



Discussion Guide

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For Professionals Working with Teens

Sexetc.org

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Lesson for What Are You Waiting For?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to

- 1) Understand at least three consequences of choosing to delay or abstain from oral, anal and vaginal intercourse while in high school.
- 2) Understand at least four pressures teens face to have oral, anal or vaginal sex while in high school.

TIME NEEDED

50 minutes

MATERIALS

- Copies of "What Are You Waiting For?"—one per student
- One copy of "Pressure Scenarios"—copied and cut into eight individual scenarios
- Index cards—one per student

PREPARATION

Optional—preprint stem sentences and closure questions on flipchart paper.

PROCEDURE

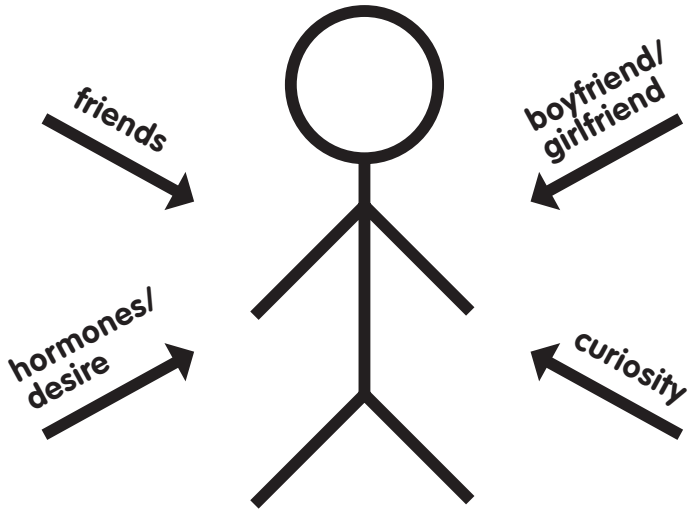
1. Introduce the lesson by asking your students, "Which method of birth control is most popular among teens?" As soon as someone guesses abstinence, tell them they are correct. Explain that for this lesson, abstinence will be defined as not having oral, anal or vaginal sexual intercourse. [2 minutes]

2. Next, ask your students, "What percentage of high school students do you think have had sexual intercourse?" Solicit some responses and then explain that in the United States, about half of all high school students report having had oral or vaginal sex and even fewer report having had anal sex.*

Lastly, ask students, "What are your reactions to learning that about half of all teens have had oral, anal or vaginal sex?" Facilitate a quick discussion about why teens' perceptions of rates of sexual activity are often so different from the actual rates. [3 minutes]

3. Go on to explain that most teens choose to delay having oral, anal or vaginal sex until after high school and for many different reasons. Remind students that all decisions have consequences—both positive and negative—and that many sex ed lessons focus on the consequences of choosing to have oral, anal or vaginal sex. Explain that this lesson will focus on the consequences of choosing to delay sex, sometimes called abstinence. [2 minutes]

4. Draw a stick figure on the board with four arrows pointing inwards. Explain that teens face enormous pressure to have sex from many sources. Explain that the next activity will focus on the pressure from friends, boyfriend/girlfriend, hormones/desire and curiosity. (**Facilitator's Note:** Fill in the words, one per arrow, as you list them for the class, so that your diagram ends up looking like the one below.) [3 minutes]



5. Distribute index cards and make sure that each student has a pen or pencil. Explain that you will be writing some stem sentences on the board and students are to write on their index card the first response that comes to mind. Remind students that there are no correct or incorrect answers, just their opinions. Write the following stem sentences on the board, pausing after each one to allow students an opportunity to respond to each.

- **Choosing to delay sex is...**
- **A positive consequence of choosing to delay sex is...**
- **A negative consequence of choosing to delay sex is...**
- **A stereotype about guys who choose to delay sex is...**
- **A stereotype about girls who choose to delay sex is...**

[5 minutes]

6. Read through each sentence again, this time asking students to volunteer to share their response with the class. Make observations to the group about the range of feedback you hear from your students and ask any appropriate follow-up questions. (**Facilitator's Note:** Follow-up questions might include the following: Which consequences seem easy to manage? Which seem difficult? Is it more acceptable for one gender or the other to delay sex? Why or why not?)

In conclusion, explain that often guys report feeling more pressure to have sex from their friends while girls report feeling more pressure to have sex from the person they are dating. [10 minutes]

7. Explain that the next activity will look at both the sources of pressure on teens to have sex and the impact that pressure has on guys versus girls. Explain that students will work in small groups to help support a teen that has chosen to abstain from sex. Explain that each teen needs help dealing with the pressure they are feeling, so they can remain abstinent, which is what they have said they really want to do.

