

# Comprehensive Sexual Health Education Instructional Materials Review 2024

## Be Real. Be Ready

**Year Published/Revised:** 2019

**Publisher:** Adolescent Health Working Group (AHWG)

**Website:** [Be Real. Be Ready. – Adolescent Health Working Group \(ahwg.org\)](https://www.ahwg.org)

**Full or Supplemental:** Full

**Grade Level:** 9 - 12

**Student Population:** General

**Duration/Number of Lessons:** 26 lessons

**Format and Features:** Digital lessons can be downloaded and printed

**Materials Provide Support for online or in-person learning:** Intended for in-person learning

**Available in Multiple Languages:** No

**Evidence-based/informed:** Evidence-informed

**National Standards Alignment:** No (aligned with California Health Standards)

**Consistent with WA Health Education Standards?** Yes

**Consistent with Comprehensive Sexual Health Education Law?** Yes

**Consistent with AIDS Omnibus Act?** Yes

**Inclusive Materials/Strategies:** Yes

**Bias-Free Materials:** Yes



## Primary Subject Areas and Topics Covered:

- Anatomy and Physiology, Reproduction, and Pregnancy (Pregnancy for Grade 6+)
- Growth and Development/Puberty
- Self-Identity (gender stereotypes, gender identity, sexual orientation, etc.)
- Prevention (general):
  - HIV/AIDS Prevention
  - Pregnancy Prevention
  - STD Prevention
  - Health Care and Prevention Resources
- Healthy Relationships (general):
  - Affirmative Consent
  - Bystander Training
  - Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Communication Skills for Healthy Relationships
  - The development of meaningful relationships and avoidance of exploitative relationships
  - Understanding the influences of family, peers, community, and the media throughout life on healthy sexual relationships

## Reviewer Comments:

### Reviewer 352

From beginning to end, this curriculum stands out in its focus on “connecting students to health services in their community.” It also equips its users to challenge harmful stereotypes and norms around gender and sexual orientation. The content is comprehensive, flows well, and emphasizes interactive and experiential activities that help students produce knowledge/skills.

It is an overall strong material but needs adapting, which could be a barrier for educators. It was designed for San Francisco schools and several lessons rely on prior coordination with CBOs, guest speakers, and clinics. Those valuable activities could be hard to replicate (WA educators also need to replace information with local resources).

It requires purchasing a video (Straight-Laced)—I could not review the video, but it feels important to do so as it is used throughout several lessons. Judging from the descriptions and trailers, it might be slightly outdated. That said, the video seems promising in that it interviews real young people documentary-style. A few lessons could also be updated to be more contemporary and to reduce signs of bias. With all the time spent on gender norms, it was almost a letdown to see how anatomy and puberty lessons turn back to using gender-dichotomous language.

Other Pros:

- Normalizes diverse relationships and thoughtful lessons around privilege and allyship
- Sets group norms and gathers student feedback on the curriculum at the end

-- Lessons on: HIV stereotypes/stigma \ Sex trafficking \ Consent in the context of accessing services and clinical settings

Other Cons:

-- Lacks dis/ability representation and glosses over that key perspective for several topics...outside of one scenario where I/DD is treated negatively as an undesired risk/outcome of pregnancy.  
- Not all, but majority of examples still seem to privilege cisgender/heterosexual people/relationships

Extra – Want Updates On:

-- Outdated media and dead links  
-- Gender/sex terminology (e.g., “nonbinary”, “two-spirit”, replace male body/female body with “people with penises/vulvas”, replace biological sex with “sex assigned at birth”)\*  
-- Missing topics: Puberty Blockers (e.g., to question ‘is it possible to not go through puberty?’). Tampons, pads, period panties as forms of hygiene/health care (might be mistaken)  
-- Expand on: Online exploitation/predation, grooming, internet boundaries \ Intersectionality, structural discrimination, equity \ Boundaries, dealing with rejection, communication skills outside of dating\*\*  
-- I would review Straight-Laced video for potential bias (for example, masculine/cisgender boys might be depicted more than others as the ones who show courage and “resistance”).

\*Can acknowledge that mostly men (or most women) have “xyz” parts and still describe reproductive anatomy neutrally (topics like cancers, pregnancy, menstruation can also be gender inclusive e.g. “people with testicles” “people who menstruate”).

\*\*These topics are possibly covered in guest presentations like Expect Respect (Lesson 8), which is not included among the materials

## Reviewer 354

This curriculum is free and extensive (26 lessons that cover the full range of health promotion topics). I ran into a lot of issues downloading the lessons, may be time limited issue and not relevant for others, but unclear.

