EyesOpenIowa

EyesOpenIowa is the only statewide adolescent sexual health network of over 1,800 agencies, schools, youth-serving professionals, teens, and parents in Iowa. EyesOpenIowa empowers communities to provide people with comprehensive sexual health information and services to make healthy and informed decisions about sex and relationships, both now and in the future.

LGBTQ teens expressed a need for inclusive sexual health education. Our project has begun implementing IN*clued, an inclusive, evidence-based program developed by Planned Parenthood. IN*clued uses peer to peer education with trained teen facilitators to empower LGBTQ teens to access inclusive healthcare. We are just beginning to implement the program. Youth feedback has included that they feel more empowered to access medical care and know the best questions to ask providers.

Our project Youth Advisory Board is entirely youth driven. The YAB determines the need and focus of the youth sexual health projects. The focus of the YAB in the last two years has been reaching teens with accurate sexual health information outside the classroom and often utilizing peer to peer education and awareness. The YAB provides input into project social media and leads their own activities, such as an educational sexual health trivia night at a local teen coffee place. The YAB also participates in other relevant teen-led projects that extend the reach of their educational focus.

Our implementation team goes where the teens are including nontraditional settings such as local gathering spots, to meet teens where they are. The team also supports our project teens in their other activities and spends time listening and responding to teen concerns.

This story was written by EyesOpenIowa.