



The education of the sexes, which is based on opportunity, self-knowledge, personal skills and positive relationships

EMAIZE Centro Sexológico will be delivering the course titled "**Sex Education: Committed to Quality Relationships**" in October. We spoke with Mainer García de Vicuña, who will be in charge of delivering this course

We have been talking about Sex Education for years, but what does it actually imply? How has it changed?

There are two types of sex education: one that is based on fear and risk avoidance, which has been the most widespread, and the education of the sexes, which is based on opportunity, self-knowledge, personal skills and positive relationships.

The former is usually aimed at young people and is mainly based on providing information on contraception to prevent infections and unplanned pregnancies. The data clearly shows that embarking on unsafe sex does not depend solely on having information. We also have to work on self-esteem, respect, care for oneself and for others, sexual and partner stereotypes... and, consequently, in addition to information, we need training and a review of the information received through different channels.

At Emaize, we have been working on Sex Education for 26 years from the perspective of people, bodies, emotions, and relations between sexuated people. That is the reason for providing education from primary school onwards. There would be no point in providing Sex Education in primary school if we only sought to avoid risks. However, it is essential if we want every sexuated person to develop fully and to be aware of themselves, to accept themselves, to learn to express themselves and relate in a positive manner. It is a process that will help to avoid risks, but not only that, the persons involved will learn how their bodies work, why, the changes that will come, to express the emotions that this process generates, to accept themselves and learn to accept other people and their differences, to feel better and establish relationships based on respect and the acceptance of other people...

In the last decade, there has been a shift in education, from risk prevention to comprehensive sex education, leading us to work increasingly in early childhood education and primary schools.

This is a highly positive change that needs to be taken further.

Why is it important for educators to attend this course?

In childhood and primary education, the children and young people spend many hours at school and/or doing after school activities, therefore, the interaction with these educators is tremendous.

Every educator, like every person, has baggage consisting of their life and what they have heard, forbidden, and experienced, with their beliefs, fears and prejudices, with pleasant and not so pleasant experiences... Every person will have that baggage with them when they educate children and if checking that baggage before embarking on the journey is necessary, it is also necessary before using it to educate others as there may be positive things for the trip and others that weigh you down and are no good.

When educating, it will not be the same if we believe that sexuality consists of the erotic games we play with our partner or that sexuality is our own vital process as sexuated persons. We do not educate the same based on fear or on opportunities. We do not educate the same based on prohibition, obligation or learning.

Regarding sexuality, every educator needs to reflect on what, why, and who they are going to educate. Depending on the answers, the type of education, the importance given to it and its integration into ordinary activities will be more or less effective.

What are the differences between educating in childhood, primary or secondary schools?

Sex Education is based on the people with whom we work; therefore, the content and especially the language to be used must be adapted to their abilities. For learning to be meaningful, it must be understood. When we talk about sexuality, we usually come across limitations derived from our own education, from social customs, and it is extremely common not to know how to speak and, therefore, the topic is often ignored. Other times, we want to talk about it but we lack the tools or the training to do so and we feel uncomfortable or frustrated by not doing a good job.

These difficulties do not depend so much on the age of the person receiving the education but on the person delivering it. Once an educator has been trained, is aware of the characteristics of the evolutionary stages, and has developed certain skills, they will be able to adapt better to people of different ages.

Give me a reason to encourage educators to take this Sex Education and Positive Relationships course

It is important to take this type of course to bring all the above out into the open. Knowing what we are talking about when we talk about sexuality, broadening our views, acquiring skills, integrating sex education into everyday life...will make us more positive educational references for the children and young people we encounter and will help us to provide a far healthier high-quality comprehensive education based on the values of knowledge, acceptance, respect and positive expression.