Making Sense of Abstinence

2017 Healthy Teen Network Conference

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Defining Sex and Abstinence

• What is the purpose of it?

• What sexual behaviors do these definitions include? Exclude?
Abstinence Definitions

Abstinence is…

1. The act or practice of refraining from indulging an appetite, as for food.

2. Abstention from alcoholic beverages.

*American Heritage Dictionary*
Abstinence is...

- The expected standard for all school age children.

Section 510(b) of the Social Security Act
Abstinence is...

- not having sex with a partner. This will keep the **sperm** from joining the **egg**.

  www.coolnurse.com

- no intercourse, not even any **semen** on the **vulva**.
  Pretty straightforward.

  Kinsey Institute & Sexuality Information Service for Students
Abstinence is…

- avoiding vaginal, anal, and oral-genital intercourse or participating in any other activity in which body fluids are exchanged.

www.managingcontraception.com
Abstinence is…

not engaging in any activity which could put a person at risk for infections or pregnancy.

www.sexetc.org
Abstinence is...

A definition of abstinence may include not engaging in masturbation.

The Complete Dictionary of Sexology
Abstinence is...

The practices of Tantric yoga recommend short periods of sexual abstinence to concentrate one’s sexual energy and prepare for more intense responses when sexual intercourse is resumed.

*The Complete Dictionary of Sexology*
Abstinence is...

- voluntary refraining from ALL sexual relationships before marriage in order to uplift your own self-worth, build character, develop career potential, and practice true love.

Clue 2000 Character/Abstinence Curriculum
Abstinence is meaningless to women who are coerced into sex.

Thoraya Obaid, Executive Director, United Nations Populations Fund
Abstinence is…

- avoiding sex. Sex, of course, means different things to different people.

www.well-net.com
Abstinence is...

I’m proud that my boyfriend and I have decided to be abstinent. We have oral sex, but definitely not real sex, you know?

Teen in your classroom
Abstinence is…

Often exclusive of LGBT students.
First marriage
Abstinence Expectation Zone
First intercourse
Puberty

What could abstinence education look like?

1. Help teens understand and apply the meaning of abstinence in their own lives and decisions.
2. Discuss not only what behaviors a person decides to AVOID, but also the behaviors that abstinence permits.
3. Build skills for successful abstinence.
4. Help teens protect themselves if/when they change their decisions.
1. Understanding and applying the meaning of abstinence

• Understand the VALUES and REASONS for choosing abstinence.

• Yes, No, Maybe So!

• Is the Slope *That* Slippery?
2. It’s not just what you avoid…
MASTURBATION DOESN'T MESS WITH YOUR EYES REALLY!!!
3. Building abstinence skills

- Discussing concrete steps for using abstinence effectively.

- Practice with **assertive** communication skills.

- Understand and manage sexual feelings

- USING abstinence
Communication skills

• Passive
• Aggressive
• Assertive
Transactional Analysis

PARENT
(Teaching): Acting, thinking, and feeling as you observed your parents doing.

ADULT
(Thinking): Dealing with the current reality; collecting and processing information objectively

CHILD
(Feeling): Feeling and asking as you did when you were a child
4. Protection when abstinence decisions change

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Worksheet: READY OR NOT</th>
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Virginity Pledges
So, what now?

• How will YOU want to teach your students about abstinence?

• If you want to contact me:
  
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MAKING SENSE OF ABSTINENCE

Workshop by

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KEY THEMES FOR EDUCATING ABOUT ABSTINENCE
A PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Help teens understand and apply the meaning of abstinence in their own lives and decisions.

2. Discuss not only what behaviors a person decides to AVOID, but also the behaviors that abstinence permits.

3. Build skills for successful abstinence.

4. Help teens protect themselves if/when they change their decisions.
Worksheet: WHAT'S YOUR TAKE ON ABSTINENCE?

1. Abstinence means not having vaginal intercourse.

2. Sex is best if it is saved for the wedding night.

3. A person who chooses abstinence is probably someone who can't get any action.

4. Teens should wait until they're older before having sex.

5. Schools should teach about abstinence but not about other methods of protection.

6. Abstaining is easy to do.

7. A person who has oral sex is not being abstinent.

8. People should abstain from intercourse if they're not married.

9. Abstinence can be a choice at any time in life.

10. Any sexual activity will lead to sexual intercourse.

11. The best way to avoid having sexual intercourse is not to touch anyone in a sexual way.

12. Virginity pledges are effective.

13. The U.S. government should support abstinence-until-marriage education worldwide as the best way to prevent HIV.

14. Sexual activity outside of marriage is likely to cause psychological and physical harm.
Worksheet: YES? NO? MAYBE SO?

