



The Facts without the Lecture

Relationships and Sexuality Education

**Resource
Materials
for Youth
Workers**

Foreword

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) plays a critical role in supporting and preparing young people for the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Young people receive a myriad of conflicting messages, from their friends, peer groups and the media, about sexuality and sexual behaviour. They are aware that such information may be inadequate or inappropriate, and say they would like an accurate, trustworthy source of information. They also welcome opportunities to learn relationship skills and to have open discussions with their peers, teachers and youth workers in a safe, secure environment, such as at school or youth clubs.

Research has found that young people are becoming sexually active at earlier ages than in the past and that early age of first sex is linked to higher incidence of crisis pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases later in life. The b4udecide.ie education initiative was developed to encourage and equip young people to make healthy, responsible decisions about relationships and sex, with the ultimate aim of encouraging them to delay early sex. The initiative provides accurate, age-appropriate information to teenagers through the b4udecide.ie website.

The b4udecide.ie education initiative is supported by these resource materials for youth workers as well as a similar set of resource materials for SPHE/RSE teachers that focus on the skills teenagers need to develop healthy relationships and make good decisions. The initiative also aims to reach out to parents, to encourage and help them to communicate with their teenage children about relationships and sexual health. Open communication between parents and teenagers about these issues can have a very positive impact on teenagers' attitudes, decisions and behaviour.

We wish to thank the youth workers and young people who participated in the pilot phase, the HSE Health Promotion Officers and the SPHE Regional Managers who gave their time to review and comment on the development of the resource materials and to Anne Potts, Louise Monaghan, Louise McBride and John Lahiff for their valuable contribution to the development of the materials.

We thank the members of the working group for the development of the b4udecide.ie Relationships and Sexuality Education Resource Materials for Youth Workers:

- **Frances Shearer**, National Co-ordinator for Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)
- **Siobhan Brennan**, Project Officer, National Youth Council of Ireland
- **Kevin O'Hagan**, Senior Project Officer, National Youth Council of Ireland
- **Orla McGowan**, Education and Information Officer, HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme

Foreword

We would like to thank the b4udecide.ie advisory group consisting of Janet Gaynor, Health Promotion HSE West, Deiniol Jones, National Youth Council of Ireland, Rita O'Reilly, Parentline, Sorchá Cusack, Máire Ní Chuireáin, Donegal Youth Council and Sharon McGrath (former member) for all their hard work in the development of the b4udecide.ie education initiative and for their continued support and invaluable assistance on all aspects of this initiative.

We would like to thank Orla McGowan for her dedication and professionalism in co-ordinating this project. In addition we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the National Youth Council of Ireland, and in particular Siobhan Brennan and Kevin O'Hagan, for their valuable contribution and successful collaboration on this endeavour.



Dr. Stephanie O'Keeffe
Acting Director, HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme



crisispregnancyprogramme



Q&A for Youth Organisations and Youth Workers	6
What is b4udecide.ie?	6
How does this resource fit within an RSE Programme?	6
What age group are these lessons suitable for?	7
Do you need to have access to b4udecide.ie to facilitate these lessons?	7
Do you need to inform parents that you are using this resource?	7
Do youth workers need training to use these materials?	7
Information for Youth Organisations	8
Young people’s sexual health – the role of youth organisations	8
Child protection in youth work settings	9
Developing young people’s personal skills	10
Creating a supportive environment for sexual health work	11
Good-practice guidelines for creating supportive social environments for workers	12
Developing policies, procedures and guidelines to support sexual health work at an organisational level	13
Additional RSE Resource Materials	14
Lesson 1 - Developing Ground Rules	16
Lesson 1 – Worksheet 1: Ground Rules	18
Lesson 2 – The b4udecide.ie Website	19
Lesson 3 – Friendship	22
Lesson 3 – Worksheet 1: Flying Carpet	24
Lesson 4 – Healthy Friendships	25
Lesson 4 – Worksheet 1: Friendship Dilemmas	27
Lesson 4 – Worksheet 2: Friendship Dilemmas	28
Lesson 4 – Worksheet 3: Friendship Dilemmas	29
Lesson 5 – The Influence of the Media	30
Lesson 6 – The Influence of Friends	32
Lesson 6 – Worksheet 1: Role-Plays	35
Lesson 7 – Values	37
Lesson 7 – Worksheet 1: Diamond Nine	39
Lesson 8 – Making Decisions	40
Lesson 8 – Worksheet 1: Thinking About Decisions	43
Lesson 8 – Worksheet 2: Decision-Making Checklist	44

Lesson 9 – Self-Esteem	45
Lesson 10 – Building a Relationship	47
Lesson 10 – Worksheet 1: Romantic Relationship Cards	50
Lesson 11 – Rights and Responsibilities in Relationships	51
Lesson 11 – Worksheet 1: Relationship Dilemmas	53
Lesson 11 – Worksheet 2: Relationship Dilemmas	54
Lesson 12 – The Age of Consent	55
Lesson 12 – Worksheet 1: Age of Consent Quiz	57
Lesson 12 – Worksheet 2: Age of Consent Quiz Answers	58
Lesson 12 – Notes for Youth Workers on the Age of Consent	59
Lesson 13 – Relationship Pressures	61
Lesson 13 – Worksheet 1: Maggie & Rob	65
Lesson 13 – Worksheet 2: Sam & Lucy	66
Lesson 13 – Worksheet 3: People at the Party	67
Lesson 13 – Notes for Youth Workers on First-Time Sex	68
Lesson 14 – Resisting Relationship Pressures	69
Lesson 14 – Worksheet 1: Skills for Saying “No”	72
Lesson 14 – Notes for Youth Workers on Sexual Violence and Young People	73
Lesson 15 – Teenage Pregnancy	74
Lesson 15 – Worksheet 1: Pregnancy Quiz	76
Lesson 15 – Worksheet 2: Pregnancy Quiz Answers	77
Lesson 15 – Worksheet 3: Amy’s Story	78
Lesson 15 – Worksheet 4: Charlotte’s Story	79
Lesson 15 – Worksheet 5: John’s Story	80
Lesson 16 – Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)	81
Lesson 16 – Worksheet 1: STI Quiz	83
Lesson 16 – Worksheet 2: STI Quiz Answers	84
Support Services for Young People	85
Sexual Health Support Services	86



Q&A for Youth Organisations and Youth Workers



What is b4udecide.ie?

b4udecide.ie is an education initiative developed by the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme, in partnership with the Department of Education and Skills, the National Youth Council of Ireland, Parentline and members of the Donegal Youth Council. It is based on the b4udecide.ie website, which teenagers can access directly, and is supported by these b4udecide.ie Relationships and Sexuality Education Resource Materials for Youth Workers and a similar set of resource materials for Teachers.

The initiative aims to encourage young people to make healthy, responsible decisions about relationships and sexual health, with the ultimate aim of delaying early sex. Over 200 young people were consulted during the development of the website. Many aspects of the website are based on their specific suggestions, such as the short videos of young people talking about their experiences, the real stories from teenage parents, and quizzes and polls on various topics.

The initiative also aims to reach out to parents, to encourage and help them to communicate with their teenage children about relationships and sexual health. Open communication between parents and teenagers about such issues can have a very positive impact on teenagers' attitudes, decisions and behaviour.

How do the b4udecide.ie Resource Materials fit within a Relationships and Sexual Education (RSE) Programme?

Youth organisations have a key role to play in addressing the issue of sexual health with young people. They can respond to young people's sexual health needs in the following ways:

1. Developing young people's personal skills (e.g. life-skills, including; communication, decision-making, negotiation, confidence building etc.) through sexual health education and promotion. The b4udecide.ie resource materials are ideally placed in this category of developing young people's personal skills.
2. Supporting sexual health work within the organisation – by providing supportive environments in which this work can take place and supporting youth workers to carry out this work with young people.
3. Developing policies, procedures and guidelines to support sexual health work at organisational level i.e. ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures are in place to support everyone involved.

What age group are these lessons suitable for?

These lessons were developed for the 14-16 year-old age group, but youth workers are free to use them with other groups as long as doing so is in line with their organisation's RSE policy.

Do you need to have access to b4udecide.ie to facilitate these lessons?

The b4udecide.ie website is used in several lessons. In all cases, apart from Lesson 2, including the website in the lesson is optional. Before using the website with young people, youth workers are advised to familiarise themselves with it.

Do you need to inform parents that you are using this resource?

Parents are the primary educators of their children in the area of relationships and sexuality. They know the civic, moral, personal and religious values they wish to pass to them. A youth organisation RSE programme, planned in consultation with parents, should reflect these values. Parents should be informed of the content of the RSE programme and be provided with opportunities to see any materials, including websites and DVDs, which will be used. Parents may find the b4udecide.ie website a useful starting point to begin discussions in the home with their teenage children about relationships and sexual health. The HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme has a range of support materials developed for parents that can be posted to parents free-of-charge. For more information and details of resources and how to access them, log on to www.crisispregnancy.ie and click on 'Help for Parents'.

Do youth workers need training to use these materials?

It is advisable that youth workers using these materials have attended RSE training.

All information was correct at time of going to print. The information in this resource is not a replacement for medical advice.



Information for Youth Organisations

Youth work has experienced several significant developments in recent years, not least the enactment of the Youth Work Act 2001¹ and the Quality Standards Framework 2010². This has influenced the evolution of youth work, with a move towards more formalised structures of practice and policy. The everyday practice of youth work is challenged by a broad range of factors relating to young people's health and wellbeing. Addressing the issue of young people's sexual health is one of the biggest challenges faced by youth organisations. There is a growing awareness in youth organisations of the importance of addressing the issue of sexual health within a comprehensive framework. Organisationally, this involves the development of good practice at all levels, supported by a sexual health policy. Therefore, these b4udecide.ie Relationships and Sexuality Resource Materials should be delivered as part of a comprehensive Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme, underpinned by a relevant sexual health policy and good practice guidelines.

Young people's sexual health – the role of youth organisations

Youth work takes place in a variety of settings, ranging from youth centres, outreach and detached work, to information and support projects. The Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland, 1997 defines the sector as "... places where young people choose to go on a voluntary basis, to engage in a range of activities and build relationships with peers and adults they know and trust. The special relationship that youth workers have with young people, meeting with them on their own territory and in situations which are relaxed, informal and of the young people's choosing, means they are singularly well-placed to facilitate effective health promotion".

Furthermore, the National Health Promotion Strategy (2000–2005)³ identifies the youth sector as "... a forum through which young people, especially those who leave school early, can be offered a range of opportunities to develop their personal skills and enhance their confidence".

Youth work has an important role to play in addressing many of the sexual health issues of young people, through direct work with them. It also has a role to play in influencing factors at contextual and policy levels through advocacy, participation, partnerships and policy development. The role of youth organisations in promoting health among young people has been increasingly developed in recent years. In this regard, the National Youth Health Programme (NYHP) has been to the forefront in developing a number of initiatives, including the Health Promoting Youth Service Initiative. This work has focused on addressing a broad range of health issues with young people in a holistic way. It paves the way for organisations to take a more proactive role in addressing the sexual health needs of young people.

¹ Department of Education and Science (2003). National Youth Work Development Plan, 2003 – 2007. Dublin: Government Publications. Government of Ireland: Youth Work Act (2001). Number 42 of 2001; Source: Irish Statute Book Database. ² Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (2010). National Quality Standards Framework (NQS) for Youth Work. Department of Health and Children. Government Publications, Dublin. ³ Department of Health and Children (2000) National Health Promotion Strategy 2000 – 2005. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Additionally, youth organisations target and work with young people during the formative period of adolescence. This is particularly important. The World Health Organisation (WHO) suggests the following reasons (cited in the Department of Health & Children Youth as a Resource: Promoting the Health of Young People at Risk, 1999)⁴ as to why adolescence is an appropriate time to target young people with health interventions. It states that it is a period when there is:

- Rapid physical growth and development
- Physical, social and psychological maturation occurring at different times for different individuals
- Sexual maturation and the start of sexual activity
- Trying out of experiences for the first time
- Frequent lack of knowledge and skills to make healthy choices
- The start of behaviours that may become lifetime habits that result in diseases many years later

It is generally recognised that youth is a time in life when one is most likely to be healthy. Therefore, the challenge for youth work is to build on this natural advantage. As already identified, sexual health is an integral part of young people's general health and requires the same attention as other health issues pertaining to young people. Youth organisations, therefore, have a key role to play in addressing the issue of sexual health with young people. They can respond to young people's sexual health needs by:

1. Linking with parents and schools to promote a coordinated and holistic approach to relationships and sexual health development.
2. Developing young people's personal skills (e.g. life-skills, including; communication, decision-making, negotiation, confidence building, etc.) through sexual health education and promotion.
3. Supporting sexual health work within the organisation by providing supportive environments in which this work can take place and by supporting youth workers in carrying out this work with young people.
4. Developing policies, procedures and guidelines to support sexual health work at organisational level i.e. ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures are in place to support everyone involved.

Child protection in youth work settings

All youth workers should be familiar with 'Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, (2011)'⁵. These guidelines provide direction and guidance about dealing with allegations or suspicions of child abuse, clarifying the steps that should be taken.

As youth work provision has developed in response to the changing needs of young people, child protection issues are becoming more of a concern for the youth work sector. While developing your sexual health policy you may consider it necessary to revisit the organisation's child protection policy and procedures. The following points are particularly relevant:

- The organisation should be clear about the definitions of child abuse and in particular child sexual abuse which is defined in Children First.
- The organisation should have procedures in place for workers when abuse is suspected.
- There should also be procedures in response to a young person's disclosure.
- Workers should ensure that their working practice does not place either themselves or the young person at risk.
- There should be procedures in place to deal with allegations against workers.
- There should be procedures in place relating to the recruitment and selection of workers.

