

# BEYOND THE BASICS: UPDATES AND TRENDS IN ADOLESCENT REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

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Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (APP) Program

# Adolescent Reproductive Health Workshop

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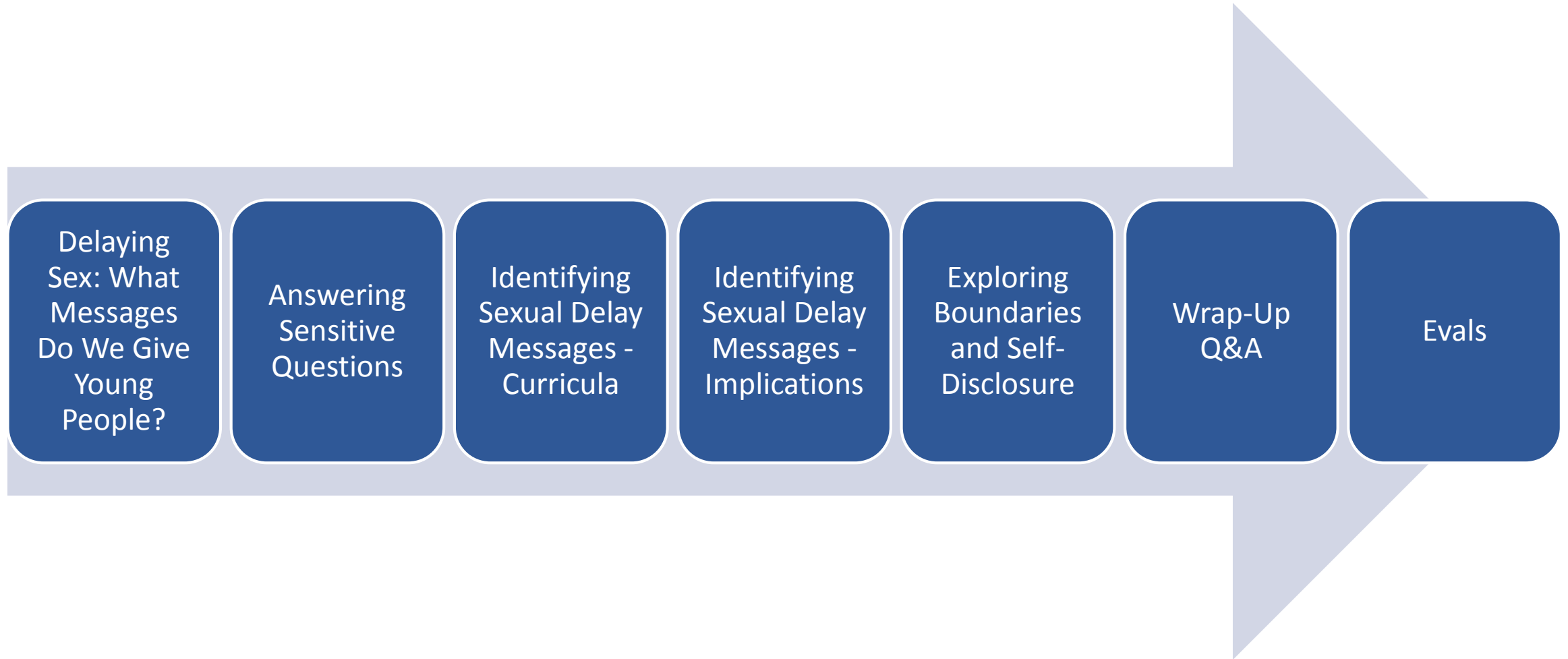
This presentation was developed for the Family and Youth Services Bureau under Contract No. HHSP23320150039I, Task Order 3.

# Introductions

- Your name
- Key takeaway (skill, concept, something new) from yesterday
- Something others would not know just by looking at you
- Your expectations for today's training



# Agenda: Day 2



# Objectives

By the end of this presentation, participants will be able to:

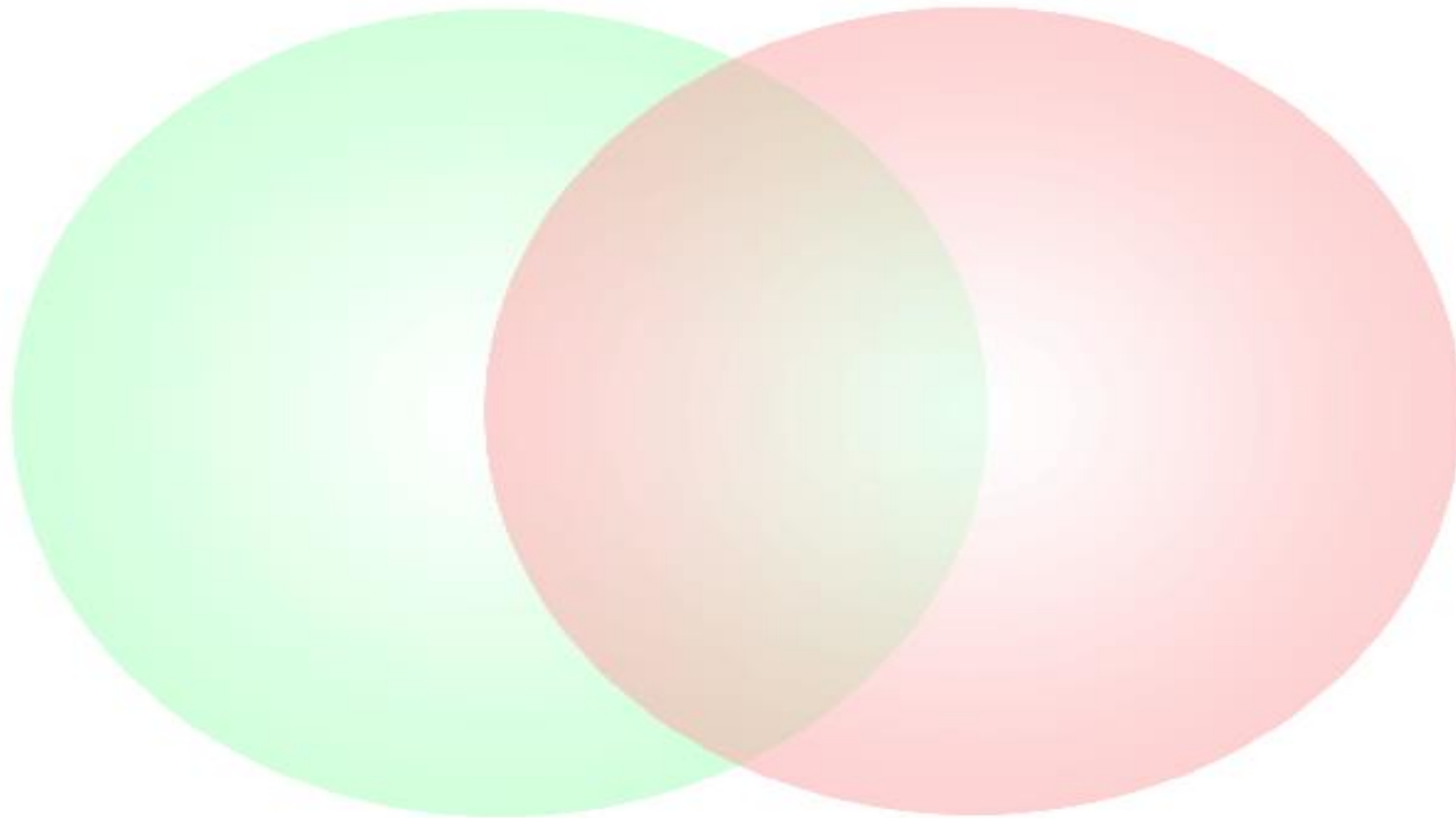
- Identify both positive and negative abstinence and/or sexual delay messages conveyed to youth in sexual health education programming.
- Explain the benefits of delaying sexual activity with positive, affirming messages.
- Confidently answer sensitive questions from youth about sexual health, STIs, and contraceptives.
- Describe advantages and disadvantages of disclosing personal information when teaching sex education.

# Delayed Sexual Activity: What Messages Do We Give Young People?



# Sex Negativity

# Sex Positivity



# Delayed Sexual Activity Means...What?

- Being clear about what we mean when we say delayed sexual activity, abstinence, or sexual risk avoidance
- Usually oral, anal, and vaginal sex
- What do your youth think?



# Does Sex Negativity = Traditional Abstinence Messages?

## Sex Positivity:

- ✓ Sex is healthy and positive.
- ✓ Sexual expression is essentially good and healthy.
- ✓ Sex should be consensual.
- ✓ Sex should be protected (pregnancy and STIs).

