Relationship Smarts PLUS

SEXUAL RISK AVOIDANCE ADAPTATION
13 LESSONS FOR TEENS ABOUT LOVE AND ROMANCE
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What is Relationship Smarts Plus SRA?

Relationship Smarts PLUS (RQ+) SRA helps teens make healthy relationship, dating, and sexual decisions for themselves by focusing on their futures. It is a lively, media-infused and activity-based comprehensive healthy relationship skills and sexual risk avoidance program for young teens. The curriculum’s 13 lessons embody an innovative and integrated approach that addresses positive youth development, life skills, healthy relationships, communication/conflict management, dating violence, and sexual delay and risk avoidance.

What’s new with Relationship Smarts Plus SRA?

RQ+ SRA is an adaptation of Relationship Smarts Plus 3.0. It includes all the core concepts, skills, and activities from the original RQ+. However, it has been adapted to meet the guidelines outlined in the Healthy Relationships Act of 2017 that set the stage for federal SRA grant funding.

What’s the evidence behind Relationship Smarts Plus?

Relationship Smarts PLUS 3.0 is an evidence-based curriculum included in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s National Registry for Evidence-based and Promising Practices, or NREPP. The curriculum has been demonstrated to reduce teen dating violence and abuse and to increase youth’s assets.

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Colored Activity Cards

Special Note: Each lesson contains a Parent-Teen Connection activity.

Sample Lesson from Relationship Smarts PLUS SRA
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Sexual Decision-Making

Overview

This curriculum, and in particular this lesson on sexual decision-making, along with Lessons 11 and 12, represent a unique approach to addressing sexual risk avoidance. Prevention programs often focus on reducing risky behaviors by providing sexual health knowledge of risks and protection, skills, and services. But, many youth lack the motivation to avoid STDs, HIV, and unplanned pregnancy. They need bigger and more positive reasons, that will stick even beyond their teen years, to follow through on sexual delay and sexual risk avoidance.

*Relationship Smarts PLUS-SRA* takes a holistic, positive youth-development approach by helping youth to better understand and develop themselves, define their goals, and acquire essential, healthy relationship and life skills. It helps teens think about their lives now and into the future. It is by intention that sex is addressed directly at this point in the curriculum, after the material on developing healthy selves and healthy relationship skills.

This holistic approach is extended to sexual matters and draws on what they have learned so far about healthy relationships. Before offering health information in Lesson 11, we focus here in Lesson 10 on the heart. Teens consider the meaning they themselves want to attach to sex and the contexts in which that meaning can be realized. The lesson begins by offering a deeper look at intimacy, love, and behavioral motivations. This exploration of intimacy speaks to young people’s desire for connection, affirmation, respect, and meaning. It helps teens ask some basic questions about what makes sex beautiful and most affirming and about whether two people are on the same page about emotions, intentions, and desires. Sex is a most intimate form of communication. In this lesson, they may discover the positives that sexual delay offer for ultimately achieving a fulfilling love life—that the time and maturity it may take to learn more about love and to find if a person is worthy of their love—may be worth it. It is not simply about waiting because of negative risks. There are many benefits in terms of freedom to explore, to grow, and to learn more about and from relationships.

The goal of this lesson is for teens to take ownership over defining a context for sex that is personally meaningful and protective of their aspirations and goals in life. It empowers them to identify their sexual values and intentions versus simply following the cues of the cultural scripts around them.

Teens engage in personal decision-making on sexual boundaries and decide when, under what conditions, and with whom they’d move their line. They explore the risks and benefits of their sexual choices, especially the benefits of waiting until they become adults or are married. Teens are introduced to some important testimonies from sexually experienced teens and young adults that
do not normalize teen sexual activity but encourage sexual delay. Teens learn about risky situations for sex and strategies for avoiding them. They use their critical thinking and communication skills to analyze real-life situations and respond to pressure situations.

In the following Lesson 11, straightforward, medically accurate information is presented on pregnancy, STDs, and HIV. Contraceptive and condom information is presented in a context of adult, married-couple family planning and does not normalize teen sexual activity. Teens will gain more practice through role-plays with refusal, negotiation, and exit strategies for sexual risk avoidance. The lesson ends with teens creating their own personal policy and plan for staying true to their sexual decisions.

Lesson 12 will reinforce sexual risk avoidance by exploring the consequences of unplanned and nonmarital pregnancy through the eyes of a child. Although the Success Sequence for reducing one’s chances of living in poverty was presented in an earlier lesson, it will be revisited in Lesson 12.

Goals

- Become aware of the benefits of making clear decisions about sex versus sliding.
- Gain a deeper understanding of the dimensions of intimacy.
- Explore some of the emotional and social risks of teen sex.
- Define a context for sex that is personally meaningful and protective of one’s aspirations and goals.
- Become aware of risky situations for sex.
- Identify sexual boundaries and the risks and benefits associated with them.

