

Season 2 Episode 7: Healthy Relationships Part 2  
*[intro music Sun Through Shade]*

ABBY: In this second episode of our healthy relationships series, we wanted to learn more about educational initiatives to support healthy relationship development among young people. We spoke with Liza Henry, a graduate student in social work and public health, to learn more about this important public health topic. We hope you enjoy our interview with this incredible graduate student and experienced youth worker.

57

00:05:24.900 --> 00:05:44.430

Liza Henry: So my name is Liza Henry. I'm currently a dual degree Public Health and Social Work graduate student. And before I returned to graduate school. I worked as the youth engagement director at sending out again. St. Paul, Minnesota, and I

58

00:05:45.480 --> 00:05:50.040

Liza: Was in various positions at the synagogue over many, many years.

59

00:05:51.120 --> 00:06:00.000

Liza: And all of which included working on the comprehensive sex ed program that they have. So the final year I was there.

60

00:06:01.590 --> 00:06:05.040

Liza: My first year of grad school I still ran that program for them.

61

00:06:06.420 --> 00:06:07.080

Liza: Because it's

62

00:06:08.550 --> 00:06:14.520

Liza: It's, the program that takes a lot of knowledge and

63

00:06:16.560 --> 00:06:20.280

Liza: just, experience. So I was training in the new person.

64

00:06:21.540 --> 00:06:24.360

Liza: As they were coming in and I was leaving

67

00:06:31.560 --> 00:06:38.040

Hannah: Yeah. So how did you become interested in youth work and focusing on relationship health?

68

00:06:38.520 --> 00:06:39.600

Liza: Sure, and

69

00:06:40.320 --> 00:06:47.880

Liza: So I grew up dairy in high school I was really involved in our youth group and

70

00:06:49.020 --> 00:07:04.470

Liza: When I started college. I also started working at the synagogue that I ended up working full time at later in life and and my first year I was working with the seventh graders in the seventh graders have, you know, that's the

71

00:07:05.940 --> 00:07:25.890

Liza: That's kind of a critical year in Judaism. It's when they have their bar and bat mitzvahs and one of big part of that year is talking about protecting your body and protecting health and one piece of that is a retreat that focuses on sexuality education and

72

00:07:27.570 --> 00:07:42.840

Liza: So I had already been involved in youth work as a youth and then that was kind of my transition to being involved in youth work as as an adult and as a youth worker. So I continued that work. And that was my first year.

73

00:07:44.220 --> 00:07:56.100

Liza: Working with this program and then I came back to work with this program every single year, even when I was doing other things because I found the program so valuable in thinking about

74

00:07:57.690 --> 00:08:04.980

Liza: Setting teens up to make thoughtful decisions about relationships about their health.

75

00:08:06.510 --> 00:08:25.140

Liza: And not just romantic relationships. But also, you know, the bigger picture of relationships and youth work is all about relationship and building relationships. And so I found that to be such a critical piece of it.

76

00:08:26.580 --> 00:08:33.330

Liza: Having built relationships with the team that sets you up to have these deeper conversations have awkward conversations

77

00:08:34.440 --> 00:08:42.360

Liza: You know, talk about things that are hard for a lot of people to talk about. So relationship is kind of key in all of them.

78

00:08:45.390 --> 00:09:00.330

Abby: Fantastic. Yeah. So then why from your perspective are healthy relationships, particularly among youth, something that we should be particularly concerned about in public health and what are the potential consequences of ignoring this issue?

80

00:09:02.760 --> 00:09:09.330

Liza: Any relationships are really at the center of being human and and youth are

81

00:09:09.630 --> 00:09:19.080

Liza: At a really interesting, teens in particular are at a really interesting point in life where they're not quite kids anymore, but they're also not quite adults and they're navigating

82

00:09:19.470 --> 00:09:28.320

Liza: What relationships look like, whether that be parent-child relationships or friendships or romantic relationships. All of these are

83

00:09:28.830 --> 00:09:40.800

Liza: changing so quickly and teenagers are constantly being friends with one person and then friends with a different person. And they're navigating what it looks like to have mature relationships.

