Tackling *THE* Talk: Helping Parents Protect Their Children with Sexual Education

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Some of the scary truth:

- The WHO reports that 35% of women worldwide have experienced a form of sexual violence.
- The US National Criminal Justice Reference Services reports that about 25% of women in the US experience sexual violence and about 8% of men experience sexual violence.
- Research in the 1970’s demonstrated that people who had a traumatic sexual experience as a child or teen were more likely to have health problems as they got older (Pennebaker)
- Children are most vulnerable to sex abuse between the ages of 7 and 13. (Finkelhor, 1988)
- Nearly 44% of Texas women have been sexually assaulted. (SafePlace)
- 22.5% of Texas men have been sexually assaulted (SafePlace)
- Sexual assault costs the state of Texas an estimated 8 billion per year in medical expenses, lost work productivity and mental healthcare (SafePlace)
- 25% of women and 16% of men have been sexually abused as children. (Dube, Withfield & Felitti, 2005)

Three critical points:

1. Preparing caregivers and arming them with support is critical.
   - When do I say what? A common stressor/question from caregivers
   - What is sexuality? How is that discussion different from a clinical explanation of body parts?
   - We have to become comfortable with the proper names of genitals in order to reduce shame and increase our client’s knowledge.
2. Knowledge is power.
   - Secrets keep us sick
   - How do we give the next generation the opportunity to have a healthier relationship with their bodies?
3. If we don’t educate our kids about sex, who will?
   - Do you trust the Internet, social media and your children’s peers to educate kids on their bodies and how to care for and respect them?