Love Notes - EBP Model, SRA Adaptation

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

Unhealthy relationships, dating violence, and risky sexual behaviors are a serious threat to the well-being and futures of many young people. Love Notes Sexual Risk Avoidance Adaptation – Evidence Based addresses these issues by building skills and knowledge for healthy relationships of all kinds: romantic, friendship, family, school, and work in the context of the Healthy Youth Act of 2017 that set the stage for SRA funding.

In 13 lessons, youth learn more about themselves: how their past has shaped the present and how to make decisions on what they want for their own future. They learn what healthy relationships are and are not while building a set of skills for choosing friends and partners, and for developing and maintaining healthy relationships that do not involve sex, including evidence-based communication and conflict management skills. Parents and family connection activities offer conversation starters on healthy relationships and on the benefits of leaving sex out of their youthful relationships.

The original Love Notes 3.0 (classic) was condensed to 12 hours of key instruction and evaluated in CHAMPS (Creating Healthy Adolescents through Meaningful Prevention Services), a 5-year $4.8 million study through the Kent School of Social Work, University of Louisville. Anita Barbee, Ph.D. was the Principal Investigator.

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Lesson 11 (72 Minutes)

Let’s Talk About Sex

Overview

This curriculum, and in particular, Lessons 11 through 13, represent a unique approach to addressing sexual risk avoidance. Prevention programs often focus on reducing risky behaviors by providing sexual health information on risks and protection, skills, and services. But, many youth lack the motivation to avoid STIs, 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.

Lesson 11 is a “heart-based” approach to sexual decision-making and comes before the sexual health information and planning in Lesson 12. It explores sexual meaning, emotions, and intimacy. It helps youth consider what makes sex positive and affirming. This exploration speaks to young people’s desire for connection, affirmation, respect, and meaning.

This lesson develops a deeper understanding of intimacy and how it may relate to positive sexuality. Intimacy is also used to address the serious issues and risks involved with sharing sensitive issues and sexually explicit images online.

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Through these activities and content, teens 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 are introduced to some important testimonies from youth—some who are sexually experienced and others who are not—that do not normalize teen sexual activity, but encourage sexual delay. Narratives, quotes and two film options (written by teens) are utilized to bring alive real situations and challenges of decision-making.

Finally, 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.

The goal is for youth to cultivate their own North Star for sexuality—to have a vision, to identify a context and timing for sex—that is personally meaningful and protective of their own aspirations. The goal is for youth to take charge and make clear decisions based on what they want and value, rather than simply sliding when it comes to sex and blindly following the current cultural scripts.

In the following Lesson 12, straightforward, medically accurate information is presented on anatomy, bio-reproduction, and STIs and HIV. Youth will develop detailed plans with action steps for their intentions regarding sex.

Lesson 13 will reinforce sexual risk avoidance by exploring the consequences of unplanned pregnancy and non-marital birth through the eyes of a child.

**Goals**

1. To explore some key questions about sex; to learn from other youths’ experiences.
2. To demonstrate a deeper understanding of intimacy and explore how it develops.
3. To examine emotional benefits and risks of their sexual decision-making, including the use of online posting.
4. To demonstrate better understanding of some biological issues related to sex.
5. To view the challenges of other teens faced with decision-making.
6. To engage in sexual decision-making, setting boundaries, and evaluating risks and benefits of where they set their line.

Lesson at a Glance

11.1 **Sex and Sliding** (10 minutes)
   Activities: Discussion: Learning from Other Youths’ Experiences; Dominique’s Decision

11.2 **The Six Parts of Intimacy** (18 minutes)
   Activity: How Connected — Annie and CJ

11.3 **Understanding Sexual Regrets** (14 minutes)
   Activities: Discussion: Benefits of Deciding, Not Sliding; Discussion: Sharing Online, Sexting, & Sexually Explicit Images

11.4 **Are We on the Same Page?** (5 minutes)
   Activity: Body Basics that Relate to Sex

11.5 **Risky Situations for Sex** (20 minutes)
   Activity: Video and discussion: All Falls Down or Toothpaste

