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## EDUCATOR ANSWER KEY—SEXUALITY STATEMENT SETS

### STATEMENT SET 1

- a) **The waxy substance under the foreskin and between labial folds (called Smegma) is natural.** ✓  
Some people have this waxy substance, some people do not (or do not have very much). Smegma is harmless and has a smell to it. Washing it away is okay and can reduce body odour, but it is not necessary.
- b) **You need special soap to wash your genitals.** ✗  
Water is all you need to clean your genitals. If you do use soap, limit the amount used. When it is loose enough, you can pull the foreskin (if you have one) back from the head of the penis to wash underneath. You can also wash between the labial folds on the vulva.
- c) **You should never douche your vagina.** ✓  
The vagina cleans itself. It is harmful to wash inside the vaginal canal with soap or “feminine hygiene” products. Douching disrupts the micro-organisms that live there.



### STATEMENT SET 2

- a) **Genitals come in all shapes, colours, and sizes.** ✓  
Genitals can look and feel very different on different people. Most people’s genitals are asymmetrical, including the scrotum, inner (labia minora) and outer (labia majora), breasts, nipples, hair patterns, penis, and anus.
- b) **Pubic hair is natural. It is okay to remove it and it is okay if you don’t.** ✓  
There is no medical or hygienic reason to remove pubic hair. It is a personal preference and social trend. If you remove your hair, you can avoid ingrown hairs by lightly exfoliating (scrubbing the surface dead skin off) over the area when you wash yourself.
- c) **If you have a cervix, you need a Pap test before you turn 18.** ✗  
Most provinces do not recommend a Pap test before age 21. Discuss when to have a first Pap test with your health care provider. You can get checked for STIs *before* your first Pap test: they are NOT the same thing.

### STATEMENT SET 3

- a) **Any person of any sex can get a yeast infection.** ✓

Yeast naturally lives on our body. Sometimes, this yeast grows too much and we call it an infection. When it is on the vulva and vagina, it is called a “yeast infection.” When it is around the scrotum and penis, it is sometimes called balanitis. There are over the counter medications that can help bring it back to balance.

- b) **People may have an STBBI and not know it.** ✓

Not all STBBI's show symptoms. For example, many people infected with chlamydia or gonorrhea have no symptoms. The only way to know is to get tested at a clinic or doctor's office. STBBI symptoms, when they are present, include burning on urination, unusual genital fluids or discharge, itching, pain during arousal or sex, blood in the urine, lesions or bumps, fever, abdominal/pelvic pain, and/or chills.



- c) **All bumps in the genitals are STBBIs.** ✗

Bumps on the penis, scrotum, vulva, and surrounding areas could be STBBIs (warts caused by HPV, Herpes, or molluscum contagiosum) but they could also be ingrown hairs, pimples, or skin tags (which are not infections and not sexually transmitted). Bumps just around the rim of the head of the penis may be pearly pink papules, which are common and natural. If you see something unusual, see your health care provider.

### STATEMENT SET 4

- a) **Breastfeeding is possible because of a complex interaction of three hormones that occur after you give birth.** ✓

Breastfeeding (also called chestfeeding) is made possible when you lactate. Lactation (making milk) is triggered by hormones a few days after you give birth. The more a baby nurses, the more milk the mammary glands produce. Because lactation is triggered by hormones, there are also ways of inducing lactation, making it possible for people with breast tissue to breastfeed anytime and not in relationship to childbirth (Mayo Clinic, 2016).

- b) **When you are pregnant, you have to stop having sex.** ✗

You can be sexual any time during pregnancy. You can be sexual with yourself and/or with a partner(s). Sexual desire can change during pregnancy: sometimes increasing, sometimes decreasing, depending on the stage of the pregnancy, the individual, and their body. Some people worry that vaginal sex might harm the fetus—it does not. Some positions may be more difficult the more advanced the pregnancy is. However, if you have bleeding, cramping/contractions or other discomfort, talk to your doctor.

- c) **You have to take the birth control pill daily for it to be effective.** ✓

To prevent pregnancy by taking the oral birth control pill, you have to do it consistently, which means taking a pill everyday around the same time. Missed pills can trigger ovulation, which can lead to pregnancy if sperm is present. The same goes for all other methods of contraception: they have to be used consistently and this varies depending on the type of contraception you are using.

#### STATEMENT SET 5

- a) **Clitoral stimulation is important for pleasure and orgasms.** ✓

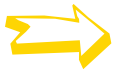
The clitoris is an important site of pleasure; it has twice the amount of nerves as the entire penis. Stimulation inside the vagina alone does not often result in orgasm.

- b) **It is important to be well lubricated before anything goes inside the vagina or the anus.** ✓

Lubrication prevents small abrasions and discomfort and is more pleasurable. The vagina has glands that make lubrication when aroused. The anus does not self-lubricate and lube must be added. More lube is always better than less. If a condom is being used, it is less likely to tear when there is good lubrication.

- c) **Urinary tract infections (UTIs) can only happen to people with vaginas.** ✗

Anyone can get a UTI. Penises have longer urethras and make it less likely to get a UTI but it can still happen. When you have a UTI, you usually have a constant urge to urinate. There may also be a stinging feeling and/or blood in the urine. If you have these symptoms, it is important to see a health care provider right away because symptoms of an STBBI can be similar to a UTI. (For more information, see module 4.2 and chapter 10)



## STATEMENT SET 6

- a) **Once you start menstruating, you should get a menstrual period every month.** ✗

It can take up to 2 years (from first menstrual period) to get a period every month. Generally, everyone's cycle length (first day until the next first day) is different. If after 2 years, you are not regularly getting your period, you should see your doctor. Other things also affect the frequency. When you are pregnant, the period stops soon after. Stress, sleep deprivation, very intense physical activity, sudden weight loss or gain, and hormonal changes all affect the menstrual cycle.

- b) **It is okay to have sex during your period.** ✓

It is okay to have sex during the menstrual cycle; it is a personal choice. Some people have a stronger sex drive during their periods. Other people feel more sexual just before or just after their periods. Everyone's cycle is different, some heavier, some lighter. Some people choose to have sex on towels to make clean-up easier, some people do not mind the blood at all, other people choose to abstain from genital sex during their periods.

- c) **Some people can ejaculate from their vulva.** ✓

Some people with vulvas can release a fluid from the Skene Glands (just inside the urethra). For many who do, it happens when they are very aroused and near or at orgasm. Ejaculation from the vulva usually comes with a feeling of "pushing." It is normal for there to be quite a lot of fluid.



## STATEMENT SET 7

- a) **You get better at using condoms if you practise.** ✓

Feeling comfortable handling or talking about condoms gets easier with practise. When a penis is not used to wearing a condom, you might find it challenging to maintain an erection or to ejaculate. Practise helps. Putting it on standing up or in an upright position (instead of lying on your back) can also help maintain the erection. People without penises can also practise putting a condom on a banana (for more information, see chapters 9 and 10).

- b) **Smoking and alcohol can affect erections.** ✓

Smoking affects erections by limiting the blood flow to the penis. Being under the influence of drugs, drinking and being drunk can decrease the ability to maintain an erection. Each drink that you have reduces your body's ability to get and keep an erection for at least a few hours.

- c) **If you have a penis, orgasm is the same thing as ejaculating.** ✗

Some people have orgasm but do not ejaculate; some people can ejaculate without the sensation of orgasm. Some people can have orgasm from stimulation of other parts of the body and/or from activities engaging muscles of the pelvic floor (such as sit-ups and chin-ups). People who have no sensation below the waist (from a spinal cord injury, for example) can have orgasm with stimulation of other parts of their body and/or with assistance from sex aids and sex toys.

#### STATEMENT SET 8

- a) **By high school, people know what their sexual orientation is.** ✗

Desire, what you find attractive, and how you choose to describe your sexual orientation can all change throughout your life. Homophobia and heterosexism make it easier to acknowledge certain attractions and harder to acknowledge others. It is important that we make our communities as safe as possible to be our diverse selves and at the same time not put pressure on anyone (including ourselves) to “choose” a sexual orientation.

- b) **The human papilloma virus (HPV) doesn't always lead to cervical cancer or penile cancer.** ✓

There are over 100 different types of HPV, only about 40 affect the genitals and anus. Some are “high risk” and some are “low risk.” Low risk types cause warts and are not likely to develop into cancer. High risk types are more likely to cause abnormal cell changes. If the abnormal cell changes are not interrupted, it might lead to the development of cancer. (There are at least 15 high risk HPV types that may cause cancer).

