

## Sub-Task #2 Explaining the Importance of Abstinence

### Materials

Magazine Advertisements e.g., clothing, cologne, alcohol, tobacco  
Newspaper and magazines articles on teen pregnancy

### Description

Students will communicate the importance of abstinence as a positive choice for adolescents through a debating process.

| Expectation Code | Learning Expectation  |
|------------------|---|
| 8p9              | Explain the importance of abstinence as a positive choice for adolescents   |
| 8p12             | Apply living skills (e.g., decision-making, assertiveness and refusal skills) in making informed decisions and analyse the consequences of engaging in sexual activities and using drugs* |
| 8p13             | Identify sources of support (e.g., parents/guardians, doctors) related to healthy sexuality issues*   |

### Assessment Opportunities: Suggestions for Assessing Expectations

- **Formative Assessment: Performance Task** – Through debate, students will present their understanding of abstinence as a positive choice for adolescents. The teacher may decide to use a checklist to monitor or record student input/participation in the debate. A group participation checklist would be appropriate.

\* These expectations are a focus of this Sub-Task but will be assessed later in the Grade 8 Growth and Development unit.

### Teaching/Learning Strategies

#### 1. Sexuality in Advertising

- The teacher will discuss with the class the fact that society often depicts sexual behaviours and sexual involvements. Assign the worksheet, “Sexuality In Advertising” (see Appendix E). Discuss how and why sex is sold. Make reference to talk show topics and current movies. Ask students about lyrics of popular music or utilize the worksheet, “Sexuality Values In Our Music” (see Appendix F). You may want to choose other music.
- Questions for discussion;
  - What is the content of the media messages regarding femininity or masculinity? (femininity: viewed as sexual objects, being demure, emotional, submissive; masculinity: viewed as tough, unemotional, aggressive)
  - Who is represented/objectified (race, class, disability, sexual orientation and gender)?
  - How does this image shape our understanding of sexuality? Is the media a good source to gain good information about healthy sexuality issues?

**Note: Make sure you emphasize to students the importance of getting good information from good sources (i.e. doctors, guardians, teachers)**

## 2. Debate

- The teacher will divide the class into six co-ed groups. Three groups will form one side of the debate and the other three groups will take an opposite stand. Arrange the class so that the opposing sides can sit opposite one another.
  - One student from each group is to be the representative for that group, and they are the only students permitted to speak during the debate. Group members are to pass information to their representatives via notes.
- The “pro” team brainstorms and lists as many possible reasons why it is OK for teens to be involved in sexual intercourse. Their team must take the position that this behaviour is positive. The other team defends the position that it is better for teens to abstain.
- Teams prepare a brief introduction which states their position and why they support that particular decision.
- Following the introductions, speakers from each group take turns making arguments supporting their belief. Group members support the speakers by listening to the opposing team’s reasoning and by passing notes suggesting ideas and facts to their respective speaker. Each speaker makes only one statement/argument at a time. Rotate from group to group until all reasons for postponing sexual intercourse vs. reasons for having sexual intercourse have been exhausted.
- Following the debate, students return to their regular seats. With help from the class, create a list on the board of reasons why teens postpone sexual activity. Appendix G contains statistics regarding Risks Associated with Teenage Pregnancy. Distribute this to the students. Here is a sample list of reasons for postponing sexual involvement:
  - risks associated with teen pregnancy
  - values
  - future goals or educational plans
  - respect for parents
  - freedom from disease
  - freedom from worry of pregnancy
  - influence of parents/family
  - fear of bad reputation
  - respect for self

## 3. Discussion Questions

- A conclusion to this activity is very important. **The following suggestions/questions will help to facilitate class discussion**.
  - Ask members of the “pro” sexual intercourse group how they felt when they were forced to defend this side of the argument.
  - Which group did you feel had the strongest argument? Why?
  - What were some of the tactics of persuasion used by the pro side?
  - Why might someone try to pressure you into becoming involved in sexual intercourse? (a girl might try to pressure her girlfriend into having sex in order to make herself feel better about her own actions, a boy might feel pressured into having sex so he can be part of the “cool” group, a boy might try to pressure his girlfriend into having sex because he paid for her date, a girl might try to pressure her boyfriend into having sex because her friends are all doing it)

- If you have decided that you do not really want to become sexually active, why does it sometimes still happen? (friends talk you into it, you attempted to say no, you were drinking and your inhibitions were lowered...)
- What can you do to help yourself prevent it from happening? (know the facts, be assertive, avoid situations where you are alone with your boyfriend/girlfriend and your parents are not home, group date)
- If a teenager becomes sexually active, can he/she return to being abstinent?

## Notes to Teacher

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Patricia Martens Miller (1998) reported in her book, “Sex Is Not A Four Letter Word” that there are approximately 20,000 scenarios of suggested sexual intercourse, sexual comment and behaviour, or innuendo in one year of prime television. A study done by the Kaiser Family Foundation of 1,351 television shows from the 1997-98 season found that 56% of television programming depicted some form of sexual conduct. Out of 88 programs analyzed, not one scene which depicted sexual conduct made any reference to sexual risks or responsibilities. The ability to distinguish between fact (reality) and myth (media image) is important for students. While students are bombarded with sexual imagery in the media they need to know where they can get good information about responsible sexuality.

### Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| CGE 3  | A reflective, creative and holistic thinker who solves problems and makes responsible decisions with an informed moral conscience for the common good |
| CGE 3d | Makes decisions in light of gospel values with an informed moral conscience   |
| CGE 6  | A caring family member who attends to family, school, parish and the wider community  |
| CGE 6b | Recognizes human intimacy and sexuality as God-given gifts, to be used as the Creator intended  |

### Fully Alive

Theme 2, **Living in Relationship**, Topic 1, Building Bridges, explores the importance of need for intimate relationship in which people freely share their thoughts and feelings. Topic 2, Friends, explores the changes in friendships related to adolescence.

Theme 3, **Created Sexual: Male and Female**, Topic 1, The loving and life-giving meaning of sexuality is presented. They explore their views of sexuality and some of the sources of their knowledge. Topic 2, Persons in Relationship. They discuss the meaning of intimacy and sexuality in the context of different states of life.

## Appendices

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|-------------------|---|
| Unit 4 Appendix E | Sexuality in Advertising – Worksheet              |
| Unit 4 Appendix F | Sexuality Values in our Music – Worksheet         |
| Unit 4 Appendix G | Risks Associated with Teenage Pregnancy – Handout |
| Unit 4 Appendix H | Decision-Making Model – Overhead Transparency     |