

Truth about Free to Be

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EDITOR: I am a Petaluma High School "human interaction" teacher. The Petaluma school district has had comprehensive sex ed since the early '90s, and I have taught the course, along with another teacher, since the beginning. It has been infuriating to hear all the misinformation with regards to the Free to Be program. The law does say comprehensive sex education is mandated in the schools. But, unfortunately, the law does not say that all schools have to teach it (many schools don't provide any information). Our program is comprehensive, and Free to Be is an important part of that curriculum.

Free to Be takes the abstinence piece and spends time with our students explaining how to make abstinence a reality in this sex-charged environment of high school. They use the same statistics from the Centers for Disease Control as

public health and Planned Parenthood, but they interpret them differently (i.e. Is the condom failure rate worth the risks?)

Through our program we help students address the differing opinions about the effectiveness of condoms and the health risks. FTB's biggest message is an important one, "abstinence allows you the freedom to explore other fulfilling areas of your life and to have a deeper relationship with a partner."

The Free to Be teen panel is our most popular set of speakers. It is teens talking to teens about why they might want to consider abstinence and how to remain abstinent in a high school or college dating relationship.

It is never judgmental or moralistic in nature. But most importantly, they are not our only speakers.

PEGGY WILEY

Teacher, Petaluma High School