

SEX ED MADE EASY: THE CREATION OF AND JUSTIFICATION FOR A WEB
SERIES THAT PROVIDES A SOLUTION TO THE CURRENT STATE OF SEXUAL
EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

by

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ABSTRACT

Many adolescents leave our education system with little to no helpful information related to sexual education (Hall, 2019). Some people learn just about the reproductive system, others are warned against pregnancy and STIs, and many are taught nothing. Research shows that teenagers are turning to the internet to find the answers to their questions and finding information that is either not intended as sex education or are lacking (Rideout, 2009). I have researched many of these online sources and categorized them into different categories and noted what was covered, what they are missing, and how each could be improved. These categories included: resources for parents and educators, websites for older adolescents, websites for adults, and pornography. Based on these findings, I have created a sexual education web series called Sex Ed Made Easy to provide adolescents access to the sexual education they are seeking. Sex Ed Made Easy's mission statement clearly states our goals and values: We provide comprehensive, accessible, engaging, and medically accurate sex education to everyone from curious teens to sheltered adults. We also strive to be inclusive and provide education to those outside of the gender, sex, and sexuality “norms.” In the final portion of this thesis, I describe previously filmed episode topics with justifications, provide a production timeline, explain the production logistics, list future episodes, and include a business plan for the web series.

I. INTRODUCTION

Ever since I was a child, I have been curious about sex. I was taught how reproduction works and the anatomically correct terms for my own genitalia, however, my education stopped there. No one taught me how to navigate new sexual feelings, how to communicate in a relationship, or the importance of consent. In junior high and high school, I started asking my friends questions and quickly learned that no one else knew the answers either. On top of that, even if they knew the information, they were afraid to talk about sex so the conversations were usually short and cringe-worthy. I then turned to the internet and only found articles on the reproductive process or pornography. My experiences uncomfortably attempting to learn about sex motivated me to create my own sex education channel, the focus of my thesis, called Sex Ed Made Easy.

In this thesis I explore the current state of sex education in the U.S., why proper sexual education is necessary, what currently exists and is missing, the justification for Sex Ed Made Easy, the creation and release of my channel, and a business plan. It is broken up into three main sections with subsections. The sections are The Current State of Sexual Education in the United States and a Possible Solution, Our Mission and Goals, and Business Plan.

II. THE CURRENT STATE OF SEXUAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES AND A POSSIBLE SOLUTION

Current Sexual Education Programs in Schools and Laws

In the United States of America, federally funded Abstinence Only Until Marriage (AOUM) programs are still the normal way adolescents receive sexual education (Santelli, 2017). AOUM programs are heteronormative sexual education programs that heavily stress abstinence until marriage as the only reasonable choice teens should make. The idea behind these programs is that by teaching teenagers that abstinence is the only way to prevent disease and pregnancy, they will abstain from sexual activities. However, this logic is not reasonable. Many programs exist to teach Americans that fast food is bad for our bodies, yet many Americans still eat fast food. For years, teenagers were taught to abstain from marijuana, yet marijuana is now more popular than ever (Ingraham, 2017). Adolescents are not going to abstain from sexual activities just because adults tell them to, and AOUM programs are not equipped to teach adolescents how to safely engage in said sexual activities (Santelli, 2017). AOUM programs are not comprehensive and are not required to teach about many important subjects including contraceptive methods and safer sex practices.

AOUM programs also promote harmful stereotypes about minority groups (Santelli, 2017). AOUM sexual education programs are missing an ideal opportunity to address other aspects of sexual health like gender and sexuality. Instead, AOUM programs promote harmful stereotypes and continue the cycle of oppression for underrepresented populations (Santelli, 2017). According to the U.S. Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation's 2017 report of hate crimes, there were

8,828 hate crimes committed in that one year (Homophobia and Hate Crimes in the US, 2019). Eighteen percent of those crimes were motivated by gender or sexuality bias, making over one thousand five hundred hate crimes against gender or sexuality in one year. With that kind of discrimination in the United States, there is no reason to inflame that hate and phobia any more by teaching adolescents biased sexual education.

AOUM programs are also not required to educate adolescents on sexual assault or consent. Even worse, AOUM programs demonize sexual assault victims (Kempner, 2009). Since rape victims are technically no longer virgins, preaching that virginity is prized and sexual activity is “dirty” causes victims to feel as if they have done something wrong or are damaged goods (LeClair, 2006). Teaching victims that they have committed wrongdoing is immoral and unjust. Rape victims already have to deal with the psychological and social fallout of the event(s), and they should not have to withstand scrutinization at school as well. Sexual assault and the mental effects should be required by law to be included in all schools’ sexual education curricula. Keeping sexual assault out of curricula forces adolescents to learn about these horrifying events through real-life events or media. I am a prime example of someone who learned in less than desirable ways. Instead of learning about sexual assault in a safe place, I learned about it through my own traumatic experiences as a freshman in high school. Instead of learning that rape has severe psychological effects, I learned by listening to my friend cry on my shoulder that my then-boyfriend assaulted her on the drive home from school. Despite having those personal events, I still came to college unaware of how to handle the aftermath of an assault. Adolescents need this information.

Education on abstinence is not the problem with our current sexual education programs; the problem is that abstinence is being taught as the *only* option and most states are not required to educate their students on anything else. As of May 2019, 29 states require schools to stress abstinence and do not require education about contraceptives or barrier methods (Hall, 2019). Shockingly, 19 of those states also require the importance of sexual activity only within marriage to be taught (Guttmacher Institute, 2019). Ohio is one state with severely conservative sexual education laws. For example, Ohio's latest sexual education bill states that if sexual education is taught, it must emphasize that "abstinence from sexual activity is the only protection that is one hundred percent effective against unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, and the sexual transmission of a virus that causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome" (Ohio Rev. Code 3313.6011B). The same bill also states that the curriculum must "stress that students should abstain from sexual activity until after marriage" (Ohio Rev. Code 3313.6011B). Thirty-one states, including Ohio, have no laws requiring any education on contraceptives and barrier methods (Guttmacher Institute, 2019). Without medically accurate information on contraception and barrier methods, teens are more likely to become pregnant and contract sexually transmitted infections (STI) (Guttmacher Institute, 2017). While abstinence is technically the only 100% effective method of preventing pregnancy, there are other methods that are extremely effective. For example, IUDs are 99.99% effective. These facts lead us to conclude that sexual education that requires an emphasis on the abstinence-only method is ineffective and should be outlawed.

