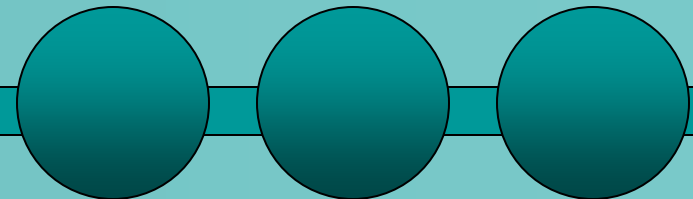


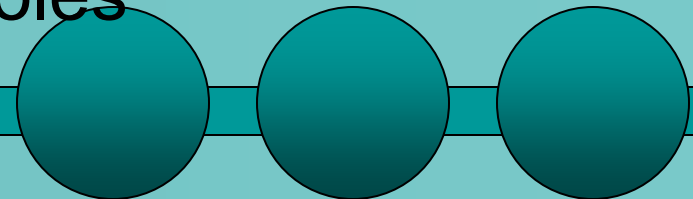
# Progressive Abstinence Education

Lauren Cikara



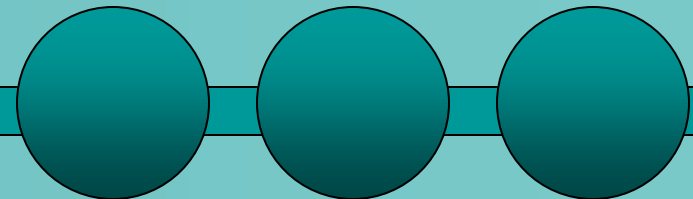
# Agenda

- The Purity Movement
- Sexual Health Education in the US
- Sexual Health Education in Europe
  - Germany, France, and the Netherlands
- What is Sexual Abstinence?
- Combating Adultism
- Shift Paradigms
  - Heteronormativity/Gender roles

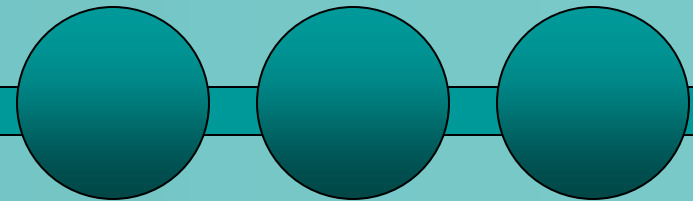


# Agenda cont.

- Empowering Youth
- Putting the sex/sexuality back in Sexual Abstinence
- A Progressive Abstinence education model

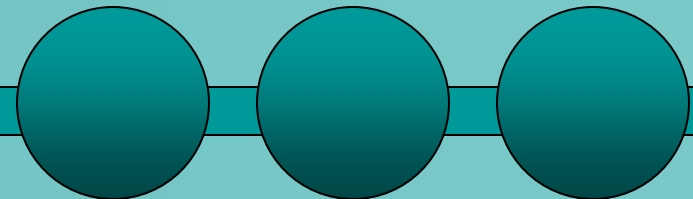


Why is progressive abstinence education important?



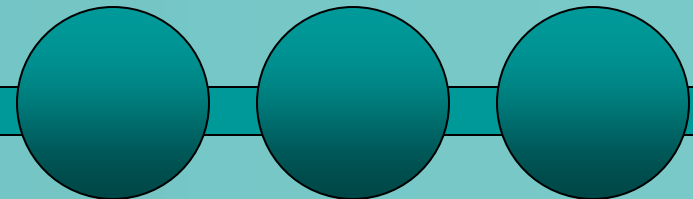
# What is progressive abstinence education?

- It is free of fear and shame.
- It places the same value on abstinence as other safer sex practices.
- It does not enforce or rely on heteronormativity and gender roles.