84

00:09:41.790 --> 00:09:51.930

Liza: And that has a huge impact on their mental health, which then also can have a huge impact on their physical health, and not in just thinking about

85

00:09:52.500 --> 00:10:01.440

Liza: Thinking about friendships to start with the way that teens are interacting with their friends can have such a wide impact on

86

00:10:01.920 --> 00:10:14.460

Liza: Their whole life. And if they feel supported by their friends, if they feel bullied by friends or other people at school if they are spending all their time with a romantic

87

00:10:14.940 --> 00:10:32.280

Liza: Partner and not spending any time with other friends, all of these things can shift their, their wellness and, and obviously there's also really unhealthy relationships which can have a huge impact on their mental health.

88

00:10:33.540 --> 00:10:54.480

Liza: And abusive relationships can have an impact on mental health, physical health, all of the above. So if we care about mental health. If we care about youth learning how to have mature adult relationships and healthy relationships going forward. If we care about

89

00:10:56.040 --> 00:11:03.810

Liza: rates of suicide amongst our teens, which are very, very high right now and then, of course, you know, then you jump into all of the

90

00:11:04.920 --> 00:11:07.020

Liza: Like STDs and

91

00:11:08.250 --> 00:11:14.460

Liza: Then sexual assault and all of these things they're, they all stem from if teens are able to

92

00:11:16.680 --> 00:11:33.690

Liza: recognize healthy relationships. Obviously, some things are outside of their control and abuse can be outside of their control. But if we can equip them with the skills to understand what a healthy relationship looks like if they're in

93

00:11:34.830 --> 00:11:39.870

Liza: A really bad situation, then they at least know where they can go to to get support.

94

00:11:40.470 --> 00:11:53.910

Liza: So we want them to have healthy relationships so that they can just generally be healthy, but also so that they have support in case they're in a situation whether they're, when they're a youth or as an adult that they have the support they need

95

00:11:56.880 --> 00:12:03.060

Hannah: That's a great segue actually into our next question, which is, how would you describe a healthy relationship?

96

00:12:04.410 --> 00:12:19.140

Liza: It can look a lot of different ways. The program that I ran, what we focused on and we were you know when we talked about healthy relationships in within the context of the the sex ed program. We were talking about

97

00:12:20.700 --> 00:12:27.480

Liza: Romantic relationships. But I think a lot of it applies to non romantic relationships as well. So we would talk about

98

00:12:27.990 --> 00:12:38.910

Liza: a relationship where you're going to be making sexual choices, whether it's to kiss or whether it's to have intercourse, whether, you know, at some point in life, you're deciding if you want to

99

00:12:39.330 --> 00:12:43.590

Liza: potentially have a child. All of these decisions relate to your sexual health.

100

00:12:44.430 --> 00:12:53.820

Liza: If you're going to be in a relationship like that you should have three things. That's the relationship should be holy, meaning it's different than other relationships. Not that it's necessarily religious just that it's

101

00:12:54.240 --> 00:13:04.380

Liza: unique and sacred and different from others. That it's committed at whatever level that means for that behavior at that age. And it's mature.

102

00:13:04.860 --> 00:13:14.790

Liza: So again, whatever that means for that level in that age and we framed that in that way because it really helps the teens. First of all, listen. So we're not saying

103

00:13:15.180 --> 00:13:20.670

Liza: You can never be in a relationship where you can't make choices, unless you're married or whatever it is.

104

00:13:21.150 --> 00:13:32.880

Liza: It helps them think about what are the characteristics of healthy relationships. What are the things I need to be able to trust this other person when I'm making this decision.