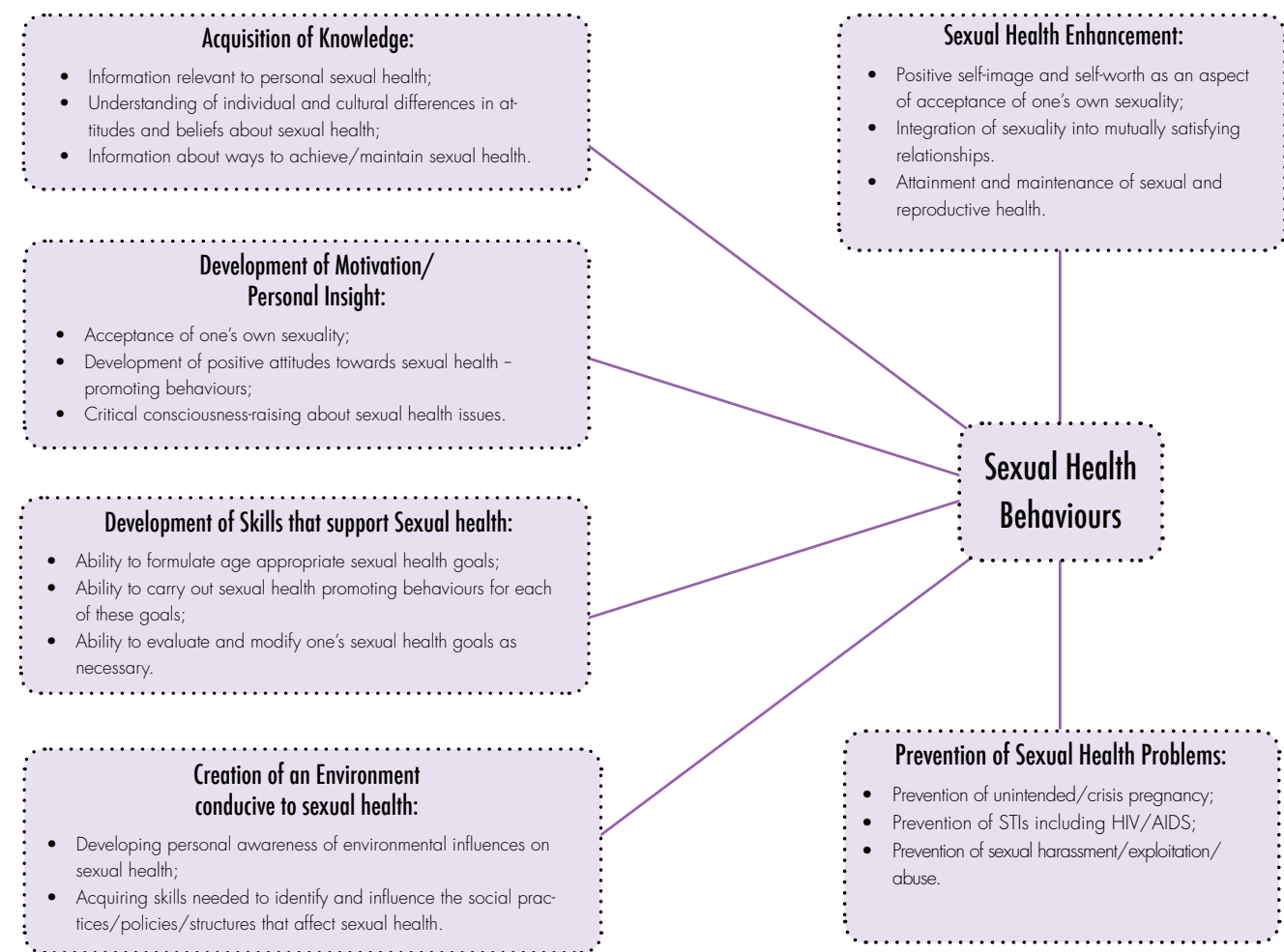
⁴ Department of Health and Children (1999). Youth as a Resource. Dublin: Stationery Office. ⁵ Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2011), Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

Youth workers have a responsibility to ensure that young people know the limits of confidentiality. If a young person is believed to be at risk, a member of staff has a responsibility to pass this information on to a relevant person/ designated child protection officer within the youth work organisation. The child protection guidelines also state that, if a youth worker becomes aware that a young person is sexually active under the age of consent, they have a responsibility to inform the young person's parents. The legal age of consent in Ireland is 17 for boys and girls, for both heterosexual and homosexual sex. All young people should be aware of this. To download a copy of 'Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, (2011)' visit www.dcyh.ie.

Developing young people's personal skills

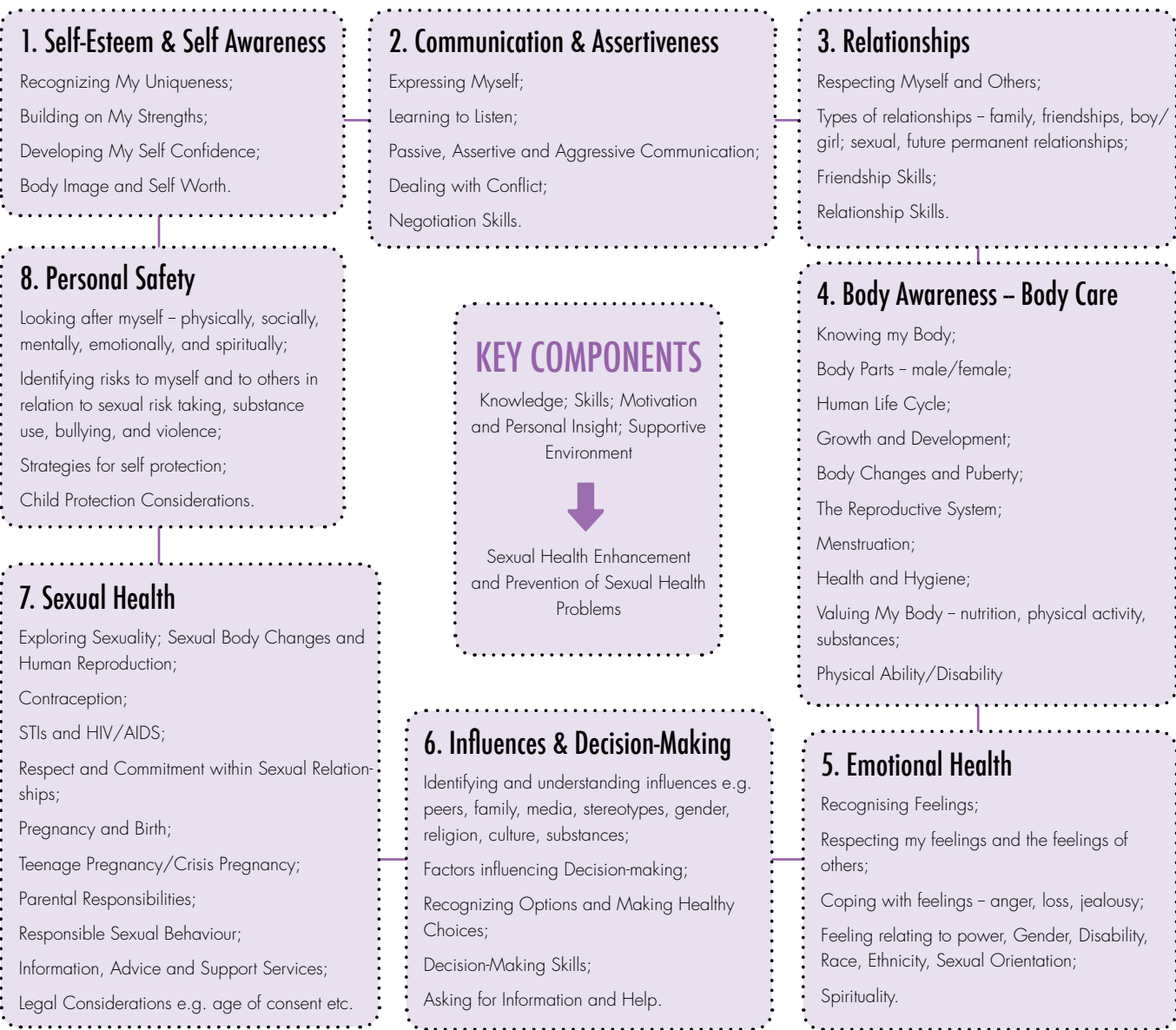
What are the key elements of an effective sexual health education programme? Sexual health education should be part of a youth organisation's broad-based, holistic health education programme, and be closely aligned with provision for personal and social development. In addition, young people's personal and social development is enhanced by the positive ethos of a youth organisation. Research has identified the basic components needed to develop effective sexual health education programmes that contribute to reducing negative sexual health outcomes and improving sexual health. Effective sexual health education programmes combine relevant information with motivational opportunities and skill-building experiences. These are described as the knowledge, motivation, skills and environmental components of sexual health education (Health Canada, 2003)⁶.

Figure 1. Components of a Sexual Health Education Programme⁷



⁶ Health Canada (2003). Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education. ⁷ Sense & Sexuality: A support pack for addressing the issue of sexual health with young people in youth work settings. National Youth Council of Ireland, 2004.

Figure 2. Curriculum Framework for a Sexual Health Education Programme⁸



Creating a supportive environment for sexual health work

- Good practice guidelines for creating supportive social environments for young people. Organisations should:
- Work with young people in a way that promotes respect, honesty and openness in a non-judgemental environment.
 - Provide young people with access to accurate, age-appropriate sexual health information in attractive and user-friendly formats.
 - Provide opportunities for young people to participate in needs-based sexual health education programmes.
 - Provide young people with opportunities to access workers of both genders, particularly in the context of sexual health education.

⁸ Sense & Sexuality: A support pack for addressing the issue of sexual health with young people in youth work settings. National Youth Council of Ireland, 2004.

- Promote equality and an acceptance of difference and diversity, particularly with regard to sexual orientation, ethnicity, culture and disability.
- Have developed and implemented referral procedures that best meet the needs of the young people with whom they work.
- Provide young people with a safe space in which they feel comfortable in discussing issues of concern and importance in relation to their sexual health.
- Empower young people to have a voice and to actively participate in decision-making processes within the organisation.

Good-practice guidelines for creating supportive social environments for workers

Organisations should:

- Promote a working environment for all workers that is based on respect, honesty, openness and a non-judgemental approach.
- Ensure that workers have access to induction, training, support and supervision, and a safe space in which to discuss issues of concern (see below for further information).
- Promote equality and an acceptance of difference and diversity, particularly with regard to sexual orientation, ethnicity, culture and disability.
- Ensure that a range of policies have been developed and implemented to support the sexual health work, including sexual health policy, equality policy, child protection policy, health and safety policy, bullying policy, substance use policy, etc.
- Provide workers with opportunities to access accurate, up-to-date information that supports them in their work in this area.
- Provide equal opportunities for workers to participate in organisational decision-making on the basis of their skills and experience.
- Promote a working environment that encourages empowerment and personal growth among workers.
- Provide opportunities for workers to build relationships and work in partnership with relevant external agencies in support of their work in this area.

Developing policies, procedures and guidelines to support sexual health work at an organisational level

The organisation should:

- Encourage the development of a sexual health policy, incorporated into the overall organisational policy in a holistic way.
- Actively consult with all relevant stakeholders e.g. young people, parents, workers, management, external agencies (where appropriate) – in the development of the policy.
- Ensure that the policy reflects the needs of the diverse groups of young people with whom the organisation may work e.g. young people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, disabled, travellers, from ethnic minorities, etc.
- Ensure that the policy incorporates the organisation's equality statement.
- Ensure that the policy takes account of the organisation's child protection policy.
- Acknowledge the need for and actively seek adequate resources for the implementation of the sexual health policy within the organisation.
- Acknowledge the need for and actively encourage the provision of training in sexual health for all involved in the organisation.
- Research and become familiar with relevant local support, expertise and resources available in relation to young people's sexual health.
- Monitor the implementation of the policy on an ongoing basis.
- Evaluate the policy at agreed intervals e.g. every three years.

Note: The guidelines above are taken from the Sense and Sexuality Resource Pack developed by the National Youth Council of Ireland. Training is available for this resource from the National Youth Health Programme or it can be viewed at www.youthhealth.ie

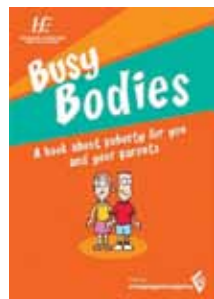


Additional RSE Resource Materials

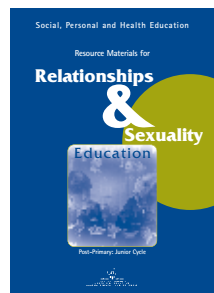
b4udecide.ie



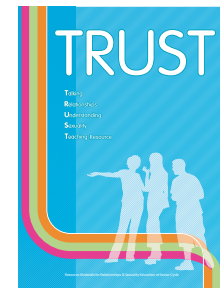
Additional resource material for the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education can be found at b4udecide.ie. This website contains quizzes, polls, videos, and information that youth workers can use to support the teaching of these lessons. The website is updated regularly so please watch out for new information/features that will be added. The website might also be brought to the attention of teenagers as a source of personal support when they need to reflect on difficult issues. Lesson 2 in this resource the b4udecide.ie website might guide youth workers in introducing young people to possible uses of the website. The lesson might be taught as an introduction to and/or summary of the issues addressed in the youth organisation's Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme.



The **Busybodies booklet and DVD** deals with developments at puberty, conception and birth. It is available from your local health promotion department or on www.healthpromotion.ie



The **Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education Post-Primary: Junior Cycle (1998)** is available for download at www.sphe.ie (select 'Resources' in the menu). This resource contains 24 lesson plans for Junior Cycle RSE.



The **Talking Relationships, Understanding Sexuality Teaching (TRUST) Resource (2008)** contains 21 lesson plans and a 40-minute DVD for Senior Cycle RSE. It is available from the National Youth Council of Ireland through training.



The **Facts DVD** for youth workers, teachers and parents contains information on fertility, contraception, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and crisis pregnancy. It is available to order on www.healthpromotion.ie

Responding to Eating Disorders and Body Image Issues – A Bodywhys/SPHE Resource Pack for 2nd Level Schools (late 2011) contains information on eating disorders, approaches and responses to supporting at-risk young people and lesson plans to address these issues within the SPHE Junior Cycle Programme. This resource is due to be available late 2011 from Bodywhys: info@bodywhys.ie

Feedback

When you are using these lesson plans with young people, you will have lots of ideas on what's good and maybe what could be better. We are really interested in what you think and would recommend that you ask the young people what they think of the lessons also.

We suggest that you ask at the end of each lesson what they thought about the lesson, how easy were the exercises to understand, how helpful were they, what did they learn from the particular lesson, what could be better, and what areas should have been addressed that were not?

Please e-mail any feedback you have to improvements@b4udecide.ie and don't forget to tell us what lesson plan(s) your feedback relates to and what the age range and gender of your group is.

Email feedback to improvements@b4udecide.ie

Lesson 1 : Developing Ground Rules

Aims

To facilitate the development of a safe learning environment.

Needed for this lesson:

- Lesson 1 – Worksheet 1: Ground Rules
- sheets of A3 (flipchart)
- paper
- markers

Learning Outcomes

Young people will:

- have developed ground rules for working together.
- be aware of relevant youth organisation policies.

Background Information



Before young people can begin exploring the area of friendship and relationships in a meaningful way, it is essential to establish a safe learning environment. Physical and emotional safety is essential for young people to participate in a way that leads to personal learning and personal development. Only when safety is established will participants be able to take risks in expressing their feelings and opinions.

As part of the initial work with the group, it is important to establish ground rules so as to provide guidelines on how people will work together, and on what is acceptable and what is not acceptable in terms of how people relate and respond to one another.

Lesson 1 : Procedure

1. Introduction

Introduce the lesson by outlining the aims and learning outcomes.

2. Developing Ground Rules

Explain that, over a number of sessions, the young people will be exploring the area of friendship and relationships. They will be looking at aspects of healthy and unhealthy relationships and the different pressures on young people to behave in a particular manner. This means that at times they may talk personally about things that are important to them. The purpose of this lesson is to develop a set of ground rules which will make it possible for people to speak, to be heard and to think about their development as a young person in today's world – in a setting where they feel safe.

- Remind the young people that they will have drawn up similar ground rules in SPHE in First Year. Even so, it is important that they are revisited here.
- Brainstorm possible rules. To get this process going, you could ask questions such as "What would help to make you feel comfortable participating in this group?" and "What might make this group uncomfortable for you and prevent you from participating?". List suggestions on a flipchart.
- Negotiate a set of the most important suggestions. The following rules need to be established:
 - I will listen to others
 - I will take responsibility for what I say
 - I will respect others' opinions even when different from mine
 - I understand that what people say is confidential (See 3. (b))
 - I will not put others down or slag others
 - I will be honest in what I say
 - I will follow instructions

Once these rules have been discussed and the points above have been clarified, ask young people to write the agreed rules in **Lesson 1 – Worksheet 1: Ground Rules**.

3. Youth Organisation Policies

- Explain the **Child Protection Policy** that operates in the youth project. Explain that, under this policy, if any young person says something to you (the youth worker) that indicates that they or someone else is in danger, you are obliged to pass on this information and seek help. This includes disclosures about sexual activity.
- Explain **appropriate and inappropriate disclosure**. The group environment is not the context for talking about issues that are very personal. If an issue raised in the group worries a young person and they wish to discuss something privately, let them know who is the appropriate person/people in the youth project for them to talk to.
- Explain your project's **anti-bullying policy**, with particular reference to your youth project policy on homophobic bullying, how it should be reported, and the consequences of this behaviour for the person/people involved.
- Explain that it is important that young people know the **law on the age of consent**. In Irish law, the age of consent for sexual intercourse is 17 years for boys and girls, for both heterosexual and homosexual sex.

You may wish to add references to these policies when developing the **Ground Rules**.

