

Are Schools Doing Enough?

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Life Orientation (L.O.) is one of the most important subjects taught in South African schools because it equips learners with the knowledge and life skills needed to make responsible decisions. Despite this, the increasing number of teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and HIV cases among young people raises concerns about whether enough is being done in L.O. classes.

"We have an L.O. teacher who never goes into detail about our sexual health topics. He only gives us the readings and activities, then sits on his phone, or he's never in class," says 16-year-old Rebecca Moses.

Many teachers avoid discussing sensitive topics such as sexual relationships, contraception, consent, and HIV prevention. This may be due to embarrassment, limited teaching resources, or fear of criticism. As a result, many learners are left with unanswered questions and often rely on friends or social media for information, which can be inaccurate and misleading.

As the saying goes, "Knowledge is power." When learners receive accurate information, they are more likely to make informed and responsible choices.

Former South African President Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." This quote highlights the important role teachers play in educating learners about sexual health.

Life Orientation teachers should provide honest, age-appropriate information in a safe and respectful environment where learners feel comfortable asking questions.

Teachers have a responsibility to ensure that learners are well informed about sexual health. Strengthening Life Orientation lessons can help reduce teenage pregnancies, prevent STIs and HIV infections, and empower young people to build healthier and more responsible futures.

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