Perhaps even worse than requiring abstinence-only education, are the laws that allow false information to be taught. At the moment, only 17 states require public schools to provide medically accurate sexual education (Hall, 2019). While those 17 states might not all be intentionally lying, no one is fact-checking their curriculum. The fact that there are any states that allow medically inaccurate information to be taught is appalling. Upon reviewing my own sexual education, I realized I was taught many inaccurate things about sexual activity. For example, I thought that tampons took away your virginity until I was twelve years old. I also distinctly remember being taught that unprotected sex *always* results in pregnancy. I even have a friend who had to endure being taught that each sexual partner reduces your worth and future sexual pleasure. Allowing medically inaccurate information, and in some cases, blatant lies like these to be taught to children leads to misinformed and at-risk adults.

Some more horrifying statistics are that eight states explicitly stigmatize homosexuality, only 12 states are inclusive of diverse sexual orientations, and only seven states are inclusive of genders outside the binary (Hall, 2019). This discrimination can lead to depression or other mental illnesses in victims (UCLA Public Health Magazine, 2015). It should be noted that just because states do not have inclusive sexual education laws, that does not mean that certain cities and counties are not trying to pass more progressive sexual education laws. For example, Austin, Texas recently passed a law requiring schools to teach about sexual orientation and gender identities (Marut, Newberry, and Norwood, 2019).

In the countries with the best quality of sexual health, adolescents receive comprehensive sex education with proper contraception education and nonjudgmental

attitudes (Lottes, 2002). The Sexuality Information and Education Institute of the United States defines comprehensive education as sexual education that covers human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture (Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education, 2004). Comprehensive sexual education has been proven to reduce unplanned pregnancy, teen births, abortion, and STIs (Lottes, 2002). Unfortunately, not all adolescents are receiving comprehensive sexual education which is why there is a need for easily accessible online resources such as the one I am creating.

While abstinence programs are intended to keep adolescents safe from STIs and pregnancy, in reality, these programs only keep youths from learning important lifesaving information about human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), contraception, and pregnancy and stigmatize anyone outside the sexual “normal.” Therefore, our society needs to implement and demand comprehensive sexual education. It should be acknowledged that there are organizations pushing for comprehensive sexual education and creating better curriculum. Unfortunately, schools and counties are slow to implement the proposed curriculum, because proper sex education classes require funding and community approval. Many public schools are too underfunded and overwhelmed to concern themselves with the sexual education of their students (Filardo, 1).

In this thesis, I am focusing on the current state of sexual education in the United States of America and how I can personally create an online sexual education program to help fill the gaps. I will explore what is currently missing in our sexual education programs, what topics should be included, and how to set up and start my online channel.

My channel will help bridge the gap and provide a solution to the lack of accessible sexual education that is accurate, comprehensive, and engaging.

Other Sources of Sexual Education

Although the United States fails to provide comprehensive sex education in public schools, there are many non-government sponsored online resources accessible to citizens. While many of these online resources have good qualities, none of them seem to be all-encompassing. I am defining an all-encompassing online resource as one that is accurate, comprehensive, accessible, progressive, and engaging. I will be breaking down the online resources into categories and then highlighting the best options within each category. There are many other options out there, but the resources described below are the most popular or consistently produced and updated. The categories are websites for parents and educators, websites for older teens, video resources for adolescents, resources for adults, and pornography.

To start, we will look at websites for parents and educators. These websites contain various sexual education curricula for purchase as an alternative to the existing government-sponsored curricula. The top websites in this category are *Planned Parenthood*, *Advocates for Youth*, and *Get Real Education*. As of November 2019, *Planned Parenthood*'s website has a digital tools tab for parents and educators. This tab contains a few short lesson plans as well as videos geared towards teaching parents and educators how to talk about sensitive subjects like gender identity, sexual orientation, and sexual safety. This website also contains links to a variety of digital applications. These lessons are well made and are wonderful resources for parents and educators because

they are inclusive and progressive; however, they are not intended for adolescents. They assume a base understanding of sexual activities and some resources require payment.

Advocates for Youth's website is similar. *Advocates for Youth* has a tab called "Resources & Tools" that contains resources for parents and educators. Some of these resources include pamphlets, fact sheets, and advocacy tools on subjects such as being religious and gay, protecting transgender youth, and national sexual education standards. *Advocates for Youth* also has short articles on other tabs about topics such as abortion access, contraception, and sexual violence. While these articles might not go over teenagers' heads, they are definitely intended for adults advocating for proper sexual education. The articles on this website are not about sex itself, but rather about sexual education in general. The articles mainly focus on why education on various topics is necessary and how to properly educate youth. While certainly helpful for adults, this website is not helpful to teenagers searching for information on sex because the language is not geared towards them.

Get Real Education's website has curricula for a variety of age groups for purchase by schools and sex educators teaching large classes. The curriculum is broken down into two sections, Middle School and High School. The Middle School curriculum consists of 27 lessons, intended to be spread out over the next three years. These lessons consist of topics such as puberty, anatomy, STIs, safe environments, and contraceptive methods. The high school curriculum consists of 11 lessons, intended to be spread out over one year. These lessons cover some of the topics previously mentioned as well as new topics such as sexuality, gender, intimacy, social media, relationships, and sexual health care. *Get Real Education* is progressive and serves its purpose well, however, it

does not help teenagers who are looking to access sexual education online because it is not accessible without payment.

