

Instructions for Use

Classroom Management & Sensitive Questions Facts and Tips Sheet

What is the purpose of this fact sheet?

This Facts & Tips sheet is meant as a quick guide to aid facilitators in managing the classroom and answering sensitive questions within the context of sexual health education programs. It is a good idea to distribute these facts and tips to new facilitators and at all training sessions. Furthermore, the facts and tips section regarding the Values Question Protocol can be used to enhance facilitator training sessions by providing facilitators the opportunity to practice their skills in answering values-type questions.

Who should receive this fact sheet?

This fact sheet may be printed and distributed to district members who facilitate programs. This may include:

- Curriculum Coordinators
- Teachers

➤ *As a reminder, don't forget to check out the **iCHAMPSS Identifying Good Health Educators facts sheet** in the PREPARE Step for more information on selecting facilitators to teach your sexual health program.*



Implement >>>>

Classroom Management

10 Tips for Success in the Classroom

- 1. Confidentiality and privacy:** Students should clearly understand what materials will always be private (e.g. personal journals that are part of a curriculum) and what materials may be discussed in class. Also ensure students are aware of actions taken if they disclose information regarding abuse. Students should be informed that, by law, you must report if a student mentions they are going to hurt themselves, hurt someone else, or mentions past physical, sexual or emotional abuse.
- 2. Prepare to use time wisely:** It's critical to be familiar with the lessons ahead of time to keep students engaged. The more time you spend finding your place while actually facilitating the class, the more time students have to get off track. If the students get off track, immediately redirect back to the current activity. Questions are great but can get the group off topic and take up class time. Using an anonymous question box is a way to ensure all questions are addressed without detracting from class time.
- 3. Enlist student helpers:** This is one possible way to occupy students who may be challenging. Try making them official helpers when passing things out, keeping score, being recorder during brainstorming sessions, etc.
- 4. Clearly establish rules and consequences:** These should be established from the onset and geared towards setting a positive, safe environment (e.g. no gossiping, no name-calling, let everyone speak for themselves). Allow students to participate in the development of rules and consequences at the beginning of the first class to enable them to feel a sense of ownership of the classroom.
- 5. Keep parents and guardians informed:** Keep parents in the loop throughout program implementation. This can be beneficial for students by encouraging more parent-child communication regarding sexual health. Examples of ways to involve parents include: regularly informing parents of their child's progress in the program, involving parents in home-based learning activities that support the curriculum, and updating parent groups on program goals and progress.



Implement >>>>

Classroom Management

- 6. Maintain open-mindedness:** Encourage an open dialogue and set ground rules that establish a climate for open and respectful discussions. Be mindful of not criticizing or dismissing students' opinions. Even if you disagree, allow students to voice their opinions. This helps you stay aware of what is currently going on in students' lives and equips you with the opportunity to help the students navigate real life situations.
- 7. Listen to students:** Be aware and attentive to students' concerns, questions, or lack of understanding of classroom material. If time permits, allow a lesson or activity more time to ensure that the students understand the main objectives. While it is important to follow the program curriculum as planned, flexibility is also essential to address students' needs throughout the process.
- 8. Don't dismiss disagreement:** If a student is challenging a main message (e.g. being a teen parent is not difficult) consider asking the class if they agree with that student. Chances are most students will agree that being a teen parent can be difficult. Whatever the responses are, emphasize it's up to everyone to make their own decisions based on what's best for them. Dismissing the student can disengage that student or even more students from the rest of the class or the rest of the lessons in the curriculum.
- 9. Be a good role model:** Abide by classroom agreements, avoid singling students out, and don't judge anyone's responses. Also, keep in mind that you never know who is in your class. Someone could be pregnant, could have HIV, or could have been abused. Being sensitive to a diversity of experiences in your classroom helps avoid shaming students or someone they know.
- 10. Know your resources:** Make contact with someone at your school (i.e. school nurse, counselor, social worker) who will be another source of support for your students. This person may also be able to help you answer questions from the question box. Also be aware of the protocol in place regarding student disclosure of abuse or neglect. Contact your curriculum coordinator for assistance in establishing this protocol.

Adapted from ETR Resource Center for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention and Canadian Association for School Health
<http://recapp.etr.org/recapp/index.cfm?fuseaction=pages.educatorskillshome>
<http://www.sexualityandu.ca/resource-library/>



Implement >>>> Classroom Management

VALUES QUESTION PROTOCOL

Answering sensitive questions skillfully can be a challenge for facilitators of adolescent sexual health classes. Below is an approach that can be used to answer sensitive questions that may not have one universal answer but rather a wide range based on a spectrum of beliefs. To start, read the question verbatim (if written), teach students more appropriate language if necessary—then follow protocol below:

A	Affirm the asker. This encourages students to continue asking questions. Reading the question verbatim is part of this step as well, as it shows respect for the student.	“You’ve got a great question.” “That’s a really common question—I’m glad you asked.”
N	Note question as values-based. This allows students to distinguish facts from opinions or feelings.	“This type of question can have a number of answers because it depends on beliefs and values.”
S	State the facts. The class should understand facts surrounding the questions even if the question is about values or beliefs.	“The facts about this issue are...”
W	What is the range of values/beliefs? Just as students should understand the facts behind a values-based questions, a question about facts may also require a discussion about underlying values.	“Some people think that... Others find... There are also people who...”
E	Encourage talking to parents or other trusted adults. Remind students that family and trusted adults can serve as an excellent resource for understanding values and beliefs.	“This is a great question to ask your parents or another adult.”
R	Remain available Ensure students feel comfortable with the answer you have provided and/or you can be approached if they have further questions.	“Did you have a different question in mind?” “Please let me know if you still have questions.”

EXAMPLE OF VALUES QUESTION & ANSWER APPROACH

QUESTION: What is the best age to start having sex?

ANSWER: “That’s a very interesting question that lots of people your age have. That actually depends on someone’s beliefs or values. It’s not possible to put an exact age on when a person should have sex. But, it’s important to note that most adolescents your age **ARE NOT** having sex. Some believe that sex is acceptable, as long as there is a mutual agreement between two consenting people, **others** believe that age, maturity level, partner health, commitment or marriage should be considered before having sex. This is a great question to ask your parents or other adult that you trust. Eventually, you will have to decide for yourself what you think is best for you considering your values, health, and goals. I hope I answered your question. If you have any other questions about this you can also speak with the school counselor.”

Adapted from Center for Health Training and Public Health Seattle & King County
<https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/locations/family-planning/education/FLASH/sexual-health-questions.aspx>