Lesson at a Glance

10.1  **Sex and Sliding** (10 minutes)
Activity: Music video and discussion, S.E.X. (Lyfe Jennings)

10.2  **The Six Parts of Intimacy** (15 minutes)
Activity: Jessie and Ben—How Connected?

10.3  **Understanding Sexual Regrets** (8 minutes)
Activity: Think/Pair/Share

10.4  **Risky Situations for Sex** (20 minutes)
Activities: Risky Situations for Sex; Film: Toothpaste (Scenarios USA); Small Group Discussion

10.5  **Know Your Personal Line** (8 minutes)
Activity: Drawing My Line

Parent-Teen Connection
Materials Checklist

Resources Found at End of Lesson:
10a. Chart a Relationship
10b. Cristina & Bobby—Let’s Analyze
10c. Parent-Teen Connection—Intimacy and Sexual Decisions

Workbook:
• Intimacy—It’s Not Just a Physical Thing (pg. 32)
• The Connections that Build Intimacy (pg. 33)
• My Personal Line (pg. 34)

Materials:
• The official music video for S.E.X., by Lyfe Jennings, is sporadically found on YouTube. Can view/project for free by going to the iTunes Store, putting S.E.X. Lyfe Jennings into the search bar, and scrolling down to the music video. Click “watch.” Or, purchase it from iTunes and download to your computer.
• Colored markers, flip chart paper
• Toothpaste (a Scenarios USA short film). Available on YouTube.

Downloadable Resources Located at DibbleInstitute.org/rsra2
• Lesson 10 PowerPoint Presentation
• Duplicate masters for handouts

Preparation

☐ Preview the PowerPoint slideshow and workbook applications.

☐ Locate the official music video for S.E.X., by Lyfe Jennings. It tends to be available sporadically on YouTube. The visuals are important. You can access and view for free in the iTunes Store. Put S.E.X. Lyfe Jennings in the search bar and then scroll down to the music video and click “watch.” Preview the song or music video and review the discussion prompts found in Section 10.1.

☐ Duplicate Chart a Relationship worksheet (Resource 10a), one per teen.

☐ Preview the film, Toothpaste, and discussion activity for Section 10.4.

☐ Duplicate group worksheet for Cristina & Bobby—Let’s Analyze (Resource 10b).

10.1 Sex and Sliding

This section starts with the observation that sex is one area where many young people slide versus making a real decision. The music video S.E.X., by Lyfe Jennings, is a hook to engage interest and discussion about two people’s interpretation and motivation around sex. This discussion begins the lesson’s exploration of intimacy and sexual meaning to assist teens in defining a context for sex that is personally meaningful and protective of their aspirations. (PP)

Open with these statements:

❖ The communication skills you’ve just practiced will be particularly important for this section on sexual decision-making. But you need to know your sexual values — what you want — first.

❖ Knowing your values and intentions puts you in charge and will strengthen your ability to assert and communicate them to a partner.

❖ Let’s first begin by talking about sex and relating it back to the concept of sliding versus deciding.

❖ Sex is clearly something many people slide into these days.

❖ As we know, sliding can carry some high-cost consequences, like an unplanned pregnancy, an STD, or emotional hurt from a relationship that turns out badly.

Announce they are going to watch a music video by Lyfe Jennings to explore this further. (PP)

❖ You’ll see the girl in the video is clearly attracted to the guy.

❖ Watch for how you think she is interpreting his desire to be physical with her. What is she thinking it means?

❖ Then watch the guy. What do you imagine he’s thinking?

❖ Directions for everyone: Take out a piece of paper and jot down one or two lines that stand out to you as you watch and listen.

Play the music video. Then continue with these discussion questions:

❖ What do you think? Were the guy and the girl in the music video on the same page in terms of what it meant? What they were looking for? Listen.
And, while this video involved a heterosexual couple, it’s just as easy for LGBTQ couples not to be on the same page and misinterpret each other’s motivations and expectations.

Ask teens what lines they jotted down. Some of the lines that likely will come up are:

... guys on the block... they just want relations. They don’t want relationships...

... He says if you’d really loved him, you would give it up...

... That’s just a line guys use to get ya stuff... See, he’ll tell you all kind of things to get in your pants, yeah...

... Think before you let it go...

Listen to their comments and continue the discussion:

Let’s talk about that line, “Think before you let it go.” How many people even talk to see if they’re on the same page before “they let it go”? What do you see in the movies? How many talk about what sex means to them? Or, even the risks of pregnancy or STDs? Is the singer’s message one you’d give your little sister or cousin?

Remember the woman in the song saying to the girl, “Maybe she can hear it coming from me?” Where do most teens — guys and girls, straight or LGBTQ — get their advice about sex? What shapes teens’ attitudes and behaviors the most? Listen to responses.

Does it make a difference if a teenager has a parent or trusted adult to talk to about sex; and not just the health risks, but emotional ones as well? And about relationships; about love?

And, what if more people talked about the benefits — the positives — that come from one enjoying teen relationships without adding sex?

One national survey found nearly 9 in 10 teens say it would be easier to delay sex and avoid teen pregnancy if they were able to have honest, open conversations with their parents.¹

The same survey also found that 87% of teens agreed that it is important for teens to be given a strong message that they should not have sex until they are at least out of high school.

Let’s talk about a person deciding to change course:

At one point, the female singer says, “Once you’ve given it away, you’ll never get it back.”

People sometimes do things they wish they hadn’t and want to do things differently in the future.

Anyone, male or female, who’s had sex can decide to stop. They can decide to leave sex out of their next relationships.
What if the girl in the music video had sex when it meant nothing to him? What benefits—what freedoms—would she get from deciding to stop and leave sex out of her teen relationships? Pause for responses.

### 10.2 The Six Parts of Intimacy

A six-part framework for understanding intimacy is introduced to encourage teens to think more deeply about sexual meaning. The point of encouraging teens to wait on sex is not only to avoid STDs and pregnancy, but also so they might have a fulfilling and affirming sexual life when they are older, more mature and confident in themselves, and with a loving partner, as in marriage. The intimacy framework will be used in an activity to analyze a teen relationship.

Begin with these points:

- As we all know, sex can happen awfully fast in a relationship. Sex can begin before two people really even know each other.

- As we saw with the relationship pyramid activity in an earlier session, sex provides a pretty shaky foundation for a relationship. (PP)

- Let me read something as food for thought.

Read aloud the first paragraph (only) from the gray box at the bottom of pg. 32 in the workbook (Understanding Sexual Regrets).

Introduce the word “intimacy:”

- Let’s examine the word “intimacy” more deeply. It might shed some light on the passage I just read.

- When we hear that word, we often think physical, as in, “They are intimate; they’re having sex.”

- But in fact, intimacy is about so much more. It’s about being truly close and connected in several ways. And intimacy may have a lot to do with good relationships and ultimately good sex as an adult.
Distribute the worksheet *Chart a Relationship* (Resource 10a):

(PP) Point out that this chart contains six kinds of connections that build intimacy. Instruct teens to draw a symbol for each one on their worksheet as you describe them with the text below.

❖ **Physical:** This connection pertains to the physical part of intimacy. There exists a whole continuum of physical intimacy from lesser to greater. It doesn’t have to be all or nothing. This continuum can go from holding hands, hugging, a gentle kiss to French kissing, increasing physical affection, greater sexual touch, to intercourse. *(Key Words: Physical Affection and Touch)*

❖ **Verbal:** When partners can really talk openly, honestly, and easily, they feel more connected to each other. When partners are interested in learning about each other, regularly sharing what’s on their mind and their daily experiences, they build a bond of connection. *(Key Word: Talk)*

Read aloud the following example of verbal connection in action:

“When Sherita and I are together,” says 17-year-old Jamal, “we talk a lot. I mean really talk. And we have a lot of fun. I never thought I could feel this close to a girl. A lot of my friends are pushing their girlfriends to have sex all the time, but nothing seems to last. The way I look at it, I don’t want to do anything to risk what I have with her.”

❖ **Emotional:** This connection relates to feelings. It’s about how warm, strong, and genuine your feelings are for each other. The feelings are mutual—you both have healthy and strong feelings for each other and know you can share freely. If you feel you must pretend to be someone you are not to keep your partner, or if you suspect his or her interest in you is based mostly on material stuff or sex, it is not a healthy emotional connection. If insecurity or neediness is driving the relationship, it’s not a healthy emotional connection. Sometimes unmet emotional needs can lead a person into poor relationship choices—just to be with somebody. *(Key word: Feelings)*

❖ **Social:** This dimension relates to togetherness—the time spent together doing things a couple enjoys. Shared activities and interests bond a couple together. *(Key words: Activities and Interests)*

❖ **Spiritual:** When couples talk about the things that are really important—like their core values, who or what’s influenced their life, or their philosophical, moral, political, or religious beliefs—that is spiritual. Being in sync and talking and sharing on this level can truly make two people feel like they are soul mates. *(Key words: Values and Beliefs)*

❖ **Commitment:** This is about trust and commitment. You can trust that your partner is in your corner and you can count on your partner to be faithful. It’s about supporting each other and being concerned about each other’s well-being. It’s doing nice things for each other. *(Key words: Trust, Support, Healthy giving to each other, Faithful)*
Putting it all together:

Point out that when partners have taken the time to grow more connected on these levels—physical, verbal, emotional, social, spiritual, and commitment—they are developing true intimacy. The following quote can be read aloud to convey this point: (PP)

❖ “Real intimacy takes time. It involves tender feelings and physical affection, but also much more. It involves respect for each other even though you recognize neither is perfect. It involves aspects of honesty, trust, and admiration that last over a long period. It involves talking seriously about your values and ideals and sharing your goals. It means both partners give of themselves generously. It means supporting each other emotionally and not doing something purposely that will hurt the other person’s feelings. And it means one partner doesn’t pressure the other to do something for which he or she is not ready. It means both partners want to say ‘I love you;’ and when they do, they mean it. All of these things take time to develop. This is the kind of intimacy that is found in a healthy marriage.”

ACTIVITY
Jessie and Ben—How Connected

Pass out colored markers to use with the Chart a Relationship worksheet (Resource 10a). Announce that you are going to read a short description of a relationship between Ben and Jessie. As participants are listening to the story, instruct them to think about how connected the couple is (i.e., together—on the same page) on each of the six kinds of connections. Point out that Ben and Jessie have a boy/girl relationship, but their situation can apply to a couple of any identity or orientation.

Ask teens to place on “X” somewhere between 0% (signifying “no connection”) to 100% (signifying “very strongly connected and on the same page”). Pause after you read each category for the group to mark the degree of connectedness on their sheets.

(PP) Alternately, you can add movement to this activity by asking teens to stand up along a wall where you have taped up 3 sheets of paper—one marked 0%, another 50% and the third 100%. After reading each intimacy dimension, ask teens to move to a place along the wall between 0% and 100%.

❖ Physical: Ben and Jessie started getting physical very soon after they met. They spend a lot of time kissing and making out at her house. Her mom is gone a lot. They’ve touched each other above the waist under the clothes and have moved on to touching below the waist under their clothes. They have not had sexual intercourse yet, but are very close to it.

Place an “X” somewhere between 0% and 100% to represent their physical connection. Or move.
Verbal: Jessie and Ben hardly talk at length about anything important. She usually tries to bring up serious topics, but he always changes the subject. The small talk they do have is either about sports (of which she isn’t too interested) or gossip (which he thinks is a bore). They argue a lot over little things. Jessie wants to go to college and loves to read novels and talk about ideas. Ben is not that great at school and would rather not talk about it when he doesn’t have to.

Place an “X” somewhere between 0% and 100% to represent their physical connection. Or move.

(PP) Emotional: Jessie wants this relationship to last. Ben is pretty hot. Ben likes Jessie and thinks this is okay for now, but definitely doesn’t think much about the future or feel that she is the “one.” Because she’s afraid to lose him, she tries to keep tabs on where he is and whom he is hanging out with. She gets very angry and jealous if he does things without her. Ben ends up giving in to Jessie’s preferences a lot and keeps quiet so he doesn’t have to deal with her mood swings. Also, he’s pretty easy going and would rather not rock the boat.

Place an “X” somewhere between 0% and 100% to represent their emotional connection. Or move.

Social: His idea of spending time together is having her hang out with his friends or being alone with her and getting physical. She wants to do more things with him, but he’s not that into her interests or what she thinks is fun. Even so, they do both like playing pool and watching videos.

Place an “X” somewhere between 0% and 100% to represent their social connection. Or move.

Spiritual: Jessie doesn’t go to church anymore. Ben goes to church most of the time and especially on holidays. She likes to talk about serious things like whether God exists or what happens when you die. He makes fun of her serious side and her interest in talking about deep beliefs. He knows what he believes in and would rather not have debates about it.

Place an “X” somewhere between 0% and 100% to represent their spiritual connection. Or move.

Commitment: He hasn’t thought beyond next month. She’s hoping to talk him into staying in school and going to college with her so that they can stay together. In fact, she’s writing his papers at school to improve his grades. How mutual is their commitment?

Make two “X’s” (one for Jessie and one for Ben) somewhere between 0% and 100% to represent their commitment. Or move once to represent Jessie and again to represent Ben.
Processing the activity: Okay, look at your charts first and then let’s answer these questions.

(PP) Read the questions below. Pause for their responses (yes or no).

1. Would you say they have a “best friends” relationship?
   - Do they share basic values?
   - Do they enjoy doing many things together?
   - Do they enjoy talking to each other—sharing thoughts and ideas?

2. How emotionally healthy is their relationship?
   - Is it trusting and secure?
   - Are their feelings for each other mutual?
   - Is it mostly physical or is the attraction on many levels?

