Love Notes – Sexual Risk Avoidance Adaptation

Relationship Skills for Love, Life, and Work
By Marline E. Pearson

What's New with Love Notes SRA?

Love Notes SRA Edition is an adaptation of the evidence-based Love Notes v2.1 curriculum. It includes all the core concepts, skills, and activities from the original Love Notes. However, it has been adapted to meet the guidelines set forth by the proposed SRA/SRR Education bill.

What Are Love Notes SRA's Core Messages?

Love Notes SRA has a strong and consistent message on the benefits of sexual delay and risk avoidance, as well as the possibility and benefits of changing course and resetting one's sexual boundaries. It communicates these messages through believable and culturally relevant examples (narratives, stories, media). It does not normalize teen sexual activity, nor does it preach or shame. The lessons are guided by the assumption that youth need encouragement to define a context for sex that is personally meaningful and protective of their aspirations and goals in life, and doing so will help them follow through on their intentions.

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Lesson 11

Let’s Talk About Sex

Overview

This curriculum, and in particular this lesson and Lessons 12 and 13, 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 an unplanned pregnancy. They need bigger reasons that will stick even beyond their teen years to follow through on sexual delay and sexual risk avoidance.

*Love Notes* 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 (Lesson 12), teens consider sexual meaning and contexts. Lesson 11 begins by offering a deeper look at intimacy and behavioral motivations. The exploration of intimacy speaks to young people’s desire for connection, affirmation, respect, and meaning. It helps teens ask some basic questions about whether two people are on the same page about emotions and intentions and desires. They discover the positives that sexual delay offer for ultimately achieving a fulfilling love life. It is not simply about waiting because of negative risks. Teens 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, and 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 12, straightforward, medically accurate information is presented on anatomy, bio-reproduction, and 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.

In Lesson 12, 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 13 will reinforce sexual risk avoidance by exploring the consequences of unplanned and nonmarital pregnancy through the eyes of a child.

**Goals**

- To become aware of the benefits of making clear decisions about sex versus sliding.
- To demonstrate a deeper understanding of intimacy and explore how it develops.
- To connect sliding to sexual behaviors and gain a deeper understanding of emotional and social risks.
- To describe similarities and differences of hormones and sexual arousal processes between males and females.
- To become aware of risky situations for sex.
- To set a personal line for physical intimacy and identify the benefits of staying in the green zone.
Lesson at a Glance

11.1  **Sex and Sliding**  (10 minutes)
Activities: Music video and discussion, *S.E.X.* (Lyfe Jennings); video clip, *Dominique’s Decision*

11.2  **The Six Parts of Intimacy**  (15 minutes)
Activities: *Annie and CJ—How Connected?*; *Brad Looking Back*

11.3  **Understanding Sexual Regrets**  (8 minutes)
Activities: *Think/Pair/Share; How Connected?*

11.4  **Are We on the Same Page?**  (5 minutes)

11.5  **Risky Situations for Sex**  (20 minutes)
Activities: *Risky Situations for Sex*; Film: *Toothpaste* (Scenarios USA); Structured small group discussion

11.6  **Set Your Personal Line**  (8 minutes)
Activity: *Drawing My Line*

Trusted Adult Connection

Materials Checklist

Resources:
11a.  *Chart a Relationship* (pg. 257)
11b.  *Cristina & Bobby—Let’s Analyze* (pg. 258)
11c.  *Trusted Adult Connection—Intimacy & Sexual Decisions* (pg. 259)

Materials:
- Lesson 11 PowerPoint slideshow is a digital download that comes with the curriculum. Easy-to-follow directions are found at DibbleInstitute.org/lnsra2.
Lesson 11

• Music video: S.E.X., by Lyfe Jennings, sporadically found on YouTube. It can be found on the iTunes Store by putting S.E.X. Lyfe Jennings into the search bar and scrolling down to the music video. Purchase for $1.99.
• Video clip: Dominique’s Decision (2:30 minutes), hyperlinked in PowerPoint slide
• Colored markers, flip chart paper
• Toothpaste (a Scenarios USA short film). Available on YouTube.

Workbook Applications:
• Let’s Talk About Sex (pg. 31)
• Intimacy—it’s More than a Physical Thing (pg. 32)
• How Connected? (pg. 33)
• Setting Your Line (pgs. 34–35)

✔ Preview the PowerPoint slideshow and workbook applications. Review the key points in the notes section of the PowerPoint slides.