Divide students into eight groups. Distribute a different teen scenario to each group. Instruct students to read the scenario and create some realistic advice for the teen given the situation he or she is facing. Allow students about five minutes to complete. Circulate among groups to assist and check in where needed. [5 minutes]

8. Give each group one minute to report back its best idea in the following order:

- **Groups with curiosity pressure (scenarios A & B)**
- **Groups with friend pressure (scenarios C & D)**
- **Groups with hormones/desire pressure (scenarios E & F)**
- **Groups with boyfriend/girlfriend pressure (scenarios G & H)**

[10 minutes]

9. Ask the following questions after all groups have reported back:

- **What are some reactions to hearing the different scenarios and advice?**
- **Did you hear any themes in either the scenarios or advice?**
- **Which advice do you think would be most helpful and why?**

[5 minutes]

10. Distribute copies of article "What Are You Waiting For?" to each student and explain that each of those quotes is from a real teen interviewed by Karen for her *Sex, Etc.* story. Then have students turn over their index cards, so they can write on the back. Have students respond to the following two questions, assuring them that no one will see their responses:

- **Have you or a friend ever felt pressured to have sex?**
- **If so, which of these suggestions might have helped and why?**

[5 minutes]

*Data from the "2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey" available at <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/yrbss/SelectLocyear.asp?cat=4&Quest=Q57> and The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, "Teens and Oral Sex," *Science Says*, No. 17, September 2005.

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PRESSURE FROM OWN CURIOSITY

A) Jacob, 15, tells you, “I want to wait to have my first sexual experience with the person that I will be with forever, not somebody that might leave me the next day. Why waste such an important thing on someone who doesn’t deserve it?”

Jacob has a couple of friends who have had sex and are always talking about what it was like and how great it felt. Jacob has a serious girlfriend and is really curious about what sex would feel like, especially since they both care about each other.

Advice for Jacob:

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PRESSURE FROM OWN CURIOSITY

B) Jillian, 18, tells you, “I was always taught that you’re supposed to remain abstinent until marriage. I want sex and my first time to be something really special, and I want to be able to share that with someone I’ll be spending the rest of my life with.”

Jillian tells you that now that she’s getting older, she has become more and more curious about sex since it’s all her friends are talking about. Jillian feels like she’s the only one that doesn’t have a boyfriend, and every romantic movie or song makes her wonder whether she should just go out and do it to get it over with.

Advice for Jillian:

PRESSURE FROM FRIENDS

C) Mike, 17, tells you, “I’m waiting to have sex because I think it should mean something important. And it should be something special.”

Mike is a baseball player and has a couple of really close friends. Both of his friends have serious girlfriends and they’ve each had sexual intercourse. They keep talking about having sex with their girlfriends and when Mike explains how he feels, they joke around and call him “gay” since he’s still a virgin.

Advice for Mike:

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PRESSURE FROM FRIENDS

D) Rosaline, 16, tells you, “I want to wait until I know that I’m prepared to take responsibility for my actions, no matter what happens.”

Rosaline constantly sees cliques of beautiful girls making out with their boyfriends in the hallway and getting attention from lots of guys. Rosaline is wondering whether having sex might give her the self-confidence she wishes she had. She knows that, if she does have sex, she’ll definitely make the guy wear a condom. She wants to wait but craves the attention and love of a boyfriend. She figures having sex is the best way to get a guy.

Advice for Rosaline:

PRESSURE FROM HORMONES/DESIRE

E) Amanda, 14, tells you, “After learning more about sex, I think that abstinence is the best choice for me. Being sexually active at a young age is not something I think I have the maturity to handle.”

Last night, Amanda called you and said, “At times, I get all hot with my partner, and I feel like I really want to have sex. At other times, I know that I shouldn’t have sex until I’m ready. The problem is sometimes I feel like I’m ready and at other times I feel like I’m not ready. What should I do?”

Advice for Amanda:

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PRESSURE FROM HORMONES/DESIRE

F) Derek, 16, tells you, “I’m waiting to have sex because I want to get married first.”

Derek has a serious girlfriend, and they have been spending more and more time together, alone. Derek told you that his girlfriend had sex with her last boyfriend, and she told Derek that if he wanted to, she is willing to have sex with him. How can Derek turn down an offer like that when everything feels so good?

Advice for Derek:

PRESSURE FROM BOYFRIEND/GIRLFRIEND

G) Jessica, 15, tells you, “My boyfriend and I have been dating for a few months, and we are very much in love! We have talked about sex before, but have never done it. Even though we love each other so much, we know there is always the risk of getting pregnant [when you have sex]. If we had a child, it would need attention. And since we’re both in school, it wouldn’t get enough. So, we’re waiting.”

Lately, Jessica has been confiding in you that her boyfriend has been pressuring her more and more to have sex since they love each other so much. He keeps telling Jessica that he will wear a condom and she can use the Pill, so their risk of pregnancy would be virtually zero. Jessica wants to share this amazing experience with someone she loves but is still really scared.

Advice for Jessica:

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PRESSURE FROM BOYFRIEND/GIRLFRIEND

H) Agatha, 17, tells you, “I take love seriously, and as a hopeless romantic, I’m waiting for the right person and the right time. I want it to be magical without any regrets.”

Agatha has recently started dating someone she has been good friends with for years. Their friendship just blossomed into an intense romance. She is head-over-heels for this person and is so excited to be in her first serious relationship. Agatha tells you that she thinks sex could be magical, but she’s worried about rushing things.

Advice for Agatha:
