

# Teaching Sexual Health in Middle School

a Scope and Sequence Resource for Grades 6-8



2022 Edition

  
maine family planning

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# Middle School Sexual Health Scope & Sequence

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## BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Maine Family Planning's **2022 Middle School Sexual Health Scope & Sequence** (MS S&S) provides a framework for implementing comprehensive and sequential sexual health education for middle school age youth. The **Scope** refers to the depth in which the topics are covered. The **Sequence** refers to the order in which the content is delivered so that students build on concepts and skills from one level to the next.

Based on feedback from middle school educators, Maine Family Planning's education team designed this Scope & Sequence for students in grades 6-8 that meets the [Maine Health Education Standards](#) and aligns with the [National Sex Education Standards](#). In Maine middle schools, there is a wide variation in how and when sexual 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 lessons deemed essential for 6th through 8th grades. These lessons cover the seven topic areas below and can be taught in the order and grades that best meet your schedule and students' needs.

- **Puberty & Adolescent Sexual Development**
- **Gender Identity & Expression**
- **Sexual Orientation & Identity**
- **Healthy Relationships**
- **Interpersonal Violence**
- **Consent & Communication**
- **Sexual Health**

Each topic includes learning objectives with recommended lessons for each grade. They are designed to be developmentally appropriate and sequential so that lessons in each grade are built upon ones from previous grades. The Scope & Sequence offers the option to use some lessons as a review if the topic has been taught in prior grades.

The lessons and other resources included in the Middle School Sexual Health Scope & are drawn from outstanding organizations that have developed sexual health education resources and curricula. This includes: [Advocates for Youth 3Rs](#) (Rights, Respect, and Responsibility); [Teaching Sexual Health](#); [Welcoming Schools](#); [Amaze.org](#); [Common Sense Media](#) and [OUT Maine](#). The grades targeted for these lessons by their authors may differ from the recommended grade level in this resource. All are geared for middle-school age youth. There is room for flexibility, and the decision of what to teach in which grade is left to the capable hands of the educator.

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The contents of this Middle School Sexual Health Scope & Sequence includes:

- A helpful checklist with steps for getting started.
- An overview table including learning objectives and links to recommended lessons by topic and grade.
- A guide to using the supplemental [Amaze.org](https://www.amaze.org) videos and website.
- Individual topic user guides with an overview, suggestions for facilitators, descriptions of each lesson, assessment options, and resources where educators can learn more.

### CHECK LIST FOR GETTING STARTED

Consider the following steps while reviewing the Middle School Sexual Health Scope & Sequence and make an individualized plan to deliver sexual health education with your students. These tips and suggestions can help you prepare the steps needed for engaging students, creating a safe learning environment, involving administrators, school support staff, and parents, and identifying outside resources. Work within your school to identify additional steps that will help to ensure a successful implementation of a middle school sexual health program.

For additional support, reach out to Maine Family Planning’s education team. Find out what we do and how we can support you on Maine Family Planning’s [For Educators](https://www.maine.org/for-educators) webpage, or by contacting [education@mainefamilyplanning.org](mailto:education@mainefamilyplanning.org).



#### **Inform Administrators**

Gaining the support of your school leaders for delivering sexual health education in middle school is fundamental to its success. Comprehensive sexuality education is written into Maine statute and is part of Maine’s Health Education Standards. While research shows most parents are supportive of sexual health education being taught in schools, administrators should be informed of the contents and timing of when sexual health is taught so they are prepared if they receive concerns from parents.



#### **Involve Parents**

You may want to send out a letter, provide an informational session, or share online resources with parents informing them about your sexual health unit in advance. Offer to share your curriculum materials so parents know what you are teaching. Check with an administrator about school procedures for informing parents. Provide resources to parents for talking with their children about sexual health, providing ongoing education and having conversations at home. One example for promoting parent engagement is the [Amaze.org](https://www.amaze.org) parent page (see the *Guide to Using Amaze.org Videos*).



### **Notify and Include School Support Staff**

Youth benefit from having multiple trusted adults they can go to, if or when they have questions or need support. Inform and involve the school nurse, counselor, and other support staff as you deliver sexual health education. If a student needs to leave the room during the lessons, designate a person or place where they can go for support. Find out what resources are available from your school nurse or guidance office, such as availability of menstrual products, counseling, or other sexual health or relationship resources.



### **Identify Outside Resources**

Many people in Maine are impacted by domestic and intimate partner violence making this an important topic to address during your middle school sexual health unit and beyond. Maine has local prevention and education resources that can assist you and your school in addressing unhealthy relationships, consent and intimate partner violence, beyond or in conjunction with the lessons and curriculum resources in this Scope & Sequence. The Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence and the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault have regional centers that are available to support you. Prevention educators can work with you and your school to provide evidence-based education and approaches to help children and families stay safe.



### **Review the Topics, Lessons, Videos, and Resources in this Scope & Sequence**

Get familiar with the range of topics and resources for each grade level in this curriculum resource. Determine which lessons, resources, and supplemental videos best fit your students' needs and make adjustments based on your schedule and timing for delivering sexual health education. If you have questions or need assistance in making adaptations, reach out to [education@mainefamilyplanning.org](mailto:education@mainefamilyplanning.org).



### **Assess Your Students Knowledge**

Simply asking your students a few questions to gauge their knowledge level and interests can help you determine your priorities and focus. This is especially helpful if your students enter middle school from different elementary schools in your district. Talking with educators who taught health to your students in prior grades may provide information to assist you in planning where to start and what topics to cover or review.



### **Create 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. Have your students help you create the list of agreements, so they are invested in their learning together. If you have established classroom agreements, review and adapt them as needed to create a safe environment for learning about sexual health.



### **Make a Plan for Anonymous Questions**

Discuss with your students how you will answer their questions during the sexual health unit. Since students may be uncomfortable asking questions a loud, provide an anonymous question box in the classroom, or virtually. Prepare and practice how you will respond to student questions. Refer to [Maine Family Planning's Educator Tool](#) on tips and strategies for answering student questions.



### **Assess Student Learning**

Assessment examples are included in the Middle School Sexual Health Scope & Sequence User Guides for each topic objective that you can use or tailor to meet your school or district requirements. A simple exit slip at the end of a lesson or an activity like Kahoot or jeopardy game can be a great way to review and assess student learning individually or as a group.



### **Promote and Model an Inclusive Classroom**

Your words, along with posters or signs displayed in the classroom, can help with understanding, show respect for diversity, and let all students know they are learning in a safe place. Model language that is inclusive of all genders and identities; many of the lessons and videos model this language. Maine Family Planning's education team can offer resources on creating an inclusive classroom and within this document there are links to organizations that can assist you in creating an open and inclusive learning environment.

# WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU!



Maine Family Planning supports Maine educators in providing comprehensive, age-appropriate sexual health education to youth, grades K-12. Here are some ways that we can support you!



## WHERE TO START?

We can assist you as you build support from administration and parents for your curriculum. We can discuss strategies for building a safe learning environment for talking about sexual health and assist you in choosing topics and lessons for each of the grades you teach.



## TEACHING RESOURCES

We are your source for innovative, evidence-based, inclusive, developmentally appropriate sex education resources, including curricula, lesson plans, and online resources – all vetted by educators like you!



## ON-THE-GROUND ASSISTANCE

Need help modifying lessons, guest speaking or modeling activities, talking to others, and understanding health education standards? We're here for you, every step of the way.



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our in-person and virtual skill-based trainings, workshops, and conferences keep educators up-to-date on relevant topics related to sexual health.



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Let us connect you with our clinics and other local resources and organizations to supplement your work and support healthier outcomes among youth.

