Twitter Thread by Planned Parenthood Action

Planned Parenthood Action
@PPact

Sex education is more than just putting condoms on bananas. Sex education is a foundation for our development as people. We know — it sounds totally awkward to talk about this with your fam. Don't worry! We've got you ■■



Spark a convo by getting everyone involved ■

TIP #1

Open the dialogue in a way that's welcoming.

If you're at a virtual dinner, share how important education is to you. Suggest going around the "table" and encouraging each person to share the topic they believe is essential for young people to learn these days.

When the time is right, say something like:

> ***"For me, sex education is one of the most important forms of education a young person can have today."***

Build a foundation to understand what everyone's own experiences were and where they would like to see change.

Q&A Break

Ask the adults:

- "What do you remember about your own sex education?"
- "If you received sex education, what would have made it more helpful?
- "If you have kids, how would you like sex education to be taught to them?"

Ask the young people on the call:

"Do you have thoughts about or experiences with sex education that you feel comfortable sharing?"

Ask everyone:

"Would you like to hear some facts about sex education and where we are as a country with it?"

If people seem engaged, then move to Tip #2.

Always helps to go over the basics: definitions, benefits, and what actually is problematic.

TIP #2

Explain what sex education is and why it's important to talk about.

Sex education

helps young people make healthy decisions about their bodies, relationships, and how they express their gender and sexuality – without fear or shame.

Sex education covers a **wide range of age-appropriate topics,** such as:

- **Physical dimensions of sexuality,** like puberty, pregnancy, and STIs
- **Emotional dimensions of sexuality,** such as feelings of connection and self-esteem
- **Identity and sense of self,** including gender identity and personal values
- **Healthy relationships,** including platonic relationships, intimate relationships, and dating
- **Communicating boundaries,** including both listening and speaking up

The benefits: Sex education is proven to increase safer sex and help young people prevent unintended pregnancy. It's also linked to reducing transphobia, homophobia, and sexual assault.

The problem: Too few young people get the sex education they need and deserve.

Hit 'em with the overwhelming statistics in favor of sex education.

TIP #3

Drop some knowledge about the resounding support for sex education in America.

Public opinion **overwhelmingly supports sex education** across geographic and political lines.

> Among parents of middle and high school students, over 80% believe sex education is important for middle schoolers, and **98% believe it's important for high schoolers.**

Like many policy discussions, we have to look at the state level disparities.

TIP #4

Explain what's getting in the way of sex education at the state level.

Almost every state has some guidance on how and when sex education should be taught, **but decisions are often left up to individual school districts.**

That means state and local politicians decide whether or not educators can discuss birth control; how educators can talk about LGBTQ+ experiences (if at all); and how much educators must stress abstinence until marriage.

Only 30 states and the District of Columbia mandate sex education. But just because a state mandates sex education doesn't mean that it's good or comprehensive! Of the states that mandate sex education, very few have high-quality standards:

- Only 20 states and DC require information about contraception.
- Just 17 states require what's taught to be medically accurate.
- Merely 11 states require sex education to have LGBTQ+ content and inclusive language.

Go over the reality of abstinence-only programs.

TIP #5

Explain the problems with abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

Abstinence-only programs:

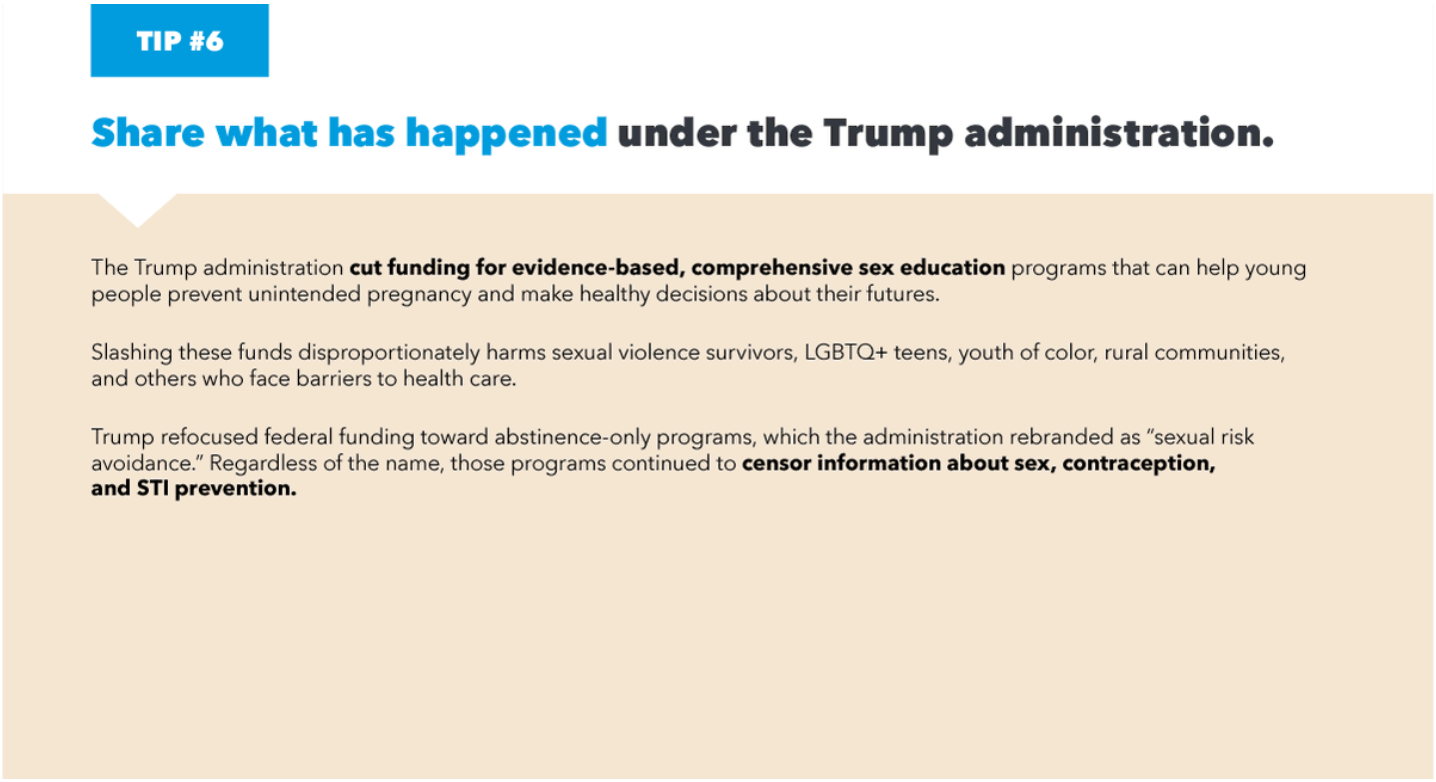
- Focus on deterring students from having sex, often by scare tactics and withholding information
- Often blame survivors for their own sexual assaults and ignore the needs of LGBTQ+ teens
- Leave a population of sexually active people uninformed and vulnerable

Studies show that abstinence-only programs are ineffective – they don't decrease STI or unintended pregnancy rates.