Lesson 1 : Worksheet 1 Ground Rules



1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Lesson 2 : The b4udecide.ie Website



Background Information



The b4udecide.ie education initiative aims to provide teenagers with the information and skills they need to deal with the pressures and influences they experience in order for them to make healthy decisions about relationships and sex as they get older.

The initiative includes the b4udecide.ie website, which teenagers can access directly, these b4udecide.ie Resource Materials for youth workers and a booklet for parents, to help them to talk to their teenagers about relationships and sexual health.

Over 200 young people were consulted during the development of the website and many aspects of the website are based on their suggestions, such as the short videos of young people talking about their own experiences, the real stories from teenage mothers and teenagers who have attended an STI clinic, and quizzes and polls on different topics.

Introducing young people to the website at this stage will provide them with a trustworthy and relevant source of information that they can access in their own time.

Aims

To introduce the b4udecide.ie website to young people.

Needed for this lesson:

- laptop with internet access to b4udecide.ie and a projector or
- access to a computer room with internet access to b4udecide.ie

Learning Outcomes

Young people will become familiar with the information available on b4udecide.ie and be assured that the site is a trustworthy source of information.

Lesson 2 : Procedure

1. Introduction

Introduce the lesson by outlining the aims and learning outcomes.

2. Introduction to the b4udecide.ie Website - Option 1

- (a) Using a laptop and a data projector, show the b4udecide.ie website to the group.
- (b) Navigate your way through the site, showing the five main sections: Relationships, b4udecide, The Facts, Quizzes and Polls, and The Video Gallery. For each section, explain that there are several sub-sections.
- (c) Click on 'The Video Gallery' and play the following videos:
Attractiveness Video: Young people talk about what they find attractive about other people.
Kissing Video: Young people talk about whether they think it's nicer to kiss someone they know, or someone they don't know.
Pressure Video: Young people talk about the pressures they feel.

Discussion pointers

Do you agree with the points made in the videos? Why? Why not? (Explain that you will be addressing some of these issues in the next few weeks.)

- (d) Click on 'Quizzes and Polls' and do the following:
 - 1) The Male Body Quiz
 - 2) The Female Body Quiz
 - 3) The Kissing Poll
 - 4) The Attractiveness PollYou may need to organise a vote on how to elicit responses to some of the questions, so that the response is not limited to those with the 'loudest voices'.
- (e) Click on 'Youth Cafes' (see bottom-right menu on the home page), listing cafes available to young people around the country, and point out the one in your area.

Lesson 2 : Procedure

Introduction to b4udecide.ie Website - Option 2

You will need to take the group to the IT room for this activity. The project's 'net nanny' will not block access to this site.

Introduce the young people, working in pairs, to the site and allow time (20 mins) for them to navigate the site independently. Encourage them to visit the five main sections and to try some of the quizzes and polls. Explain that they will be exploring some of the site sections in more depth later.

Discussion pointers

- What sections of the website did you explore?
- What did you learn from the website?
- Is there anything on the website that you would like more information on?
- You may have seen a feedback form on the website. Did any of you give feedback on the website? What feedback would you like to give?
- What particular areas of the website would you like to revisit?
- Could you see yourself discussing with your parents some of the issues raised on the website?

3. Conclusion

If young people have questions or concerns about friendships, relationships and sex, encourage them to talk to their parents, or another adult they trust. If they would like to bring up this topic with their parents, but find it difficult, it might be helpful for them to show their parents the b4udecide.ie website and ask them for their views.

Lesson 3 : Friendship

Aims

To give young people the opportunity to reflect on the value of friendships and the necessity to nurture healthy friendships in their lives.

Needed for this lesson:

- Lesson 3 - Worksheet 1 or large sheet with the heading 'Flying Carpet' in big lettering
- post-its
- blu-tack

Learning Outcomes

Young people will:

- have explored the qualities that are important in friendships.
- understand that the characteristics of a healthy friendship are the same as the characteristics of a healthy romantic relationship.

Background Information



A supportive network of friends can help young people to deal with the challenges in their lives. As young people go through adolescence, friendships can develop and become more intimate. These close friendships can enable them to meet their needs for security, love, understanding, compassion and empathy. Developing the skills that nurture friendships – such as compromise, listening, mutual trust, honesty and respect – can increase a young person's self-esteem as their friendships thrive. When young people have positive and rewarding experiences of friendship in adolescence, they will be better prepared to establish positive, healthy romantic attachments as they get older. The skills and values developed through friendship are the same skills and values that are important when we begin to develop romantic attachments and relationships later in life.

Note: The Friendship Flying Carpet exercise is taken from the Let's Leave it Till Later resource, with the kind permission of Jo Adams.

Lesson 3 : Procedure

1. Introduction

Introduce the lesson by outlining the aims and learning outcomes.

2. Friendship Flying Carpet

- (a) Split the group into pairs.
- (b) Invite each person to spend a few minutes, on their own, thinking about a current friendship or one they had in the past. This could be with a friend, a cousin, a neighbour, a brother or a sister (but not a boyfriend, girlfriend, someone in the room, or a sexual partner).
- (c) Ask them to think about the following questions:
 - What qualities do you bring to the friendship?
 - What qualities does the other person bring?
 - What do you value in this friendship?
 - How does the friendship make you feel about yourself?
 - What positive role does/did your friend play in your life?
 - What does the friendship help you to do, to be, or to aspire to?
- (d) Ask each one to turn to their partner and spend two or three minutes describing their friendship. They then swap over so that each person has an opportunity to speak. They can share as much or as little as they wish.
- (e) Put up on the flipchart the large sheet with 'Flying Carpet' written on it. Ask each person to identify one positive thing the friendship gives them that enhances their life. Ask them to write this down on a 'post-it'. Then invite them one by one to stick their 'post-its' on the Flying Carpet sheet or on the flipchart.

- (f) Read through the different 'post-its' and point out that these represent the range of positive qualities that young people in the group receive from a valued friendship. Ask them to identify one of the qualities they see in themselves and to remember how valued and loved they are by their friends.

3. Group Exercise

- (a) Looking at the Friendship Flying Carpet, what qualities/characteristics posted here might also be important in romantic relationships? (e.g. trust, honesty, respect, having a laugh)
- (b) Write 3 of these qualities on the flipchart.
- (c) Taking one quality at a time, ask the group:
 - On a scale of 1-5, how important is this quality in a friendship?
 - On a scale of 1-5, how important is this quality in a romantic relationship?Note down feedback on the flipchart. You may like to do this for a range of different qualities on the Flying Carpet.
- (d) Ask the group: Do you think that a good friendship is a good foundation for a romantic relationship? If so, why?

4. Conclusion

Ask the group to think about five qualities that are most important to them in their friendships and five qualities that would be most important to them in a romantic relationship.

Lesson 3 : Worksheet 1 Flying Carpet



A large dotted rectangular box for writing, with a small illustration of a blue flying carpet in the bottom left corner.

Lesson 4 : Healthy Friendships

Aims

To encourage young people to reflect on the characteristics of healthy relationships.

Needed for this lesson:

- Lesson 4 – Worksheet 1: Friendship Dilemmas
- access to b4udecide.ie (optional)

Learning Outcomes

Young people will:

- have an understanding of different types of relationships.
- be aware of the feelings and emotions associated with a variety of relationships.

Background Information



Friendships can change throughout life. Some friendships grow deeper and stronger and continue into adulthood, while we outgrow other friendships and move on from them. It is important for young people to recognise that, although there is no such thing as a perfect friendship or relationship, healthy relationships are, for the most part, rewarding, fulfilling and fun for the people involved. Being able to recognise some differences between healthy and unhealthy friendships will help them to maintain and nurture friendships that have a positive effect on them, while letting go of friendships that are damaging or cause worry or distress. This important learning will be of benefit to them as they grow older and begin to develop romantic relationships in adulthood.

Lesson 4 : Procedure

1. Introduction

Introduce the lesson by outlining the aims and learning outcomes.

2. b4udecide.ie: Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships Video (optional)

Go to b4udecide.ie, click on the Video Gallery and then on the video titled 'Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships'. Here a counsellor talks about such relationships. Ask participants to think about what the counsellor has said and how it's applicable to friendships and romantic relationships. Take feedback on the key points made.

3. Case Studies: Friendship Dilemmas

- (a) Divide the group into pairs and assign each pair one of the Friendship Dilemmas from **Lesson 4 – Worksheet 1, 2 and 3: Friendship Dilemmas**. Give the pairs 10 minutes to read the dilemmas and discuss their answers to the questions.
- (b) Go through each of the dilemmas with the group, allowing the pairs of young people to read out their dilemma and summarise their responses to the questions.

4. Conclusion

Invite the group to think about the healthy friendships in their own lives and about ways that they can make sure they do not take these healthy friendships for granted.

Lesson 4 : Worksheet 1 Friendship Dilemmas



Emma & Jane

Emma and Jane have been best friends since primary school. They always have something to talk about and have the same sense of humour. Lately, they have fallen out because **Emma** has kissed someone that **Jane** fancies. **Jane** is furious. She cried when she found out and told **Emma** she would never speak to her again. **Emma** is very upset.

Emma's questions:

- If friends fall out, or fight, does that mean that a friendship is over?
- What should I do?
- Is this a healthy friendship for me?

John and Jamie

John and Jamie are great friends and two of the best players on the football team. Recently, **John** told **Jamie** that his older brother is gay, but asked him not to tell anyone else. **Jamie** agreed. On his way into the changing-room yesterday, **John** heard **Jamie** tell one of the other lads on the team his secret. When he walked into the changing-room, **Jamie** looked embarrassed and later, after training, he apologised for telling **John's** secret.

John's questions:

- What can you do if your friends let you down?
- What should I do?
- Is this a healthy friendship for me?

Richard and Conor

Richard and Conor live on the same road. Usually, they go to the library after school, but lately, **Conor** has skipped the library and has started hanging around the shopping centre instead. Last week when **Richard** was in **Conor's** house, **Conor's** mother asked him if **Conor** was still going to the library with him. Richard just nodded. When they were alone, **Conor** kicked **Richard** and punched him in the ribs. He said he'd better get better at lying unless he wanted a good beating.

Richard's questions:

- What can I do if someone who is supposed to be my friend threatens me and hits me, to make me do something I don't want to do?
- What should I do?
- Is this a healthy friendship for me?



Rita and Louise

Rita and Louise get on really well since meeting in first year. They love hanging out together and having fun. The problem is that **Louise** does not like **Denise**, another good friend of **Rita's**. **Louise** is mean to Denise, and always ignores her if she is there. **Rita** has tried to make **Louise** see that **Denise** is really nice, but **Louise** told her that **Denise** was boring and that they had much better fun on their own, that they didn't need **Denise**.

Rita's questions:

- Is it ok for Louise to tell me not to be friends with Denise?
- What should I do?
- Is this a healthy friendship for me?

Karen and Siobhan

Karen and Siobhan have known each other since they were five years old and know all of each other's secrets. Now they are in second year, and beginning to go out and kiss boys. **Siobhan** started kissing boys in first year and she loves telling **Karen** all about it. **Karen** is shyer than **Siobhan**; she kissed someone for the first time last weekend. She really liked him. She got a text message from him, but didn't want to show it to **Siobhan**, because it was private. **Siobhan** grabbed her phone and started shouting it out and everyone heard what he had said. **Karen** went red and started to cry. **Siobhan** was shocked to see **Karen** crying and immediately felt guilty about what she had done and gave her phone back to her.

Karen's questions:

- If Siobhan does not respect my privacy, is she really a good friend?
- What should I do?
- Is this a healthy friendship for me?

Stephen and Jessica

Stephen and Jessica sit beside each other in their French class and get on really well. **Stephen** is good at French and always does his homework. He has let **Jessica** copy his homework once or twice, but lately she is asking him for his copy all the time and it is getting annoying. He said no to her last week and she started calling him a swot and made him feel really stupid and embarrassed in front of the other people in their class.

Stephen's questions:

- If Jessica tries to embarrass me every time I say no to her, is she really my friend?
- What should I do?
- Is this a healthy friendship for me?



Lorraine and Michael

Lorraine and Michael don't go to the same school, but they do hang around together at the weekends. They are not girlfriend and boyfriend. **Michael** texts **Lorraine** after school every day and several more times before going to bed. If she doesn't respond within 10 minutes he thinks she is ignoring him and they have a fight. **Lorraine** is getting really tired of this. Her parents do not approve of the relationship, but **Michael** has said that he needs her and, if she is not there for him, his life is meaningless.

Lorraine's questions:

- Is someone really a good friend to me if they are always making me feel guilty if I am not paying them attention all the time?
- What should I do?
- Is this a healthy friendship for me?

Peter and Brian

Peter and Brian are good friends. Recently, **Peter** has been out of school a lot. When **Brian** asks **Peter** why he is out of school so much, **Peter** changes the subject. **Brian** doesn't know what to think. He hopes that, if something is wrong, **Peter** would tell him, but he thinks that, for now, he will stop asking him about it. If **Peter** wants to talk about it, he will do so in his own time.

Brian's questions:

- What can I do to support a friend who is going through a hard time?
- What should I do?
- Is this a healthy friendship for me?

Lesson 5 : The Influence of the Media

Aims

To increase young people's awareness of how their attitudes to relationships, sexuality and sexual behaviour are influenced by the media.

Needed for this lesson:

- advertisements from magazines which portray aspects of relationships and sexuality and/or sexual images of males and females or
- examples of lyrics from a popular song(s) that portray aspects of relationships and sexuality, qualities or traits in males and/or females, or particular attitudes towards sex and sexuality (if appropriate, you may also like to show the music video that accompanies the song)
- CD player (optional)

Learning Outcomes

Young people will:

- have explored how various media can influence our views on relationships and sexuality.
- have critically examined the difference between how relationships and sexuality are portrayed in the media and the attitudes and values of Irish teenagers concerning relationships and sexuality.

Background Information



In the course of their everyday lives, young people can be exposed to a wide range of influences in relation to sex and sexuality. They are particularly vulnerable in their early teenage years, when gender roles and attitudes to sex, sexuality and relationships are being formed. Many magazines, lyrics of songs, TV programmes and films portray relationships and sexual behaviour in a way that is unrelated to the real experience of relationships among Irish teenagers. Providing opportunities for young people to challenge and question the values and messages portrayed by the media will help them to develop healthy attitudes and values concerning relationships and sexuality.

Lesson 5 : Procedure

1. Introduction

Introduce the lesson by outlining the aims and learning outcomes.

2. Group Work

a) Images in the Media

Divide the group into smaller groups of three or four. Ask each group to appoint a reporter who will share the group's findings with the full group. Give each group one advertisement and ask them to take about ten minutes to discuss the following questions:

- What kind of picture of the product does the advertisement create?
- Is the image used an accurate reflection of real life?
- What message is the advertisement giving about the attractive qualities of men/women?
- What message is it giving about relationships and sexuality?

When groups have had sufficient time to consider the questions, invite one participant from each group to show the ad to the overall group and summarise their group's responses to the questions. As they do so, write key words, in response to each of the questions, on the flipchart.

Discussion pointers

- Why are the people in these ads made to look attractive/sexy?
- How does the company want you to respond to the advertisement?
- What kind of impact can this type of advertising have on people?

OR

b) Messages in Music

Divide the group into smaller groups of three or four. Ask each sub-group to appoint a reporter who will share their sub-group findings with the overall group.

Give each group one set of lyrics, or one verse of a song, and ask them to take about ten minutes to read through the words and discuss these questions:

- What is this song saying about males/females and relationships?
- Are these messages and values the same as your own attitudes and values?
- In what way are the feelings expressed and the relationships portrayed similar or different to real-life relationships?

When the groups have had sufficient time to consider the questions, invite one participant from each group to read some of the lyrics (or play their song) and summarise their group's responses to the questions. As they do so, write key words, in response to each of the questions, on the flipchart.