All of the websites in this category have wonderful qualities. They are providing adults who want to help solve the lack of sex education with resources. However, these websites do not have tools geared towards teenagers themselves. These websites also fail to teach the basics and assume that their viewers looking for resources already have a base understanding of sexual topics. These websites also fail to cover disability and the tone stays relatively impersonal.

The second category is the websites for older teenagers. These websites have articles about puberty and reproduction as well as a few short videos. These websites provide medically accurate sexual information in an understandable manner. However, they are difficult to find, unengaging, and highly technical. The first website in this category is *Web MD*. *Web MD* has a tab under “Health & Facts” called “Just the Facts.” This page contains information on the reproductive system, puberty, sexual orientation, and other technical aspects of sex. Unfortunately, the page with this information is difficult to find and technically written. Another site in this category is *I Wanna Know*. *I Wanna Know* has articles on sexual health, STIs, relationships, LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, plus), and pregnancy. The articles are informative and well written; however, they lack the level of engagement and authenticity that video content brings. Both *Web MD* and *I Wanna Know* address healthy relationships and emotions, however, *Web MD*’s relationship content is for adults and focuses on marriages, while *I Wanna Know* only briefly cautions teenagers against abuse.

Unfortunately, neither of these websites are engaging or accessible enough for adolescents.

The next category is video resources for adolescents. There are a limited number of these, so I will only speak to one. *Talk Tabu* is a great online resource for older teens and young adults that has many articles on various topics revolving around sex. The articles are wonderful, and I highly recommend them for those that are okay with long reads and small amounts of swearing. There are even several personal articles on relationships. However, the video resource portion of the website is lacking. *Talk Tabu* only has a few videos though, and those videos are difficult to find and dated. These videos might be good for certain adults, but they are not quite engaging or youthful enough for teenagers.

For those who are okay with vulgarity, there are resources for adults. These resources have great articles on subjects most people are not comfortable with, such as anal sex, squirting, and sexual kinks. One of the websites is the *O.School*. The *O.School* specializes in discussing female pleasure in articles, first-hand accounts, and a few videos. The *O.School* is a valuable resource to adults that are okay with foul language and intimate details, such as first-hand accounts of “eating pussy” for the first time. It also has articles on relationships, abuse, and healthy communication. Unfortunately for adolescents, the *O.School* assumes its readers have a basic understanding of sex and its intricacies. If an inexperienced and undereducated teenager was to stumble upon this website, they would find information not intended for beginners.

Killer And A Sweet Thang is another resource in this category. This website has first-hand stories about sexual experiences and advice from other sexually active adults.

With article titles like “When I Grow Up, I Want to be a Slut” and “I Stuck My Finger Up My Boyfriends Ass,” these resources are not meant for teenagers just beginning to explore sexual activities.

The last category is pornography. Whether or not pornography is healthy to be viewed is still being debated. However, pornography is most often fictional and is not a realistic depiction of sexual activities (Growing & Developing Healthy Relationships, n.d.). While I would not consider pornography inherently “bad,” I would not want teenagers to stumble across it and use it to learn from. Teenagers learning about sex from pornography videos is a problem because pornography is a fantasy. Pornography represents human desires and fantasies and is not intended to be realistic or to teach people how to have sex (Growing & Developing Healthy Relationships, n.d.). Most pornography videos leave out basic, important steps like getting consent, discussing sexual health, and aftercare. Many videos are also derogatory, violent, or blatantly nonconsensual. This can be harmful to teenagers using pornography as a teaching tool because it can lead to unrealistic expectations about sex (Jones, 2018). Pornography is so easily accessible in this new era of smart devices, streaming services, and constant media bombardment, that it is no surprise that porn is often teenagers’ first lesson on sex (Jones, 2018).

Adolescents should not have to turn to pornography to receive their sexual education. In an ideal world, they should not have to turn to the internet at all. However, the United States of America is currently failing to provide comprehensive sexual education to all citizens, so teenagers are being forced to take matters into their own hands (Harvey, Brown, Crawford, Macfarlane, & McPherson, 2007). Unfortunately, the

existing online resources on sexual education are lacking. Not all of the websites that come up when someone searches a search engine for sexual topics are websites teenagers should be accessing. In order to fill the gap, I am attempting to create a safe, nonjudgmental, inclusive, and engaging web series that teenagers can access to receive comprehensive sexual education. The hope is that instead of turning to websites that are lacking, teenagers will have a web series they can turn to that is fun, accessible, and medically accurate. My web series will consist of episodes that each address a different sexual topic.

I will also be sure to include topics that are often left out of sexual education. Most resources focus on reproduction and puberty, leaving out so many vital topics such as LGBTQ+ education, disability inclusivity, emotional health, relationships, consent/sexual assault/ bodily autonomy, and sex health. Unfortunately, the only resources from the list above that included any of these topics were inappropriate for beginners or required payment. The topics Sex Ed Made Easy covers will be inclusive, and the videos will not assume the viewer has any base understanding of sexual subjects. The videos will also stay engaging and personal because they will have real young adults in them discussing the issues. Instead of feeling like a lecture, these videos feel like a casual conversation between friends. My goal is to take the things the above websites did well and bring them together in one place while avoiding the negative pitfalls.

A Solution for Filling the Gap in Sexual Education

Throughout the web series, I will address various topics that many U.S. citizens are undereducated about. Specifically, I want to make sure underrepresented communities and minorities have education on topics accessible and applicable to them. This is

necessary because not everyone fits into the heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied mold that most public-school sexual education classes are geared towards (Hobaica, 2017). Even the majority of the online resources I mentioned in the previous section do not address these communities. The few that do (e.g. *O.School* and *Killer And A Sweet Thang*) are not geared towards youth or beginners.

