

SEX

& relationships

What do you really know?



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Teachers' Notes and Suggestions for Use

This card set is a flexible resource that can be used with individual students, in small groups or in a class setting. The main aim is to provoke frank discussion and enquiry on sensitive subjects and to allay some of the common myths and fallacies that underlie knowledge of sexual matters.

Some statements are ambiguous e.g., '*You can't get pregnant in a swimming pool*' and clearly demonstrate the need for teachers and leaders to tease out what the student is actually saying by the use of careful questioning. These particular cards will also enable students to identify their own interpretations and possible misunderstandings.

The cards are frank and cover a range of topics based on six important themes. Each card has been colour-coded to make it easy for teachers to pick out the topics:

- Relationships: **Green**
- Contraception: **Pink**
- Pregnancy: **Yellow**
- STIs: **Blue**
- The Internet: **Purple**
- Personal: **Brown**

The cards can be used as lesson starters or form the basis of a lesson on a specific topic. They can also be used within a lesson by splitting the class into smaller groups and giving each group one card to discuss and record their findings: these can then be fed back to the whole group. Single sex groups could discuss the same card and then compare their conclusions, or mixed sex groups could be used to promote more diverse debate.

The cards could simply provide a useful resource to fill in time at the end of a lesson in order to finish on a lively note!





About CedarOak

CedarOak is a registered charity based in Gosport, Hampshire - an area sometimes referred to as the 'Teenage Pregnancy Capital of Hampshire'. It was established over 20 years ago to provide free independent counselling to those in distress arising from an unplanned pregnancy, abortion or baby loss. Since 2004 CedarOak has been working with local secondary schools to enhance their sex and relationship programmes by running sessions in class and now delivers three separate lessons to around 1200 pupils per year: **Is Sex Worth Waiting For?**, **Crisis Pregnancy** and **Marriage**.

International evidence suggests that young people who have a broad programme of sex and relationship education, which begins early in their schooling, are more likely to delay having sex until they are older, to use contraception and to have fewer sexual partners¹. However, according to Ofsted, the quality and quantity of sex and relationship education taught in schools varies widely and so can leave some young people very vulnerable. The programme CedarOak delivers looks at healthy relationships, the possible merits of sexual delay, the implications of a crisis pregnancy and an exploration of when life begins. Lessons are continually modified to incorporate current issues and trends: they now also cover issues arising from sexting and pornography. The lessons are frank and hard-hitting: young people are, for example, encouraged to consider how their sexual decision-making may be affected by the media, peer pressure, alcohol, drugs and the law. They also discuss the challenges of long-term commitments and the qualities needed for successful loving relationships. Information is provided about contraception and sexual health providers in the local area, with whom CedarOak works in partnership through the Hampshire Teenage Pregnancy Partnership.

CedarOak resources are all designed in-house, but some are now available to buy through Small World-Big Imaginations Publishing. We very much hope you will find **What do you really know? Sex & Relationships** a helpful tool to enhance your SRE curriculum. For more information on the work of CedarOak or to enquire about lessons in the Fareham and Gosport areas, please email: office@cedarOak.org.uk or visit our website at www.cedarOak.org.uk





Contraception

Condoms only split if they're faulty

There are a number of reasons why a condom might split including:

- Being out of date
- Using anything oil-based lubricant on a latex condom, e.g., lipstick, lubricant, hand cream.
- Damage caused by ripping the packet open with teeth, scissors, knives or pencils
- Damage from nails or jewellery.
- A lack of lubrication
- Medication e.g., creams, pessaries or suppositories (for thrush for example)

Condoms can deteriorate if not stored properly as they are affected by both heat and light, so storing them in a back pocket, a wallet, or on a window ledge is not generally a good idea. Condoms from a reputable source will have the CE mark on the packet, which means they've been tested to European safety standards.

Condom manufacturers state that condoms are 98% reliable if used correctly; in reality effectiveness is only around 85% due to incorrect or inconsistent use².

