



# Sexual Health Education Instructional Materials Review

## Choosing the Best Journey

**Year Published:** 2009

**Publisher:** Choosing the Best Publishing, LLC

**Website:** [www.choosingthebest.com](http://www.choosingthebest.com)

**Full or Supplemental:** Full

**Grade Level:** 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> grades

**Student Population:** General

**Duration/Number of Lessons:** 8 lessons, 50 minutes each

**Evidence-Based - CDC or HHS/OAH registry; National Campaign database; ETR database:** Publisher indicates curriculum is “evidence-based”; curriculum not found on national registries

**Healthy Youth Act Compliance:** No (see ratings and reviewer comments)

**AIDS Omnibus Act Compliance:** No (see ratings and reviewer comments)

**National Standards Alignment:** No

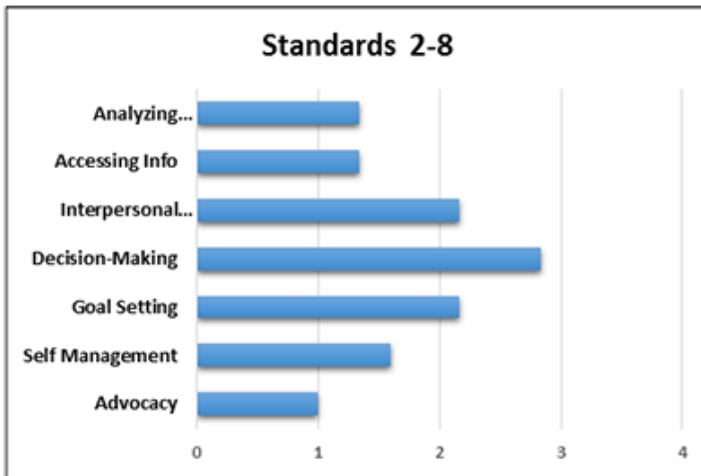
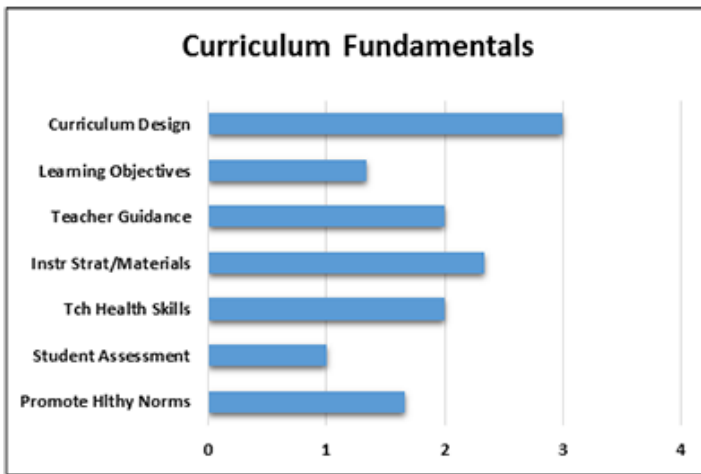
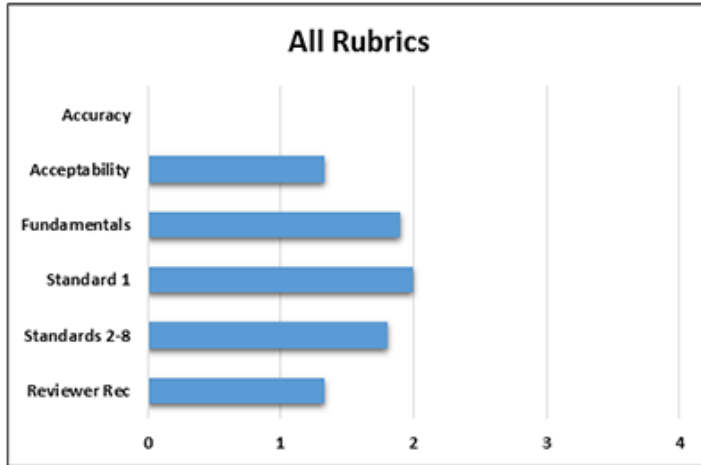
**Format and Features:** Leader Kit includes leader guide, student manual, DVDs, posters