## GET IN TOUCH WITH US TODAY!

[education@mainefamilyplanning.org](mailto:education@mainefamilyplanning.org)

[www.mainefamilyplanning.org/for-educators](http://www.mainefamilyplanning.org/for-educators)



## Did you know?

Maine Family Planning operates 18 clinics throughout the state offering confidential, affordable sexual and reproductive health care to people of all ages.

For more information, call 207-922-3222  
or visit us online at [MaineFamilyPlanning.org](http://MaineFamilyPlanning.org)



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## A GUIDE TO USING AMAZE.ORG VIDEOS IN YOUR SEXUAL HEALTH UNIT

### WHAT IS AMAZE.ORG?

Amaze.org creates animated sex education videos with input from youth and sexual health professionals. Their engaging and educational videos provide age-specific and medically accurate information that is shame free and helps young people understand their bodies, feelings, and relationships. Video topics include puberty, sexual orientation, gender identity, personal safety, healthy relationships, pregnancy and reproduction, and STIs and HIV. The Amaze.org website adds new videos on a regular basis and includes features for helping you identify videos and strategies that will help you deliver your sexual health lessons.

- The Age Guide helps you find videos designed for the developmental needs of your students.
- The Educator Tab includes toolkits and lesson plans that incorporate Amaze.org videos.
- The Parents Tab includes parent guides for having ‘the talks’ at home and a way to sign-up for their Askable Parent Challenge newsletter. A great way to extend learning at home is to share with parents/guardians the topic of the day and provide a link to an appropriate Amaze.org video. Parents/guardians and students can view the video together and use the prompting questions for discussion.
- The AMAZE Around the World map connects you to videos dubbed in different languages by youth around the globe.

### HOW CAN EDUCATORS USE AMAZE.ORG?

Consider using an Amaze.org video to introduce a new topic, as a quick review of topics already taught, or to provide additional information that your lesson did not cover.

Below are some Amaze.org tools that support educators.

- Each video page on the Amaze.org website includes an educator section with sample discussion questions and lesson plans that supplement each video. You will find these resources as you scroll down past the video summary and sections for youth and parents.
- The My AMAZE button in the top right corner of the website allows you to create customized video playlists so your students can focus on the videos you want them to see.
- The National Sex Education Standards page links to the videos that address each standard.
- When you don’t know where to start, the search bar in the top right-hand corner of the website allows you to find videos on specific topics.

### NEED HELP FINDING A VIDEO TO ACCOMPANY YOUR LESSON?

Email [education@mainefamilyplanning.org](mailto:education@mainefamilyplanning.org) for one-one-one assistance in finding an Amaze.org video or other resources to meet your needs.

# OVERVIEW OF MIDDLE SCHOOL SEXUAL HEALTH SCOPE & SEQUENCE TOPICS AND LESSONS BY GRADE LEVEL

These topic areas do not need to be taught in this order.  
Consider which topics are the best fit for each grade within your sexual health unit.

6 <sup>th</sup> GRADE	7 <sup>th</sup> GRADE	8 <sup>th</sup> GRADE
<b>PUBERTY &amp; ADOLESCENT SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT</b>		
<p><b>Describe the reproductive system, including internal and external body parts and their functions.</b> Advocates for Youth 3Rs, <u>Sexual and Reproductive Anatomy with Slide Presentation</u></p> <p><b>Explain the relationship between sexual intercourse and human reproduction and the range of ways that pregnancy can occur.</b> Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, <u>So, That’s How Babies are Made!</u></p> <p><b>Describe the role of hormones in sexual development and the changes that occur during puberty.</b> Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, <u>It’s All About the Hormones with Slide Presentation.</u></p>	<p><b>Identify the basic components and functions of the human reproductive system.</b> Teaching Sexual Health, <u>The Journey of the Egg and The Journey of the Sperm</u></p> <p><b>Describe the physical, social, and emotional changes of puberty and ways to cope with these changes. and Explore messages received around puberty (from peers, family, media) and identify trusted adults and other sources of support.</b> Teaching Sexual Health, <u>Puberty Review</u></p>	<p><b>Define sexual intercourse in the context of human reproduction.</b> Advocates for Youth 3Rs, <u>Reproduction Basics</u></p> <p><b>Recognize that individuals experience puberty changes at different rates.</b> Teaching Sexual Health, <u>Going through Puberty</u></p> <p><b>Explore ways that digital media can impact the way people make decisions about their health.</b> Common Sense, <u>Digital Media and Your Brain</u></p>
<b>GENDER IDENTITY &amp; EXPRESSION</b>		
<p><b>Identify stereotypes around gender roles and the influences that impact one’s attitudes around gender.</b> Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, <u>Gender Roles Gender Expectations</u></p> <p><b>Differentiate between gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.</b> Welcoming Schools, <u>Gender Snowperson</u></p>	<p><b>Define terms related to gender and differentiate between gender identity and gender expression.</b> Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, <u>Thinking Outside the (Gender) Box</u></p> <p><b>Identify and analyze media messages around gender roles and stereotypes.</b> OUT Maine lesson, <u>Gender Sleuths: Examining Gender Roles in Advertising</u></p>	<p><b>Demonstrate ways to communicate respectfully and identify accurate sources of information about gender identity.</b> Advocates for Youth 3Rs, <u>Being Respectful About Gender Identity, Pronouns and Practice!</u> with <u>Slide Presentation</u></p>



6 <sup>th</sup> GRADE	7 <sup>th</sup> GRADE	8 <sup>th</sup> GRADE
<b>SEXUAL ORIENTATION &amp; IDENTITY</b>		
<p><b>Define sexual orientation and differentiate between sexual orientation and gender identity.</b></p> <p>Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, <a href="#">What is Love Anyway?</a> with <a href="#">Slide Presentation</a></p>	<p><b>Demonstrate ways to communicate respectfully with and about people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions.</b></p> <p>Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, <a href="#">I Am Who I Am</a> with <a href="#">Slide Presentation</a></p> <p><b>Define sexual identity and explain the range of identities related to sexual orientation.</b></p> <p>Watch and debrief <a href="#">Amaze.org</a> videos: <a href="#">What is Sexual Orientation?</a> and <a href="#">Sexual Orientation: A Spectrum of Attraction</a></p>	<p><b>Develop a plan to promote safety and respect for all people.</b></p> <p>Welcoming Schools, <a href="#">Making Decisions: Ally or Bystander</a></p> <p>or</p> <p>Welcoming Schools, <a href="#">Name Calling and Feeling Safe in Schools</a></p>
<b>HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS</b>		
<p><b>Analyze the similarities and differences between friendships and romantic relationships.</b></p> <p>Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, <a href="#">More Than Friends, Understanding Romantic Relationships</a></p>	<p><b>Describe a range of ways people express affection within diverse types of relationships.</b></p> <p>Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, <a href="#">Liking and Loving - Now and When I'm Older</a></p> <p><b>Reflect on the positive and negative effects social media use has on their relationships.</b></p> <p>Common Sense, <a href="#">My Social Media Life</a></p>	<p><b>Compare and contrast the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships.</b></p> <p>Advocates for Youth 3Rs, <a href="#">Healthy or Unhealthy Relationships</a></p> <p><b>Describe strategies a student might use to end an unhealthy relationship, including involving a trusted adult who can help.</b></p> <p>Advocates for Youth 3Rs, <a href="#">Breaking Up Is Hard to Do, But Not Impossible</a></p>
<b>INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE</b>		
<p><b>Define sexual abuse and harassment. and Describe ways that a person can talk with a trusted adult if they or someone else they know is being sexually abused.</b></p> <p>Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, <a href="#">Your Body, Your Rights</a></p>	<p><b>Identify and analyze online relationships, what is safe to share online, and red flags when communicating online.</b></p> <p>Common Sense, <a href="#">Chatting Safely Online</a> with <a href="#">Slide Presentation</a></p> <p><b>Describe strategies a person can use to respond to sexual harassment.</b></p> <p>Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, <a href="#">Harassment Prevention - The Basics</a></p>	<p><b>Identify situations and behaviors that constitute sexual harassment and abuse and where to access sources of support.</b></p> <p>Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, <a href="#">Warning Signs: Understanding Sexual Abuse and Assault</a></p>

