

Comprehensive Sexual Health Education Instructional Materials Review 2024

Healthy Relationships

Year Published/Revised: 2023

Publisher: The Arc of King County

Website: www.arcofkingcounty.org

Full or Supplemental: Full

Grade Level: 9 - 12

Student Population: Students with Intellectual/Developmental Delays

Duration/Number of Lessons: 16 Lessons

Format and Features: PDF with supporting slides for each lesson, parent/trusted adult letters.

Materials Provide Support for online or in-person learning: Usable for online learning and in-person learning

Available in Multiple Languages: No

Evidence-based/informed: Not evident

National Standards Alignment: No

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 350

This full comprehensive curriculum is for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It is up front, and shares information without judgment or shame. It does so in very clear and concise ways, offering students and teachers unambiguous content that is easy to understand. (3rd to 5th grade reading level)

While there are many parts to the curriculum, and at first glance, it seems a little overwhelming, it is all very clearly laid out. Every piece is useful from the slides, to the intro/curriculum summary, to the activities folder with handouts, to the plain language guide to the internet, to the Trusted Adult Letters for each lesson.

Some lessons include 2 tracks. These are (1) intended for students with lower baseline of knowledge and skills with higher communication support needs, and (2) for students with higher baseline of knowledge and skills who may have an ability to understand more complicated and nuanced examples. This allows for differentiation.

Lessons include great teacher background info at the opening of most lessons.

The curriculum intentionally does not include evaluation/assessment tools due to the needs and abilities of the population being served.

Lessons are aligned to National Sex Ed Standards. The lessons align with standards from a wide span of standards across grade levels.

There are Trusted Adult Letters (TAL) for every lesson. They communicate what is being taught and give an overview/outline of the lesson.

Gender inclusive language is used when describing anatomy. Drawings of anatomy seem to be missing for

Vulva and Urethra and Vagina on the TAL12. The TAL10 on consent provides local (Seattle/King County) resources/contact info. Great info including guidance on rejection. The TAL15 on STIs is non-shaming, and matter-of-fact. The TALs periodically refer to “your family’s values” and encourage engagement at home.

Slides show images of all races, genders, identities, abilities, and ages (some teens and mostly adults). However, the 3 slides that depict people and address gender identity show white people who are trans or non-binary. The one person of color is cisgender. This may reinforce the stereotype of gender identity being a white thing. At the same time, earlier in the lesson the scripted part of the lesson refers to the intersectional experience of being a person of color and a person with a disability.

Lesson 8 Internet Safety, Porn and Sexual Information lesson seems to have information for both teen and adult audiences, so educators may need to emphasize clear laws and boundaries for students under 18.

Lesson 20 STIs Does not discuss HIV/AIDS in a thorough way as to meet the state standards, but HIV is mentioned a little bit. This lesson does a condom demonstration and instructs (track 2) students to be given a penis model (dildo) to use in the activity. Activities in this lesson don’t adequately address state standards.

Reviewer 351

The curriculum is engaging; multiple activities for students to participate in. Teacher guide provides two different tracks to use, depending on level of baseline knowledge students may have. Strong emphasis on using the internet with a critical lens. Curriculum feels supportive of all sexual expression and activity/non-activity as long as it is safe and consensual; the disability justice and anti-racist framework is evident.

Reviewer 352

This curriculum is comprehensive, contemporary, and written with a culturally responsive lens for young adults with I/DD. The material could be useful for all students, especially for ideas that are often overlooked (e.g. in internet safety, consent practice). However, it might not have the same type of details as other curricula (e.g., specific STIs, hormones).* It uses Plain Language, and has a reading level that feels appropriate for most people including ELLs. Activities are designed to accommodate a range of cognitive abilities, mobility, and communication styles.