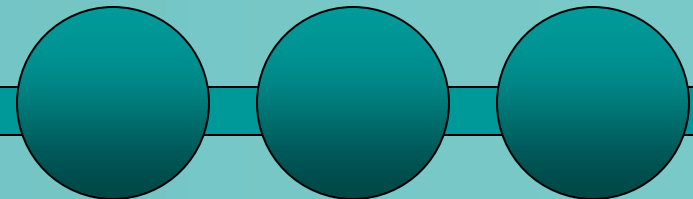
# The Purity Movement

- Also referred to as the “virginity movement” or “abstinence movement”.
- Driven by conservatives and evangelical Christians, antifeminist think tanks, religious leaders, and legislators.
- Women’s virginity and sexuality are being used as a commodity.



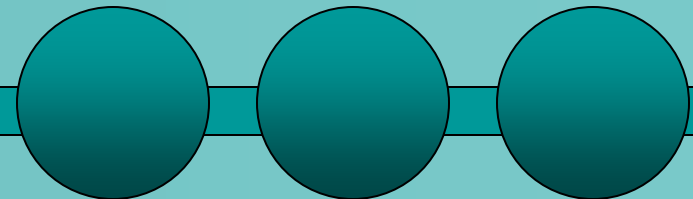
# The Purity Movement cont.

- Women are the gatekeepers of sexual morals.
- A movement steeped in shame and fear.
- Heterocentric.
- Safer sex does not exist until marriage.
- Sex isn't for pleasure.

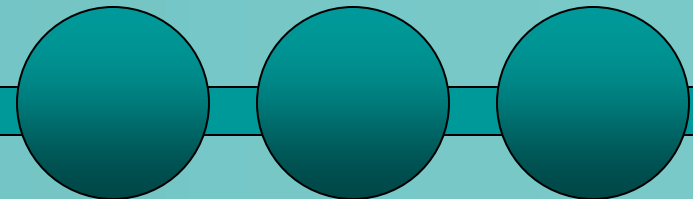


# What does the Purity Movement look like?

- Promise rings
  - Daughter pledges to her father to remain abstinent by wearing a ring
- Purity balls
  - Father/Daughter dances with a purity pledge
- Integrity balls
  - Mother/Son dances where the son promises not to dishonor someone else's daughter/future wife

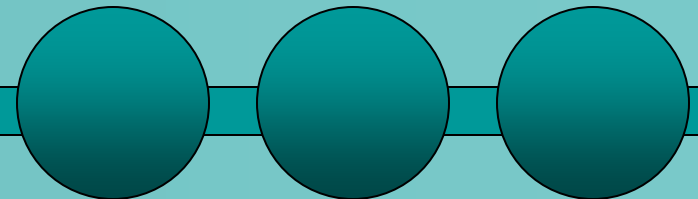


- Pledges
  - Written “contracts” between daughters and fathers.
  - Also included in many Health Curriculum textbooks
- Abstinence-only-until-marriage sexual health education



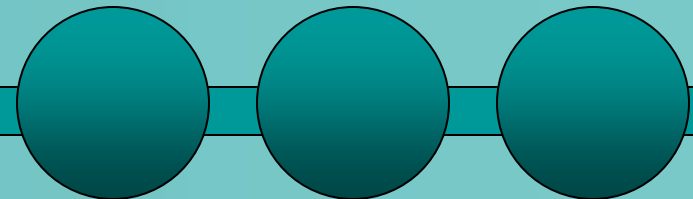
# Sexual Health Education in the US

- Abstinence-Only Programs
- Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs
- Comprehensive Sexual Health Education Programs



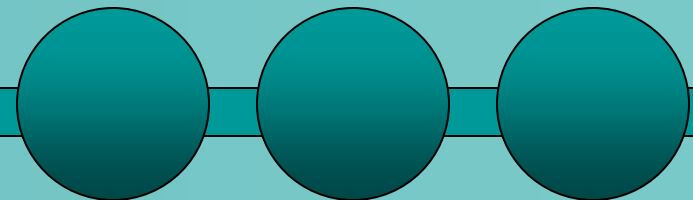
# Abstinence-Only Programs

- Teaches abstinence as the only morally correct option of sexual expression for teenagers.
- Usually censors information about protection in preventing STI's and unintended pregnancy.



