

# Values Activity

## Goals

- To discuss what values are and where they come from.
- To demonstrate how values can differ between individuals and can change over time.
- To examine how values influence our decisions and affect our perceptions when it comes to sexuality.
- To show how the people and places may have contradictory values.
- To emphasize that no one should impose their values on another person.

## Senior 1-4 Education Curriculum Connections

**This activity contributes to the following Student Specific Learning Outcomes:**

***Aboriginal Languages and Cultures*** (if offered concurrently with Language Teachings)

- 3.2.3 E-10 Analyze factors (e.g., family, peers, values, media, awareness of healthy practices) that affect self in making decisions for active healthy lifestyles.

***Family Studies***

- S1 5.1.4 Define, classify, and determine personal values and goals.

***Guidance Education*** GLOs under Personal/Social Component.

***Physical and Health Education***

- K.5.S1.E.3a Describe social factors affecting human sexuality.

## Have Ready

- “Agree,” “Neutral,” and “Disagree” signs posted in a linear fashion long the wall as a temperature activity.
- “Values” statements.

## Activity Introduction

- Ask youth, “**What is a value?**” A value is what is right or wrong for you, or what you believe in.
- Explain that you will read a series of statements. After each statement, the youth should move to somewhere between “Agree-Neutral-Disagree,” they feel most accurately reflects their feelings

about that statement. Explain that the “Neutral” area includes not being sure what their feelings are, if they don’t understand a statement, if they have never thought about their position on that particular statement, and/or if they do not want the rest of the group to know their position. Note: This activity can be done with youth sitting and writing whether they “agree,” “disagree,” or are “neutral” or pointing from sitting down.

- **Remind participants that this is a silent activity. This is important in maintaining a safer space where people feel comfortable participating.** This activity works best when people feel comfortable and respectfully express what they think. Aim for no talking, pointing or laughing during the activity. Let youth know they will have a chance to share **after** the activity.
- Explain that this is an individual activity; it’s not about what the adults, or others think, but about what individual youth think.
- Everyone should start the activity around “Neutral.”

## Values Statements

- In brackets after each statement are how Teen Talk would answer the statements based on our operating principles. (See the Introductory chapter of the Teen Talk Service Provider Manual for Teen Talk’s Operating Principles.)
- Suggested talking points for each statement are listed following the debrief and can be used in debriefing the exercise.

1. *I believe that the media (Netflix, TV, movies, music, games, social media etc.) accurately shows real life. (disagree)*
2. *I believe that masturbation (touching yourself for sexual pleasure) is okay. (agree)*
3. *I believe that it is okay to have sex or a relationship with someone of a different culture or ethnic background. (agree)*
4. *I believe that sex should be saved for marriage or for someone you love. (neutral)*
5. *I believe that someone who identifies as Two Spirit, Trans, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Plus (2STLBGQ+) deserves to live free of harassment. (agree)*
6. *I believe that people with disabilities are not interested in dating or sexual relationships. (disagree)*

7. *I believe girls and women should be able to wear whatever clothes they want without being harassed. (agree)*
8. *I believe that a person who is pregnant should have the option to have an abortion. (agree)*
9. *I believe teens can make good parents. (agree)*
10. *I believe only girls should be responsible for birth control. (disagree)*
11. *I believe that parents/caregivers should talk to their children about sex. (neutral)*
12. *I believe a person can decide for themselves when they are ready to have sex. (agree)*

## Debrief

- Ask youth, **“What did you think of the exercise?” “Have you thought about these issues before?” “Did you learn anything new about the group?”**
- **“Where do our values come from?”** Make a list of their responses, common ones include: family, the land, spirituality, religion, culture, self, media, friends, peers, school, past experiences, etc. We get different messages from different sources and this can be confusing. Encourage youth to check-in with how they personally feel, and let them know they get to decide what fits best for them. It is important to think about our values because they influence the decisions we make, what we do, and how we take care of ourselves.
- **Values can change.** A part of maturing means finding your own values. This is often a process of mixing and matching the values of your family, culture, or religion with the values of your friends, the media or your peer group with your own. Experiences can also impact values. Society’s values change over time. Fifty years ago it was less common for people of different ethnic backgrounds to date or get married. Ten years ago the room may have looked different when we talked about dating someone of the same gender. Societies and personal values are shifting.
- Remind the youth that each of us is allowed to have different ideas. **“Your values are entirely your business and you do not have to share them with others, especially if you feel unsafe.”**

- **“No matter what our values are, no one ever has the right to insult, harass, or physically hurt someone else because of what they believe. Making others feel unsafe is called harassment, and we all have the right to feel safe.”**

## **Suggested Talking Points for Value Statements**

- Not all will need debriefing, but based on how the youth respond, you may want to address specific statements (i.e. homophobic or sexist values can be used as “teachable moments”).

