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big decisionsTM

**MAKING HEALTHY
INFORMED CHOICES
ABOUT SEX**

BY JANET REALINI, M.D., MPH

talk about  Texas presents

big decisions™

5th Edition

**MAKING HEALTHY,
INFORMED CHOICES
ABOUT SEX.**

By Janet Realini, MD, MPH



Advancing informed sexual health decisions

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Curriculum Outline

01 RULES OF THE GAME: Forming a respectful group

Objectives

- ◇ Review the Key Messages of *Big Decisions*
- ◇ Identify respect as a key value for the group
- ◇ Develop ground rules for the group
- ◇ Role-play showing respect for others
- ◇ Express confidence in your ability to show respect

Activities

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1.1 | Introduction and Key Messages Review | 5 min |
| 1.2 | Ice-Breaker: Differences and Respect | 10 min |
| 1.3 | Setting Ground Rules | 10 min |
| 1.4 | Respecting Others | 15 min |
| 1.5 | What Respect Means to Me | 5 min |

02 GOALS AND DREAMS: My future

Objectives

- ◇ Picture your dreams for the future
- ◇ Consider how a pregnancy, or another pregnancy, or HIV/STI could affect reaching your goals and dreams
- ◇ Make a personal decision about avoiding pregnancy, or another pregnancy, and STIs
- ◇ Prepare to talk with a parent or other trusted adult about goals and dreams

Activities

- | | | |
|-----|--|---------------|
| 2.1 | My Dream Board | 30 min |
| 2.2 | How Could It Affect My Goals and Dreams? | 5 min |
| 2.3 | My Goals, My Decisions | 5 min |
| 2.4 | Homework: Talking about Goals and Dreams | 5 min |

03 RELATIONSHIPS AND ROMANCE: What is healthy?

Objectives

- ◇ Reflect on conversations with your parent or other adult about goals and dreams
- ◇ Identify characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships
- ◇ Learn how people in unhealthy relationships can seek help, if needed
- ◇ Personalize the importance of showing and expecting respect

Activities

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| 3.1 | Homework Review: Goals and Dreams | 5 min |
| 3.2 | Healthy or Unhealthy? | 20 min |
| 3.3 | Relationship Role-Plays | 15 min |
| 3.4 | Relationships and Me | 5 min |

04 ANATOMY AND REPRODUCTION: How it works

Objectives

- ◇ Identify the names and functions of the reproductive body parts
- ◇ Review how pregnancy happens
- ◇ Evaluate statements about reproduction to determine if they are true or false

Activities

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| 4.1 | Ice-Breaker: What Do They Call It? | 5 min |
| 4.2 | Reproductive Anatomy: The Body Parts | 20 min |
| 4.3 | The Journeys of the Sperm and the Egg | 10 min |
| 4.4 | Reproduction: True or False? | 10 min |

05 ABSTINENCE: Decisions to wait

Objectives

- ◇ Define what is meant by "abstinence"
- ◇ Identify reasons to not have sex
- ◇ Learn that choosing abstinence means setting limits
- ◇ List ways to show someone you care other than sex
- ◇ Personalize the advantages of abstinence

Activities

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------------------|---------------|
| 5.1 | Reasons to Wait | 10 min |
| 5.2 | Is This Abstinence? | 15 min |
| 5.3 | Ways to Show You Care | 10 min |
| 5.4 | My Ideas about Abstinence | 5 min |
| 5.5 | Homework: Talking about Abstinence | 5 min |

Curriculum Outline, continued

06. A CLEAR “NO”: Respecting and defending limits

Objectives

- ◇ Reflect on conversations with your parent or other adult about abstinence
- ◇ Recognize the right to say “no” and the essentials of “yes”
- ◇ Consider how to defend your limits and respect others’ limits
- ◇ Practice effective ways to say “no”

Activities

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------|
| 6.1 | Homework Review: Talking about Abstinence | 5 min |
| 6.2 | The Right to Say “No” | 20 min |
| 6.3 | Pressure Situations: A CLEAR “No” | 20 min |

07. SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS, INCLUDING HIV/AIDS

Objectives

- ◇ Personalize the potential consequences of common STIs
- ◇ Identify ways to reduce the risk of getting and spreading STIs
- ◇ Identify health providers in your community that provide testing for STIs
- ◇ Identify your personal limits to reduce your risk of STIs

Activities

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------------|---------------|
| 7.1 | Index Cards | 5 min |
| 7.2 | Getting to Know about STIs | 20 min |
| 7.3 | Preventing STIs | 15 min |
| 7.4 | STIs and Me | 5 min |

08. CONTRACEPTION: Pregnancy at a Good Time for You

Objectives

- ◇ State what you would like to have in place before you have or cause a pregnancy or another pregnancy
- ◇ Evaluate commonly used contraceptive methods, including abstinence, for effectiveness
- ◇ Identify your personal limits to avoid pregnancy, or another pregnancy, until it is a good time for you
- ◇ Prepare to talk with a parent or other trusted adult about having children

