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Family Life Sex Education Goal Questionnaire II

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The initial Family Life Sex Education Goal Questionnaire (FLSE-GQ) was developed in the early 1980s as a needs assessment instrument designed to assess the attitudes of school personnel and community members toward the various goals of family life and sex education in the public schools. The FLSE-GQ-II is an updated version that includes additional items relevant for assessing family life sexuality education needs in today’s public school systems. Outcome research has demonstrated that comprehensive sexuality education programs have a positive impact on delaying initiation of sexual behavior, reducing the number of new sexual partners, and reducing the incidence of unprotected sexual intercourse, to name a few (Alford, 2003, 2008; Kirby, 2001; Kirby, Laris, & Rolleri, 2005). Despite past federal governmental efforts to fund abstinence-based sex education, the Government Accountability Office Report (2006) and the Waxman Report (2004) suggest little evidence to date has been documented demonstrating program efficacy of this approach. Most experts, professional organizations, and even parents support comprehensive sexuality education (McKeon, 2006). For decades, school administrators and school boards have hesitated to include more controversial goals in their sex education programs for fear of negative community reactions or resistance from teachers or other school personnel; however, there is evidence that negative attitudes are found mostly among a small but vocal minority (Scales, 1983). The FLSE-GQ-II provides an empirical basis for determining local needs and the extent of school and community support for the various content areas of sex education and offers a means of clarifying diverse attitudes and priorities.

Description, Response Mode, and Timing

The instrument has a long and a short form. The long form consists of 60 goal items, and the short form consists of 20 goal items. Items on both forms have a 5-point Likert-type response format with response options labeled from Very Unimportant to Very Important. Respondents circle the number indicating the relative importance of each goal item for a family life sex education program. The long form takes 30 to 40 minutes for the parents to complete, and somewhat less time for the teachers. Owing to the length of the long form, the short form may be more appropriate for some parent groups. Researchers should consider the degree of literacy, interest, and so forth in the population to be sampled in determining which version to use.

The FLSE-GQ-II (or its earlier version) has been used with four major samples: 337 elementary and high school teachers, 248 parents of elementary and high school children in the Midwest, and 175 high school teachers and 157 parents of high school children in the Northeast. Separate factor analyses were carried out on the goal items from the teacher and parent samples. These analyses identified five goal dimensions or themes common to both samples: (a) facilitating sexual decision-making and life skills, (b) teaching about male and female physical development, (c) encouraging respect for diversity, (d) providing secondary prevention (e.g., to help pregnant girls to stay in school), and (e) teaching about the family and integrating sexuality in personal growth. Within the Midwest sample, Sexual Decision-Making and Life Skills was the largest factor (31% of the variance) with parent participants, whereas Family Life and Personal Growth were the largest factors (30% of the variance) in the teacher sample. Within the Northeast sample, Sexual Decision-Making and Life Skills was the sole large factor (32% of the variance). The remaining goal dimensions were minor goal dimensions in both samples (4% to 9% of the variance). The five scales of the short form correspond to each of the common goal dimensions and include items that had loadings of .5 or greater on corresponding factors in both the parent and the teacher samples.

Scoring

Investigators working with large samples will probably want to score the long form of the FLSE-GQ-II by subjecting the importance ratings for all 60 items to a principal components factor analysis. This procedure avoids any a priori assumptions about the salient goal dimensions within a particular population. The investigators can then derive scores for each goal dimension either by using computer-generated factor scores or by adding the importance ratings for the items with highest loadings on each factor. Investigators working with smaller samples and/or preferring the short form of the FLSE-GQ-II can derive scores for the Sexual Decision-Making and Life Skills (Items 8, 10, 17, 18, 21, 43), Physical Development (Items 32, 33, 44), Respect for Diversity (Items 47, 48, 49), Secondary Prevention (Items 39, 45, 57), and Family Life and Personal Growth (Items 16, 20, 22, 23, 54) scales by adding responses for each scale item and dividing by the total number of scale items.

