Everything You Wanted to Know about the Middle School Sexual Health Scope & Sequence and How to Use It!

Maine Family Planning's 2018 *Middle School Sexual Health Scope & Sequence* provides a framework for implementing comprehensive and sequential sexual health education for middle school students. The *Scope* refers to the depth at which the topics are covered and the *Sequence* refers to the order in which the content should be taught for the best learning at each grade level.

Based on feedback from middle school educators, Maine Family Planning's education team designed this Scope & Sequence for students in grades 6-8 to meet the Maine Health Education Standards and align with the National Sexuality Education Standards. In Maine middle schools, there is a wide variation in how and when health topics are delivered. This Scope & Sequence offers up-to-date lessons and resources from trusted sources that can be easily adapted by middle school educators to meet the specific needs of their students within their unique timeframe, schedule, and learning environment.

Combined, the *Middle School Sexual Health Scope & Sequence* offers a total of twenty-seven lessons deemed essential - seven in 6th grade, ten in 7th grade, and ten in 8th grade. These lessons cover five primary topics:

- Puberty and Adolescent Development
- Identity
- Healthy Relationships and Communication
- Personal Safety and Consent
- Sexual Risk Reduction

For each learning objective there are one or more related lessons with additional resources and supplemental videos. They are designed, in a developmentally-appropriate and sequential way, so that lessons in each grade build upon ones from previous grades. The Scope & Sequence offers the opportunity to use some lessons as a review if the topic has previously been taught.

Consider the following steps as you refer to the Scope & Sequence to plan and implement sexual health education for your students. These suggestions can help prepare you as well as involve your administrator, additional school staff, and parents. This is not an exhaustive list, and you may identify additional steps that to ensure a successful program.

For additional support, reach out to Maine Family Planning's Prevention Program. Find out what we do and how we can support you on the For Educators page of our website, or contact education@mainefamilyplanning.org.
Plan with your building administrator.

Your principal's support of sexual health education is fundamental to its success. Comprehensive sexuality education is part of Maine education standards and law. While most parents are supportive of their child receiving sexual health information at school, oftentimes administrators are concerned about getting calls and concerns from parents, so plan ahead.

Involves parents.

Follow your school or district procedures if parents need to be informed that you are teaching sexual health. You may want to offer an information session or send out a letter so parents know what you are teaching. Provide resources to parents on talking with their children about sexual health and ideas on how to get the conversation started.

Notify and include other staff in your school.

Youth should have multiple trusted adults they can go to, if and when needed. If possible, involve the school nurse or counselor in some of the education. If a student needs to leave the room during the lessons, designate a person or place where they can go for support.

Become familiar with the Middle School Scope and Sequence sexual health topics, the lessons and additional resources.

For each grade level, review the topics, learning objectives, and lesson suggestions. Determine which lessons, additional resources, and supplemental videos best fit for your students' needs.

Assess what your students already know.

Simply asking your students a few questions to gauge their knowledge level can help you determine your focus. Talking with educators who had your students in prior grades may provide information to assist you in planning what you need to cover or review.

Make and use classroom agreements.

On the Maine Family Planning website, a tip sheet provides steps for building a safe learning environment, including sample agreements and background on why this is an important part of your sexual health education.

Offer students a way to ask anonymous questions.

Discuss with your students how you will answer questions and provide an anonymous question box in the classroom. Refer to Maine Family Planning's tip sheet on answering student questions.

Assessing Student Learning.

Assessment examples are included in the Middle School Scope and Sequence tables for each learning objective that you can use or tailor to meet your school or district requirements. If you have an assessment you use and would like to share, tells us about it!

Promote and model an inclusive classroom.

Your words, along with posters or signs displayed in the classroom, show tolerance and understanding of differences and let students know they are learning in a safe place. Use language that is inclusive of all genders and identities. We want all youth to feel seen and heard. Maine Family Planning's Prevention Program can offer resources on creating an inclusive classroom and links to organizations that can assist you in this area.