



# Discussion Guide

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For Professionals Working with Teens

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Sexetc.org

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## Lesson for Choosing Abstinence After You've Already Had Sex

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- 1) Describe at least three reasons why teens might decide to abstain after they have had sex.
- 2) List at least three strategies teens can use to initiate a discussion about abstaining with their partners.

### TIME NEEDED

50 minutes

### MATERIALS

- Copies of "Choosing Abstinence After You've Already Had Sex"—one per student
- Copies of "Conversation Starter" worksheets—one per each small group of three to four students
- Chalkboard or flipchart paper and easel
- Chalk or markers

### PROCEDURE

**1.** Introduce the discussion by asking your students, "Can anyone think of something that you thought you really wanted to do, but once you did it, you decided it wasn't quite what you had expected and decided not to do it again?" Solicit some answers from the group and write sample responses on the chalkboard or flipchart. Responses might include riding a roller coaster, trying a new sport, tasting a new food, wearing a new pair of jeans, staying out past curfew, etc. [2 minutes]

**2.** Ask the group to reflect on how they knew they didn't want to do that particular behavior or activity again. Solicit some answers from the group and write them on the chalkboard or flipchart. Responses might include feeling sick or scared, not enjoying the feeling or sensation, not feeling good once they tried it, experiencing negative consequences, not expecting the outcomes, regretting the decision, etc. Explain that one word to refer to choosing to not do something temporarily—for any reason—is called abstinence. [3 minutes]

**3.** Explain to the group that these same situations can come up when teens or adults decide to have sex of some kind with another person, but then decide it's not what they expected. The big myth out there is that just because someone has done something sexual before, they have to do it again—whether with the same partner or a future partner. But anyone can choose not to do something sexual for a while. **(Facilitator's Note:** This article and activity refer to abstaining after "having sex." As "having sex" can

include a variety of behaviors, make sure the discussion includes behaviors a person might choose to discontinue, such as vaginal, oral and anal sex.)

Ask students to brainstorm reasons why a teen might decide to stop having sex after they have already had it before. Write their responses on the chalkboard or flipchart. Responses might include broke up with partner, had a pregnancy or STD scare, was a “one-night stand” or hook-up, wasn’t what they thought it would be, regretted decision, didn’t feel good, etc. [3 minutes]

**4.** Distribute copies of the article “Choosing Abstinence After You’ve Already Had Sex” and read together with your students. Ask students for their reactions to the article.

- What do you think of the article?
- What did you find interesting about it?
- Do you agree with what was discussed? Why or why not?

Give students time to discuss. [6 minutes]

**5.** Explain that while it’s one thing to decide to stop doing something sexual, it can be a whole other thing to share that decision with a partner. Divide students into small groups of three or four. Explain that each group will receive a different worksheet. At the top of the worksheet is a scenario from a real teen who wants to stop having sex of some kind with his or her partner. Make sure students know that the teen is struggling with how to let his or her partner know. Then, explain that each group will create a way for their teen to bring up the subject of wanting to stop having sex with his or her partner. Let students know, however, that bringing it up is only the beginning. Once the subject is brought up, the teen and his or her partner will have a conversation. Every group will have a chance to contribute to how that conversation goes.

Explain that groups should assume the conversation will be in person and not on the phone or via text, instant message or e-mail. Once the group has come up with a sentence or two that will initiate the discussion, they should stop and not complete the rest of the worksheet. Ask if there are any questions, and if not, distribute one worksheet to each group. Give groups a few minutes to

complete the task. (**Facilitator’s Note:** Mingle among groups to ensure students are on task and understand the directions. Also, if you sense any group is taking the dialogue in an unproductive direction, you can redirect them before the worksheet is shared with another group.) [6 minutes]

**6.** Once most groups have completed the task, gather the groups’ attention and explain that now they are going to rotate the worksheets so that each group has a new teen scenario to work with. Explain that during the second round groups will read what the first teen said and create a response from the teen’s partner who wants to have sex. Explain that the groups should come up with the next line of dialogue that conveys the partner’s interest in having sex while also wanting to maintain the relationship. Rotate worksheets clockwise among groups and give groups a few minutes to complete this task. Be sure students know they are only to write the next line and not go beyond that. [5 minutes]

**7.** Once the groups have completed the task, gather the groups’ attention. Explain that during the third round the worksheets will rotate again and each group is to respond as the original teen who doesn’t want to keep having sex. Explain that their teen can not give in, no matter how strong the pressure is or how persuasive his or her partner might be. Explain that after they are done with this round the worksheets will rotate twice more, and the same directions will apply. Rotate worksheets so that the last task for each group will be to write a final statement from the teen who wants to stop having sex. [10 minutes]

**8.** Once the groups have written their last statements, ask them to select two people from their group to read the worksheet dialogue aloud to the whole group. After each dialogue is read, ask the whole group, “What did you think of how the teen explained why he or she wanted to stop having sex? Was it realistic? Do you think it would be effective? Why or why not?” [10 minutes]

**9.** Lastly, ask students the following question as closure, “How might this activity be helpful for teens your age?” End the lesson by thanking students for their creative responses and encouraging them to share these ideas with any friends who might be in a similar situation. [5 minutes]

# Conversation Starter: Adriana

**Instructions:** Adriana wants to stop having sex, but her partner wants to continue having sex. They both want to maintain the relationship. Work with your group to come up with an effective next line in this dialogue and then wait for the next set of instructions. PLEASE WRITE CLEARLY SO OTHERS CAN READ YOUR HANDWRITING.

