

STUDYING CONTRACEPTION

Lesson 1

8
G
R
A
D
E

LEARNER OUTCOME¹ W-8.14:

Identify and describe basic types of contraceptives; i.e., abstinence, condom, foam, birth control pills.



MATERIALS:

1. Chalk and blackboard
2. Paper



INTRODUCTION:

Comprehensive Sexual Health Education stresses abstinence as the preferred sexual behaviour amongst teens. Abstaining from sexual activity, that involves exchange of bodily fluids and/or genital to genital or skin to genital contact is the only sure way of avoiding the risk of pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases. Postponement of initial sexual activity, adherence to one sexual partner and protected sexual intercourse are sequentially offered as the next best alternatives.² The programs that are most effective in helping young people to abstain discuss abstinence, contraception and sexual health decision making.³ Grade 8 focuses on studying contraception. This lesson focuses on identifying abstinence as the only sure method of contraception, and offers strategic skills for maintaining abstinence.



APPROACHES/STRATEGIES:

A. Ground Rules

Ensure ground rules are established before beginning this lesson. For classes that have already established ground rules, quickly reviewing them can promote a successful lesson.

B. Discussion Questions

These discussion questions help students begin to examine abstinence and postponing sexual activity. Encourage students to take notes during the discussion to help them complete assignments that come later in this lesson.

NOTES:

(5 - 15 min)

(15 - 20 min)

1. What is contraception?

- Contraception occurs by either preventing the fertilization of an ovum (egg) by the sperm cell, or the prevention of implantation of the embryo (fertilized egg) into the lining of the uterus.

2. Why is it important to learn about contraception?

- Provide rationale for teaching birth control/contraception – **stress that there is not an assumption that students are sexually active.** Some people have sexual intercourse in their teen years. Many do not.
- Stress that factual information is critical to make healthy decisions now and in the future.

3. Can you identify/describe some methods of contraception?

- List the methods identified by students on the board under the heading “Methods of Contraception.”
- Ensure **abstinence** is included on this list. If students do not bring it up on their own, use questions to prompt them such as, “What is the only 100% effective method of contraception?”

4. What is abstinence?

- Abstinence can mean different things to different people. For some, it means having no physical contact with other people. For others, it could mean having limited contact, allowing some activities, but not sexual intercourse.
- Abstinence is often referred to as being 100% safe; meaning that it completely eliminates the risk of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) or unplanned pregnancy. This is only true if the definition includes eliminating any intimate sexual behaviour involving skin to genital, genital to genital or body fluid to genital contact. Pregnancy can occur without intercourse if sperm is ejaculated near the entrance of the vagina during heavy petting. STIs such as herpes can be passed through skin-to-skin genital contact.
- The majority of youth are not sexually active. The average age at first intercourse is 16.5 years, but the likelihood of having engaged in intercourse rises with age. In the 2003 Canadian Community Health Survey 28% of respondents between 15 and 17 reported having sexual intercourse. By comparison, 65% of 18 and 19 year olds reported having has sexual intercourse.⁴

5. If a teen did have sex – would that mean that they could no longer be abstinent?

- No. A person who is abstinent is not necessarily a virgin (a person who has never had sexual intercourse). Someone who is abstinent may have had sexual



Cultures and religions support various values that influence our individual decisions. It is important to realize that these values may be reflected in the attitudes of students in the class and teens may be struggling with sexual decision making.

intercourse in the past, but is not currently sexually active. The choice to be abstinent can be made at any time, regardless of past experience. Just because a person has had sex before does not mean that that person must feel pressured to have sex again.

6. Do you think there are pressures at your age to have sex? If so, what are they?

- List the pressures identified by students on the board under the heading “Sexual Pressures.”

7. What are some of the pressure situations that might lead to unplanned sexual activity?

- List the students’ responses on the board under the heading “Pressure Situations.”

(25 – 30 min)

C. Abstinence Skill Building

Students demonstrate refusal skills to help them resist the pressures of engaging in sexual activity.

1. Distribute blank paper to students or have them each take a new sheet of paper from their binder.
2. At the top of the paper, have students write a pressure line that students at their age might use to try to convince someone to have sex or a pressure situation from the list generated by the class in the previous activity. Have them place a box around the pressure line/situation.
3. Collect the papers from the students and redistribute them, making sure that the students do not receive their own paper.
4. Underneath the pressure line/situation, have the students write a response scenario (including verbal and physical responses) that would reduce the risk of sexual activity. Encourage the students to be creative and respectful in their approach.
5. Step four can be repeated more than once, having each new student who receives the paper come up with a new response scenario.
6. Discuss as a class the different pressure lines/situations and response scenarios given by the students. For each pressure line/situation, determine what techniques would be effective in saying no. If papers have been passed more than once, choose the best response scenario.
7. Debrief using the following discussion questions:
 - Why is choosing not to have sex a wise choice?

- Why do you think some teens choose to have sexual intercourse?



Remember that different cultures and families have different beliefs about the use of contraception. In many societies, there are cultural taboos against sexual intercourse outside of marriage. In others, a couple is expected to engage in sexual intercourse – or even conceive a first child – before marriage.⁵

- Students with developmental disabilities may need a whole lesson dedicated to personal boundaries due to a potential misinterpretation of verbal cues. People with other disabilities tend to be the target of sexual pressure and may need more practice with role-play and refusal skills. You may play gross motor games using role-plays that necessitate assertive, STOP and walk away behaviours. Have each student take several turns both saying STOP and responding appropriately to another’s STOP. Outline steps for reporting violations or a person who is pressuring the person to have sexual contact. For example, who to report to, how to call the police and local resources available to the students.
- When using role-play activities that highlight relationship issues, it is important to be cognizant of students in your class who may be involved in or questioning alternative relationships. Gay and lesbian students often experience pressure in their relationships and may at some point want to raise this issue with an adult.



QUESTION BOX:

(10 min)

If time permits, address student questions.



Keep in mind that all students do not live in a “traditional” family nor do they have equal opportunities for open discussion within their “family.” Although it is best for students to complete this assignment with a supportive parent or guardian, it may not be possible. Be sensitive to the needs of your students.



SELF REFLECTION:

- During the lesson, were:
- Ground rules being followed?
 - Good practices established regarding discussion?
 - Skill building activities handled appropriately by the students?

What will you change for future classes with this group?

What will you change for future use of this lesson?



STUDENT ASSESSMENT:

During the lesson, did students:

- Knowledge:**
- Define contraception and abstinence?
 - Outline the importance of abstinence?
 - Identify pressures that could lead to sexual activity, and ways to respond to sexual pressure that would encourage abstinence?
- Skills:**
- Demonstrate an understanding of refusal skills?
- Attitudes:**
- Decide what personal actions are going to be followed?



You may want to use the promotional materials and role-play presentations for formal evaluation

¹

Alberta Learning. (2002). Kindergarten to grade 9 health and life skills : Guide to implementation. Retrieved July , 2007, from:: http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/K_12/curriculum /bysubject/healthpls/healthgi.asp.

¹ CRHA Policy Position. (1996). Overview of Services, Education, p. A-10.

¹ SIECUS, Community Action Kit, Responding to Arguments Against Sexuality Education

¹ Sexual Health in Canada: Baseline (2007). Canadian Federation for Sexual Health

¹ EngenderHealth. (2002). Sexuality and Sexual Health Online Mini-Course. Available online at: <http://www.engenderhealth.org>