105

00:13:33.630 --> 00:13:41.190

Liza: So those three things that you think are really good basis for thinking about even friendships, you know, if I'm in, if I have a friend,

106

00:13:41.490 --> 00:13:51.570

Liza: and I want to be able to tell them something that's really hard. You know, is it a friendship that's unique and special between the two of us, is it

107

00:13:52.350 --> 00:14:01.350

Liza: one where I feel like it's mature enough to handle whatever I'm going to tell them, and is it, is this friend committed to me in a way that they care about

108

00:14:01.830 --> 00:14:13.560

Liza: my health and well being. So, I think that those three things are really great for guiding it because healthy relationships can look very different amongst different people.

109

00:14:14.490 --> 00:14:30.060

Liza: You know, for some people a healthy relationship involves talking a lot, and for some people it involves doing a lot of sitting next to each other and reading a book. And both of those are okay as long as you are,

110

00:14:31.140 --> 00:14:46.080

Liza: you're in a situation where you're communicating your needs, that you're seeing each other as whole individuals, that you're meeting kind of those three, you see those three pieces within that relationship.

112

00:14:53.430 --> 00:15:05.610

Abby: Our next question is, can you share a specific example about how education about healthy relationships, improve the health and well being of young people in the communities that you serve or have served?

114

00:15:10.230 --> 00:15:13.350

Liza: In the program that I run, well used to run,

115

00:15:14.580 --> 00:15:20.610

Liza: one of the things I love most about it was that we had an 11th and 12th graders.

116

00:15:21.180 --> 00:15:29.280

Liza: Which they had their own program as well. But for the seventh grade program, we had 11th and 12th graders that were mentors for our seventh graders.

117

00:15:30.060 --> 00:15:42.240

Liza: So we they had been through the program themselves and then they came back when they were older and they did a lot of the teaching and they were trained by myself by other educators.

118

00:15:43.620 --> 00:15:52.380

Liza: And they had, it was halfway through the school year, so they already had built relationships with the younger youth and, and

119

00:15:52.920 --> 00:16:04.710

Liza: it was really, it's really powerful to see those older youth come back and share their knowledge, their experiences and it's you know it's specifically, you know, they're not sharing their,

120

00:16:05.310 --> 00:16:22.830

Liza: you know, their relationship experiences, but they're sharing their wisdom and they're teaching these youth. And then you have teens say, coming to, to myself or to other educators who we've had involved when they're older. And they can come to us knowing

121

00:16:24.030 --> 00:16:39.060

Liza: we're trusted adults who understand who are here to listen. So we have youth who come back and say, 'Hey, I'm having this problem. Can we talk through it? And, my boyfriend this, or this person that.'

122

00:16:39.510 --> 00:16:49.680

Liza: And they're able to process with us and they have the language to talk about these things, and some of them even come back and report, 'Hey, I

123

00:16:50.100 --> 00:17:02.610

Liza: was able to talk to my significant other about this thing because I knew the words to say. And they had a really hard time with it because they didn't know what to say or we worked through it together.'

124

00:17:03.090 --> 00:17:12.630

Liza: And so you, they both have somebody, they have someone to come to, really a network of adults because sometimes they come back to the

125

00:17:14.010 --> 00:17:29.970

Liza: the adult staff that are involved. Sometimes they continue to talk to their mentors who, you know, 11th and 12th graders are quickly becoming adults and going into college and all of that. So sometimes our younger youth are coming back to those mentors, year after year.

126

00:17:31.500 --> 00:17:47.010



Liza: And they just have this language. And the unfortunate side for other teens, we often hear that, our teens are coming back and saying, 'Oh, my goodness. My school sex ed was so bad. I feel like I'm educating everybody around me. They don't know what they're talking about.'

127

00:17:48.330 --> 00:17:55.410

Liza: Which to me says we're doing a good job, but also that we have a lot of work to do beyond our little program.