**My experience with sex wasn't what I would've expected for myself. My first time was more of an experiment than anything emotional. I just had sex with this guy because I found it easier than dealing with my emotions. I also felt I had to make him happy. But then, I heard people were talking bad about me. I also noticed that the girls who hadn't had sex were more respected, and I want to be respected. He wants to hang out again, and I like him. But I don't want to have sex again.**  
—Adriana, 17, Texas

**How can Adriana start a conversation about this?**

**Adriana:**

**Partner:**

**Adriana:**

**Partner:**

**Adriana:**

# Conversation Starter: Angel

**Instructions:** Angel wants to take a break from having sex. Angel's new partner knows about Angel's past and wants to have sex with Angel. Work with your group to come up with an effective next line in this dialogue and then wait for the next set of instructions. PLEASE WRITE CLEARLY SO OTHERS CAN READ YOUR HANDWRITING.

One of my friends and I used to call each other "slut" as a joke, because we're both quite experienced sexually. But the fact is that eventually it got other people calling me a slut too, which made me choose to stop having sex. It's not bad to be a virgin at all. I wish I was a virgin. Now I'm dating this new person who expects me to put out because I have with other people. I want things to be different this time.

—Angel, 16, Illinois

**How can Angel start a conversation about this?**

**Angel:**

**Partner:**

**Angel:**

**Partner:**

**Angel:**

# Conversation Starter: Dan

**Instructions:** Dan wants to stop having sex, but he wants to stay in his relationship. His girlfriend wants to continue having sex and also wants to stay in the relationship. Work with your group to come up with an effective next line in this dialogue and then wait for the next set of instructions. PLEASE WRITE CLEARLY SO OTHERS CAN READ YOUR HANDWRITING.

**I'm a really paranoid person, who worries every time after I have sex with my girlfriend, even with condoms. And she's taken the morning-after pill, but I'm still freaking out that she could get pregnant. It's just not worth the stress. I want to tell her that I don't have to have sex, but worry she'll think I'm gay or there's something wrong with me.**

**—Dan, 16, Wisconsin**

**How can Dan start a conversation about this?**

**Dan:**

**Partner:**

**Dan:**

**Partner:**

**Dan:**

# Conversation Starter: Cristina

**Instructions:** Cristina wants to stay in her relationship, but she also wants to stop having sex. Her partner wants to continue having sex and stay in the relationship. Work with your group to come up with an effective next line in this dialogue and then wait for the next set of instructions. PLEASE WRITE CLEARLY SO OTHERS CAN READ YOUR HANDWRITING.

I was with my boyfriend for four months before we lost our virginity to each other. Initially we only had sex romantically and on special occasions. I wasn't comfortable with having sex if it wasn't really meaningful and romantic. As time went by, we began to make sex a casual thing, which really bothered me.

—Cristina, 17, New Jersey

**How can Cristina start a conversation about this?**

**Cristina:**

**Partner:**

**Cristina:**

**Partner:**

**Cristina:**

# Conversation Starter: Leo

**Instructions:** Leo has decided to stop having sex and is interested in someone new. This person has had sex before, and Leo thinks his new love interest will assume they will have sex, too. Work with your group to come up with an effective next line in this dialogue and then wait for the next set of instructions. PLEASE WRITE CLEARLY SO OTHERS CAN READ YOUR HANDWRITING.

**I had sex once before, but I wish I hadn't done it. After we had sex, everything felt so wrong. Now that I look back, I can say I had sex, but I haven't made love. So I'm waiting until I know I'm ready, but not sure how to tell this to this new person I like.**  
—Leo, 18, Virginia

**How can Leo start a conversation about this?**

**Leo:**

**Partner:**

**Leo:**

**Partner:**

**Leo:**

# Conversation Starter: Skylar

**Instructions:** Skylar wants to stay in her relationship, but she doesn't want to have sex. Her partner wants to continue having sex and also wants to stay in the relationship. Work with your group to come up with an effective next line in this dialogue and then wait for the next set of instructions. PLEASE WRITE CLEARLY SO OTHERS CAN READ YOUR HANDWRITING.

**I was under pressure. I wanted it to mean more than what it did. But it was something that I chose to do, thinking it would make my guy care about me more. Well, that didn't work, and now I don't want to have sex anymore.**  
—Skylar, 15, Minnesota

**How can Skylar start a conversation about this?**

**Skylar:**

**Partner:**

**Skylar:**

**Partner:**

**Skylar:**