✔ While reading through the lesson, preview the music video S.E.X. and the corresponding discussion prompts in Section 11.1. There is a hyperlink to the music lyrics in the PowerPoint slideshow. To access the music video, go to the iTunes Store, put Lyfe Jennings in the search bar, and scroll down to the music videos. Preview Dominique’s Decision, hyperlinked in the PowerPoint slides as well.

✔ Duplicate the Chart a Relationship worksheet (Resource 11a, pg. 257), one per teen.

✔ Preview the film Toothpaste (on YouTube by putting Scenarios, Toothpaste in the search bar) and the corresponding activity for Section 11.6.

✔ Duplicate the group worksheet Cristina & Bobby—Let’s Analyze (Resource 11b, pg. 258).

SECTION 11.1
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:

❖ Today we’re going to focus more directly on sex. We’ll start by relating it back to the concept of sliding versus deciding.

❖ 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.

❖ But, today we are going to discuss sex from a different angle—what makes sex good. And why the context in which sex takes place matters.

❖ Married couples want to have a good sex life. It’s important for healthy marriages.

❖ But, what makes sex beautiful and affirming? Does it depend on mere physical attraction or techniques—or something much deeper? We’ll explore intimacy in all its parts and find out.

❖ You’ll also consider what you’d want any level of physical intimacy to mean, starting from holding hands or a kiss on down.

❖ We’ll look at what it means when two people are not on the same page about sexual meaning—sexual values.
Announce they are going to watch a music video by Lyfe Jennings to explore these questions further.

❖ 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.

(PP) 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 their motivation—what they wanted physical intimacy to mean? Listen to responses.

Then ask teens to identify any risks they can think of when two people are not on the same page about the meaning of getting physical. Ask them to think beyond health risks.

Then, continue with the point below:

❖ 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 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 about what getting sexual means before “they let it go”? What do you see in the movies? And how many talk about the risks of pregnancy or STDs?

❖ 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? About emotions, relationships, and love?

❖ 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

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.

Challenge the group to come up with as many benefits as they can that a person might get from deciding to stop and change course.
Media Opportunity: Dominique

**Ask:** What if more people talked about the benefits—the positives—that come out of enjoying teen relationships without adding sex?

❖ (PP) Let’s listen to Dominique, about her choice and her life.

This short MTV clip (2:30 minutes) portrays a young woman who has decided to wait until marriage for sex.

Conclude this section by stating that in a national survey, 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.²

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**SECTION 11.2**

**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 in a healthy 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 relationships today. 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.

❖ In national surveys, the majority of sexually experienced teens say they wish they had waited. Maybe sex didn’t turn out as they had imagined or meant less than what they had hoped. Maybe they thought that it meant the relationship would last. For some, it just may have created drama and made the relationship more complicated.

Introduce the word “intimacy:"

❖ Let’s examine the word “intimacy” more deeply. It might shed some light on the passage I just read about wishing they’d waited.

❖ 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 11a, pg. 257):

(PP) Point out that this chart contains six kinds of connections that build intimacy. Instruct teens to draw a symbol and the keywords 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, or a gentle kiss to French kissing, increasing physical affection, greater sexual touch, and 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. *(Keyword: Feelings)*

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

❖ **Spiritual:** When couples talk about the things that are really important—like their core values; who or what has influenced their lives; 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. *(Keywords: 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. *(Keywords: Trust, Support, Healthy giving to each other, Faithful)*

**Putting it all together:**

**(PP)** Point out that when partners have taken the time to grow more connected verbally, emotionally, socially, spiritually, and are becoming more committed, they are developing true intimacy. The following quote can be read aloud to convey this point:

❖ “**True 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 intimacy found in a healthy marriage.”**

**Activity: Annie & CJ—How Connected?**

Continue to use the *Chart a Relationship* worksheet (Resource 11a, pg. 257). Announce that you are going to read a short description of a relationship between Annie and CJ. 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 Annie and CJ are a boy/girl relationship, but their situation can apply to a couple of any identity or orientation.

**(PP)** 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. Alternately, place 3 sheets across the wall with 0%, 50%, 100% and ask teens to move to a place along the wall to mark "how connected" after you read each one.

❖ **Physical:** Annie and CJ got sexually involved almost from the start. A lot of their time together is focused on sex.

*Place an “X” somewhere between 0% and 100% to represent their physical connection. Or move to a place along the wall.*

❖ **Verbal:** Annie and CJ hardly talk at length about anything important. She usually tries to bring up serious topics but it goes nowhere. To her, he doesn’t seem interested in finding out much about her friends, what she likes to do, or her future plans. She has dreams of going to college. School was never CJ’s strong suit and he doesn’t like talking about the future. When she asks him where he stands on the relationship, he usually just clams up and won’t talk about it. They argue a lot over little things.