3. Do they each have a clear sense of identity (i.e., know who they are)?
   - Do you think they both have a lot more growing up to do?
   - Are they a good match for a long-term relationship?

4. Do you think it is a good idea for them to have sex?
   - Is it likely one or both of them could have regrets down the road?
   - Is it likely that one or the other may end up cheating?
   - What if Jessie gets pregnant? Are they in a place to get married, make a home, and provide what a child needs?
   - Do you think they have a good foundation for a successful future together?

To conclude this section:

❖ I guess you could say Jessie and Ben don’t have much true intimacy.

❖ True intimacy is linking hearts and souls and it’s built slowly over time.

❖ It takes time and maturity to know who you are, what you want, and how to build a healthy relationship.

❖ Thinking about what true intimacy is and what you want deepening levels of physical intimacy to mean might be useful to help you make important relationship and sexual decisions.
10.3 Understanding Sexual Regrets

Begin by saying you want to read aloud some quotes from real teens. Read aloud Miguel and Amber’s statements on pg. 32 in the workbook.

❖ We often hear of guys pressuring girls, but it seems like Miguel was pressured by a girl. That happens. And what if Miguel was gay or questioning? Guys pressure other guys too, just as girls can pressure girls.

❖ As was mentioned earlier, 59% of teens have not had intercourse. (CDC, YRBS 2015)

❖ And surveys show most teens who have had sex wish they had waited.

❖ Many say that sex didn’t turn out as they had imagined or hoped for.

❖ For others, sexual involvement simply made things complicated.

❖ Another interesting finding is that 8 out of 10 first-time teen, sexual relationships last 6 months or less, and one-quarter are one-time affairs.

Point out that although young people hear a lot about the risks of STDs and pregnancy, hardly anyone talks about some of the emotional and social risks of sex-too-soon for teens of any gender, identity, or orientation. Present four of them as food for thought. (PP)

Some Emotional Risks of Sex-Too-Soon

1. **The hurt from unmatched expectations.** Sex always carries expectations. One person may expect or assume that sex means something, like tender and mutual feelings for each other, a relationship, or love. For another, it merely may mean we did it and we’ll do it again. It can hurt to find out you were not on the same page whatsoever. How many people have a deep discussion about their sexual values?

2. **Sex can change a relationship or keep it from growing.** Because of unmatched expectations over the meaning of sex, there is less honesty and less talking about true feelings, which leads, in turn, to more wondering about the real feelings and intentions of the other person. Then comes the tension. One pressures for more sex; the other pressures for a relationship. The result? Instead of honesty, openness, and meaningful conversations that build a bond of friendship, trust, and intimacy, there is more questioning, dishonesty, avoidance, second-guessing, or pressuring.

3. **Sex can take over a relationship.** Sex can become the major focus. It means that it’s mainly planning opportunities for sex instead of doing fun things together and enjoying each other’s company.
4. **Sex can keep a bad relationship going that should end or never should have started.** Sexual involvement can get a person emotionally connected and make it harder to see what is really there. It can keep people in a relationship that should end much sooner. It can get complicated even for those who think it’s just “friends with benefits,” no strings attached.

(PP) Now read aloud Mariah’s quote on pg. 32 in the workbook. Ask the group about her experience—how sexual involvement kept her in the relationship longer than she should have been. Ask teens what else they learned from her story. Discuss her point about how it dominated her life and kept her from doing other things. (Note: Riley can be male or female)

- Have the group turn to workbook pg. 33 and review the five connections that build intimacy before doing a quick Think, Pair, Share activity.

**ACTIVITY Think/Pair/Share**

- Read aloud Ebony’s quote on pg. 33 of the workbook.
- Then ask teens to pair up and discuss what each person thinks about Ebony’s decision and the points she makes. Did she do the right thing?
- Then ask for their responses.

**Note:** An important point here is that while Ebony describes a healthy relationship with AJ, she still decided to hold off on sex. She is happy with her decision and has no regrets. She seems to realize the risks of sexual involvement as a young teen and the freedoms she gains by sticking to her boundaries.

10.4 Risky Situations for Sex

This section examines risky situations for sex and offers strategies for avoiding them. This information will be reinforced with an engaging, short film with which teens will practice their critical thinking and communication skills.
Begin with these points:

❖ Remember—the majority of teens who get or make someone pregnant or acquire an STD actually didn’t plan or expect to have sex. It just happened. They slid into it.

❖ Defining what sex means to you and making a clear decision on your boundary line puts you in charge.

❖ Being pressured, unsure, or used is not what good sex is about.

❖ You also need to know the signs and situations that make sex more likely—to go further than you want.