6 <sup>th</sup> GRADE	7 <sup>th</sup> GRADE	8 <sup>th</sup> GRADE
<b>CONSENT &amp; COMMUNICATION</b>		
<p><b>Demonstrate positive ways to communicate differences of opinion while maintaining relationships. and Demonstrate refusal skills.</b> Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, <a href="#">Being Clear with Your Friends</a></p> <p><b>Identify verbal consent and demonstrate ways to ask for consent and respect the boundaries of others in relationships.</b> Teach Consent, <a href="#">Ask, Listen, Respect</a></p> <p><b>Define consent and ways to communicate nonverbally and verbally.</b> Maine Family Planning, <a href="#">Introducing Consent with Slide Presentation</a></p>	<p><b>Identify characteristics of healthy communication and apply negotiation skills about the use of technology in relationships.</b> Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, <a href="#">Choose Your Words Carefully</a></p> <p><b>Identify de-escalation strategies when dealing with digital drama.</b> Common Sense, <a href="#">Digital Drama Unplugged</a></p>	<p><b>Demonstrate effective listening and communication skills in sexual decision-making.</b> Advocates for Youth 3Rs, <a href="#">We Need to Talk with Slide Presentation</a></p> <p><b>Identify the risks and potential consequences of sexting and ways to respond in situations where sexting may occur.</b> Common Sense, <a href="#">Sexting and Relationships</a></p> <p><b>Define sexual consent, sexual agency and factors that can affect the ability to give or perceive consent to sexual activity.</b> Advocates for Youth 3Rs, <a href="#">Consent It Goes with Everything with Slide Presentation</a></p>
<b>SEXUAL HEALTH</b>		
<p><b>Identify factors that are important in deciding whether and when to engage in sexual behaviors.</b> Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, <a href="#">When Should a Person...</a></p> <p><b>Explain the impact that media, including sexually explicit media, can have on one's body image and self-esteem.</b> Advocates for Youth, 3Rs, <a href="#">Image Overload with Slide Presentation</a></p>	<p><b>Identify accurate and credible resources for sexual health.</b> Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, <a href="#">Being a Sex Ed Sleuth</a> and <a href="#">Slide Presentation</a></p> <p><b>Examine the influences on personal decision making for responsible sexual behavior.</b> Teaching Sexual Health, <a href="#">Decision Making</a></p>	<p><b>Define STIs and how they are transmitted. and Compare sexual behaviors that put people at risk of STI/HIV transmission.</b> Advocates for youth 3 Rs, <a href="#">Protecting your Health: Understanding and Preventing STDs</a> <small>*The terms STD and STI are often used interchangeably in sexual health information and resources.</small></p> <p><b>Explain the various methods of contraception, including abstinence, and their effectiveness in preventing pregnancy.</b> Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, <a href="#">Birth Control Basics</a></p> <p><b>Describe the steps of using condoms correctly.</b> Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, <a href="#">Using Condoms Effectively</a></p>

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## PUBERTY & ADOLESCENT SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT USER GUIDE

Identifying and understanding the changes of adolescent development is important for students as they grow and develop during the middle school years. Regardless of prior education they've received at home or in previous grades, students should start middle school with a review of puberty changes and anatomy so that they have a common base knowledge. This is particularly true if students are coming together from different elementary experiences. This information lays the groundwork for addressing self-esteem, positive body image, and future health topics related to sexual relationships and pregnancy and STI prevention.

Many middle school students have already started experiencing the changes of puberty, may be comparing themselves with others, and wondering "Am I Normal?" Starting your sexual health unit with a review of puberty changes, sexual anatomy, and reproduction can help students feel more secure and confident as they continue to learn and grow.

### FACILITATOR NOTE

The puberty and sexual anatomy lessons recommended below are not intended to be taught in all three grades. Middle school educators often deliver sexual health education in different grades, depending on their school and class schedules. The contents in the lessons below become more in-depth as they advance from the 6th to 8th grade level. Review the options provided, think about the developmental stage and needs of your students, and choose the lessons that best fit your classrooms and schedule.

### 6<sup>th</sup> GRADE

Describe the reproductive system, including internal and external body parts and their functions.

- **Advocates for Youth 3Rs, Sexual and Reproductive Anatomy** lesson with **Slide Presentation**

This lesson provides an overview of sexual and reproductive anatomy using inclusive non-gendered language and includes a set of slides with anatomical diagrams and worksheets. Interspersed throughout the educator script are questions to pose to the students and a game to review and assess their learning. You can cut up small cards to hand out to students with a link to [Amaze.org](http://Amaze.org) puberty videos as a safe, age-appropriate resource for students to learn more.

#### Assessment Options

Students can complete the anatomy diagram worksheets included in this lesson to review body parts and the game questions to review body functions.

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Explain the relationship between sexual intercourse and human reproduction and the range of ways that pregnancy can occur.

- **Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, So, That’s How Babies are Made!**

This lesson includes an [Amaze.org](#) video and can be a follow-up to learning about sexual and reproductive anatomy. The video provides a short definition of sexual intercourse in the context of reproduction and the role of the sperm and the egg in beginning a pregnancy. This lesson is inclusive of other ways, besides sexual intercourse, that pregnancy can occur, and provides answers to questions students may have about the many ways families are formed. The lesson provides foundational knowledge for further exploring pregnancy prevention in the older middle school grades.

**Assessment Options**

The lesson includes an anatomy diagram on *How Pregnancy Happens* that your students can complete and two exit slip questions about the role of the egg and sperm in human reproduction.

Describe the role of hormones in sexual development and the changes that occur during puberty.

- **Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, It’s All About the Hormones with Slide Presentation**

This short lesson and accompanying slides review puberty changes using a timeline that shows when common physical, cognitive, social, and emotional changes occur during adolescent development. This lesson compliments the review of sexual and reproductive anatomy by explaining the role of hormones in sexual development. The lesson also provides information about the experiences of transgender people during puberty including an explanation of hormone blockers.

**Assessment Options**

Students can use an exit slip or timeline to plot the physical, social, and emotional changes that commonly occur during adolescent development and describe the role of hormones in this development.

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## 7<sup>th</sup> GRADE

Identify the basic components and functions of the human reproductive system.

- Teaching Sexual Health, The Journey of the Egg and The Journey of the Sperm

Although the authors developed this lesson for Grade 5, the information included is relevant and appropriate for most middle school grades. The lesson starts by following the path of the sperm and egg during reproduction including the process of menstruation. There are several activities to choose from depending on students' needs and the time available. This lesson uses gender inclusive descriptions of the anatomy parts and functions and includes worksheets, matching games, discussion, and Kahoot quizzes.

### Assessment Options

Students can complete the anatomy worksheets or Kahoot quiz, reviewing the reproductive system individually or in small groups.

Describe the physical, social, and emotional changes of puberty and ways to cope with these changes. Explore messages received about puberty (from peers, family, media, and advertising) and identify trusted adults and other sources of support.