- c) **Safer sex is the responsibility of everyone involved.** ✓

Condoms, birth control pills, and other safer sex equipment is everyone's responsibility, not just the person who uses the condom or takes the pills. Many sexual partners share the responsibility and supply costs.

#### STATEMENT SET 9

- a) **People have different opinions and preferences when it comes to oral sex.** ✓

As with any part of sexuality, everyone has different likes and dislikes. Some people love it and some people do not. It is not a given that oral sex happens and no one is obliged to give or receive oral sex. It is also important to be critical about how oral sex is portrayed in pornography as compared with real life (for more information on pornography, see module 6.6).

- b) **You can ejaculate in your sleep even if you are not having sexual dreams or thoughts.** ✓

“Wet dreams” can happen all on their own, not connected to sexual dreams or thoughts. Some people get them, some people do not. Their frequency tends to be highest during puberty and then it can change (for more information on wet dreams, see module 4.2).

- c) **If your body shows signs of arousal (e.g., erection, wetness, hardened nipples), it means you are consenting to sex.** ✗

Our bodies can be aroused with touch or sexual imagery even when we do not feel any sexual interest or enjoyment. Pleasure, desire, and consent are not connected to biological signs of arousal. You can even be aroused when you are asleep or in a coma. Being asleep, passed-out, and/or in a coma, means that you cannot consent to sex, even if your body is showing signs of arousal. (For more information on consent and sexual violence, see chapter 8).



#### STATEMENT SET 10

- a) **Research shows that learning about sexual health increases sexual activity.** ✗

Studies show that comprehensive sexuality education does not result in earlier or more frequent sexual behaviour. It actually reduces sexual activity in youth.

- b) **It is important to consume pornography wisely.** ✓

It is important to consume pornography wisely. Some people develop a dependence on pornography and this dependence is increasingly being studied. It is also very important to remember that pornography is mostly not real, even though it can seem like it is. Real-life bodies, courtship, communication, consent processes, and pleasure are completely different. (For more information on pornography, see module 6.6).

- c) **Most Canadian have not had penetrative sex by age 16.** ✓

Canadian studies show that less than a third of adolescents have had sexual intercourse before age 17 and many do not have penetrative sex until they are 18 years or older.

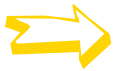
## STATEMENT SET 11

- a) **Sex only counts if you have sexual intercourse with a penis and a vagina. ✗**

One common myth about sex is that sex only “counts” as sex if you have sexual intercourse with a penis and a vagina. In fact, sex and sexual activity comes in many variations and includes everything from digital penetration to use of sex toys and sex aids to oral sex and anal sex. When sex is only thought of as penetration of a penis into a vagina, pleasure is often ignored (or downplayed) while reproduction is emphasized. It also leaves out people who do not participate in penetrative penis-vagina sex (i.e., the LGBTQ+ community) from important sexual health information (e.g., STTBBI risk reduction and safer sex practices).

- b) **If you have oral sex, practising safer oral sex is important in preventing STBBIs. ✓**

Due to the prevalent myth that only penis-vagina penetrative sex counts as sex, there is a common misconception that oral sex does not pose any risk for STBBIs. In fact, if safer sex measures (like using dental dams and condoms) are not taken, oral sex can lead to STBBIs such as Herpes, HPV, Syphilis, Chlamydia, and Gonorrhea.



- c) **If you have anal sex, practising safer anal sex is important in preventing STBBIs. ✓**

Many people, regardless of sexual orientation, like to have anal sex. Despite common misconceptions, anal sex does “count” as sex and poses risks for STBBIs such as HIV, Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Herpes, HPV, Syphilis, Hep-B, and Hep-C. It is important to practise safer sex when engaging in anal sex.

## STATEMENT SET 12

- a) **The concept of “losing your virginity” is a social construct; this is not a scientific concept. ✓**

A lot of emphasis is placed on “losing your virginity” in popular culture. Gender norms of masculinity demand that men lose their virginity to become a “real man,” while gender norms of femininity label women as “sluts” or “prudes” depending on their virginity status. The concept of losing your virginity and the gender norms that come along with it have serious social and emotional impact but the loss of virginity has no scientific meaning or biological basis. Nothing is “lost” when you start to consensually engage in sexual activities.

