

Abstinence

Grades 9-12, Lesson 9

Summary

Students define abstinence and learn the steps to refusing effectively. In small groups, they practice using refusal skills and observe their peers modeling effective refusal skills.

Student Learning Objectives

The student will be able to ...

1. Define abstinence.
2. Demonstrate effective use of refusal skills.
3. Analyze influences that may have an impact on deciding to be abstinent.

Lesson Timing

Warm up	Bell work + 2 minutes
Definition of abstinence	3 minutes
Refusal skills	12 minutes
Refusal skills scenarios – large group	10 minutes
Refusal skills scenarios – small group	20 minutes
Assign homework	
Exit ticket	3 minutes
Total	50 minutes

FLASH Key Concepts

Abstinence is choosing not to have oral, anal and vaginal sex.

Most high school students are abstinent.

Abstaining from oral, anal and vaginal sex means a person does not have to worry about pregnancy or STDs.

People of every sexual orientation and gender identity choose abstinence.

People can choose abstinence at any point in their life, whether or not they have had sex before.

Standards

National Health Education Standards (SHECAT)

Standard 1	Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention.
SH1.12.7	Justify why abstinence from sex and drugs are the safest, most effective risk avoidance methods of protection from HIV, other STDs, and pregnancy.
SH1.12.8	Analyze the factors that contribute to engaging in sexual risk behaviors.
SH1.12.9	Analyze the factors that protect one against engaging in sexual risk behaviors.
SH1.12.10	Summarize ways to prevent pregnancy and the sexual transmission of HIV and other common STDs.
SH1.12.11	Summarize the importance of setting personal limits to avoid risky sexual behavior.
SH1.12.13	Analyze the relationship between using alcohol and other drugs and sexual risk behaviors.
SH1.12.28	Analyze situations that could lead to being pressured to having sex.
Standard 4	Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.
SH4.12.1	Demonstrate effective communication skills to promote sexual health and healthy relationships.
SH4.12.3	Demonstrate effective peer resistance, negotiation, and collaboration skills to avoid engaging in sexual risk behaviors.
SH4.12.4	Demonstrate effective communication strategies to prevent, manage, or resolve interpersonal conflicts.
Standard 7	Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.
SH7.12.3	Demonstrate practices and behaviors to improve the sexual health of oneself and others.

National Sexuality Education Standards

PR.12.IC.1	Demonstrate ways to communicate decisions about whether or when to engage in sexual behaviors.
SH.12.CC.2	Evaluate the effectiveness of abstinence, condoms, and other safer sex methods in preventing the spread of STDs, including HIV.
HR.12.IC.2	Demonstrate effective ways to communicate personal boundaries as they relate to intimacy and sexual behavior.
PS.12.CC.4	Explain why a person who has been raped or sexually assaulted is not at fault.

Rationale

Supporting young people to be abstinent is an important component of teen pregnancy and STD prevention. The FLASH curriculum's approach to abstinence has benefited greatly from recent research on abstinence education. The FLASH curriculum encourages positive attitudes and positive peer norms about abstinence, builds confidence to remain abstinent, teaches refusal skills, avoids denigrating condoms and birth control, and avoids putting down students who are sexually active.^{1 2 3}

Research has shown that most abstinence-only programs are ineffective and can have negative effects on teens' sexual health and behavior. These programs do not delay sexual initiation, reduce the number of sexual partners, or increase abstinence.⁴ Some actually decrease contraception and condom use when teens do have sex, and decrease the likelihood of STD testing and treatment.^{5 6 7} The FLASH curriculum seeks to avoid these unintended outcomes by employing a different approach, relying heavily on recent research about abstinence programs with positive outcomes.¹

Gender stereotypes are intentionally avoided throughout the abstinence lesson in an effort to support the sexual violence prevention goals of the curriculum.