Activities

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------|
| 8.1 | When would be a Good Time for a Pregnancy or another Pregnancy? | 5 min |
| 8.2 | Effectiveness Line-Up | 15 min |
| 8.3 | Contraceptive Method Bingo | 15 min |
| 8.4 | Pregnancy in My Life | 5 min |
| 8.5 | Talking about Having Children Homework | 5 min |

09. STAYING HEALTHY AND ON TRACK: My safety and my limits

Objectives

- ◇ Reflect on the conversation with your parent or other adult about having children
- ◇ Demonstrate the ability to say “no” effectively to sex without a condom.
- ◇ Consider the risks of sexting nude photos
- ◇ Consider limits that will keep you healthy and safe

Activities

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|---------------|
| 9.1 | Homework Review: Having Children | 5 min |
| 9.2 | Staying Safer | 20 min |
| 9.3 | A Story | 15 min |
| 9.4 | My Safety and My Limits | 5 min |

10. MY DECISIONS: Ready for challenges

Objectives

- ◇ Reinforce the connection between your decisions and achieving your goals and dreams
- ◇ Anticipate how the adolescent brain can make healthy decisions challenging
- ◇ Personalize strategies to handle challenging situations
- ◇ Celebrate completion of *Big Decisions*

Activities

- | | | |
|------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| 10.1 | My Goals and My Decisions | 5 min |
| 10.2 | Decisions and the Brain | 15 min |
| 10.3 | Ready for Challenges | 15 min |
| 10.4 | <i>Big Decisions</i> Graduation | 10 min |

Activity 2.2 5 MIN

HOW COULD IT AFFECT MY GOALS & DREAMS?

Tell the students:

- ▶ The whole point of the *Big Decisions* program is to help you stay healthy and achieve your goals and dreams by helping you make healthy decisions.
- ▶ Getting pregnant or getting someone pregnant and having a baby at any time of life is often a positive experience. Of course, there is a lot of responsibility that comes with being a parent.
- ▶ Becoming a parent as a teen does not mean that a person cannot reach their goals. But, often it does make it harder for young people to achieve their goals.
- ▶ If someone is already a parent, having another child very soon can mean even bigger responsibility. So, even if someone is pregnant or parenting now, preventing another pregnancy from happening soon may be important to them.

FACILITATOR NOTE

Pregnancy, STIs, and Goals and Dreams

Activity 2.2 focuses on the impact of a pregnancy or an STI might have on students' goals and dreams for the future. It is essential to avoid shaming or stigmatizing either of these situations. Certainly, a pregnancy can be a positive event.

Even though STIs are not positive events, there is treatment for all STIs—and some are curable. To avoid inadvertently shaming anyone, a matter-of-fact attitude on the part of the facilitator is often helpful for this discussion.

Write “Pregnancy” on the board or newsprint on one side of the list of goals and dreams.

Ask the class:

- ▶ What effect do you think a pregnancy as a teen, either getting pregnant or getting someone pregnant, might have on achieving these goals and dreams?

If needed, offer a couple of examples, e.g.:

- ▼ Being pregnant or parenting could mean it would be harder to graduate from high school, because it would be hard to find time to study.
- ▼ Being pregnant or parenting could mean someone feels motivated to succeed, so they can be an especially good parent to their child.

As suggestions are made for effects on goals and dreams, write key words on the board or newsprint in the “Pregnancy” column next to the appropriate goal affected.

Acknowledge that:

- ▶ Some of these goals might be harder to achieve, or might be delayed by having a child as a teen.
- ▶ For some, pregnancy and parenthood as a teen could be a part of achieving their goals.

Refer to the **Facilitator Resource for Activity 2.2** for ideas about how a pregnancy can affect teens’ achieving goals and dreams.

Now, on the other side of the list of goals and dreams, write “STIs”.

Tell the students:

- ▶ Pregnancy and having children are experiences that many people look forward to and want to have.
- ▶ In contrast, having sexually transmitted infections (STIs)—including HIV, the virus that causes AIDS—are experiences that people do not look forward to or want to have. These are quite different!
- ▶ Still, the existence of STIs are an important part of our decisions about sex.

Ask the students to share their ideas about how having an STI such as HIV infection might affect achieving one or more of these goals. Write key words for their points under “STIs” on the board or newsprint.

Help the class include many of the ideas listed in the **Facilitator Resource for Activity 2.2**. In particular, include:

In particular, include:

- ▶ HIV infection could mean needing to take medication for years. That could cost money and mean lots of medical visits.
- ▶ STIs can affect the health of a fetus, if the person were pregnant. This could affect the goal of having a healthy baby.
- ▶ A person could be contagious to someone they have sex with. This could affect relationships because you would need to talk about it with a partner.
- ▶ Some viral infections, like HIV and herpes, stay with a person for life. These could have an effect on a person’s sex life for a long time.

During the discussion, it is important to acknowledge:

- ▶ People with HIV and other STIs can get treatment and live productive and happy lives.
- ▶ Some STIs are curable, and all are treatable. However, infections could still interfere with achieving some of a person’s goals.

Thank the students for their insight and ideas. Keep the list of “Goals and Dreams” on the board or newsprint, so it will be visible later in the lesson. If there is not much room, the lists of ideas under “Pregnancy” and “HIV/STIs” can be erased.



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