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Reliability and Validity

Cronbach alphas for the five goal dimensions from the long form range from .60 to .79 for the sample of teachers, and from .65 to .85 for the sample of parents. Cronbach alphas for the five scales from the short form range from .73 to .83 for the sample of teachers, and from .79 to .87 for the sample of parents. Although the Cronbach alphas are slightly higher for the short form, researchers may want to use the longer form to assess whether new goal dimensions exist for their specific population. The questionnaire has been used to identify school personnel and community member goals for a Family Life Sex Education program in a large, midwestern urban center and the rural Northeast. Frank, Godin, Jacobson, and Sugrue (1982) and Godin, Frank, and Jacobson (1984) assessed relationships between goal dimensions derived from the long form of the FLSE-GQ-II and the teachers’ and parents’ demographic characteristics (i.e., age, sex, race, and religiosity). Among the teachers, religiosity was the best predictor of differing attitudes toward the goals of family life sex education in the public schools, whereas among the parents both religiosity and race contributed significantly to attitude differences. Both parents and teachers rated sexual decision-making goals as significantly less important than the other goal dimensions, contributing to the greater controversy surrounding this topic area in family life sex education. Within the Northeast sample, parents and teachers were in agreement regarding the high importance of sexual decision-making and life skills, whereas there were significant differences in importance ratings related to the minor factors (Razzano & Godin, 2006).

Other Information

The Family Life Sex Education Goal Questionnaires were copyrighted in 1985, 1994, and 2006. Electronic copies of the questionnaire, including an optional demographic questionnaire, are available by contacting the senior author.

References


Exhibit

Family Life Sex Education Goal Questionnaire II

This questionnaire lists goals which some people have described as important for a family life sex education program. Some goals may be of lesser importance than others. For each of the goals listed, we would like you to indicate (on the 5-point scale provided) whether or not you view the goal as important for a family life sex education program in the ______ (specify program, school, grade level, etc.).

Instructions: In the column to the right of the goals listed on the pages which follow, indicate the importance of each goal by using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Unimportant</td>
<td>Somewhat Unimportant</td>
<td>Neutral Importance</td>
<td>Somewhat Important</td>
<td>Very Important</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here is an example of how to use the scale:

Example Items

A. To teach children about how to stay physically healthy as they grow. 1 2 3 4 5
B. To teach children how to play a musical instrument. 1 2 3 4 5
If, in your opinion, the first goal (“To teach children about how to stay physically healthy as they grow”) is somewhat important (number “4” on the scale) for a family life sex education program, you would circle “4” next to the goal statement in the column on the right. If, in your opinion, the second goal (“To teach children how to play a musical instrument”) is very unimportant for a family life sex education program, you would circle the number “1” in the column to the right.

Remember, you may see some goals as more important than others. Please circle your opinion by circling the number that best represents your views beside each goal statement.