One notable strength is its content on healthy relationships, boundaries, and communication—which apply to day-to-day interactions as well as dating and sex. Lessons present various ways of practicing safe sex without placing one method over the other (abstinence is included among the options but not expanded). The content overall avoids biased and shaming language and emphasizes agency, equity, and disability justice. The curriculum smoothly navigates polarizing topics (e.g., pornography, masturbation, abortion)—offering partial opt-outs, acknowledging different beliefs/values, and encouraging nonjudgmental reflection. The trusted adult letters are a great tool to encourage collaboration with guardians/families in their student’s education.

Other Strengths:

- Equips teachers to carry conversations around systems of oppression, power, and discrimination
- Emphasizes voluntary participation in each lesson and incorporates student check-ins, consent, and transparency with families
- Trans-inclusive and disability-inclusive
- Sex positive lens but does not force certain values. \ Pleasure is treated as a normal motivation and positive outcome.
- Lessons: Digital safety and finding accurate online health information, including pornography literacy \ Lesson "zero" sets group norms and explains mandatory reporting

*Gaps, learning standards:

- There are various strategies to measure understanding but the curriculum (deliberately) does not include written evaluations.
- There is simplified internal anatomy, certain parts of organs are not named. Information about specific diseases is not included under STI lesson.
- The following grade outcomes were partially covered:
 - "Explain the role hormones play in sexual behavior and decision-making." H5.Se1.HS \
 - "Describe emotional, social, physical, and financial effects of being a teen or young adult parent." H1.Se1.HSb \
 - "Explain the physical, social mental, and emotional changes associated with being a young adult." H1.Se2.HSa \
 - "Describe laws related to accessing sexual health care services." H3.Se6.HS

Reviewer 358

The curriculum offers strong teacher guidance on best practices in disability sexuality education, which will make it accessible and teachable for educators who are newer to sexuality education and SPED. Disability justice themes and the intersections of sex, race and disability are present in many lessons. That will make the content more engaging for a wider range of students, and it gives context to the lived experiences of people from diverse backgrounds. Pre- and post-test and written evaluations are intentionally not included because they are often not effective methods of evaluating comprehension for students with IDD. As an educator with experience in IDD sex ed, I agree with that assessment - and with the curriculum's suggestion of using formative assessments instead.

The lessons offer comprehensive information about bodies, relationships, boundaries, consent and sexual health. Information is provided in straight-forward, non-judgmental and shame-free ways that center autonomy and choice. This is critically important for people with disabilities who often receive shaming and confusing messages about sexuality, and are often denied autonomy. The lessons clearly convey social expectations and standards of appropriateness, giving concrete examples through scenarios, Q&A and videos. The materials are engaging and invite high levels of sharing and participation. Slide decks are ready-to-use and feature many images of people with diverse identities. The slides convey anatomy information with drawings that are age-appropriate and easy to understand. Materials for activities use both written words and images, making it more accessible for students with a range of literacy skills.

Reviewer 370

The Healthy Relationships full curriculum and supplemental materials includes: A Plain Language Guide to the Internet, Family Letter to Opt-out, a Curriculum Outline, a slide deck for each individual lesson topic with hyperlinks to videos, Trusted Adult Letters, and activities to further learning. Each lesson in the curriculum includes Learning Targets, and age appropriate/developmentally appropriate lessons. They appear to be mostly aligned to the standards. However, abstinence is not addressed as an option available to people with disabilities anywhere in the curriculum. This is a concern as it addresses all available options for engaging in safe sexual activities but seems to exclude that people with disabilities have the option to abstain from sex as well. It does highlight and effectively describe consent in all things but lacks any description of abstinence.

The images used and language used was very appropriate and there was only a very limited amount of bias observed. The supplemental document explaining a Guide to the Internet included a great deal of errors in grammar, punctuation, and there were a few instances of not using People First Language. On the slide deck there is a picture on 14. Sex Pregnancy slide 3 that should be changed as it may confuse people with IDD. It is repeated on 15. Sex STI slide 3. Otherwise, this was a nicely sequential curriculum that used challenging yet sufficient language and examples to teach the subject in a non-bias manner and I would be willing and able to teach this in my classroom.