Discussion pointers

- Do you think the lyrics of songs could influence what young people think about girls, boys and relationships?
- In what way might such influences affect their expectations about girls, boys and relationships?

3. Conclusion

Conclude by reminding the participants that music and advertisements can have a strong influence on our moods, thoughts, and behaviour. That is why companies spend so much money on advertising. It is important to realise that, behind advertisements and song lyrics, there is a team of people trying to give a certain message that will encourage us to buy their product or aspire to a lifestyle that they promote. Encourage the young people to keep this in mind when they are viewing advertisements during the week.

Lesson 6 : The Influence of Friends

Aims

To increase young people's awareness of how their attitudes towards relationships and sexuality are positively and negatively influenced by their peers and to enable them to develop the skills for establishing and maintaining relationships.

Needed for this lesson:

- Lesson 6 – Worksheet 1: Role-Plays
- access to b4udecide.ie (optional)

Learning Outcomes

Young people will:

- recognise that friends can positively and negatively influence the way in which we behave.
- have developed assertive responses to peer pressure.
- have learned how to accept an assertive response to peer pressure.

Background Information



One of the key tasks of adolescence is the development of a sense of identity. This is a time of exploration and experimentation. The young person's reference point has up to this been parents and family, but this may now change; the peer group often becomes the main point of reference for decisions about how to behave throughout the teenage years.

The level of peer influence can increase as the young person gains greater independence. Furthermore, they may not yet have developed the skills, confidence and awareness to resist negative peer influences during this time. This could result in the teenager shifting away from their family norms and values and moving instead towards the values of the peer group.

Young people can, both intentionally and unintentionally, put pressure on each other, for various reasons. The first step in dealing with pressure is being able to recognise it when it is being applied. This awareness can empower young people to understand what is happening to them and behave in accordance with what is good for them, and in line with their own feelings and values.

Lesson 6 : Procedure

1. Introduction

Introduce the lesson by outlining the aims and learning outcomes.

2. Peer Pressure Videos – b4udecide.ie (optional)

Explain that you are going to play two videos of young people talking about peer pressure. Go to b4udecide.ie, click on the Video Gallery, then play the videos entitled:

- Pressures on Young People
- Dealing with Peer Pressure

Discussion pointers

- Do you think the pressures young people talk about in these videos are common among young people?
- Do boys and girls experience different types of pressure?
- Where does this pressure come from?

3. Role-Play

- Divide the participants into groups of three.
- Assign a role-play from **Lesson 6 – Worksheet 1: Role-Plays** to each group. You may be limited to two role-plays if you have a single-sex group. Reassure them that groups are not in competition with each other.
- Give them 8-10 minutes to read the scenario, decide who will take what role and 'flesh out' the role-play. They may find it useful to write down their 'fleshed out' version of the script. Ask participants to think about each person in the role-play and how they might feel in that situation.
- Pick a group to act out each role-play. Each should take no more than a minute or two. At the end of each role-play, ask the actors to stay in place and ask the group the following questions.

Discussion pointers

- What is happening in this role-play?
- How do you think the person being pressurised is feeling?
- How do you think the other people are feeling?
- Why might they be behaving in this way?
- How might the person being pressured respond so as to deal assertively and effectively with peer pressure?
- What could the person exerting the pressure say or do to show that they accept and respect the other person's objection to being pressured?
- What could you say or do if you wanted to be a supportive friend to the person being pressured?

Lesson 6 : Procedure continued...

Take feedback and suggestions from the group about extra exchanges that could be added to the role-play, showing: (a) the person being pressured responding assertively, (b) the person/people exerting the pressure accepting and respecting that the person has said no, and (c) the situation being resolved. Ask the actors to act out the suggestions of the group.

Discussion pointers for the actors

- What was it like to be put under pressure?
- What was it like to pressurise someone?
- What was it like to respond assertively and say no?
- What was it like to accept and respect that the person being pressured had said no?

Ask the participants to de-role. Repeat for other role-plays, if time allows.

4. Conclusion

Ask the young people to reflect on their own behaviour, and how they might be unintentionally putting other people under pressure.

For more tips on dealing with peer pressure, young people can visit b4udecide.ie and click on 'Relationships and U' and then on 'Pressure from Friends'.

Lesson 6 : Worksheet 1 Role-Plays



Laura, Kate & Sinead

Story: Laura, Kate and Sinead are friends. Laura and Sinead have started going out with boys recently. They want Kate to start going out with someone too.

Laura: Alan fancies you. I can set you up with him. Then we will all have boyfriends.

Kate: No, it's ok. I don't want to go out with anyone.

Sinead: Don't be such a baby, Kate.

Laura: You can't keep hanging around with us unless you get a boyfriend.

Sinead: Yeah, you need to grow up if you want to stay friends with us.



Nicola, Aisling & Deirdre

Story: Nicola, Aisling and Deirdre are friends. One of the most popular boys in the school fancies Deirdre. Deirdre is not interested because he's so much older than she.

Nicola: You are crazy to say no to him, Deirdre.

Aisling: Yeah, I can't believe you're thinking of that.

Deirdre: Why? He's in Leaving Cert and I'm in third year. He's too old for me.

Nicola: But Deirdre, if you kiss him that means we'll get to hang around with his friends.

Aisling: Exactly. If you don't kiss him, they'll all think we're frigid or something. That's not fair. You can't do that to us.



Michael, Jason & Kevin

Story: Michael, Jason and Kevin are friends. Michael finds out that an attractive girl has asked Jason out and he has said no.

Michael: Emma Lyons fancies you.

Jason: No she doesn't.

Kevin: She's hot.

Michael: Yeah, and she asked you to meet her at the weekend and you said no. She told me.

Kevin: What! Why not?

Michael: Because he's afraid. He wouldn't know what to do. He's only a chicken anyway.



Lesson 6 : Worksheet 1 Role-Plays



Des, Sean & Philip

Story: Des, Sean and Philip are friends. Sean started going out with a girl recently and Des and Philip have been pressuring him to talk about her.

Philip: Did you have a good night Friday night, Sean?

Sean: Yeah.

Des: Did you get up to much?

Sean: No.

Philip: What was she like?

Des: Did she let you do more than kiss her?

Sean: Shut up!

Philip: Sean, if you won't tell us what you did we'll just think you did nothing.

Des: Yeah, that you're only a virgin, and we don't like hanging around with virgins, isn't that right, Philip?



Darren, Sandra & Keith

Story: Darren is going out with Sandra. They are in Sandra's house. Darren wants them to have some time alone in her bedroom. Sandra wants them to watch a DVD with her little brother, Keith.

Darren: C'mon Sandra, this is boring. I want to spend time alone with you. Let's go up to your room.

Sandra: I can't. I have to mind Keith.

Darren: He's fine, aren't you, Keith?

Keith: I'm fine. I'm watching TV.

Darren: Listen Sandra, I don't want to put you under pressure, but if you loved me you'd want to spend more time alone with me. Do you love me or not?



Lesson 7 : Values

Aims

To enable young people to identify their own values in relationships.

Needed for this lesson:

- Lesson 7 – Worksheet 1: Diamond Nine
- flipchart paper and markers for each group of four

Learning Outcomes

Young people will:

- have identified values that are important to them in their relationships.
- understand that their values guide their decisions and choices in life.

Background Information



It is preferable to do this lesson directly before Lesson 8 – Making Decisions.

People who have given some thought and consideration to their beliefs, feelings and what they value in their lives will be better placed to make good decisions that will be respectful of both themselves and others. Values are the principles, beliefs and qualities that we hold dear and that guide our decisions and behaviour on a day-to-day basis. Our values act as an 'internal guidance system' which helps us to decide whether something is right or wrong for us. They come from our parents, family, school, religion and culture but, as we get older, our values usually become more personal to us, as we begin to have a better understanding of what our own values are. Our values can be influenced by our friends, the media and our own life experience. Generally, our decisions about how we behave and the choices we make are influenced by our values. This is especially true in the area of relationships.

Lesson 7 : Procedure

1. Introduction

Introduce the lesson by outlining the aims and learning outcomes.

2. Group Work: Diamond Nine

- Split the group into pairs and ask the young people to come up with a list of four values that they think are important in friendships/relationships. Such values might be: kindness, honesty, trust, respect and fun.
- Ask each pair to join with another pair to form a group of four, and share their values. They now have eight values. Take feedback from each of the groups in turn, adding new values to the list on the flipchart each time.
- Young people continue working in the same groups of four and as a group decide on nine values from the list on the flipchart that are important to them. They can use their own eight and select one more, or they can decide on a new list. They must agree on the nine.
- Distribute **Lesson 7 – Worksheet 1: Diamond Nine** to each group.
- Ask them to decide on the relative importance of the nine statements as follows:
 - Decide on the most important value
 - Two values ranked second, having equal importance
 - Three values ranked third, having the same importance
 - Two values ranked fourth, having equal importance
 - One value ranked fifth, being least important
- When they have agreed on their statements, ask them to write them in Worksheet 1: Diamond Nine.

Discussion pointers

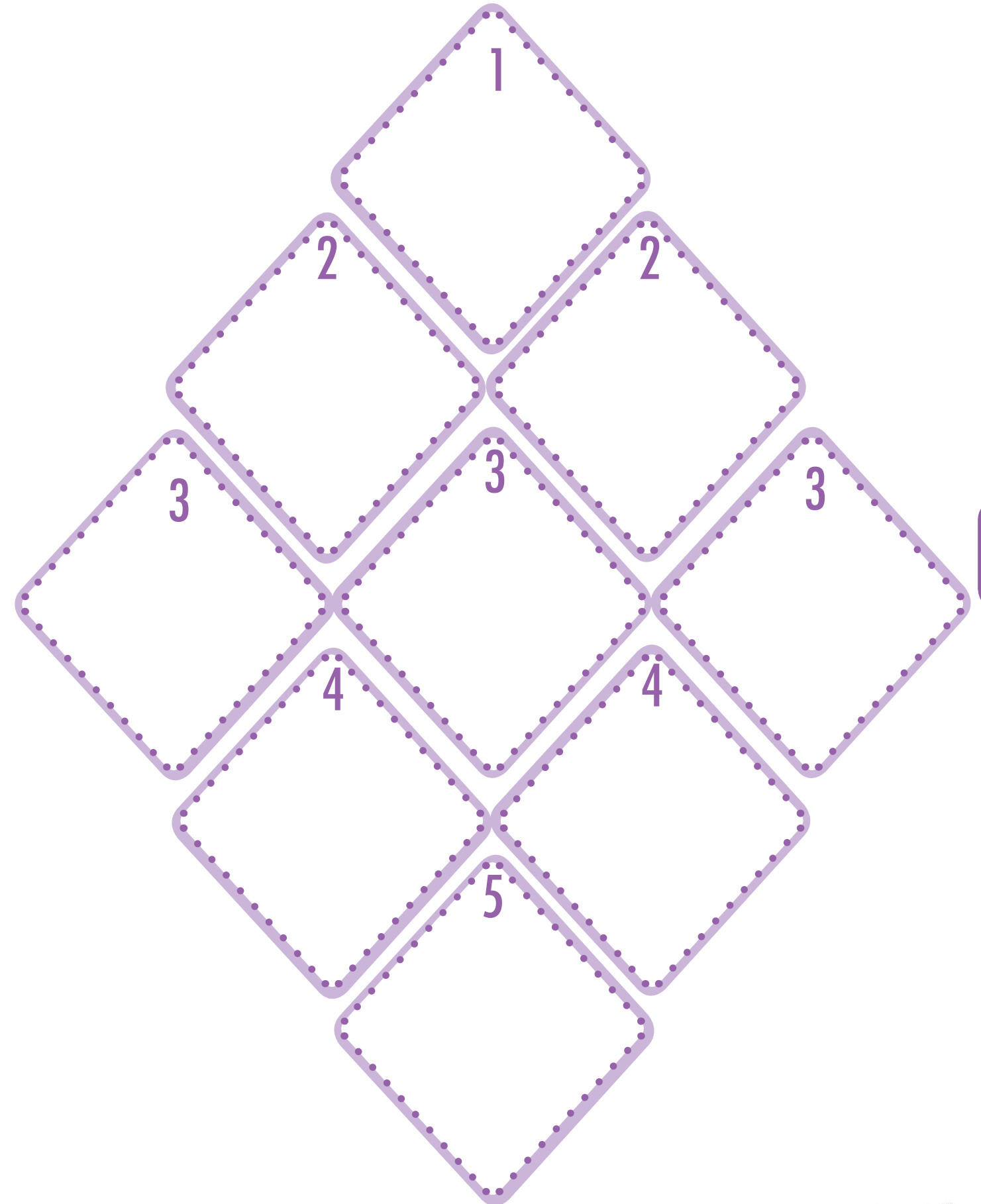
Once participants have completed the above, you can use the following questions to guide a discussion:

- How easy or how difficult was it to decide on values with one other person?
- How did you feel when sharing your values with another person and another pair?
- As a group, how did you decide on values you would select from those listed on the flipchart?
- When it came to doing the Diamond Nine, what guided your discussion and decisions about how you would rank the nine values you had chosen?
- Were there differences among the group? Why/Why not?

3. Conclusion

Remind the group that everyone has different values that guide their attitudes and behaviour in relationships. It is beneficial to be aware of our values when we are making decisions in relationships and to respect other people's values, which may be different from our own, particularly in our personal relationships. When we make a decision that is in line with our own personal values, it is more likely that it will be a healthy one for us.

Lesson 7 : Worksheet 1 Diamond Nine



Lesson 8 : Making Decisions

Aims

To develop an awareness of the process involved in making healthy decisions in relationships.

Needed for this lesson:

- Lesson 8 – Worksheet 1: Thinking About Decisions
- Lesson 8 – Worksheet 2: Decision-Making Checklist
- flipchart/A3 paper and markers.

Learning Outcomes

Young people will:

- know the steps involved in making healthy decisions.
- have the skills for establishing and maintaining relationships at appropriate levels.

Background Information



It is preferable to do this lesson directly after Lesson 7 – Values.

The decisions we make reflect our beliefs and values. Our decisions can be described as our values in action. Making healthy decisions, particularly in the area of relationships, is critical to our physical and emotional health and well-being.

Being able to understand and communicate what we want and do not want is an important skill for teenagers to learn. It can help them to understand and approach relationships in a way that is respectful both to themselves and the other person.

The decision to become involved in a romantic relationship for the first time is a big event in the life of a teenager, and possibly one of the first big decisions they will make without input from their parents or carers. This can be a very empowering feeling and experience, but young people need support to avoid possible negative experiences and influences.

Lesson 8 : Procedure

1. Introduction

Introduce the lesson by outlining the aims and learning outcomes.

2. Brainstorm

- Ask the young people to think of a good decision they have made. Then ask: "How do you feel after you have made a good decision/a decision that is right for you?" Take feedback on the flipchart.
- Ask the young people to think of a decision that they made and subsequently regretted. Then ask: "How do you feel after you have made a bad decision/a decision that is not right for you?" Take feedback on the flipchart.
- Ask the young people: "What is a gut reaction?" Take feedback on the flipchart.

3. Decision-making

Option 1

– Personal Reflection: Making Healthy Decisions

This exercise is conducted by participants individually. If your group has low literacy levels, you may choose one dilemma and conduct the exercise with the whole group.

- Choose one of the dilemmas below and write it on the flipchart. Alternatively, you can write all of the dilemmas on the flipchart, and allow the young people to choose the one they would like to use for the exercise.

1) Dilemma 1

If you go out this weekend, you know you will be put under pressure to drink even though you don't want to. Everyone else is going out. What do you do?

2) Dilemma 2

You would like to send a text to someone that you are attracted to, but you don't know if they feel the same way. What do you do?

3) Dilemma 3

Someone you are kissing starts touching you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable. What do you do?

- Give each person a copy of **Lesson 8 – Worksheet 1: Thinking About Decisions**.