Materials Needed

Student Materials

- *Refusal Skills Checklist*
- *Refusal Skills Scenarios*
 - *Scenario B: Jonathan and Amber (partially scripted)*
 - *Scenario C: Amara and Son*
 - *Scenario D: Rosibel and Anthony*
 - *Scenario E: Stacia and Grace*
- *Individual Homework: Beliefs About Abstinence in the U.S.*
- *Family Homework: Talking About Abstinence*, available in multiple languages on the FLASH website
- *Lesson 9 Exit Ticket*

Classroom Materials

- *Lesson 9 Warm Up*
- *Refusal Skills Visual*
- *Scenario A: Jonathon and Amber (fully scripted)*, 2 copies for demonstration

Teacher Preparation

- *Prepare Refusal Skills Visual* for document camera or projector.

Activities

1. Warm up

Display warm up as bell work.

Question: The majority of high school students are abstinent. When people have sexual feelings, they can still make the choice not to have oral, anal or vaginal sex. If people have already had sex before, they can still make the choice not to have sex in the future.

List at least 2 benefits of not having oral, anal or vaginal sex.

Possible answers: Not getting pregnant, not getting an STD, not having to worry about being pregnant, not having to worry about getting an STD, not adding pressure to the relationship.

2. Define abstinence and explain purpose of lesson

Define abstinence, emphasizing the sexual behaviors that need to be avoided in order to prevent pregnancy and STDs - oral, anal and vaginal sex. Explain that abstinence is very common, and reinforce that it is a decision people make throughout their lives.

*Today we are going to discuss abstinence. Can someone define abstinence for me?
(Allow students to give their own definitions of abstinence and validate their ideas.)*

People have a lot of personal definitions of abstinence. The definition we are going to use in this class is that abstinence means not having oral, anal or vaginal sex. Oral sex is when one person's mouth goes on another person's genitals; anal sex is when a penis goes in someone's anus or butt; and vaginal sex is when a penis goes in someone's vagina.

Why do you think it's important to know that most high school students are abstinent? (Allow students time to respond.)

If someone thought that every student in this school was having sex, how would that feel? (Allow students time to respond.)

It's important to know that most high school students are not having any type of sex, so that you don't feel pressured to have sex.

Abstinence is something that teens and adults choose at different times in their lives. People of every sexual orientation and gender identity choose abstinence, including gay, lesbian, bisexual and straight people, and people who are transgender and cisgender. And adults and teens can choose abstinence at any point in their lives, even if they've already had sex.

The purpose of today's lesson is to learn and practice the important steps that can help someone say NO to sex that they don't want to have.

3. Teach refusal skills

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Tell students they will be learning about how to say no in a variety of situations. Brainstorm ways to be clear when saying no. Show students the *Refusal Skills Visual* and read through it as a class, giving a brief explanation of each step. Discuss that forcing or pressuring someone to have sex is always wrong.

Once people make the decision to not have sex or participate in a certain sexual activity, it's important to be able to communicate their decision to whoever they are with. What are some things that a person could do to make it clear they mean NO? (Be sure to include the following points: saying NO, clear voice, match what's being said with body language.)

I want to be really clear that people always have to listen when another person says no, no matter how they say it. It is never OK to force or pressure someone into having sex or into any kind of sexual touch. It is always the fault of the person who forced or pressured them, and it is always wrong.

For the purposes of this lesson, let's assume that you like the person you are saying NO to and want to continue hanging out, but you do not want to have sex. We are going to practice it this way because those are the times when it will feel harder to say no.

1. **Say NO.** Clearly state that you do not want to have sex.
2. **Explain why.** For example: "I don't want to get pregnant," or "I'm not ready to have sex."
3. **Suggest an alternative.** Offer something else that you can do together instead. For example, "I think we should go outside now."
4. **Leave if you need or want to.** Like we discussed earlier, sometimes the other person doesn't respect your no. At that point you might need to get out of the situation or get help from someone else.

4. Refusal skills scenarios – large group

Introduce scenarios and do a large group demonstration of refusal skills by having two volunteers read Scenario A.