One of those topics is sexuality. Human sexuality and LGBTQ+ knowledge is a topic that is lacking and necessary (Hobaica, 2017). Less than 50% of teenagers identify as heterosexual and those teenagers deserve proper sexual education (Tsjeng, 2016). Teenagers are also curious about sexuality and subjects surrounding sexuality (Tsjeng, 2016). In my web series, I intend to address not only sexual orientation, but also gender, sex, the spectrum of sexuality, and gender expression. I also plan on redefining sex. As a society, we currently look at sex through a narrow heteronormative lens (Hobaica, 2017). When someone uses the term “sex” most people assume it means penile-vaginal penetration. This is a problem because many people do not have sex within that context. I plan on redefining it so that this next generation of LGBTQ+ youth do not feel trapped within such a narrow definition.

Another population that deserves better education are people with physical or developmental disabilities or disorders. Sexual education should not be exclusive to the able-bodied population. The stigma around sexual activity combined with the stigma around disability makes it difficult for adults with disabilities to comfortably find partners. This goes back to redefining sex. Sex can refer to outercourse as well as intercourse, and in cases of people with disabilities - sex often refers to outercourse, or non-penetrative activity (Shaw, 2013). Perhaps if adolescents were taught about

disabilities and sex in school, it would not be stigmatized as much. Those with mental disabilities also deserve proper sexual education. Adults on the autism spectrum have reported similar desires for sex as adults who are not on the spectrum (Solomon, 2019). Whether physically disabled or mentally impaired, everyone needs and deserves comprehensive sexual education.

Another topic that is woefully under-discussed is emotional health and the possible emotional effects of sexual activity. Human emotions are complex and can often be difficult to understand. Teenagers have to deal with hormonal changes, emotions, and confusing new sexual feelings all at the same time. They should be taught how relationships and sexual activity can affect their emotions. However, I have not found any sexual education curriculums that address it. Even *FLASH*, one of the most progressive sexual-education curricula in the country, does not address the emotional effects of sexual activity (About the FLASH Curriculum, 2019). While the emotional effects of sexual activity are often raved about by concerned parents, priests, and teachers, I was unable to find any scholarly sources on the topic. I searched multiple databases for the terms “sex” or “sexual activity” and “emotions” or “emotional effects” and found no results relevant to sex education or adolescents. Emotions need to be addressed; however, educators should be careful to avoid scare tactics. Utilizing scare tactics to keep teenagers from having sex has been proven not to work (Kempner, 2009). That being said, emotions still need to be discussed so youth are not blindsided by new feelings.

I will also make a point to discuss healthy relationships. Both *Get Real Education* and the *O.School* address healthy relationships. The *O.School* even makes a point to touch on hookups, long term relationships, and other types of romantic and sexual

relationships. The *O.School* also discusses different levels of intimacy. While this website is a great resource on relationships, the articles are not teenager friendly and therefore not helpful to young adolescents just starting to learn about sex. I intend to discuss the manner in a way that is appropriate for younger audiences. Younger audiences need to know about the types of relationships they might enter into and how those relationships can affect them. However, they do not need to hear crass language or vulgar stories.

Sexual health is another under-discussed topic. While a few things under the umbrella of sexual health are discussed (such as STIs), many others are not. Those pieces of sexual health that are not being discussed are masturbation, cleaning, pleasure, and knowing your own body. Adolescents need to be educated on these topics, however, talking about them can often be awkward and uncomfortable for both the educator and teenager. That is why few are taught on these taboo topics. I believe discussing this topic on a web series is a solution to the problem. Teenagers would be able to access the video from wherever they feel the safest and would not have to worry about judgment. In turn, the educators could speak freely and in a casual tone without fear of supervisor or parental disapproval. A video series is a way to be both personal and detached at the same time. The messages can be engaging, friendly, and personal without making adolescents feel awkward or exposed.

I will also make a point to discuss consent. The topic of consent is only starting to be discussed in popular media and has not yet made its way into the majority of the sexual education curriculum that exists. One new type of consent being discussed is enthusiastic consent. In a 2018 article from *ABC*, enthusiastic consent is defined as “the model of consent that encourages people to make sure the person they're about to have

sex with is enthusiastic about the sexual interaction and wants to be there.” *Planned Parenthood* says that enthusiastic consent can be seen when a partner is "...happy, excited, or energized." I searched the term “enthusiastic consent” in multiple research databases and got no results relating to sexual education. While multiple sources demonstrate that sexual assault is a problem, none even come close to listing enthusiastic consent education as the solution. The concept of enthusiastic consent is relatively new to the sexual education scene; however, I believe it could change the way teenagers view consent. Instead of simply looking for their partner to say “yes,” teenagers would be able to search for physical and verbal signs that their partner is enjoying the sexual encounter. Teenagers would also be taught how to pause the encounter and check in with their partner if they notice anything troubling. If this process was common, many regrettable sexual experiences could be avoided. Perhaps consent education would also reduce the number of sexual assaults that occur in this country. Every sexual experience should start with consent and in order to normalize it, I plan on integrating consent into every episode. Since this topic is currently not being taught in schools, teenagers need to be able to access this information easily online.

The current public sexual education programs in the United States of America are promoting harmful stereotypes and misinformation. Due to this, teenagers are turning to the internet to learn about sex. Unfortunately, the online resources that exist are either impersonal and technical, or they are intended for more experienced audiences. Adolescents need a place to turn to find inclusive, accessible, engaging, and medically accurate sexual education. Among other things, this new resource needs to address human sexuality, differently abled populations, emotional intimacy, healthy relationships,

sexual wellness, and consent. For these reasons, I have created an online web series called Sex Ed Made Easy that is easily accessible via social media and addresses the above-mentioned topics and populations. The goal of Sex Ed Made Easy is to provide inclusive sexual education for all. In section II of my thesis I will go through the creation and visualization of Sex Ed Made Easy and then in section III I have included a business plan. Both sections are formatted to appeal to potential investors and partners.