*Place an “X” somewhere between 0% and 100% to represent their verbal connection. Or move to a place along the wall.*

❖ **Emotional:** Annie’s not close to her family. She wants this relationship with CJ to last forever and she feels close when they’re together sexually. CJ likes her 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’s hanging out with. She gets very angry and jealous if he does things without her. CJ ends up giving in to Annie’s preferences a lot and keeps quiet so he doesn’t have to deal with her mood swings. In addition, he’s easygoing and would rather not rock the boat.

*Place an “X” somewhere between 0% and 100% to represent their emotional connection. Or move to a place along the wall.*

❖ **(PP) Social:** His idea of spending time together is having her hang out with his friends or being alone with her getting it on sexually. 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 watching movies. A lot of their time is spent inside the house.

*Place an “X” somewhere between 0% and 100% to represent their social connection. Or move to a place along the wall.*
 **Spiritual:** Annie doesn’t go to church anymore. CJ goes to church most of the time, 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 (and disagrees with most of it). 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 to a place along the wall.*

 **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. She sometimes suspects he’s cheating on her, but he says he’s not and that she’s his main girl. How mutual is their commitment?

*Make two “X’s” (one for Annie and one for CJ) somewhere between 0% and 100% to represent their commitment. Or move once to represent Annie and again to represent CJ.*

**Note:** If you are short on time, you can simply ask participants to shout out the percentage of connection after you read each one. Take the median percentage and write in on the flip chart.

**Processing the activity:** Okay, 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 Annie gets pregnant? Are they in a place to make a home, get married, 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 Annie and CJ 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. And it might have something to do with having a good sex life later on.

Read-Aloud: Brad Looking Back

(PP) I’d like to read a quote from a 21-year-old guy named Brad:

Brad Looking Back: “I’m in a relationship right now that is probably the best one I’ve had so far. I’ve had a lot of messed-up relationships in the past. Before asking Chelsea out, I had taken off a couple of years from girls—from dating—to re-examine my priorities. I think that this extended period of reflection helped me recognize the reasons I became attracted to certain types of girls. It helped me figure out what good traits I wanted in women.”
Before re-examining my priorities, I would exclusively pick girls who appeared promiscuous and troubled, just like me. Entering the relationship, I believed that I was there for sex with a “throw-away” girl and would have no trouble dropping her if the relationship got to be trouble or too taxing. What would always happen is that I would feel like I had fallen in love with them and they would manipulate me into a wretched lump—seeing they were better at the mind games. They were generally pretty troubled and had rough childhood experiences, including divorce and sexual abuse. The promiscuity, I’m guessing, was a way to get attention. I picked up on this, not wanting to wait more than one date for the sex, and went for whichever girl seemed to be the fastest way to the bedroom. The sex—a contributing factor was our young, high school age—was almost always disappointing and extremely sketchy. Since I had no good experience to compare it to, I guess I was just there for the points. Happy, normal girls never really caught my eye. I assumed that they were boring, would not wear exciting underwear, and would want me to wait for sex. The memory of my old behavior makes me cringe nowadays.…"

**After reading Brad Looking Back, conclude with:** This guy has given himself time to reflect on his past. He’s taken a break from relationships to focus on his own development and figure out what he really wants and what is important to him. He also admits that the sex in that earlier context was almost always disappointing and extremely sketchy. He’s trying to learn more about what a healthy relationship really is and what intimacy truly means.
SECTION 11.3
Understanding Sexual Regrets

❖ As was mentioned earlier, 60.5% of high school teens have never had sexual intercourse and 47.8% of high school teens report they have had no sexual contact ever (CDC, YRBS 2017).

❖ And, surveys show that the majority of teens who have had sex wish they had waited. So, over half haven’t had sex and the majority who have wish they had waited.

❖ Teens are often told about the health risks of sexually transmitted diseases or pregnancy.

❖ But, there are other emotional and social risks for teens of any gender, identity, or orientation that you hear less about.

❖ Let’s examine four of them.

Some Emotional Risks of Sex-Too-Soon (PP)

1. **The hurt from unmatched expectations.** Sex always carries expectations. One person may expect or assume that the sex means something, like tender and mutual feelings for each other, a relationship, or love. For some, 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. 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’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. It can get complicated even for those who think it’s just “friends with benefits,” no strings attached.