11.6 **Set Your Personal Line** (5 minutes)
   Activity: Setting Your Line

**Trusted Adult Connection**
Resources:
11a. *Chart a Relationship* worksheet (pg. 257 in the LN SRA 3.0 Manual; duplicate, one per person)

Materials:
- Lesson 11 PowerPoint slideshow is a digital download that comes with the curriculum. Easy-to-follow download directions are found at DibbleInstitute.org/LNEBPSRA2.
- *Love Notes* Question Box

Workbook Applications:
- *Intimacy—It’s More than a Physical Thing* (pg. 32)
- *How Connected?* (pg. 33)
- *Setting Your Line* (pgs. 34–35)
SECTION 11.1
Sex and Sliding

(PP) Introducing the lesson to the youth:

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

  • As you know, sliding can lead to 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.

❖ Have you ever asked yourself or talked with friends about the following questions?

  • What makes sex beautiful and affirming? Does it depend on physical attraction, body shapes and sizes, and techniques, or does it involve something much deeper?

  • Do you think the context in which sex takes place matters? (For example, with whom, when, or the kind of relationship it is.)

❖ We’ll explore these questions today.

  • You’ll be considering what you’d want any level of physical intimacy to mean—from holding hands or a kiss, on to deeper levels of physical intimacy.

  • We’ll start by looking at what happens when two people get involved but are not on the same page.
Instructor Note: No need for much discussion. Just pose these questions and ask the group to keep these in mind during the lesson. There will be more discussion opportunities in the lesson.

❖ Let’s start with this question: Are we on the same page?

• (PP) Think about the teens and young adults around you, in your community, who have had or who are having sex. You can think of guy/girl relationships or partners of any identity or sexual orientation.

• What do you think? Are they always on the same page regarding what having sex means to each of them?

• Do they always have the same intentions? Similar feelings for each other?

• Same expectations? What they want out of sex?

Pause for brief responses. Caution: The group is not to use names!

❖ So, what are the risks (think about feelings, emotions) when two people aren’t on the same page regarding the meaning of getting physical—and not just sexual intercourse, but things like kissing and affectionate caressing?

• Remember when we did the Relationship Pyramid? Sex always carries expectations. How often do two people having sex have different expectations—two different ideas about what it means?

❖ Someone once said this about sex: “Think before you let it go.”

• That might be a good idea, but in reality, how many people actually talk to see if they are on the same page regarding what getting sexual means before they “let it go”?

• How many talk about what’s in their heart and what they want deepening levels of physical intimacy to mean?
Sex can happen awfully fast in relationships today. Sex can begin before two people barely even know each other.

It can provide a shaky and risky foundation for a relationship, as you see in the image.

Here’s some food for thought:

- In national surveys, the majority of sexually experienced teens say they wish they had waited longer.
- Maybe sex didn’t turn out as they had imagined or meant less than what they had expected.
- Maybe they thought that sex meant there were feelings—that there’d be a relationship.
- For many, sex can create drama and make things more complicated.

Let’s hear some statements collected from young people themselves.

(PP) Read aloud these real experiences:

A teen mom: “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.”

Seth, 22: “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.”

Melanie, 19: “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 sexually intimate, but I still did it. Now, I can’t even get close to doing that anymore, knowing how unhappy it truly made me.”
Did you know? 60.5% of high-school-age teens have not had sex. And, of those who have, the majority wish they’d waited longer. 47.8% of high-school-age teens report they have had no sexual contact ever. (CDC, YRBS 2017)

Dominique’s Decision

(PP) Instructor Note: This short MTV clip (2:30 mins.) portrays a young woman who has decided to wait on sex. Dominique’s segment starts at 0:46 mins. and goes to 3:08 mins.

Let’s listen to Dominique talk about her choice and her life.

After viewing, ask the following:

Did Dominique seem like a happy person?

What if more people talked about the benefits—the positives—that come out of enjoying one’s teen relationships without adding sex?

Dominique is free to have fun, to date, to learn more about herself, others, and what she wants in a partner and relationship.

She’s also giving herself time to mature and to find out if a person is truly worthy of her love.
SECTION 11.2
The Six Parts of Intimacy

What Is Intimacy?

❖ (PP) As was mentioned, 60.5% of high-school-age teens have not had sex. And, of those who have, the majority wish they’d waited. What are we to make of that? Sex is supposed to be wonderful.

