

## MORE THAN CONDOMS

### Using STD Videos to Model Communication and Fight Stigma, Part 1

(Note: This is hour 1 of a 2 hour series, and should be followed by **"SO, YOU HAVE AN STD."**)

#### **Objectives**

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

1. Demonstrate 2 ways to talk about safer sex with a partner.
2. Demonstrate 2 ways to talk about STD testing with a partner.
3. List where to get safer sex supplies and get STD testing.

#### **Audience**

Late high school or college-aged youth (ages 16-22) who have already been exposed to the basics of STDs.

#### **Time**

1 hour

#### **Rationale**

Teaching sexual communication skills is an important component of sex education. Without the ability to communicate about sexual health, young people are not able to make and follow through on healthy decisions and may be put at risk of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Classroom settings are limited in their ability to illustrate what healthy communication between partners looks like in real-life situations. Videos modeling conversations about STDs offer new and compelling ways to show teens what healthy and respectful communication looks like when young people are in sexual situations. The videos on which this lesson is based were designed to help young people feel more comfortable and confident in their ability to talk about STD prevention and management with a sexual partner. This lesson plan should be followed up with **"SO, YOU HAVE AN STD."**

#### **Materials**

- Flip chart paper or board, markers, tape
- One flip chart paper with the following pre-written on it:
  - STD Prevention Tools
    - ✓ Abstinence from all sexual activity
    - ✓ Abstinence from the most high-risk activities (i.e. anal and vaginal sex)
    - ✓ Condoms
    - ✓ Dental dams

- ✓ Gloves
- ✓ Lube
- ✓ Regular testing - both you and your partner
- ✓ Being honest about your status - both you and your partner
- A computer with Internet access, projector, and speakers to show the videos.
- Educator Resources: STD Role-Play: Scenarios (cut into cards), My Plan worksheets (cut in half to make half sheets)
- Optional: Extra pens or pencils for participants to fill out handouts.

### **Introduction (2 minutes)**

- Tell the group that today's lesson is about talking with a partner about STDs, including how to prevent spreading them, getting tested, and how to tell someone you have an STD. Talking about these topics might seem scary or unnecessary, but being able to have these conversations with a sexual partner is an important part of a healthy sex life.

### **Preventing and Managing STDs: The Basics (10 min)**

1. Tell participants: "Let's talk about the things that are involved in preventing the spread of STDs. What are some of things you need to use/do to help prevent spreading STDs?" Allow participants to respond and write down their responses on the board/flip chart.

Show flip chart/white board with the following pre-written on it, and ask the group if there are any things on this list missing from the one they came up with.

#### STD Prevention Tools

- ✓ Abstinence from all sexual activity
  - ✓ Abstinence from the most high-risk activities (i.e. anal and vaginal sex)
  - ✓ Condoms
  - ✓ Dental dams
  - ✓ Gloves
  - ✓ Lube
  - ✓ Regular testing - both you and your partner
  - ✓ Being honest about your status - both you and your partner
2. Tell participants: "A lot of people think preventing STDs is only about using condoms, but it's just as important to get tested (and treated if you have an STD), and to be honest about any STDs you have. Communication about STDs is really important to be healthy."

### **Talking About Safer Sex (10 minutes)**

1. Tell the group that now we're going to watch a video that shows what it looks like to talk to a partner about safer sex.
2. Show "How to Talk About Safer Sex" video at this link: [p.ppfa.org/SaferSexTalk](http://p.ppfa.org/SaferSexTalk), or via the playlist ([p.ppfa.org/TalkingSTDs](http://p.ppfa.org/TalkingSTDs)).
3. Discussion questions:
  - a. What are some phrases people used to bring up safer sex with their partner?  
*Make sure at least one example is given from each scene.*
  - b. What were some reasons why people didn't want to have safer sex? What are some other reasons you think people you know would resist having safer sex?
  - c. When their partner was resistant, what are "comebacks" people used to make it clear why safer sex was important or non-negotiable?  
*Make sure at least one example is given from each scene.*
  - d. How did each pair come to agreement?  
*Make sure at least one example is given from each scene.*

### **Talking About STD Testing (10 minutes)**

1. Tell the group that now we're going to watch a video that shows how to talk about STD testing.
2. Show "How to Talk About STD Testing" video at this link: [p.ppfa.org/TestingTalk](http://p.ppfa.org/TestingTalk), or via the playlist ([p.ppfa.org/TalkingSTDs](http://p.ppfa.org/TalkingSTDs)).
3. Discussion questions:
  - a. What are some phrases people used to bring up STD testing with their partner?  
*Make sure at least one example is given from each scene.*
  - b. What were some reasons why people didn't want to get tested? What are some other reasons you think you know would resist getting tested?

- c. When their partner wasn't sure about it, what are "comebacks" people used to make it clear why safer sex was important or non-negotiable?  
*Make sure at least one example is given from each scene.*
- d. How did each pair come to agreement?  
*Make sure at least one example is given from each scene.*

### **Scenarios Practice (18 minutes)**

1. Tell the group that now we're going to get into pairs and practice conversation skills. Arrange the group into pairs. Once they're in their pairs, explain that they'll each get 2 scenarios, and will each have a chance to practice while their partner listens.
2. Give each pair two cards from the **STD Role-Play: Scenarios** and ask the pairs to work together for 2 minutes to answer the 3 questions on the card. Each person in the pair will have a chance to go.
3. After 2 minutes, tell them to switch to the second card and have the other person in the pair answer the 3 questions.
4. Ask for one or two volunteers to role-play in front of the large group what they said for question 3 on the card, and ask the following process questions after each role-play.

