

# Factors Affecting Decision Making About Sexual Activity

*Lesson Plan*

**Resource:** H&PE Elementary Resources

**Unit:** Human Development and Sexual Health

**Grade(s):** 8

**Lesson:** 3 of 5

## H&PE Curriculum Expectations

**2019 H&PE Curriculum Expectations:** A1.1, A1.2, A1.5, D1.4

## Materials

**[Teacher Resource: Anecdotal Recording Chart \(PDF\)](#)**

## Learning Goals

We are learning to use our self-awareness skills to identify and explain factors that can affect an individual's decisions about sexual activity and identify sources of support regarding sexual health.

## Overall Assessment

Use the Teacher Resource: Anecdotal Recording Chart to observe and provide written and verbal feedback about students' understanding of factors that can affect an individual's decisions about sexual activity and identify sources of support for sexual health.

## Minds-On

Share the learning goals with the class and co-construct success criteria with students. Consider posting the success criteria in the learning space for reference throughout the lesson.

Remind students of general group rules, including the importance of showing respect for others' ideas and opinions.

Write the term 'Sexual Activity' for students to reference.

Using Direct Instruction, explain to students that the term 'Sexual Activity' refers to all types of sexual activity, including online interactions (e.g., sexting, sharing intimate photos) and in-person interactions (e.g., genital-on-genital contact, vaginal and anal intercourse, and oral-genital contact). When making decisions, it is important to weigh the pros and cons, and consider all the factors that might influence the decision. Identifying these factors is helpful to make informed healthy decisions about future goals, engaging in relationships with others, and engaging in sexual activity.

Use a **Think, Pair, Share** strategy for students to generate a list of factors that can influence a person's thoughts, feelings and decisions about sexual activity. Record students' responses.

*Student responses:*

- "Lack of interest in sexual activity"
- "Perceived personal readiness"
- "Peer pressure"
- "Pressure from one's partner"
- "Desire"
- "Curiosity"
- "Self-concept"
- "Maturity level"
- "Awareness and acceptance of gender identity and sexual orientation"
- "Physical or cognitive disabilities and possible associated assumptions"
- "Legal concerns (such as the legal age of consent)"
- "Awareness of the risk of sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections (STBBIs)"
- "Access to prevention methods to reduce the risk of getting or passing on a STBBI or unintended pregnancy"

- “Concerns about the risk of becoming a parent”
- “Use of alcohol or drugs”
- “Personal or family values”
- “Religious beliefs”
- “Cultural teachings”
- “Access to information”
- “Media messages”

## Action

Have students reference the student-generated list of factors that affect decisions about sexual activity to identify the five factors that they feel are most important/influence them the most when making informed choices about sexual activity. Have students pair up with an [Elbow Partner](#) to share their five factors and explain why they are the most important/influential factors for them. Have partners note the similarity and differences between the factors that influence them to highlight and that the factors that influence one person’s decisions about sexual activity may not be the same as their partner. It is important that individuals who choose to engage in sexual activity have a shared understanding of the choices and decisions of everyone involved.

Use the following teacher prompts to lead a large group discussion about factors that influence decisions about sexual activity and sources of support that an individual might access regarding their sexual health.

- **Teacher prompt:** “How would thinking about your personal limits and life goals influence decisions you may choose to make about sexual activity?”

*Student responses:*

- “Thinking in advance about what I value and what my personal limits are would help me to respond and make decisions that I feel comfortable with in different situations.”
- “I would be able to approach a situation with more confidence and stick to what I had planned.”
- “It gives you more time to think about what you want or need.”

- “I would be less likely to be caught off guard and have to react without having thought through the options and possible consequences.”
- **Teacher prompt:** “Why is it important to get information from a credible source before making a decision that has to do with sexual health or sexual activity? Why is this important for all students – including those with physical, mental, emotional, or cognitive challenges?”

*Student responses:*

- - “Having more information, and information that you can trust helps you make better decisions.”
  - “Taking time to get more information also gives you more time to think.”
  - “People who are well informed about sexual health and who are aware of the possible health consequences of becoming sexually active will be more likely to use the protection they need.”
  - “People with physical or cognitive disabilities still need information about sexual health, just like everybody else. Everyone has the right to access the information they need that addresses their needs or concerns.”
  - “People deal with different issues and need sexual health information that is adapted to their particular needs, or with variations on the same issues, like privacy and self-image.”
- **Teacher prompt:** “Where can people go for support for questions or decisions related to their sexual health?”

*Student responses:*

- - “A health care provider like a doctor, nurse or public health practitioner is a good source to get informed, credible information.”
  - “There are reputable websites that provide information. It is important to check a few websites rather than relying on one.”
  - “Trusted adults can also be helpful when making decisions or needing support like parents, elders, a counsellor or a teacher.”

Divide students into groups of 3. Post the following “Dear Grade 8...” questions for groups to reference.

Dear Grade 8...

- “How do I let someone know that I like them? How can I find out if they like me?” – Curious and Confused
- “I’m in Grade 8. What do I do when my parents/guardians say “no way” to having a romantic/dating relationship?” – Feeling Controlled
- “How can I break up with someone without hurting their feelings?” – Hurting Soul
- “What are some ways to say “No” to my partner?” – Not Ready
- “I’m in a relationship that is getting serious. I am confused about sex, and I am afraid I might lose my partner. How can I keep my relationship without having sex?” – Too Close
- “My partner has a temper and does not let me spend time with my other friends. When my partner gets jealous, they twist my arm and say I deserve it for talking back. What should I do?” – Confused
- “Some of my friends are dating but I haven’t met anyone that I like. I’m only in Grade 8 and dating doesn’t interest me. Am I weird?” – No Interest
- “I’m pretty scared about dating and being pressured to do things I’m not ready for. What should I do?” – Scared
- “Many of my friends are interested in people who are a different gender, but I am not. I’m confused. What should I do?” – Questioning
- “I have a partner that does not let me spend time with my other friends. What should I do?” – Missing My Friends
- “I know someone likes me, but I’m not interested in them that way. What should I do?” – Feeling Scared
- “My friend and I like the same person. What should I do?” – Friendly Feud
- “I have cerebral palsy. My friends think that because of my cerebral palsy, I’m not interested in being in a relationship with someone, but I am! What can I do?” – Interested
- “I want to ask someone out. If they say no, what are some helpful ways I can deal with my feelings?” – Feeling Nervous

Inform groups that they are members of their "Healthy School Team". The team has developed a blog, inviting all Grade 8 students to submit their relationship questions. Their responsibility is to respond to the submitted questions. Have groups respond to the question(s) of their choices, using what they have learned about consent, factors that influence decisions about sexual activity and sources of support. Invite groups to share their responses with other groups or with the class, using the sharing to consolidate and/or extend student understanding of consent, factors that influence decisions about sexual activity and sources of support.

## Consolidation

Have students complete an [Exit Card](#) to answer the following question:

What are your takeaways from the lesson that will support you in all future relationships? Why?