OUR MISSION AND GOALS





VISION & PURPOSE

Ever since I was a child, I've been curious about sex. I was taught how reproduction works and the anatomically correct terms for my own genitalia, however, my education stopped there. No one taught me how to navigate new sexual feelings, how to communicate in a relationship, or the importance of consent. I started asking my friends questions in high school and quickly learned that no one else knew the answers either. I then turned to the internet and only found vague articles on reproduction and how to spot abuse in relationships. My experiences attempting to learn about sex drew me to learn more about sex education and eventually create my own sex education channel called Sex Ed Made Easy.

The goal of Sex Ed Made Easy is to create a place teenagers and young adults can turn to when the educational system fails them. Not only does it address topics like the ones discussed in previous sections, but it also does so in an engaging manner. The whole feel of the brand is designed to destigmatize sex and bring the content to a place that viewers can easily emotionally access. I've intentionally chosen bright brand colors and playful fonts in order to bring joy and ease into a topic that is currently so taboo. No one should feel dirty or out of place when educating themselves. Hopefully, when visiting the website and watching the episodes, viewers will feel safe and as if their questions matter.



Sex Ed Made Easy provides comprehensive, accessible, engaging, and medically accurate sex education to everyone from curious teens to sheltered adults.

MISSION STATEMENT

Sex Ed Made Easy's official mission is to "provide comprehensive, accessible, engaging, and medically accurate sex education to everyone from curious teens to sheltered adults." Let's break that down section by section!

Comprehensive

The Guttmacher Institute (n.d) defines comprehensive sexual education as education that, "seeks to equip young people with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values they need to determine and enjoy their sexuality—physically and emotionally, individually and in relationships" (para.1). They also note that "this approach recognizes and accepts all people as sexual beings and is concerned with more than just the prevention of disease or pregnancy" (Guttmacher Institute, para. 2). One important phrase in that definition is "all people." An important part of comprehensive sexual education is that it is inclusive. I strongly believe in inclusivity and am working with activists in various communities to make Sex Ed Made Easy for "all people." One group I am currently working with is the LGBTQIA+ community. I personally identify as queer and bisexual, but I understand that I cannot speak for everyone in the community. Because of this, I am working with multiple activists with various personal identities to create a mini-series within the web series that addresses every letter in LGBTQIA. The goal is that this mini-series can show younger queer youth they are not alone while simultaneously educating heterosexual allies. I am also planning on working with activists in the disabled community. I am currently exploring how best to discuss ability and sexuality in a way that helps differently-abled youth. We are now in talks for season two and focusing on differently abled people is going to be a major focus. I personally am chronically ill and so I know quite a few people in the community who are sex positive.

Accessible

The second point in Sex Ed Made Easy's mission is accessibility. Merriam-Webster defines accessible as "being within reach" and "easy to speak or deal with." It is important to me that the content we create is easy to reach and understand. By using social media platforms, Sex Ed Made Easy is already far more accessible than other sexual education methods. The online platforms we are using are free, easy to find, commonly used, and accessible by teenagers without parental permission. The use of social media platforms also does not look suspicious to parents who monitor their children's online activity. Later in this thesis, I will discuss more on the choice of channels and social media platforms.

Engaging

The third goal of Sex Ed Made Easy is to be engaging. Engaging material is material that draws and captures interest and attention. I want our content to be engaging because sex education already garners so much stigma. I want our episodes to be in complete contrast to the fear-based tactics most abstinence-only sex ed utilizes. In order to do this, I have branded the web series with fun colors and fonts, used cute emojis and stickers on posts, and kept the feel of the episodes cheerful. The average attention span of a teenager is also lower than it used to be. Humor and levity keep the episodes from feeling too long and capture audience interest.

Medically Accurate

The last point in our mission is medical accuracy. I wish we lived in a world where this point was not necessary. Teaching false information, unintentionally or otherwise, should be considered objectively wrong. Unfortunately, we do not live in a perfect world and this point needs to be mentioned. Adolescents deserve to know the truth about their bodies. No one should be lied to about their own health.



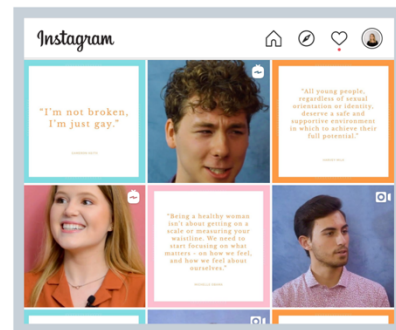


CHOOSING A MEDIUM & PLATFORM

Sex Ed Made Easy is a web series that appears on Facebook Watch, Instagram TV, and Youtube.

When brainstorming the best medium for my sexual education endeavor, I considered multiple options including blog articles, fun infographics, and others. Ultimately, I settled on video. I still use other forms of media for side content, but the main medium used for Sex Ed Made Easy is the online video episodes. I believe video is the best medium for sexual education because it allows a more personal connection to viewers. Viewers are able to watch my facial expressions as I interact with guests and pick up on nuances in the conversations. Watching videos is also more visually stimulating than reading articles.

After choosing to use video as the medium, I then decided on the platform(s). While I am technically a Millennial (I was born in 1998), I am on the cusp of Generation Z. This gives me an advantage because I am able to identify with both our younger and older viewers. Even prior to researching, I knew I wanted to use Youtube, Instagram, and Facebook as our main platforms. Instagram is popular among Gen Z, Facebook is popular among Millennials, and Youtube is popular among both generations (Pew Research Center, 2019). According to a study conducted by Pew Research Center, Youtube, Facebook, and Instagram were the most commonly used social media platforms among adults in 2019 (Pew Research Center, 2019). Among teenagers, Youtube and Instagram were the most commonly used in 2018 with Snapchat coming in a close third (Pew Research Center, 2018).