1. To help adolescents feel good about their physical appearance.
2. To help adolescents appreciate their special qualities and personality as well as that of other boys and girls.
3. To reduce guilt and fear about sexuality.
4. To provide information about abnormal sexual development and behavior.
5. To help adolescents understand how sexual development affects other aspects of personal growth and development.
6. To provide complete information about male and female genitalia (sex organs) and other physical differences between men and women.
7. To involve parents in selecting instruction materials and planning the curriculum of the family life sex education program.
8. To provide information about abortion and its effects on the body.
9. To provide information about the biology of human reproduction and birth.
10. To discuss ways of coping with an unexpected pregnancy.
11. To help adolescents develop skills in getting along with members of the opposite sex.
12. To provide information about how to be good parents.
13. To help adolescents learn to understand and communicate with each other better.
14. To make youth aware of community services related to health and prenatal care.
15. To emphasize the importance of the family as the keystone of American life.
16. To help adolescents understand their responsibilities to self, family, and friends as they grow up.
17. To inform youth of community services related to birth control and sexual decision-making.
18. To counsel adolescents to make their own decisions about how far to go in their sexual activities.
19. To encourage adolescents to talk more openly with their parents about sexuality.
20. To discuss the role of the family in personal growth and development.
21. To encourage adolescents to use contraceptives if they decide to have sexual intercourse.
22. To discuss ways in which families work out conflicts and solve problems.
23. To help adolescents understand people’s feelings and points of view.
24. To educate adolescents about peer pressure and how to deal with it.
25. To provide information about sexually transmitted infections including HIV and AIDS.
26. To teach about abstinence as a form of contraception.
27. To encourage discussion of personal family experiences in the classroom.
28. To provide special courses about family life and sexuality for disabled students.
29. To encourage adolescents to think about alternatives to abortion.
30. To bring in outside speakers to talk to youth about sexuality.
31. To counsel boys who are expectant fathers.
32. To correct myths and misinformation about the body.
33. To help adolescents to view the growth changes in their bodies as normal and healthy.
34. To discuss how the attitudes toward growth and development may be different for different ethnic groups and cultures in our society.
35. To provide information about alternative sexual behaviors and lifestyles, such as homosexuality.
36. To discuss abortion as a form of contraception.
37. To provide workshops to assist parents in talking more openly with their adolescent children about sexuality.
38. To encourage grooming and thoughtfulness about personal appearance.
39. To counsel girls who are pregnant.
40. To demonstrate how to put on a condom using a plastic teaching model or banana.
41. To refer students with special needs to social service agencies.
42. To make adolescents aware of the negative effects of sex role stereotypes.
43. To provide information about good prenatal care.
44. To provide information about contraceptives and how they work, and describe their effects on the body.
45. To teach about biological changes during puberty.
46. To provide individual counseling to students with low self-esteem or those who feel embarrassed about their bodies.
47. To meet with parents about a child who is having difficulties with sexual issues and stresses.
According to equity theory, people perceive a relationship as equitable when they and their partners are getting what they both “deserve” from their romantic and marital relationships. In theory, couples are assumed to feel most comfortable when their romantic and sexual relationships are maximally profitable and (considering what they and their partners contribute to their relationship) they are reaping all the rewards they deserve—no more and certainly no less (see Hatfield, Walster, & Berscheid, 1978). Equity has been found to relate to many aspects of relationships and appears to be important throughout a couple’s lifetime (Pillemer, Hatfield, & Sprecher, 2008). More recently, evolutionary theorists contend that concerns about equity have an enormous impact in the dating marketplace (Baumeister & Vohs, 2004). The Global Measure of Equity and the Multi-Trait Measure of Equity were designed to assess men’s and women’s perceptions of how fair and equitable their love and sexual relationships are (Traupmann, Peterson, Utne, & Hatfield, 1981; Walster, 1975).

Description

On the Global Measure of Equity, men and women are asked to assess how fair and equitable they perceive their dating and marital relationships to be. Respondents indicate their judgments on a 7-point Likert-type scale, with answers ranging from +3 = I am getting a much better deal than my partner to −3 = My partner is getting a much better deal than I am.

On the Multi-Trait Measure of Equity, the experimenter begins by explaining the concept of equity (see Exhibit). The experimenter then hands the respondent a list of 25 items, which consist of Personal Concerns, Emotional Concerns, Day-to-Day Concerns, and Opportunities Gained and Lost (i.e., things one gains or loses simply by dating or being married). Each item can also be rated as to importance. Once again, men and women are asked to assess how fair and equitable their dating and marital relationships are and to indicate their judgments on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from +3 = I am getting a much better deal than my partner, to −3 = My partner is getting a much better deal than I am.

Response Mode and Timing

The equity measures can be administered either individually or in groups. Respondents are asked to circle the number (ranging from +3 to −3) indicating how true each statement is for them. The Global Measure of Equity generally takes 1 minute to administer. The Multi-Trait Measure of Equity takes approximately 15 minutes to administer. If each item on the Multi-Trait Measure is weighted by importance, the scale generally takes 30 minutes to complete.

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