Directions: Decide if you think a person is abstinent if he or she does the behaviors below. For each item, circle YES, NO, or MAYBE.

1. Chat online with a partner about doing something sexual
   - YES
   - NO
   - MAYBE

2. Cuddle with someone with no clothes on
   - YES
   - NO
   - MAYBE

3. Give someone a body massage
   - YES
   - NO
   - MAYBE

4. Give oral sex
   - YES
   - NO
   - MAYBE

5. Have a sexy conversation on the phone
   - YES
   - NO
   - MAYBE

6. Have anal intercourse
   - YES
   - NO
   - MAYBE

7. Have vaginal intercourse
   - YES
   - NO
   - MAYBE

8. Kiss
   - YES
   - NO
   - MAYBE

9. Kiss with mouths open
   - YES
   - NO
   - MAYBE

10. Masturbate when alone
    - YES
    - NO
    - MAYBE

11. Masturbate with a partner
    - YES
    - NO
    - MAYBE

12. Read something that is sexually arousing
    - YES
    - NO
    - MAYBE

13. Receive a body massage
    - YES
    - NO
    - MAYBE

14. Receive oral sex
    - YES
    - NO
    - MAYBE

15. Rub bodies together
    - YES
    - NO
    - MAYBE

16. Touch a girl’s breasts
    - YES
    - NO
    - MAYBE

17. Touch a partner’s buttocks
    - YES
    - NO
    - MAYBE

18. Touch a partner’s genitals
    - YES
    - NO
    - MAYBE

19. Watch something that is sexually arousing
    - YES
    - NO
    - MAYBE
ANSWER KEY: JUST THE FACTS!

(Note: See last page of Answer Key for alphabetical list of sources.)

1. Many infants and young children discover that touching their genitals feels good.  TRUE.  Masturbation, or self-pleasuring (as the behavior is generally referred to in childhood), is common throughout childhood, beginning to occur from the age of six or seven months onward.  Research shows that many one-year-olds have touched their own genitals for the pleasurable feelings this touch brings.  Later in childhood, some children continue to masturbate, some begin to do so, and some stop and start again later.  Young children may not understand the adult sexual meaning of this behavior, but they do learn from adults’ reactions, which likely affect their future feelings about the behavior.

2. Many boys and girls report masturbating during puberty.  TRUE.  During puberty, adolescents begin developing a strong sense of how their bodies function, including their sexual feelings and physical responses, and may begin masturbating more purposefully.  In the United States, about one-third of adolescent females and about one-half of adolescent males have masturbated by age 13; three-fourths of males and 44% of females have done so by age 15; by age 18, the rates are 80% of males and almost 60% of females.  On average, those who masturbate begin around age 13 (some earlier, some later, some never).

3. Masturbation can help people learn about their own bodies.  TRUE.  Masturbation can help people learn how they like (and do not like) to be touched, how physical and emotional feelings are connected, and how they can reduce tension and stress. It can help people feel more confident with their bodies and less anxious during sexual interactions.

4. For most females, masturbation involves deep vaginal penetration.  FALSE.  People report many different ways to masturbate.  While some women prefer vaginal penetration during masturbation, female masturbation rarely resembles vaginal intercourse.  Most masturbate by gently stroking the clitoris (the only body part whose sole purpose is sexual pleasure), the labia, vagina, and/or the breasts.  As for males, most masturbate by stroking the shaft of the penis.

5. Masturbation always leads to orgasm.  FALSE.  For people of all ages, masturbation can be a pleasurable activity whether or not it causes a person to reach the stage of arousal called orgasm with its peak in blood pressure, breathing, heart rate and rhythmic muscular contractions.  A person can begin and stop masturbating whenever he or she wishes; there is no goal or end point that a person must reach or always reaches.

