

Climate Setting

Grades 9-12, Lesson 1

Summary

The climate-setting lesson begins by reviewing the FLASH Bill of Rights and collaboratively developing ground rules to ensure a climate of safety and respect. Students participate in a 4 Corners exercise to engage in FLASH prevention messages. The teacher leads the class in developing anonymous questions, which will be answered throughout the rest of unit. The lesson concludes with homework expectations, focusing on the role of family homework as an avenue to promote family communication about these topics.

Student Learning Objectives

The student will be able to ...

1. List classroom ground rules that promote safety and respect.
2. Analyze factors that influence the decision to abstain from sex.
3. Analyze factors that influence the use of condoms and birth control.
4. Support others to make positive and healthy decisions about abstinence, birth control, condoms and relationships.

Lesson Timing

Warm up	Bell work + 3 minutes
Introduce FLASH	2 minutes
Set classroom expectations	8 minutes
4 Corner exercise	19 minutes
Anonymous questions	10 minutes
Homework expectations	5 minutes
Exit ticket	3 minutes
Total	50 minutes

FLASH Key Concepts

Birth control and condoms are excellent at preventing pregnancy.

Many teens successfully use birth control and condoms.

Teens of every sexual orientation and gender identity need to learn about birth control and STD prevention, for themselves or to help a friend.

Condoms are easy to get and easy to use.

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.

Standards

National Health Education Standards (SHECAT)

Standard 1	Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention.
SH1.12.5	Summarize the importance of talking with parents and other trusted adults about issues related to relationships, growth and development and sexual health.
Standard 8	Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community health.
SH8.12.2	Persuade and support others to avoid or reduce risky sexual behavior.
SH8.12.3	Persuade and support others to make positive and healthy choices about relationships.
SH8.12.4	Collaborate with others to advocate for improving personal, family, and community sexual health.

National Sexuality Education Standards

ID.12.SM.1	Explain how to promote safety, respect, awareness and acceptance.
PR.12.INF.1	Analyze influences that may have an impact on deciding whether or when to engage in sexual behaviors.
SH.12.INF.1	Analyze factors that may influence condom use and other safer sex decisions.

Rationale

The purpose of the climate-setting lesson is to develop a safe, respectful and engaging learning environment for the FLASH unit. Developing a positive classroom climate is a common strategy in all fields of education. Sexual health educators find that establishing a positive classroom climate for the sexual health unit is an investment in high-quality learning experiences and respectful behavior between students for the remainder of the unit.

Positive classroom climate is one important aspect of positive school climate, which is associated with a host of positive outcomes, including effective risk prevention, health promotion, student learning and academic achievement.¹ This lesson strives to meet several indicators of the National School Climate Standards, including collaboratively developing codes of conduct; promoting the social, emotional and ethical development of students; and creating an environment where all students are welcomed, supported and feel socially and emotionally safe.²

The curriculum as a whole rests heavily on risk and protective factor research related to the prevention of teen pregnancy, STDs and sexual violence.^{3 4 5 6} These important evidence-based factors are introduced in the climate-setting lesson, and will be addressed in greater depth throughout the curriculum. For example, the 4 Corners exercise begins building positive attitudes about abstinence, condoms and other forms of contraception. Family Homework, which is introduced in Lesson 1 and reinforced in all subsequent lessons, is intended to increase parent communication with teens about condom use, increase comfort and skill talking with teens about sex, and increase clarity of values about adolescent sexual behavior. These family communication determinants play an important role in the prevention of teen pregnancy, STDs and HIV.⁷

Materials Needed

Student Materials

- Small pieces of identical paper (2 per student)
- *FLASH Bill of Rights*
- *Anonymous Questions*
- *FLASH Family Homework Letter*, available in multiple languages on the FLASH website
- *Lesson 1 Exit Ticket*

Classroom Materials

- *Lesson 1 Warm Up*
- A shoebox or big envelope for collecting questions (1 per class)
- 8 large pieces of paper

Teacher Preparation

1. Write each of the following 8 messages on a large piece of paper:

Round 1 Messages:

- Birth control and condoms are excellent at preventing pregnancy
- Many teens successfully use birth control and condoms
- Teens of every sexual orientation and gender identity need to learn about birth control and STD prevention, for themselves or to help a friend
- Condoms are easy to get and easy to use

Round 2 Messages:

- 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.
- It's never okay to pressure someone to have sex
- It's important to respect someone's choice not to have sex, even if they have had sex before

2. In each of the 4 corners of the room, post a message from Round 1 and a message from Round 2. Keep the papers covered or folded.