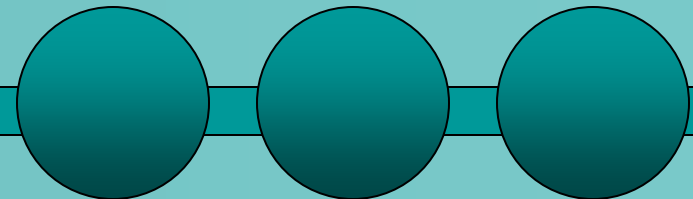
# Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs

- Teaches abstinence as the only morally correct option of sexual expression for unmarried young people.
- Federally funded programs must censor information about protection preventing STI's and unintended pregnancy.



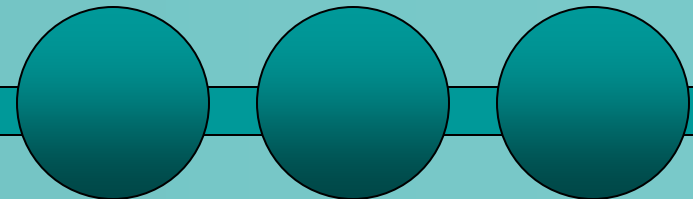
# Comprehensive Sexual Health Programs

- Teaches age-appropriate and medically accurate information about sexual health
- Four main goals:
  - Provide accurate information about human sexuality.
  - Develop and understand their values, attitudes, and beliefs about sexuality.
  - Develop relationship and interpersonal skills.
  - Help exercise responsibility regarding sexual relationships.



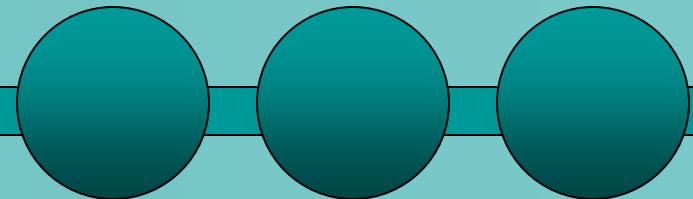
# Funding

- Federal support began in 1981
- 1996 – 2008 \$1.5 billion spent on abstinence-only education programs



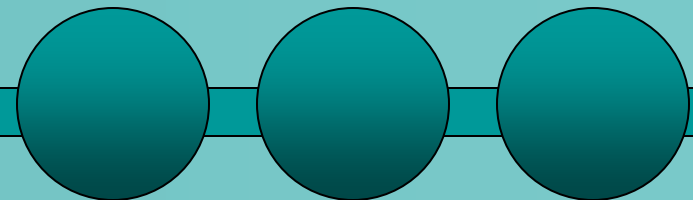
# Sexual health education confusion

- Just Do it! Vs. Just say no until you are married!
- Mixed messages result in lack of motivation to be sexually responsible.
- States control the implementation of sexual health education.



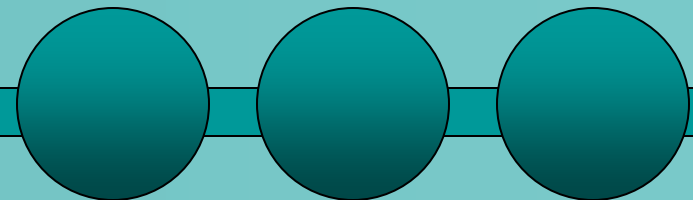
# Sexual health education in Europe: Germany, Netherlands, France

- Rights. Responsibility. Respect.
- Less time preventing youth from having sex and more time educating and empowering youth.
- Higher comfort level talking about sex and sexuality.