❖ Let’s examine the word “intimacy.” Maybe it can shed light on why many teens who’ve had sex wish they had waited longer.

❖ When we hear the word, intimacy, we often think physical, as in, “They’re intimate; they’re having sex.” But friends (like the girls in this image) can be intimate with each other as good friends. And romantic partners can be intimate without having sex.

❖ Intimacy is so much more than a sexual thing. It’s about being close and connected in a number of ways. You can be intimate with a family member or a close friend or a partner. Physical intimacy is one part of intimacy, but it’s not the only part.

- For our discussion today, intimacy may have a lot to do with good relationships and good sex.

- Let’s look at the kinds of connections that relate to intimacy for a couple.
(PP) Read aloud the descriptions of the six dimensions of intimacy. More information is found in the LN SRA 3.0 Manual (pgs. 238–239).

❖ **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)

❖ **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. (Key word: True 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, Faithful, Mutual Giving)

❖ **Physical**: 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 on the cheek, to French kissing, increasing physical affection, caressing, greater sexual touch, on to intercourse.
(PP) When you finish reading the descriptions, read this quote:

“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: Let’s Analyze a Relationship

For this activity, you can either pass out Resource 11a, Chart a Relationship (pg. 257 in the LN SRA 3.0 Manual), or use the alternative movement activity with wall signs described on the next page. If using movement, put up three signs spaced along a wall with a 0%, a 50%, and a 100% and have students gather along that wall.

❖ (PP) I’m going to read a description of a relationship between Annie and CJ. They have a boy/girl relationship, but it can apply to a couple of any identity or orientation. (Feel free to change names and genders.)

❖ I want you to think about how connected they are (i.e., on the same page) on each of the six kinds of intimacy. Make a check mark between 0% (no connection) and 100% (very strongly connected) (if using the worksheet).

If using the movement activity, have the group stand up along the wall and move to a percentage place between 0% and 100% after you read each description.

❖ Physical: Annie and CJ got sexually involved almost from the start. A lot of their time together is focused on sex.
• Make a check mark on your chart indicating how connected they are physically. Or move along the wall.

❖ **Verbal:** Annie and CJ hardly talk at length about anything important. She 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.

• Make a check mark indicating how connected they are verbally. Or move.

❖ **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.

• Make a check mark indicating how connected they are emotionally. Or move.

❖ **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.

• Make a check mark indicating how connected they are socially. Or move.

❖ **Spiritual:** Annie tends to think a lot about the meaning of things. She likes to talk about serious things like whether God exists, what happens when you die, or whether certain things are morally right or wrong. CJ makes fun of her serious side and her interest in talking about ideas and beliefs (and disagrees with most of them). He knows what he believes and would rather not have debates. CJ goes to church, especially on holidays, and believes that it’s important. He would have his children baptized and brought up in the church.

• Make a check mark indicating how connected they are spiritually. 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. She takes him to school, covers for him when he doesn’t go, and gets applications for him for the community college. She suspects (more than one person has told her) he’s cheating on her, but he says he’s not and that she’s his main girl.

- **Make two check marks** on your chart—one for Annie and one for CJ—to indicate each person’s level of commitment. Or move once for Annie and again for CJ.

(PP) **Now I have some questions.**

Read each question off the slide and pause after each one for a group shout-out of “Yes” or “No.”

Debrief:

- We could conclude they don’t have much intimacy. Physical, yes, but not much on other levels.
- 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 help you make important relationship and sexual decisions.

**Workbook: How Connected?**

(PP) **We encourage you to complete this exercise (pg. 33) after the program, when you take home your workbooks.**

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.
Ebony’s Experience

(PP) Read aloud Ebony’s experience on pg. 32 of the workbook.

Briefly ask the group what they think of her decision.

❖ What freedoms did she gain?

Conclude with these points:

❖ An important point is that while Ebony describes a healthy relationship with AJ, with many healthy connections of intimacy, 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 gained by sticking to her boundaries.