128

00:17:57.690 --> 00:18:07.350

Abby: Yeah, that's a really, really great segue into our next question which is what, what do you see as some of the biggest barriers to healthy relationship education or sexuality education?

129

00:18:09.000 --> 00:18:22.350

Liza: I think that it's so ingrained in our society that these ideas are about morals and values, which some of them are, a lot of it is about values.

130

00:18:24.030 --> 00:18:26.370

Liza: And we so often see it

132

00:18:29.850 --> 00:18:51.120

Liza: not represented properly, you know it's, it's seen as a solely religious thing it's seen as a, your family makes all these decisions about what is and is not okay. And it's seen as something that's only about sex. And this work is about way more than sex.

133

00:18:52.230 --> 00:19:01.440

Liza: The curriculum that a lot of the work I did was based off of is, is called our whole lives. It's from the Unitarian Universalist Church and the

134

00:19:02.400 --> 00:19:11.580

Liza: The Church of the UCC, you know, Universal Church of Christ. So they're the ones that sponsor it but they created a secular curriculum and then they have their own

135

00:19:12.600 --> 00:19:14.640

Liza: kind of supplements for their own churches.

136

00:19:15.300 --> 00:19:24.810

Liza: But the curriculum itself is called our whole lives because it literally is a whole lifelong curriculum, so you can get the curriculum for preschoolers and kindergarteners and you can,

137

00:19:25.140 --> 00:19:36.510

Liza: they're actually working on one for like older adults right now as well. And that's really what I'm, that's so true is that this, this idea is lifelong.

138

00:19:36.900 --> 00:19:46.470

Liza: So we need to talk to our youngest youth, our little ones, about, you know, my body belongs to me.

139

00:19:46.800 --> 00:19:54.390

Liza: And I can hug grandma, if I want to. Or maybe I will just want to give grandma a high five. Or maybe I'm feeling really shy today. And all of those are okay.

140

00:19:54.750 --> 00:20:04.200

Liza: And that's setting kids up and adults up for having healthy relationships and understanding boundaries and consent. And those are, those are just basic things.

141

00:20:04.620 --> 00:20:16.950

Liza: It's not about religion. It's not about any particular way of living. It's just simply understanding that we all have autonomy and in relationships we need to respect that autonomy.

144

00:20:22.590 --> 00:20:28.530

Liza: So, I think we have a lot of work to do in terms of helping people understand that the, what

145

00:20:29.010 --> 00:20:48.510

Liza: we're trying to teach our young people is how to navigate relationships and how to be thoughtful, be respectful, and see each other as holy beings and not just somebody for their body or somebody for this one piece of who they are. But really, then

146

00:20:50.310 --> 00:20:58.770

Liza: you know, within our program, we talked about this idea of B'tselem Elohim, which is Hebrew for made in the image of God.

147

00:20:59.790 --> 00:21:05.100

Liza: And we talked about it often from a very secular viewpoint, because our teens are all over the place in their

148

00:21:05.520 --> 00:21:22.320

Liza: understanding of how they feel about a higher power and such. And the idea is just, if I am made in this image and you're made in this image, then we both need to respect that we are whole individual human beings. And sometimes I explain it to the teens like

149

00:21:23.580 --> 00:21:37.500

Liza: 99.9% of us is the same, like, genetically. So if I'm the same genetically and you're the same genetically, then we need a, similar to the idea of made in the image of God,

150

00:21:38.100 --> 00:21:57.000

Liza: we each deserve respect. We each deserve dignity. We each deserve empathy. And we deserve to feel as a whole being. And that's what we need to think about and that's what we need to be able to talk about, especially the time like right now where we're seeing a lot of

151

00:21:58.230 --> 00:22:00.570

Liza: people not seeing each other as whole beings.

152

00:22:04.170 --> 00:22:20.280

Hannah: So, how can people who are working to develop healthy relationship education draw support from other people working on other areas of public health?