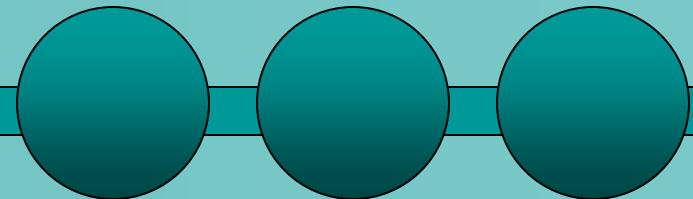
# Netherlands

- Engaged in mass media campaigns to promote safer sex practices.
- Promoting positive aspects of sexual relationships and sexual responsibility.
- Youth are active in their own sexual health education.



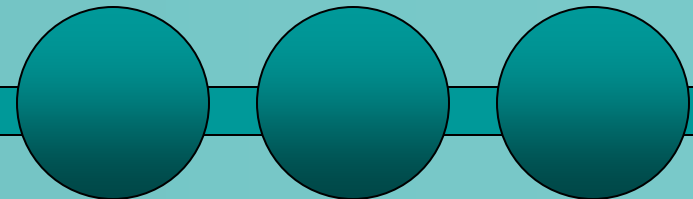
# Germany

- Mass media campaigns focusing on safer sex messages.
- Comprehensive sexual health education.
- Free of repressive views, it is positive, and also a dialogue-based approach

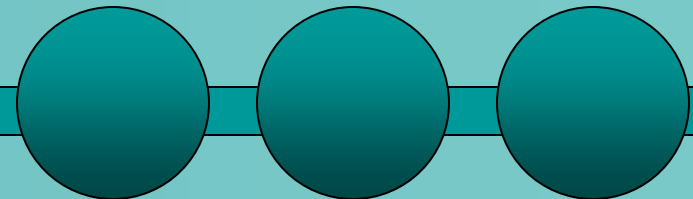


# France

- Mass media campaign focusing on disease prevention
- National curriculum

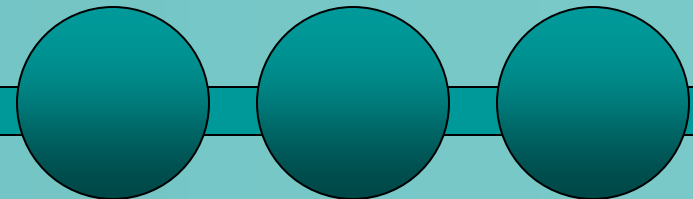


The European sexual health education programs could be used as a foundation for progressive abstinence education in the U.S.



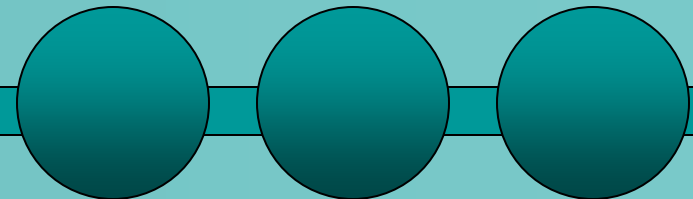
# What is Sexual Abstinence

- “Voluntarily choosing not to engage in any sexual behavior that can result in pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease.”
  - Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains  
Community Education Department



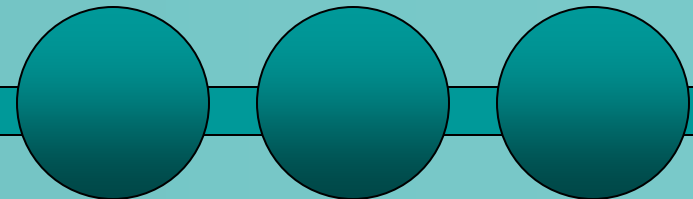
# Sexual Abstinence cont.

- Abstinence is abstaining from sex or sexual partnership for periods of time.
  - Scarleteen, May 2010.



