

## PEER EDUCATION TO PROMOTE ADOLESCENT REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

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Do the right thing because it is right because these are the magic keys to living your life with integrity - (W. C. Stone).

Healthiness is rudimentary to each societal and monetary improvement as a society and as a nation. Our Constitution states that we shall promote the social, spiritual, physical and total well-being of our young people. The very essence of this will transform our young to be partners in building our nation.

The research conducted by the National Youth Commission (NYC) entitled as National Youth Assessment Study (NYAS) in 2020 clearly pointed out the increasing vulnerability of our adolescent youth to engage in sexual relationship because of peer pressure, their sexuality, and the influence of the following: school 40.5 %, internet 19.0 %, television 8.9%, peers 9.1%, household 5.3 %, health center 4.8%, books 3.7%, and other sources 2.1%. Emerging issues like Marital Status, Household Characteristics, Education, Employment, and Health connecting's like premarital sex, unsafe sex, unplanned or unwanted pregnancies, abortion, and HIV/ AIDS have been very alarming, considering the fact that most sufferers are youth.

A study on sexual issues, specifically those that concern youth and adolescent reproductive health has been sidetracked and undeveloped. Seemingly, the society has forgotten this very important aspect in human development of youth. Fortunately, the recent research and studies on Youth Adult Fertility and Sexuality (YAFS) showed that

there is a growing concern towards populace clamor for health, particularly on matters concerning youth and adolescent reproductive health.

The change is brought about by global paradigm shift that health concerns of the young people shall be at the centerpiece of social and economic development.

Realizing the importance of adolescent reproductive health propels the Department of Health (DOH) in collaboration with the Department of Education (DepEd) to embark in crafting learning platform. The learning platform is a comprehensive bundle of skills training that focuses on different components such as ARH, Peer Education, Human Development; Sex, Gender, and Sexuality; Relationships; Gender (Sexual) Health and Responsible Reproductive Behavior; and Basic Life Skills.

This learning package is intended for use of peer educators as well as their learners. Why peer educators? For the simple reason that the young people have a common perception that parents tend to be controlling and imposing the traditional way of parenting, thus, discouraging them to share issues and problems with their parents. In school, youth could not open up with their teachers for fear of expulsion or dropping them out from school.

With all these fears and apprehension, the youth tend to look for friends and peers whom they belong and can open with comfortably and are willing to listen and relate to their issues and problems without hesitation.

The objective is to promote the concepts and importance of ARH among peer educators and learners and let them realize their role, by providing them with knowledge and skills in becoming effective peer educators. It seeks to define the basics and importance of each component and how these could be applied/practiced by youth and adolescents in their own lives, thereby promoting healthy lifestyles and avoiding risky behaviors. The results and findings of the various researches and studies conducted in relation to youth and adolescent health issues and concerns need to be responded to. This

is an urgent call for all stakeholders and for us. If we do not act now, tomorrow may be lost and the future of our young will be compromised. The call to action is... NOW.

*References:*

ALS 2.0 Enhanced Curriculum Guide, Adolescent Friendly Enhancement Program (ALS PROTECTION PROGRAM Literacy Guide Plan and Strategies) and Peer Education Module Guide