

Speaker hits nail on the head

Participants at this week's state student council convention were treated to some high-power, quality speakers.

We only wish the entire community could have heard the positive messages, many dealing with problems like youth violence, drugs, alcohol and sex.

One speaker in particular caught our attention with a few choice comments on the consequences of being sexually active at a young age. Motivational speaker Dr. Stephen Sroka touched on sexually-transmitted diseases and pregnancy, which are always important to cover, but then he addressed that organ that always seems to slip through the cracks in sex discussions: the heart.

Our opinion

We wanted to jump up and down when he actually told the students that *they* could get hurt – not just their bodies, but their emotional well-being.

With sex constantly being portrayed as a casual, no-strings-attached option these days, it comes as quite a shock to many young people that there's a whole lot more involved in their decision than just "protection."

Sroka shoots down the protection myth: "Do you know what they forgot to tell you about condoms? It cannot protect your brain or your reputation. None are big enough and strong enough to protect your heart."

Allelujah! Finally someone has gotten past the medical mumbo jumbo and spoken straight to the students.

Sroka's analogies don't pull any punches, but we need to stop kidding ourselves that we are "protecting" young people from "adult" references when they see far worse on television every night and are likely more advanced than we are in *physical* knowledge of sex.

But therein lies the difference; they may be mature enough to experiment with the physical, but are they prepared for the heartbreak and the complexities and confusion?

We talk to teens about sex sometimes like they're making a decision about their medical health or about planned parenthood. But we're so busy trying to scare them abstinent or get "the talk" over with that we seldom focus on the emotional factors, which are huge. We don't give them enough tools to make a mature decision.

We may not remember or understand everything in teen-age minds, but it would really help if we talked to the *whole person* and showed them that we care about their feelings, not just their reputations.

Thank you, Dr. Sroka, for hitting the nail right on the head.