

# *Unit Design*

## **Theme**

Making Safer Choices

## **Driving Questions**

What are the risk factors for AIDS, other STDs, and pregnancy?

How do I say no to risky behavior without alienating my friends?

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

It is required by the State of Michigan that students are taught about HIV and AIDS and their prevention in every school building at least once. I learned about this at a conference, but it is not in the Michigan Curriculum Framework, so I am unsure of the exact wording.

## **Lesson Sequence**

Day 1: NOT Everybody's Having Sex!

- Why Young People Choose to Have or Not Have Sex -- a "think/group/share" discussion
- Expressing Affection -- on anonymous note cards students describe how they show affection without sex, these are collected, shuffled, and read by the teacher to the class
- HOMEWORK--Then and Now -- talk about dating with your parents (several given questions plus one of the student's)

Day 2: The Safest Choice: Deciding NOT to have sex

- Correcting Misperceptions of the Norm -- an interactive lecture including review of reasons given yesterday
- Effective NO Statements -- Role playing saying NO effectively in groups of three (pressurer, resister, observer)

Day 3: Saying NO to Having Sex

- Review of Clear NO Statements -- a recitation on the method of giving a clear NO statement that was learned yesterday (Say NO, Use Tone, Use Body Language, Repeat NO)
- More Ways to Say NO -- an interactive lecture on alternative actions and delay tactics followed by several role play

Day 4: Understanding STDs and HIV

- \*STD Posters -- an interactive lecture and in class worksheet on the differences and similarities of different STDs (ask students how they might model this to set up for inquiry-type activity on the next day) (\* means lesson written up)
- \*HOMEWORK--Calling a Hotline -- students go home and call an HIV or STDs hotline and ask a question and get an answer

Day 5: Examining the Risk of Unsafe Choices

- Review Homework -- an interactive discussion on the "Then and Now" and "Hotline" homework assignments
- \*HIV Risk: students model disease propagation (there are many ways to do this, and if there are good ideas which are close enough to what is approved I would like to do this as an inquiry based lesson but I realize there may be issues)
- \*Dealing with Pregnancy -- worksheet

Day 6: Teens with HIV: A Reality

- A teen with HIV comes in to tell their story. I learned

there is a number where teachers can get such teens.

Day 7: Practicing the SAFEST Choice

- Refusal Skills Review -- more role playing, but students also have to write out for each line 1) a clear NO statement, 2) an alternative action and 3) a delaying statement or action

- HOMEWORK: What do YOU think? -- an in class worksheet followed by a take home worksheet (students write about what not having sex means to them, what they think about having sex, and what they think their parents think about having sex; their parents write what they think about having sex; and then the students compare with their parents)

Day 8: Using Protection -- Part 1

- Methods of protection -- an interactive lecture

- UNSAFE, SAFER, SAFEST -- I will do this as a group assignment of many cards, each group getting a few and organizing them, and then we will discuss the correct answers as a group. This gives students an anonymous way to see how they did and discuss.

- HOMEWORK: Researching Methods of Protection -- students go to a store and research how to buy protection

Day 9: Using Protection -- Part 2

- Condom Demonstration -- a demonstration of how to use a condom followed by a lab where each student puts one on (a banana, etc., not themselves!)

- Condom Negotiation Role plays -- a discussion of reasons people might give for not wanting to use a condom followed by ways to counter those excuses; role plays follow for the rest of the period

Day 10: Knowing what you can do

- Review of Homework and Closure -- discuss what you can do

## **Assessment**

There are four homework assignments on which they will be assessed.

## **Rationale**

Assessment -- My CT has stressed to me that grades are due at the end of the last class in this unit and it is clear to me that we will have other things to grade during these two weeks. She always gives the students a folder for this unit and then checks to make sure they did it for a grade. I am expected to grade this unit the same way, and so I will. I feel it is important to choose my battles.

Scope & Sequence -- The *Safer Choices* curriculum has been approved by the CDC as a curriculum which reduces the occurrence of students making risky choices with regard to HIV/AIDS, pregnancy and STDs. Many of the activities are ones which I have done before, which my CT is planning on doing anyway, and hopefully most of which already have prior approval.

What I am pushing for this year is approval to use this curriculum when I teach sex ed. It has good coverage of STDs and methods of protection, and focuses on refusal skills. I really like the way the other concepts are embedded in learning more and more about refusal skills. This does two things. First it keeps reminding the students of the situations they may find themselves and how these situations could have very important, life long consequences. Breaking up the refusal skills role play with the

important information on diseases and pregnancy helps keep them focused on learning the refusal skills as they realize the dire consequences of not learning them.

I have modified it in a few ways (I am not happy with the way the propagation of a virus is modeled,<sup>1</sup> for instance, so I am making that an inquiry lab and hoping the students come up with some better ideas on how to do it (which I can use in the future even if they aren't allowed this year); I have alternative cards for the "UNSAFE, SAFER, and SAFEST" activity;<sup>2</sup> and I am bringing in a speaker instead of showing a video about people living with AIDS).<sup>3</sup>

Mostly, however, my goal is to stick very close to the curriculum because it is CDC approved and also because it will be easier to get approval for it if I agree to stick to it.

Why did I choose the learning objectives that I did? -- They are required topics in the eighth grade science curriculum. They are also important life skills for my students.

Why are these important for students to engage with? -- Because AIDS kills, and pregnancy can make their lives much more

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<sup>1</sup> The demonstration given in the main section of the book doesn't take into account the fact that someone can only pass on a disease if they acquired it beforehand. This results in the disease spreading more quickly (since it can do so retroactively), and students may notice this. I feel the disease will spread fast enough otherwise. The alternative method given in the appendix is using a base and water and a pH test determines if you are infected. I also find this method unsatisfactory because it disguises the chain along which the disease is passed.

<sup>2</sup> At the conference, we did this activity with a very large number of cards. Each group was given cards (similar to the 10 cards given according to the book), but each group had different cards. Groups were instructed to put their cards in order from safest to least safe on the back wall. This meant that when corrections were made, groups knew if a corrected card was placed there by their group or not, but if it was placed there by a different group they didn't know who had gotten it wrong. I like this philosophy a lot. Finally, I do NOT plan on giving "hope" as a method (albeit unsafe) of birth control/STD prevention as the book does. I understand their point that some people hope it won't happen to them and that this is not a way to stop AIDS, but I also agree with the person at the conference who noted that students may tune in and out and godforbid they turn in and look at the board where hope is being written as a method of birth control.

<sup>3</sup> I feel this will be even more effective, and it is even given as an alternate activity in the book.

How did I contextualize student learning? -- The role plays, I feel, really contextualize the learning of refusal skills. I feel the come-ons are situations and that all of my students will face sooner or later, and the lines are ones my students may have already heard. I feel learning about AIDS and pregnancy in the context of these role plays makes them more real for the students.

How did I make use of inquiry? -- I am using inquiry to generate more ideas to make a better demonstration of contagion.

How did I make use of students' prior experience and knowledge? -- As always, I conduct my lectures in a very interactive fashion which encourages students to teach each other what some of them already know. In addition, they are brainstorming reasons for and against having sex, and this helps them to realize that we, the teachers, are not just telling them they can't have adult fun, but are looking to keep them safe. Brainstorming about intimacy helps them realize that there are alternatives that they already know about and may already be using.

## *References*

Fetro, J., Barth, R., & Coyle, K. (1998). *Safer choices level 1: Preventing HIV, other STD and pregnancy*. Santa Cruz: ETR Associates.