Speak Up for Patient Health:
Critical Conversations on Controversial Issues

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Weight and Weight Perceptions

Obese: 15%

Overweight: 16%

Described self as Overweight: 32%

Trying to Lose Weight: 47%
Gender Disparities

- Described Themselves as Overweight, 25%
- Trying to Lose Weight, 34%

- Described Themselves as Overweight, 38%
- Trying to Lose Weight, 60%

Eating Disorders

Eating disorders in U.S. adolescents ages 13 - 18 was 2.7%

- Females 3.8%
- Males 1.5%
Sexual Activity

29 percent of students had sexual intercourse with at least one person during the 3 months before the survey and defined as sexually active
Teen Births

34 per 1,000 in 2010
19 per 1,000 in 2017
Total in U.S.: 194,377
When should you ask about pregnancy?
When do you ask about pregnancy?

![Bar graph showing responses to the question about when to ask about pregnancy. The graph indicates that the highest percentage of responses is for '16 and over,' followed by '12 - 13' and '14 - 15.' There are minimal responses for '9 and under' and '10 - 11.' There are no responses for 'We don't ask about those topics.'](image-url)
Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Chlamydia cases
Females 33 per 1,000
Males 9 per 1,000

Gonorrhea cases
Females 6 per 1,000
Males 3 per 1,000

https://www.cdc.gov/std/stats17/adolescents.htm
Illegal Drug Use

Marijuana: 36%
Prescription Pain Medicine: 14%

Sexual Identity

Heterosexual: 85%
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual: 10%
Not Sure: 4%
What Topics Are Most Common?

- Pregnancy status
- Eating disorders
- Obesity/overweight
- Illegal drug use
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Sexual orientation/gender identity
What Topics Are Most Difficult?

- Obesity/overweight
- Eating disorders
- Use of contraception/birth control
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Sexual orientation (gay, lesbian,...)
- Illegal use of drugs
- For female patients only:....
- Other (please specify)

Responses
Reasons You Would NOT Have a Conversation

1. Confidentiality concerns
2. Fear of embarrassing or offending patient
3. Lack of acceptance of advice from a dentist
4. Fear of appearing judgmental of patient
5. Lack of knowledge on how to start the conversation
6. Lack of knowledge or training about the topic
7. Lack of training in communication skills
8. Condition does not affect course of treatment
9. Concern over legal risks
Reasons You Would NOT Have a Conversation

• Over 80 percent of respondents
• 50 – 79 percent of respondents
• Under 50 percent of respondents
Obesity

- Fear of appearing judgmental of patient
- Fear of embarrassing or offending patient
- Confidentiality concerns
- Condition does not affect course of treatment
- Concern over legal risks
- Lack of knowledge or training about the topic
- Lack of knowledge on how to start the conversation
- Lack of training in communication skills
- Lack of acceptance of advice from a dentist
Eating Disorders

- Fear of appearing judgmental of patient
- Fear of embarrassing or offending patient
- Confidentiality concerns
- Condition does not affect course of treatment
- Concern over legal risks
- Lack of knowledge or training about the topic
- Lack of knowledge on how to start the conversation
- Lack of training in communication skills
- Lack of acceptance of advice from a dentist
Pregnancy

- Fear of appearing judgmental of patient
- Fear of embarrassing or offending patient
- Confidentiality concerns
- Condition does not affect course of treatment
- Concern over legal risks
- Lack of knowledge or training about the topic
- Lack of knowledge on how to start the conversation
- Lack of training in communication skills
- Lack of acceptance of advice from a dentist
Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity

- Fear of appearing judgmental of patient
- Fear of embarrassing or offending patient
- Confidentiality concerns
- Condition does not affect course of treatment
- Concern over legal risks
- Lack of knowledge or training about the topic
- Lack of knowledge on how to start the conversation
- Lack of training in communication skills
- Lack of acceptance of advice from a dentist
Sexually Transmitted Diseases

- Fear of appearing judgmental of patient
- Fear of embarrassing or offending patient
- Confidentiality concerns
- Condition does not affect course of treatment
- Concern over legal risks
- Lack of knowledge or training about the topic
- Lack of knowledge on how to start the conversation
- Lack of training in communication skills
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Illegal Drug Use

- Fear of appearing judgmental of patient
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- Confidentiality concerns
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- Lack of acceptance of advice from a dentist
Actual Adolescent/Parent Attitudes

- Scarcity of research
- Primarily qualitative with small groups
- Generally positive
- Similar barriers
Why Don’t Patients Talk to Doctors?