ACTIVITY

Risky Situations for Sex

Conduct a brainstorm by asking teens to identify what kinds of situations they think make a slide into sex more likely. Then add the following if not mentioned: (PP)

❖ Drinking, under the influence of substances.

❖ Going with someone a lot older than you.

❖ Being alone together and kissing and touching for long periods of time.

❖ Listening to sexy music.

❖ Not having positive reasons in your own mind for waiting on sex. The more you have a positive vision of the kind of relationship you want and the more you have a vision of what you want sex to mean, the more you will be able to confidently resist being pressured.

❖ Not having talked about your sexual values and boundaries earlier.

❖ Not having an agreement on touch and time alone.

❖ Not having clear reasons for why you do not want to get or make someone pregnant at this time in your life. Not being fully aware of how it would impact you, your partner, and a child.

❖ Not knowing the facts about pregnancy and STDs.

Make a special point on alcohol or drugs.

❖ Being drunk or high can cause you to do sexual things that you wouldn’t normally want to do.

❖ Date rapes often involve alcohol.

❖ Consent becomes difficult, if not impossible, to give or respect when drunk.

❖ Mixing sex with alcohol or drugs is just dangerous.
Basic pointers to reduce risks of going further than you want:

1) Agree on rules for touch. Decide what is okay or not okay. Be concrete, not vague. Is it over the clothes or under the clothes, above the waist or below the waist?

2) Agree on rules for how much time is spent alone, making out, versus doing fun things together or with friends.

❖ Clear agreements on touch and the amount of time being physical are needed. If not, sexual arousal is likely to take over and all good intentions will be out the window.

❖ Touching sexual parts of the body skin-on-skin will accelerate arousal and will put you in the danger zone for going beyond your intentions.

❖ Anyone with a normal sex drive will struggle with stopping points. Decide ahead of time on your line and have a plan regarding time and touch. These will help you stick to your intentions.

❖ So to sum it all up, don’t wait until you’re in the heat of the moment. Agree on your ground rules ahead of time. Discuss them with a partner. Have this discussion once you’ve moved from “just friends” into kissing and romantic attraction.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY
Toothpaste

This short film, titled Toothpaste, will enhance the points made previously regarding risky situations for sex. Teens will engage in some preliminary responses to such situations.

❖ (PP) Let’s watch a film now about sexual decisions and situations that are challenging. It was written by teens.

Instructor note on film: Toothpaste is a short film written by teens from Texas and produced by Hollywood filmmakers from Scenarios USA. It involves two Latino girls and their respective relationships. One girl has a healthy relationship with her longtime boyfriend and they are able to talk honestly about their decision to wait on sex. Cristina, on the other hand, has recently fallen for a guy and thinks she’s ready to have sex but at the last moment has second thoughts. By that time, she is in a sticky situation. Unfortunately, this couple is not able to talk openly and honestly. They have never discussed boundaries and Cristina is totally unprepared for his pressure lines. Play film.
ACTIVITY
Small Group Discussion

Briefly debrief on the film before starting structured, small-group discussion. Ask:

❖ What did you like about the relationship between Jennifer and Carlos? Listen to responses.

❖ Cristina and Bobby had only been going together for three weeks. What from Relationship Smarts PLUS-SRA have you learned that may have helped her in assessing her relationship and making decisions? Let’s quickly make a list of any concepts, skills, and topics we’ve covered that would have helped her.

(PP) Have the group divide into pairs or groups of three. Pass out the worksheet on Cristina and Bobby (Resource 10b). Each group jots down their responses to each question.

Allow 4 minutes and then ask for volunteers to offer responses and discuss.

Instructor note: The point of this discussion is to deepen teen’s reflection on maturity, healthy relationships, the importance of communication, and the benefits of waiting on sex.

Cristina and Bobby’s story offers an opportunity to talk, not just about the risk of pregnancy, but risks to the heart as well. The example of Jennifer and Carlos underscores that healthy relationships are respectful of each other and each other’s boundaries.

Playing out their lives after Cristina discovers she’s pregnant can help teens understand how that would affect one’s future goals.

Finally, be sure to discuss the final questions on the benefits if they had talked about sex and made a clear decision to leave it out of their high school relationships.

Instructor note: Be sure to make the point that loving and trusting each other (like Jennifer and Carlos) and using a condom does not ensure that you won’t end up pregnant or making someone pregnant or getting an STD.

❖ Even though Jennifer and Carlos are in a long-term, committed relationship and they love each other and trust each other, do you think they are ready to become parents? They are still in high school.

❖ Even though they plan on using a condom if they have sex in the future, the reality is that under normal usage, 18 couples out of 100 will become pregnant; and for teens, that number is even higher. Even with perfect usage, every year there are couples who get pregnant who relied on condoms as their method of birth control.
And while condoms do provide important protection from a lot of STDs, they don’t provide 100% protection from all STDs. Some STDs are on areas not covered by a condom.

