Planning and Protection: Avoiding or Managing STDs

A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum

Fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education.

NSES ALIGNMENT:

By the end of 12th grade, students will be able to:

SH.12.GS.1 – Develop a plan to eliminate or reduce risk for STDs, including HIV.

SH.12.AI.1 – Explain how to access local STD and HIV testing and treatment services.

TARGET GRADE: Grade 9 Lesson 8

TIME: 50 Minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- White board and markers
- Lined 3 x 5 index cards, enough for each participant, prepared as described
- Pens or pencils, in case students do not have their own
- Homework: "Investigative Reporting" – one per student

ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR LESSON:

- Turn the index cards to the non-lined side. In the bottom right-hand corner, write lightly and in pencil, an "S" on three cards, and at least 4 of each of the following: a "U","A", "C" and "P." Leave the remaining cards blank.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

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

1. Name the only 100% effective way of avoiding an STD. [Knowledge]
2. Explain why having oral, anal or vaginal sex with an infected partner puts a person or couple at risk for STDs. [Knowledge]
3. Name one health clinic or center in their area that provides STD testing and treatment for teens. [Knowledge]

A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:

Language is really important and we've intentionally been very careful about our language throughout this curriculum. You may notice language throughout the curriculum that seems less familiar - using the pronoun "they" instead of "her" or "him", using gender neutral names in scenarios and role-plays and referring to "someone with a vulva" vs. a girl or woman. This is intended to make the curriculum inclusive of all genders and gender identities. You will need to determine for yourself how much and how often you can do this in your own school and classroom, and should make adjustments accordingly.

PROCEDURE:

STEP 1: Ask the students to take out a pen or pencil, which they will need throughout the class session. As they are doing that, distribute one of the index cards you prepared in advance of the class to each student without telling them there is anything written on them.

Once they all have a card and writing implement, ask them to stand up and walk around the room, just milling around, talking and saying "hi" to each other. (To appeal to your musical learners, you may wish to have music playing softly in the background as they do this part of the activity). After about 10 seconds, ask them to stop where they are and pair up with the person standing closest to them.

Note to the Teacher: *If there is an odd number of students, the leftover person can join a pair as a group of three; you do not, however, want there to be groups of three throughout the room, so be*

sure to wait until everyone has paired up before assigning the one leftover student to a pair.

Say, "I am going to give you a topic to discuss with this other person. You will have two minutes, and you need to keep the discussion going for that time." Write on the board, "Top three favorite movies." Say, "I'd like you to talk with each other about three of your favorite movies – and why they're your favorites. It doesn't matter who starts first; I'll tell you when two minutes have elapsed. Go!"

After two minutes, ask them to stop their conversations. Say, "Please hand your index card with the lined side up to your partner, and take their index card from them. Write your name on the card, and then give it back to your partner. So you should now be holding your index card that has the other person's name on it."

Ask them to thank their partner for their conversation and then start milling around the room again, greeting each other, smiling, whatever they wish – and then ask them to stop again and partner up with whomever is closest.

Say, "I'm going to ask you to have another brief conversation with this person – but on a different topic." Write "Travel anywhere" on the board and say, "If money were no option, and you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be and why? Remember, you have about 2 minutes so you can choose more than one place if you wish. Ok, go!"

After 2 minutes, ask them to stop their conversations, and sign their partner's card. Be sure that once they have signed their partner's card they get their original card back but now with the names of the last two students with whom they had conversations.

Ask them to thank their partner for their conversation and then start milling around the room one last time, greeting each other, smiling, giving high fives, whatever they wish – and then ask them to stop again and partner up with whomever is closest.

Say, "I'm going to ask you to have one more brief conversation with this person – but on a different topic." Write "Super powers" on the board and say, "If you could have any three super powers, what would they be, and why? Remember, you have about 2 minutes. Ok, go!"