One of the leading manufacturers also recommend that users squeeze the teat at the end of the condom so that no air is trapped inside the teat as this creates space for semen.

It is important to access emergency contraception immediately if the condom has split or any semen has come into contact with the vagina.

Condoms are for boys only

No: you can also get female condoms. They look quite different from male condoms and are worn inside the vagina. They can be inserted up to 8 hours prior to sexual intercourse which means their use does not have to interfere with foreplay. Female condoms protect against pregnancy and against STIs; if used correctly and consistently they are **95% effective**. This means that five out of 100 women using female condoms will become pregnant. However, the failure rate has been found to be higher because of incorrect use: i.e. 21%, which means **19 out of 100** women will typically become pregnant using female condoms only.

Male condom effectiveness is **98%** when used perfectly and **85%** with teenagers, i.e. **2 out of 100 women** will become pregnant if the condom has been used correctly but **15 out of 100** females will typically become pregnant using only male condoms and this is higher in the teenage group³.

A girl can't get pregnant if she is on the Pill

If used correctly the pill is 99% effective; however, a girl can get pregnant if she:

- forgets to take a pill – especially at the beginning or end of a pack
- has diarrhoea and/or vomiting (a common holiday risk)
- takes certain medication

It used to be thought that some antibiotics would also reduce the effectiveness of the pill but doctors are now undecided about this as no evidence has been found to confirm it.





You need to see a doctor to get emergency contraception

You can get it from your GP but it is also available free from:

- any family planning clinic
- some pharmacies
- any CASH clinics (Contraception and Sexual Health)
- any NHS walk-in centre
- any young persons' clinic

There are now two types of tablets: Levonelle is effective up to 72 hours after intercourse; Ella One is effective up to 5 days after intercourse; both are more effective the sooner they are used.

The 'Morning After Pill' only works in the first 24 hours

Emergency contraception, (used to be called the morning-after pill), prevents pregnancy after intercourse has occurred so it is a back-up if there is concern that another method may have failed, e.g., when a condom breaks or slips off, or the girl has forgotten to take a pill. There are now two types of tablets, Levonelle is effective up to 72 hours after intercourse but Ella One is effective up to 5 days after intercourse; both are more effective the sooner they are used. **It is always worth taking emergency contraception even if you think it may be too late.**

You might not be able to get a condom to fit

Condoms are made in different lengths and widths and different manufacturers produce them in varying sizes: snug, regular and large. Typically, the body of most condoms are roomy enough to accommodate men of almost any size, but, even though latex condoms are super stretchy, if condom sizes are too small, discomfort may occur.

More of a problem with teenagers may be that condoms are too large so it is very important that they check fit before using them.

Contraception is the girl's responsibility

The decision to have sex should be an agreement between you and your partner, and part of that is deciding together what contraception you will be using and how you protect each other from STIs. If you do not feel at ease with your partner enough to discuss this important issue, maybe you are not ready to have a sexual relationship with each other.

My parents would find out if I tried to access contraception

You can get contraception; advice about any sexual issues; an abortion and treatment for STI's, without your parents finding out as long as:

- You are at least 14 years old
- The professional you are seeing believes that you fully understand the information given and your choices, called being 'Gillick competent' or within the Fraser guidelines (see notes at end)
- You are not at risk of any harm or sexual exploitation.

They would however encourage you to talk to your parents, especially if you are trying to access abortion services.





Relationships

Anal sex is good as you can't get pregnant

You can't get pregnant with anal sex but it does carry other health risks:

Penetrative anal sex has a higher risk of spreading STIs than many other types of sexual activity. The lining of the anus is thin and lacks natural lubrication, which means it can tear easily, making it more vulnerable to infection. (www.nhs.uk)

The anus is surrounded with a ring-like muscle, called the anal sphincter, which tightens after we defecate. When the muscle is tight, anal penetration can be painful and difficult. Repetitive anal sex may lead to weakening of the anal sphincter, making it difficult to hold in faeces until you can get to the toilet. (www.webmd.com). It can also lead to piles.