## Sex Negativity:

- ✓ Seeks to repress or control sexuality.
- ✓ Sees sex as problematic, disruptive, dangerous.
- ✓ Many times has a religious element.

Queen, Carol; Comella, Lynn (2008). "The Necessary Revolution: Sex-Positive Feminism in the Post-Barnard Era". *The Communication Review* 11 (3): 274–291.

# Our Words Have Power

- “Wait until you can handle the consequences.”
  - Instead, say “wait until you’re emotionally ready.”
  - Consequences less about pregnancy/STI or health risks and more about social and emotional risks – changing relationship dynamics, emotions if relationship ends, vulnerability, etc.
- “Abstinence is the best choice.”
  - “Not having sex is the only method that’s 100% effective” or “Abstinence is the MOST effective way to prevent pregnancy and infections.”

# Helpful Teaching Strategies

- Abstinence is a loaded term! Consider dropping it entirely. Instead, say “not having sex” or “waiting to have sex.”
- Caution against “choose not to have sex” (being mindful of coercion, consent, and trauma).
- Remove focus on virginity.
- Virginity is a social, rather than medical, construct.
- If you talk about abstinence with already-sexually active youth: proceed with caution and sensitivity!



# Continuum of Sexual Behavior



No sexual contact  
of any kind

Unprotected oral,  
anal, or vaginal sex

# It's Not All or Nothing!

- What other things can you do with a partner?
- What kind of terminology works best for you?
- Activities people can do that won't cause pregnancy or infection...
  - Let's brainstorm!



# A Note About Safety

- Mention risks of transmission, specifically skin-to-skin.
- Pregnancy is possible if semen or pre-ejaculate is near the vaginal opening.

# Empowering Youth to be Safe and Healthy

- A person can decide not to have sex:
  - for any reason,
  - for any length of time,
  - even if they're already had sex with that person,
  - even if they've been forced to have sex in the past.
- Delaying sex requires SKILLS! It is not a fallback or default to having sex – it's also a choice and requires skills to use.
- Help youth to take control of their (sex) lives by choosing what they want or don't want to do sexually.

# Help Youth to Consider

- Am I clear about why I don't want to have sex?
- Am I aware of situations that could make not having sex difficult for me? Can I avoid them?
- Alcohol and other drugs can affect my judgment and decision-making ability. How do I feel about not using them?
- Are there people in my life I can talk to about my decision not to have sex? Will they be supportive?



# Beyond the Usual Reasons

- Advantages for teens:
  - Sexual satisfaction without worry about pregnancy or STI
  - Helps people learn about their bodies and what they like (or don't)
  - Others?
- Disadvantages for teens:
  - Outercourse can lead to intercourse without thinking about protection from pregnancy or STI
  - Physical touching can lead to sex if partners do not communicate their physical limits or talk about consent
  - Others?



# What About the Guys?



# See You in 15 Minutes!



# Answering Sensitive Questions – Part 2



# Underlying Motivations

- Personal
- Information seeking
- Shock value
- Am I normal?
- Permission seeking

# Facilitator Anxiety

- Not knowing the answer, worrying about giving out misinformation
- Being uncomfortable with the content
- Being unfamiliar with slang terms
- Concerns about whether an answer is age-appropriate
- Being uncomfortable with navigating values-based questions
- Concerns about how to reframe shock-value questions
- Maintaining clear boundaries with personal questions



# Helpful Tips

- Be aware of your body language and tone of voice.
- Respond to or at least acknowledge all questions, affirming the young person.
- Paraphrase the slang with the correct terminology.
- If you don't know the answer, admit it.
- Give a brief response to developmentally inappropriate questions.
- Ask for questions in writing.
- Practice responding to challenging questions.
- For some...for others...for you...

# 5-Step Model

Clarify what is being asked.

Determine why they are asking the question without saying “why.”

Affirm the young person for asking.

Give an accurate and direct response OR commit to getting the answer and reporting back.

Check for understanding.

## General guidelines:

- Nonverbal cues
- Deep breath
- Take your time
- Explore a range of values
- Refrain from stating your own values

# Answering Sensitive Questions – Practice Time!



# Practice Session #1

- Form small groups of 3–4 people.
- Rotate around the room to the question card stacks.
  - We'll take 8–10 minutes with each group of questions.
  - Each person should have the opportunity to answer at least one question, acting as a facilitator. Do your best to respond as though you were in front of a young person. Avoid paraphrasing if you can!