After 2 minutes, ask them to stop their conversations, and sign their partner's card. Be sure that once they have signed their partner's card they get their original card back – they should now have an index card with the names of all three students with whom they had conversations.

Ask them to take their seats. (7 minutes)

STEP 2: Explain to the students that, for the purposes of this activity ONLY, the conversations they just had weren't conversations – but sexual encounters. Tell everyone to turn their card over to the unlined side.

Say, "In one of the corners, you should see a lightly written letter. If you have an 'S' on your card, can you please stand up?"

Note to the Teacher: *It can help to intentionally select the students who will receive the 'S' card to ensure they won't be easily embarrassed or mistakenly believe they were singled out due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.*

Three students should stand up. Explain that for the purposes of this activity ONLY, this person has a sexually transmitted disease – even though they look and feel fine, they had no idea they had an STD.

Note to the Teacher: *There will very likely be some class reaction as you announce that these represented sexual encounters, as well as when you announce who represents the STDs. This is a good thing! It brings energy to the room and keeps students engaged. Be mindful, however, that we do not know the STD status of our students, and you want to be sure people don't throw out insults – such as, "Figures it'd be you, [student name]" or anything else. This is why it is important to emphasize again and again throughout the activity, "for the purposes of this activity only." Be sure to refer back to your groundules as necessary to make sure students are respectful of each other.*

Ask the rest of the students to look at their own cards to see whether they have the signatures of any of the people standing on their card – and if they do, to please stand. Then ask whether the people who are standing have any of the following letters on their card. If so, explain what they should do next:

- Say, "Of those who are standing, if you have an 'A' on your card, you may sit down. An 'A' means you chose to remain abstinent – you did no-risk sexual things together or didn't do anything sexual together after all."
- Say, "If you have a 'C' on your card, you may also sit down. A 'C' means you used condoms or other latex barriers, so you were at very low risk for an STD, or pregnancy if you were with a partner of a different sex."
- Say, "If you have a 'P' on your card, it means that if one person in the relationship can get pregnant or has another reason to take the pill, they're on the pill – but that's the only method you used. So, great job protecting yourself and your partner against pregnancy if that was a risk, but the pill offers NO protection against STDs – so you have to remain standing."
- Say "If you have a 'U' on your card, it means you did not use any condoms or other latex barriers during your sexual encounter – meaning the sex was 'unprotected' – so you have to remain standing."
- Say, "If you have a blank index card, it means you were using alcohol or drugs during the encounter and can't remember what happened, including whether you used any kind of latex barrier – so you need to remain standing."

Ask the class to look at any of the people who are now standing, and whether they have any of their signatures on the card. If any students who are sitting have the signatures of those students on their cards, ask them to please up. Repeat the same process of elimination as above, reminding them what each initial stands for. Do this entire process a third time to represent all three conversations or sexual encounters. (14 minutes)

STEP 3: Ask the students to look around the room and to tell you how many people are currently standing up. Once they tell you the number, ask, "How many were standing the very first time – how many had an S on their cards?" Probe for 3, and say, "So three people originally had an STD, and then by the end of the activity, [fill in the number of students standing] had some kind of unprotected sex with that person."

Ask everyone to take their seats. Process, by asking the following questions:

- What was it like to do that activity? What was [easy, fun, hard, interesting – fill in their responses] about it?
- What did you notice about who got to sit down, and who had to remain standing? (Probe for the fact that only students who had an "A" on their card for abstinence or used latex barriers could sit down). Ask them why they think that was. (Probe for the fact that only abstinence offers 100% effective protection against STDs, but that condoms and other latex barriers offer extremely effective protection if they're used correctly with every single sexual encounter).
- What does the number of people who were standing at the end of the activity tell you? (Probe for
  - How it's best to not have unprotected sex with multiple partners to reduce the chances of STDs spreading
  - How, if you're going to have any kind of sex, it's important to use condoms or other barriers correctly and every time
  - How important it is to talk with a person about their sexual history to figure out what your own risk for STDs is
  - How if a person were to find out they had had some kind of sex with someone who has an STD they would need to get tested and to tell anyone else they may have been in a sexual relationship with that they need to get tested, too.)

