

What's Up With Guys? Sexual Decision-Making Issues for Teen Males



Ted Sikes
Wise Guys Educator
Family Life Council
Greensboro, NC
(336) 333-6890, x237

www.wiseguysnc.org

Workshop Objectives

- Understand the trends in male health.
- Understand the social forces that influence male health-seeking and risk-taking behaviors.
- Improve communication and outreach to boys regarding health and risk-taking behaviors.

Agenda

- I. The Gender Gap
- II. Social and Cultural Issues
- III. Cognitive Development
- IV. Communication

Bad News For Boys



Bad News for Boys (cont.)

- Male Infants suffer a 25% higher mortality rate than female infants
- They are the majority of those diagnosed with schizophrenia (6 to 1)
- Emotionally disturbed boys outnumber emotionally disturbed girls 4 to 1
- Twice as likely as girls to be the victims of physical abuse



Source: The Wonder of Boys by Michael Gurian

Bad News For Boys (cont.)



- 9 out of 10 drug and alcohol violations are committed by boys
- 4 out of 5 crimes that end up in juvenile court involve boys
- 15 times more likely to be the victims of violent crime
- 1/3 nationwide have carried a gun or other weapon to school.

Source: The Wonder of Boys by Michael Gurian

Bad News For Boys (cont.)

- Gunshot wounds are the second leading cause of death for those age 10-14
- 4 times more likely to commit suicide
- They earn 70% of the D's and F's on report cards
- 2 to 4 times as many are diagnosed with ADHD
- 2/3 of those labeled "learning disabled" are boys

Source: The Wonder of
Boys by Michael Gurian

Bad News For Boys (cont.)

- 3 times more reading difficulties than girls
- Account for 80% of high school dropouts
- 4 times more likely to be referred to a school psychologist
- 59% of all master's degree candidates are women and the percentage of men in graduate programs is shrinking each year
- By 2007, universities are projected to enroll 9.2 million women to 6.9 million men

Source: The Wonder of Boys by Michael Gurian

Male Behaviors and Attitudes

- Males take more risks.
- They know less than females about how to take care of their own health.
- Superman Complex.
- Societal messages doom males.
- Denial and avoidance of health problems.

Male Risk-taking Behavior



Male Risk-taking Behavior



Step 1: Remove shoes.

Step 2: Place metal ladder in water.

Step 3: Use power tools while standing barefoot on metal ladder in water.

Male Risk-taking Behavior



"Gee, guys... that seems like an awful lot of protective gear for such a small chlorine gas leak..."

Male Barriers

- Lack of social supports.
- Less inclined to ask for help.
- Perception of “women’s” health services
- Other males and perception of masculinity
- Health professionals see no hope for males

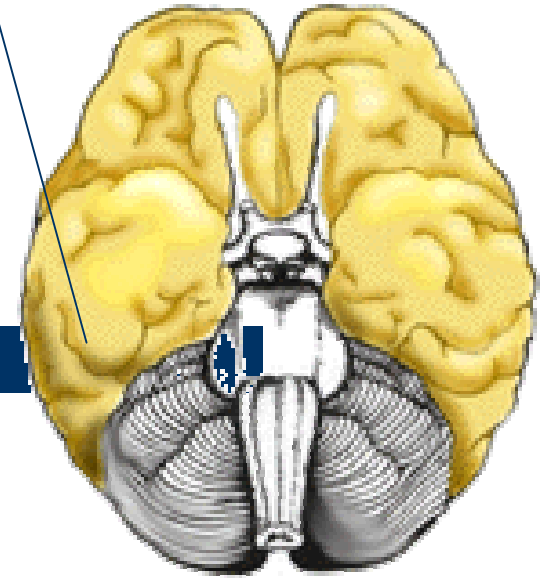
Men's Influence on Women's Health

- Using or supporting the use of contraception.
- Supporting women during pregnancy.
- Preventing the spread of STI's to their partners.
- Preventing all forms of violence against women.

The Brain—Nature v. Nurture

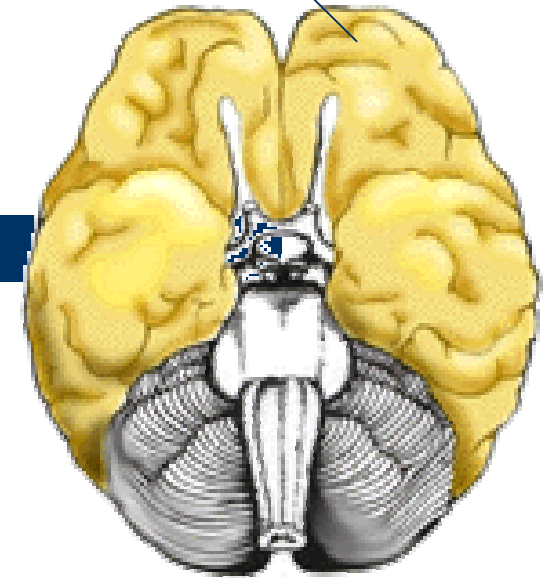
- Two schools of thought
- Environment
- Biologically “hard-wired” into who we are