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### YOU SHOULD KNOW



There is a common myth that “losing your virginity” does have a biological basis for people with vaginas. The myth of “popping your cherry” or “breaking your hymen” has been linked to “losing your virginity” if you have a vagina; however, the hymen is not something that breaks or pops. A hymen is a thin layer of skin that is flexible and elastic. It is constantly being stretched and re-stretched throughout a person’s life. It can be found at the vaginal opening and, contrary to the myth, there are different shapes of hymen and often, the hymen does not fully cover the vaginal opening and instead just sits as an extra layer of skin at the vaginal opening. It may get stretched throughout a person’s life but this stretching does not only happen from frontal sexual intercourse (penetrative penis vagina sex). This stretching can happen from digital penetration and from using a tampon or menstrual cup. (For more information, see the Laci Green video in 4.4 resources).

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#### b) HIV is a “gay disease.” ✗

A belief that is still commonly held is that HIV is a “gay disease” meaning that it only affects gay men. In fact, HIV affects people of all sexual orientations. HIV is not transmitted through sexual orientation, instead it is transmitted through blood, semen, breast milk, rectal fluid, and vaginal fluid. (For more information on HIV incidence and prevalence rates in Canada, as well as safer sex practices that will help prevent HIV, see chapter 10 and the CATIE website in 4.4 resources).



#### c) If you identify as a lesbian woman you can get STBBIs. ✓

A commonly held misconception is that lesbian women are not at risk of STBBIs and therefore do not need to practise safer sex. This misconception exists for three primary reasons: one, it is assumed that the only kind of sex that actually “counts” as sex is sexual intercourse between someone with a penis and someone with vagina; two, it is assumed that the biggest risk (and sometimes the only risk) to having sex is unwanted pregnancies; and three, it is often assumed that lesbian women have only (and will only ever) have sex with people with vaginas; while this maybe true for some people, it does not take into consideration the diversity of sexuality and gender and how human sexuality and gender can change throughout the lifespan.



### STATEMENT SET 13

- a) **Sex is only sex if a person with a penis ejaculates.** ✗

One common myth about sex is that sex only “counts” as sex if a person with a penis ejaculates. This can perpetuate other assumptions that sex needs to involve and be pleasurable for a person with a penis in order for it to count as sex. It also assumes that if a person with a penis does not ejaculate, then it does not count as sex. In fact, sex and sexual activity come in many variations and include activities that do not involve penises or ejaculation. Sex can involve everything from digital penetration and the use of sex toys and sex aids to oral sex and anal sex. When sex is only thought of as a penis ejaculating, pleasure is considered only in relation to ejaculation and reproduction is emphasized. It also perpetuates the myth that there is no risk of STBBIs and/or pregnancy if the penis does not ejaculate. (For more information on safer sex practices, see chapter 10).

- b) **It is common for breast tissue to feel different at different points in your menstrual cycle.** ✓

It is common for breast tissue to feel different at different points of the (menstrual) cycle. Sometimes breast tissue can be sensitive during your cycle and then the sensitivity will disappear at other times. Knowing what is normal for your body helps you to discern when or if there is a symptom or lump that is out of the ordinary.

- c) **People of any gender identity and sex can masturbate (self-pleasure).** ✓

There are some myths that portray masturbation as unhealthy for everyone and other myths that normalize masturbation for people with penises and stigmatize masturbation for people with vulvas. In fact, masturbation is healthy and normal for anyone who chooses to engage in it. (For more information, see module 4.5).

### STATEMENT SET 14

- a) **Everyone can get “jock itch.”** ✓

Tinea cruris, commonly known as “jock itch,” can affect anyone in the crural fold (groin area). It is a skin rash that presents as an itchy, red irritation. It happens in the groin area where there is a lot of sweat that accumulates and skin is more likely to rub together causing the irritation. While it is more often present in people with penises and testicles (because of the higher number of skin folds that rub together easily), people with vulvas can also get tinea cruris.



b) **The only reason why people have sex is reproduction.** ✘

People have sex for a variety of reasons, one of which may be to reproduce. The reasons people have sex vary from person to person and change over a person's lifespan. Most often people have sex because it is pleasurable.

c) **Getting to know your body (whether you have breasts, testicles, a penis, a menstrual cycle etc.) is a good sexual health practice.** ✔

Knowing what is normal for your body helps you to discern when or if there is a symptom or feeling that is out of the ordinary. Getting to know what your breast/chest tissue looks and feels like at different points in your menstrual cycle and getting to know what your testicles and penis look and feel like is good sexual health practice throughout the lifespan.