The only form of birth control that is 100% effective is for Jennifer and Carlos to continue to wait to have sex. As they continue to wait, they will be able to strengthen their relationship so that when they are ready to become parents, after they have graduated from high school—and better yet, college or additional training—have gotten jobs, and are married, then they will be able to provide their child with a stronger and more stable home environment than if they end up getting pregnant before they were planning on it.

10.5 Know Your Personal Line

Announce to teens they are going to do some personal reflection and personal boundary setting (privately) at this time.

Start by highlighting the importance of knowing one’s line before becoming physically affectionate with someone.

- It’s important to know your line before you start becoming physically affectionate with someone.

- Knowing how to communicate with a partner about boundaries and knowing how to make plans to follow through on your sexual choices is really, really important.

- Remember, most sexually experienced teens didn’t plan to have sex—it just happened.

ACTIVITY

Drawing My Line

Instruct teens to turn to My Personal Line in the workbook, pg. 34, and look at the scale of physical intimacy. (PP)

- Read over the scale of deepening levels of physical intimacy and then think about where you draw your line, where you would draw your line, or where you would draw your line if you want a do-over.
❖ How does your line fit with your values—the meaning you would want for any level of physical intimacy? Consider under what conditions, when, and with whom you would ever move your boundary line.

❖ Answer the questions on the benefits of setting the line above the bolded line. Be as specific as possible about emotional, health, and social benefits.

❖ Then answer the question on the risks of going below the bolded line. Challenge yourself to be specific and to consider all areas: health risks, risks for your future, emotional risks, risks to friendships, freedom to explore and meet new people, etc.

❖ Being clear about your line can help you stick to your intentions.

Allow 4 minutes (or assign as homework). When finished, say:

❖ Remember, once you move from just friends to romantic interests, it’s important to start talking. The more you are clear in your own head, the more you’ll be able to assert what you want to a partner and not be pressured. (Note: Teens will complete My Personal Plan, workbook pgs. 35–36, in Lesson 11.)

Parent-Teen Connection

(PP) Pass out Parent-Teen Connection—Intimacy and Sexual Decisions, Resource 10c. Teens are to ask their parent or trusted adult to read the 5 connections that build intimacy on pg. 33 of their workbook, as well as the story of Mariah on pg. 32 and the story of Ebony on pg. 33.

❖ Together, discuss the 5 dimensions of intimacy and compare the decisions of Mariah and Ebony.

❖ Ask your parent or trusted adult what he or she feels the benefits are in deciding to leave sex out of teen relationships.

❖ Ask him or her to sign and return for credit.

Notes


2. See surveys conducted by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unwanted Pregnancy, With One Voice 2012. TheNationalCampaign.org/wov/

RESOURCES 10a

Chart a Relationship

Using the six-part intimacy framework, ask teens to place an “X” somewhere between 0% (signifying “no connection”) to 100% (“very connected and on the same page”) as you read about each one.

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<th>0% ........................................................</th>
<th>50% ........................................................</th>
<th>100%</th>
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<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
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</tbody>
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(a line for each person)

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RESOURCES 10b

Cristina and Bobby—Let’s Analyze

1. What were Cristina’s feelings for Bobby and his for her? Were they on the same page about the meaning of sex? ___________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

2. What pressure lines did Bobby use in the bedroom? __________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

3. Cristina had a condom in her purse downstairs. Why didn’t she go get it?
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

4. Did her friend Jennifer think it was a good idea for Cristina to have sex? Why?
   _______________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________

Cristina could have insisted on a condom to reduce the risk of pregnancy and STDs, but what emotional risks would she face, even if they’d had protected sex?
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

1. How would Bobby feel later on, knowing Cristina thought sex meant a lot more? Can a person feel good inside if they pressure someone into sex and use them?
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

2. How would Cristina feel afterwards, knowing Bobby had used her and didn’t have the same feelings for her and expectations? _______________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

Sketch out how the pregnancy will affect their lives over the next few years:
• For Cristina: _____________________________________________________________
• For Bobby: ______________________________________________________________

Your opinion: What benefits would there have been had they agreed to leave sex out of their high school relationship? ____________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

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RESOURCES 10c

Parent-Teen Connection—Intimacy and Sexual Decisions

Ask your parent or trusted adult to read the 5 connections that build intimacy on pg. 33 of your workbook. Then ask him or her to read the story of Mariah, pg. 32, and the story of Ebony, pg. 33.

Together, discuss the 5 dimensions of intimacy and compare the stories of Mariah and Ebony.

