

Prevention of Pregnancy Among High-Risk Institutionalized Teens:

Problem

According to the Russian Orphanage Association, the average age of an orphanage resident having sex for the first time is 12.7 years. Orphanage girls who get pregnant are “required” to undergo abortions as “wards of the State.” Those who refuse are forced to leave the orphanage and have their children with little or no support often give up their children to the State and thus starting the cycle all over again. It is critical that pregnancy prevention is taught to orphanage boys and girls at an early age

MiraMed’s response

Our Pregnancy Prevention Program has developed through relationships with progressive orphanage directors who have invited professional MiraMed staff to come to their orphanages once a week to teach a comprehensive sex and relationship education program to all teen-agers in their last two years of institutionalization. The program is taught to both sexes.

The program

Relationship and sex education is a lifelong learning about emotions, relationships, and sexual health. It involves acquiring information, developing skills, and forming positive beliefs, values, and attitudes. Information will be presented in a non-judgmental and unbiased manner. This will allow our participants to have the information necessary to develop self-esteem, self-awareness, a sense of moral responsibility, confidence and ability to resist abuse and unwanted sexual activity.

The program goals are:

- ✍ To be aware of and honor their sexuality
- ✍ To develop positive values and moral framework that will guide their decisions, judgment and behavior.
- ✍ To have the confidence and self esteem to value themselves and others
- ✍ To behave responsibly within sexual and personal relationships
- ✍ To develop a positive model of family life that they haven’t had access to before
- ✍ To have sufficient information and skills to protect themselves and their partners from unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV.

(b) training of orphanage staff:

Many orphanage staff working with MiraMed acknowledge that they lack the skills and knowledge to teach sex and relationship education themselves, but feel it is critically necessary. In order to reach as many children as possible with this very important life information, orphanage staff will be trained to use the MiraMed curriculum as well.

Two or three staff from each of the orphanages served by the Social Adaptation Centers -- Moscow (21 orphanages), St. Petersburg (3 orphanages), Smolensk (2 orphanages) and Uglich (1 orphanage) – are being trained by professional MiraMed team.