- Teaching Sexual Health, Puberty Review

This lesson includes a variety of activities. Puberty cards review the changes of puberty, divided into physical and social/emotional changes. Students explore messages they have heard about puberty, identify misinformation, and understand the importance of having trusted sources of information. An activity on coping with the changes of puberty uses picture cards to explain products people may need during puberty. Students identify and analyze messages they may receive through the advertisement of the products. Students use their creativity to write puberty scenarios for managing the changes that come with puberty. There is also an option for a Kahoot quiz to review information and an interview handout, *When You Were My Age*, that students can use to open discussion with a parent or guardian.

### Assessment Options

Students can identify common puberty changes through the Kahoot quiz. They can identify and describe puberty related products and how they are marketed to consumers.

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## 8<sup>th</sup> GRADE

### Define sexual intercourse in the context of human reproduction.

- **Advocates for Youth 3Rs, Reproduction Basics**

This lesson is an important precursor to discussing sexual relationships and pregnancy prevention in future grades. Students share what they already know related to sexual intercourse in the context of reproduction and how pregnancy begins. They explore myths and facts about pregnancy with an in-depth description of the menstrual cycle and related terminology. *Note: The linked video in this lesson is no longer active, but there are many other alternatives on the topic at <https://amaze.org/?topic=pregnancy-and-reproduction>*

#### Assessment Options

Students can use the cards in the activity to demonstrate their knowledge of how a pregnancy happens.

### Recognize that individuals experience puberty changes at different rates.

- **Teaching Sexual Health, Going through Puberty**

In this lesson, students reflect on who they are, how they feel about themselves, and ways they may compare themselves to their peers. Students reflect on scenarios that represent common experiences that may come up during puberty. A Kahoot quiz reviews some of the common changes that occur during puberty and an *Ask an Adult* interview worksheet gives students an opportunity to talk with a family member or trusted adult.

#### Assessment Options

Students can use the questions in the Kahoot quiz to identify examples of the changes that occur during puberty and explain how people experience these changes in different ways and at different rates.

### Explore ways that digital media can impact the way people make decisions about their health.

- **Common Sense, Digital Media and Your Brain**

This lesson begins by exploring ways that students use their devices to engage with others online. After a brainstorm and discussion, a set of slides defines aspects of engaging online to help students understand how some people get hooked on their devices. A video called *Teen Voices: The Pressure to Stay Connected* presents common experiences and challenges teens experience using digital media. Students can apply what they have learned by completing a handout called *Humane or Brain Drain?* to analyze scenarios of how apps can be helpful or addictive. There are also resources for engaging with families.

#### Assessment Options

Students complete the handout to demonstrate their understanding of addictive design and healthy digital media habits. If you make an account (free) with Common Sense, you can also access and share a quiz with students.



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## GENDER IDENTITY & EXPRESSION USER GUIDE

During the middle school years, young people are exploring who they are compared to the people around them, including their peers, family members, and others in their community as well as online and in the media. During adolescence young people continue to explore and build a sense of identity which may include their group identity (jock, nerd, drama kid), their style (preppy, goth, skater), and their gender. Students may also be exposed to new terminology and language around gender. Examining gender roles and stereotypes can also lay a foundation for determining what is a good fit for them and how they will navigate gender roles in their relationships. During this stage of development, it is important to address common misconceptions, provide facts and information, and allow opportunities for students to explore their own feelings and perceptions about how they want to express their gender to the world. These lessons provide a space to explore gender roles, expectations, and how to communicate with and about people of diverse genders and expressions.

### 6<sup>th</sup> GRADE

**Identify stereotypes around gender roles and the influences that impact one's attitudes around gender.**

- **Advocates for Youth 3Rs, Gender Roles, Gender Expectations**

This lesson starts with a brainstorm to define gender, pretending that students need to explain the characteristics of 'girl' and 'boy' to an alien researching creatures on earth. Through this activity, students identify gender stereotypes and reflect on and describe their own feelings about certain behaviors that are often ascribed to a particular gender.

#### **Assessment Options**

Students can complete the *Gender in the World Around Us* worksheet to assess their ability to identify examples of gender stereotypes around them.

**Differentiate between gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.**

- **Welcoming Schools, Gender Snowperson**

Students first work in pairs to identify what gender means to them. Using an illustration of a snowperson, they learn the difference between sex assigned at birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. The terms *cisgender*, *transgender*, and *nonbinary* are also defined and discussed. Students can fill out their own Gender Snowperson handout, adding clothing and accessories for creating their own gender snowperson.

#### **Assessment Options**

Students can complete their *Gender Snowperson* handout or complete an exit slip explaining the difference between gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.

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As an alternative for this student learning objective, you can show the following [Amaze.org](https://www.amaze.org) videos. *The Educator Discussion Questions* at the bottom of the webpage can be used to debrief the videos.

- **Sex Assigned at Birth and Gender Identity: What's the Difference?** This video discusses a person's sex assigned at birth, gender identity, and gender expression and how they can all be different.
- **Range of Gender Identities** This video explains the difference between sex assigned at birth, gender identity, and sexual orientation. It includes definitions along with other terms such as transgender, non-binary, and genderqueer/genderfluid. The video also addresses how to respect people's gender identities by not making any assumptions about gender, using preferred names and pronouns, and being a friend and ally to people of all gender identities.

## 7<sup>th</sup> GRADE

Define terms related to gender and differentiate between gender identity and gender expression.

- **Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, Thinking Outside the (Gender) Box**

This lesson helps students understand the basic definitions related to gender identity and gender expression and explores the impact of gender role stereotypes on how people see themselves and others. Using a twist on the card game *Go Fish*, this lesson encourages students to identify a trusted adult they can talk to with questions about these topics. The content in this lesson is critical as students develop their own identities and recognize the range of identities of the people around them.

### Assessment Options

Students can submit their *Go Fish* worksheet with the definitions they learned. Alternatively, use a Quizlet or similar program in which students can match terms and definitions from the lesson.

Identify and analyze media messages around gender roles and stereotypes.

- **OUT Maine, Gender Sleuths: Examining Gender Roles in Advertising**

This lesson has students go through magazines, catalogs, programs, or online advertisements to identify marketing messages that target boys or girls specifically, or both (non-binary). Through this activity students practice critical thinking skills by examining and questioning gender-based messages in advertising and in the media. After completing this activity, students better understand the impact of gender marketing on gender roles and stereotypes.

### Assessment Options

Students can either complete the *Media Sleuth: TV Log Worksheet* provided in the lesson or write their reflections describing ways in which the messages they identified reflect, or do not reflect, reality.

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## 8<sup>th</sup> GRADE

Demonstrate ways to communicate respectfully and identify accurate sources of information about gender identity.

- **Advocates for Youth 3Rs, Being Respectful About Gender Identity, Pronouns and Practice! with Slide Presentation**

In this lesson students explore accurate and credible sources of online information about gender identity and gender expression. They explore how someone's words and actions can impact the health and well-being of transgender youth. This lesson provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate respectful communication and identify messages and actions that can support transgender and nonbinary people and create a safe environment for everyone.

### Assessment Options

Students can submit their art project that shows how to respect somebody's gender identity and/or pronouns.

## RESOURCES

There are many resources in Maine and online that can support students and provide additional education for adults related to gender identity, expression, and equity.