*1. I believe that the media (TV, advertising, commercials, music, movies, internet etc.) accurately shows real life. (disagree)*

The media often shows unrealistic expectations of how people should look and act. Often the relationships we see presented in the media are unhealthy. Many people are underrepresented and may only be shown as a stereotype. We all need to be critical of what we see in the media, and challenge what is presented to us as “normal” or “typical.”

*2. I believe that masturbation (touching yourself for sexual pleasure) is okay. (agree)*

Masturbation can be a safe and healthy part of someone’s sexuality. Exploring our bodies can also be a good way to get to know yourself and what you like and don’t like. Some people choose to masturbate, while others do not. We get to choose what is right for our bodies.

*3. I believe that it is okay to have sex or a relationship with someone of a different culture or ethnic background. (agree)*

People have a right to love, date, marry or be attracted to whomever they choose. Have opinions/values changed over time/throughout history? Yes. At one point in history, interracial marriage was heavily discouraged and the Canadian government used different policies to “regulate” interracial marriage (i.e. Indian Act).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Racial Ideas and Gendered Intimacies: the Regulation of Interracial Relationships in North America. *Social and Legal Studies* 18, 3 (2009): 353-371.

4. *I believe that sex should be saved for marriage/someone you love. (neutral)*

For some, sex is an intimate/special activity they would share with someone special to them. For others, sex may be more casual or not tied to marriage. Values differ among everyone, but neither are “wrong or right,” just different.

5. *I believe that someone who identifies as Two Spirit, Trans, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Plus (2STLGBQ+) should be able to live free from harassment. (agree)*

We all have the right to live free from harassment. People have the right to love, date, marry or be attracted to whomever they choose. They also have the right to live as the gender that they know themselves to be. There are more than two genders, even though in our society the genders that are most recognized are male and female and usually based on someone’s anatomy (the genitals they were born with). This is called sex assignment and is based on an assumption that someone’s genitals match their gender. Gender is not about anatomy, it is about who they know themselves to be.

6. *I believe that people with disabilities are not interested in dating or sexual relationships. (disagree)*

Anyone, regardless of their abilities can be interested in dating or sexual relationships.

7. *I believe girls and women should be able to wear whatever clothes they want without being harassed. (agree)*

Sometimes our society excuses or justifies violence based on what someone was wearing, where they were, who they were with etc. This is called victim blaming. In reality, no one ever does anything, says anything or wears anything to deserve to be harassed or sexually assaulted. It is always the fault of the person who used violence. Assault and rape involves power and control. When talking about sexual assault reinforce key messages: If anyone is sexually assaulted it is never their fault. There’s a lot of victim blaming when it comes to sexual assault and youth need to hear they are not to blame if they have been assaulted and deserve support.

8. *I believe that a person who is pregnant should have the option to have an abortion. (agree)*

Believing someone who is pregnant has the right to choose what happens with their pregnancy is called being pro-choice (not the

same thing as “pro-abortion”). Being pro-choice means we support people who are pregnant in whatever option they choose.

*9. I believe teens can make good parents. (agree)*

Many pregnant youth or young parents are discriminated against or stigmatized. What do babies/children need? Love, food, shelter, etc. Can teens provide these things? Yes. Young parents may need extra resources to help them be great parents, whether it is community resources outside the home, or from friends and extended family.

*10. I believe only people who can get pregnant should be responsible for birth control. (disagree)*

It takes a sperm and egg for pregnancy to happen so whomever is involved in penis-vagina sex is responsible for birth control. A partner can share the responsibility by using condoms, sharing the costs for birth control, going to the nursing station/health centre together to get information, supplies, tested for STIs etc.

*11. I believe that parents/caregivers should talk to their children about sex. (neutral)*

Parents and guardians are an important and primary source of guidance for young people concerning sexual behavior and values. While many youth look to parents/caregivers as a valuable source of sexuality information, it is important to note that parents/caregivers may not have all of the answers, and some may not be open to discussing sexual health. Having other sources such as school, reputable websites can also be helpful.

*12. I believe a person can decide for themselves if and when they are ready to have sex. (agree)*

Every person knows themselves best and can choose if and when the time is “right” for them. **“What does “ready” for sex mean?”** Using the Head, Heart, Body model,<sup>2</sup> being ready involves checking in with thoughts, feelings and the physical body’s reaction. Teen Talk would add being able to communicate with a partner about birth control and STI prevention, knowing how to put on a condom and talk to a partner about using them, being able to talk about testing for STI/HIV, sexual boundaries, expectations of how sex will change/not change your relationship with that person, etc.

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<sup>2</sup>Calgary Sexual Health Centre, [www.calgarysexualhealth.ca/2013/04/sex-without-regret-checking-in-with-head-heart-body/](http://www.calgarysexualhealth.ca/2013/04/sex-without-regret-checking-in-with-head-heart-body/), accessed August 2016.