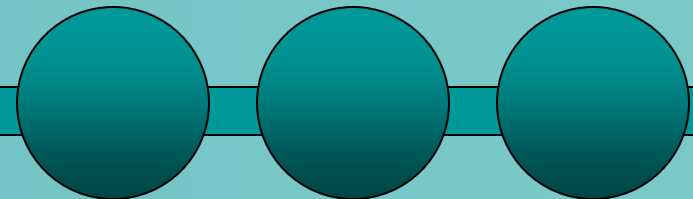
# How Sexual Abstinence Works

- Define sexual abstinence
- Communicate said definition to ones sexual partner
- Think ahead to difficult situations
  - Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains  
Community Education Department



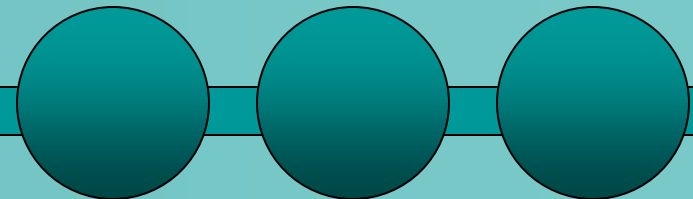
# Let's shift our definition's

- Choosing to engage in sexual activity.
  - Not being sexually abstinent
- Choosing not to engage in sexual activity.
  - Being sexually abstinent



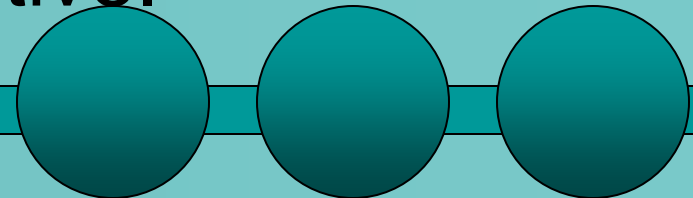
# Sexual Abstinence

- It is a CHOICE for ALL
- It is voluntary
- It is NOT a lack of sexuality
- The definition can change over time
- Not being fearful of society and the construction of myths being highlighted



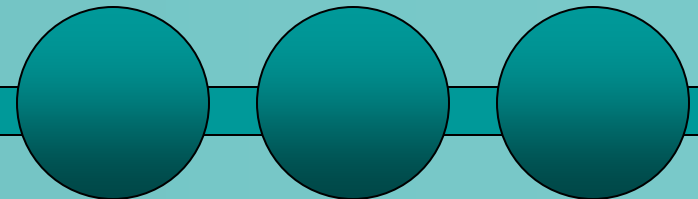
# How can sexual abstinence work ?

- Define sexual abstinence.
- Communicate said definition to sexual partner.
- Explore own sexuality.
- Explore own sexual response.
- Think ahead to difficult situations
- Think ahead to the consequences of choosing to be sexually active.



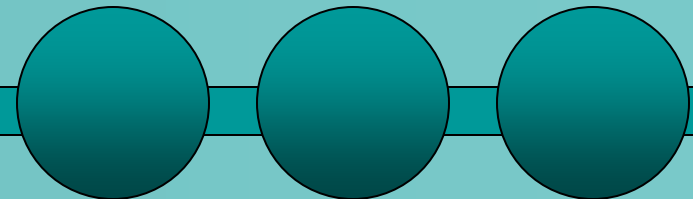
# But first ...

- Lets check our adultism at the door.
- Shift the heteronormative paradigm and gender roles.
- Empower youth!