153

00:22:23.310 --> 00:22:33.840

Liza: I think that all of our work is and should be interdisciplinary and I think that one of the heart, the challenges is, we

154

00:22:34.950 --> 00:22:55.320

Liza: you know, healthy relationship education tends to live in the world of education and public health doesn't always get into the world of education in a really connecting way. And so I think that we as public health professionals could do a lot better job of connecting with our educators.

155

00:22:56.670 --> 00:23:02.100

Liza: Who, I mean our schools are providing all kinds of public health services.

156

00:23:03.270 --> 00:23:07.140

Liza: And we're often connecting with the nurses, were often connecting with the,

157

00:23:08.430 --> 00:23:16.470

Liza: the food service staff, and of course like the administration, but we're not actually often connecting with the educators themselves.

158

00:23:17.610 --> 00:23:33.630

Liza: And maybe also some schools use their social workers to, to teach this kind of curriculum. So I think what would be really beneficial is if we, as the public health side, reached out and said, 'how can we support what you're doing?'

159

00:23:35.160 --> 00:23:49.470

Liza: Because yes, there are definitely public health folks who are doing this kind of work. But so much of it lies within the classroom in a school. So thinking about, can we from our, you know,

160

00:23:50.490 --> 00:23:56.220

Liza: our sexual assault prevention departments from our STD

161

00:23:57.810 --> 00:24:03.000

Liza: monitoring department, you know, thinking about

162

00:24:03.810 --> 00:24:13.050

Liza: all of these different departments that we have that touch on these issues. How are we reaching out to our educators, how are we giving them support and partnering with them.

163

00:24:13.500 --> 00:24:23.340

Liza: And partnering with them for us also means that we then have a connection to these youth to talk about relationships and also all of these other things.

164

00:24:24.120 --> 00:24:32.610

Liza: Connecting them with all of these other services that we offer that we know that our partners in the Department of Human Services offer

165

00:24:33.870 --> 00:24:41.190

Liza: and really if we can do a better job of being a more connected coordinated system. I think that would be really beneficial and,

166

00:24:42.000 --> 00:24:53.040

Liza: as we all know, our teachers need as much support and cheerleading as possible because they're doing a lot of hard work and, and honestly not all teachers who are teaching sex ed

167

00:24:53.490 --> 00:25:02.370

Liza: are trained to teach sex ed. They're often just thrown in there, or in my experience, a lot of them are gym teachers. So great, they know a lot about

168

00:25:03.420 --> 00:25:23.700

Liza: how the, you know, muscles work, but they don't necessarily know how to teach about relationships. So they might teach the basics of how our bodies work. But there's a lot a lot more there to teach. So we can give them that support and help them with the language with, you know,

169

00:25:25.350 --> 00:25:33.840

Liza: they're not necessarily trained in reproductive health. They're trained in kinesiology in that kind of stuff. And that's

170

00:25:35.190 --> 00:25:46.710

Liza: important and also not the basis to be teaching comprehensive sex education healthy relationships. Yeah. All of these healthy decision making pieces.

171

00:25:51.780 --> 00:26:03.420

Abby: I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about maybe the role of, like, policy and funding in those partnerships and, and interdisciplinary work?

172

00:26:03.510 --> 00:26:25.380

Liza: I think policy is one of our biggest uphill battles when it comes to sex ed, and because there is a large contingent of people who don't want to see sex ed in our schools and it's often the people who are not seeing the whole scope of what sex ed is and what it means.

173

00:26:26.700 --> 00:26:41.220

Liza: And often a lot of those people never had high quality sex ed themselves. So they're working on a basis of, of possible misunderstanding of what we're talking about.