Everyone else is doing it

Are you sure? How do you know? It is human nature to exaggerate or distort the truth and this is particularly true in sexual matters. Boys, especially, have been known to brag about their sexual conquests. In a survey carried out by the BBC in 2006, the latest year for which figures are available, only 30% teenagers had sex before the age of 16⁴. It is actually illegal to have sex before the age of 16 and anyone who is older than that, who has sex with an under-16 year old, is at risk of committing a serious sexual offence. Also, even if your friends are having sex, it doesn't mean it's the right time for you: the right time to begin having sex is when you are ready, not to keep up with your friends.

You will always remember the first time you had sex

Losing your virginity is an important milestone in a person's life and is something you will always remember, whether it was good or bad. Research conducted at the University of Tennessee found that people's first sexual encounter had an impact on how fulfilling their future sex lives were⁵.

In ten years time what kind of 'first sex experience' would you like to be able to look back on?

Sex is best with an experienced partner

The 'mechanics' of sex are very easy, so you don't need to have previous experience to know what to do. Having experience of what previous partners have enjoyed may not necessarily be positive because your new partner is likely to enjoy different things and it's best to find this out together rather than assume you know what they like. When you feel loved and secure in a relationship it's a lot easier to talk about your likes and dislikes and explore your sexuality together. A sexually experienced partner will have been more exposed to the risk of an STI and may also carry hurts and disappointments from a previous relationship.

Sex is just a physical act that's lots of fun

Sex isn't just a physical act but it involves a level of emotional intimacy and trust.

Scientists have discovered that, when people have sex, two powerful hormones are being released. One is dopamine, which is a 'feel good' chemical: it gives a kind of 'high', which explains why people, once they have experienced sex, are very keen to carry on .





The other chemical that is released is oxytocin: this is also produced when a woman gives birth and it produces a bonding experience between the two people. That's why it is often very confusing and painful when a sexual relationship breaks up. This bonding chemical really helps to keep a relationship going, but the more you have engaged in casual sex the weaker your bonding experience is going to be.

It's good to have alcohol before you have sex as it relaxes you

Alcohol may relax you but it also changes the way you feel and think and makes you far more willing to take risks, which include:

- not using contraception (pregnancy/STIs)
- losing self-respect by doing things you feel regret the next day, or having sex with someone you would have never chosen otherwise
- getting a reputation and being called names, such as 'slag', 'slut'
- sexual assault

If you think you'll have to drink a lot of alcohol so you feel relaxed enough, or you only find yourself thinking about having sex when you're drunk, that suggests that maybe you're not ready for a sexual relationship. It's also important to remember that it is against the law to have sex with a person who is not able to 'consent' freely due to the use of alcohol (or drugs); therefore, if a girl agrees to have sex when she's drunk, but afterwards says she didn't mean it, the boy can be charged with serious sexual assault which can have long-lasting consequences.

Having sex with someone shows you're committed

Sex is something very special in a relationship, but it's only one way to show love. A strong relationship is built on many different things, including trust and respect. No-one should ever ask you to 'prove' your commitment to them; that is emotional blackmail and demonstrates a lack of respect for your choices and feelings.

It hurts to have sex for the first time

Not usually for boys, but for a girl the first time may be a little painful. When the penis enters the vagina for the first time it will stretch or tear the hymen, and the girl may bleed a little. The muscles in a girl's vagina may tense up if she is nervous or not at ease, making penetration difficult.

There are some simple steps to take to make the first time special:

- make sure that this is what you both want and feel ready for
- sort out contraception
- choose a safe/comfortable environment
- take time to relax and become aroused
- use a water-based lubrication (oil based lubrication would affect a condom's effectiveness)

These will all make it easier.





It's never too late to change your mind about having sex

Being sexually active is always a choice. Any kind of sexual activity has to be a joint agreement - something you both consent/agree to, rather than something you are doing just because you feel you should. If you feel unhappy to take things further **at any point** it is important to make that very clear and the other person needs to respect that and back off. This may be difficult, especially once a boy is very aroused, but to carry on against someone's wishes is sexual assault or even rape.

