



Sexual Health Education Instructional Materials Review

Curriculum Title: Relationship Smarts Plus 4.0

Year Published: 2018

Publisher: Dibble Institute

Website: <https://www.dibbleinstitute.org/relationship-smarts-plus-4-0/>

Full or Supplemental: Supplemental

Grade Level: Secondary

Student Population: General

Duration/Number of Lessons: 13 one-hour lessons

Format and Features: 13 lesson plans, 1 student workbook, 4 posters, activity cards, handouts

Evidence-based/informed: Evidence-based

National Standards Alignment: Not evident

Healthy Youth Act Compliance: With modification (supplementing with birth control/STD prevention information)

AIDS Omnibus Act Compliance: N/A

Bias Free Materials: With modification (see reviewer comments)

Primary Topical Areas (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abortion | <input type="checkbox"/> Identity/Orientation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Abstinence | <input type="checkbox"/> Online Safety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy & Reproduction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anatomy and Physiology | <input type="checkbox"/> Puberty/Adolescent Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication/Decision-making | <input type="checkbox"/> Refusal Skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Condom Use | <input type="checkbox"/> STD Prevention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consent | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contraception | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Healthy relationships | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HIV Prevention | |

Reviewer Comments:

Reviewer 205

Overall, the information in the curriculum is good. It is accurate and comprehensive, covering a wide variety of topics, and many of them are covered in-depth including activities and discussions. Each lesson includes Teen-Parent activities, where teens can share and discuss the information with their parents.

The materials do appear to be promoting long-term relationships leading to marriage and children. While the message and information are accurate, this may not be reflective of the lived experience or desire of many teens. For example, the "Success Sequence" described in the curriculum includes completing high school, attending college or developing a trade, and then getting married and having children. This prescribed path may not be an option for many youth, and youth, for a variety of reasons, may not want to pursue this specific path.

The fourth lesson talks about "Smart Relationships". This language is judgmental, implying that youth who may not use the principles are not smart. This is particularly impactful since many high school students have already started dating prior to learning of these principles. There are also other instances where the language is judgmental, such as in the Success Sequence described above.

The curriculum includes four lessons on sexual decision-making, pregnancy, and STDs. In the parenting session, it specifically promotes a nuclear family with one mom and one dad. This is not reflective of the diversity of family lives that youth may currently have or may have in the future.

The materials do include lots of videos and links to music videos to enhance the message and make them more relevant. Many of the included videos are outdated. Some of the music videos are older, from before 2010, and may not be relevant to high school students anymore. Also, the visual appearance of the slides is not very engaging or appealing.

The images and scenarios do include some diversity, but it is minimal. The curriculum is very proscribed and does not have very many opportunities to adapt to the culture or needs of the audience.

Reviewer 209

While this curriculum is substantive in length - it includes 12 one-hour sessions - It does not comprehensively address the topics that it covers. This reviewer could not find the word "consent" in this curriculum, and the latter half of it which is dedicated to sexual decision making, unplanned pregnancies, and STIs focuses mainly on the consequences of sex and relies on shame to discourage students from engaging in sexual activity. This curriculum also lacks representation for LGBT people - in fact, one of the few references to Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) individuals contains a statistic about higher rates of sexual assault in youth LGB communities outside of a larger context of societal oppression and disproportionate levels of violence. Identifying communities that experience higher rates of violence without any explanation of why can have the effect of fostering victim blaming attitudes. Finally, this curriculum never defines the term sexual assault, and incorrectly uses the phrase "forced to have sexual intercourse" several times which serves to dismiss experiences of sexual violence that do not include intercourse and is also hetero-normative. I would recommend that people avoid this curriculum.

Reviewer 201

For grades 8-12 and delivered as thirteen, 1-hour lessons. It is designed to help teens learn how to make wise choices about relationships, dating, partners, and sex. It is an LGBTQ inclusive, relationship skills curriculum, including pressure situations, communication, and maturity. From a diversity perspective, this is the most inclusive curriculum that I have seen.