- Ask the young people to select a dilemma and to fill out the worksheet based on their own response to a situation like this, giving consideration to the choices they have, the consequences of those choices, their own values, the feelings of other people, and their own 'gut feeling'. They may need to use their imagination to fill out some details of the story.

Lesson 8 : Procedure continued...

Discussion pointers

- What was easy/difficult about this exercise?
- Was everyone able to make a decision at the end?
- Did thinking about the options and consequences help you to make a decision?
- Did thinking about your own values help you to make a decision?
- Did thinking about your own 'gut reaction' help you to make a decision? (You may need to acknowledge that it is difficult for them to know what their gut reaction is in an imaginary scenario.)

OR

Option 2 – Pair Work: The Decision-Making Checklist

- (a) Split the group into pairs, nominating an A and a B in each pair
- (b) Give the As a copy of **Lesson 8 – Work Sheet 2: Decision-Making Checklist**
- (c) Ask the Bs to think of an important decision they need to make. They don't need to share it with anyone
- (d) Tell the As to ask the Bs the question on Lesson 8 – Worksheet 2: Decision-Making Checklist
- (e) When the Bs have finished answering, they can swap roles, so that the Bs are asking the As the questions

Discussion pointers

- What is the most helpful step on the Decision-Making Checklist?
- Is there anything there that you did not think of as being an important part of decision-making?
- Is there anything you think should be added to this list?
- Do you think this Decision-Making Checklist could be useful to refer back to when making decisions?

4. Conclusion

Remind the group of the feelings they had when they made good decisions and the feelings they had when they made decisions they regretted.

When they have to make difficult decisions, they may find it useful to think back and remember how they felt when making a good decision in the past. Keeping these feelings in mind as they consider their options may help to identify the best decision for them.

Lesson 8 : Worksheet 1 Thinking About Decisions



Your Options:

1.

2.

3.

Possible Consequences of Option 1

Possible Consequences of Option 2

Possible Consequences of Option 3

Which option feels like the right choice for you?

Is this option in line with your values?

Lesson 8 : Worksheet 2 Decision-Making Checklist



Do you have to make this decision now?	NO →	Don't feel pressured into decisions you don't want to make.
YES ↓		
Do you feel pressurised by your friends/peers into making this decision?	YES →	Making a decision due to peer pressure is not a good idea.
NO ↓		
Have you thought about what your options are?	NO →	Carefully consider all the choices you could make.
YES ↓		
Have you considered the positive and negative consequences of each option?	NO →	Write out each choice you could make and all the possible consequences.
YES ↓		
Have you spoke to an adult you trust?	NO →	Get some advice from someone who cares about you.
YES ↓		
Have you thought about how this decision might affect other people?	NO →	Consider the feelings of anyone who could be affected by the decision.
YES ↓		
Taking everything into account do you have a preferred choice?	NO →	Don't worry! It takes time to make good decisions. Come back to it in a few days.
YES ↓		
Is this decision in line with your personal/moral values?	NO →	Re-think your choice!
YES ↓		
Are you happy and comfortable with this decision? Is your gut reaction telling you this is the right thing for you?	NO →	Your gut reaction to a decision is v. important. Re-think - do you need to make this decision now?
YES ↓		
You have considered this decision carefully and you have gone through a good process to come to this decision. But remember it takes time to develop good decision-making skills. If this decision does not turn out well for you, the important thing is to learn from it - it will help you to make better decisions in the future.		

Lesson 9 : Self-Esteem

Aims

To enable young people to reflect on their positive qualities, achievements and important relationships in their lives and how to focus on these as a means of building their self-esteem.

Needed for this lesson:

- 1 large piece of art paper for each participant
- crayons, colouring pencils, markers
- glue
- glitter, star stickers, other art materials
- a photograph of each person in the group (optional)

Learning Outcomes

Young people will:

- have recognised and appreciated their own strengths, positive qualities and achievements.
- have helped others to recognise their strengths, positive qualities and achievements.

Background Information



A person's self-esteem is a measurement of the degree to which a person values himself or herself. The foundations of self-esteem are built at an early age when a child develops a healthy, secure attachment to a parent or primary carer. As a child grows and develops, messages that they receive from parents, carers, youth workers, sports coaches and friends can influence the child's 'internal picture' of who they are. Constant criticism, teasing and put-downs may lead a young person to believe that they are worthless. Such young people are more likely to struggle with poor self-esteem. On the other hand, appropriate praise and encouragement, particularly from an adult with whom a young person has a secure relationship, helps a child to successfully meet the challenges that life presents and in the process develop healthy self-esteem and make good decisions for themselves.

Notes for youth workers on encouragement and self-esteem

1. Encouragement is helping young people to believe in themselves and in their abilities.
2. Encouragement is a basic attitude towards yourself.
3. Encouragement is different from praise. Praise goes to those who excel or come in first. Encouragement can be given for any positive action or behaviour. Encouragement does not have to be earned.
4. Praise places a value judgement on the person. Encouragement focuses on the work or effort, on treating the person with acceptance and respect.
5. Encouragement accepts individuals as they are, not as they could be.
6. Mistakes are not failures. They can promote learning.
7. The first step in encouragement is to stop making negative comments about a person.
8. Identify talents, assets, positive attitudes and goals. Every person has strengths.
9. Be an asset finder, not a fault finder.

Lesson 9 : Procedure

1. Introduction

Introduce the lesson by outlining the aims and learning outcomes.

2. Art Work

- Give each young person a large piece of art paper. Ask them to stick their photograph in the middle of the page, or to draw themselves, or write their name in the middle of the page.
- Write the words: strengths, positive qualities, achievements on the flipchart.
- Explain that you want them to pass their page on to the person beside them, who must write on the page a strength, positive quality, or achievement that they associate with the owner of the page.
- Ask them to use their creative and artistic skills to make the feature or achievement noted down as attractive as possible. The pages go around the whole group, so that everyone in the group contributes to everyone else's page.
- As they are working, supervise the group and keep an eye on the posters, to make sure that there are no inappropriate comments on any page. You may also like to write a positive comment on the posters for each young person.
- After 20 minutes, ask for the pages to be returned to their owners. Give them a few minutes to look at their own pages. You may want to invite them to add something to their own pages – an achievement that their classmates might not know about, or something positive that their parents/other family members would say about them.

Discussion pointers

- How did you feel when you were doing this activity?
- How do you feel seeing what other people wrote on your page?
- What did you learn from this activity?

3. Conclusion

Ask the young people to reflect on the strengths, positive qualities or achievements on their own pages and suggest that they keep their page in a safe place, so they may refer back to it if they wish to.

For more tips on improving self-esteem, young people can visit b4udecide.ie – click on 'Relationships', then click on 'How you feel about yourself'.

Lesson 10 : Building a Relationship

Aims

To explore how relationships progress through different stages, from initial meeting through to making a commitment or eventual breakup.

Needed for this lesson:

One set for each group of the following:

- Lesson 10 – Worksheet: Romantic Relationships Cards
- A3 sheets
- pritchstick or glue
- scissors

Learning Outcomes

Young people will:

- have reflected on the qualities of a healthy relationship and the time it can take for these qualities to develop.
- have reflected on appropriate stages of a relationship for various levels of physical intimacy, such as kissing, touching, making love.
- be aware of the benefits to them when the physical and emotional aspects of romantic relationships develop together.

Background Information



Developing a secure, healthy, romantic relationship with another person takes time. As the majority of teenagers are only beginning to experience romantic and sexual attraction, they are often unaware of the time involved in building a healthy relationship with another person and of the benefits of allowing physical and emotional aspects of a relationship to develop together. Physical intimacy such as kissing and touching in the absence of an emotional connection, involving respect, trust and genuine caring is common in adolescence. While some experimentation is natural at this stage, it can also give rise to feelings of vulnerability and confusion. Young people learn relationship skills, such as building trust and good communication, through their friendships. This important learning can be transferred to more intimate relationships in adulthood.

There may be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) young people in your group. You should point out that the development of a healthy relationship is the same for LGBT young people as it is for heterosexual young people.

Lesson 10 : Procedure

1. Introduction

Introduce the lesson by outlining the aims and learning outcomes.

2. Group Work – Building a Relationship

- (a) Divide the group into sub-groups of three. If you have a mixed group, you may like to divide the boys and girls into separate groups, as they may have differing views on how a relationship should develop.
- (b) Distribute **Lesson 10 – Worksheet 1: Romantic Relationship Cards**, a scissors, glue and an A3 page to each group.
- (c) Ask the young people to draw an 'S' shape the full length of the large piece of paper. Give time (20 mins) for them to discuss the statements on the cards. Ask them to stick the cards on the large page (starting at the top of the 'S'), in what they consider to be the 'correct' order for a relationship that is healthy at the beginning, and then develops into the lifelong commitment/marriage stage, or becomes unhealthy and ends. Remind the groups that a relationship can end at any stage. Not all cards have to be used and there will be variety in what the groups decide. You may like to visit each of the groups to get a flavour of the discussion that guided their decisions.
- (d) When the young people have finished, put the pages on the wall for everyone to see what each sub-group thought.

3. Group Discussion

It is the responsibility of the youth worker to articulate the values expressed in the organisation's RSE policy in a respectful way. However, it is not inconsistent to do this while also facilitating young people to express their views and opinions in a respectful way.

Discussion pointers

- Did you find it easy or difficult to decide on what statements you would place where? Why do you think this was so?
- In the pages you have created, look at where the following cards are placed: kissing, touching and intimate kissing, making love/sexual intercourse, getting married. Does everyone agree on the appropriate place for these cards?
- What happens before these stages? Are there other cards that could/should be placed before these stages?
- What are the benefits of developing an emotional connection with someone (i.e. feeling a connection, having a good laugh together) before kissing/being physically intimate?
- Look at where the falling in love card is placed. Do the groups agree on the appropriate place for this card?
- Judging from the number of things that happen before falling in love, how long do you think it takes for a relationship to develop to the falling in love stage?
- Some relationship stages are part of adult rather than teenage relationships. Can you draw a big circle around the stages that best represent teenage relationships?

Lesson 10 : Procedure continued...

4. Conclusion

Relationships can develop in different ways. The important part is that the couple allow respect, trust and good communication to develop between them before being physically intimate, as this reduces the likelihood that they will feel vulnerable, confused or subjected to unwanted pressure.

Ask the group to reflect on the other benefits there might be to being friends with someone before being romantically intimate with them.

Lesson 10 : Worksheet 1 Romantic Relationship Cards



Lesson 10

feeling attracted to someone	losing interest in them	feeling nervous around them	compromising on things you disagree about
getting to know them	feeling a connection	having a good laugh together	being hurtful towards them
falling in love	finding out if you have things in common	knowing that you could tell them anything	respecting that their opinions, emotions and needs can be different to yours
asking them out/being asked out	getting annoyed with them a lot	holding hands	getting married
flirting	meeting each other's friends	being known as boyfriend and girlfriend	exchanging text messages
feeling that they are not as nice to you as they used to be	feeling like you can't do anything right	making love/sexual intercourse	kissing
having arguments but making up	touching & intimate kissing	breaking up	meeting each other's family
feeling close and special to them	making plans for the future together	saying "I love you"	fighting all the time

The blank cards can be used to add in more stages, if necessary.



Lesson 11 : Rights & Responsibilities in Relationships

Aims

To increase awareness of rights and responsibilities in a relationship.

Needed for this lesson:

- Lesson 11 – Worksheet 1: Relationship Dilemmas
- flipchart/A3 paper and markers.

Learning Outcomes

Young people will:

- reflect on rights and responsibilities in a romantic relationship.
- have differentiated between situations where compromise is appropriate and where it is more appropriate to say no directly.

Background Information

All relationships involve balance between rights and responsibilities. Pressures arise in relationships when there are competing rights and responsibilities. Usually, in healthy relationships, these conflicts can be resolved through compromise. Learning to compromise is an important skill in a relationship as it involves negotiation and agreement on how our rights and responsibilities balance with those of the other person. In some instances, such as if a young person's safety is at risk, or if they are being coerced or pressured into something they are not comfortable with, compromise may not be appropriate. It is important that young people realise that, in situations where their rights are being undermined, it is more advisable for them to say no directly.

Lesson 11



Lesson 11 : Procedure

1. Introduction

Introduce the lesson by outlining the aims and learning outcomes.

2. Brainstorm: Rights and Responsibilities

(a) Ask participants what they think compromise means in the context of building a healthy relationship and why compromise is important. Ask for examples of compromises to ensure that they know what it means. One definition of a compromise is "a discussion, followed by a fair agreement on how the respective rights and responsibilities of each person are balanced in a certain situation".

(b) Make a chart with two columns on the flipchart. Label one column 'Rights' and the other 'Responsibilities'.

(c) As a large group, brainstorm the rights people have in relationships. Encourage young people to think about rights related to themselves and to others. Write their responses in the 'rights' column. Go through a similar process with 'responsibilities'. Some rights might include: to be told the truth, to have your opinions and feelings respected, to be listened to, to be spoken to respectfully, not to be pressured to do things you are not comfortable with, to say no to things you are not comfortable with. Responsibilities correspond with these rights.

(d) Split the group into pairs and give out **Lesson 11 – Worksheet 1 and 2: Relationship Dilemmas**. Give them a few minutes to fill it in.

(e) Get feedback on the rights and responsibilities they assigned to each scenario and whether they thought that compromise was appropriate in these situations.

(f) For scenarios 1 and 2, ask what type of compromise might work in these situations. In scenarios 3 and 4, it is more advisable to say no directly, as their safety is at risk.

3. Group Discussion

Discussion pointers

- In general, is having sex or being sexually intimate a 'right' in a relationship?
- What are some of the responsibilities that go along with having a sexual relationship? (encourage the young people to think of the emotional and physical responsibilities)

4. Conclusion

Ask the group to reflect on the rights and responsibilities they have in relationships with their parents, siblings and friends. The next time they have an argument with someone, they might find it useful to think about the rights and responsibilities involved, not only from their own point of view, but also from the point of view of the other person.

Lesson 11 : Worksheet 1 Relationship Dilemmas



Scenario 1: You want to break up with your girlfriend/boyfriend because you would prefer to have more time to yourself and/or to hang out with your friends, but your girlfriend/boyfriend pleads with you not to break up.

My Rights	My Responsibilities
1.	1.
2.	2.

Is it appropriate to compromise in this situation? Why/Why not?

Scenario 2: Your boyfriend/girlfriend wants to get a goodnight text from you every night, but you think this is too demanding.

My Rights	My Responsibilities
1.	1.
2.	2.

Is it appropriate to compromise in this situation? Why/Why not?

Lesson 11 : Worksheet 2 Relationship Dilemmas



Scenario 3: Your girlfriend/boyfriend tries to go further with you physically than you are comfortable with.

My Rights

My Responsibilities



1.

1.

2.

2.

Is it appropriate to compromise in this situation? Why/Why not?

Scenario 4: Someone 3 or 4 years older than you wants to go out with you. You are unsure, but they are very persuasive.

My Rights

My Responsibilities



1.

1.

2.

2.

Is it appropriate to compromise in this situation? Why/Why not?

Lesson 12 : The Age of Consent

Aims

To increase young people's awareness about the age of consent for sexual activity.

Needed for this lesson:

- Lesson 12 – Worksheet 1: Age of Consent Quiz
- Lesson 12 – Worksheet 2: Age of Consent Quiz Answers
- access to b4udecide.ie (optional)

Learning Outcomes

Young people will:

- know that in Ireland the age of consent for sex is 17.
- be aware that the law exists to protect them.
- have an understanding of the different way that the law treats boys and girls.

Background Information



Consent means to give permission or to agree. It is very important that both people give consent to having sex, before they have sex. The age of consent in Ireland, for homosexual and heterosexual sex, is 17 for both boys and girls. This means that it is against the law to have sex with someone under the age of 17, as someone under that age cannot legally consent to sex. This includes vaginal, oral and anal sex.