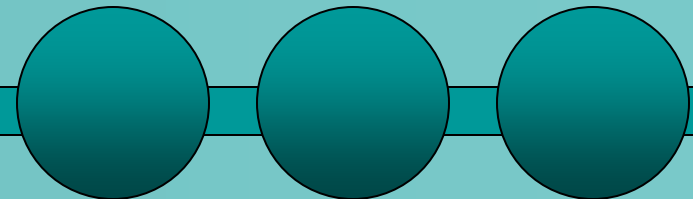
# Adultism

- The assumption that youth are “not ready”
- Waiting vs. Choosing
- “Huge decision”



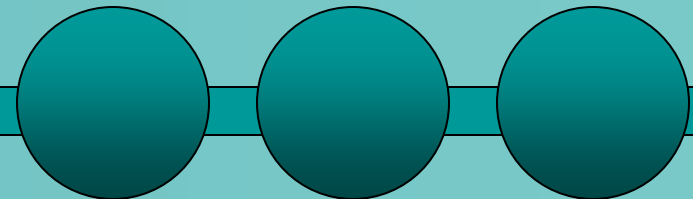
# Adulthood cont.

- Comfort with the grey area
  - Age that youth choose to engage in sexual activity
  - Relationship status of the youth who choose to engage in sexual activity
- We need to relay that choosing to be sexually active means being prepared to deal with the consequences.



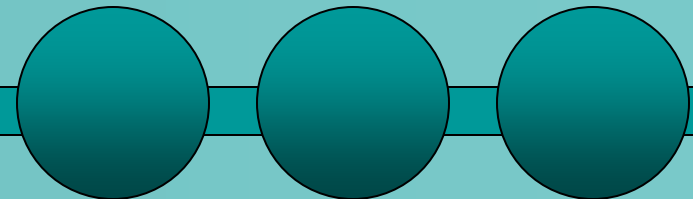
# Heteronormativity/Gender roles

- Gender and sexuality are fluid
  - multiple types of identities and relationships exist.
- Women should not be the “gate-keepers” of sex.
- Sluts vs. Studs.
- Accountability should be shared.



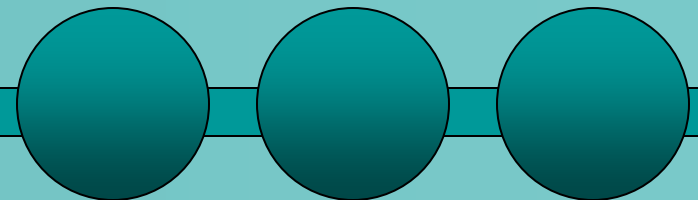
# Empowering Youth

- Let's talk about sex! And sexuality!
  - Being ready to choose to engage in sexual activity makes sex better.
  - Being ready to explore sexuality makes sex better.
  - Being aware of ones own sexual response makes sex better.
  - Talk about pleasure.
  - Talk about masturbation.
  
- Be sex positive!



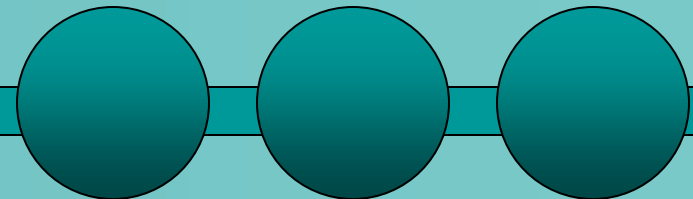
# Sex/Sexuality in Sexual Abstinence

- Sexual response
- Sexual pleasure
- Masturbation
- Sexuality is fluid and should be explored



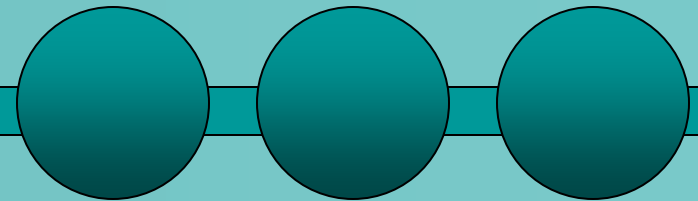
# The “P” word

- Talking about pleasure, shifts the notion that sexual activity is only for Procreation.
- Sex is also about Pleasure.
- Allows for all youth to explore what Pleasure is.



