

DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

Outline

Teaching about Birth Control and Sexually Transmitted Infections

Purpose: To provide a preamble for teaching about birth control and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), stressing the importance of decision-making prior to engaging in sexual activity.

Equipment Required: “Decision Tree” diagram (page 23)
Chalkboard/overhead projector/PowerPoint
Chalk/markers

Time Required: 5 -10 minutes

Instructions:

1. Discuss the decision-making process using the following:
 - Draw two happy faces interconnected by a squiggle of hair, with question marks and the word “sex” (Follow Decision Tree diagram-(page 24)
 - Explain that this couple is trying to make a decision as to whether they should have sex or not. (Sometimes students will comment that they look like two girls or two guys; this presents an excellent opportunity to indicate to students that parts of the lesson will be pertinent only to opposite-sex couples, but some parts will also pertain to same-sex couples. This will normalize and demonstrate inclusion of gay/lesbian/bisexual people. Use of the term “partner” instead of “boyfriend” or “girlfriend” may also be a consideration.
2. Have the students identify the choices (YES or NO) and put them on the board, with ‘NO’ on the far left and ‘YES’ toward the right.
3. Discuss Abstinence (‘NO’ option) (**Number 2** on Decision Tree diagram- page 24)
If a couple has decided not to have sex:
 - Explain that “abstinence” means refraining from any sexual activity in which there is an exchange of body fluids, or in which there is any genital contact (genital-to-genital, or skin to genitals).

- Explain that a woman can become pregnant even without intercourse if any sperm meets the vaginal area. A virgin can become pregnant in this manner.
4. A “virgin” is defined as a person who has never had intercourse.
 5. Explain that other forms of sexual contact also carry risks of STI’s and pregnancy.
 6. Explain that people, who are not virgins, can choose to be abstinent and that they should not be pressured into having sex because they are not virgins.
 7. Engage students in a discussion about abstinence including:
 - the reasons people might abstain (e.g. religious or moral beliefs, parental influence, not ready, not old enough, not with the right person, don’t want to risk pregnancy or infections)
 - the benefits of choosing abstinence (e.g. no risk of pregnancy or sexually transmitted infection, less complicated relationship, allows time for the couple to get to know each other better, experience the benefit of delayed gratification)
 - the possible consequences of choosing abstinence (e.g. a partner who wants to have sex might leave the relationship)
 - why it might be difficult to remain abstinent in a relationship (e.g. judgement impaired by drugs or alcohol, pressure from partner or others – “everyone is doing it”, fear of losing one’s partner, strong need to feel loved, strong sexual urges)
 - Point out that making a decision to abstain does not mean a person will never have sex; it just means postponing sex for now.
 - It is important to discuss abstinence as the only 100% effective method of birth control
 8. Discuss Sexual Activity (YES option) (**Number 3** on Decision Tree diagram - page 24)

If a couple has decided to have sex:

 - Elicit potential negative consequences of having sex:
 - Pregnancy
 - Sexually transmitted infections (STI’s)
 - Emotional changes in the relationship.
 - Guilt

9. Discuss the importance of having open discussion about these issues before having sex.
10. Considering the consequences of having sex. Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's) (**Number 4** on Decision Tree diagram- page 24)
11. Refer to the STI Lesson Plan in the "Sexually Transmitted Infections" section of your "Choices not Chances" kit.
12. Pregnancy (**Number 5** on Decision Tree diagram- page 24)
13. If a couple has decided to have sex, they now have another decision to make – to use contraception, or not to use contraception. Continue with the "Birth Control Lesson" (see page 29).
14. Emotional Change (**Number 6** on Decision Tree diagram- page 24)
15. Discuss the impact on the emotions when youth engage in sexual activities before they are ready
16. No Birth Control (Number 7 on Decision Tree diagram- page 24)
17. Discuss the possible outcomes- may become pregnant or contract an STI
18. Discuss options if 'No Birth Control' is used
19. Emergency contraceptive Pill (ECP) or not
20. No ECP taken - and pregnancy occurs
21. Keep baby
22. Adopt
23. Abort
24. Birth Control (**Number 8** on Decision Tree diagram- page 24)
25. Now you are ready to address available birth control options to prevent an unwanted pregnancy- these can be completed during the Birth Control Lesson