

Group Brainstorms: “Why Do Teens Have Sex”, “Why Don’t Teens Have Sex,” & “Fun and Safe Activities”

Goals:

- To brainstorm reasons why teens do and don’t have sex.
- To brainstorm other “fun and safe” activities and discuss abstinence as a choice.

Have Ready:

- Three pieces of flipchart paper, one for each brainstorm above. Write the name of each flipchart at the top.
- Markers and tape.

Instructions:

- This exercise may be done in small groups or as a large group activity.
- For small groups, hand out flipcharts and markers and give youth ~10 minutes to write out as many responses as they can.
- Invite the groups present their flipcharts, or read them out yourself if not one wants to volunteer.
- If doing as a large group ask youth, “**Why do teens have sex?**” and write down their responses. Proceed with the other two flipcharts in the same way.
- If not already on the flipcharts, the bolded responses (see below) should be added and addressed when debriefing.
- Preface the third flipchart with, “**What do we mean by safe?**” Safe from STI/HIV and pregnancy.

Sample Flipcharts:

Why Do Teens Have Sex?

- **Want to**
- **Feels good**
- **Are ready** (this is a good place to explore what it means to be ready for sex)
- **Are horny**
- **Use drugs/alcohol** (mention that people sometimes make different choices when drunk or high)
- **To keep their partner**
- **Peer pressure**
- Friends are having sex
- To rebel against parents/authority
- Want to have a baby
- To attain status
- Are in love
- To prove sexual orientation
- Forced, physically or verbally; this is sexual assault not sex. (If youth bring up sexual assault explain that it's not your fault if you have been assaulted and provide resources where people can go for help, e.g. Klinik Sexual Assault Crisis Program 1.888.292.7565)

Debrief:

- Acknowledge that there are many reasons why youth choose to have sex. Ideally we want to youth to reflect on their motivation.
- If youth mention forced to have sex, mention it's not their fault and provide resources. (See consent piece of "Things to Think about Before Sex" activity.)
- Encourage youth to check in with their own values. Ask youth, **"What does it mean to be ready for sex?"** (or making out or dating). Being ready for can include checking in with thoughts, feelings, and the physical body. ¹ At Teen Talk we encourage youth to think about:
 - Whether they want to do it

- Figuring out what sexual activity means to them
- Knowing what's important to them
- How comfortable they are with the idea of a sexual relationship
- Talking about consent with a partner
- Being able to talk about limits and boundaries (what they want and don't want) with a partner
- Having information about birth control (if needed) and protection from STI/HIV
- Understanding how pregnancy happens and how STI/HIV are spread
- Feeling comfortable with condoms/sex dams
- Getting tested for STI/HIV
- Feeling comfortable with your body
- Depending on the type of sex, thinking about pregnancy options

Why Don't Teens Have Sex?

- **Don't want to**
- **Not ready**
- **Scared of pregnancy/STI/HIV**
- **Too busy/no time**
- **Not interested**
- **Past experience** (If youth bring up sexual assault explain that it's not your fault if you have been assaulted and provide resources where people can go for help, e.g. Klinik Sexual Assault Crisis Program 1.888.292.7565)
- **Have poor body-image**
- **Beliefs (religion/culture/spirituality)**
- **Partner doesn't want to**
- Future goals
- Don't have a partner
- Afraid of parents finding out
- Rumors
- Values
- Not comfortable with partner/body

Debrief:

- Normalize all the reasons people have for not having sex.
- Let youth know that any reason someone has for not having sex is okay. No one should ever feel pressured to have sex or do anything sexually they aren't comfortable with.
- Ask youth, **"What are some signs that someone may not be ready for sex?"**
 - You feel pressured
 - You or your partner needs to get drunk or stoned to do it
 - You're not sure about it
 - You can't talk about it with your partner
 - You don't have a way to protect yourself from STIs and pregnancy
- When it comes to sexual activity, there are many ways to show affection, sex is only one way. The biggest sexual organ is the skin followed by the brain; therefore we are only limited by our imaginations and this would lessen the emphasis on "doing it" or "not doing it."

Fun and Safe Activities

- Kissing
- Holding hands
- Massage
- Masturbating
- Talking
- Touching
- Common interests
- Hugging
- Hickies
- Hanging out with friends
- Watching movies
- Going for coffee/tea
- Playing bingo, card games
- Going for a walk
- Playing sports
- Phone sex sexting
- Instant messaging
- Braiding each other's hair
- Ski-doo ride/4 wheeling/boat ride
- Oral sex (**requires debriefing, see below**)

Debrief:

- Normalize all the ways that people show affection.
- Normalize masturbation as an activity that can give pleasure with or without a partner that's no risk of pregnancy or STIs.
- If the youth include oral sex on the flipchart debrief how oral sex will not cause pregnancy, but that STIs can be spread that way. Let the youth know that oral sex can be made safer with condoms and sex dams (used on the vuvla, vagina, anus, or scrotum).
- Use the list to show that abstinence or not having sex doesn't have to be limiting or boring!
- Optional: show youth a condom and sex dam demo. See the Sexually Transmitted Infections chapter for instructions.

Additional Activities:

Ideally, this activity can be followed by:

- Sexual Readiness Brainstorming Activity
- Things to Talk About Before Having Sex Brainstorm

Endnotes

¹Calgary Sexual Health Centre, www.calgarysexualhealth.ca/2013/04/sex-without-regret-checking-in-with-head-heart-body/, accessed, August 2016.