### *LGBTQ+ Organizations*

- **MaineTransNet** is a community-based organization led by and for transgender people. They provide peer-to-peer support groups, offer social and community events, and advocate for the transgender community across Maine. They also offer transgender cultural competency trainings for individuals, schools, organizations, and health care providers on how to affirm and support transgender people. [mainetrans.net](http://mainetrans.net)
- **OUT Maine** works to create more welcoming and affirming communities for Maine's diverse queer youth in all of their intersectional identities by changing the systems that serve them. They have age-specific groups for youth and for parents and provide training and workshops for schools and organizations. [outmaine.org](http://outmaine.org)
- **Trans Student Educational Resources** is a website with educational resources to help raise awareness about gender identity and expression. The youth-led organization offers workshops and infographics to download for free. [transstudent.org](http://transstudent.org)

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*Gender Equity Organizations*

- **Hardy Girls Healthy Women** partners with girls and gender expansive youth to ignite curiosity, promote critical thinking, build coalitions, and challenge the status quo. They provide trainings and workshops, for both adults and youth, and offer groups, virtual spaces, and other events for girls and gender expansive youth across Maine. [hghw.org](http://hghw.org)
- **Maine Boys to Men** is committed to ending male violence and self-harm while advancing gender equity. They have training opportunities for educators and coaches as well as youth programming. [maineboystomen.org](http://maineboystomen.org)

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## SEXUAL ORIENTATION & IDENTITY USER GUIDE

As students begin puberty, many will begin to have sexual feelings. During this time, students may wonder and explore who they are attracted to – boys, girls, both, neither, or that a person’s gender is not important in who they find attractive. As students begin to explore their sexual orientation, some students may find it helpful to have the language to communicate with others. Language can help students feel connected and less alone, especially if they have a sexual orientation that is different from their peers. Most students, regardless of their sexual orientation and identity, are eager to understand and learn more about the diversity that exists in the world. Understanding this diversity, along with practicing how to communicate respectfully with others, provides a safe environment for all students to learn and grow into their own, authentic selves. Through activities that correct misinformation and promote skills for responding to bullying and intolerance, students develop skills that lead to better understanding, communication, and respect for the diversity in sexual orientation that exists in their school and community.

### 6<sup>th</sup> GRADE

Define sexual orientation and differentiate between sexual orientation and gender identity.

- **Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, What is Love Anyway? with Slide Presentation**

This lesson starts with a brainstorm that explores the difference between liking and loving and how people may develop romantic relationships as they get older. An accompanying slide presentation can be used to define gender identity and sexual orientation and explain the diversity of ways people may be attracted to others.

#### Assessment Options

Students can complete the handout  
*Defining Sexual Orientation.*

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## 7<sup>th</sup> GRADE

Demonstrate ways to communicate respectfully with and about people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions.

- **Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, I Am Who I Am with Slide Presentation**

This lesson starts with students writing what they have heard about sexual orientation. A slide presentation defines gender identity and expression and sexual orientation. Students work through a myth vs. fact handout with statements about gender identity and sexual orientation. There is an optional homework assignment on creating a respectful classroom for LGBTQ+ students that includes a video and debrief questions in a handout called *Fix This!*

### Assessment Options

Students can complete the *Myth vs. Fact: Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation* handout or *Fix This!* homework assignment to demonstrate their knowledge.

Define sexual identity and explain the range of identities related to sexual orientation.

- **Amaze.org Videos.**

There are many Amaze.org videos that address sexual orientation and identity. Here are two that can be used, along with *Educator Discussion Questions* at the bottom of the webpage to debrief the videos.

**What is Sexual Orientation?** This video begins by defining sexual orientation, mentions the labels of heterosexual, gay, and bisexual, and then further defines pansexual, asexual (or ace), and demisexual.

**Sexual Orientation: A Spectrum of Attraction** This video explores sexual orientation as a spectrum of attraction. It explains that sexual orientation is about who a person is romantically and sexually attracted to.

### Assessment Options

Students can complete an exit slip with a description of sexual orientation.



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## 8<sup>th</sup> GRADE

Develop a plan to promote safety and respect for all people.

- **Welcoming Schools, Making Decisions: Ally or Bystander**

This is a four corners activity where students think through the options they have for responding to teasing or bullying. Students will listen to scenarios and move to the option they choose, either: 1) Ignore the Situation or Walk Away, 2) Intervene Myself, 3) Talk to the Person in Private, or 4) Seek Help from an Adult or Someone Older. The debrief explores what it means to be a bystander, the impact of bullying, and the impact of doing nothing.

### Assessment Options

Students can complete a self-reflection exit slip saying what they learned and what their plans are to promote dignity and respect for their classmates and themselves.

or

- **Welcoming Schools, Name Calling and Feeling Safe in Schools**

This activity starts with a brainstorm of all the places students walk through in school. Students identify the places in school where they feel safe and unsafe. The educator leads a debrief discussion about what makes spaces safe or unsafe and the impact of name-calling on individuals and the school environment. Students identify action steps to make school safer for everyone.

### Assessment Options

Students can complete a self-reflection exit slip saying what they learned and what their plans are to stop name-calling and help others feel safe.

## RESOURCES

There are many resources in Maine and online that can support students and provide additional education for adults related to sexual orientation and identity.

- **GLSEN** offers resources for both students and educators on how to create a safe environment for all students in their school and community. [glsen.org](http://glsen.org)
- **OUT Maine** works to create more welcoming and affirming communities for Maine's diverse queer youth in all of their intersectional identities by changing the systems that serve them. They have age-specific groups for youth and for parents and provide training and workshops for schools and organizations. [outmaine.org](http://outmaine.org)
- **Equality Maine** works to secure full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in Maine. Check out their Safe Schools in Maine and New Leaders Project programs on their website. [equalitymaine.org](http://equalitymaine.org)

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## HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS USER GUIDE

As students grow and change, so do their relationships. What they like and who they spend time with may be different in middle school than when they were in elementary school. Young people might notice that their friendships are changing, they are attracted to other people, and they may be developing dating relationships. During their teen years, young people often experience more intense feelings and attractions. Developing the skills to navigate these new experiences is vital to helping them recognize the healthy and unhealthy characteristics of their relationships and where to go for guidance and support. Through these lessons, students will learn skills necessary to: recognize the different aspects of healthy and unhealthy relationships, maintain healthy relationships, and respectfully end them. They will learn about potential risks in the digital age, understand what information to disclose (and not disclose) online, and how to respond when sexting becomes part of an online conversation.

### FACILITATOR NOTE

As you make plans to deliver this topic across the middle school grade span, consider the benefits of pairing lessons on *Healthy Relationships* with *Consent and Communication* and *Interpersonal Violence*. For approaches to integrate the three topics, reach out to MFP's Prevention Education program for assistance. As young people explore the key elements of healthy relationships, assertive communication, and affirmative consent, they build on vital components within a relationship to ensure they are heard and respected. In relationships where there may be coercion, disrespect, or lack of equality, young people deserve to be equipped with the skills to recognize unhealthy relationships, improve the relationship if they desire, determine when to end a relationship, and where to go for support and resources.

### 6<sup>th</sup> GRADE

Analyze the similarities and differences between friendships and romantic relationships.

- **Advocates for Youth 3Rs, More Than Friends: Understanding Romantic Relationships**

In this lesson, students *analyze* scenarios and determine if the relationship in the scenario is a friendship or a romantic relationship. They make a list of characteristics that describe the relationship and determine which characteristics are positive and which are negative. Students reflect on the similarities and differences between people who are good friends and those in romantic relationships.

#### Assessment Options

Students can complete the worksheet *Relationships on TV* to identify friendships and romantic relationships and analyze the characteristics of those relationships.

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## 7<sup>th</sup> GRADE

Describe a range of ways people express affection within diverse types of relationships.

