus health promotion programs are developed by practitioners. Alternatively, Boldly Me Healthy Week (BMHW) was a student-led initiative via community-based approaches to increase student knowledge, awareness and skills. The four-day schedule of events included several skill-based workshops hosted by students and myriad on-campus partners. Benton County Health Department provided free and anonymous HIV testing. Student leaders identified key issues to promote during the event including gender inclusivity, healthy communication, survivor advocacy, STI prevention and healthy sexuality. All events culminated in a fashion show that celebrated consent, healthy sexuality and gender inclusivity. Post event evaluation (n=42) shows promising results.

OBJECTIVE(S):

- Understand a method for engaging students in health promotion work at a university.
- Explain the need for community-based program development on a college campus to improve sexual health outcomes
- Describe OSU's Boldly Me Health Week events to impact student health, engagement and cultural changes regarding sexual health.

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