There can be confusion among young people about the age of consent, partly due to differences with the law in the UK, where the age of consent is 16. Although a significant minority of Irish teenagers (22% girls and 31% boys)* engage in sexual intercourse before the age of 17, research has found that some teenagers find the law on the age of consent to be protective, as it reduces the pressure they may feel to engage in sex at an early age.

It is also important to note, that although uncommon, a number of court cases have been brought against boys who have engaged in sex with a girl under 17, following a complaint by the girl's parents.

Additional information from b4udecide.ie on the age of consent is supplied at the end of this lesson.

* The Irish Study of Sexual Health and Relationships, 2006. These figures are based on information from people aged 18-24 who were asked about the age they were the first time they had sex.

Lesson 12 : Procedure

1. Introduction

Introduce the lesson by outlining the aims and learning outcomes.

2. The Age of Consent Quiz

- a) Distribute **Lesson 12 – Worksheet 1: Age of Consent Quiz**. Allow the young people to work in pairs to complete the quiz.
- b) Distribute **Lesson 12 – Worksheet 2: Age of Consent Quiz Answers**. Go through the correct answers with the group, and allow them to correct their work.
- c) Alternatively, you can let them check their answers on b4udecide.ie, by clicking on 'The Facts' and then on 'Age of Consent'. The information here is the same as Notes for Youth Workers on Age of Consent provided at the end of this lesson.

3. Conclusion

Ask the young people to reflect on how they are protected by the law on the age of consent from the consequences of unplanned pregnancy and STIs. They may find it interesting to look up recent court cases on the age of consent.

Lesson 12 : Worksheet 1 Age of Consent Quiz



- 1 In Ireland, what is the age of consent (age where it is legal to have sex) for heterosexual couples?
A) 16 B) 17 C) 18
- 2 In Ireland, what is the age of consent (age where it is legal to have sex) for homosexual couples?
A) 16 B) 17 C) 18
- 3 In a sexual encounter, if someone says yes, but then pushes you away, this means:
A) They want to have sex
B) They do not want to have sex
- 4 In a sexual encounter, if someone says no, but you think they mean yes, this means:
A) They want to have sex
B) They do not want to have sex
- 5 What is the safest way to be sure that someone has given consent to sex?
A) To ask them directly
B) To assume that they have given consent if they have not pushed you away
- 6 If someone says yes to sex initially, do they have the right to change their mind at any time?
A) Yes B) No
- 7 If a couple aged 16 have sex, are they breaking the law?
A) Yes B) No
- 8 If a man or a woman aged 18 or older has sex with someone under the age of 15 in Ireland, is it a very serious offence?
A) Yes B) No
- 9 Why is there an age of consent in Ireland?
A) To stop young people from enjoying themselves
B) To protect people under the age of 17 from engaging in sex at an early age and to prevent older, more experienced people from taking advantage of those younger than they are

Lesson 12 : Worksheet 2

Age of Consent Quiz Answers



- 1 In Ireland, what is the age of consent (age where it is legal to have sex) for heterosexual couples?
A) 16 **B) 17** C) 18
- 2 In Ireland, what is the age of consent (age where it is legal to have sex) for homosexual couples?
A) 16 **B) 17** C) 18
- 3 In a sexual encounter, if someone says yes, but then pushes you away, this means:
A) They want to have sex
B) They do not want to have sex
- 4 In a sexual encounter, if someone says no, but you think they mean yes, this means:
A) They want to have sex
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- 5 What is the safest way to be sure that someone has given consent to sex?
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A) Yes B) No
- 7 If a couple aged 16 have sex, are they breaking the law?
A) Yes B) No
- 8 If a man or a woman aged 18 or older has sex with someone under the age of 15 in Ireland, is it a very serious offence?
A) Yes B) No
- 9 Why is there an age of consent in Ireland?
A) To stop young people from enjoying themselves
B) To protect people under the age of 17 from engaging in sex at an early age and to prevent older, more experienced people from taking advantage of those younger than they are

Lesson 12

Notes for Youth Workers on the Age of Consent

What does consent mean?

Consent means to give permission or to agree. It is very important that both people give consent to having sex before they have sex.

What is the legal age of consent?

The law states that you must be 17 to consent to (or agree to) have sexual intercourse. The age of consent is the same for males and females. It is the same for homosexual and heterosexual sex.

What does this law mean?

This means that, under the age of 17, you are not legally allowed to have sexual intercourse. This means that, in certain circumstances, someone who has sex under the age of 17, or with someone else under the age of 17, may be prosecuted by the gardaí.

Why does this law exist?

This law exists to protect people under the age of 17, who are more vulnerable than those aged 17 and over. People under 17 are not considered by the law to be able to make the decision to consent to sex. The law aims to protect young people. It also aims to prevent older, more experienced people from taking advantage and influencing the decision of those younger than they.

Does this mean that a couple will go to jail if they have sex under 17?

This question cannot be answered for certain. It depends on a number of factors. A girl under 17 cannot be prosecuted under the legislation. But a boy can, strictly speaking, be prosecuted for having sex under 17. The gardaí and the Director of Public Prosecutions use their discretion and tend to look at the overall circumstances of a relationship before deciding whether or not to prosecute. The welfare of the young person is always the most important issue, so the law does not aim to punish teenagers unnecessarily.

If both people are under 17, why are boys and girls treated differently?

The law makes this distinction because it does not want to seem to punish pregnancy nor to discourage reporting by female victims of incidents of sexual assault or rape.

If a girl is 17 and the boy is 16, will she be prosecuted?

In this case, the girl may be prosecuted by the gardaí as she is 17. Whether the gardaí decide to prosecute a criminal offence or not always depends on a number of factors, however, such as the circumstances of the case and the evidence at hand.

Lesson 12 continued...

Notes for Youth Workers on the Age of Consent

If a girl is 15 or 16 and the boy is 17, what happens?

A boy aged 17 has reached the age when he can legally have sex. If the girl is 15 or 16 he may be prosecuted for an offence called "defilement", which in simple terms means having sex with somebody under the age of 17. It is not a defence to this crime to say that the girl involved consented, which means she gave permission and said she wanted to have sex. It can be a defence to show that he genuinely believed she was 17 and was thus legally allowed to have sex.

If the girl is under 15 and the boy is 17 or older, what happens?

In the eyes of the law, it is more serious for an adult to have sex with someone under the age of 15 than with someone aged 15 or 16, as those under 15 are even younger and more vulnerable.

Can you buy condoms if you are under the legal age of consent (17)?

Yes. Unlike the law against having sex under 17, there is no law forbidding you to buy condoms under this age. The law does not forbid the sale of condoms to young people, in order to encourage safer sex.

Can you get the pill, or other methods of contraception from a doctor, if you are under the legal age of consent (17)?

There is no straightforward answer to this question. Different doctors will treat you differently. If you are under 16, in most cases, the doctor will need the consent of your parents to treat you. If you are 16, some doctors will use their own discretion in prescribing contraception to you, based on their personal assessment of you, your emotional maturity and your ability to make informed decisions in relation to your sexuality. Other doctors will not prescribe contraception for you, even if you are 16, because you are under the age of consent for sexual intercourse. You should talk to your parents or another adult that you trust. You can also talk to your doctor.

Remember, just because the legal age of consent is 17, this does not mean that you are ready to have sex at age 17.

This information is from www.b4udecide.ie/Thefacts/AgeofConsent

Lesson 13 : Relationship Pressures

Aims

To reflect on how peer pressure and peer influence can affect romantic relationships.

Needed for this lesson:

- Lesson 13 – Worksheet 1: Maggie and Rob
- Lesson 13 – Worksheet 2: Lucy and Sam
- Lesson 13 – Worksheet 3: People at the Party
- flipchart and markers

Learning Outcomes

Young people will have:

- reflected on how pressure and conflict arise in a romantic relationship.
- identified the source of pressure and how conflicts might be resolved in a healthy and respectful manner.
- reflected on the different pressures experienced by boys and girls in a relationship.

Background Information



Some level of conflict arises in all relationships because no two individuals are the same; everyone has different opinions, needs and desires. Teenage relationships are influenced by their peer group. For some teenagers, their status within the peer group is related to their sexual experience.

Research has found that boys and girls can experience peer pressure differently. Teenage boys may experience an increase in their status if they are seen to be sexually active, whether within a relationship or not. However, they can be highly anxious about their performance in romantic/sexual encounters, and fear being gossiped about among groups of girls afterwards. The type of pressure a girl feels can depend on her own particular peer group. A peer group can highly disapprove of a girl who is sexually active outside a loving, committed relationship, though a girl's status might increase if she has a boyfriend. This can lead girls into feeling pressured to engage in sexual activity in order to maintain both a relationship with a boyfriend and her status in her group.

Note: The Pressure Cooker exercise has been adapted from a similar exercise in the Let's Leave It Till Later resource, with the kind permission of Jo Adams.

Lesson 13 : Procedure

1. Introduction

Introduce the lesson by outlining the aims and learning outcomes.

2. Pressures in a Romantic Relationship

Three options are given for this exercise:

Option 1 – Case Studies

Case Studies may be more suitable for a younger group, where the pressure to have sex is beginning to become part of their lives.

Option 2 – People at the Party

People at the Party deals in a more focused way with the pressure to have sex, concentrating on the social pressures/influences that can affect a person's decision to have sex.

Option 3 – The Pressure Cooker Exercise

The Pressure Cooker Exercise is the most time-consuming exercise and may be more suitable for a group where the young people are in relationships and would have some level of understanding of the interpersonal pressures that can exist in romantic teenage relationships.

Option 1 – Case Studies

Split the overall group into groups of 3 or 4. Give half the groups **Lesson 13 – Worksheet 1: Maggie and Rob**. Give the other half **Lesson 13 – Worksheet 2: Sam and Lucy**.

Allow them to read the stories and give them 15 minutes to discuss answers to the questions.

Ask someone to read out Maggie and Rob's story.

Go through the questions, asking each group to answer 2/3 of the questions.

Repeat for Sam and Lucy's story.

Discussion pointers

- In a romantic relationship, is there an increase in pressure to become sexually intimate?
- Where do you think this pressure comes from?
- What are the similarities and differences between the pressures felt by boys and by girls?
- What are the most important elements of a healthy, romantic relationship?

Option 2 – People at the Party

- (a) Give out copies of **Worksheet 3 – People at the Party**. Explain that this is a story of seven friends who are at a party. None has had sex yet.
- (b) Read through the worksheet.
- (c) Ask the group to list all the reasons why the young people in the story are thinking of having sex. Take feedback on the flipchart.

Discussion pointers

- Are the reasons listed good reasons to have sex?
- Who do you think is most at risk at the party and why are they at risk?
- Do you think drinking alcohol could affect the decisions made by each character?
- What do you think happens next?
- What advice could you offer to each of the people at the party?
- In what ways are the experiences of boys and girls in this story similar?
- In what ways were the pressures experienced by boys and girls different?
- How might young people your age feel under similar pressure in relationships?
- Why do you think it might be better for the couple to wait before they decide to have sex?

Lesson 13 : Procedure

Option 3 – The Pressure Cooker Exercise

In this activity, using Jenny's story and Darren's story, the group will explore some of the pressures on young people to be sexually active.

(a) Split the group into two halves. Ask each half to stand in a line down the middle of the room, facing the other half – these lines should be not more than three feet apart. Get the people in each line to stand as close together as possible in the row, to make a more compact group.

Put up Jenny's scenario on the flipchart at the front of the room:

Jenny is 17. Her boyfriend, who is 18 and who she has been going out with for two months, has told her he'll have to find someone else if she won't have sex.

(b) Ask everyone in the group to think about all the things Jenny may be feeling, thinking, wondering, anxious about – everything that may be going on for her. Give them a minute or so to reflect on this quietly, on their own.

(c) Then say that you are going to be Jenny, and the group is going to be her inner voices and feelings. You will walk through the Pressure Cooker (through the middle of the two lines) – and as you pass by each person they should say something that Jenny may be thinking. They should speak in the first person. You might model this for them in your introduction. For example, you could say: "Jenny might be thinking to herself 'I'm so confused' or 'I don't want to lose him'."

(d) It doesn't matter if they repeat what someone else has said. Encourage them to see things from Jenny's point of view.

(e) Read out Jenny's story. When they are ready, walk slowly between the two lines, through the Pressure Cooker, allowing each person to speak. When you reach the end, pause for a moment, turn and slowly walk back, again giving the young people a chance to say anything else they want to say.

(f) As you arrive back to the beginning of the lines, pause to give an opportunity for them to reflect on what has happened.

Discussion pointers

- How did you find that exercise?
- What struck you about that activity?
- How did you feel as you were speaking as a voice in Jenny's head?
- Did anything strike you or surprise you about what others said?
- Was what people said helpful to Jenny in making her decision?
- Do you think that Jenny's dilemma would be common among young people of your age?

If these points don't emerge in the discussion on the last question, it would be useful to make them:

- Jenny feels isolated and seems to have no-one to talk to about how she feels and thinks about her dilemma.
- Many of the voices may be about giving in to her boyfriend's wishes and needs, rather than considering her own.
- Jenny's desire to have sex or not have sex may or may not have been raised.
- A lot of Jenny's concern is about others and what they will think.

(g) To conclude this part of the activity, ask the young people to set up the Pressure Cooker lines again. Explain that you are going to walk back down as before. This time, ask them to say one thing to Jenny as a friend, that would relieve some of the pressure she is feeling. In doing so, they are helping to support her and empathise with her in this situation.

Lesson 13 : Procedure continued...

This can help to ease the sense of desperation and isolation experienced by Jenny in the earlier part of the activity.

(h) Set up the Pressure Cooker as before. Put up Darren's scenario on the flipchart:

Darren is 18. All of his friends say they've had sex and he's tired of being called gay, so he's going to have sex with a girl before his birthday next month.

(i) Repeat the exercise for Darren. Use the same questions as used for Jenny's situation, as pointers for discussion. As with Jenny's story, if these points don't emerge in the discussion it would be useful to make them:

- There is little mention in Darren's thinking of love or intimacy.
- He is not really considering how his girlfriend feels or what she wants or needs.
- Darren feels that he is under pressure to prove his masculinity.
- The pressure is coming from his friends. He wants to be able to brag to them about having sex with a girl.
- There is a sense of urgency about Darren's wanting to have sex ... with anyone.

(j) To conclude this part of the activity, ask the young people to set up the Pressure Cooker lines again. Explain that you are going to walk back down as before. This time, ask them to say one thing to Darren as a friend that would relieve some of the pressure he is feeling. This can help to relieve the concerns that Darren experienced in the earlier part of the activity.

(k) De-role: Before asking the participants to return to their places, it is important to give them an opportunity to de-role. Ask them to say their name and their star sign to the person beside them.

(l) Jenny and Darren – the couple. When the young

people have returned to their places, set down Jenny and Darren's stories side by side and ask the group if they notice anything new about them. They may realise then that Jenny and Darren are a couple, each with their own particular view of their situation. The following points should be made:

- Both Jenny and Darren have concerns about having sex.
- If they did end up having sex it would be to satisfy a different set of needs for each of them.
- None of their reasons were based on love or intimacy.
- Neither has really talked to the other about what they would like from one another or from the relationship.
- If they did have sex they would be physically intimate without being emotionally intimate.
- In Ireland it is illegal to have sex with someone under the age of 17. The age of consent for sexual intercourse for heterosexual and homosexual sex is 17 for both boys and girls.

Discussion pointers

- What does all this tell us about what makes a relationship healthy?
- Write suggestions on the flipchart.

3. Conclusion

Ask the group to record four things that they can relate to as a result of doing these activities and that will be important considerations for them in their relationships, now or in the future.

For more information on peer pressure and how to deal with it, young people can visit b4udecide.ie

Lesson 13 : Worksheet 1 Maggie and Rob



Saturday: Maggie and Rob became friends in first year and became closer over the last year. They have a great laugh together and find it really easy to talk to one another. They finally kiss for the first time. They are delighted.

