

# Comprehensive Sexual Health Education Instructional Materials Review 2024

## Pearson Health

**Year Published/Revised:** Not indicated

**Publisher:** Savvas Realize

**Website:** Savvas Realize® - Savvas Learning Company

**Full or Supplemental:** Full

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Student Population:** General

**Duration/Number of Lessons:** 5 chapters in sexual health supplement

**Format and Features:** Online textbook, with supporting videos, worksheets, and assessments.

**Materials Provide Support for online or in-person learning:** Relatively simple online user interface, search function available within the text, videos are imbedded within the online textbook.

**Available in Multiple Languages:** Yes, available in English and Spanish.

**Evidence-based/informed:** Not indicated

**National Standards Alignment:** Not indicated

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

**Consistent with Comprehensive Sexual Health Education Law?** No

**Consistent with AIDS Omnibus Act?** With modification

**Inclusive Materials/Strategies:** No

**Bias-Free Materials:** No



## 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** (*editor note: this reviewer's comments reference the primary Health curriculum, not the sexual health supplement*)

Useful slides, eText, chapter summaries, worksheets and notes, vocabulary, as well as videos are all easily accessible using the online format. All necessary materials are available from a drop down menu for each chapter and can be exported digitally. Text is age-appropriate, yet doesn't include a wide range of cultures and races in imagery.

End of unit tests and standardized test prep pages are useful.

Chapter 18: Reproduction and Heredity:

Section 1 - The Endocrine System:

Teens Talk: Hormones video: Low quality, somewhat outdated video referencing "Raging Hormones" in teens. Reinforces some gender stereotypes, such as difficulty for girls being taller than their male peers with growth spurts. Mention of impacts on hormones include references to smoking cigarettes (no mention of vaping) Use of scare tactics, including threats of shriveled testicles and girls growing beards.

Most experts interviewed are older and white, as are the majority of the students interviewed. No mention of transgender people and the impacts of hormones.

eText: The Male Reproductive System, as well as the Female Reproductive System: very gendered, as is the entire chapter. No mention of any range of options around gender is mentioned.

(medical accuracy? Suggests age 40 for mammogram, while age 50 is now recommendation)

Enrichment activities are provided, encouraging Family involvement

## Chapter 19: Pregnancy, Birth, and Childhood

Everything is very gendered and traditional; women, mothers, husbands, and marriage are mentioned.

Teens Talk: Teen Pregnancy video somewhat out of date- referenced making \$6/hour employment

The bulk of the images of teens in the eText tend to be white, yet the majority of teens depicted in the Teen Pregnancy video are black girls/girls of color.

## Chapter 20: Adolescence and Adulthood

Includes content related to adolescence and adulthood, goal setting, responsibility, adulthood and marriage, death and dying.

Content helps normalize common changes and experiences in adolescence. One image of a young woman getting a tattoo has a caption that reads, "Could having a tattoo affect a person's ability to get a job?" This is feeling like a dated concept/concern, but the idea of impulsive decisions is legitimate.

Includes useful goal setting slides.

Discussion of autonomy, independence, and community connection are helpful.

Discussion of marriage tends to be a white, middle-class American perspective. No mention of cultural norm around marriage.

Chapter Close documents (chapter tests) have some formatting issues.

## Chapter 22: STIs and AIDS – Risks of Sexual Activity, Kinds of STIs, HIV and AIDS, Accessing Info, Protecting yourself from HIV/AIDS

Very heavy abstinence messaging. Repeated use of phrase "high risk behaviors" when referencing being sexually active.

Not a lot of conversation about social determinants of health and how HIV disproportionately impacts some groups. Continues to emphasize the importance of abstinence and fidelity, rather than, limiting partners, etc.

Includes information about accessing reliable internet resources.

No mention of PrEP or undetectable status. No mention of condom use (*editor note: sexual health supplement does include brief condom references*). All images and examples are of straight couples.

Video: Outdated video. Risks and STIs. Shows student seeking STD check in a clinic. Abstinence only messaging. Shaming. All messaging leads to abstinence as the solution. One girl says, "I think sex is one of the riskiest of high-risk behaviors. It is right up there with all the really hard drugs." Expert says, We know the healthiest way, unequivocally, is to be abstinent until someone marries, and is in a monogamous relationship."

## Reviewer 360

The online curriculum format is easy to use. The materials do not look like they have been updated since perhaps 2011. So many of the data charts and statistics are quite dated. The

videos are also dated, perhaps were made in the 1990s? P.480 described a characteristic of Downs Syndrome as "mental retardation" again, seems like this is not a current terminology. p.474 Mentioned some CDC recommendations for gynecological screenings for 13-15 yo females that again need to be updated. p.521 Mentions looking at ads in magazines, TV and online, again not where modern youth are exposed as most are using social media and have smart phones, etc. Overall this is a comprehensive curriculum that would be great and easy to use if Pearson did some updating to terminology, update data/statistics and procured some more modern images and video resources that would be more relatable to 2020s youth.

