



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1991 Volume V: Adolescence/Adolescents' Health

Introduction

Nine Fellows in the seminar, *Adolescence/Adolescents' Health*, have created units that capture the work of the seminar and emphasize the interrelatedness of the process of adolescent development and the content of specific health needs and disorders in the adolescent population. In each unit, discussion of an issue about health that is important to youth in New Haven is illuminated by an understanding of the basic physical, psychological, and social phenomena that drive adolescence. In each unit, an effort has also been made to distinguish between behaviors that reflect the normal developmental process and behaviors that represent risks to the health of adolescents. Throughout their units, Fellows have grappled with the important contributions that cognitive function, cultural issues, and physical maturation make as they developed materials that they believed would be useful to them or their colleagues in middle school and high school curricula. Many of the most important contemporary adolescent health problems are addressed in these units. Nutrition, and its importance to the growth process, as well as genetic or psychosomatic disorders such as obesity and anorexia nervosa, are the subjects of several units. Development of methods for better self control and nutrition, as well as practical knowledge about personal hygiene and first aid measures are the objectives of a thoughtful unit designed for slow learning adolescents. An exemplary unit presents the cultural issues that affect learning about human sexuality among Black and Hispanic adolescents and provides well defined steps for the classroom teacher to use to identify them and incorporate them into the educational process. In each of three units, the spotlight falls on one of the serious health problems of adolescence: common sexually transmitted diseases, substance abuse, and AIDS. An innovative and provocative unit provides methodology for the release of stress in the classroom through a creative dramatic process called "personal monologue," and it teaches adolescents relaxation techniques that could be useful in a variety of situations.

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