Lesson for
Should a Guy
Have a Say
in Whether
or Not His
Girlfriend Has
an Abortion?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
By the end of this lesson, students will be able to
1) Describe at least one benefit and one
challenge of having guys be involved in
deciding what to do about an unintended
pregnancy.
2) Express their own opinion about the role
of a guy and a girl when dealing with an
unintended pregnancy.

TIME NEEDED
50 minutes

MATERIALS
• Copies of “Should a Guy Have a Say in Whether
or Not His Girlfriend Has an Abortion?”—one per student
• Copies of “Who Speaks Up for Guys During an Unintended Pregnancy?”—one per student
• Copies of “Who Speaks Up for Guys During an Unintended Pregnancy? Do Over!” worksheet—one per each small group of three
• Flip chart or chalkboard
• Markers or chalk

PROCEDURE
1. Tell students that more than half of all
pregnancies—among women of all ages—are
unplanned in the United States. Ask students to
call out reasons why a girl or woman might become
pregnant unintentionally. [1 minute]

2. Next, ask students to raise their hands if they
personally know someone who has experienced an
unintended pregnancy. Acknowledge the number
of students who raise their hands and explain
that when a girl or woman faces an unintended
pregnancy, there are no easy answers. [1 minute]

3. Next, write the words “guys and pregnancy” on
the flip chart or chalkboard and ask students to
brainstorm all of the words or phrases that come
to mind when they hear this phrase. Write their
responses on the flip chart or chalkboard. After
six or eight responses, acknowledge the range of
words and how complicated the issue is. [2 minutes]
4. Distribute copies of “Should a Guy Have a Say in Whether or Not His Girlfriend Has an Abortion?” and read together with your students. Ask the following discussion questions when done reading:

- What points does Tate make about a guy being involved that you agree or disagree with?
- What points does Erica make about a guy not being involved that you agree or disagree with?
- After reading this article, raise your hand if you have a clear opinion about whether or not a guy should be involved when his partner gets pregnant unintentionally?
- For those students who did not raise their hands, what is challenging about forming an opinion one way or another? [10 minutes]

5. Distribute a copy of “Who Speaks Up for Guys During an Unintended Pregnancy?” to each student. Instruct students to read the case study individually and answer the questions at the bottom on their own. Give participants five minutes to complete this task. [5 minutes]

6. Next, divide students into groups of three. Explain that each group will talk about the case study and compare each student’s answers about which characters he or she identified with most or least and why. Allow groups five minutes to complete this task. [5 minutes]

7. Gather the groups’ attention and ask how many groups had a variety of opinions about the characters. Then ask students to raise their hands if they most identified with Thomas. Continue asking students who they most identified with until you’ve gone through each of the characters: Shari, Thomas’s Mom, Health Teacher, Coach. Then, go through each of the characters, asking students to raise their hands for the character they least identified with. Next, ask the following questions:

- What surprised you about the decisions Thomas or Shari made?
- Did this scenario seem realistic? Why or why not?
- What did you learn from this scenario and the small group discussion? [10 minutes]

8. Next distribute a copy of the “Who Speaks Up for Guys During an Unintended Pregnancy? Do Over!” worksheet to each small group. Instruct each group to look at the scenario again and change five things Thomas and Shari could do in order to prevent Shari from becoming pregnant. Give students five minutes to complete this task. [5 minutes]

9. Lastly, ask each group to report back on one of their changes to the scenario that would prevent Shari from becoming pregnant. Record the students’ ideas on flip chart paper or a chalkboard so they can see all of the strategies teens can use to prevent pregnancy. Ideas might include the following: not having sexual intercourse, educating themselves about how pregnancy happens, using effective birth control, such as condoms or birth control pills, using Plan B, talking about their beliefs about abortion before they decide to have intercourse, etc. [10 minutes]

10. Close by reminding students that not having sexual intercourse is the most effective way to prevent pregnancy and if someone does decide to have intercourse, using two methods of birth control is more effective than just one. [1 minute]

Special thanks to Michelle Scarpulla, M.P.H., for her assistance with this lesson plan.
Thomas and Shari have been together for a couple of months and are both juniors in high school. Shari is involved with the student newspaper and honor society. She hopes that her SAT scores will be good enough for her to get a scholarship to journalism school. Thomas loves being part of the soccer team. He hopes to go into computer programming at the state university, so he can be close to his family, especially his younger sisters. Thomas and Shari have just recently started having sexual intercourse and both care about each other a lot, but things are still new. Thomas and Shari usually use condoms every time they have sex. But one time, when Shari was on her period, they didn’t, because they heard it was safe.

Now, Shari’s period is more than three weeks late. She’s taken home pregnancy tests, and they are positive. Shari and Thomas go to the clinic together and find out that she is definitely pregnant. They totally freak out since both of them want to have kids, but not until much later in their lives. Shari wants to have an abortion and doesn’t think one mistake should ruin her life and all of her dreams. Thomas is strongly against abortion. He explains to Shari that he wants her to have the baby and even threatens to break up with her if she goes through with the abortion. He has also started to think about how he could raise the baby and continue high school, maybe quitting the soccer team and getting a part-time job.

Thomas tells his mother, who also does not believe in abortion, and she says that if Shari were to have the baby, she would be willing to help raise it. Thomas’s mother, who is very religious, starts to go to church more often and tells Thomas that if he lets his girlfriend get an abortion, he will be guilty of murder, too.

Thomas talks to his soccer coach—someone he has always looked up to like a father. His coach can’t believe that Thomas did something so stupid like have unprotected sex. He yells at Thomas about flushing his future down the toilet.

In health class, the teacher just happens to be covering pregnancy and parenting. Thomas listens eagerly, hoping to learn something that will help him out. His state unfortunately won’t allow the teacher to cover any information related to abortion, much less the rights of the father. The teacher focuses on teen moms and tells the class that most guys never stick around to help out anyway.

Thomas texts Shari to see if they can meet to talk. Shari agrees and wants to meet at the clinic, where Thomas assumes they will talk with a counselor together. He meets her after school at the clinic. Shari is walking out of the clinic. She tells him it’s over; she had an abortion.

Which character can you identify with most? _____________________________________

Why that character? ____________________________________________________________

Which character can you identify with least? _____________________________________

Why that character? ____________________________________________________________

The idea for this activity was adapted by Nora Gelperin, M.Ed., from Teaching Safer Sex, Peggy Brick and colleagues, Planned Parenthood of Greater Northern New Jersey, www.ppgnnj.org.
Thomas and Shari have been together for a couple of months and are both juniors in high school. Shari is involved with the student newspaper and honor society. She hopes that her SAT scores will be good enough for her to get a scholarship to journalism school. Thomas loves being part of the soccer team. He hopes to go into computer programming at the state university, so he can be close to his family, especially his younger sisters. Thomas and Shari have just recently started having sexual intercourse and both care about each other a lot, but things are still new. Thomas and Shari usually use condoms every time they have sex. But one time, when Shari was on her period, they didn’t, because they heard it was safe.

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List five things that Thomas and Shari could do differently to prevent this pregnancy.

1. __________________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________________________
4. __________________________________________________________________________
5. __________________________________________________________________________