



Welcome to the Second Issue of the Community College Health Study newsletter!

As a part of the Community College Health Study, over 1,500 community college students from 34 college campuses across the nation are completing online questionnaires about their sexual health, relationships, media use, and previous experiences with sex education.

In this issue, we provide a snapshot of students' previous experience with school-based sex education, including whether they received any sex education at all, the topics that were covered, and the quality of their sex education. This information can help colleges better understand their students' preparedness to form safe and healthy relationships and provides an opportunity for colleges to identify and fill gaps in previous school-based sex education.

Are your colleagues interested in receiving study updates? If so, they can complete the form below to receive future newsletters!

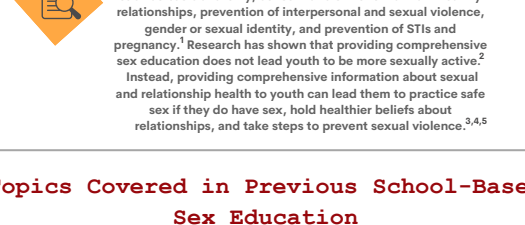
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School-Based Sex Education

Nearly 40% of students have not received school-based sex education since 9th grade.



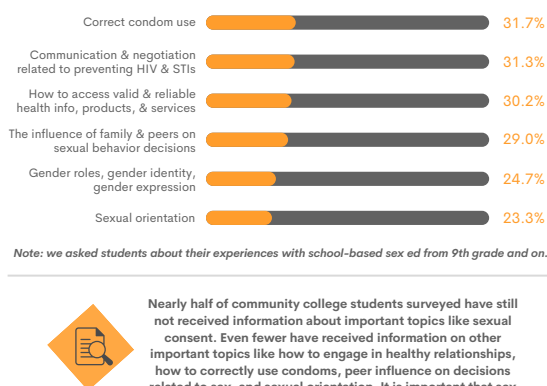
Note: we asked students about their experiences with school-based sex ed from 9th grade and on.



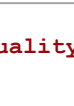
It is critical that young people receive comprehensive sex education that is inclusive and relevant to their diverse range of experiences. Comprehensive sex education may cover topics such as basic anatomy, consent and skills to maintain healthy relationships, prevention of interpersonal and sexual violence, gender or sexual identity, and prevention of STIs and pregnancy.¹ Research has shown that providing comprehensive sex education does not lead youth to be more sexually active.² Instead, providing comprehensive information about sexual and relationship health to youth can lead them to practice safe sex if they do have sex, hold healthier beliefs about relationships, and take steps to prevent sexual violence.^{3,4,5}

Topics Covered in Previous School-Based Sex Education

Since 9th grade, students report receiving limited education on important sex ed topics.



Note: we asked students about their experiences with school-based sex ed from 9th grade and on.

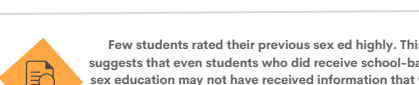
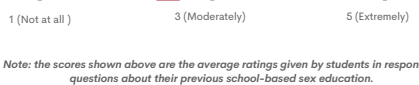
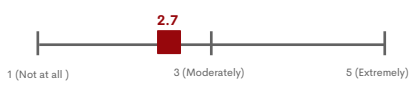
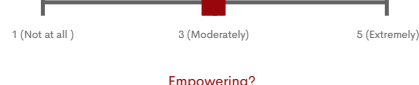


Nearly half of community college students surveyed have still not received information about important topics like sexual consent. Even fewer have received information on other important topics like how to engage in healthy relationships, how to correctly use condoms, peer influence on decisions related to sex, and sexual orientation. It is important that sex education is comprehensive - and covers many topics - so that students are well-prepared to make informed and safe decisions regarding their sexual and relationship health.

Quality of Previous School-Based Sex Education

Overall, students rated their previous sex ed experiences poorly.

Students responded to questions that asked, "was your previous sex ed..."



Note: the scores shown above are the average ratings given by students in response to questions about their previous school-based sex education.