174

00:26:42.630 --> 00:26:45.240

Liza: So I think there's a lot of space as

175

00:26:46.350 --> 00:26:56.430

Liza: public health professionals, as comprehensive sex educators, as relationships educators to work with those communities to help them understand

176

00:26:56.790 --> 00:27:10.470

Liza: what our goals are. Our goals are not simply to teach your kid how to wear a condom. Our goals are to help them make decisions that can affect their mind, their body, you know, their whole being. And

177

00:27:12.420 --> 00:27:26.430

Liza: if we can meet them there, then I think we can create policies that allow for more of this education to happen will continue to be stuck in this battle with those who oppose sex ed and

178

00:27:27.210 --> 00:27:38.400

Liza: everybody else. Which, everybody else has, you know, a wide variety of ideas of what sex ed is and how it should be taught and all that. And that's where the conversation should be, not in the

179

00:27:38.790 --> 00:27:55.080

Liza: 'we should have it or not,' because we should have it, it's really valuable. And if we can help people understand what it really is, then I think, then we can create policy that shores up funding for this kind of work.

180

00:27:56.640 --> 00:28:11.040

Liza: And in talking about partnering with educators, I think that there could be space to use some of the funding that we have for public health programs and directed toward the schools. And

181

00:28:12.300 --> 00:28:31.260

Liza: I don't know all of the inner workings of how public health funding and schools can partner, but I think that there's, that's a great opportunity to find funds for that education to happen to find funds to train the people who are providing this education in and to support that work.

182

00:28:32.850 --> 00:28:46.620

Liza: But I think that at the end of the day, learning to all get on the same page about what we're talking about, so that we can get rid of the policies that are so that it creates such a big barrier to actually making this happen.

183

00:28:50.340 --> 00:28:53.700

Hannah: Um, and kind of

184

00:28:54.750 --> 00:29:04.170

Hannah: piggybacking off of that, what are you seeing as major trends in health healthy relationship education and maybe where,

185

00:29:04.950 --> 00:29:13.800

Hannah: where some of these partnerships are being formed, and then what are you seeing maybe in the people that you're working with. Like the teens, what are you seeing with,

186

00:29:14.580 --> 00:29:24.000

Hannah: like, changes and relationships in recent years, or just in general what healthy relationship or discussion looks like and youth these days?

187

00:29:25.320 --> 00:29:32.460

Liza: I think one of the really great things we're seeing is the youth are way more educated about consent.

188

00:29:32.910 --> 00:29:41.610

Liza: And that they're coming into our programs with some idea of what that means. Already, which is really awesome and

189

00:29:42.300 --> 00:30:00.810

Liza: I've also seen it over the course of my time in the working with the program, which was about 11 years that I was actively working with the program and the, the understanding of LGBTQ issues is, it's like night and day. So our youth are coming in

190

00:30:02.250 --> 00:30:16.140

Liza: with some familiarity of that, with a lot of normalization of it, and with curiosity about 'how do I understand myself, how do I understand my gender. How do I understand my own sexual orientation.' So,

191

00:30:16.620 --> 00:30:27.540

Liza: those pieces I think make such a big difference in being able to move the conversation forward and get digging deeper than where we could,

192

00:30:28.200 --> 00:30:49.920

Liza: you know, in 2009 where you had to start more with the basics. So now we can review the basics and start digging deeper, which is really, really awesome. And I think what I'm also seeing is there are more programs out there, not necessarily connected with schools, but I'm seeing

193

00:30:51.870 --> 00:31:06.720

Liza: health care centers that have programs for teens to learn how to become like peer educators, we're seeing a lot of opportunities to become peer educators, which I think is really awesome because I think that

194

00:31:07.920 --> 00:31:16.350

Liza: especially when talking about things like sex and relationships, there's such a value in hearing it from somebody your own age or somebody just a little bit older than you.

195



00:31:16.800 --> 00:31:27.930

Liza: And, and over the years, when I was running the program, I stepped back further and further and further, letting other people like take the mic, per se.

196

00:31:28.290 --> 00:31:36.990

Liza: Because they don't have, a bunch of seventh graders don't need to hear me talk all day long about sex, and it's so valuable for them to hear other perspectives.

