

I ♥ My Vagina



Description

In this women-only course, we will learn about things that are left out of sex education classes. We will connect up-to-date scientific information with our own values to develop a new way of living in the body as a sexual person. Each person's perspective and privacy will be valued as we learn from each other. The material covered in this class applies to all women who want to learn more about their sexuality.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Discuss the structure and function of major organs in a woman's reproductive tract;
2. Name the four phases of the fertility cycle;
3. Name at least two ways in which the fertility cycle and a woman's reproductive tract are changed by the use of artificial estrogen and progesterone;
4. List at least five ways in which the fertility cycle influences non-reproductive body processes;
5. Name at least five life behaviors of a sexually healthy adult;
6. Discuss connections between sexual rights and human rights.

Activities

Class activities will vary depending on the interests of the group. The class will have the opportunity to:

- Gain detailed, accurate information about women's sexual and reproductive health;
- Learn self-cervical exam and practice it in private if desired;
- Discuss aspects of sexuality and self-care not included in typical sex education classes;
- Make a customized list of expectations and concerns to be discussed at one's next gynecological visit.

Incentives

Participants will receive:

- A copy of the latest edition of the women's health classic book *Our Bodies, Ourselves*;
- Materials for practicing physical self exam;
- A t-shirt custom made for mini-course participants;
- Additional incentives provided by the host/sponsor.

Empirical Foundation

- Several studies show that health literacy is positively associated with improvement in health habits and adherence to recommended medical care.
- The *Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education, 3rd edition* recommends instruction in six aspects of sexuality: human development, sexual health, sexual behavior, personal skills, relationships, and society & culture, because comprehensive sexuality education supports the development of Life Behaviors of a Sexually Healthy Adult. However, most of today's college students have been exposed to "abstinence only" sex education. Even secondary schools that rejected abstinence-only curricula tended to choose curricula that emphasize HIV or pregnancy prevention rather than an overall range of sexually healthy behaviors. As a result, many young adult women lack comprehensive information about sexuality.
- The methods used in this course are expected to be effective, based on evaluation of prior iterations of the course and evaluations of the SHAPE Peer Education Sexual Health trainings, which utilized many of the same components. The self- help model developed by the Federation of Feminist Women's Health Centers and employed in this course has not been formally evaluated but has a strong body of anecdotal evidence supporting its success in developing health literacy in women.
- The course will be evaluated by a pre-post test strategy. Participants will fill out a questionnaire before the course begins and at the end of the course. The questionnaire will include objective and subjective items about the content and methods used in the course.

Contact

Shirley M. Banks, Health Educator and AASECT-Certified Sexuality Counselor, Emory University Student Health and Counseling Services, 404-727-7312, shirley.banks@emory.edu

This mini-course is revised regularly and may vary somewhat from this overview.