HIGH SCHOOL
LESSON III
ASSERTIVENESS

Objectives
Students will
• Discuss examples of peer pressure
• Identify reasons to abstain from sex
• Identify sexual pressures that teenagers experience
• Practice assertiveness skills
• Learn to interpret the pressures and messages given by media
• Discuss abstinence as the only 100% effective method of preventing pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infections

Concepts
1. Reasons teens choose to abstain from sex.
2. Sexual activity carries the obvious risks of pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infections.
3. Premature sexual activity has additional risks, both physical and emotional.
4. A higher rate of cervical cancer has been found in females who begin sexual intercourse at a young age and have multiple partners.
5. Sexual activity has been correlated with factors such as low self-esteem and dependency.
6. Although hormones influence behavior, they should not be allowed to govern actions. Life is more complicated when involved in a sexual relationship. Emphasize and show through class discussion that the advantages to abstaining outweigh the disadvantages.
7. Sexuality is an inherent part of one’s personality that is influenced by the media and peers.

Materials
• Chalkboard/chalk or flip chart/marker
• Activity sheet “Refusal Skills”
• Activity sheet “Assertiveness”

Activity Choices
1. Introduce the lesson by talking about pressure. People are under all kinds of pressure. Have students bring to class examples of TV commercials, magazine ads, advertising jingles that pressure the consumer to buy a product. What messages do they give about sexuality? Do they stereotype, give unhealthy messages, give incorrect messages?
2. Discuss the following
   A. Sometimes pressure can be serious. If pressure has to do with sex, then it is sexual pressure.
B. The first step in dealing with pressure is learning how to recognize it. How can a person tell if he/she is being pressured?
C. One may feel pressured if they choose sexual abstinence.
D. Some may feel they have no choices about becoming sexually involved.
3. Have students get into groups of 3 or 4 where they feel comfortable and list reasons that teens give for having sex.
4. Share information with total group and record on board.
5. Indicate where pressure comes from in each of the situations.
6. Discuss peer pressure. Students can give examples of healthful and harmful ways to influence their peers. Have them discuss ways in which they have been influenced.
7. Have students complete activity sheet “Refusal Skills”
8. Have students complete activity sheet “Assertiveness”
9. Elicit from the students a list of reasons for not having sexual intercourse and record the responses on the board.

**Vocabulary**
1. abstinence
2. assertiveness
3. sexual pressure
REFUSAL SKILLS

Directions: Use the Refusal Skills steps to resolve the following pressures. These may be done by role-play or in written form.

1. Let’s do it this one time
2. No one will know if we have sex
3. Everyone is having sex, why not us
4. Being a virgin is obsolete

STEPS
1. Give a reason for your refusal.

2. Use behaviors to reinforce what is meant, look directly at the person.

3. Show how one cares about the person.

4. Provide alternatives.

5. Take a definite action, if pressure persists, tell the person that the relationship cannot continue.
ASSERTIVENESS

Directions: Use the following techniques to respond in writing to scenarios given by the teacher where a student must be assertive. (Example: Your date wants to go out and “park” in a deserted area.)

STEPS
1. Be honest and direct. Say what one means and mean what one says (honesty).

2. Stand up for one’s rights and values (respect and self-respect).

3. Don’t put the other person down (fairness and equality).

4. Think about whether this makes one feel good about himself/herself (self-esteem).