## **Reviewer 362**

This curriculum was decent, though had several pitfalls that may make utilizing it tough. Firstly, the use of antiquated language is common in these chapters, using outdated and offensive language for intellectual and developmental disabilities, and completely omitting the existence of Trans\* and Intersex people in their human development and sexuality chapters. To the curriculum's credit, there are wellness and health activities in each chapter that are somewhat useful though they still face the same problems as the general text passages mentioned here. The Pearson online textbook software is very smooth and easy to interface with, and teacher materials are easy to navigate. The actual content of the curriculum seems dated in some places as well, some charts seem to be from over a decade ago so perhaps this is why there seems to be some sense of asynchronicity with modern culture, knowledge, and norms. Other areas of concern include some photos throughout the pages that feature young females bathing (headshots only) while no photos of the males are presented this way, and there is a passage in one such chapter about the sexualization of young women in media so there is that bit of irony too. The text uses a definition of sexuality that is inaccurate, and conflated with gender expression and uses a definition of gender that is akin to the process of being gendered by outside observers. The text ultimately fails to accurately represent the concepts of human sexuality as it is portrayed more accurately and inclusively in other curriculums, potentially minimizing the benefits to student learners. As for sexual health education, the text assumes an "abstinence is the right and safe" kind of approach. Nearly overwhelmingly so, they have only one paragraph in the health text that mentions condoms, and a couple of sections of the human sexuality texts cover prevention methods. Unlike the activities in the text to practice other health skills, there is no education on how to use prevention methods safely. Harm reduction is not acknowledged at all and there is a pervasive undertone of shame in the videos about abstinence.

## **Reviewer 363**

The curriculum offers many teacher tools and skill-building activities including Spanish language and adapted materials, but it needs to be updated.

The most recent health statistics provided in the curriculum range from 2005 to 2011. Medical advice, like performing regular self-breast exams, does not follow current recommendations. It lacks information on newer HIV medications, expanded HPV vaccination options, and contraceptive methods like IUDs and implants. Access to sexual healthcare resources for teens is

not adequately addressed. This does not include anything about online safety, social media influences, or on using the internet as a resource for health information or access to care. Some activities are not aligned with best practices, such as "Be a Parent for a Day".

The curriculum includes some representation of different races and ethnicities but lacks representation of LGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, and diverse family structures. There is no mention of gender diverse people and very little mention of sexual orientation. Binary terms are to describe body parts and gender, excluding LGBTQ+ students.

## **Reviewer 365**

After a review of Chapter 18-20 and 22 of "Health for Realize" and Chapters 1-5 of "Human Sexuality for Realize," I was disappointed with much of the material, as it seems dated to when I was in school, for the most part.

Teacher materials: the website, the teacher resources, and instructions, and background information are lacking to say the least.

Student materials: lack meaningful diversity and representation, dated photos, examples, and activities, not culturally responsive or relevant.

Meeting Standards: Seems to lack serious attention to other prevention strategies other than abstinence.

Sexual orientation: homosexuality, bisexuality mentioned once, but limited, as is gender expression.

I feel like so much time is spent on biological nature of "sexual health" but not the social/sexual aspects of "sexual health."

HIV: References to HIV are from 2011, no updated information about PREP or HIV prevention medicine.

Would not recommend.

## **Med/Sci Reviewer 367**

This curriculum appears to promote abstinence above all else and does not mention abortion as a choice in the lesson on teen pregnancy. The video used to share the stories of teen mother's highlights available programs for teen mothers who would otherwise have nowhere else to live. as well as the hardships of being a teen mother with no mention of other alternatives. This same video presents a shame-based model when discussing teen pregnancy. The anatomy lessons are hetero and teen pregnancy referencing only negative statistics like, "teen mothers are more likely to give birth to low birth weight babies due to a lack of prenatal care." The anatomy

lessons are cis normative using examples like, “language such as, “when sperm enters a woman’s body.”

### **Med/Sci Reviewer 369**

Pretty disappointed about a lot in this text. Did a lot to reinforce gender roles, diet culture, and human behaviors in potentially harmful and outdated ways; it seemed like it went out of its way to barely mention condoms in all of that STI conversation. Not up to date on some of the screening guidelines or pregnancy care guidelines either.

### **OSPI Comments**

This curriculum was found to be inconsistent with Washington state requirements for comprehensive sexual health education for the following reasons: medical inaccuracies (in part due to dated information), lack of inclusive language and strategies, and biased content. It should not be used in Washington public schools for the provision of comprehensive sexual health education.