Activities

1. Warm up

Display warm up as bell work. The purpose is to engage students in the unit. This warm up has no incorrect answers.

Prompt: In this sexual health unit, we will learn about ways to prevent pregnancy, STDs, including HIV, and sexual violence. We will also increase our knowledge of sexual health and have opportunities to talk more about these topics with family members.

Check the 1 topic you already know the most about (for example, from health class, books, your family, etc.):

2. Introduce the FLASH unit

Explain that the class is beginning a 3-week unit on sexual health.

Today we are beginning the sexual health unit. In the warm up, you saw many of the topics we'll be covering over the next 3 weeks. In this unit we'll be talking about a lot of serious issues. We'll also have fun and learn a lot. This unit is going to help all of us stay safe and healthier, and become more knowledgeable about sexual health. Today, we are going to have an overview of the unit.

3. Set classroom expectations for the FLASH unit

Hand out and read the *FLASH Bill of Rights*. Explain that students will generate ground rules to help ensure that everyone has these rights during class. Describe the situations when a teacher, as a mandated reporter, cannot maintain confidentiality. Keep the *FLASH Bill of Rights* and student-generated ground rules posted for the entire unit.

We already have expectations about how to behave in this classroom, but I think it's important to revisit these as we begin our sexual health unit. The FLASH curriculum has a Bill of Rights. It describes important rights that all students should have when learning about sexual health.

1. *The right to be treated with respect*
2. *The right to protect the privacy of oneself, one's family and friends*
3. *The right to ask questions about sexual health without being judged*
4. *The right to receive accurate answers*
5. *The right to one's beliefs, including the beliefs of one's family, culture and faith*

Together, we are going to decide on ground rules for this unit. Let's think of concrete rules that would help ensure that we truly have these rights in our class. For example, what ground rules would ensure that people are treated with respect?

Write students' suggestions on a piece of large paper. If students miss any ground rules you think are important, suggest them yourself. Examples:

- No put-downs.
- It's OK to agree or disagree.

- Listen and be respectful of other people's opinions.
- No mean comments about people's bodies or sexuality
- It's OK to laugh and have fun. Don't laugh at others.
- Any question is OK.
- All questions will be answered.
There will be times when I don't know the answer to a question. When this happens, I will look up the answer or ask for a volunteer to research it.
- Protect confidentiality. Don't share private information publicly. Don't share anyone else's name.
I take privacy very seriously. I won't ask you questions about your own sexual health, and I won't answer questions about mine either.

When discussing confidentiality, describe the situations that teachers and other school staff are legally bound to report.

There are some situations when, as a teacher, I can't keep information private. If I learn that students are thinking about hurting themselves or someone else, or that someone is being abused or neglected, I must try to get help. This is an important law that all teachers must follow.

Conclude the ground rules.

Great job! I'm going to keep the Bill of Rights and the ground rules posted throughout the unit.

4. Lead 4 Corners exercise

Introduce the 4 Corners exercise on FLASH prevention messages. Ask students to imagine that they are leading a teen campaign to prevent pregnancy and STDs and need to choose the main messages. Their choices are posted in the 4 corners of the room.

Unfold or uncover the Round 1 messages on condoms and birth control:

- Birth control and condoms are excellent at preventing pregnancy
- Many teens successfully use birth control and condoms
- Teens of every sexual orientation and gender identity need to learn about birth control and STD prevention, for themselves or to help a friend
- Condoms are easy to get and easy to use

Then tell students to walk to the corner with the message that they think is best for the campaign. Allow time for students in each corner to discuss their decision among themselves, and then ask them to share their reasoning with the class.