Few students rated their previous sex ed highly. This suggests that even students who did receive school-based sex education may not have received information that was engaging, relevant, inclusive, or even accurate. When students are more engaged and satisfied with their sex ed, they learn more, and the education can have a greater positive influence on their sexual and relationship health.^{6,7}

Our findings suggest that young adults entering community college are in need of additional, high-quality sex education resources.

An Opportunity to Meet Student Needs

For students that are sexually active or in a romantic relationship, comprehensive sex education is critical for promoting healthy decision making. In our previous newsletter, we reported that 62% of community college students included in this study have had sex. In this current newsletter, we report that many students have not received recent, comprehensive, or high-quality sexual and relationship health education.

As such, community colleges should consider incorporating sexual and relationship health promotion programs that are not only medically accurate but also engaging and inclusive in their curriculum to promote sexual health and reduce the risk for STIs and unplanned pregnancy.

Comprehensive sex education is relevant to all students. For students that are not sexually active or in a romantic relationship, comprehensive information about sexual health can prompt students to consider their own values and interests surrounding sex and relationships. If students do decide to have sex, the ideal time for them to receive information about topics like STIs and pregnancy prevention is BEFORE they have sex.

Together, this information reveals an opportunity for colleges to better meet the needs of students regardless of their current sexual activity or relationship status.

Many young adults attending community college need additional education about sex and relationships. Community colleges have an opportunity to close this gap and provide their students with the information and skills they need to thrive.

What Can I Do Next?

Find a Program

Explore Media Aware, an evidence-based comprehensive sexual and relationship health promotion program designed to fill gaps in previous sex education and meet the unique needs of students at your school. This online, self-paced program is easy to administer and complies with Title IX and Campus Save Act sexual assault prevention mandates.

[Explore Media Aware](#)

Share This Information

Click the button below to visit our study website where you can find a downloadable email template and PowerPoint slides. Feel free to use these materials to share findings presented in this newsletter at your next staff meeting, with your college listserv, or on other relevant platforms. If you decide to share this information, please cite the information using the following: Ahuna, K., Evans-Paulson, R., Porter, E. Scull, T. and The Community College Health Study Team (2023). *Community College Health Study Newsletter, 2nd edition*. <https://cchealthstudy.com>

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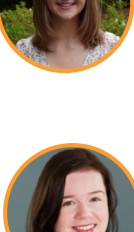
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Meet the People Behind This Newsletter

Kylia Ahuna, MA

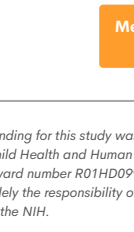
Lead Author and Public Intern



Kylia Ahuna is a Master of Public Health student with a concentration in health behavior at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She has experience in conducting research in behavioral neuroscience and maternal and pediatric health. Her current research interests involve developing and evaluating health interventions and programs, and she is particularly passionate about making research more accessible.

Reina Evans-Paulson, PhD

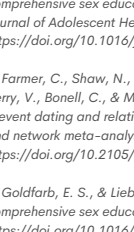
Senior Author and Project Director



Dr. Evans-Paulson conducts research related to adolescent and young adult health with a focus on implementation and evaluation of sexual health interventions, parent and family influences on adolescent sexuality, and sexual communication. Dr. Evans-Paulson has published in esteemed peer-reviewed journals such as *JAMA Pediatrics*, *Journal of Sex Research*, and *Pediatrics*. She received her doctorate in applied social and community psychology from North Carolina State University.

Elizabeth Porter

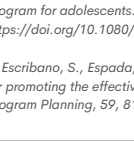
Content Marketing Specialist



Elizabeth Porter studied communication media, rhetoric, and professional writing at North Carolina State University, and she is passionate about creating content that is relevant, engaging, and helpful for others. She has experience in marketing, writing, social media management, web content creation, email design, and editing.

Tracy Scull, PhD

Senior Author and Principal Investigator



Over the past 16 years, Dr. Scull has conducted rigorous research on child, adolescent, and family health, with specific focus on promoting sexual health and preventing substance abuse. Dr. Scull has secured over 10 million dollars in federal funding for her research and has published her work in esteemed peer-reviewed journals such as *Pediatrics*, *Developmental Psychology*, and the *Journal of American College Health*. She holds a doctorate in developmental psychology from Duke University.

[Meet the Full Community College Health Study Team](#)

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