Then have all students practice refusal skills by writing new lines for Jonathan in Scenario B. Remind students that Jonathan likes Amber and wants to continue going out with her, but doesn't want to have sex with her.

Have one volunteer read Amber's lines and invite several students to share their lines for Jonathan with the whole class as you are reading through the scenario.

Now let's practice the refusal skills through a series of scenarios. The first scenario we will do as a class. It is scripted and I will need two volunteers to read the script.

Thanks! Now we will all have a chance to make up some lines for Jonathan.

5. Refusal skills scenarios – small group

Introduce the small-group scenario practice. Pass out and review the *Refusal Skills*

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Checklist.

Break the class into small groups with three people per group. Give 10 minutes for every student to fill in the refusal lines for all three scenarios (Scenarios C, D and E). Remind the class that the person playing the refuser likes the asker and wants to continue hanging out with them, even though they want to say no to them.

When students are done writing, each small group reads Scenarios C, D and E aloud. Small group members take turns being the asker, the refuser and the observer, who fills out the *Refusal Skills Checklist* while they observe. After reading a scenario out loud with the new lines written by the refuser, everyone will switch roles and do another scenario, so that each person gets the opportunity to be in each role. The purpose is for everyone to practice refusal skills and to hear good refusal skills.

Debrief as a large group after all groups have finished, discussing the scenarios one at a time. Ask volunteers from a few of the groups to give examples of the refusal skills that they came up with or observed. Validate all of the refusal language. Conclude the lesson by praising the students' effort and skill.

Conclude the refusal skills practice.

Great job! You were all so clear and said NO really well. Saying NO is such an important skill to learn. It's great to know how to do this every day, not just for refusing to have sex. The more you practice the easier it gets. It's also an important skill to know throughout your life so that you can remain abstinent when you want to.

6. Assign homework

Allow students to choose between the individual or family homework and explain the assignments as needed.

Individual Homework: Beliefs About Abstinence in the U.S.

Family Homework: Talking About Abstinence, available in multiple languages on the FLASH website

7. Exit ticket

Hand out the *Lesson 9 Exit Ticket*.

Question: What are three things people could do if they are being pressured by someone to do something sexually that they don't want?

Possible answers: Use refusal skills, say NO, explain why, suggest alternative, leave, ask a friend or adult for help.

Warm Up

The majority of high school students are abstinent. When people have sexual feelings, they can still make the choice not to have oral, anal or vaginal sex. If people have already had sex before, they can still make the choice not to have sex in the future.

List at least 2 benefits of not having oral, anal or vaginal sex.

1. _____
2. _____

Refusal Skills Visual

- 1. Say NO**
- 2. Explain why**
- 3. Suggest an alternative**
- 4. Leave if you need or want to**

Refusal Skills Checklist

Directions: For each scenario, check off the refusal skills you see the actors using.

	Scenario B Jonathan and Amber	Scenario C Amara and Son	Scenario D Rosibel and Anthony	Scenario E Stacia and Grace
Says NO (or states that they don't want to have sexual activity).	_____	_____	_____	_____
Is clear.	_____	_____	_____	_____
Explains why.	_____	_____	_____	_____
Suggests an alternative.	_____	_____	_____	_____

Refusal Skills Scenario A

Fully Scripted (for Class Demonstration)

Jonathan and Amber have been dating for 2 weeks. They talked last week and decided they were not going to have sex. Jonathan is not ready to have sex and is really scared by the idea of getting someone pregnant.

Today they are going to Amber's house after school to study. Amber's mom is running late at work and won't be home for an hour. Jonathan and Amber have the house to themselves. They decide to skip studying and kiss on the couch.

Amber: I really like you and think you're so hot. I know we said we weren't going to have sex, but I didn't think we'd ever get the chance to be alone together. Now that we're alone, I really think we should have sex.

Jonathan: I like you, too. It's cool hanging out, and I want to kiss you. But I don't want to have sex.

