Lesson One

Title: Learning About Sexuality

Theme: Introduction to Sexuality Education

Time: 120 minutes

Materials:
- Sexual Terminology-Student Handout
- Sexual Terminology-Teacher Guide
- Anatomy Review-Student Handout
- Anatomy Overheads
- Question Box-Student Handout
- Question Box-Teacher Guide
- Question Box

Objectives

● to set ground rules for sexual education classes
● to establish clear boundaries for acceptable behaviour in the classroom
● to increase comfort level of students and teacher
● to assess the level of student understanding in the subject area
● to identify the students' areas of interest or curiosity
● to provide students with factual information on sexuality and anatomy
● to stimulate discussion among students and with their teacher
● to give students the opportunity to ask questions they might otherwise feel too embarrassed to ask

Curriculum Expectations

9p34 - Contribute to the success of the group verbally and non-verbally (e.g. by completing a fair share of the group task, by acknowledging others' contributions to the task).

4MAT Quadrant Code(s)

1R: brainstorming, student-generated questions, question box
1L: teacher-led discussions, small group work and discussions, analyzing, listening, speaking and sharing

Helping Teens To Make Healthy Decisions About Sex And Relationships: A Resource For Educators
Peel Health Department: Healthy Sexuality Program – Contact Health Line Peel @ 905-799-7700
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Procedure

Talking with students about sex and sexuality can be difficult for many teachers. Since sexuality is intimately connected to personal values, family backgrounds and spiritual beliefs, it can be a sensitive issue. Before beginning this unit, you may want to consider the ideas presented in the document entitled, “Tips For Teaching Sexual Education”. It is included in Appendix One. Prior to this lesson, you will need to fabricate a question box for your classroom. You might cover a cardboard box with black construction paper and decorate it with yellow question marks. Remember the box must be large enough to hold approximately thirty 8½ x 11 folded sheets of paper at one time.

Activity One: Establishing Classroom Rules – 20 minutes

The first part of this lesson is designed to ensure that all students know and respect the classroom rules about sexual education. Before you begin this unit, spend some time thinking about the rules you feel are important. Here are a few suggestions to consider.

Classroom Rules for Students and Teacher

Everyone has the right to her/his own beliefs and opinions.

Everyone has the right to be heard.

Everyone will be treated with respect.

We will use only the proper terms for body parts and sexual activities.

We will not make fun of our peers.

We will not name-call or put people down.

We will not ask personal questions during our discussions.
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After you have chosen your rules, introduce them to the class. Students may also suggest rules they would like put in place. Once all rules are complete, you could post them in the classroom. You might also create a contract. This way, each student can sign the contract agreeing to abide by the classroom rules. Students will now have a clear sense of what is expected of them during this unit.

**Activity Two: Addressing Student and Teacher Apprehension – 25 minutes**

The second part of this lesson confronts student and teacher apprehension in talking about sexuality. Begin by explaining that it is perfectly normal to feel embarrassed when it comes to the subject of sex. In an effort to reduce student anxiety, try initiating a discussion based on the following questions. If you like, write the questions on the chalkboard:

1) **What does the word “sex” really mean? Are there different meanings for the word?**

2) **Why do we feel uncomfortable talking about sex?**

3) **Why do students laugh when they are asked to talk about sexuality?**

Invite students to participate in a large group discussion. Conclude by explaining that most of the embarrassment may be attributed to the fact that sexuality remains a subject that is rarely broached among families or inside classrooms. Teens and adults do not often talk about issues involving sexuality. Essentially, our discomfort stems from the fact that we are not used to discussing sexuality openly. Even though sex and images of sexuality are prevalent in the media, honest discussions surrounding sexuality can be more difficult for some people. You might remind students that talking about sexuality is healthy because it will help them become informed and therefore prepare them for making informed decisions about their own sexuality.
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**Activity Three: Complications in Sexual Terminology – 30 minutes**

Talking about sex is further complicated by the varying uses and misuses of sexual terminology. For this reason, it is wise to spend a few minutes clarifying the terms you will be using in the upcoming sexual education classes. Ask students to form groups of four or five. Distribute the student handout entitled, “Lesson One - Sexual Terminology”. Ask the students in each group to create a list of possible meanings for the terms by brainstorming. Have them share some of their ideas. Present the definitions with which you are most comfortable. For reference, you can use the Teacher Discussion Guide that accompanies the Sexual Terminology exercise. You might also ask the students to add your information to their charts.