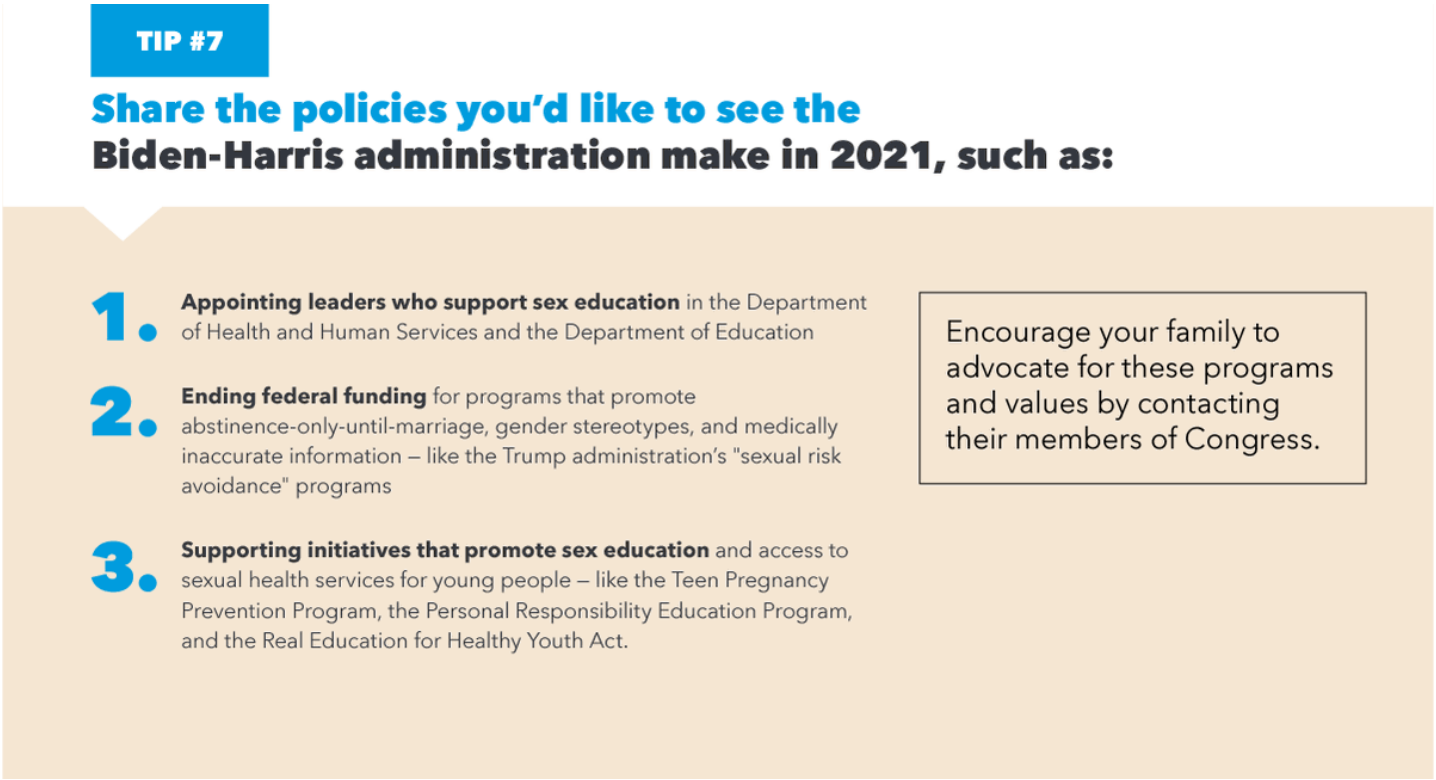
Studies also show that abstinence-only programs are harmful – they violate a basic human right of young people to access accurate health information, stigmatize or exclude gender nonconforming people, and reinforce damaging gender stereotypes.

Despite all this, Congress poured **$2.1 billion taxpayer dollars** into abstinence-only-until-marriage programs between 1996 and 2018.

The last 4 years haven't been pretty for a lot of reasons, and the Trump admin really did damage by censoring sex education.



Time for the good news: we're entering a new era. Let's hold the Biden-Harris admin accountable and advocate for the programs we need.



With all fam gatherings, things can get awkward and you took it one step farther by bringing up SEX EDUCATION■■■ Amazing, but make sure to thank them for taking this journey with you.

TIP #8

Thank your family for having the conversation with you.



Express heartfelt gratitude for each person who joined in the conversation, and any person who just listened.



Whether the conversation was challenging or a breeze, remember this: **It could be a gateway to other meaningful interactions about issues you care about.**

Pat yourself on the back for taking this big step!