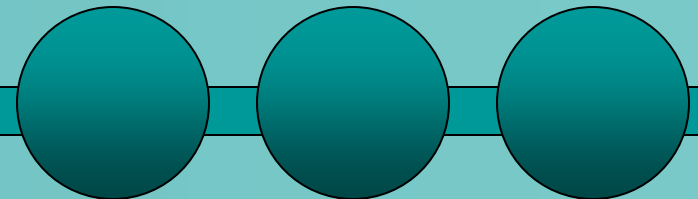
# Sexual Response

- Sexual anatomy should be taught through both a reproductive lens and a sexual response lens.
  - i.e. the prostate

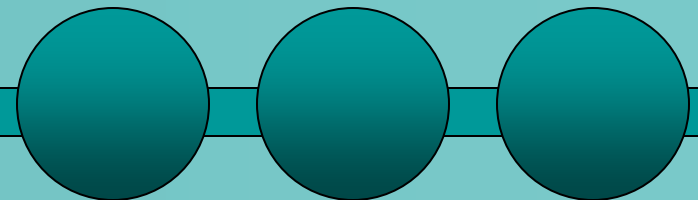


# Masturbation

- A safe form of sexual activity.
- Allows youth to explore their own bodies.

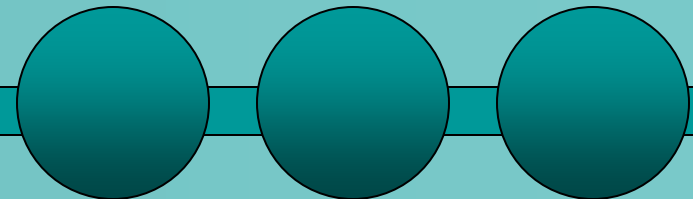


- Allowing for youth to understand pleasure, sexual response, and masturbation will give them the tools they need to communicate and know their sexual desires when they are ready to choose to engage in sexual activity.



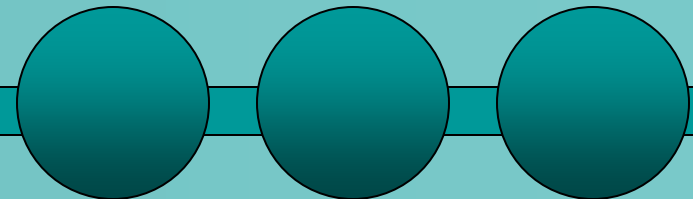
# Progressive lens

- What does the progressive lens look like?
- Should we use a different term other than progressive?
  
- How about sex positive abstinence education?



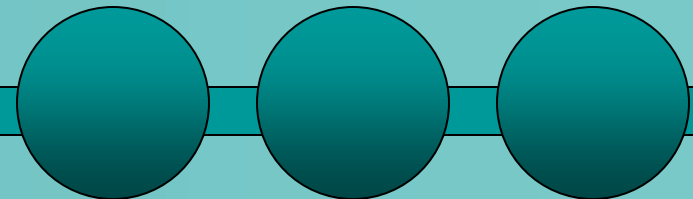
# Sex Positive Abstinence Education

- Age appropriate
- Medically accurate
- Healthy Relationships
- **Explore sexuality**



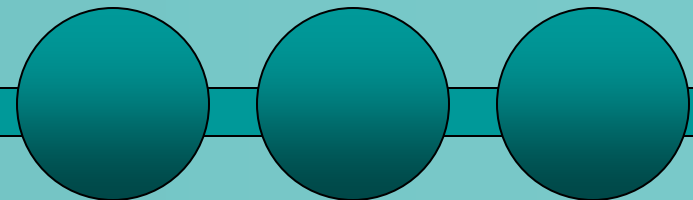
# References

- Advocates for Youth. “The History of Federal Abstinence-Only Funding,” [www.advocatesforyouth.org/policy-and-advocacy/policy-publications](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/policy-and-advocacy/policy-publications).
- Advocates for Youth. “Five Years of Abstinence-Only-Until Marriage Education: Assessing the Impact,” [www.advocatesforyouth.org/policy-and-advocacy/policy-publications](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/policy-and-advocacy/policy-publications).
- Advocates for Youth. “European Approaches to Adolescent Sexual Behavior & Responsibility,” [www.advocatesforyouth.org/policy-and-advocacy/publications](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/policy-and-advocacy/publications).
- Aggleton, P, & Campbell, C. (2000). Working with youth people – towards an agenda for sexual health. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, 15 (3), 283 – 296.