**Activity Four: Anatomy Review – 30 minutes**

At this point, the teacher will provide the students with a review of human sexual anatomy. This is a good opportunity for students to revisit the proper terms for their sexual body parts. Please refer to the document entitled, “Lesson One – Anatomy Review”. You could photocopy this information for the students, put it on acetate sheets for the overhead projector, or simply share the information orally with the class. While describing body parts, demonstrate them by presenting the visual images on the overheads entitled, “Female Reproductive Anatomy” and “Male Reproductive Anatomy”.

![Male and Female Symbols](image)
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Activity Five: Introduction to the Question Box – 15 minutes

Tell your class that it is very common for students to have a lot of questions during a sexual education unit. You will have already established that some people feel a little nervous when talking about sexuality. Briefly explain the concept of a question box to your students. Ask them to spend a few minutes thinking about some questions that came to mind during today’s class. Distribute the Question Box Handout for Lesson One. Request that students attempt to write at least one question under each heading.

Encourage them to write more questions if they wish. Tell the students that you will be reading their questions and preparing answers for the following class. Remind students not to write their names on the top of the page, so their questions can remain confidential. Ask them to fold up the handout and deposit it in the question box.

Possible Extensions

You might consider using the question box after each lesson. This way, students can ask difficult questions throughout the entire unit.

If you have space in your classroom, you might post diagrams of female and male anatomy for student reference.

Students could also spend some time in the library researching the history of love and sexuality in different countries (China, India, Africa, etc.) or in different societies in the past (The Middle Ages, The Protestant Reformation, etc.).
Possible Assessment

This lesson lends itself to diagnostic assessment. The teacher will be able to assess how much information, and misinformation, is possessed by students. The student handout will also assist teachers in developing relevant curriculum for students. Certain classes may express an interest in a particular sexuality-related issue. Many students may share common concerns. By collecting the questions from the question box, the teacher can look through them, collect answers if necessary, and organise when and if the topic will be covered in class.

Since the nature of the discussion may be difficult for some students, and because this is the first class of the unit, teachers may refrain from giving a mark for participating in the class discussion. Further assessment might best be left for future lessons.
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Tips For Teaching Sexual Education

Talking with students about sex and sexuality can be difficult for many teachers. Since sexuality is intimately connected to personal values, family backgrounds and spiritual beliefs, it can be a sensitive issue. Sexual education specialists recommend the following advice to teachers who wish to increase their level of comfort in teaching sexuality education.

- Try to develop a healthy attitude towards your own sexuality.
- Identify your own values and possible reactions toward different subjects on sexuality.
- Read some current literature in the field of sexuality education. Acquire a basic knowledge of sexuality so that your class may benefit from your expertise. Remember that your knowledge is less important then your attitude towards sexuality. Students learn best about sexuality when they are taught by a kind, tolerant and respectful teacher. Creating a classroom in which students feel safe and free to ask questions is very important. You can accomplish this in a number of ways. Some ideas are as follows:

Beyond The Basics: A Sourcebook on Sexuality and Reproductive Health Education, suggest the following ideas:

- address different learning styles
- react positively to questions
- be sensitive to non-verbal communication
- use humour to ease embarrassment and create a comfortable environment
- be student-centred
- ask participants about what they would like to learn
- be patient
- encourage self-confidence and decision-making skills
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Establishing A Healthy Classroom Environment

- Respect and care for others.
- Create an atmosphere of trust in which all students can be themselves.
- Be sensitive towards the attitudes, values and feelings of others.
- Respect the values and beliefs of people from all cultural communities.
- Communicate with warmth.
- Be capable of discretion should students decide to confide in you.
- Be sincere.
- Do not be afraid to express discomfort.
- Listen carefully to your students’ questions, concerns, worries and thoughts.
- Keep an open mind.
- Value your students’ opinions and realise they may change over time.
- Be flexible.
- Respect the privacy of others.
- Answer questions honestly when you know the correct answer.
- When you do not possess accurate information regarding a topic, research the answer and tell your students at a later date.
- Avoid criticizing students’ opinions.
- Share positive feedback with students whenever possible.
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Resources


