

The Well Now

Relationships Edition

How relationships affect health

By Jensen Ling



Some of you might wonder why the *Well Now*, a newsletter put out by the Student Health Center, has devoted its entire Spring issue to the topic of relationships. As ordinary as the word "relationship" may seem, most of us would probably agree that it occupies and consumes a lot of our time, energy and emotion. When we think of the word, many of us automatically think about whether or not we have a significant other in our lives. There are also relationships with friends, siblings, faculty and employers that influence our well-being.

We believe that anything that consumes so much personal energy and sometimes causes large amounts of stress is worth considering as a vital health factor. One of the most obvious ways relationships can affect your health is through stress. Relationships can change how you feel about yourself, what you eat, how you sleep. A sexual relationship with the wrong person can leave you with an incurable disease or even kill you.

The Peer Health Advisors in the Health Education Program want to share information that we've learned. There are so many different kinds of complex situations out there, and many of us have experienced them at one time or another. In this issue of the *Well Now*, there are several articles which directly address some of the health issues centered around relationships.

The Health Education Program has many resources available on relationships and other health-related topics. Peer Health Advisors provide individual counseling and group presentations on a number of topics. You can also borrow a variety of health-related books, videos, and pamphlets at the Health Education Office. If you are interested in talking with a Peer Health Advisor individually or in requesting a group presentation on a particular topic, our number is 346-4456.

Student Health Center offers HIV testing

By Arnie Steele



You had too much to drink and ended up sleeping with a person you didn't know that well. When you first met the person they seemed very nice. As you continued to drink, they became more attractive. After awhile, you began to kiss and before you knew it you ended up in bed together. You didn't have a condom and your partner didn't say anything about using one.

So you had unprotected sex? What's the big deal? It was only one time! You were drunk and your partner didn't look like the type of person who would have some kind of sexually transmitted disease.

If you've ever had unprotected sex, you run the risk of being infected with HIV. HIV is the virus which causes AIDS. The only way a person can find out if they are infected with the virus is to be tested for it.

HIV testing is offered on campus at the Student Health Center. If you want to get tested, you need to wait 3 to 6 months after your possible exposure to HIV. This is the amount of time it may take your body to produce the antibodies in the blood, which is what the test detects.

Once you've decided to get tested, you need to make an appointment at the Student Health Center. This appointment consists of a 30 minute session with a HIV counselor. The counselor will discuss your rights of privacy and will clearly explain your risk of contracting the HIV infection.

You may choose to take the test confidentially, which means the test will be part of your medical record. If you prefer more privacy you can take it anonymously, which means it doesn't become part of your medical record. The test costs \$12.00 and must be paid up front for an anonymous test. For a confidential test you can pay through student billing.

It takes about two weeks to get the results. To receive the results, you must meet with the HIV counselor a second time. The counselor will explain the test results and discuss any other important issues concerning HIV and AIDS.

If you are a person who has possibly been



Photo by Joe Livingston

Ginger Sands is one of two HIV/AIDS counselors at the Student Health Center.

exposed to HIV, it's time to get tested. Getting tested is easy, but it takes a degree of courage to go through with it. There are many reasons you should get tested. The best one would be to find out you aren't infected with HIV.

If you are infected with HIV, it's better that you know so you don't infect other people. There's also treatment for HIV patients that can improve their quality of health and possibly delay the onset of AIDS.

Many people make mistakes that can expose them to HIV. Trying to forget the incident or ignoring it altogether won't make it go away. It's time to take responsibility for your actions. Get tested and find out the truth. For more information on the testing or HIV and AIDS, call Ila Ausland at 346-2794 or Ginger Sands at 346-2764.

Work out together!

By Shawna Durand



You've been seeing each other for several months now. You've done the dinner thing, you've watched a dozen movies, you've even climbed the Butte together at 6 am to watch the sunrise. Short of taking a Caribbean cruise, what is left to do together? Since most college students don't have the money to attend a movie at the Bijou much less a sunny beach where the native language is not English, one must look elsewhere to keep the relationship fresh, exciting, and healthy.

There are several "frontiers" out there that can be explored by couples searching for something a little more stimulating than another late night with David Letterman. One option is exercising together. This can be a wonderful experience if several areas are considered before hitting the slopes or strapping on roller blades. It is necessary that the potential exercising couple (you and your other half) sit down and set some common

goals and learn more about each other.

When couples first begin dating they usually spend a large amount of time with each other. Things like exercising and sleeping usually get neglected. Once the relationship starts to get comfortable, schedules get reevaluated (falling asleep in calculus from lack of sleep is not conducive to a positive learning experience), and exercise once again becomes important. Working out can be a great way to spend time together.

Suppose you are now sitting face to face discussing the mountain bike excursion you plan to take on Saturday. Here are some things you need to discuss. What is each person's fitness level? Is one partner very active and the other quite sedentary? Can each partner keep up with the other? Are you going to need to adjust your pace? It is very important that you are aware of the capabilities of the other person before embarking on an exercising adventure.

Next, it is vital to discuss the activity and experience level of each participant. It is hard to play "one on one" with some-

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