As people participate in the activity processing, write the five themes that should come up during the discussion on the board; if any of them do not, add them in at the end, saying, "I also saw from this activity that…":

- Abstinence is the safest choice
- Condoms (and other latex barriers) are a must for reducing STD risk
- Talking with your partner is key
- Contraceptive methods like the pill are great for pregnancy prevention, but don't protect against STDs
- If you are having sex, it is a good idea to get tested and to ask your partner(s) to get tested, too. Some couples will go to get tested together, which reinforces the care they have for each other.

Remind the students that someone needs to have an STD in order to transmit it to someone else, sexual behaviors don't in and of themselves create STDs. Also remind them that this was only an activity, and that nothing about what you just did implies that the students who were standing up during the activity have an infection or actually had sexual encounters with each other! (9 minutes)

STEP 4: Divide the class into five groups. Once they are in their groups, say, "It's great to recognize that these five points are important – but it's another thing altogether to remember them or put them into practice. When businesses want us to change our behaviors or buy certain things or act in certain ways, they buy time on tv or on websites and create commercials. That's what you're going to do now."

Assign each group one of the five categories. Tell them they will have 10 minutes to work together to create a commercial for that statement or something that has to do with that statement, which they will then act out for the class. Remind them that commercials tend to

be no longer than 30 – 45 seconds. As groups work, walk around the room to help them get started or point them in the right direction. You will also want to listen for any joking around or inappropriate language and help refocus the students on the activity.
(12 minutes)

STEP 5: After about 10 minutes, ask the groups to stop. Have each group present its commercial, asking for feedback from the class after each: What did you take away from this commercial? What was missing? What would be some other helpful take-away points? (8 minutes)

STEP 6: Acknowledge the work of the class. Say, "STDs are a very real part of our world today. And considering 1 in 4 teens will end up with an STD once they start having some kind of sex, teens – and people of all ages – have a responsibility to know how to practice ways to reduce their chances of getting an STD."

Explain and distribute the homework and close the class session. (2 minutes)

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

Learning objectives one and two will be achieved by the STD index card activity in class. The homework assignment will fulfill the third learning objective.

HOMEWORK:

Worksheet: "Investigative Reporting" – students will go around for the next week interviewing people about what they know and think about safer sex, as well as finding information about where someone in their community can go for STD testing and treatment.

Note: Versions of the STD index card activity has been used in a variety of formats and resources for many years. The original author is unknown.

Homework:
Investigative Reporting!

Name: _____ Date: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: You are a reporter working on a story about STD prevention. You need to go online and talk directly with some people to get the information required below by your editor. Be sure to protect the confidentiality of your sources – this tends to encourage them to be more honest! (Be sure not to give them the answers – you're trying to see what people know without you saying anything). Not sure what it's like to be a roving reporter? Check out these teens from Sexetc.org as they interview students about this same topic! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zP3y6yTbcio

What do high schoolers know about STD prevention? Find five students and ask them to answer the following two questions:

Question 1: Do you think people our age are at risk for STDs? Why or why not?

PERSON'S GRADE	PERSON'S INITIALS	ANSWER
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Homework:
Investigative Reporting!

Question 2: What is the BEST way to avoid getting an STD, or giving one to someone else?

PERSON'S GRADE	PERSON'S INITIALS	ANSWER
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Question 3: *(To be answered by looking online or by making a phone call)*
What is the name of a health center in our area that provides STD testing – including for teenagers – for low or no cost?

Name and URL of Health Center: _____

Address of Health Center: _____

Telephone number: _____

What services do they specifically provide relating to STD testing and treatment?

_____

_____

How much do these services cost? _____