**Activity: Think/Pair/Share**

- **(PP)** Have the group turn to workbook pg. 32 and review the five connections that build intimacy before doing a quick Think/Pair/Share activity.

- Read aloud Ebony’s quote on pg. 32 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 freedoms she gains by sticking to her boundaries.

Read aloud the quotes from Seth, Melanie, and Cassie on pg. 31 of the workbook.

- **Listen to these words from these three young adults.**
Activity: How Connected?

(PP) To apply what they’ve learned on intimacy in relationships, ask teens to turn to How Connected? on pg. 33 of their workbook.

❖ Use this chart to either assess your current or past relationship, or the relationship of someone you know well.

❖ This assessment might answer a nagging doubt about whether your relationship is worth it.

❖ This assessment, whether done for you or for someone you know well, might help you be more aware of what you want and underscore the advantages of deciding to leave sex out of your teen relationships.

❖ Place an “X” somewhere between 0% and 100% to indicate “how connected” on that level of intimacy. Jot down any insights this assessment gave you on the relationship.

SECTION 11.4
Are We on the Same Page?

(PP) This section begins with a short presentation to understand some basics on hormones and sexual arousal patterns.

❖ Let’s talk a little about your body and why it does what it does and how that might affect your relationships and expectations when it comes to physical intimacy.
It might help you understand why partners may not be on the same page about meanings and expectations.

The discussion of hormones is based on research literature, which is mostly focused on those who conform biologically or socially to the stereotypical expressions of male and female.

Some LGBTQ youth may not fit this data as neatly.

- As a reminder, for whatever reasons, LGBTQ youth are at a greater risk than the population of teens as a whole to engage in heterosexual behavior resulting in a pregnancy.
- LGBTQ youth are also at a higher risk for STDs.

So it is important for all youth, regardless of gender, identity, or orientation, to listen, even though every description may not exactly describe everyone’s experience.

Hormones

- What is true for everyone is that testosterone affects sex drive. Males, on average, have higher levels of testosterone, which is the hormone for sexual drive (for both males and females) and aggression. It is especially higher for young males. Females have testosterone, but in smaller amounts, on average.

- Another hormone related to physical intimacy and sex is oxytocin. Oxytocin affects feelings of trust and connection—making us feel close to another. It’s released through affectionate and supportive touch, labor, breast feeding, and sex. It’s often nicknamed the bonding hormone or cuddle hormone.

- Both males and females have increased oxytocin with intimate touch and get a surge of oxytocin when having sex. However, females generally have higher levels of it than males.

- This may be one reason females have a harder time separating their emotions from physical intimacy and sex than males. Females may be more likely to quickly feel connected and trust with intimate touch. Oxytocin lowers your defenses and makes you trust more. The body can’t distinguish whether the person is a casual fling or life-long partner material. Oxytocin is released either way.
Sexual Arousal:

❖ There is a pattern to the changes in the body when you are sexually aroused, turned on, “horny,” etc.

❖ There are changes in heart rate, breathing, and blood pressure; the genitalia engorges with blood (males: the penis, females: the vulva) and lubrication occurs.

❖ This process is very similar for males and females, but there are some key differences.

❖ Time:

• **Males** get turned on fairly easily and the time from the start of arousal to the end (orgasm and ejaculation) for young males is from 30 seconds to 4 minutes.

• **For females**, because the arousal process is not just physical, but also emotional, it can take from 4 to 20 minutes.

• Affection or an emotional connection and intimacy are considered very important to female sexual satisfaction. According to a national survey of adult women, very few said that casual sex was appealing.

Offer some insights about “friends with benefits,” i.e. casual sex:

❖ Females who hook up often have hopes of it evolving into a more serious relationship.

❖ Males and females often differ in their expectations about no-strings-attached sex.

Make these points about the popular culture’s portrayal of sex: (PP)

❖ Sex in our culture is portrayed as no big deal. Well, is it really?

❖ This biological discussion may help you think more deeply about why some partners are not on the same page.

❖ It’s important for you to define the meaning you attach to sex and to not just follow the pop culture.
❖ It’s your heart and your body. Put yourself in charge of making the best decisions to protect your aspirations and goals.

❖ The safest sex—emotionally, socially, and health-wise—takes place in the context of adulthood and a healthy marriage.

❖ Most people don’t develop those deep levels of verbal, social, emotional, spiritual, and trusting intimacy with someone until they are older.

❖ We want you to have good sex someday and the context in which that happens—like when and with whom—makes all the difference in the world.