Then uncover or unfold the Round 2 messages about abstinence:

- 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.
- It's never okay to pressure someone to have sex
- It's important to respect someone's choice not to have sex, even if they have had sex before

High School FLASH, 3rd edition

Again, have students walk to the corner that they think has the best message for the campaign, discuss their decision among themselves, and then share with the class.

There are no incorrect answers. The purpose is to introduce students to important prevention concepts. When students report out, allow different responses to stand side by side, without debating their merits. Remind students of the ground rules: agree to disagree, and respect all opinions. Condoms/birth control and abstinence are discussed in separate rounds so that students do not debate them.

We're going to do an exercise called "4 Corners" to help us all get familiar with some of the ideas in this unit. This exercise has no wrong answers.

I want you to imagine that we are developing a sexual health campaign for teens. The purpose of the campaign is to help prevent pregnancy and STDs. We're going to choose messages to put on TV, radio, Internet and magazines to help teens protect themselves and stay safe.

In each corner of the room, you'll see a different message. When I say "go," I want you to stand by the message you think will work best for this campaign. Be prepared to talk about why you made that choice. There will be two rounds. The first round will focus on condom and birth control messages. The second round will focus on messages about abstinence, or choosing not to have sex.

Remember, there are no wrong answers. You'll all be deciding which messages, in your opinion, would work best for a teen campaign. Any questions? Go! (3 minutes for instructions)

Uncover the newsprint for Round 1 in each corner. Have students go to the corner of their selected message. (2 minutes)

Talk with the other people in your corner about some of the reasons you chose that message. You may have chosen it for the same or different reasons. (2 minutes)

Ask the group in each corner: Would anyone like to report why their group thought this message would work best for a teen campaign? (4 minutes)

Now let's do this again for some messages about abstinence.

Uncover the newsprint for Round 2 in each corner. Have students go to the corner of their selected message. (2 minutes)

Again, talk with the people in your corner about why you chose that message. (2 minutes)

Ask the group in each corner: Would anyone like to report why their group thought that message would work best for a teen campaign? (4 minutes)

Nice job, everyone! I can tell from the discussion that all of these messages are important in different ways.

5. **Students write anonymous questions**

Hand out the *Anonymous Questions* instruction sheet and review it with students. Pass out 1 to 3 slips of paper per student, making sure the entire class has the same color. Ask students to write at least one question without writing their names. Explain that if they don't know the medical term for something, they can use whatever word they know, and you will teach the medical term when you answer the question.

One of the best parts of the FLASH unit is all the questions students ask. Many of the questions are asked out loud during class. But it's also important to have a chance to ask questions anonymously. What does anonymous mean? (That's right. No names. No one knows who wrote the question.)

Let's look at the Anonymous Questions instruction sheet together.

1. **Write at least one question. Don't write your name.** For some people, writing an anonymous question will help them ask something that's really important to them without worrying about what others will think. Even if you're comfortable asking any question out loud, for this exercise, I want every single student to write a question. If you have more than one question, write each question on a separate slip of paper.
2. **The question can be about any topic in this unit.** Students ask all kinds of questions. For example, they ask about:
 - **Sexual health:** what kinds of exams people need, what clinics they can go to, how to take care of their bodies
 - **Sexually transmitted diseases:** how people can protect themselves, how they know if they have one, how common STDs are
 - **HIV and AIDS:** how people get HIV, how to protect themselves
 - **Birth control:** what methods there are, how they work, if a method is safe, how to get birth control
 - **Abstinence and decisions about sex:** how people decide about sex, how to talk about it
 - **Sexual abuse and rape:** how to help a friend who's been hurt, how common is it, what people should do if they've been hurt
 - **Sexual orientation and gender identity:** how people might know that they're gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, how to support a friend who is coming out, what does it mean to be transgender
 - **Relationships and love:** what makes a good relationship, how to help a friend who's in a bad relationship, how to talk to a partner about something difficult
 - **Pregnancy, becoming a parent, abortion, adoption:** what are the laws, where can a person who's pregnant get help
 - **People's bodies:** how things work, what's normal, what to do if you have a concern
3. **Here are some common ways to start anonymous questions.** You can write your question any way you want. Many students find these question-starters helpful:
 - *Is it true that...?*
 - *Should you worry if...?*
 - *What do they mean by...?*
 - *How do you know if...?*
 - *Is it normal...?*