Monday: Rob tells his best friend, Peter, that he kissed Maggie and that he really likes her. Peter tells Rob that the only way he can prove that Maggie really likes him would be if she had sex with him.

Tuesday: Rob spends the evening with his older brothers and their friends. He'd love to feel that he was part of the group and had his own stories to tell about sexual experiences.

Wednesday: Rob and Maggie go to the cinema. Afterwards, when they are kissing, Rob tells her that he loves her and wants to have sex with her. Maggie tells him that she likes him, but she does not want to have sex with him. Rob gets annoyed and tells her that, if she really liked him, she would want to have sex with him. Maggie gets upset and goes home.

Thursday: Rob feels terrible. Maggie has not returned his texts from last night or today. Peter keeps asking him if he's meeting Maggie at the weekend. Rob wishes he would just shut up.

1. How is Rob feeling? Why?

2. How is Maggie feeling? Why?

3. What are the positive elements of Maggie and Rob's relationship?

4. What is the problem in Rob and Maggie's relationship?

5. Why did Rob want to have sex with Maggie?

6. Do you think he considered her feelings in advance of their conversation on Wednesday night?

7. Is this story an accurate representation of how boys and girls experience pressure differently?

8. How could these problems be solved?



Lesson 13 : Worksheet 2

Sam and Lucy



February: Sam and Lucy have been going out for a few months. They really enjoy being around each other and have a similar sense of humour. They also both love sport, and go to loads of each other's matches.

March: Even though Lucy is Sam's first girlfriend, Sam knows that Lucy had a boyfriend before him. He knows that she has not had sexual intercourse, but it makes him feel a bit uncomfortable that she might be more experienced than him. He wonders if she is expecting him to take things further. The problem is that he is not that sure what to say or do, and he is afraid that Lucy will laugh at him if he makes a mess of it. He thinks that it would be a good idea for both of them to get drunk. Then, if things don't go right, he can just blame it on being drunk.

April: Lucy has noticed that Sam has been drinking the last few times they've been together. She hates it when he gets drunk, so she chats to other people instead. She wants to have a good time when she is out. Sam gets really annoyed when he sees Lucy flirting with everyone else.


May: Lucy knows that Sam gets jealous when she talks to other boys, but she doesn't care. She likes Sam a lot, but she doesn't like kissing him when he is drunk. He gets pushy and pressures her to have a drink too. She hates that. It's not very romantic or special and she is getting bored with it. It feels like it's been ages since they've done something really nice together.


- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. What are the good elements of Lucy and Sam's relationship? | 5. How is this making him behave towards Lucy? |
| 2. How is Lucy feeling? Why? | 6. In what ways are they both contributing to the problems they are having? |
| 3. How is this making her behave towards Sam? | 7. What could they do to solve their problems? |
| 4. How is Sam feeling? Why? | 8. Do you think they should stay together? |


Lesson 13 : Worksheet 3


People at the Party





Siobhan  Derek and Siobhan are going out. Siobhan is worried that Derek fancies Tracey and has been acting a bit jealous recently. She has told Derek that she loves him, but Derek tells her that, if she loved him, she would have sex with him. On the way to the party, she bought condoms, just in case she decides to 'prove' to Derek that she loves him.


Derek  Derek wants to finish with Siobhan and ask out Tracey, but now he thinks that Siobhan might have sex with him. He would like to be able to say to the lads that he's had sex, so he might not break up with Siobhan tonight, as he had planned.

Tracey  Tracey likes Derek so she chats to Paul, Derek's best friend, to try to make Derek notice her. Paul is suggesting they go upstairs to take things further. Tracey is very drunk and emotional, and the room is spinning.

Paul  Paul is chatting to Tracey. She seems up for having sex. Paul is sick of his friends slagging him and calling him a virgin. He feels like he is the only guy in the world who hasn't had sex. This is a chance to change that. He has no condoms but thinks Tracey must be on the pill.

Chloe  Chloe is out with Siobhan tonight because she's having a hard time with her other friends. In the last few months, they started having sex with their boyfriends. They've told Chloe that, unless she starts having sex soon, they're not hanging around with her anymore. Jim puts no pressure on her, but she really likes him, so she's wondering if she should say something about having sex.

Jim  Jim is in a relationship with Chloe. He doesn't want to have sex with Chloe because he really likes their relationship and doesn't want to complicate it by starting to have sex. His brother became a dad at 17, and he doesn't want that to happen to him, or for Chloe to become a mother at her age. He is worried Chloe will laugh if he tells her this.

Susan  Susan is Tracey's twin sister. She is having a great time, but isn't interested in getting together with anyone at the party.

Lesson 13 : Notes for Youth Workers on First-Time Sex

The HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme has conducted a range of studies on the sexual knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of Irish teenagers. Some findings of this research are summarised here (this information is taken from the b4udecide.ie website).

Reasons why young people say they want to wait until they are older before having sex

- They want to be in a loving relationship first.
- They want their first experience of sex to be special.
- They want to be sure that they are emotionally ready.
- They feel they would be better able to deal with the possible consequences when they are older.
- They want to have finished school and exams before taking that step.

Reasons why people say they wish that they had waited until they were older before having sex

- They were too young and didn't fully realise the consequences.
- They had sex because they were under pressure from friends or from their boyfriend or girlfriend.
- They got carried away in the moment and didn't know how to say no.
- They felt they 'had to' have sex because their girlfriend or boyfriend had had sex in a previous relationship.
- They were afraid that their girlfriend or boyfriend would break up with them if they didn't have sex.

Reasons why it's better for young people to wait until they are older before having sex

- Irish research has found that young people who have sex before age 17 will be 70% more likely to experience a crisis pregnancy than those who wait until they're 17 or older.
- Young people who have sex before age 17 are twice as likely to get a sexually transmitted infection as those who wait until they are older.
- It is against the law to have sex before age 17 or with someone under 17.
- Young people who have had sex at an early age are likely to say that they regret it.
- Young people who have sex before age 17 are less likely to use contraception.

Lesson 14 : Resisting Relationship Pressures

Aims

To give young people the skills to deal with relationship pressures and to say no to requests they would prefer not to comply with.

Needed for this lesson:

- Lesson 14 – Worksheet 1: Skills for Saying “No”
- access to b4udecide.ie (optional)
- flipchart/A3 paper and markers.

Learning Outcomes

Young people will have:

- explored the difficulty in saying no and the gains from saying no.
- reflected on the skills of saying no assertively.
- discussed saying no to unwanted sexual activity.

Background Information



Research shows that young people say they sometimes feel pressurised to be more physically intimate with a boyfriend or girlfriend than they wish. It can be difficult for them to resist pressure for sexual intimacy from a boyfriend or a girlfriend, as they may not have developed the confidence and skills to communicate assertively. Girls may fear that, if they are not willing to be physically intimate, or not willing to have sex, their boyfriend might break up with them. Boys may fear that it is expected of them to make a sexual advance and that, if they say no to a sexual advance from a girl, their reputation will be damaged and they will be the subject of discussion.

In a relationship, each person has a responsibility to be honest about their feelings, a right to express those feelings, and a right for those feelings to be heard by the other person. It can take time to develop the confidence and skills to deal with these pressures.

Note: The Skills for Saying “No” exercise has been adapted from a similar exercise in the Lets Leave it Till Later resource, with the kind permission of Jo Adams.

Lesson 14 : Procedure

1. Introduction

Introduce the lesson by outlining the aims and learning outcomes.

2. Group Activity – Difficulties and Gains of Saying No

- On a flipchart write: “What stops you from saying no to something you don’t want to do?” Make it clear that you are asking about the fear and anxieties that stop us from saying no when we really have a choice and might prefer not to do something that we are being pressured to do.
- Write some of the responses on the flipchart. They may include: “I’ll be seen as boring”, “I’ll be seen as a spoilsport”, “I’ll let someone down/upset someone”, “I’ll feel guilty”, etc.
- Ask the group if they notice anything about these responses. They are, in the vast majority of cases, fears and fantasies rather than the truth or reality.
- Write “Gains from Saying No” on the flipchart.
- Write their responses on the flipchart. It may include responses like: “respect from others”, “being true to myself”, “feeling good about standing up for myself”.

3. Pair Work – Saying No Assertively

Write one of the following scenarios on the flipchart:

- Mark is pressuring James to make a move on someone he doesn’t fancy, to prove that he’s a real man.
- Alison is pressuring Shauna to have oral sex with a boy she hardly knows, to prove that she wants to be part of Alison’s group.

- William is pressuring Rachel to have sex with him, otherwise he will break up with her.

OR

Rachel is pressuring William to have sex with her, otherwise she will break up with him.

Split the group into pairs. Give out copies of **Lesson 14 – Worksheet 1: Skills for Saying “No”**. Using this worksheet, give the pairs 10 minutes to script a realistic conversation between the characters in your chosen scenario, where one is saying no to a request and the other person eventually accepts that the person has said no.

Ask the pairs to read/act out their conversations/role-play. Ensure that the young people de-role after completing this exercise.

Discussion pointers

- What tip on the Skills for Saying “No” worksheet did you find most useful in developing your conversation/role-play?
- Did you find it difficult to end the scenario where the person who is doing the pressurising accepts that the other person has said no? If so, why?
- Do you think that the benefits of saying no to something you don’t want to do outweigh the disadvantages?

Lesson 14 : Procedure continued...

4. b4udecide.ie - ‘Saying No’ Video (optional)

- Explain to the group that they are now going to look at a video of young people talking about times they have said, or wished they had said, no to unwanted sexual activity.
- Go to b4udecide.ie. Click on ‘Video Gallery’. Play the video titled ‘Saying No’.

Discussion pointers

- How do the young people in this video approach saying no to unwanted sexual activity?
- Does saying no always have to be a direct verbal response?
- What other ways might a young person say no indirectly to someone, without hurting their feelings?
- What are the benefits of saying no in this manner?
- When might it not be suitable to say no in this manner?

5. Conclusion

Ask the group to reflect on the benefits of saying no to things they don’t want to do, so that they are prepared for the next time that someone asks them to do something that they don’t want to do or is unsafe for them.

For information on child protection within youth work settings, please refer to pages 9-10.

Lesson 14 : Worksheet 1

Skills for Saying "NO"



Pick a good time and place:

If possible, think of a place and a time that you feel comfortable having this conversation. Decide what you want to say beforehand. This helps you feel in control of the situation.

Body language:

Stand tall, keep your head up and keep eye contact. Feel strong and equal. Believe in yourself

Say something positive first:

Begin by saying something positive to the other person, for example:

You are my friend but ...
I want to have a good time but ...
I really like you, but I don't want to ...

Use short clear statements:

I don't feel like ...
I think it's unfair to ...
I'm not going to ...

You don't need to give a reason:

Avoid being manipulated into giving further explanations. If the person requests a reason, repeat a short, clear statement, such as:

"Because I'm not going to ..."
"I've already said I don't want to and I'm not going to change my mind."

Don't make it worse:

Don't accuse or blame the other person for anything, simply state your views and wishes. Listen to what they say and acknowledge their point of view. "Yes, I hear what you're saying, but I'm still not going to ..."

Expect them to accept what you are saying:

If this person cares about you, they will accept what you are saying and will not continue to put pressure on you. In extreme situations where you are not being heard and your safety is under threat, you may need to walk away.

Lesson 14 : Notes for Youth Workers

on Sexual Violence and Young People

Youth workers should be mindful that young people may start discussing the area of sexual violence among their peers, particularly in the discussion on saying no to unwanted sexual activity. Youth workers should also be mindful that a young person may be experiencing sexual violence or abuse currently or may have in the past. These areas are not dealt with specifically in this manual but below are recent statistics and information on guidelines and supports services youth workers should be familiar with.

Research

Findings from the Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland 2002 (SAVI)⁹ study showed that 32% of girls and 23% of boys in Ireland have had an unwanted sexual experience before the age of 18. The National Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU)¹⁰ report for 2009 shows 147 young people below the age of 18 attended a SATU, 28% of the total attendances.

Guidelines and further information

Youth workers should be aware of 'Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children' that the organisation or service must operate within, and ensure that young people are informed of them. These guidelines provide direction and guidance about dealing with allegations or suspicions of child abuse, clarifying the steps that should be taken. See page 9-10 'Child Protection in Youth Work Settings' for more information.

For more information/support services, please contact one of the organisations listed below:

- COSC, the National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence www.cosc.ie and click on 'Useful Links' for a list of local sexual violence services.
- Rape Crisis Network Ireland www.rcni.ie
- One in Four www.oneinfour.ie
- National Sexual Violence Helpline (for men and women): 1800 77 88 88

For information on child protection within youth work settings, please refer to pages 9-10.

⁹ Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland Report (SAVI): A national study of Irish experiences, beliefs and attitudes concerning sexual violence, Hannah McGee et al, Royal College of Surgeons in association with the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, Liffey Press, 2002. ¹⁰ Eagan, Maeve: First National Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU) Annual Clinical Report: 2010.

Lesson 15 : Teenage Pregnancy

Aims

To enable young people to reflect on the realities of teenage pregnancy and parenthood.

Needed for this lesson:

- copies of Lesson 15 – Worksheets 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5
- access to b4udecide.ie (optional)

Learning Outcomes

Young people will:

- have learned correct information about the risk of pregnancy.
- have gained some insight into the lives of teenage parents.
- be aware that crisis pregnancy counselling services are available to them.

Background Information



This lesson should only be taught to groups that have already received lessons on Changes at Puberty and The Male and Female Reproductive System. Contraception, though briefly referred to, is not dealt with in this lesson. Lessons on Fertility and Contraception are available in the TRUST pack for Senior Cycle RSE.

In Ireland, as in most European countries, young people are becoming sexually active at a younger age. The average age of first sex for young people in Ireland is 17. A lower age at first sex is linked to less likelihood of using contraception and higher likelihood of experiencing crisis pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections later in life.

Young people who have sex at an early age (under 17) are more likely to say that they regret it. Not all teenage pregnancies are crisis pregnancies, but around 2,000 teenage girls give birth in Ireland every year. The website positiveoptions.ie has a list of crisis pregnancy support services around the country. Young people can attend these services if they experience crisis pregnancy, though, in some cases, they may need to bring a parent or carer with them. Services are also open to teenage fathers and other family members.

Sensitivity is required when addressing this topic. There may be young people in the group who are teen mums or dads, whose siblings have become parents at a young age, or who may be concerned at the moment that they, or their girlfriend, may be pregnant.

Lesson 15 : Procedure

1. Introduction

Introduce the lesson by outlining the aims and learning outcomes.

2. Pregnancy Quiz

- Distribute **Lesson 15 – Worksheet 1: Pregnancy Quiz**. Allow the group to work in pairs to complete the quiz.
- Distribute **Lesson 15 – Worksheet 2: Pregnancy Quiz Answers**. Go through the correct answers with the group, and allow them to correct their work.
- Alternatively, you can allow them to check their answers on b4udecide.ie, by clicking on 'The Facts' and then on 'Teenage Pregnancy'.

3. Real Teenage Pregnancy Stories

Split the group into groups of three. Give each group one of the teenage pregnancy stories (**Lesson 15 – Worksheets 3, 4 and 5**).

Explain that these are based on real-life stories about people their own age or a little older who have had the experience of becoming pregnant, having a baby and caring for that baby while still a teenager. Allow the young people to read through the stories and discuss the questions in groups. Let each sub-group nominate a spokesperson to read out to the overall group both the story and their answers to the questions.

4. Conclusion

Ask the group to design a poster aimed at encouraging people of their age to delay involvement in sexual activity until they are older.