SECTION 11.3
Understanding Sexual Regrets

❖ (PP) You’ve all heard about the health risks of sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. But there are other emotional and social risks of sex-too-soon that can affect anyone of any gender, identity, or orientation. We don’t hear much about those.
Let’s examine four of them:

1. **Hurt from unmatched expectations.** Sex always creates expectations. One person may expect or assume that sex means something while the other does not. It can hurt to find out you were not on the same page. How many people have deep discussions 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. This in turn can lead to more wondering about the real feelings and intentions of the other person.
   - One may pressure 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. **It takes over.** Sex can become the major focus. It’s mainly planning opportunities for sex instead of doing fun things and enjoying time together.

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.”

**Benefits of Deciding, Not Sliding**

- **(PP)** Adult men and women who said they use sex as an expression of love reported a greater level of sexual satisfaction than others in a large national survey. This may likely apply to many, regardless of gender, identity, or sexual orientation.

**Emotional Benefits of Deciding vs. Sliding**

- Using sex to express love may give people more sexual satisfaction regardless of gender, identity, or sexual orientation.
- Three hypotheses why married couples, on average, report greater sexual satisfaction:
  1. The power of love
  2. Exclusivity
  3. Greater proximity, practice, and time
Also, demographic analysis has shown that married couples reported higher levels of emotional and physical satisfaction with sex, on average, when compared to singles or partners living together.

Here are three hypotheses for why this may be:

1. **The power of love:** A shifting of the focus from self-gratification to a focus on the other person may positively affect the experience. Couples who use sex as a symbol and expression of love and commitment may get more out of sex.

2. **Exclusivity:** By committing to one person, partners close off their options and invest more in their sexual relationship—putting more energy into figuring out how to please and pleasure each other; this builds more trust and safety.

3. **Greater proximity, practice, and time** to learn to please and pleasure each other and the motivation and commitment to do so.

Conclude:

- *It is for you to decide the context and timing for sex. But for sure, making clear decisions versus just sliding carries benefits.*

**Instructor Note:** Be sure to explain what “on average” means. Marriage doesn’t ensure sexual satisfaction and, indeed, not all married couples are having great sex. Still, this is an interesting finding for youth to reflect upon as they consider a context and timing for sex. (Sources: CDC on health benefits of marriage; hypotheses put forth by University of Chicago demographer, Linda Waite, in The Case for Marriage.)

**Sharing Online, Sexting, & Sexually Explicit Images**

- *(PP) There are other kinds of social and emotional risks growing today that we should discuss.*

- In a deepening and developing relationship, there is gradually more sharing of private feelings, thoughts, emotions, and experiences. This builds intimacy.
❖ But some of what you might share with a partner might be sensitive or confidential—about yourself, your past experiences.

❖ What if you share too quickly through your texts, Snaps, Instagrams, Tweets, etc. and then find out your friend or partner shares stuff you don’t want others seeing or knowing?

• Remember, it takes time to know if a person is trustworthy or worthy of your love. It also takes maturity to make ethical and wise decisions about information given to you.

❖ But the risks greatly increase if you post sexually explicit images on social media.

• We know that many teens pass on sexts to others they are not meant for.

• Absolutely nothing texted or posted online is guaranteed to stay private. And that is why the risks of sharing online are greater, because they may not stay private.

• And, even if you trust your partner now, what might happen if you break up and they want to get back at you?

Instructor Note: See the SAL, Technology and Social Media, in the Appendix of the LN SRA 3.0 Manual for greater background information, data, and sources. Also, at the end of the SAL, see the two optional handouts Resource C, Social Media and Privacy—Myths and Realities (pg. 379), and Resource D, Risks—Social, Emotional, and Legal (pg. 380).

❖ (PP) Privacy is a total myth. Once you hit send, snap, shoot, or film it, you lose control.

• Whatever you send can be forwarded, copied, pasted, altered, tagged, or used by people you don’t even know.

• Snapchat gives the illusion that it will disappear. But it only takes a few minutes on Google to find hacks or info to take screenshots or save images or video without the sender knowing.

• Some people try to blur faces in sexually explicit images, but there is reverse technology to unblur images.
• Tweets, Instagram, and screenshots can all be traced back to a location and device.

❖ (PP) Many people believe they can trust a friend or partner not to share what’s sent to them, but we know that teens have forwarded sexually explicit messages and images to others.