- **Advocates for Youth 3Rs, Liking and Loving - Now and When I'm Older**

In this lesson, students define *affection* and brainstorm who in their lives they might show affection to, such as family members, good friends, or someone that is more than a friend. Using a relay race, they list together ways to show affection, using examples from their own relationships. The following discussion addresses how, as people get older, they may show affection in different ways, including sexual behaviors. The educator shares definitions of sexual behaviors and abstinence, explaining how abstinence is 100% effective at preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. Students refer back to their lists to identify the many ways one can show affection without engaging in sexual activity. A homework assignment provides the opportunity for students and parents to start conversations around what they learned in class.

### Assessment Options

Students can complete an exit ticket that shares one thing they learned and one question they still have.

Reflect on the positive and negative effects social media use has on their relationships.

- **Common Sense, My Social Media Life**

In this lesson, students watch a short video called *Teen Voices: Friendships and Social Media* and discuss the benefits and drawbacks of social media use. There is a set of slides an educator can use to go over the information, including statements about social media in which students either agree or disagree and explain why. The lesson also defines *oversharing* and *red flag feelings* when using social media. Students then apply what they learned by completing a handout in which they analyze a scenario and discuss their responses in small groups.

### Assessment Options

Students can turn in their handout *Noticing Red Flag Feelings* or turn in their responses to the exit slip question. If you make a free account with Common Sense you can also access and share a quiz with students.

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## 8<sup>th</sup> GRADE

Compare and contrast the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships.

- **Advocates for Youth 3Rs, Healthy or Unhealthy Relationships?**

In this lesson, students work in pairs to determine whether relationship scenario cards depict healthy or unhealthy characteristics in a relationship. In unhealthy scenarios, students problem-solve ways they could become healthier. Power differences are introduced as students review their suggestions to make the relationship scenarios healthier and name the characteristics found in healthy relationships. A homework assignment gives students a chance to reflect on a relationship they've seen (in real life or from a movie, tv series, book, online, etc.) and describe what makes the relationship healthy and/or unhealthy.

### Assessment Options

Students can turn in the handout *Healthy Relationships All Around Us* or complete an exit slip on what stood out to them from the lesson.

Describe strategies a student might use to end an unhealthy relationship, including involving a trusted adult who can help.

- **Advocates for Youth 3Rs, Breaking Up Is Hard to Do, But Not Impossible**

In this lesson, students think about romantic relationships and use a word cloud tool to express what they think of when they hear the words *relationship* and *break-ups*. Students consider what factors may influence their ideas around relationships and process how to change the negative aspects of breaking up into something that is positive for both people. In small groups, students receive specific strategies for ending relationships in a healthy way then discuss and share with the rest of the students. As they listen to the presentations, students complete a *Guide to Healthy Break-ups* handout. Students also receive a card with contact information for [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org) if they or someone they know is in an unhealthy relationship and needs support.

### Assessment Options

Students can complete an exit ticket answering these two questions, 'Imagine you want to end a relationship, but would like to remain friends, name one strategy that would be helpful to maintain the friendship.' and 'If you or someone you know were afraid to end a relationship, name one resource you can access for support and help.'

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## RESOURCES

The resources below offer information, resources and services for both students and educators to address and prevent unhealthy relationships.

- **Love Is Respect** is a website that provides resources for people who: 1) have questions about dating and relationships, 2) want more information about unhealthy relationships, 3) are in an unhealthy or abusive relationship and need a safe place to turn for help (through chat, text or phone), or 4) want to support a friend, family member, child, or student in an abusive relationship. [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org)
- **Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence** is a statewide organization that works closely with nine member organizations serving communities around the state to increase awareness and prevent all types of domestic violence. They provide support services for people impacted by domestic abuse, including dating abuse, and resources for both educators and youth. Their advocates are available 24 hours a day at 1-866-834-HELP. [mcedv.org](http://mcedv.org)

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## INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE USER GUIDE

During the middle school years, young people often spend less time under direct adult supervision, while using technology or hanging out with friends. As they grow into adolescence and gain more independence, they may develop new relationships and engage in more risk taking behaviors. It is an important time for students to understand and be able to identify abuse and harassment in their relationships, both online and in-person, and learn skills to address interpersonal violence and respect others. The lessons in this unit help students identify and define interpersonal violence, gain the skills to prevent violence in their relationships and school community, identify where to go for support, how to make a safety plan, and respond when violence occurs. These lessons provide a foundation for students to practice healthy risk taking and identify behaviors that cause harm.

As you introduce this topic, it is important to recognize that students may have already experienced interpersonal violence. While addressing this topic, we encourage educators and other school staff to connect with their local domestic violence and/or sexual assault agency (listed below) for resources and support. Create a safe learning environment by including group agreements that include strategies and resources where students can go for one-on-one support (i.e., school counselor, trusted adult, or a local website or hotline). Reinforce that a person is not to blame for the harm someone else did to them, and people who have experienced violence are not alone. As students may disclose incidents of interpersonal violence as a result of learning more about this topic, review your school's mandated reporting policy and procedures.

### FACILITATOR NOTE

Some lessons in this unit may be more effective when taught or supported by a local domestic violence or sexual assault advocate. Assess your experience and knowledge of teaching topics related to trauma, abuse, and assault and connect with your local domestic violence or sexual assault agency before teaching these lessons. They may be able to help you teach or be available for your students to talk to during or after class.

To find your local Domestic Violence Resource Center, visit: [mcedv.org/get-help/](https://mcedv.org/get-help/)

To find your local Sexual Assault Resource Center, visit: [mecasa.org](https://mecasa.org)



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## 6<sup>th</sup> GRADE

Define sexual abuse and harassment, and Describe ways that a person can talk with a trusted adult if they or someone else they know is being sexually abused.

- **Advocates for Youth 3Rs, Your Body, Your Rights**

This lesson begins by defining *sexual abuse* and *sexual harassment* and providing students with facts related to sexual abuse. Students work in pairs to come up with strategies for how someone who is being abused can tell a trusted adult about the abuse. Students identify trusted adults and resources they can go to if they or someone they know has experienced abuse. A worksheet on *What We Talked about Today* can be shared with parents or caregivers to encourage discussion at home about abuse.

### Assessment Options

Students can complete the *What Do You Know About Sexual Abuse?* worksheet provided in the lesson.

## 7<sup>th</sup> GRADE

Identify and analyze online relationships, what is safe to share online, and red flags when communicating online.

- **Common Sense, Chatting Safely Online**

This activity starts with a quick brainstorm on the ways students communicate with others online. Using a slide presentation, students identify basic concepts about the risks of sharing information online and watch the video *Who You're Talking to Online*. Students work in pairs to respond to debrief questions about the video. Using the slides, the educator reviews key vocabulary to identify what is private information and what might be considered risky, inappropriate, or a red flag. Students apply the information using a scenario of a young person sharing information online.

### Assessment Options

Students can turn in the handout *Risky Chat Dilemma* or complete an exit slip responding to questions about how they will use the information they learned in their own online friendships or advice they would give the character in the scenario. If you create a free account with Common Sense, you can also access and share a quiz with students.

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Describe strategies a person can use to respond to sexual harassment.

- **Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, Harassment Prevention - The Basics**

The lesson begins with the educator letting students know they will be discussing a difficult topic and making a plan for students who may need to excuse themselves from the lesson. Students watch an [Amaze.org](http://Amaze.org) video describing sexual harassment while they fill out descriptions of sexual harassment on their handout, *Sexual Harassment Note Catcher*. In small groups, students use scenarios to practice responding to harassment as bystanders. There is an optional homework assignment for students to create a PSA for their school on ways to respond to sexual harassment.