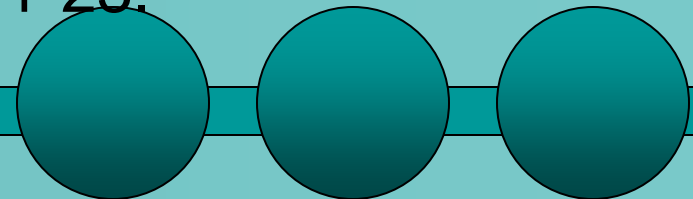
# References

- Brown, J.D., Hust, Staccy. J.T., & L'Engle, K.L. (2008). Boys will be boys and girls better be prepared: An analysis of the rare sexual health messages in young adolescents' media. *Mass Communications & Society*, 11, 3-28.
- Community Action Kit. [www.communityactionkit.org](http://www.communityactionkit.org)
- Drill, E., McDonald. H., & Odes, R. (1999). *Deal With It*. New York, NY: Roundtable Press.
- Fray, J. (2003). *Teaching teens about sexual pleasure*. SIECUS Report, 30 (14), 1-7.
- Joannides, P. (2009). *The Guide to Getting it On* (6th ed). Waldport, OR: Goofy foot Press
- McClain, L.C. (2006). Some ABC's of feminist sex education (in light of the sexuality critique of legal feminism). *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law*, 15(1), 63-88.



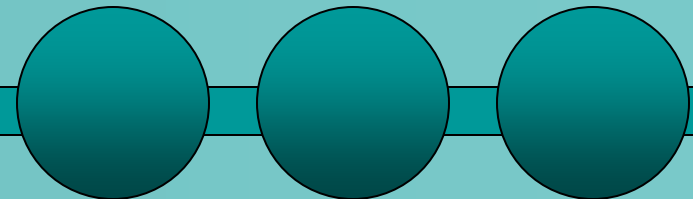
# References

- Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains, [www.pprm.org](http://www.pprm.org)
- Scarleteen. [www.scarleteen.com](http://www.scarleteen.com) (key words: pleasure, masturbation, sexuality, abstinence, sex positive, sexual health education)
- Schalet, A. (2001, July 23). The Sleepover Question. *The New York Times*  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/24/opinion/sunday/24schalet.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/24/opinion/sunday/24schalet.html?_r=1)
- Schalet, A. (2011). *Beyond Abstinence & Risk: A new paradigm for adolescent sexual health*.  
<http://people.umass.edu/schalet/PP4309.pdf>
- Schalet, A. (2004). Must we fear adolescent sexuality? *Medscape General Medicine*, 6(4), 1-23.



# References

- SIECUS. [www.familiesaretalking.org](http://www.familiesaretalking.org)
- Simson, G.J. & Sussman, E.A. (2000). Keeping the sex in sex education: The first amendment's religion clauses and the sex education debate. *Review of Law and Women's Studies*, 9, 265-297.
- Taverner, B. (2007). Reclaiming 'Abstinence' in Comprehensive Sex Education. *Contemporary Sexuality*, 41 (4), 9 – 14.
- The National Campaign. [www.TheNationalCampaign.org](http://www.TheNationalCampaign.org)
- Valenti, J. (2010). *The Purity Myth*. Berkeley, California: Seal Press



# Thank you

- Lauren Cikara

Education Program Specialist

Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains

[lauren.cikara@pprm.org](mailto:lauren.cikara@pprm.org)

719-574-1905