197

00:31:37.530 --> 00:31:49.710

Liza: And when you have a bunch of 11th and 12th graders or young adults staff who are in college who are there and who are engaged and excited to talk about this and have been trained

198

00:31:50.280 --> 00:32:00.120

Liza: they, all of those perspectives are so valuable in all of the ways that each individual person can talk about this and frame it and share

199

00:32:00.630 --> 00:32:09.180

Liza: aspects of their own lived experiences. Not necessarily, like, sharing the gritty details of their own sex lives, but sharing it, you know.

200

00:32:10.170 --> 00:32:24.060

Liza: we had a teen who identified as lesbian and she shared some of her experience of discovering what that means for her, or we had another team who shared that,

201

00:32:24.810 --> 00:32:31.350

Liza: with the seventh graders, took that as the opportunity to share that they were using they/them pronouns.

202

00:32:31.800 --> 00:32:38.730

Liza: And so they were seeing not only this is what we're learning about, this is what we're experiencing this is real life and

203

00:32:39.630 --> 00:32:48.990

Liza: so there are a lot of really awesome things happening. As much as social media has areas of detriment to our youth,

204

00:32:49.410 --> 00:33:02.040

Liza: there's also areas where they're seeing and learning things that they never had access to and they're seeing people out there being themselves and they're seeing examples of

205

00:33:02.550 --> 00:33:15.450

Liza: people talking about healthy relationships in a way that we've never had before. And so kind of the positive side of social media can be this access

206

00:33:16.050 --> 00:33:28.920

Liza: to communities, to ideas that our teens never saw before, and especially for those teens who maybe aren't feeling like they have peer support in their everyday life, they might find that peer support and learn

207

00:33:29.430 --> 00:33:34.560

Liza: and build relationships with people who do understand them.

208

00:33:35.370 --> 00:33:44.640

Liza: Especially thinking about our kids who are in living maybe in more conservative areas, but are also feeling like they want to explore their gender and sexuality.

209

00:33:45.270 --> 00:33:53.100

Liza: It's a great way for them to, to connect on there. There are good high quality resources out there. There are also some really bad ones.

210

00:33:54.330 --> 00:33:56.400

Liza: But there are some, and I think that

211

00:33:57.420 --> 00:34:00.870

Liza: as the professionals in the field, we can,

212

00:34:01.920 --> 00:34:14.160

Liza: we can help guide those in putting out our own content that is valuable and well researched. Being a resource for teens from various areas.

213

00:34:14.910 --> 00:34:29.670

Liza: I mean, we're very much today, living in an almost entirely internet world for a lot of us and having those resources online can be really valuable, especially as teens are like completely cut off from any kind of community.

214

00:34:33.060 --> 00:34:46.110

Abby: Our last question for you is, how can people become more involved in or support work in advancing healthy relationship education in their own communities?

215

00:34:48.150 --> 00:34:53.010

Liza: I think it depends on your community. So I think in some communities that are not

216

00:34:53.880 --> 00:35:07.950

Liza: seeing any kind of comprehensive sex ed and getting involved in the schools and getting involved in pushing for curriculum in the school that talks about healthy relationships.

217

00:35:08.880 --> 00:35:20.550

Liza: And if you need to frame it as simply healthy relationships and not even touch on sex ed that's fine because sex is just one aspect of all of this.

218

00:35:21.750 --> 00:35:34.590

Liza: But I think that, and even in less conservative areas, like I said, we're also not seeing the best comprehensive sex at in our more urban urban environments, either. So

219

00:35:35.460 --> 00:35:45.300

Liza: in the more progressive environments. Some schools are great, but by and large, what they're providing if they're providing something, it's not necessarily the best

220

00:35:46.140 --> 00:35:53.910

Liza: So in general, getting involved with your schools, if you have kids in in a school, then you have, you know, an in already

221

00:35:54.270 --> 00:36:04.290

Liza: in talking to other parents, in talking to teachers and administration about what this could look like and starting, not just in middle school.

