

Postponing Sexual Involvement HiTOPS Educator

Designed for: Males and females grades 7 & 8

“If you really loved me you would.”
“Oh come on; what’s the big deal?”
“If I don’t, she’ll find someone else.”

How often are first sexual experiences the result of peer, media and social pressure? These elements in our culture combine to make teens think they have to be sexually active to be “normal”. While there are many reasons why teens have sex, few of these are healthy reasons. However, there are many good reasons for waiting to become sexually involved. Teens need to make their own decisions to postpone sexual involvement until they know they are truly ready, emotionally as well as physically. When individuals discover their own thoughtful reasons for wanting to postpone sexual involvement, they are more invested in those reasons than when an adult *tells* them why they should.

This workshop can be presented in one of two ways:

1. “Why Teens Have Sex – Why Teens Wait”

This version of the workshop uses brainstorming in small groups as well as large group discussion to guide participants in a decision-making process about becoming sexually involved that will allow them to reach their own conclusions. This workshop also uses discussion and role-play scenarios to teach participants negotiation and refusal skills – the specific behavioral steps to saying “no” and/or negotiating a solution in any kind of pressure situation. Risks of early sexual involvement, social, media and peer pressures are also discussed, as well as the qualities need for a healthy sexual relationship.

2. “What’s in the Bag?”

This version of the workshop uses an engaging hands-on activity to get participants thinking about the risks of early sexual involvement, as well as social, media and peer pressures surrounding sexual involvement. Ten bags are passed around the class that contains different objects. Students feel inside and guess what is in the bag and how the object relates to postponing sexual involvement or having a healthy relationship.

Our goals are to help students:

- Explore reasons why teens do and do not become sexually involved
- Increase understanding about the consequences of early sexual involvement
- Discuss the pressures that influence young people’s sexual behavior
- Learn and practice negotiation and refusal skills

Average length of program: 45 minutes; 90 minutes

Recommended number of participants: 10-30