The following points from the standards were addressed in the Healthy Relationships Curriculum: Summarize fertilization, fetal development, and childbirth, Evaluate the effectiveness of condoms, and other contraceptives in preventing pregnancy and STDs/HIV, Differentiate between affection, love, commitment, and sexual attraction, Compare and contrast characteristics of healthy and unhealthy romantic and sexual relationships, Examine laws and consequences related to sexual offenses, including when a minor is involved, Identify laws and concerns related to sending or posting sexually explicit pictures or messages, Analyze factors that can affect the ability to give or recognize consent to sexual activity, Identify local youth-friendly sexual health services, Describe laws related to accessing sexual health care services, Demonstrate effective ways to communicate with a partner about healthy sexual decisions and consent, Explain the role hormones play in sexual behavior and decision-making, Use a decision-making model to make a sexual health-related decision, Demonstrate steps to using a condom correctly, Understand importance of personal responsibility for sexual decisions, Understand importance of personal and social responsibility for sexual decisions.

Reviewer 371

Train the trainer:

Spends a large chunk on disability advocacy and justice.

Tells teachers to check their own biases but provides no information on how to teach past these.

Makes assumptions about paraeducators that they will display microaggressions.

Requires a lot of prep work upfront with paraeducators to determine what may trigger students.

Curriculum:

Curriculum includes handouts for activities. Throughout the curriculum the guide references it is an activity but there is no handout. Does not differentiate in the guide what is a provided activity versus a guided conversation by the teacher or a series of question presented over the next several slides.

During slide deck 4 boundaries, it is easy to get lost on what content in curriculum goes with which slides. Teachers will need to spend extra time preparing for this lesson to determine when to be on each slide and how to pair the discussion activities.

Lots of good information on general consent, internet safety to protect students from different types of exploitation.

Pornography section gives good information on fantasy vs reality, does have a cartoon video that shows cartoon breast and penis.

Resources on where to get help for sexual assault are only in King County. Teachers in other counties would need to find statewide or local resources to share.

Activity for consent video clips does not have premade clips, teacher would have to find clips to share to do this activity.

Mentions drinking and slurring words but doesn't specifically address how drugs or alcohol can affect decision making and consent.

Didn't go into detail about consequences of rape or having sex of a minor beyond saying "this is illegal"

Discussed STI's in general but did not specifically mention HIV/AIDS, how it differs from other STI's or how it can impact a person's life.

Guide addressed 2 tracks depending on abilities and cognitive understanding of students. Did not address any supports for not English speakers.

Made some comments regarding values being different in other cultures. Does a good job of showing a variety of races and types of relationships. Does have a couple slides where They/Them pronouns are used but also then uses He/She to reference the same person. Could be better on addressing non-gender normative pronouns. Does not have Native American or Pacific Islander peoples represented.

Med/Sci Reviewer 367

This is a very comprehensive and medically accurate curriculum. The Arc King County has designed an inclusive, up-to-date curriculum with language that clear, easy to understand, and respectful of diversity regarding gender, sexuality, sexual preferences, culture, etc. A good

example are the drawings depicting a variety of ways a penis and a vulva may appear. The material covers beyond the full range of comprehensive sexual health information I have seen in other curriculum including a lesson on pleasure and why people choose to have sex and the sexual response cycle. The lesson on consent does an excellent job explaining WA state laws, dealing with rejection and where to go for help. The scenarios included in most of the lessons along with the lesson activities provide outstanding opportunities for assessing knowledge and in some cases skills. The sensitive approach used during some of the lessons with a slide reading, "content warning" and then a full explanation is also very useful and based in trauma informed comprehensive sexual education best practices.

Med/Sci Reviewer 369

By far the best curriculum I have reviewed. Factual, well paced, thorough, and inclusive throughout. I hope that this is adopted and used widely.