• Nationally, 60 to 80 percent of adults admit withholding relevant information from their doctors

• Patients are less likely to tell dentists than physicians

• Not all patients are alike

What Do Adolescents Really Want?

- Rapport
- Credibility
- Respect
- Caring
- Independence

Bora & White, 2018; Daley, 2017.
Rapport Assignment

• Choose a partner and discuss:
• What do you look for when first meeting someone?
• What behaviors are most important to do or to avoid doing?
How Do I Build Rapport?

• Eye contact
• Facial expression
• Body position
• Greeting by name
• Paying positive attention

Burkhart, 2005.
How Do I Start a Challenging Conversation?

• Set the stage
• Do your homework
• Begin with general open questions
• Transition to the topic with a question
How Do I Start a Challenging Conversation?

- The patient gives a minimal response
- You follow up with minimal encourager
- The patient elaborates on the topic
- You follow up with an empathic response

Korsvold, 2016.
How Do I Start a Challenging Conversation?

• Compliment plus Question
How Do I Enhance My Credibility?

- Wear proper identification
- Display licenses, diplomas, certificates
- Provide a clean, organized environment
- Strive for one voice

How Do I Create a Sense of Respect?

• Display non-discrimination policies
• Encourage and enforce zero tolerance policies regarding discrimination
• Provide education opportunities
• Explain wait times
• Remember negatives outweigh positives

Daley, 2017; Bora & White, 2018.
How Do I Communicate Caring?

• Allow sufficient time in the schedule
• Listen well
  • Patient satisfaction
  • Diagnostic accuracy
  • Treatment compliance
How Well Do I Communicate?

• 75 percent of providers reported they communicated satisfactorily
• 21 percent of patients agreed their provider communicated satisfactorily
How Can I Be an Effective Listener?

- Put down the chart
- Turn away from the computer
- Rise above parent/patient distractions
- Ask better questions
- Take notes, but not too many
How Can I Be an Effective Listener?

- Mentally summarize the patient's message
- Listen for central concerns underlying remarks
- Listen for signals, such as “most important”
How Can I Conduct Motivational Interviewing?


How Can I Manage Helicopter Parents?

- Parent in reception
- Eye contact
- Body orientation
- Use of names
- Minimal versus positive response
- More directive?
Adolescent-Friendly Information Key to Independence

• Explain what occurs in the exam and why
• Explain procedures and post-treatment expectations
• Give choices; discuss treatment alternatives
• Answer questions fully
• Avoid clinical jargon
Essential Skills of Oral Health Literacy

- Use easy to understand language
  - Use simple language
  - Speak slowly
  - Draw pictures or use printed illustrations
  - Present only 2 to 3 concepts at a time
  - Ask patients whether they would like a family member or friend in the discussion

- Use the Teach Back Method
  - Ask patients to repeat back information or instructions
  - Ask patients to tell you what they will do at home to follow instructions

- Use patient-friendly materials and aids
  - Use models or x-rays to explain
  - Hand out printed materials
  - Use a video or DVD

Rozier, 2011.
Essential Skills of Oral Health Literacy

- Make practice environment patient-friendly
  - Ask patients how they learn best
  - Refer patients to the Internet or other sources of information
  - Use a translator or interpreter
- Provide help or assistance in understanding information
  - Underline key points on print materials
  - Read instructions out loud
  - Write or print out instructions
  - Ask staff member to follow up with patients for post-care instructions
  - Follow up with patients by telephone to check understanding and adherence

Rozier, 2011.
Benefits of Good Communication

Patients
Better tolerate pain; report less discomfort
Experience less anxiety
Require less medication
Recuperate more quickly; have increased daily function

Parents
Make fewer complaints; increased satisfaction
Stay with the practice
Follow instructions and adhere to treatment
Refer other patients
Pay their bills on time
Less likely to sue
References


- Bora K, White, K. How can health professionals enhance interpersonal communication with adolescents and young adults to improve health care outcomes?: systematic literature review, International Journal of Adolescence and Youth, 2018, 23:2, 198-218.


- Daley AM, Polifroni EC, Sadler LS. “Treat me like a normal person!” A meta-ethnography of adolescents' expectations of their health care providers. Journal of pediatric nursing. 2017 Sep 1;36:70-83.


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