6. Masturbation can make males run out of sperm.  FALSE.  This myth has been a cause of much worry in the past.  If a male ejaculates several times close together, he may notice a slight decrease in the amount of semen (which is 99% of the fluid).  However, there are still millions of sperm in the semen. A healthy male continues to produce millions of sperm daily from puberty throughout his life.  Likewise, for females, masturbation does not affect fertility.
7. Mar...
11. **Masturbation is an example of safe sex.**

**TRUE.** Masturbation has been described as “having sex with the only person whose sexual history you can trust completely.” A person cannot give or get a sexual infection or get pregnant just by masturbating.

12. **Too much masturbation can cause health problems.**

**FALSE.** Frequent masturbation does not cause health problems. Generally people stop when they feel their bodies are sexually satisfied. In fact, research indicates that there may be many health **benefits** to masturbation, such as:

- Reducing stress and tension
- Avoiding sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancy
- Relieving menstrual tension and cramps
- Making blood and hormones pump through the body faster, which helps the body produce cells better
- Helping prevent disease by increasing the flow of white blood cells and building up resistance to infections
- Strengthening muscles in the pelvic and anal area
- Helping prevent breast cancer, prostate cancer, and other prostate problems

**Sources:**


Worksheet: AN INTERVIEW ABOUT ABSTINENCE

Directions: To find out how abstinence was discussed and how people felt about it in the past, interview your parent, guardian, or other trusted adult by asking the following questions. DO NOT write your name or the name of the adult you are interviewing on this worksheet.

Age of person interviewed (optional) __________

1. When you were my age, was teen sex a big issue? At what age did people usually begin having intercourse?

2. Were people expected to abstain from sexual intercourse until marriage? Was this true for both men and women? What happened when people discovered someone had had intercourse?

3. Did schools teach about abstinence? Did adults talk about it? What messages did they give?

4. How do you define abstinence? What is not OK for an “abstinent” person to do? What is OK?

5. Do you think it is easier or more difficult for a teen to abstain from intercourse today than it was when you were young? Why?

6. What advice would you give to a teen who is thinking about whether to abstain or to have intercourse? What advice would you give to a teen who has decided to have intercourse?
### THREE WAYS TO COMMUNICATE:

#### PASSIVE
Giving in and saying “yes” when you don’t really want to. Not speaking up when you want something. Acting this way to be liked, to be nice or not hurt the other person’s feelings.

- **Speech:** say nothing, lots of “ums”
- **Voice:** soft, whining
- **Eyes:** looking down, looking away
- **Posture:** head down, body fidgeting

**Example:** You and your partner are making out. The other person starts to unbutton your pants. You don’t want to go that far. But, you don’t say anything and let it happen.

What usually happens with **PASSIVE** communication?
You usually don’t get what you want. The other person wins or you feel like you’ve been used.

#### AGGRESSIVE
Trying to get your own way or stand up for yourself by putting someone else down or violating that person’s rights. Taking what you want. Threatening or forcing a person to give you something.

- **Speech:** put-down words, just taking what you want
- **Voice:** loud, cold, tense
- **Eyes:** cold, staring, angry
- **Posture:** stiff and rigid, hands on hips, clenched fist, finger pointing

**Example:** Your partner starts to unbutton your pants. You don’t want to go that far. You say, “Get off me, you stupid jerk.”

What usually happens with **AGGRESSIVE** communication?
You may get what you want but the other person loses.

#### ASSERTIVE
Giving people an honest “no” to things you don’t want. Asking straight for what you do want without putting them down. Not using other people or letting yourself be used.

- **Speech:** honest, direct words
- **Voice:** clear, firm, loud enough to be heard, but not too loud
- **Eyes:** direct eye contact but not staring
- **Posture:** relaxed, balanced, head and shoulders up

**Example:** Your partner starts to unbutton your pants. You say, “Stop. I like you, but I don’t want to go that far.”

What usually happens with **ASSERTIVE** communication?
You often get what you want. You keep your self-respect. You respect and don’t hurt others.

Worksheet: SAY WHAT?!

**Directions:** There are three ways a person can respond in any situation – passively, aggressively, or assertively. Read the following situations and write one of the following codes next to each response.

