

How do you work in schools?

We bring comprehensive sex education to students in schools across America in three important ways. We provide substantive, in-person and online trainings for educators to reach elementary, middle and high school age youth with age-appropriate, medically accurate information. Answer is the only organization in the U.S. to offer robust online professional development in sexuality education on a national scale. Students access the print version of our unique, teen-written magazine, *Sex, Etc.*, in classrooms and libraries in both public and private schools, as well as additional content and features online. And through our leadership in the Future of Sex Education (FoSE) initiative, we are helping to successfully institutionalize sex education in our nation's schools.

How are you affiliated with Rutgers University?

Since our founding 35 years ago, Answer has remained a program of Rutgers University, and especially in the early days, this provided much-needed credibility for an issue that remains controversial. Although Answer is entirely self-funded, Rutgers provides Answer with ample office space and fulfills many of our administrative functions, such as accounting, IT, human resources, etc. We also benefit tremendously by access to Rutgers' cutting-edge e-learning platform, which provides the foundation for our online trainings. Answer is an educational organization nurtured and housed by one of America's leading academic research centers.

How do you work with SIECUS and Advocates for Youth?

We work in close partnership with these valued sister organizations, each benefitting from the other's strengths, approaches and constituencies. While Answer focuses primarily on teens and teachers, we work in coalition with our partners who have greater bandwidth in the advocacy arena and may be able to push the envelope more than we can, given our target audience. We receive joint funding to work together extensively on FoSE, which has brought about much-needed change in the field of sexuality education that is reflected inside and outside the classroom.

Why do you continue to produce a print edition of *Sex, Etc.*?

Many schools and students still do not have access to technology in the classroom or at home, particularly in underserved communities. These print copies are invaluable and are often shared among multiple classrooms and students. Frequently paid for with grant funding, many schools bulk order the magazine, with lesson plans created by Answer to accompany each issue. Producing the print issue is also a great learning experience for the young people who work on the magazine. They develop writing, critical thinking and leadership skills doing hands-on journalism work that enjoys a national audience. While the teen staff writers live locally, contributors from across the nation write content for both the magazine and website.

How do you measure impact?

We routinely track the number of students and teachers we reach through our educational programs, which are themselves systematically monitored and evaluated. We measure the impact of our training program by conducting pre- and post-tests to assess changes in participants' knowledge and comfort with the subject matter, as well as to measure their intentions to implement activities and skills acquired in the training.

We measure the impact of our work with FoSE by periodically surveying school districts and other key stakeholders to gather information on the uptake of FoSE tools like the *National Sexuality Education Standards* and the *National Teacher Preparation Standards for Sexuality Education*.

In the next two years, Answer seeks to build upon our success reaching young people online and with our magazine by developing a curriculum based on *Sex, Etc.* content, using a hybrid digital/in-person instructional design. Our ultimate goal is to conduct a rigorous evaluation of a *Sex, Etc.* curriculum that will earn the designation of an “evidence-based program,” enabling the replication of the curriculum by schools and other organizations across the country. Developing and evaluating theory-based curricula is a significant undertaking in terms of time and resources and will require additional funding.

Why should sex education begin in kindergarten?

Educating young children is necessary to create the building blocks for healthy sexual expression throughout the life cycle. In addition to teaching kids appropriate names of their body parts, much of the conversation with young children centers around friendship. What does it mean to have a friend, to be a friend? How do you show respect and state your boundaries? This is the foundation for understanding romantic relationships, consent, etc., as well as preventing childhood sexual abuse.

Do you work internationally?

While the *Sex, Etc.* website is accessed by youth around the globe, currently we lack the staff and infrastructure required to engage directly in schools or with school systems outside the U.S.

Why don't you produce a Spanish-language version of *Sex, Etc.*?

The vast majority of Latina and Latino teens living in the U.S. are bi-lingual and/or are native English speakers. The perspectives and experiences of young Latinx staff writers and contributors are included in the magazine's content and creation.

Tell me about your organization.

Founded in 1981, today Answer has a budget of \$1.2 million and a diverse staff of nine. Over a dozen students aged 14 to 19 work on the Teen Editorial Staff to produce *Sex, Etc.*, along with national teen contributors, to reach an online audience of over two million. Over 3,000 adults annually participate in our training program.

What does your funding look like?

Approximately 70% of our funding comes from foundations and 20% comes from earned income we receive from our national training program. We have recently launched an initiative to engage more individual donors in supporting our work. Please consider making a gift at Answer.rutgers.edu or hosting a small get together to introduce your network to Answer.

Have more questions? We have answers! Please contact Executive Director Nicole Cushman at 848-445-7929 or nicole.cushman@rutgers.edu.