SECTION 11.5
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 where 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 and less likely to succumb to someone pressuring you.

❖ 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 brief 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 older than you
- Being alone and kissing and touching for long periods of time; listening to sexy music
- Not having talked about your sexual values and boundaries earlier
- Not having an agreement on touch and time alone
- Not having positive reasons in your own mind for waiting on sex
- Not having clear reasons for why you do not want to get or make someone pregnant at this time in your life
- 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 or high on anything.
- Mixing physical intimacy with alcohol or drugs is just dangerous.
Basic pointers to reduce risks of going further than you want: (PP)

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? No touching of sexual parts of the body?

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 amount of time being physical are needed.

Activity: Film and Small Group Discussion

Announce they will watch a short film written by teens about sexual decisions and situations that are challenging. The film will bring to life the points made previously about risky situations. Toothpaste is a short film written by teens from Texas and produced by Hollywood filmmakers from Scenarios USA. It involves two couples—one with a healthy relationship where they are able to talk honestly about their decision to wait on sex. Cristina, on the other hand, has recently fallen for someone and thinks she’s ready to have sex but at the last moment has second thoughts. By that time, she’s in a sticky situation. Unfortunately, she is not prepared to resist his subtle pressures. They have not talked honestly and openly about sexual values, boundaries, or expectations. Play the film.

(PP) Before starting a 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 Love Notes 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.
Divide into pairs or groups of three. Pass out the worksheet on Cristina and Bobby (Resource 11b, pg. 258). 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, the ability to be assertive that comes from knowing your values and boundaries, 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 also 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 the pregnancy 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 don’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, there are couples who get pregnant every year 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.

SECTION 11.6
Set 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. It’s important you define for yourself the meaning you place on deepening levels of physical intimacy.

- 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 Setting Your Line in the workbook, pg. 34, and look at the scale of physical intimacy. (PP)

1. Read over the scale of deepening levels of physical intimacy and then think about where you want to set your line, or where you would like to reset your line if you have gone further than you wanted to.

2. 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. (PP)

3. The third question asks you to describe the benefits for you of staying in the green zone. Then, describe the risks of leaving the green zone. Be as specific as possible about emotional, health, and social benefits or risks.

❖ As you consider setting your line, remember what we learned about love chemicals and how they surge strongly in the early months of a relationship and make it easy to slide into risky situations. It’s also important to remember that…

• 8 out of 10 first-time sexual relationships last six months or less. 4

• People don’t tend to regret waiting on sex, but the majority of teens who have had sex wish they’d waited.

❖ We want you to leave here with an understanding of the importance being deliberate about your personal values, what you want, and setting your line.

❖ Remember, once you move from just friends to romantic interest, it’s important to start talking. The more you are clear in your own head, the more you’ll be able to assert your values and not be pressured.

❖ Ask your parent or trusted adult to read the six (6) connections that build intimacy on pg. 32 of your workbook. Then ask them to read the story of Ebony, pg. 32.

❖ Together, discuss the 6 dimensions of intimacy and the story of Ebony.

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

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


2 Ibid.


4 Ibid.
# Chart a Relationship

Using the six-part intimacy framework, ask teens to place an “X” somewhere between 0% (signifying "not much connection") to 100% ("very strongly connected and on the same page") as you read about each one.

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RESOURCE 11b
Cristina & Bobby—Let’s Analyze

1. What were Cristina’s feelings like 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 about the emotional and social risks, 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 and follow the Success Sequence? ____________________________________________________________
**RESOURCE 11c**

**Trusted Adult Connection—Intimacy & Sexual Decisions**

Ask your parent or trusted adult to read about the connections that build intimacy on pg. 32 of your workbook. Then ask them to read the story of Ebony, pg. 32.

Together, discuss these dimensions of intimacy and the story of Ebony.

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

Signature: ____________________________________________________________

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Together, discuss these dimensions of intimacy and the story of Ebony.

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

Signature: __________________________________________________________________________
Too often people slide into sex without having first defined their values and a context for sex that is meaningful and protective of their aspirations in life. Sex is a big deal emotionally, socially and health-wise. It’s important to consider the long-term consequences for you, your partner and, most importantly, for a child that could result from an unplanned pregnancy.

"When I was younger, I used to engage in casual sex all the time and found no real gratification in it. It was just a physical thing. Now things are totally different. It’s not just about me. I really care about my partner."