Ask your parents or trusted adult to say what they feel the benefits are in deciding to leave sex out of teen relationships.

Signature: ____________________________________________

Sample Lesson from Relationship Smarts PLUS SRA
www.DibbleInstitute.org

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Miguel, 16: As I was growing up, my parents told me that making love was this very special thing. I always figured I’d wait until I was older. But a friend fixed me up with a girl from another school, and it happened. This girl and I went out only twice. I hardly knew her, but she came on to me so strong that I kind of stopped using my head. I still can’t believe I let myself get pushed into it that way. We were nothing to each other. She just wanted to get laid. It still gives me a bad feeling when I think about it.

Amber, 17: I figured out that I was just something temporary and exciting for Ryan. But to me, he was the biggest thing in my life, my first love. I gave him my virginity, my heart, everything. But he ditched me for some other girl who was better at sex. I know because my friend got it out of him. Guys are mostly players who don’t really care about you.

Mariah, 19: I met Riley the summer after my freshman year. We were so in love. We really liked each other and did everything together. But, it was like a 24/7 relationship. It just felt at times that it was too much of a grown-up relationship for the age we were. It dominated our lives. It prevented me from doing other things and from spending time with my friends. As it turns out we headed in different directions and the relationship only lasted six months out of high school. Now I realize we should have kept it lighter and agreed on boundaries. When my doubts started to creep in, it took so much longer to end it because we were involved sexually. It made it hard to see what was really there. My advice to teens is this: enjoy your relationships and enjoy the affection, but keep some boundaries. And, make sure you don’t spend ALL of your time together. You change so much after high school.

Understanding Sexual Regrets

In national surveys the majority of sexually experienced teens say they wish they’d waited. Maybe sex did not turn out as they had imagined or it meant less than they had hoped. Maybe they thought that it meant the relationship would last. For some, it may simply have made the relationship a lot more complicated. Do you know anyone who feels this way?

The number of teens who say they wish they had waited may indicate that sex did not turn out to be what they thought it would. Realizing that real intimacy is so much more than just sex may help explain some regrets about adding sex to a teen relationship. One thing is for sure: with the number of people who say they wish they had waited, it turns out not to be what many people think it’s going to be. True intimacy builds slowly between two people through countless exchanges and experiences. It is a process of linking hearts and souls in a committed love that includes strong emotional, verbal, and social connections. It requires a level of maturity and self-knowledge. It usually is not achieved until people are in their twenties.
Verbal is being able to talk and openly share thoughts and feelings. Couples feel close when they find it enjoyable and interesting to talk to each other.

Emotional relates to feelings. Are the feelings of two individuals equally strong and genuine? Can they honestly share what is in their hearts? If the relationship feels controlling, conditional, or based purely on physical attraction, it’s not an emotionally healthy connection. Similarly, if insecurity or neediness is driving the relationship, it’s not emotionally healthy.

Social focuses on enjoyable time couples spend together. Shared interests and fun activities form a positive bond.

Spiritual relates to core values, life influences, religious, moral or ethical beliefs that couples share. Being in sync and sharing on this level can make two people feel like soul mates.

Trust/Commitment is about supporting each other’s goals and well-being. It’s about putting a partner’s needs on par with your own. It’s about being faithful and acting like a team. It’s about knowing you can count on each other.

 Ebony, 21: When I look at this chart on intimacy, I think about my relationship with AJ. We started going together junior year. We had fun, could really talk and had strong feelings for each other. I can honestly say that we had a really good relationship, not like many of the short-lived and superficial ones at my high school. After graduation, I had the opportunity to work and travel in Europe, but AJ didn’t want me to go. I realized then I wasn’t ready for that level of commitment. I still had a lot of exploring to do. And, am I ever glad that I had stuck to my boundaries on sex. It would’ve been so easy to think sex was okay because we had so many good connections. But what if I’d gotten pregnant? No way were either of us ready to be parents. As it turned out, we broke up shortly after. I learned from that experience and left with no regrets. It’s okay to have a great relationship in high school without feeling you have to have sex or commit to a future.

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Having a clear boundary in your mind before you get affectionate with someone is important. If your standards and values are not clear before it gets so tempting, it will be much harder to figure out what to do in the moment. Most teens who have had sex did not plan to the first time. They were caught off guard and arousal took over. If you know you intentions, you have a better chance of not sliding into a deeper level of physical intimacy faster than you want.

1. On the scale above, where do you draw your personal line; OR, where do you want to draw your line if you want to do things differently in the future? Place an “X” on the scale above.

2. Describe how your line fits with your values. Consider when, with whom and under what circumstances you would ever move your line.

3. What are the benefits of staying above the bold line on the scale? List as many as you can.

4. What are the risks of going below the bolded line on the scale? List as many as you can.