



## **Pregnancy Support Services Curriculum Overview**

Pregnancy Support Services of Durham & Chapel Hill (PSS) offers a Healthy Relationship curriculum designed to align with middle school and high school health classes. All statistics and research are taken from credible organizations, including but not limited to: The Center for Disease Control, The American Psychological Association, The American College of Pediatrics, and The Medical Institute for Sexual Health. Parents are encouraged to follow-up with their child and ask about class activities.

Middle School and High School Presentations include:

- Media & Cultural Influence
- Emotional & Psychological Effects
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Infections (STDs/STIs)
- Basics of Sexual Relationships
- Healthy/Unhealthy Relationships
- Application

### **Media & Cultural Influence**

The presentation begins with a discussion on the power of media culture and messaging and how they influence the sexual pressures that teens encounter today. For instance, research shows strong links between lyrics describing sex in popular music and youth sexual activity. Students are encouraged to consider the relationship implications of these pop culture messages in music and other forms of media and are challenged to evaluate whether or not sexual activity promotes physical, emotional and relational health.

### **Emotional & Psychological Effects**

It is important for students to understand that sex is not just a physical activity, but an intimate encounter that involves the mind, body, and emotions. Students are educated about brain development, the neurochemicals involved in sexual activity, and the emotional and psychological impact of being sexually active.

Groups discuss relevant research such as the increased probability of divorce if a person's first sexual experience is with someone other than one's spouse and the impact of multiple partners upon an individual's ability to bond in a healthy way.

## Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Infections (STDs/STIs)

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reported in August 2016: “STDs take a particularly heavy toll on young people. CDC estimates that youth ages 15-24 make up just over one quarter of the sexually active population, but account for half of the 20 million new sexually transmitted infections that occur in the United States each year.”

The CDC reports that the only sure way to avoid STDs is to not engage in vaginal, oral, or anal sexual activity. In our presentation, we use an activity which allows students to see firsthand how quickly STDs can spread. Practical information on how to get free STD testing is outlined in this presentation.

## Healthy/Unhealthy Relationships

Familial relationships, friendships, and romantic relationships all fall somewhere on the spectrum between healthy and abusive/dangerous. We communicate to students that they are inherently valuable as persons and have the right to be free from coercive, abusive, or manipulative relationships. We educate them on how to ask good questions about their relationships and where to go if they need help.

Students are given the opportunity to complete a worksheet of “Refusal Tactics” should they need them. We end our time with discussions about integrity and healthy relational goals. Students also engage in a brainstorming activity to identify healthy and safe ways to spend time with others.

## Application

Students participate in various activities, roleplays, demonstrations, and group discussions to help solidify major themes and key learning objectives. These activities facilitate discussion on ways to evaluate whether or not a relationship is healthy, how to remove oneself from an unhealthy relationship, and how to realistically assess someone’s character and integrity before becoming intimately involved. Students have many opportunities to ask questions and discuss relationships and sexual pressures in a healthy way.

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### **List of Resources for Healthy Relationships Presentations:**

Abbott, Douglas A., and Michelle Cretella. "At Risk: Single Young Women Having Non-Marital Sex." Web.

Daily Media Use Among Children and Teens Up Dramatically From Five Years Ago." The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 20 Jan. 2010. Web. 23 Aug. 2016.

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McIlhane, Joe S., and Freda McKissic. Bush. *Hooked: New Science on How Casual Sex Is Affecting Our Children*. Chicago: Northfield Pub., 2008. Print.

Metcalf, J., & Mischel, W. (1999). A hot/cool system analysis of delay of gratification: Dynamics of willpower. *Psychological Review*, 106(1), 3–19.

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On Point. *Is It Love*. N.p.: On Point, 2009. Print. (*Adapted from: The Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Center, DVIRC, 2009; But I Love Him, Dr. Jill Murray, 2000*).

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The Medical Institute. *The Condom*. Austin: Medical Institute, 2015. Print.

*Sex, Condoms and STDs: What We Now Know*. Rep. 2.0nd ed. Austin: Medical Institute, 2003. 1-32. Print. Monograph.

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Soltero, Alvaro J. "The Relationship Between Social Media and Self-worth." Web log post. *The Social U*. Web.

"Women Who Began Having Sex as Teens Are More Likely to Divorce, Study Finds." *ScienceDaily*. 14 June 2011. Web. <<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/06/110615091059.htm>>.

### **Websites Referenced:**

<https://www.justice.gov/criminal-ceos/citizens-guide-us-federal-law-child-pornography>

<http://famm.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/FS-Intro-to-Child-Porn-8.22.13-fixed.pdf>

<http://www.cdc.gov/std/>