~ Seth, 22

"On the topic of sex, I’m starting to understand it more as I get older. I have really changed my views and am quite different about how I choose to be with someone. I wasn’t really happy when I was involved with someone and we were intimate, but I still did it. Now, I can’t even get close to doing that any more, knowing how unhappy it truly made me. I want a real relationship."

~ Melanie, 19

"So many of my friends were pressured to have sex when they didn’t really want to. What I’ve noticed is that people who have sex at 13, 14, and 15 go on to have lots of casual sex. They don’t have any concept of sex as something special. It makes them feel worthless after a while. There’s no real pleasure. They aren’t enjoying it. I know; I’ve been there."

~ Cassie, 18, single mom of a two-year-old child

Did you know?

60.5% of high school age teens have not had sex.

Of those who have, the majority wish they’d waited longer.
Intimacy—
It’s More than a Physical Thing

It takes time to know who you really are, what you want, and to build trust and a healthy relationship. It usually doesn’t happen until your twenties. Sex-too-soon can cloud a person’s ability to see the relationship or other person clearly.

**Verbal:** This connection is about being able to talk. When partners find each other interesting to talk to, when they can share thoughts and feelings freely, they feel close.

**Emotional:** This connection is about feelings for each other that are equally strong and genuine. It’s sharing what’s in your heart. If it feels controlling or conditional, it’s not an emotionally healthy connection. If insecurity or neediness is driving the connection, it’s not healthy.

**Social:** Partners that enjoy their time together doing things they both enjoy feel connected.

**Spiritual:** When couples talk about what’s really important—like their values, what’s influenced their life, or religious, philosophical, moral, and political beliefs—that is spiritual. Talking on this level can make two people feel like soul mates.

**Commitment:** It means putting a partner’s needs on the same level as your own. It’s about thinking like a team. And it’s about a promise of faithfulness and about being there even when it’s not easy or convenient.

**Physical:** Physical intimacy is not all or nothing, but a continuum from holding hands, hugging, kissing, embracing, caressing, and on to more intimate forms of sexual involvement.

“AJ and I started going together junior year. We had lots of fun and could talk about anything. Our relationship was not like the superficial ones around us. After graduation I got the opportunity to travel and work abroad, but AJ didn’t want me to go. I started realizing I wasn’t ready for that level of commitment. I wanted to go to college and travel. Am I ever glad I stuck to my boundaries in high school. It would’ve been so easy to think sex was okay because we had a good relationship. But what if I’d gotten pregnant? And what if we’d taken it to that level? Would I have been too emotionally involved to leave? As it turned out, we broke up two months later. I learned from that experience and left with no regrets.”

Ebony, 20
This chart can help a person look at their relationship reality. Maybe it will help you understand problems of a past relationship. This framework might help you decide how to pace your involvement in a future relationship (or a first) and consider the importance of building connections of intimacy that don’t involve adding sex.

Use a current or past relationship or a relationship of someone you know well. Place a mark in each category where the level of connection falls on the scale. Zero percent is little connection, 100 is a strong connection.

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What insights did this charting exercise give you about the relationship?
Where do you set your line and when, with whom, and under what condition would you move your line? Some people wait till marriage for sex and some do not. It can be hard to keep the line set where you intended. But without a clear boundary line it is much easier to slide and to do sexual things you do not want to and may regret.

This section is meant to help you think about your boundaries, and what meaning you attach to different levels of physical intimacy. The questions on this page and the next can help you think about the benefits or the risks involved with your line. Staying in the green zone is optimal. Moving into the yellow and orange zones puts you in risky situations.

1. **Drawing Lines:**

   Put an “X” on the scale above to indicate where you draw your line, or where you would draw your line if you could do things over. If you are re-setting your line for the future where will it be? Setting a clear line makes it more likely you can hold to that line.

---

**Deepening Levels of Physical Intimacy**

- Hand-holding and hugging
- Gentle kiss on the cheek or lips
- Cuddling
- French-kissing
- Intense, passionate, and prolonged kissing
- Touching breasts and genital areas outside the clothes
- Touching breasts and genitals under the clothes
- Stimulation to orgasm outside the clothes
- Stimulation to orgasm under the clothes
- Oral sex
- Intercourse

---

Have no regrets. Stick to your line or decide to make a change. Anyone can decide to change course.
2. Your Sexual Values:
In thinking about your future, what do you want sex to mean? And what is the right context and timing for sex? How does that relate to your values?

3. Risks and Benefits:
Describe the benefits for you of staying in the green zone. Then describe the risks for someone moving beyond the green zone on the scale.

If you are in a relationship now, have you talked to your partner about your values and line?  

Yes  No