

Sexually Healthy Faith Communities

Religious communities have an important role in helping people become sexually healthy adults who express their sexuality in ways congruent with their religious and ethical values.

But we must also strive to become sexually healthy faith communities. In a sexually healthy faith community:

- Sexuality is affirmed as a sacred part of life.
- People interact with both genders in respectful and appropriate ways.
- Every person is treated with dignity and self-worth.
- Every adult, whether single, married, divorced, widowed, gay or straight, young or old, able-bodied or disabled, finds support and affirmation for their life situation.
- Families are valued as the primary educators of their children.
- Youth are valued members of the community.
- Pastoral counseling and support are available to those whose sexuality has been broken.
- Age-appropriate sexuality education within the faith tradition is available throughout the life span.
- Social action committees work for sexual justice.
- Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people are welcomed as full participating members.
- The congregation plays an active role in supporting public school education, including sexuality education.
- There is a commitment to fostering spiritual, sexual, and emotional health.

We are called upon as religious people to acknowledge the inherent goodness of sexuality as part of creation and to respond to abuses of this sacred gift.

From Debra W. Haffner, *A Time to Speak: Faith Communities and Sexuality Education*. SIECUS 1998.