AESTHETICS

Once the medium and platforms were chosen, I began to think about aesthetics. I knew I wanted the show to be lighthearted yet informative, clear yet entertaining, and fun yet not silly. Walking this line is difficult, but I am figuring it out. Most Sex Ed Made Easy episodes are set up like a talk show interview. I invite an expert to be a guest for an episode, ask them questions and chat with them, and then have my team edit the footage down into an episode. The tone is informal and conversational. The reason I invite guests on is that I am not an expert on every subject. In fact, I am not an expert on most subjects! I believe it is important to be honest with viewers about my knowledge level and show teenagers that it is not shameful to ask questions. It is also important to hear multiple voices and people from different backgrounds and video interviews allow that. Viewers may be dealing with similar issues, have similar backgrounds.

The brand colors I've chosen for the show are orange, pink, and teal blue (as pictured below in the logo). We also supplement with yellow on occasion. These colors are my own modern take on classic primary school colors. I remember growing up seeing bright blue, red, orange, and yellow on the walls of classrooms. I also distinctly remember using an orange book in my middle school gym/health class. The combination of orange, pink, and teal blue is gender-neutral, bright, and youthful.

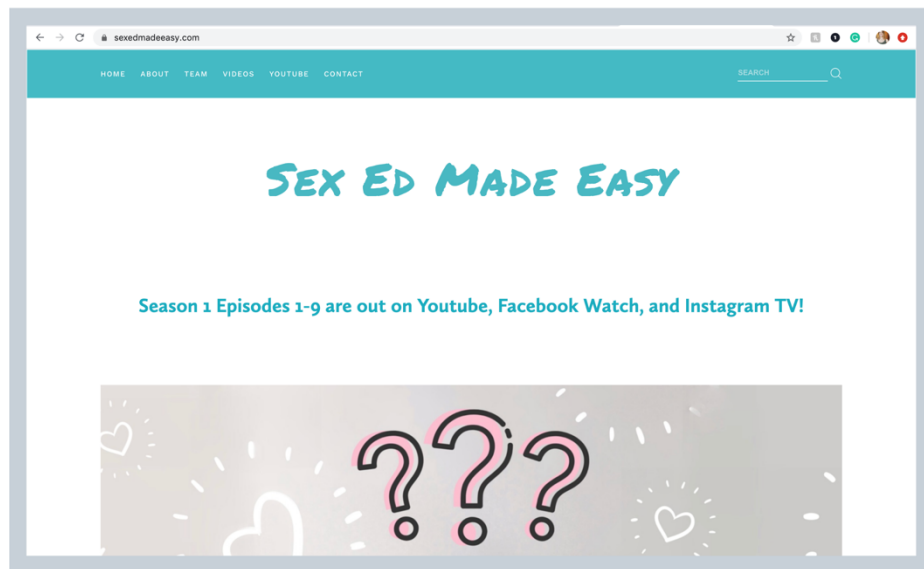
I then chose a playful brush font for the logo (pictured on the right). The last component of the logo is the orange gender neutral symbol. This symbol immediately lets members of the LGBTQIA+ community know they will be safe and respected. It also provokes curiosity in those who do not recognize the symbol. Either way, it sends the message that we are inclusive of genders, sexes, and sexualities.





LOOKING FORWARD

By this point, we know that better sex education is necessary and that a web series is a good method for sex education. In the upcoming section, I've included information on the business side of Sex Ed Made Easy.



BUSINESS PLAN





BUSINESS PLAN & TRAJECTORY

Identity & Purpose

Sex Ed Made Easy provides comprehensive, accessible, engaging, and medically accurate sex education to everyone from curious teens to sheltered adults.

Problem & Solution

Teenagers and young adults are undereducated about and underprepared for sexual activity, sexual health, and healthy relationships. Our episodes are entertaining and engaging, while still providing the information desperately needed.

Target Audience

The target audience is teenagers and young adults, specifically sexually curious adolescents who received either no sexual education or poor sexual education. Although it is geared to a younger audience, the information is medically accurate and helpful to all ages.

Competition

Online sexual education resources vary from websites that provide information for parents of sexually curious youth (ex: Planned Parenthood and Get Real Education), informative websites for older youth (ex: WebMD and I Wanna Know), more vulgar resources for adults (ex: O.School and Killer And A Sweet Thang), and pornography websites (ex: PornHub and XVideos). Although these resources serve their purpose, none of them are informative, engaging, and medically accurate.

12 MONTH TIMELINE

• June •

- Brainstorming!
- Early ideas for logos, name, etc

• July •

- Find Creative Team Members
- Create a Website
- Create Platform Accounts

• August •

- Film Episodes #1-3
- Launch Platforms & Website
- Start Initial Marketing

• September •

- Film Episodes #4-6
- Promote Season #1
- Pilot Episode Drops!