Process the role-plays using the following discussion questions:

- a. What happened during the role-plays?
- b. How did it feel to practice these conversations?
- c. How did it feel to get a negative or resistant reaction?
- d. What could happen if you don't bring up these topics with your partner?  
*(Answers may include: you could get or give someone an STD that might not get tested/treated leading to health problems down the road)*
- e. What are the benefits of having these conversations?  
*(Answers may include: you can get what you want; your partner can also get what they want; you can have a healthier and safer time together; it's the right thing to do, etc.)*
- f. What could make it difficult to talk about safer sex/STDs in certain situations?
- g. What could you do to make it easier?
- h. What will you do differently now that you've seen the videos and practiced the role-plays?
- i. How confident do you feel about talking about STDs in your life?

### **Accessing Resources and Setting Intentions (8 minutes)**

1. Tell the group that a big part of being sexually healthy is being open and honest with your partner about STD prevention, including safer sex and getting tested. But we're going to take this one step further, so you have all the tools you need to do this in real life.
2. Ask participants where they would go to get condoms/dental dams. Write their answers down on the board.
3. Ask participants the order of steps they need to take to get tested for STDs from beginning to end (*i.e. find a doctor/health center, make an appointment, figure out how to get to the appointment/insurance/payment, ask questions while they're there, get any necessary treatment, tell any partners who need to get tested*). Write their answers down on the board in order, pausing to fill in any steps that they miss along the way.
4. Pass out local resources sheet from your community or write down [www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org) on the board telling the group that they can get condoms, dental dams, and STD testing at these places in their community. Remind them that condoms are also usually available in convenience stores and drugstores, but may be cheaper or even free at community health centers. STD testing is usually cheap or free, and quick and generally painless.
5. Let the group know that now that they know what steps they can take, they're going to write it down so they have a plan to get safer sex supplies and get tested. Hand out the Educator Resource: My Plan slips to participants. Give them 2 minutes to fill them out on their own.
6. Ask for a few participants to share what they wrote down with the group. Thank those who share.

## **Summary and Conclusion (2 minutes)**

Thank the participants for their efforts and emphasize the following key messages:

- Safer sex is about more than just condoms. There are lots of safer sex tools for different kinds of sex, including condoms (both internal/male and external/female), dental dams, gloves, lube, as well as abstinence and avoiding the kinds of sex that are most likely to pass STDs (like anal/vaginal sex).
- Talking to your partner about how you're going to protect against STDs will make you both more likely to do it.
- Preventing the spread of STDs is about more than safer sex - you've gotta get tested too. Talk to your doctor or nurse, like the staff at your local Planned Parenthood health center, about how often you should get tested and for which STDs.
- It's not enough for you to get tested - you need to talk to your partner about whether or not they've been tested, too. Talking openly and honestly with your partner about testing will make you both more likely to do it.
- There's a lot of fear and shame associated with STD prevention, but really it's just about staying healthy - just like brushing your teeth or getting a flu shot.

## My Plan

Given my sexual orientation and the kinds of sex I think I might have (whether now or in the future) I will have the following supplies on hand to have safer sex (circle all that apply):

Condoms (if circled, write down what kind): \_\_\_\_\_

Dental dams

Lube

Gloves

Others: \_\_\_\_\_

I will get my supplies from \_\_\_\_\_.

I will schedule an appointment at \_\_\_\_\_ for a sexual health check up and ask about which STDs I should be tested for and how often.

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## STD Role-Play: Scenarios

Copy and cut this page into cards. Each pair will share two cards. You may need to make multiple copies if you are working with a larger group. It's okay for multiple groups to get the same card.

<p><b>Scenario:</b></p> <p><i>You're at your partner's place and both decide you want to have sex. You ask if they have any condoms/dental dams, and they say no.</i></p> <p>What do you say next?</p>		<p><b>Scenario:</b></p> <p><i>You're hooking up with someone and think you might be about to have some kind of sex soon. They don't say anything about safer sex or having been tested.</i></p> <p>How do you bring it up?</p>
<p><b>Scenario:</b></p> <p><i>You have herpes so you only have sex with condoms/dental dams. You're in a pretty new relationship and your partner asks if you want to have sex. They don't know you have herpes and you want to be honest about it, and be clear about having safer sex.</i></p> <p>How do you bring it up with them?</p>		<p><b>Scenario:</b></p> <p><i>Your partner says you two don't need to have safer sex because you've never had sex and they've only had sex with one other person.</i></p> <p>What do you say next?</p>



<p><b>Scenario:</b></p> <p><i>You ask if your partner has been tested for STDs, and they say “No, I’m not a slut.”</i></p> <p>What do you say next?</p>	<p><b>Scenario:</b></p> <p><i>You’re in a pretty new relationship and you both want to have sex with each other, but you want to make sure you’re both tested first.</i></p> <p>How do you bring up getting tested together?</p>
<p><b>Scenario:</b></p> <p><i>Your partner mentions that they’ve been having a burning feeling when they pee in passing conversation about feeling a little under the weather.</i></p> <p>How do you bring up getting tested?</p>	<p><b>Scenario:</b></p> <p><i>You just got on birth control. Your partner says that it’s great you don’t have to use condoms anymore.</i></p> <p>How do you respond?</p>