A = Aggressive P = Passive * = Assertive

1. Your boyfriend or girlfriend promises to call you, and then doesn’t. **You…**
   
   a. _____ Don’t say anything about it, figuring he or she probably just forgot.
   
   b. _____ Say, “I don’t like it when you tell me you’ll call and you don’t. I wish you would call me when you say you will.”
   
   c. _____ Say, “You never do what you say you’ll do. You’re so stuck on yourself.” Walk away without giving him/her the chance to explain.

2. You are at a party. Your boyfriend or girlfriend says, “Let’s go upstairs and ‘do it!’” You think they probably mean intercourse, and you don’t feel ready for that. **You…**
   
   a. _____ Say, “No, I’d rather stay down here.”
   
   b. _____ Go upstairs because you don’t want anyone to think you’re scared.
   
   c. _____ Say loudly, “No! You’re disgusting! What do you think I am?”

3. Your friends are teasing you about still being a virgin. **You…**
   
   a. _____ Look away embarrassed and say nothing.
   
   b. _____ Say, “Why are you so concerned about my personal life?”
   
   c. _____ Say, “Shut up! You guys are a bunch of jerks.”

4. Tonight, things have been getting hot and heavy with your partner, and you think it’s time to stop and talk. **You…**
   
   a. _____ Say, “Get your hands off me. There’s no way I’d have sex with you!”
   
   b. _____ Say, “We’ve been getting really, really close lately, and I think we need to talk about what we’re going to do.”
   
   c. _____ Decide to wait and see what happens; it’s embarrassing to talk about sex.

Worksheet: IDENTIFYING EGO STATES

Directions: Read the numbered statements and then identify each response as the Parent (P), Adult (A), or Child (C) ego state.

1. “When do you think a teen is old enough to have sex?”
   ______ I wish I didn’t even have to think about teens having sex.
   ______ I think that abstinence is a healthy choice for teens. What do you think?
   ______ Teens shouldn’t have sex until they’re older and married.

2. “I know I shouldn’t have sex, but I do anyway.”
   ______ What is making it difficult for you to abstain?
   ______ What’s the matter with you? Why don’t you just say no?
   ______ I feel like I’ve failed because I haven’t been able to get you to abstain from sex.

3. “Well, I don’t know if I was ready to have sex, but we did it anyway.”
   ______ You know that you shouldn’t have sex until you’re ready.
   ______ What are you worried about? Sex is great! Just do it!
   ______ Let’s think together of some ways a person might know when they’re ready.

4. “How do you feel about teenagers breaking virginity pledges?”
   ______ How can we prepare teens to protect themselves if they change their decision?
   ______ Teens that break virginity pledges are irresponsible and deserve to suffer the consequences.
   ______ I would just die if my kid broke her pledge.

5. “How can we include lesbian and gay teen in abstinence education?”
   ______ I wouldn’t have the slightest idea of how to talk to gays and lesbians about abstinence.
   ______ How awkward!
   ______ Lesbians and gays don’t need abstinence education because they don’t have real sex.
   ______ Young people of all sexual orientations need opportunities to discuss abstinence and sexual decision-making.

6. “We didn’t use birth control because we didn’t know we were going to have sex.”
   ______ What do you mean, you ‘didn’t know’ you were going to have sex? That’s the dumbest thing I’ve ever heard!
   ______ How do you feel about what happened?
   ______ I agree with you, sex is best when it is spontaneous!

7. “Am I allowed to do anything sexual with my partner if I decide to abstain from sex?”
   ______ What are some ways to be sexual with your partner that fit into your definition of abstinence?
   ______ Just say no means just say no.
   ______ I could never be abstinent. That would be way too hard!

**Worksheet: READY OR NOT?**

**Directions:** Circle the name of the character assigned to your group, and imagine you are that character in the story. Check the boxes that describe how ready that character seems to be right now.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>LIZ or MATT</th>
<th>YES</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Think about YOUR requirements before you will have intercourse with someone. Are these conditions met?</td>
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<td>5. Are you comfortable enough with your partner to talk clearly about sexual intercourse?</td>
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<td>6. Would you be able to give and receive sexual pleasure?</td>
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<td>7. Before deciding to have intercourse, have you and your partner tried other sexual experiences?</td>
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<td>9. Are you ready to use contraception and safer sex every time to prevent unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections?</td>
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<td>11. Are you able to have intercourse without getting drunk or high first?</td>
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<td>12. Could you handle breaking up and other emotional aspects of sexual intercourse?</td>
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