• October •

- Film Episodes #7-9
- Find 2-3 Sponsors and Affiliates for Season #1

• November •

- Film Episodes #10-12
- Find Partner & Brainstorm Mini-Series

• December •

- Film Episodes #13-15
- Begin Filming Mini-Series

• January •

- Film Episodes #16-18
- Promote & Launch Mini-Series

• February •

- Film Episodes #19-21
- Brainstorm Finale
- Create a Business Plan

• March •

- Film Finale
- Find Business Team Members

• April •

- Promote Finale
- Brainstorm Season 2

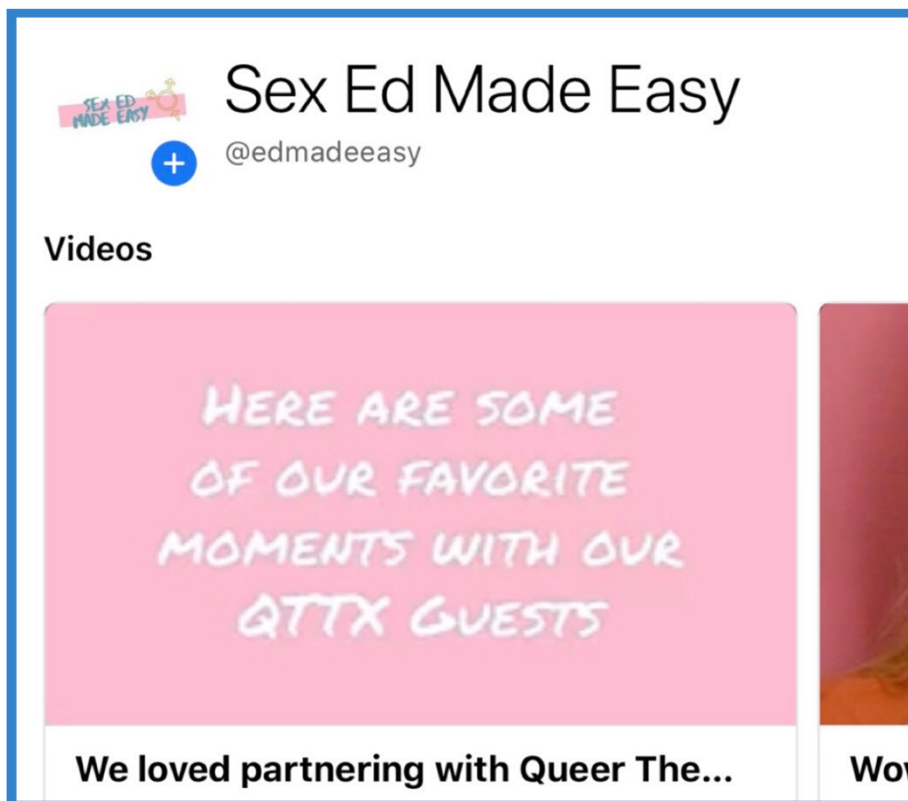
• May •

- Drop Finale!
- Prep for Season 2

EXPENSES

Creative Team			
Job Title	Job Description	Estimated \$/hr	Estimated Hrs per Episode
Host	A show host runs the show, talks to the guests and sometimes the audience, and provides entertainment for everyone.	\$15	5
Producer	A film producer is a person who oversees film production. Either employed by a production company or working independently, producers plan and coordinate various aspects of film production, such as selecting the script; coordinating writing, directing, and editing; and arranging financing.	\$15	5
Director	A director controls a film's artistic and dramatic aspects and visualizes the film while guiding the technical crew in the fulfillment of that vision.	\$15	4
Director of Photography	The director of photography is responsible for determining lighting, composition, and camera angles.	\$15	4
Video Editor	A video editor is responsible for editing and assembling recorded raw material into a suitable, finished product.	\$10	8
Lighting Designer	A lighting designer designs the lighting for film and sets up the physical lights on the set.	\$10	3
Sound Engineer	A sound technician assembles, operates and maintains the technical equipment used to record, amplify, enhance, mix or reproduce sound.	\$10	5
Camera Operator(s)	A camera operator works with the director of photography to record the film and operate the cameras.	\$7.50	3
Captioner	Closed captioners create on-screen text from audio in post-production.	\$10	8
Total Cost Per Episode:		\$532.50	

Platforms			
Platform	Estimated Initial Set-Up Cost	Estimated Cost/Year	Possible Marketing Costs/Year
Website via Squarespace	\$300	\$155.88	\$0
Instagram	\$0	\$0	\$300+
Facebook	\$0	\$0	\$300+
Youtube	\$0	\$0	\$0



FILMED EPISODES & JUSTIFICATIONS

#	Episode Title	Summary	Justification	Drop Date
1	Enthusiastic Consent with Derek Thomas Miller	This episode addresses what enthusiastic consent is and how to utilize it in sexual encounters.	Sexual assault is a problem in the United States. I believe enthusiastic consent could change the way teenagers view consent. Instead of simply looking for their partner to say "yes," teenagers would be able to search for physical and verbal signs that their partner is enjoying the sexual encounter.	09/17/2019
2	Sex Ed in America with Soph	This episode is a discussion of what the current state of sexual education looks like and how it has affected us personally.	Many people are unaware that the current state of sexual education looks like and how it affects youth.	09/17/2019
3	Reproductive Anatomy with Chris Frost	This episode is about the male and female reproductive anatomy and function.	It is important to know the anatomical names for your genitalia and the functions of your personal reproductive system. This allows you to make more informed decisions regarding your personal health.	10/01/2019
4	All About Contraception with Lily Kren	This episode reviews the various contraceptive methods available, how to get them, their costs, and their side effects.	Those looking to get contraceptives should know their options and be able to compare facts to find what is best for them.	10/15/2019
5	Identifying as Bisexual with Paul Amrani	This episode is about identifying as bisexual and our personal journeys as queer individuals.	Viewers can put faces and experiences to an identifier they may know little about. Others can identify with us and our experiences and feel less alone.	11/05/2019
6	Hooking Up Safer & STIs with Lauren Green	This episode is about hookup culture, preventing STIs, and common misconceptions about STIs.	It is important that sexually active individuals are informed of their risks and how to lower them.	11/19/2019
7	Sex on Campus with Dr. Michael Burns	This episode discusses truths, resources, and misconceptions about sexual activity on college campuses.	Media portrays college campuses as sexually rampant environments. This is not a reality for many students.	12/03/2019
8	Identifying as a Lesbian with Alyssa	This episode is about identifying as a lesbian and Alyssa's personal journey as a queer individual.	Viewers can put a face and experience to a label they may know little about. Others can identify with her and her experiences and feel less alone.	12/17/2019