**Professional Development:** Available, not required

### PRIMARY TOPICAL AREAS

- Anatomy and Physiology
- Puberty/Adolescent Development
- Pregnancy & Reproduction
- Contraception
- Abstinence
- STD Prevention
- HIV Prevention
- Identity/Orientation
- Healthy relationships
- Other
  - Abortion
  - Access to Services
  - Character Building
  - Condom Use
  - Human Rights
  - Infant Care Simulation
  - Marriage and Parenthood
  - Refusal Skills
  - Sex Trafficking

## OVERALL RATINGS



## REVIEWERS' COMMENTS

### Review 1

#### Reviewer ID 11

The materials in the curriculum are too simplistic for high school students including language, graphics, level of thinking and assessment. Even younger students are asked today to think at a higher level than the curriculum questions in this curriculum. Time for lessons on STD's and safe sex are not sufficient. Some of the lessons about communication and decision making would be good to incorporate into a much more comprehensive and rigorous curriculum.

### Review 2

#### Reviewer ID 16

Choosing the Best is an abstinence focused curriculum that teaches primarily to the heterosexual relationship. The strength of this curriculum is in addressing how to build healthy relationships and really evaluate one's personal beliefs and goals when looking at dating and relationships in general. In focusing on abstinence, I found this curriculum to provide a variety of instructional activities that evaluated a many aspects to consider when developing a relationship. It addressed social media issues, conflicts that develop within a relationship, aspects of identifying an abusive relationship, communication styles, goal setting, aspects of a healthy relationship, and risks associated with being sexually active which further promoted abstinence. This was the strength of this curriculum by far. The student and teacher resources were very easy to follow and included additional teaching points to deepen the knowledge of many aspects of the lessons addressed. The DVD material was current with the trends that students could easily identify with and showed cultural diversity, but did not represent any orientation outside of the heterosexual relationship.

As a public school teacher, we cannot teach abstinence only education or only reference curriculum that identifies only the heterosexual population. In order to use this curriculum, I would have to do a lot of supplemental work in order to serve students that were not choosing abstinence as their primary choice, teach to students outside of the heterosexual population and build a tolerance to others differences. I found the STD lessons, preventative measures within the use of birth control and how to obtain and correct use, and general information presented in both levels to be outdated material, so in order to use the foundation of these lessons and remain medically accurate, you would have to update these materials on your own as well. Since abstinence was the primary focus, teaching preventative measures along with how to seek out medical treatment and STD testing was not included as a part of the materials. Preventative measures were provided on a very basic level and really enforced the failure rates of some forms of birth control, enforcing the abstinence based approach.

I found many aspects useful within this curriculum: the strength on goal setting, communication, and setting a healthy foundation of building a relationship outside of sex but for me, the gap in providing a comprehensive sexual education program to the student who does not choose to remain abstinent or did not identify with the heterosexual relationship was lacking, but again was not the primary focus on this curriculum. You could easily use all of these lessons to teach the healthy aspects of building any relationship but the gender and sexual orientation references would have to be changed throughout and could still promote abstinence for all students.



## Review 3

### Review ID 17

This curriculum is written only with heterosexual students in mind. It repeatedly says "opposite sex" (how about "other sex"?) and completely ignores all other relationships and couples. Even the idea of a "soulmate" is controversial and not a universal belief. Throughout, the view is that males and females are completely unlike, and they are the only couples that exist. Footnotes and notations are often incorrect or missing. Unfounded statements are written as factual, such as the following: "It takes more sexual activity each time to get back to the same level of excitement." Marriage is referred to often, with pictures of a white man and woman in traditional wedding attire. Headings say things like: "Cohabiting: Sex without strings, relationships without rings." There is an overriding view that men and women are truly OPPOSITE. The "Marriage Survival Kit" includes 2 books: "What Husbands Wish Wives Knew About Men" and "What Wives Wish Husbands Knew About Women."

The STD slide section is just awful and needs to be deleted. The quality of photos is very poor, and there is no point to it at all except to get students to "ewww" and "iiiick" about the slimy, bloody, out-of-focus photos.

There is only one choice given respect in the curriculum and that is abstinence. Everything else is denigrated. There is a lot of discussion that "once you give away your virginity you can't get it back." Where does that leave the large numbers of youth who have been sexually abused and molested?

I would never use this curriculum in the classroom. It is very judgmental, and leaves out large numbers of students who don't fit the writer's model of relationships. It repeatedly refers to "abstinence until marriage" which leaves out all gay and lesbian couples for life, in the states that still have not legalized same gender marriage.