Right Brain



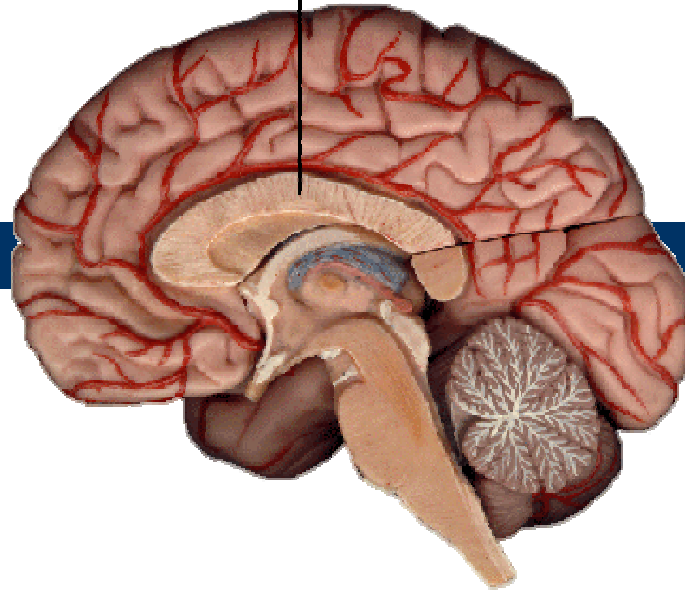
- Generally used more by women
- Adept at language and the art of communicating
- Can generally handle several tasks at once
- Need less time to think before answering
- Females have a smaller brain but use more of it
- Because of an emotional processing center, easier to link emotion to speech
- More oriented toward person-to-person relationships (One on one communication involving complex emotional behavior)

Left Brain



- Generally used more by men
- Adept at spatial concepts and how things work together
- Focus on one specific task at a time
- Need extra time to think before answering
- Have a larger brain but use less of it
- Because of an older limbic system, easier to link emotion to action (reptilian brain)
- More oriented toward spatial relationships (moving a ball through space)

Corpus Callosum



- The Corpus Collusum is a bundle of nerves that connect the two sides of the brain. It helps the two sides communicate.
- Females have a thicker Corpus Collusum than males, allowing better communication between the two sides than in a male's brain.
- The difference in size is much like a narrow path in the woods compared to a two lane highway.


Men and Contraception






- 60% of adolescent males age 15-19 used a condom the first time they had sexual intercourse, whereas only 40% of the same demographic used a condom the last time they had sexual intercourse

- 83% of adolescent males use a condom for the sole purpose of preventing a pregnancy from occurring



- 
- 50% of sexually active men in their early 20's who are not in a union do not regularly use a condom
 - 34% of first-time fathers in their 20's said that the child was born earlier than intended
 - 15% of first-time fathers in their 20's said that no time would be good to have a child

Source: *In Their Own Right: Addressing the sexual and reproductive health needs of American men.* The Alan Guttmacher Institute



Adolescent and young adult males are less likely to initiate communication with their female partners about condoms, birth control, HIV/AIDS, and other STDs.

*(Source: National Survey of Adolescents and Young Adults
– Kaiser Family Foundation, 2003)*

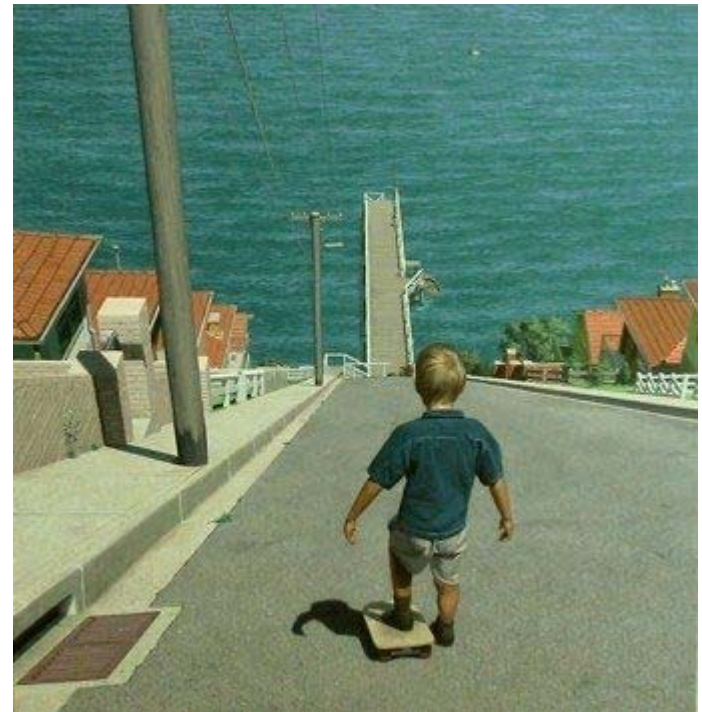


“Of surveyed men diagnosed with an STI in the past 5 years, 14% had not told their partners, compared to just 2% of women. In kind, 51% of adolescent males diagnosed with an STI had not talked about it with their partner, compared to 9% of adolescent females.”

(Source: Males Less Likely to Tell Partner about STD: Study. Health News 2002. Retrieved 15 Jan. 2004.

Major Goals

1. REDEFINE MALE STRENGTH
2. TRANSFORM MALE CULTURE



VIDEO RESOURCES

Wrestling with manhood:
Boys, Bullying & Battering
(2003)

Tough Guise: Violence, Media, and the
Crisis in Masculinity
(1999)

WWW.MEDIAED.ORG