

Our Whole Lives Values

Though the OWL curriculum is secular, it is not value free. The following are the values on which the curriculum is based.

These values are posted at each session for the 4th & 5th grade and 7th & 8th grade programs and referred to on a regular basis throughout the curriculum.

Self worth

Every person is entitled to dignity and self-worth, and to his or her own attitudes and beliefs about sexuality.

Sexual health

Knowledge about human sexuality is helpful, not harmful. Every individual has the right to accurate information about sexuality and to have her or his questions answered.

Healthy sexual relationships are:

- *consensual* (both people consent)
- *nonexploitative* (equal in terms of power, neither person is pressuring or forcing the other into activities or behaviors)
- *mutually pleasurable*
- *safe* (sexual activity brings no or low risk of unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and emotional pain)
- *developmentally appropriate* (appropriate to the age and maturity of persons involved)
- *based on mutual expectations and caring*
- *respectful* (including the values of honesty and keeping commitments made to others).

Sexual intercourse is only one of the many valid ways of expressing sexual feelings with a partner. It is healthier for young adolescents to postpone sexual intercourse.

Responsibility

- We are called to enrich our lives by expressing sexuality in ways that enhance human wholeness and fulfillment and express love, commitment, delight and pleasure.
- All persons have the right and obligation to make responsible sexual choices.

Justice and inclusivity

- We need to avoid double standards. People of all ages, sexual identities, races, ethnicities, genders, backgrounds, income levels, physical and mental abilities, and sexual orientations must have equal value and rights.
- Sexual relationships should never be coercive or exploitative.
- All of the following are natural in the range of human sexual experience: being romantically and sexually attracted to more than one gender (bisexual), the same gender (homosexual), another gender (heterosexual), and/or to those with a more fluid understanding of their own and others' gender (pansexual), or not experiencing sexual attraction at all (asexual).

Our Whole Lives Assumptions

- All persons are sexual.¹
- Sexuality is a good part of the human experience.
- Sexuality includes much more than sexual behavior.
- Human beings are sexual from the time they are born until they die.¹
- It is natural to express sexual feelings in a variety of ways.
- People engage in healthy sexual behavior for a variety of reasons including to express caring and love, to experience intimacy and connection with another, to share pleasure, to bring new life into the world, and to have fun and relax.
- Sexuality in our society is damaged by violence, exploitation, alienation, dishonesty, abuse of power, and the treatment of persons as objects.
- It is healthier for young teens to postpone sexual intercourse.

¹ The OP-Owl curriculum defines "sexual," or "sexuality" as a broad term that encompasses sensuality, intimacy, sexual identity, sexual health and reproduction, and sexualization. Please see "Circles of Sexuality" on the following page to understand the holistic interpretation of "sexual" that underlies these assumptions.