**Assessment Options**

Students can turn in their *Sexual Harassment Note Catcher* handout or complete the PSA homework assignment.

**8<sup>th</sup> GRADE**

Identify situations and behaviors that constitute sexual harassment and abuse and where to access sources of support.

- **Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, Warning Signs: Understanding Sexual Abuse and Assault**

The lesson begins with the educator letting students know that they will be discussing a difficult topic and reviewing group agreements. Students first learn basic information surrounding sexual assault, abuse, and harassment by watching the [Amaze.org](http://Amaze.org) video *What is Sexual Assault*, followed by a debrief of the video, sharing key messages and information. The educator goes over the spectrum of assault, aggression, threats, unfair pressure, and mutual consent. The lesson ends with watching and processing the video *The Signs* about an abusive relationship, the warning signs, and how victims can seek help and support. A homework assignment has students review one of three sexual assault prevention websites provided in the lesson and respond to questions about their services.

**Assessment Options**

Students can complete the homework worksheet, *Taking Action: Make Sexual Assault and Abuse STOP*.

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## FACILITATOR NOTE

This lesson includes an important yet sensitive topic. Discuss with other school staff how to appropriately and thoroughly address this topic with students. Your local sexual assault prevention and education organization may be able to help identify strategies to deliver this information.

## RESOURCES

The following Maine resources can be used to help you plan and deliver education on interpersonal violence with your students, and as places students can access confidential services.

- **Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence** works to end domestic violence and support survivors in Maine through services including a 24/7 hotline and legal advocacy. They support local resource centers across the state which often have prevention staff that can help deliver education in schools. [mcedv.org](http://mcedv.org)
- **Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault** works to end sexual assault and support sexual assault survivors in Maine through services including a 24/7 hotline and legal advocacy. Local resource centers across the state can provide support for education in schools. [mecasa.org](http://mecasa.org)
- **Age of Consent** is a website with information regarding the age of consent in Maine, as well as other states in the U.S., and in other countries. You can learn about the age and circumstances in which a person is competent to consent to sexual activity and information on the 'close-in age' exemption laws specific to Maine. They also list state sexual abuse and assault laws. [ageofconsent.net](http://ageofconsent.net)

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## CONSENT & COMMUNICATION USER GUIDE

The interconnected skills of communicating effectively and practicing consent are foundational in developing healthy relationships and being sexually healthy. Adolescence is an amazing time, but it can also provide challenges when it comes to communication and consent. Young people’s brains are still developing, and their fluctuating hormones can present speed bumps in their ability to effectively communicate with others. Therefore, it is so important to provide a safe space where they can learn and practice effective communication and consent. In this unit, students will gain information about consent and identify strategies for communicating in relationships. They will also practice new skills in communicating boundaries and desires and how to resolve conflict. Students will understand elements of sexual agency and how to determine factors that influence consent. These activities pair well with those in the healthy relationships and interpersonal violence topic areas.

### 6<sup>th</sup> GRADE

**Demonstrate positive ways to communicate differences of opinion while maintaining relationships. and Demonstrate refusal skills.**

- **Advocates for Youth 3Rs, Being Clear with Your Friends**

In this lesson, students brainstorm what makes communication in relationships challenging. The educator provides definitions of aggressive, assertive, and passive communication and students compare how these communication styles may look and sound. Students identify ways to express and maintain boundaries in relationships and practice these skills through role play scenarios.

#### Assessment Options

Gauge the use of assertive communication in the role plays or have them complete exit slips describing aggressive, assertive and passive communication and the benefits of assertive communication.

**Identify verbal consent and demonstrate ways to ask for consent and respect the boundaries of others in relationships.**

- **Teach Consent, Ask, Listen, Respect**

Students explore aspects of consent by imagining a scenario in which they are sharing a pizza with a friend. Students watch a short one-minute video on consent and identify when the characters practiced consent. The educator facilitates a discussion about consent in the context of dating relationships. Through a movement-based activity called personal space invaders, students explore boundaries and practice consent by moving closer to each other based on verbal and nonverbal communication.

#### Assessment Options

Look for student comprehension through the brainstorm and personal space invader activity. Students can complete an exit ticket where they define consent and list two important tools for practicing consent.

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Define consent and ways to communicate nonverbally and verbally.

- **Maine Family Planning, Introducing Consent with Slide Presentation**

This activity begins by defining consent. Students work in small groups to make a pizza with toppings they can all agree to, only using nonverbal communication. After debriefing the first activity, students continue to explore nonverbal communication by looking at pictures in a slide deck. Students lift YES or NO cards and share whether they think consent is present based on their interpretation of the nonverbal cues. Students then offer possible ways that **verbal** communication would help the people in the pictures to communicate consent or non-consent. The lesson ends with a debrief and key messages about consent and communication.

**Assessment Options**

Use the exit slips/notecards listed at the end of the lesson to assess students' understanding of consent.

**7<sup>th</sup> GRADE**

Identify characteristics of healthy communication and apply negotiation skills around the use of technology in relationships.

- **Advocates for Youth 3Rs, Choose Your Words Carefully**

In this lesson, students start with a brainstorm of why it can be challenging to talk with someone about something important. Students work in small groups to create conversations between two people using prepared statements discussing how to negotiate the use of technology to communicate with each other in their relationship. A homework assignment uses a video to show how communication can be challenging when talking by text. Students respond to questions on a worksheet and offer solutions for the couple in the video.

**Assessment Options**

Students can watch the *iRelationship* video and turn in the worksheet to identify challenges in communicating by text and solutions for effective communication.

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Identify de-escalation strategies when dealing with digital drama.

- **Common Sense, Digital Drama Unplugged**

This lesson begins by defining drama, why people are often drawn into it, and how drama and conflict happen online. Students watch the short video *Teen Voices: Dealing with Digital Drama* and respond to debrief questions. In small groups, students read a scenario and complete the handout *Taking the Lead* in which they take on the viewpoint of a character in the scenario. Students explore the reasons why their character acted in the way they did, what they could have done differently, and what stopped them from acting differently. After defining *de-escalation*, students explore what the characters could have done to de-escalate the scenario.

**Assessment Options**

Students can complete their *Taking the Lead* handouts or you can observe their de-escalation role plays. If you make a free account with Common Sense, you can also access and share a quiz with students.

**8<sup>th</sup> GRADE**

Demonstrate effective listening and communication skills in sexual decision-making.

- **Advocates for Youth 3Rs, We Need to Talk with Slide Presentation**

In this lesson, students practice listening and communication skills specifically around sexual situations. The slides can guide the discussion, including ways to be an effective listener and how to be clear with others. The educator models effective and ineffective ways to communicate. Students work in groups of three to practice communication skills in three different scenarios (two people act out the role play while the third person observes). They then switch roles. Altogether, students process what went well, and not so well, in their role plays and discuss possible reasons why. The class ends with a reflection activity. A homework activity, *Let's Talk*, can be used to initiate conversations with a parent/caregiver.

**Assessment Options**

The reflection activity can be used to assess what students learned about communicating with others and how they might apply it in their own relationships.

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Identify the risks and potential consequences of sexting and ways to respond in situations where sexting may occur.

- **Common Sense, Sexting and Relationships**

This lesson begins by asking students to remember a time when they shared a secret or something personal about themselves with someone else, followed by defining self-disclosure and sexting. A set of slides are available to guide the discussion and activities. Students watch the video *Teen Voices: Sexting, Relationships, and Risks* and respond to debrief questions. They read a scenario and respond to questions on a handout called *Late Night Texting* about feeling pressured to sext and identify red flag feelings that can be a warning that something isn't right in a situation.