- *What should you do if...?*

4. Use medical words, if you know them. *If you're not sure of the medical word for something when writing or asking a question, use whatever word you know, even if it's slang. When I answer the question, I'll teach the medical word, so we can all use it in class.*

I'll be answering all of the anonymous questions throughout the unit. By the end, we'll get to all of them. I bet everyone will learn so much from the FLASH lessons that we'll be able to answer a lot of these questions together.

Allow time for students to write their questions, each on a different slip of paper. If students can't think of a question after hearing all of the instructions, instruct them to either write a question they think other students would be interested in or write a piece of factual information about one of the topics you will cover. The goal is to have everyone write something.

Collect the questions in a box or large envelope, labeled with the current class period. Explain that you will be answering the anonymous questions throughout the unit, but not today.

Use the following guidelines when answering anonymous questions throughout the unit:

- Sort the questions by topic. Plan on answering questions during the appropriate lesson or as time allows.
- Get help answering any question in advance, if needed
- Read each question verbatim. Answer it yourself, or if you think the content has been covered already, see if the class can answer it.
- Use FLASH Key Concepts to guide your answers.
- Use the Values Question Protocol to answer questions about non-universal values.
- If a question includes slang, read it verbatim and provide the medical term when answering the question.
- Answer all questions.

6. Introduce FLASH homework expectations

Hand out *FLASH Family Homework Letter* for students to take home to their parents or guardians. The purpose of FLASH family homework is to encourage family discussion about the lesson content.

Explain that every FLASH lesson has family homework. The student and an adult family member or other adult who is like family complete the assignment together. The family member signs the homework in order for the student to get credit. Family homework is available in multiple languages, and can be printed from free PDFs online at www.etr.org/flash/ under the "Family Resources" tab. Students who choose not to do the family homework may complete the individual homework for the same credit.

Every FLASH lesson has family homework. You can complete family homework with any adult family member or with a trusted adult who is like family. The purpose is to help adult family members and teens talk about these topics. Even though it might be uncomfortable at first for some people, a lot of students say they really like this part of the unit.

The homework has questions for the student and adult to ask each other about that day's lesson. The questions focus on people's beliefs and values. No particular knowledge or experience is required to do the homework, and no one is required to ask or answer any personal questions. It takes about 10 minutes. To get credit, the adult signs a slip saying that you did the assignment together. You won't be asked to report back on anything you talked about.

The family homework is available in a number of different languages. Let me know what language you need.

For students who can't complete the family homework, or who don't want to, each lesson has an individual homework assignment that can be completed instead for the same credit.

Tonight, your only homework is to bring home the Family Homework Letter.

Good work today! Tomorrow, we'll get started by reviewing the reproductive system.

7. Exit ticket

Hand out the *Lesson 1 Exit Ticket*.

Question: Today we discussed several ways to promote respectful behavior and a good learning environment during the sexual health unit. Describe one ground rule from class today.

Answer: Students may describe any ground rule generated during the class.

Warm Up

In this sexual health unit, we will learn about ways to prevent pregnancy, STDs including HIV, and sexual violence. We will also increase our knowledge of sexual health and have opportunities to talk more about these topics with family members.