DESIGN: There's consistent format with vocabulary, teacher tips, instructions, and handouts. Just a few lessons come with a PowerPoint as well. The regular lessons may appear dated and are very plain. Most of the curriculum has no graphics, there are very limited videos, and little to no interactive digital content. Wide range of learning styles may benefit from the design: full group, small groups, role plays, self-reflection activities, guided discussions. Teachers given prompts, notes, answer keys. Most lesson plans don't offer additional resources, but there's a separate lesson for this. Lesson provides homework for more engagement with the topic outside of the class, but doesn't build in time to process or review previous homework assignments. Each lesson has objectives, they are not necessarily measurable. Would be more user friendly if there

was info on the main page or descriptions of lessons to give a heads up when an outside resource or guest speaker is part of the lesson. Without this, each lesson needs to be carefully reviewed long ahead of time before using. Approximately 6 lessons require outside materials that are not free (guest speakers, curriculum, DVD). Student post survey is referenced but not provided.

CONTENT: Appears to be very consistent with WA Learning Standards. May be considered on the more progressive side (for ex. includes info on polyamorous relationships). Dedicates several lessons to gender and sexuality identity, discusses them with nuance. However, doesn't address race all that much. Did not notice a lot of media literacy content. Has 2 specific lessons on trafficking, which are pretty robust, includes definitions & examples of sex, labor, and human trafficking and provides several scenarios. The approach is not fear based. Link to short trafficking video clip doesn't work but I found it easily on YouTube.

### **Reviewer 359**

Incredible thorough curriculum that is well developed and easy for teachers to use and students to understand. Materials are nonbiased and inclusive.

### **Reviewer 361**

The lesson plan structure was easy to follow - objective, agenda, materials, standards; numerous ways to engage different modes of learning - visual, partner, whole group, independent, graphic organizers; provides opportunity for students to share their own learning and personal values ex: health vs. unhealthy choices.

### **Reviewer 364**

Overall, this curriculum is strong and thorough, covering a majority of sexual health and relationship related topics in a way that is easy to facilitate and adapt. Materials include handouts, worksheets, PowerPoints (with teacher notes), media, and interactive activities. Lessons do connect and build on one another but could easily be used individually without losing much context/information.

For the most part, information provided is accurate though some lessons need to be updated (Lesson 14, outdated resources and encouragement to use period tracking apps which could be an issue Post-Roe; Lesson 16, a misleading statistic about pregnancy risk; Lesson 20, CA-specific laws; Lesson 23, a defunct resource link) and some lessons are missing access to resources altogether (Lessons 5, 6 and 11 - no access to Straightlaced video referenced).

The biggest challenges with this curriculum are:

- At least 5 lessons are San Francisco-specific as the entire lesson is bringing in a guest speaker from a specific partner agency; these could of course be adapted using local partners but as no PowerPoint or content from the actual guest speakers is provided, this would be a lift. Almost all of the guest speaker lessons have "alternative" non-guest speaker options that cover similar objectives.

- The lessons related to DV/SA and LGBTQ+ are not very trauma-informed and could use explicit trigger or content warnings (for example, role plays in Lesson 2, agree/disagree activity in Lesson 7)
- The language could use some updating to be more inclusive of different bodies, genders, and sexualities

Despite the above challenges, I would recommend this curricula as overall it includes accurate information and engaging activities covering a number of different topics.

Reviewer note: I was unable access Lessons 13 and 22 so this review does not reflect those lessons.

### **Med/Sci Reviewer 367**

Designed to meet CA Healthy Youth Act (CHYA) standards which are very rigorous. Created by AHWG and SFUSD and SFDPH. Both Lesson 3: Human Sexuality and Lesson 4: Sexuality: Sex, Gender, & Orientation used up-to-date terminology and concepts related to identity are accurate and inclusive. Information presented is based on credible up-to-date research/sources. Straightlaced video and reflection questions and gender bread person activity engaging tools for reinforcing information. Strong glossary of terms. Specific CHYA standards addressed in the lesson are identified at the beginning of each lesson.

### **Med/Sci Reviewer 368**

Lesson 3: Had mention of "identity" along with gender roles, orientation etc.

Lesson 4: P. 2 and p.9 wish to change Genderbread person to Gender Unicorn (currently more used). Vocab L4 - wish to see added definitions for "fluid" "non-binary" as well as pan, demi. Objectives for L4 has "homophobia", change to "queerphobia".

Lesson 18: STI research ex of What type of STI is this (bacteria, virus, parasite, sexually associated)- they are all sexually associated (i know they're to bring in HPV, but weirdly written). Slide 15 Outdated with "vaccine" vs "Curable".. treatable would be more appropriate.

STI stats in the sect blue box "suggested script" outdated 2014 stats - ex current 2022 CDC reports 1/2 of all STI's reported are among adolescent 15-24 y.o.

Lesson 18 vocab - "symptom" not correct def (it's not necessarily visible, can be felt, experienced).

Lesson 22: Objectives - Recommend a change from "students will increase respect, compassion, understanding for People Living with AIDS;" suggestion: "Students will gain knowledge in the risks and transmission of HIV, and gain experience in destigmatizing and normalizing this infection, and the realities for those living with HIV.

Lesson 23: Updated/Additional resources: Trevor Project, Teen Health Source (some more queer and youth driven).