**Assessment Options**

Students can complete their *Late Night Texting* handout. If you make a free account with Common Sense, you can also access and share a quiz with students.

Define sexual consent, sexual agency, and factors that can affect the ability to give or perceive consent to sexual activity.

- **Advocates for Youth 3 Rs, Consent It Goes with Everything with Slide Presentation**

Students work in large groups to define consent, what it looks like, and what could happen if a person does not receive consent. Students view the Amaze.org video *Consent Explained: What Is It?* and define sexual consent and how one can give sexual consent. Sexual agency is explained, and students review scenarios to determine if sexual agency is respected. Using a board game, students apply critical thinking to decide if the person's ability to provide sexual consent has been influenced or not influenced by a set of factors.

**Assessment Options**

Students can complete an exit ticket citing something new they learned about consent and why affirmative consent is important in relationships.



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## SEXUAL HEALTH USER GUIDE

From the 2019 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey, we know that 93% of middle school students reported that they had not yet had sex. At the same time, during the middle school grades, many young people are starting to explore dating and intimate relationships and may feel pressure to also explore sexual activity. Tell your students that the information in this unit may not be immediately relevant to them and you are not assuming that they are currently sexually active. By having accurate information and resources ahead of time, they will be able to make healthy decisions around engaging in sexual activity, now or in the future. Students should understand that sexual health not only includes preventing sexually transmitted infections or unintended pregnancy; it also includes understanding how bodies work, having a healthy body image, being able to communicate with a partner around engaging in consensual behaviors, knowing what your boundaries are, and what you want in your relationships.

### FACILITATOR NOTE

STDs or STIs? Many people prefer to use the term sexually transmitted infections (STIs), recognizing that not all STIs are categorized as diseases. You will find that the term STD is still commonly used among the general population and is still frequently used in many resources and educational materials.

## 6<sup>th</sup> GRADE

Identify factors that are important in deciding whether and when to engage in sexual behaviors.

- **Advocates for Youth 3Rs, When Should a Person...**

In this lesson, students start by identifying factors that are important for them in considering whether and when to engage in sexual activity, including healthy relationships, protection, consent, personal beliefs, and outside influences. Students are reminded that being sexually active is a decision that everyone has the right to decide for themselves, and that it can be helpful to identify trusted adults who they can talk to when they have questions about sexual health. The lesson includes a decision-making model that the educator goes through with students that they can apply in their own lives when making important decisions, like having sex.

### Assessment Options

Students can complete an exit slip that includes the factors they would use to determine whether or when to have sex.

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Explain the impact that media, including sexually explicit media, can have on one's body image and self-esteem.

- **Advocates for Youth 3Rs, Image Overload with Slide Presentation**

The lesson starts with students using a handout to reflect on several questions about how they perceive their bodies. Students talk in pairs about how body image is connected to self-esteem (a person's confidence in their own self). They identify different influences on body image and rate the importance of those influences. Each student decides how those influences impact their own body image in a positive, negative, or neutral way. Among the influences is sexually explicit media, or porn, which the educator explains does not provide a realistic view of sex and can negatively influence someone's body image and expectations.

#### **Assessment Options**

Students can identify specific messages in media (songs, films/tv, social media, etc.) or advertising and how they might influence someone's body image and self-esteem.

## **7<sup>th</sup> GRADE**

Identify accurate and credible resources for sexual health.

- **Advocates for Youth 3Rs, Being a Sex Ed Sleuth with Slide Presentation.**

This lesson begins with asking students if they have ever gone online to get an answer to a question and how they determine that the search results are credible. You will then use a slide deck and websites to identify characteristics of credible websites when looking for sexual health information. In small groups students view pictures of a webpage and, using the *Sex Ed Sleuth* worksheet, answer questions to analyze whether they think the site is reliable or not and why.

#### **Assessment Options**

Students can use the questions on the *Sex Ed Sleuth* worksheet to identify the characteristics of a credible source of online information.

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Examine the influences on personal decision making for responsible sexual behavior.

- **Teaching Sexual Health, Decision Making**

This activity allows students to explore their own values, identify pressures they may feel, and influences that can impact their decisions around becoming sexually active. Using scenarios, students identify what things a person should think about when deciding whether or not to have sex. Abstinence is the focus of the activity, but also discusses how student who choose to have sex can make informed decisions that respect their own values. Handouts on *Am I Ready to Have Sex?* and exploring *Family Values* help students explore their individual situations and values.

**Assessment Options**

Since this activity explores attitudes and beliefs rather than facts, you can assess learning by having students identify some of their own life goals, pressures that may influence their decisions, and values they hold.

**8<sup>th</sup> GRADE**

Define STIs and how they are (and are not) transmitted. and Compare sexual behaviors that put people at risk of STI/HIV transmission.

- **Advocates for Youth 3Rs, Protecting your Health: Understanding and Preventing STDs.**

*This lesson uses the term STD but you can explain and use STI if you prefer.* In small groups, students examine clues to determine the characteristics of the different types of STDs and behaviors that put someone at high risk, some (low) risk, or no risk of contracting an STD. A homework option allows students to do more research specifically on HIV and AIDS.

**Assessment Options**

A quiz or Kahoot can be used to identify the characteristics of different STDs and behaviors that may put someone at risk of contracting an STD. The worksheet on HIV and AIDS can also be used to assess learning on HIV.

Explain the various methods of contraception, including abstinence, and their effectiveness in preventing pregnancy.

- **Advocates for Youth 3Rs, Birth Control Basics**

In this lesson, students are introduced to the various forms of birth control most commonly used by teens, categorizing them by how they are used and their effectiveness in preventing pregnancy. They play the game *Which One is Not True* to determine what is true and false about each of the methods. Students identify the reasons someone may use birth control to avoid pregnancy.

**Assessment Options**

A quiz or Kahoot can be used to identify true and false information about birth control methods or to categorize the methods' effectiveness at preventing pregnancy. Students can explain the benefits of using birth control and factors in deciding which method might be right for each person.

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Describe the steps to using a condom correctly.

- **Advocates for Youth 3Rs, Using Condoms Effectively**

This activity has the teacher demonstrate condom use while students in small groups identify and put in order the steps to correct condom use. If your school permits students to handle condoms in the classroom, this activity can be adapted so that students, along with the teacher, practice the correct steps to condom use with actual condoms. If no condoms are allowed in the classroom (even with the teacher demonstrating), there are videos on the correct use of condoms that can be shown. A homework assignment has students identify situations in the media where couples are in sexual situations to determine whether or not their conversations include condoms.

**Assessment Options**

Students can correctly identify the steps of condom use. They can also complete exit slips to share their thoughts on why condom use is important in sexual situations.

## RESOURCES

Maine law grants minors the right to access sexual health counseling and services without parental/guardian permission. The service providers below offer confidential, low/no cost sexual health services. The following resources/websites provide more information about services available for young people in Maine.

- **Teen Pocket Guide to Sexual Health Care in Maine** this resource answers common questions teens ask about how to access sexual and reproductive healthcare services in Maine. Contact [education@mainefamilyplanning.org](mailto:education@mainefamilyplanning.org) to request copies of this print resource.
- **Maine Family Planning** has 18 clinics across Maine providing sexual and reproductive healthcare services for teens and adults. Both in-clinic and telehealth visits are available. Prevention and education staff are also available for guest speaking. [mainefamilyplanning.org](http://mainefamilyplanning.org)
- **Planned Parenthood of Northern New England** has clinics in Biddeford, Portland, Sanford and Topsham providing sexual and reproductive healthcare services for teens and adults. [plannedparenthood.org](http://plannedparenthood.org)