# Practice Session #2

## ***Fishbowl!***

- Divide into slightly larger groups.
- One pair will come into the middle of the circle and role-play answering questions while the rest of the group observes.
- Debrief.
- Switch.



# Processing

- How did it feel to use the five-step model?
- Do you think models like these will help you?
- How is using this model different than your existing strategy?
- How are you going to use this with youth?

# Let's Eat!



# Identifying Abstinence Messages: A Look at Curricula

- Form small groups
- Is content acceptable? Problematic? Why?
- How would your youth respond to this?
- How could you change this abstinence message into a positive frame for youth?

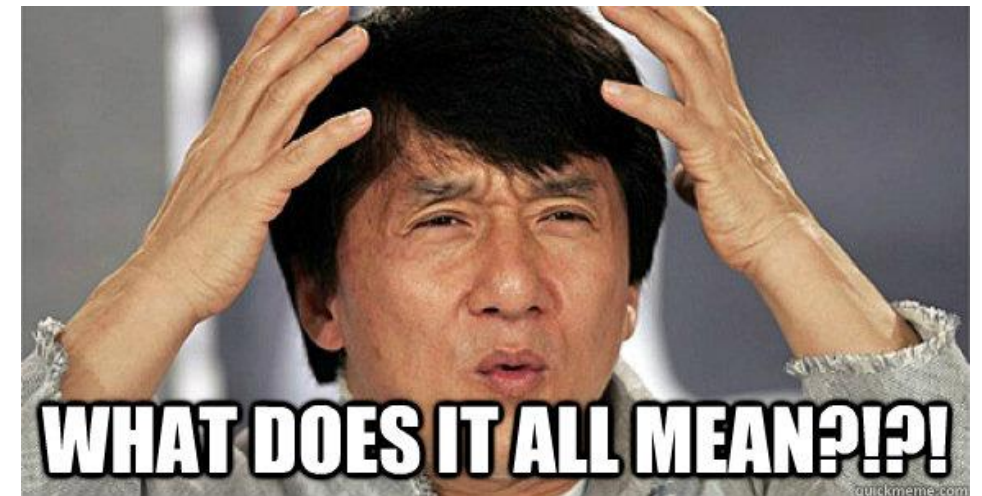


# Common Abstinence Messages and Trauma

- Avoid shaming language:
  - “Most teen moms end up living in poverty.”
  - “Experimenting with sex to satisfy curiosity is unhealthy.”
  - “Abstinence shows that you are stronger than peer pressure.”
  - “Abstaining may ultimately help people be better lovers; it allows them to explore a wide range of ways to express love and sexual feelings.”
  - “Nearly two-thirds of teens who had sex say they wish they had waited longer.”

# Identifying Sexual Delay Messages: Implications for Your Work

- Form small groups
- Discuss the implications of this information on your current implementations.



**See You in 15 Minutes!**



**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
TAKE A  
BREAK**

# Exploring Boundaries and Self-Disclosure



# Processing

- What were some of the similarities and differences you noticed?
- Were there any situations where you thought you might disclose sometimes, but not others? If so, what might change your mind?
- Are there ever times that we disclose things unintentionally? If so, how?
- What are some of the things you will consider regarding disclosure in the future?

# Brainstorming



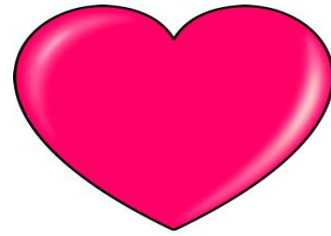
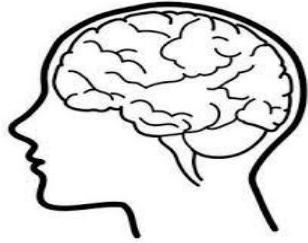
# Pro and Cons of Self-Disclosure

- Write down at least two pros and two cons to disclosing personal information with your youth.
- What might you do differently as a result of exploring issues around self-disclosure?

Disclosing personal information has pros and cons. It is important to consider your rationale for disclosing that information and whether your local policies would support that disclosure. Also remember: once you disclose information about yourself, you can *never* undo that decision.



# Reflecting



## Wrap-Up Q & A

# Thank You!



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