222

00:36:04.590 --> 00:36:13.110

Liza: We know that kids, first of all, we know that kids are starting to develop and go through puberty earlier. We know that kids have relationships

223

00:36:13.410 --> 00:36:18.810

Liza: of all kinds starting as babies. You know, people live in relationships so

224

00:36:19.170 --> 00:36:31.830

Liza: thinking about what it is to teach healthy relationships at a young age, what it means for that kindergarten classroom to talk about if they want to, like, if you want to give your friend a hug or a high five.

225

00:36:32.280 --> 00:36:42.750

Liza: And having those conversations from a young age and helping the school system recognize they can do that work without necessarily being controversial.

226

00:36:44.760 --> 00:36:52.980

Liza: And then in a lot of areas you can get involved with organizations, particularly like organizations that are serving youth and

227

00:36:53.490 --> 00:37:09.180

Liza: volunteer. So, in St. Paul there's the family tree clinic and they have volunteer sex educators that meet with patients to provide education. So I had a teen at one point who,

228

00:37:10.590 --> 00:37:21.480

Liza: who needed to go there to get a pregnancy test. And after the pregnancy test they had this teen sit down with a volunteer sex educator and talk about options for birth control.

229

00:37:21.990 --> 00:37:42.630

Liza: And help this teen understand what was available to her and, and what everything kind of looked like and felt like. And this teen asked me to come along with them. So I went along with them. And it was really lovely.

230

00:37:44.400 --> 00:37:57.540

Liza: And this was a guy who was probably in his late 70s and likely retired and chose to spend his time doing this. So definitely opportunities for engaging in

231

00:37:58.020 --> 00:38:12.000

Liza: doing this work, being trained in how to do some of this work and volunteering to to serve, family tree clinic serves more than teens, but youth are a large portion of their, their clients and

232

00:38:13.260 --> 00:38:18.960

Liza: so I think that those are two of the biggest ways to be involved. And of course, if you're looking at policy,

233

00:38:19.770 --> 00:38:32.640

Liza: keeping in touch with your representatives and your city council, your state representatives, those that can all make a huge difference in helping our state's pass and our cities pass

234

00:38:34.140 --> 00:38:36.300

Liza: bills that fund this kind of work.

235

00:38:37.770 --> 00:38:49.620

Liza: And I'll also say that if you are involved in a religious community or faith community there's some, some have really, really awesome programs and

236

00:38:49.920 --> 00:39:04.110

Liza: I know that a lot of you you churches to have comprehensive sex ed and but I think that there's a big opportunity within faith communities within churches and mosques and synagogues and and all of that to.

237

00:39:04.680 --> 00:39:17.970

Liza: to think about relationships because that's what a lot of religion is based off of as well and that and I religious spaces can often have a huge impact on how are you to think about,

238

00:39:19.290 --> 00:39:21.210

Liza: about relationships and

239

00:39:22.410 --> 00:39:29.730

Liza: what they internalize about how to act in a relationship. So I think there's definitely opportunity there

240

00:39:31.050 --> 00:39:35.490

Liza: to embed some of that in whatever the religious education there is.

*[outro music Night Air]*

HANNAH: Before we close this episode, let's return to our quiz. The answers were:

Sherlock and \_\_\_\_, Watson, Sherlock Holmes

Buzz and \_\_\_\_, Woody, Toy Story

Tina Fey and \_\_\_\_, Amy Poeler

Key and \_\_\_\_, Peele

Cleopatra and \_\_\_\_, Mark Antony

[quiz music]

ABBY: Thank you so much for listening to this episode of Perspectives. We would love to hear your thoughts and reactions to this episode. Please connect with us on Twitter or Facebook with the tag @pubhealthreview.

*[outro music Night Air]*