

PROJECT MARS

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Introductions - Building Trust

We start by establishing ground rules to ensure that the course is a safe, respectful, and inclusive space for everyone. These guidelines will emphasize respect for differing views, experiences, and identities. It is crucial that every student feels comfortable and heard throughout the program. We will clarify the boundaries of confidentiality in our program, highlighting our commitment to protecting students' privacy. However, we'll also make it clear that if someone's safety is at risk, certain disclosures may need to be reported to the appropriate authorities.

Definitions - Establishing a Common Language

This activity aims to establish a common language for the course by ensuring that all students understand the vocabulary that will be used throughout our two hours together, enabling them to participate more effectively in our discussions. It also promotes an open and non-judgmental environment where students can ask questions about any words they don't understand. This activity also helps normalize talking about sexual health, breaking down barriers of discomfort, and creating a safe, inclusive, and engaging learning environment.

Questions - Encouraging Risk Assessment

The goal of this activity is to facilitate understanding of the risks associated with various sexual behaviors, dispel myths, and promote informed and responsible sexual choices. We will engage students by asking MI informed, guided questions to stimulate their critical thinking skills and promote an open-ended discussion on these topics. When students have a clear understanding of sexual risk, it promotes open and honest discussions about

sexual history, preferences, and boundaries between partners, thus improving sexual relationships by ensuring mutual consent and respect.

Statistic - Understanding Sexual Practices

This activity helps students to understand the statistical realities of sexual behaviors among their age group. Using a handout with the latest reliable and appropriate sexual health statistics for teenagers in Minnesota, we summarize the importance of understanding and utilizing statistics when discussing sexual health. As educators we facilitate a discussion on how perceived sexual behaviors and actual sexual behaviors often vary significantly due to societal norms, media portrayals, and personal beliefs or biases.

Physical Ruler - Interpreting Personal Risk

This activity uses personal scaling questions to assist students in gaining a clearer understanding of their personal attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors related to sexual activity and safety. We ask students to rate their feelings, attitudes, confidence, and likelihood of change concerning particular sexual behaviors and practices on a scale from 1 to 10. They may recognize potential risks and vulnerabilities they had not previously considered.

BREAK

Self-Affirmations - Centering Personal Strengths

We as educators ask each student to take a few minutes to brainstorm positive words or phrases that they feel describe them. This activity is a powerful way for students to affirm their strengths. By centering personal strengths in sex education, we foster empowerment, confidence, and resilience.

Movie & Discussion - Examining Risky Behaviors

During this activity, students watch a movie about risky sexual behaviors and then discuss these behaviors. Using MI informed, guided questions students engage in a discussion about the movie's content and are encouraged to think critically about the role of societal norms, media influence, peer pressure, and personal responsibility in sexual behavior. Students gain increased awareness about risky sexual behaviors and their possible

outcomes. This includes understanding the physical health risks such as sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS, and unplanned pregnancies, as well as mental and emotional consequences like guilt, stress, and potential social stigma.

Condom Demonstration - Gaining Practical Knowledge

By physically demonstrating the correct way to use a condom, students can gain the confidence to use them in their own lives. The hands-on aspect of this activity reduces the likelihood of mistakes during actual use, which can happen due to anxiety or lack of familiarity with the process. Throughout the demonstration, educators encourage questions and seek to normalize condom use, reducing stigma or embarrassment around purchasing and using condoms. As educators, we provide students with practical resources for obtaining condoms and reproductive healthcare services.

Sexual Sequence Cards - Applying New Skills

This activity helps students develop an understanding of healthy sexual behavior in a hands-on, interactive way. Educators assist students in arranging a set of cards in an order that they believe outlines healthy sexual practices. The content of these cards focusses not only on physical sex acts, but also the emotions and the methods of communication central to healthy sexual choices. Students learn to respect each other's boundaries and the importance of open communication in a relationship. They also get an opportunity to clarify any misconceptions or concerns they may have about sexual behavior in a safe, controlled environment.