Amber: But don't you like me? If you liked me, you'd want to have sex with me.

Jonathan: Amber, I don't want to have sex. I'm not ready to have sex and I don't want to get you pregnant.

Amber: But when are we going to get the chance to be alone like this again? I really want you.

Jonathan: The answer is NO. I like you too, and I'm not ready to have sex. I think we should go outside to hang out so we don't get more tempted.

Refusal Skills Scenario B

Partially Scripted (for Large-Group Practice)

Jonathan and Amber have been dating for 2 weeks. They talked last week and decided they were not going to have sex. Jonathan is not ready to have sex and is really scared by the idea of getting someone pregnant.

Today they are going to Amber's house after school to study. Amber's mom is running late at work and won't be home for an hour. Jonathan and Amber have the house to themselves. They decide to skip studying and kiss on the couch.

Amber: I really like you and think you're so hot. I know we said we weren't going to have sex, but I didn't think we'd ever get the chance to be alone together. Now that we're alone, I really think we should have sex.

Jonathan: _____

Amber: But don't you like me? If you liked me, you'd want to have sex with me.

Jonathan: _____

Amber: But when are we going to get the chance to be alone like this again? I really want you.

Jonathan: _____

Amber: OK. You're right. I respect that.

Refusal Skills Scenario C

Small-Group Practice

Amara is at a party with a group of her friends. At the party, she runs into Son. Amara is trans, and recently started attending the GSA at school, where she met Son. She has a crush on Son, but has never had a chance to hang out with him. Son seems to be very interested in Amara. He's been talking to her for a while and tells her how pretty she looks tonight. Son has been drinking and offers Amara a beer. Amara really likes Son and wants to keep talking to him, but she doesn't want to drink.

Son: Hey Amara. It's nice to see you outside of school. Fun party, huh? Can I get you a beer?

Amara: _____

Son: Oh come on, don't tell me you don't drink. I'll get you a beer.

Amara: _____

Son: Really? It's just beer.

Amara: _____

Son: OK. You're right. I respect that.

Refusal Skills Scenario D

Small-Group Practice

Rosibel, a tenth grader is hanging out at the mall after school with her friends. Anthony, a 20 year old, just stopped by with some of his friends. Rosibel thinks that Anthony is really cute and is very flattered when Anthony starts talking to her. Rosibel's parents only let her hang out with friends around her own age. She knows her parents would definitely not be OK with her dating a 20 year old.

Anthony: It's been so fun hanging out with you. We should hang out again sometime. Want to hang out after school on Friday?

Rosibel: _____

Anthony: Oh come on, it's not like you have to tell your parents that we're hanging out. We could just meet up at the mall again.

Rosibel: _____

Anthony: That's really a shame. I like you and would like to get to know you better. What do you say? Meet me here on Friday?

Rosibel: _____

Anthony: OK. You're right. I respect that.

Refusal Skills Scenario E

Small-Group Practice

Stacia and Grace are juniors in high school and have been best friends since the fifth grade. Grace has been with her girlfriend, Brooklyn, for 3 months and is in love. Grace doesn't want to have sex with Brooklyn. She thinks that she's too young to have sex and doesn't feel ready. Stacia started having sex with her boyfriend 2 months ago and is pressuring Grace to also have sex.

(Be sure that in Grace's responses to Stacia, she does not put Stacia down or call her any names for having made the decision to have sex.)

Stacia: I can't believe that you haven't had sex with Brooklyn yet. I don't know why you're waiting. You should just do it.

Grace: _____

Stacia: You better rethink that before she finds someone else. You should have sex with her.

Grace: _____

Stacia: Oh come on. You keep saying that you're in love with her!

Grace: _____

Stacia: OK. I'm sorry. You're right. I respect your decision not to have sex.

Individual Homework: Beliefs About Abstinence in the U.S.

Name: _____

Period: _____

Research beliefs about abstinence that exist in the United States.