Lesson 15 : Worksheet 1 Pregnancy Quiz

Lesson 15 : Worksheet 2 Pregnancy Quiz Answers



		True	False
1	Girls can get pregnant the first time they have sex.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Girls can get pregnant if they have sex standing up and in any other position.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Girls can get pregnant when they have sex, even if they have a shower or bath immediately afterwards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Girls can get pregnant at any time of the month, including during their period.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Girls have to have sex every night to get pregnant.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Keeping your eyes closed during sex prevents pregnancy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	If a boy 'pulls out' before he ejaculates, this will prevent a girl from becoming pregnant.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	The age of consent for sexual intercourse in Ireland is 17 for boys and girls.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	If a girl under the age of 17 becomes pregnant, the boy involved could be prosecuted.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Only abstinence from sex gives a couple 100% protection against unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		True	False
1	Girls can get pregnant the first time they have sex.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Girls can get pregnant if they have sex standing up and in any other position.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Girls can get pregnant when they have sex, even if they have a shower or bath immediately afterwards.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Girls can get pregnant at any time of the month, including during their period.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Girls have to have sex every night to get pregnant.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6	Keeping your eyes closed during sex prevents pregnancy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7	If a boy 'pulls out' before he ejaculates, this will prevent a girl from becoming pregnant.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8	The age of consent for sexual intercourse in Ireland is 17 for boys and girls.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	If a girl under the age of 17 becomes pregnant, the boy involved could be prosecuted.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Only abstinence from sex gives a couple 100% protection against unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Amy's Story

The first time I had sex I thought I was madly in love with my boy-friend. I felt more or less pressurised into it. He was very nice and loving and saying everyone else was doing it and why can't we do it? So I just felt it was something we had to do, that I didn't have a choice. I was 16. He was 16. We were both too young. I would like to have waited for someone who was a bit more special and had a bit more respect for me.

The night I got pregnant, I was celebrating my birthday. A few days later I told my friend we had had sex and we hadn't used any contraception. She went with me to get a pregnancy test. I was so shocked when it was positive. My friend was the only person who knew. I was scared to tell people. I was afraid of how they might react. It was awful telling my parents, they didn't take it well at all. My Dad wouldn't speak to me for a few days. Things are much better now. Everyone loves Katie, the baby.

Life is very difficult. I have stretchmarks and I feel like everyone is looking at me in changing rooms. If I want to go to the cinema, I have to get a babysitter for Katie, then I have to ask permission from my parents. It is difficult because my brother gets to go anywhere he wants, but even if I do go out, I have to be up at 7 in the morning to feed Katie, or to play with her. My life is so different to the lives my friends have.

It's also hard when she gets sick, because she only wants me to look after her, and it's hard. It's very hard. I'd say to young girls thinking about having sex, just think about it. Think about "If I do this, then what will happen?" Even if you don't get pregnant, different things can happen. Be careful about it. Be sure that it's what you want. If you decide that you are going to have sex, talk to someone about it first, a nurse, a friend or someone older.

- Why did Amy have sex?
- Is this a good reason to have sex?
- How did Amy feel when she found out she was pregnant? (think of as many words as you can)
- How did the people around her react?
- How has being a teen parent affected Amy's life in the short term?
- How is it likely to affect her life in the longer term?
- What can be learned from this story?



Charlotte's Story

I don't really know why I started having sex. I just thought it was what everyone was doing. I was taking the pill, but I kept missing days here and there. I got pregnant when I was 17.

My period was late and my mum was asking questions. I wasn't worried because my period had been late before when I was studying for exams, so I just thought it was the stress of wanting to do well in them. I couldn't believe it when the pregnancy test was positive. I thought it must be a mistake. I kept saying to myself, no I can't be pregnant, I just can't.

Eventually, I told Mum and Dad. They were supportive but angry and upset at the same time. Mum left the room. Dad said that everything was going to be ok, but he couldn't believe that I had been so irresponsible. Then we had to go and tell my boyfriend's mum. He wasn't able to say the words. I had to do it. She told him that he had ruined my life.

Some days are difficult and some days are ok. I live at home, but my mum and dad are out at work all day, so I am home alone with James, my little boy, every day. Some days, if he is in bad humour, he could cry all day. Then there are other days where he'll be smiling and laughing and it brings you joy.

My advice would be – don't think that having a child is going to be easy. Babies look cute when they are all dressed up and people like holding them and that, but for the first few months you'll be up at 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning, feeding him and changing him and all the rest. I had to take a year out of school, because I kept missing days, but I am hoping to go back and do my Leaving Cert next year. I love my little boy, but being a teenage mum is not an easy life.

- Did Charlotte really think about whether having sex was a good decision for her when she started having sex?
- How did she feel when she found out that she was pregnant? (think of as many words as you can)
- How did the other people react?
- Do you think this would be a common reaction?
- How has being a teen parent affected her life in the short term?
- How is it likely to affect her life in the longer term?
- What can be learned from this story?

Lesson 15 : Worksheet 5



John's Story

I met Sarah at school and we started going out. We were both 17. I was one of the first in my group of friends to have sex and it felt great to be one of the first, with a few stories to tell.

When we started having sex, we were really careful and always used a condom, but after a few months, we got a bit careless. We got away with it the first two times. I wasn't really worried. I never thought it would happen to us.

We found out she was pregnant a few weeks after starting Leaving Cert year. She showed me the pregnancy test. I didn't know what to say. I couldn't say anything for a while. Neither of us could. I was so embarrassed going back to her house to tell her parents. I thought they would throw me out, but she didn't want to do it on her own. When we told my mother, she started crying.

The baby was born in June, just before my Leaving Cert exams. I knew I wasn't ready to be a dad. Sarah's mother went to the hospital with her, and she texted me to say that it was a girl. It was really weird feeling that I was a dad. Most mornings that summer I would arrive at Sarah's house at 10am. Sarah would have been up all night. I stay there most of the day, helping Sarah with the baby, but I don't feel comfortable when her parents are there. Next year Sarah wants to go back to school to sit her Leaving Cert. Her mother is going to give up work to mind Aoife, and my mother is going to help out too. Sarah and I will still be looking after Aoife at the weekends and holidays. Having Aoife has changed my life. I feel a huge responsibility to go to college and get a good job now, so that Aoife can have a good future.

- Why do you think John started having sex?
 - Was he ready to make a decision like that?
 - How did he cope with finding out that Sarah was pregnant?
 - How did he support her?
- How did the other people in the story react?
 - How has being a teen parent affected John's life in the short term?
 - How is it likely to affect his life in the longer term?
 - What can be learned from this story?

Lesson 16 : Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

Aims

To raise awareness of some of the more common sexually transmitted infections.

Needed for this lesson:

- Lesson 16 Worksheet 1: STI Quiz
- Lesson 16 Worksheet 2: STI Quiz Answers
- access to computer and to b4udecide.ie (optional)
- flipchart/A3 paper and markers.

Learning Outcomes

- Young people will:
- understand what a sexually transmitted infection (STI) is.
 - know how STIs can spread from one person to another.

Background Information



This lesson should only be taught to groups that have already received lessons on Changes at Puberty and The Male and Female Reproductive System. Contraception, though briefly referred to, is not dealt with in this lesson. Lessons on Fertility and Contraception are available in the TRUST pack for Senior Cycle RSE.

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are infections that are spread from one person to another through intimate contact. Anyone can become infected with an STI. The rate of reported STI infections among teenagers in Ireland is on the increase.

Some STIs exhibit no symptoms so a person may not be aware that they have contracted one. All STIs can be treated but not all can be cured. Young people need to know that it is possible to contract an STI from intimate contact and sexual intercourse.

The term STIs is sometimes used interchangeably with STDs (sexually transmitted diseases). In recent years the term sexually transmitted infections (STIs) has been preferred, as it has a broader range of meaning; a person may be infected, and may potentially infect others, without showing signs of disease.

If you are doing this lesson with older or at-risk young people, you may wish to use the real-life stories from young people who have visited STI clinics. Go to b4udecide.ie - click on 'The Facts' and then on 'Real STI Stories'.

Lesson 16 : Procedure

1. Introduction

Introduce the lesson by outlining the aims and learning outcomes. Remind participants that they have already explored some of the consequences of becoming sexually active at a young age.

2. Brainstorm

a) Carry out a quick 'brainstorm', asking the young people to think of the consequences of being sexually active. If they have not already done so, include the possibility of contracting a sexually transmitted infection. Explain that this lesson will explore the topic of STIs. Explain that there are good reasons for exploring this topic now:

- STIs are on the increase in Ireland and young people are at particular risk.
 - Not all STIs have symptoms but, if left untreated, they can lead to more serious health problems, such as infertility.
 - It is important to be aware of the risks of getting an STI in order to make informed choices about sexual behaviour in the future.
- b) Ask participants what they think an STI is. Write key words on the flipchart and then give the correct definition.

Sexually transmitted infections are infections that are spread from one person to another through close sexual contact. An STI can be caused by bacteria, viruses or parasites.

3. STIs Quiz

- (a) Distribute **Lesson 16 – Worksheet 1: STI Quiz**. Allow the group to work in pairs to complete the quiz.
- (b) Distribute **Lesson 16 – Worksheet 2: STI Quiz Answers**. Go through the correct answers with the group, and allow them to correct their work.
- (c) Alternatively, if possible, you can let them check their answers on b4udecide.ie, by clicking on 'The Facts' and then on 'STI' (see Q&A below the video).

4. Conclusion

To conclude this topic, ask the group to visit b4udecide.ie, click on 'The Facts', then on 'STIs', then on 'STI Clinics', to find an STI clinic in their area.

Lesson 16 : Worksheet 1 STI Quiz



		True	False
1	You cannot get an STI the first time you have sex.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	STIs stands for 'safe times in sex'.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	You cannot catch an STI from a toilet seat.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	The most common STI in Ireland is AIDS.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Someone can only get an STI from having sexual contact or skin-to-skin contact with a person who is already infected with an STI.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	You can tell by looking at someone that they have an STI.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Using a condom will reduce your chance of getting an STI but it will NOT eliminate the risk completely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	All STIs have symptoms and you will know immediately if you have one.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	All STIs can be treated with medication but this does not mean that all STIs can be cured.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Having a check-up by your doctor or at an STI clinic is the only sure way of knowing whether you might have an STI or not.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	If you go to an STI clinic and are under 17, you are encouraged to bring a parent or guardian with you.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Abstinence from sex (not having sex at all) and from intimate sexual contact is the only way to be 100% sure you will not contract a sexually transmitted infection.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Lesson 16 : Worksheet 2 STI Quiz Answers



		True	False
1	You cannot get an STI the first time you have sex.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2	STIs stands for 'safe times in sex'.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3	You cannot catch an STI from a toilet seat.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	The most common STI in Ireland is AIDS.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5	Someone can only get an STI from having sexual contact or skin-to-skin contact with a person who is already infected with an STI.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	You can tell by looking at someone that they have an STI.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7	Using a condom will reduce your chance of getting an STI but it will NOT eliminate the risk completely.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	All STIs have symptoms and you will know immediately if you have one.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9	All STIs can be treated with medication but this does not mean that all STIs can be cured.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Having a check-up by your doctor or at an STI clinic is the only sure way of knowing whether you might have an STI or not.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	If you go to an STI clinic and are under 17, you are encouraged to bring a parent or guardian with you.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Abstinence from sex (not having sex at all) and from intimate sexual contact is the only way to be 100% sure you will not contract a sexually transmitted infection.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUPPORT SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

GENERAL SUPPORTS

CHILDLINE

24-hour support and information service for children and adolescents.

Tel: 1800 666 666

ISPC

Irish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children.
Tel: 01 676 7960

SAMARITANS

24-hour confidential support service for anyone who is in crisis.

Helpline: 1850 60 90 90

www.samaritans.org

SPUNOUT

An interactive website for young people which deals with a wide variety of issues.

www.spunout.ie

NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL OF IRELAND (NYCI)

NYCI represents and supports the interests of voluntary youth organisations.

Tel: 01 478 4122

www.youth.ie

NATIONAL YOUTH HEALTH PROGRAMME (NYHP)

The NYHP provides a broad based, flexible health promotion/health education support and training service to youth and community organisations.

www.youthhealth.ie

ALCOHOL AND DRUG RELATED ISSUES

AL-ANON & AL-ATEEN

Alcohol misuse support service.

Tel: 01 8732699

DRUGS/HIV HELPLINE

Drugs misuse and HIV support service.

Helpline: 1800 459 459

DRUG AND ALCOHOL SUPPORT

Drugs and alcohol information and support.

www.drugs.ie

www.unlocked.ie

Support and information service for young people around alcohol misuse.

SEPARATION AND BEREAVEMENT ISSUES

TEEN BETWEEN

Support service for teenagers 12-21 (years of age) of separated parents. www.teenbetween.ie

Lo call: 1890 380 380

RAINBOWS IRELAND LTD

Support service for children dealing with the grieving process and losses around separation and divorce or bereavement. Tel: 01 4734175

CONSOLE

Support service for people dealing with the grieving process and losses around bereavement by suicide.

Helpline: 1800 201890

MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

REACHOUT.COM

Reach Out is a web-based service that inspires young people to help themselves through tough times and find ways to improve their own mental health and well-being. www.reachout.com

HEADSUP

Support service for mental health issues.

Freetext 50424 to receive a list of topics/options.

www.headsup.ie

MENTAL HEALTH IRELAND

A support service around positive mental health.

www.mentalhealthireland.ie

Tel: 01 284 1166

GROW

Support service for people who have suffered, or are suffering, from mental health problems. www.grow.ie

Tel: 1890 474 474

HEADSTRONG

Support service for youth mental health issues.

www.headstrong.ie

Tel: 01 472 7010

BODYWHYS

National organisation dedicated to supporting people affected by eating disorders.

www.bodywhys.ie

Helpline: 1890 200 444

EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION SUPPORT SERVICE

Helpline: 1800 724 724

SEXUAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES

SEXUAL HEALTH

Information about Sexual Health & Contraception

www.thinkcontraception.ie

HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme website on contraception for sexually active adults.

www.yoursexualhealth.ie

HSE support and information service on a range of sexual health topics.

The Sexual Health Centre, Cork

Tel: 021 427 5837

Crisis Pregnancy Counselling Services

www.positiveoptions.ie

HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme website with details of crisis pregnancy counselling services available nationwide. Counselling is free of charge and is available to teenagers and their parents.

www.abortionaftercare.ie

HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme website with details of post-abortion medical and counselling services available nationwide. All services are free.

STI CLINICS

Support services around Sexually Transmitted Infections

DUBLIN –

St. James's Hospital, GUIDE Clinic

Tel: 01 4162315 / 4162316

Mater Misericordiae Hospital

Tel: 01 8032063

The Gay Men's Health Service

Tel: 01 6699553

CARLOW – Carlow District Hospital

Tel: 051 842646

CASTLEBAR – Mayo General Hospital

Tel: 094 9021733

CLARE – Ennis Regional Hospital

Tel: 061 482382

CORK – Victoria Hospital

Tel: 021 4966844

STI CLINICS CONTINUED...

GALWAY –

University College Hospital

Tel: 091 525200

Portiuncula Hospital Ballinasloe

Tel: 090 9648372

LIMERICK – Regional Hospital

Tel: 061 482382

SLIGO – Sligo General Hospital

Tel: 071 9170473

TIPPERARY –

Nenagh General Hospital

Tel: 061 482382

South Tipperary Hospital

Tel: 051 842646

TRALEE – Tralee General Hospital

Tel: 021 4966844

WATERFORD – Waterford Regional Hospital

Tel: 051 842646

GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER ISSUES

GLEN

Working for equality for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender people in Ireland.

www.glen.ie

BELONGTO

Support service for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender young people.

www.belongto.org

SEXUAL ABUSE AND VIOLENCE ISSUES

CARI (CHILDREN AT RISK IN IRELAND)

Support service for young people around sexual abuse issues.

www.cari.ie

Helpline: 1890 924567

(Mon-Fri 9.30am - 5.30pm)

DUBLIN RAPE CRISIS CENTRE

Support service around sexual abuse issues.

National 24 - hour helpline: 1800 778 888

