

Let's talk about sex, navigating the conversation

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IVN Contributing Writer

Have you ever wondered when or how to discuss your children's questions about sex and sexuality? Parent involvement in conversations about sexuality seem to be disappearing in an age where 24/7 access to television and social media is the norm.

The problem is that mass media often portrays sexual relationships as a casual, and sometimes not consensual, activity that everyone engages in as a rite of passage at earlier and earlier ages.

These depictions of sexuality often paint an incomplete and confusing picture for both children and teens. Empowered parents have an opportunity shape these ideas to align more closely with their family values and provide their children with a strong knowledge base that promotes healthy relationships.

The I.V. Safe House Alliance is offering a free class for parents to start building the skills necessary to be successful in having consistent,

healthy, lifelong conversations about sex and sexuality with their children.

This discussion group has been created to address age appropriate topics for parents or professionals who work with pre-kindergarten through elementary school aged children.

The "Engaging Parents" classes will take place on Fridays from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Alliance, located next to the DMV in Cave Junction.

The sessions will include free dinner, childcare and a free guidebook in English or Spanish for those who participate in all 4 sessions. Those who attend all sessions will also gain the most benefit from the training.

Alliance volunteer coordinator Marcy Sowa stated, "This is a great opportunity to learn how to feel comfortable talking to your children about sex and sexuality. Learning to be comfortable while having these discussions with your children allows you to be the first to help shape how they feel about these topics. It also helps you establish the critical lines of communication with your children which,

with a little work, can stay open as they develop and face difficult circumstances and peer pressures."

The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health revealed young people who reported feeling a lack of parental communication were more likely to report lower self-esteem, school problems, drug use and sexual risk behaviors.

A related study found that open, ongoing parent dialogue about sexuality delays a youth's first sexual encounter and lowers frequency of sex during adolescence, as compared to peers who do not have this type of communication with a parent or trusted adult.

The Engaging Parents class will begin Sept. 16. The first session offers a class overview and discussion of human sexuality throughout life. Participants will also have the opportunity to explore and clarify their own values about sexuality.

The second session on Sept. 23 will include information on answering tough questions, teachable moments, and how to become an "askable" or approachable adult.

On Sept. 30 participants will discuss gender

and body talk and the final session on Oct. 7 will cover healthy relationships and decision making.

For further information or to sign up for "Engaging Parents," contact Sowa or Susie Ellwood at 541-592-5332 during regular business hours.

Also, beginning Sept. 28, the Alliance is teaming with Project Baby Check to offer a 10 week class titled "Helping Children Exposed to Batters." This class is designed for parents, grandparents, foster parents or anyone who works with children.

This training will help parents and caregivers strengthen their relationships with their children and better understand the impact of violence in their lives. Another goal is to teach them to talk and listen to their children to encourage their resiliency.

The free "Helping Children Exposed to Batters" classes will be held 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesdays at Siskiyou Community Health Center and will include lunch, free childcare and transportation. Those interested are encouraged to call 541-592-2515 or 541-592-6444 to register.

Valley Girls ready for 8th annual quilt show

Illinois Valley quilters – it's time to get your entries organized for the eighth annual Valley Girls Quilt Show set for Oct. 14 through Oct. 16th at the Illinois Valley Senior Center.

Entry forms are available at the Illinois Valley Senior Center, 520 E. River St. or by contacting Carol Dickson at 541-660-3136 or at boxerlovers@wildrivenetworks.com.

The annual show provides an opportunity to showcase the talent of local quilters. Quilts can be hand or machine-pieced, appliqued or pieced. Quilted, bed-sized quilts, art quilts, baby quilts and wall hangings are all welcome. Antique or vintage quilts will also be displayed.

Early entry is encouraged to allow

the group time to plan for the hanging of the quilts. Deadline for returning forms is Sept. 30. There is no fee to enter your quilts but due to the limited size of the venue, the show is only open to Illinois Valley residents.

This year's home-themed opportunity quilt is called "Valley Vista" with tickets available for \$1 each or 6 for \$5. The quilt is being shown and tickets are being sold at various events throughout the Valley until the drawing which is set for the last day of the quilt show.

Another way the Valley Girls are showing their affection for the Valley is by showcasing quilters in special locales throughout the Illinois Valley in a 2017 Calendar of Quilts. The 12-month calendar

includes local business sponsors as well as photos of colorful quilts taken throughout Illinois Valley. Calendars cost \$10 each and they started to be available at the Illinois Valley Lions Club Labor Day Festival. Now, they will be available from group members. There is a limited press run for the calendars with whatever remaining calendars available for sale at the quilt show.

All proceeds from the show, the calendar, and the opportunity quilt ticket sales benefit the Illinois Valley Boys and Girls Club, the Healing Hearts and Hooves therapeutic riding program and the Takilma Dome School. Last year, the Valley Girls donated \$7,000 to local youth organizations.



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