• Reputations get ruined, people get humiliated and bullied.

• It causes emotional harm, depression, and even suicide for some who have had their private lives go viral.

• Even if you trust a partner now, what if you break up and they want to get back at you?

❖ There are serious legal issues with sexually explicit images.

• Under new laws in many states, a person found guilty of sextortion can be sentenced up to 10 years in prison with a $10,000 fine.

• If the person is younger than 16, you could be charged with possessing or distributing child pornography.

• This can land a person with criminal charges and on the sexual offender registry for life.

• Anything online about you is part of your permanent online history for years to come. It has come back to haunt people later on.

❖ The bottom line is that today, millions of sexually explicit images are grabbed for pornography sites. Once on the Internet, they will be there forever.
SECTION 11.4
Are We on the Same Page?

This section explores some basic biology as it may relate to sex.

Body Basics that Relate to Sex

❖ (PP) 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.

❖ This discussion of hormones and sexual arousal is based on the research literature, which is mostly focused on those assigned male or female at birth. Trans, gender-fluid, and questioning youth may not fit this data as neatly. Take from this discussion whatever you find relevant. And all are encouraged to help us understand how your experience differs.

Hormones:

❖ What is true for everyone is that testosterone affects sex drive. Oxytocin is released through touch and sex and increases trust and attachment.

- Males, on average, have higher levels of testosterone, which is the hormone for sexual drive and aggression (for both males and females). Females have testosterone, but in smaller amounts, on average. It varies by person, but on average, young males have much more.

- Oxytocin is a hormone related to physical intimacy and sex. Oxytocin affects feelings of trust and connection—it makes 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.
• **Females** generally have higher levels of **oxytocin** than males. Females get a surge of oxytocin after having sex. This may be one reason females have a harder time separating their emotions from sex. Oxytocin makes you trust. The body can’t distinguish whether the person is a casual fling or serious partner material, a wonderful person or a louse. Oxytocin is released either way with intimate touch.

**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, blood pressure, and lubrication. This process is very similar for males and females, but there are some key differences.

❖ Time is one difference, i.e., the time it takes from the start of arousal to orgasm.

• **For females**, because arousal is not just physical but involves her mind and emotions, it can take, on average, **5 to 20 minutes**. See the purple line (Orgasm is not always achieved—arousal can collapse.)

• **Young males** can get turned on fairly easily and the time from the start of arousal to orgasm for **young males**, on average, is from **30 seconds to 4 minutes**. (Point to the fast line up and down in the diagram.)

❖ **Affection, emotional connection, and intimacy are important, especially to many females.** According to a national survey of adult women, very few said casual sex was appealing.

❖ This biological discussion may shed light on why so many sexually experienced teens wish they’d waited.

❖ **(PP) Safe sex should mean more than protection from STIs.** Sex should be physically and emotionally safe as well as protective of ones’ aspirations.
Sex in our culture is portrayed as no big deal. Well, is it?

- It's important for you to define the meaning you attach to sex and 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 desires, aspirations, and goals.

The safest sex is more likely to take place in the context of adulthood and a healthy marriage. We want you to have good sex someday and the context in which that happens—like when and with whom—makes a difference.

SECTION 11.5
Risk situations for sex

Instructor Note: Choose either All Falls Down in its entirety (12 minutes if stopped at the end of the film before the credits), or Toothpaste (14:40 minutes if stopped at the end before the credits, or there is an optional slide at the end of the slideshow with directions for playing and discussing a 9-minute segment). Preview both films and decide which one fits your audience better.

(P) Show All Falls Down and process it using these prompts:

1. Do you think the girls intended to have sex with the guys when they went home with them? (Listen first. Neither girl seemed like she consciously chose to go home with the guy to have sex.)

2. At what point could each of the girls have done something differently to prevent sliding into sex? (Listen first. Getting to know others in a group setting, like the mall,
rather than alone playing video games; awareness of the “love chemicals”; the 7 Principles; the impact of alcohol on decision-making; knowing that when drunk, consent is impossible; etc.)

3. **What do you think of the other relationship (the one where the couple was moving slowly)? Do you think this kind of relationship is possible? Realistic? What is positive about this type of relationship?** (Listen.)

