

UNDERSTANDING AND PREVENTING SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

Lesson 12

DIFFERING ABILITIES

LEARNER OUTCOME

Describe symptoms, effects, treatments, prevention for common sexually transmitted diseases; i.e., chlamydia, HPV, herpes, gonorrhea, hepatitis B & C, HIV¹.



MATERIALS

What do you think about STI? - Activity

Condom Line-Up - Activity

Talking About STI Case Studies - Activity



INTRODUCTION

Learning about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) helps students to be able to take care of their own bodies, preventing possible health and infertility problems associated with having an STI or allowing an STI to go untreated. This lesson helps students learn about STIs/HIV, as well as describe symptoms, effects, treatments, and prevention for common STIs. Students will learn how to talk to partners and how to access services for testing and treatment.



This lesson follows on from Lesson 10: Decision-Making: Creating Safe Sexual Relationships and Lesson 11: Preventing Pregnancy: Talking About and Using Contraception. It is best suited to students who are able to discuss what it would be like to have a sexual relationship. Not all students will be ready for this level of information which is very practical and focuses on building knowledge and skills that teens can use if they are involved in a sexual relationship. There is no assumption that all teens are sexually active, rather an understanding that some are, and many will be in the future.



APPROACHES/STRATEGIES

A. GROUND RULES

- Ensure that ground rules are established before starting your classes. For classes that have already established ground rules, quickly reviewing them can promote a successful lesson.
- You should be prepared for giggles in your class. Acknowledge students' reactions to the subject by saying that it is common to feel uncomfortable talking about sexual relationships. Having these discussions helps teens feel prepared if they do have a sexual relationship.

B. DISCUSSION- WHAT ARE STI AND WHY DO WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT THEM?

Introduce this lesson by referring back to lesson 10 and doing a quick review. Discussion in lesson 10 focused on making decisions to have safe sexual relationships.

1. What does STI mean and what are they?
 - STI is short for sexually transmitted infections. Sometimes people use the term STD which is short for sexually transmitted diseases. In Canada we use the term STI.
 - STI are infections spread through close sexual contact and sexual intercourse. Some are spread through contact with blood that may happen when people share needles for drug use or tattooing and piercing such as HIV and hepatitis B and C.
2. Why is it important to learn about STI?
 - It helps to understand how to take care of your body.
 - Untreated STI can lead to health problems, make someone very sick or lead to infertility meaning it is very hard to get pregnant or get someone pregnant.
 - It is important to learn about how to talk to a partner about STI.
 - It helps to discuss the myths about STI that could lead to someone getting an STI e.g., "I can tell if someone has an STI as they will look sick!" Most STI do not show signs or symptoms!



Sexual health education occurs most effectively in a classroom where there is a mutual feeling of trust, safety and comfort. Having Ground Rules in place can be a very successful way to facilitate a positive classroom environment. Click [here](#) for more information on how to set up ground rules.



During this lesson you will probably talk about common STI such as chlamydia and human papilloma virus (HPV). While it is good for students to know about specific STI it is more important that they know the general prevention rules and have knowledge and understanding about what they can do to get tested and treated. For specific information about STI please see the [STI Health Information Sheets](#) which give details about causes, symptoms, testing, treatment and prevention.

3. What are some of the common symptoms of STI?
 - Genital itching
 - Burning when you urinate/ pee
 - Discharge (normal for females to have some discharge but if there is more, it smells different or is a different colour; for males anything other than urine or semen)
 - Sores, bumps, lumps or rashes around genitals
 - Pain during sex
 - Unusual bleeding, especially after sex
 - Most common symptom is no symptom at all.

4. Where can you go to talk about STI or get testing and treatment?
 - Doctor or walk-in clinic
 - Sexual and Reproductive Health Clinic
 - STI Clinic
 - Some public health offices

5. What are the best ways to prevent STI?
 - Abstinence meaning no sexual behaviour involving skin to genital, genital to genital or exchange of bodily fluids.
 - Using condoms correctly and consistently
 - Talking with partner about sexual history i.e., asking if they have used condoms in the past or if they have been for annual check-ups
 - Limiting number of sexual partners
 - Regular STI testing (annually or as recommended by a doctor.

C. ACTIVITY-WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT STI?

This activity encourages students to think about what they know about STI and helps to challenge the myths and stereotypes they might have. Students can complete the handout in pairs or groups or you can read out the sentences and have students discuss their responses as a group.

Responses may include the following:

1. People who get an STI are.....
 - **Dirty** Having good personal hygiene does not mean that you will not get an STI. If you have sexual contact with someone who is infected with an STI you are at risk of getting that STI.
 - **Sexually active** Sexual activity is the most common way to get an STI. This means coming into contact with a person's skin, genitals, body fluids or mucous membranes e.g., mouth. STI can also be spread through blood when sharing needles.
 - **Involved in prostitution** There is a stereotype that people involved in the sex trade get STI and no one else. It is important to understand that STI do not discriminate. If you have sexual contact with someone who is infected with an STI you are at risk of getting that STI.
 - **Gay** Another stereotype that persists is that only gay men get STI especially HIV. People involved in heterosexual, long term relationships can get STI.