Some possible areas to research:

- What are some different beliefs about abstinence in the U.S.? For example, do beliefs about abstinence vary according to people's age, their relationship status, or if they are married?
- How do the beliefs about abstinence change across cultures and religions?

Try an Internet search using the term "abstinence beliefs in the U.S." A librarian can also help you find good sources of information, in books or online.

Write one paragraph about your research findings.

Family Homework: Talking about Abstinence

All Family Homework is optional. Students may complete Individual Homework instead.

Purpose: Family Homework is a chance to share your beliefs about sexuality and relationships, and the beliefs of your family, culture or religion.

Directions: Student will do the homework with a family member or trusted adult who is like family. Find a quiet place where the two of you can talk privately for 5-10 minutes. Please follow these guidelines:

- It is okay for either of you to skip a question.
- What you discuss will not be shared with anyone else, unless you give one another permission to share it.
- Take turns asking questions. When it is your turn to listen, try to understand the other person's response.

Ask the student: What do you think about teens dating or agreeing to be a couple? What are the advantages and disadvantages?

Ask the adult: Have you ever fallen in love? When? What was it like? How did you know it was love?

Ask the student: Do you think you'll ever be in a committed, life-long relationship? If so, what kind of person would you want it to be with? If not, why not?

Ask the adult: When do you think a person is ready to have sex?

Ask the student: When do you think a person is ready to have sex?



Family Homework Confirmation Slip: Talking about Abstinence

Due: _____

We have completed the family homework.

Date

Signature of family member or trusted adult

Student's name

Signature of student

Exit Ticket

What are three things people could do if they are being pressured by someone to do something sexually that they don't want?

1.

2.

3.

Lesson 9: Assessment Questions

1. List two of the refusal steps.

2. What is the most effective way to not get pregnant or get an STD?

3. Circle any situations that could make it harder to remain abstinent once someone has decided not to have sex.
 - A. Being drunk or high
 - B. Being home alone with a boyfriend or girlfriend
 - C. Not telling boyfriend/girlfriend about the decision to be abstinent
 - D. Spending time with other teens who are abstinent

4. Which of the following communication skills help make it clear that a person means NO?
 - A. Says NO.
 - B. Says "I'm not sure."
 - C. Says "Maybe later."
 - D. Uses a clear, firm voice.
 - E. Matches body language with what's being said.

Lesson 9: Assessment Key and Standards Alignment

Question	Answer	Standards
1. List two of the refusal steps.	Possible correct answers: 1. Say NO. 2. Explain why. 3. Suggest an alternative. 4. Leave if you need or want to.	NHES: PR.12.IC.1 HR.12.IC.2 NSES: SH4.12.1 SH4.12.3 SH4.12.4
2. What is the most effective way to not get pregnant or get an STD?	Possible correct answers: Abstinence. Don't have oral, anal or vaginal sex	NHES: SH.12.CC.2 NSES: SH1.12.10 SH7.12.3
3. Circle any situations that could make it harder to remain abstinent once someone has decided not to have sex. A. Being drunk or high B. Being home alone with a boyfriend or girlfriend C. Not telling boyfriend/girlfriend about the decision to be abstinent D. Spending time with other teens who are abstinent	Correct answers: A, B, C	NSES: SH1.12.8
4. Which of the following communication skills help make it clear that a person means NO? A. Says NO. B. Says "I'm not sure." C. Says "Maybe later." D. Uses a clear, firm voice. E. Matches body language with what's being said.	Correct answers: A, D, E	NSES: SH1.12.9
Exit Ticket: What are three things people can do if they are being pressured to do something sexually that they don't want?	Possible correct answers: Use refusal skills, say NO, explain why, suggest an alternative, leave, ask a friend or adult for help.	NSES: SH4.12.1 SH4.12.3 SH4.12.4

References

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- ⁷ Bearman, P., & Brückner, H. (2005). After the promise: The STD consequences of adolescent virginity pledges. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 36, 4, 271-2.