4. **Let’s talk about the boys. Did you hear any of them say sexist, double-standard things (e.g., “You can’t make a wife out of a ho,” etc.)? Should they have called him out? Some say if you stay silent, then you are part of the problem. What about the boy who gave the girl alcohol? Is that manipulation? A form of coercion?**

**(PP) Show Toothpaste and process it with these prompts:**

❖ **Both girls have second thoughts in the bedrooms. Jennifer and Carlos are able to talk and agree to continue waiting. Cristina, on the other hand, says to Bobby she’s not ready, but she is not prepared to resist Bobby’s pressures.**

1. **What have you learned from Love Notes so far that might have helped Cristina? What would have helped her better navigate her attraction to Bobby? Let’s brainstorm.** (knowing about the love chemicals, identifying qualities important to her in a partner and relationship, the 7 Principles, answering the three questions about healthy relationships, awareness of red flags, the six parts of intimacy, and being able to communicate confidently about sexual values, boundaries, and relationship expectations)

2. **Cristina could have insisted on using a condom and she had one in her purse downstairs. Why didn’t she go get it?** *(Note: This is a great opportunity to talk about emotional pressure and maturity. Bobby was pressuring her, playing on her insecurities, and she was not confident enough to assert herself. Also, Cristina knew little about what makes a really healthy relationship and how it takes time to develop. Did she communicate to Bobby what physical intimacy meant to her? Did she even know if she and Bobby were on the same page regarding what deepening levels of physical intimacy means to each of them?)*
3. Is it just a girl’s responsibility for how things go? What from Love Notes would have helped Bobby be a young man of character? What could he learn from Love Notes that would enable him to have a healthy, respectful relationship? (Listen.) (Principle 6—no pressuring, three questions for healthy relationships, the relationship pyramid)

4. Sketch out how you think the pregnancy will affect each of their lives. Play out his subsequent life and hers. (Ask for their hunches.)

5. Let’s say she had gotten the condom and not gotten pregnant. Would all have been good with her heart? Was this the relationship and treatment she envisioned with Bobby? Recall how he treated her later.

6. Now let’s think about all these questions from the angle of an LGBTQ couple. How can the same dynamics play out?

An important point to bring home on Toothpaste and the relationship of Jennifer and Carlos:

❖ Loving and trusting each other (like Jennifer and Carlos) and using a condom does not ensure you don’t end up with a pregnancy. Do you think Jen and Carlos are ready to be parents? They are still in high school. The only 100% effective way for them to prevent a pregnancy is 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 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.

At the end of the film and discussion (whichever film you use), say: “We are going to talk about how to set up a way for you to pace and plan, decide instead of slide, and take control of your love life and your future.”
SECTION 11.6
Set Your Personal Line

Introduce this section:

❖ (PP) It’s important you define for yourself the meaning you place on deepening levels of physical intimacy.

❖ Knowing how to communicate with a partner regarding boundaries and making plans to follow through on your sexual choices is really, really important.

❖ As is doing so before you start becoming physically affectionate.

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

Activity: Setting Your Line

❖ Please open your workbooks to pg. 34.

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

Pause for the youth to complete this.

❖ (PP) On pg. 35, there are two more questions. Number two asks how your line fits with your values—the meaning you attach to each level of physical intimacy. It asks you to consider under what conditions, when, and with whom you would ever move your line.
The third question asks you to describe the benefits of staying in the green zone for your life and the risks of leaving the green zone. Be as specific as possible in identifying emotional, health, and social benefits and risks.

Conclude:

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. Also, remember the 3-6-9-month tip for making relationship decisions.

- Note that 8 out of 10 first-time sexual relationships last six months or less.
- And people don’t tend to regret waiting on sex; but the majority of teens who have had sex say they wish they had waited.

We want you to leave here with an understanding of the importance of being deliberate about your personal values, what you want, where you set your line, and how you want to pace things—now or next time.

- Remember, 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.

**Trusted Adult Connection**

(PP) Read the instructions. Print out this slide or copy and paste the instructions so two will fit on a paper you can cut in half to distribute to the youth for the TAC. Add a signature line at the bottom for the youth to return for credit.