2. The best way to avoid getting an STI is.....
- **Don't have sex** Abstinence from sexual activity that involves skin to skin, skin to genital and contact with body fluids is the only way to completely avoid STI.
 - **Use condoms** Although not 100% effective, using condoms provides good protection.
3. When I hear the words sexually transmitted infections I think.....
- **Gross/disgusting** Many people may think this but may believe they are not likely to get an STI, that only other people get STI. The fact is that some STI can lead to sickness and symptoms that are very unpleasant.
 - **Diseases** Sometimes people refer to STI as diseases. No matter what term you use STI make you sick.
 - **Death** Even though some STI can be cured and others treated and managed there is still no known cure for HIV that can lead to AIDS. HPV can lead to cancers that if left untreated can lead to death.
4. The worst STI I could have would be.....
- **AIDS** There is no known cure for HIV and it needs ongoing treatment and care. After many years of living with HIV a person's immune system may be damaged and unable to fight off infection. If someone with HIV develops certain illnesses they may then have AIDS. Some of these illnesses may lead to death.
5. STI I have heard of are..... Students may or may not know the names, correct or slang terms, of the following
- Chlamydia
 - Genital herpes
 - HPV – genital warts
 - Herpes Simplex Virus (genital sores)
 - Gonorrhoea or “the clap”
 - Hepatitis B/C (a blood borne pathogen)
 - HIV & AIDS (a blood borne pathogen)
 - Syphilis
 - Pubic lice or “crabs”
 - Scabies
6. If I thought I had an STI, I would.....
- **See a doctor** It is important to get tested and treated as soon as possible to be healthy and to stop the spread of STI.
 - **Freak out/cry** Having an STI can be very upsetting and can affect relationships. Talking to a health care professional about treatment and prevention can help someone with an STI manage.
 - **Tell someone** It is important to tell any sexual partners if you think or know that you have an STI.
7. Talking to a girlfriend or boyfriend about STI is.....
- **Embarrassing** Having a safe and responsible sexual relationship involves talking to partners about testing, treatment and protection from both STI and pregnancy. If someone is not able have these discussions the relationship may not be healthy and the decision to not have sex could be the best choice.
 - **A good idea** Starting a relationship with honesty shows respect and is a sign of a healthy relationship.

8. Condoms are.....

•**A good way to prevent STI** Along with dental dams condoms are the best way to prevent STI if someone is sexually active.

•**Awkward** This may be the case at first but once using condoms becomes a health habit they can be a comfortable part of a sexual relationship. Is it more awkward to tell a partner about a positive test for an STI?

D. CONDOM AND DENTAL DAM DEMONSTRATIONS

Condoms are a common method used by teens. They are easy to access and do not need lots of planning ahead of use. The following video demonstrations are designed to assist teachers who would like to show condom and dental dam demonstrations to students. The accompanying notes give step by step instructions to help guide teachers to perform the demonstrations.

E. EXTENSION ACTIVIT — CONDOM LINE-UP ACTIVITY

Condoms are a barrier method of contraception and the only form of contraception, besides abstinence, that can provide protection from sexually transmitted infections (STI). People who are sexually active are encouraged to use a condom with each sex activity. Using a condom correctly and consistently may help reduce the risk of STI as well as pregnancy if that is a risk. At the end of this activity, participants will be able to describe the proper sequence of steps to ensure correct condom use.

F. EXTENSION ACTIVITY — TALKING ABOUT STI CASE STUDIES

Talking about STI and sexual decision making with a boyfriend or girlfriend is an important skill that takes practice. In small groups or as a class use each case study to discuss communication strategies.



QUESTION BOX

Have students fill out questions and address them next class.



The process of asking questions is an important learning activity that helps students clarify and validate information being presented. Question Box is a method of individualized instruction which has been proven to enhance learning. Click [here](#) for more information on how to use the question box.



SELF RELECTION

During the lesson, were:

- Ground rules being followed?
- Good practices established regarding group work and discussion?

What will you change for future classes with this group?

What will you change for future use of this lesson?



STUDENT ASSESSMENT

During the lesson, did students:

Knowledge:

- Define STI?

Skills:

- Identify symptoms, effects, treatments and preventions for common STI?
- Identify community based resources where information and testing for STI is available?

Attitudes:

- Accept the need to prevent STI/HIV?
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¹Alberta Education. (2002). *Health and life skills guide to implementation: Kindergarten to grade 9*. Retrieved from <http://education.alberta.ca/media/352993/pos.pdf>

What do you think about STI?

This activity encourages you to think about what you know about STI and help challenge some of the myths and stereotypes you may have.

With a partner read through and complete the open ended sentences listed below. When you are done you will have an opportunity to share and discuss some of your answers with the class.

1. People who get an STI are.....
2. The best way to avoid getting and STI is.....
3. When I hear the words sexually transmitted infections I think.....
4. The worst STI I could have would be.....
5. STI I have heard of are.....
6. If I thought I had an STI, I would.....
7. Talking to a girlfriend or boyfriend about STI is.....
8. Condoms are.....

Talking About STI Case Studies

Talking about STI and sexual decision making with a boyfriend or girlfriend is an important skill that takes practice. In small groups or as a class use each case study to discuss communication strategies.

Kelly and Mark have been going out for several months. They are talking about the day they plan to have sex for the first time. Kelly explains that they will have to use a condom. Mark insists that there is no danger of any sexually transmitted infections (STI) and refuses to wear one. Mark is complaining that Kelly doesn't trust him; Kelly just wants to be safe.

What is Kelly concerned about?

What should Kelly do?

Silvia's friend Anna has been seeing her boyfriend for a while. Anna told Silvia that recently they've started having sex. Now Anna is noticing some symptoms that she never had before. She is really worried and is too embarrassed to go to the doctor.

What advice can Silvia give her friend?

Jamie and Jake are making plans to have sex for the first time and are planning to do it the night of a party at their friends. Jamie felt uncomfortable talking to Jake about using a condom, so she never brought it up. Jake did not discuss it either. The night of the party both Jake and Jamie are nervous about having sex for the first time and decide to have a few drinks first.

What might affect Jamie's ability to make healthy decisions at the party?

What should Jake and Jamie have done differently?

Kai and Riley have been together for a long time and are considering having sex for the first time.

What do both Kai and Riley need to do to prepare and make sure they are protected?