What aspect of sexual health do you think is the most important for school sex education programs to emphasize?

Dorothy Horton, PsyD, answers your questions in her latest Ask Doctor Dee column.

March 7, 2016 By Dorothy Horton

Q: What aspect of sexual health do you think is the most important for school sex education programs to emphasize?

A: Without a doubt, I think the most important aspect of sexual health for school sex ed programs to emphasize to young people is having a strong, positive self-image.

The teen years are a crucial time in children's lives, when their personalities develop and they begin to mature. This is the time when the foundation is laid for the kind of adults teenagers become. The way teens see themselves can influence the lifestyle choices they make and the type of friends they choose, and affect how well they do in school.

When kids develop a positive self-image, this gives them a head start on building successful and fulfilling lives.

To have a positive self-image, it's key we feel good about ourselves and comfortable in our bodies. When young people have a good self-image, they are more apt to make smart decisions about sex and adopt healthy sexual behaviors that support the positive way they see themselves.

School sex ed programs can help build teenagers' confidence, and encourage youngsters to feel good about themselves and strong enough to reject behaviors that can be damaging or dangerous to them mentally and physically.

This is why sex education programs can be an invaluable resource in schools, where they can help strengthen teenagers' appreciation of themselves, and others, as individuals.

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