9	Mental Health & Sex with Jacy Moss	This episode is about how mental health can influence sexual encounters, libido, and body image.	As a culture, we are just beginning to be open about mental health. We need to discuss how anxiety, depression, and other disorders can affect sex. Viewers can also identify with our personal experiences and feel less alone.	01/22/2020
10	Identifying as Gay with Cameron	This episode is on identifying as gay and Cameron's personal journey as a queer individual.	Viewers can put a face and experience to a label they may know little about. Others can identify with him and his experiences and feel less alone.	03/11/2020
11	Queer Theatre Texas	This episode is a compilation episode featuring the members of Queer Theatre Texas (our partners).	We are partners with QTTX and this episode gives us an opportunity to support them	04/07/2020
12	Non-Monogamy with Derek Thomas Miller	This episode is about consensual non-monogamy, the various types, and our personal experiences with non-monogamous relationships.	Not everyone engages in monogamous relationships and those who choose to participate in non-monogamy deserve education on the subject.	04/23/2020
13	Identifying as Trans with Tasha Fierce	This episode is on identifying as transgender and Tasha's personal journey as a trans individual.	Viewers can put a face and experience to a label they may know little about. Others can identify with her and her experiences and feel less alone.	05/05/2020
14	Sex, Stigma, Suppression with Aja Rodriguez	This episode is on the stigma revolving around sex, how cultures suppress individuals via sex, and Aja's personal hopes for the future.	Obviously sex is stigmatized. However, we rarely discuss why that is or who that benefits.	05/12/2020
15	Intersexuality	This episode is about defining intersexuality and refuting common misconceptions.	Many people are unaware of what intersexuality is and do not know how common it is. This episode is purely to make viewers aware.	05/19/2020
16	Identifying as Asexual with Madison Miller	This episode is about identifying as asexual and Madison's personal journey as a queer individual.	Viewers can put a face and experience to a label they may know little about. Others can identify with her and her experiences and feel less alone.	05/26/2020

"Sexuality is fluid."

UNKNOWN

"Like it or not, sexual activity is a reality for teens in America"

KELLY WELTCH "BETTER SEXUAL EDUCATION NEEDED IN US FOR STUDENT OF ALL AGES." AUGUST 24, 2011

"Providing information about contraception does not increase adolescent sexual activity"

CHRIS COLLINS "ABSTINENCE ONLY VS. COMPREHENSIVE SEX EDUCATION"

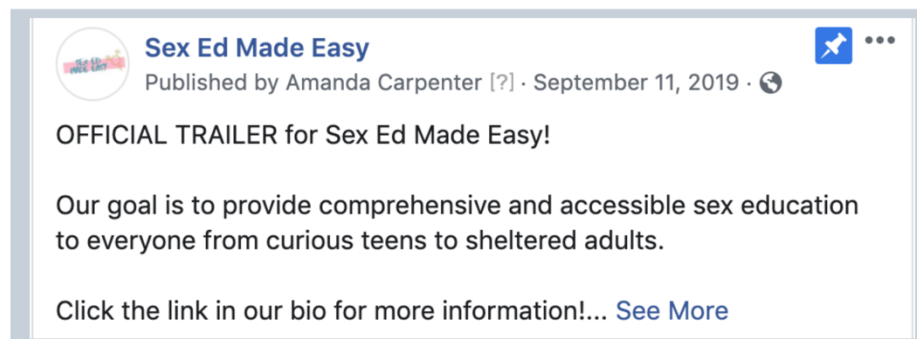
POSSIBLE FUTURE TOPICS

Possible Future Topics	
Topic	Description
The Myth of Virginity	What is virginity? Why do we care about it? Is the hymen real? How does it work?
Healthy Relationships	Is my relationship healthy? How can I communicate my needs with my partner? How do I spot abuse?
The Female Orgasm	Is the orgasm gap real? Do females ejaculate? What is squirting? Why can females have repeat orgasms? Why are orgasms more difficult for females?
Masturbation	What is masturbation? Is it healthy? How often is too often? Does it have side effects?
Sexual Dysfunction	What is sexual dysfunction? Let's discuss different conditions. Why can't I orgasm? Sex hurts, can you help me?
The Importance of Pleasure	What is sexual pleasure? Is it important? Why? Can pleasure be addicting?
Alcohol & Sex	How does alcohol affect sexual encounters? Can I consent under the influence? Does alcohol influence my ability to orgasm?
Choosing Abstinence	What is abstinence? Why do people care about it? Should I care about it? Should I choose abstinence? What should I know before staying celibate?
Sex Therapy	What is sex therapy? What does a sex therapist do?
Exploring Kinks Safely	What are kinks? Why are they shamed? Are kinks bad? Can some kinks be bad? How should I explore any kinks I think I have?
Pornography	Is porn bad? Should I watch it? I don't like porn, is there something wrong with me? Can someone like porn too much?
Sexual Abuse	What is sexual abuse? How can I spot sexual abuse? How do I deal with it after the fact?
Taking Care of Your Genitalia	How should I clean my genitals? Do I need to use special soap? What doctors do I need to see? How would I know if something's wrong?
Love vs. Lust	What's the difference between love and lust? How do I know which one I feel?
All About Abortion	What is abortion for real? Why is it such a big deal? What should I believe? If I choose abortion, what should I expect? Are there negative effects? Do people regret abortions?
Disability & Sex	Can disabled people have sex? How should I approach sex with disabled partners?
Pop Culture & Sex	Does sex sell? Why is it used for marketing? Why are certain cultures so obsessed with sex?

MARKETING

The goal of the logo was to create something that is playful, youthful, inclusive, and used colors associated with education. For the website, we settled on the color palette orange, teal, yellow, and pink. All of the colors except yellow are used in the logo. Orange, yellow, and blue are often associated with education and learning (Poole) while pink is a very youthful and innocent color (Przybyla). To create an inclusive feel, we made sure to use the gender neutral symbol to show we are inclusive of all sexes, genders, and sexuality.

The same playfulness is reflected in the business card design.



V. CONCLUSION

In this thesis I covered the current state of sex education in the U.S., why proper sexual education is necessary, what currently exists and is missing, the justification for Sex Ed Made Easy, the creation and release of my channel, and a business plan. The current state of sexual education is poor, and the existing resources online are severely lacking. While the current state of sexual education is disheartening, there is hope. There are people around the country demanding better for the next generation (Advocating for Sex Education in Your Community). I plan on supporting that fight in hopes that someday all children receive proper sexual education. In the meantime, my goal is to turn Sex Ed Made Easy into that place where youth and young adults feel like they are able to safely ask questions, share insecurities, and learn free of shame and stigma.

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