Check the 1 topic you already know the most about (for example, from health class, books, your family, etc.):

- ☐ Reproductive System
- ☐ Pregnancy
- ☐ Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
- ☐ Healthy Relationships
- ☐ Preventing Sexual Violence
- ☐ Abstinence
- ☐ Birth Control
- ☐ Condoms
- ☐ HIV and Other STDs

Check the 1 topic you think will be most interesting to learn more about:

- ☐ Reproductive System
- ☐ Pregnancy
- ☐ Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
- ☐ Healthy Relationships
- ☐ Preventing Sexual Violence
- ☐ Abstinence
- ☐ Birth Control
- ☐ Condoms
- ☐ HIV and Other STDs

FLASH Bill of Rights

- 1. The right to be treated with respect**
- 2. The right to protect the privacy of oneself,
one's family and friends**
- 3. The right to ask questions about sexual
health without being judged**
- 4. The right to receive accurate answers**
- 5. The right to one's beliefs, including the
beliefs of one's family, culture and faith**

Anonymous Questions

1. Write at least one question. Don't write your name.

2. The question can be about any topic in this unit.

- Sexual health
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- HIV and AIDS
- Birth control
- Abstinence and decisions about sex
- Sexual abuse and rape
- Sexual orientation and gender identity
- Relationships and love
- Pregnancy, becoming a parent, abortion, adoption
- People's bodies

3. Here are some common ways to start anonymous questions.

- Is it true that...?
- Should you worry if...?
- What do they mean by...?
- How do you know if...?
- Is it normal...?
- What should you do if...?

4. Use medical words, if you know them.

- Don't worry if you can't think of the right word for something or can't spell it.
- Just use the word you know, even if it's slang.

To Parents & Guardians: Introducing *FLASH Family Homework*

An important part of the FLASH sexual health unit is Family Homework. Family Homework is completed by the student and an adult family member together. This letter explains the purpose of FLASH Family Homework and what you can expect.

One of the goals of the FLASH unit is to increase parent and teen communication about sexual health. Even though teens don't always show it, surveys show that they would like to talk more about these issues with a parent or other trusted adult, and research shows that these conversations play a very important role in helping teens prevent pregnancy, STDs and HIV. The FLASH program includes Family Homework to make these discussions easier and more frequent.

Family Homework is completed by the student and an adult family member, or with an adult who is like family (e.g. foster parent, guardian, etc). The questions in the Family Homework ask about your thoughts and beliefs on a topic related to the classroom lesson. You don't need to have any information about sexual health to do the homework. No one is required to ask or answer any personal questions. Each Family Homework takes about 10 minutes. To get credit, the adult signs a slip saying that the homework was completed. Students will not be asked to share anything you talked about.

Young people are surrounded by messages in the media telling them how to behave sexually. Although the power of the media is huge, we know that family communication is also very powerful. Family Homework is intended to help adults talk clearly and directly with teens about their beliefs and hopes for them.

Family Homework is recommended but not required. If a family decides not to do Family Homework, students will be offered an individual homework assignment that can be completed for the same credit.

Thank you for taking the time to look at the Family Homework. We hope it helps you and your teen have these valuable discussions.



Family Homework Letter – Confirmation Slip

Due: _____

I received the Family Homework Letter.

Date

Signature of family member or trusted adult

Student's name

Signature of student

Exit Ticket

Today we discussed several ways to promote respectful behavior and a good learning environment during the sexual health unit. Describe one ground rule from class today.

References

¹ Thapa, A., Cohen, J., Guffey, H., & Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2013). A review of school climate research. *Review of Educational Research*, 83, 3, 357–385.

² National School Climate Standards. (2009). National School Climate Council. New York. www.schoolclimate.org.

³ Alford, S. (2008). *Science and success, second edition: Programs that work to prevent teen pregnancy, HIV & sexually transmitted infections*. Washington, DC: Advocates for Youth.

⁴ Kirby, D. (2007). *Emerging answers 2007: Research findings on programs to reduce teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases*. Washington, DC: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy.

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Division of Violence Prevention. www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/riskprotectivefactors.html. Accessed 12/31/2014.

⁶ Kirby, D., & Lepore, G. (2007). *A matrix of risk and protective factors affecting teen sexual behavior, pregnancy, childbearing and sexually transmitted disease*. Scotts Valley, CA: ETR Associates.

⁷ Kirby, D., Coyle, K., Alton, F., Roller, L., & Robin, L. (2011). *Reducing adolescent sexual risk: A theoretical guide for developing and adapting curriculum-based programs*. Scotts Valley, CA : ETR Associates.