Once you've had sex you're expected to carry on

Some young people have sex because they are curious or because they don't want to feel 'the odd one out', but they didn't really enjoy the experience or they are no longer in a relationship with anyone they want to have sex with. It's OK to say NO, even if you've previously had sex and it's OK to wait for a special person or a better time in your life to have sex again. **Having sex is always a personal choice and not something anyone should expect of you.**

All gay men have anal sex

Not all gay men have anal sex. Just like heterosexuals, gay men have many different preferences as to what they enjoy sexually. If you are gay and you don't want to have anal sex, you don't have to.





Pregnancy

A girl can't get pregnant the first time she has sex

This is a common myth: yes, she can! And she can also catch an STI so needs to use contraception to protect against pregnancy and condoms to protect against STIs.

You can't get pregnant in a swimming pool

Clarify what the students think this question means as it could be interpreted in different ways: does it mean you can't get pregnant if you have sex in a swimming pool/in water? If so, that's a myth because you can.

If it means you can't get pregnant by swimming in a pool which has semen floating in it, that is correct: you can't, as sperm dies very quickly outside the body. There are also chemicals in the water which would kill the sperm.

You can't get pregnant standing up

That's a myth; yes you can! No matter what position or place you have sex in, you need to use contraception to protect against pregnancy and condoms to protect against STIs.

A girl must have had her first period before she can get pregnant

Not having had a period, or not having regular periods, doesn't mean it's safe to have unprotected sex, because ovulation (the time when you can become pregnant) occurs 14 days **before** any period: if she's never had a period she wouldn't know whether she was just about to start her first ovulation and period.

A girl's period is a good time to have sex

There is never a safe time to have sex without contraception, as ovulation, when an egg has been released and is ready to be fertilized, can take place at any time, even during a girl's menstruation. Also, sperm can live for up to 7 days inside a woman's body so, even if ovulation takes place after the period, the sperm may still be active.

There is also an increased risk of infections and passing on STIs by having sex during menstruation.

It's safe not to use a condom as long as the boy pulls out before he has an orgasm

No as some sperm leaks out before the boy ejaculates (and it only needs one sperm to fertilise an egg). Also the pre-cum can transmit STIs.

It is very important to put on a condom before any sexual contact takes place.





Sexually Transmitted Infections

I would know if I had a sexually transmitted infection

Not always: some sexually transmitted infections, such as Chlamydia, may not cause any pain or unpleasant symptoms, but they can nevertheless have serious consequences if they are not treated. For example, untreated Chlamydia can cause infertility.

You don't need condoms if you are on the pill

The pill (and other forms of contraception other than condoms) does not protect you from sexually transmitted infections, so it is important to use condoms as well .

Condoms protect against all STIs

Condoms, when used correctly, are highly effective in protecting against HIV and in reducing the risk of other STIs. They do not protect against Genital Herpes, which is a viral infection that causes sores in the genital area. They also only partly protect against Genital warts (Human Papilloma Virus or HPV). However, as condoms protect against most STIs and, most importantly against HIV, it is very important to use them.

Lesbians can't catch STIs

Yes they can! STIs can be passed on through oral sex and through sharing sex toys.

It's only gay men who catch HIV

That's a myth: HIV can be passed on if blood or sexual fluid from an infected person gets into another person's body. This can happen to both gay and heterosexual people.





The Internet

There is a lot of useful info about sex on the internet

There is a lot of information about sex on the internet but there are also a lot of very unhelpful websites. Porn websites do not provide good information about sex because they show a fantasy world and do not promote safe sex or sex in the context of a loving relationship.

Websites specifically created for young people have really good information. (See useful websites at the end).

Porn is different from real sex

Porn actors are acting! Porn is not trying to show what most people's sex life really looks like but it shows a fantasy world that is often quite violent. In real life most women don't want to be dominated but loved and respected. People don't always wear sexy outfits; they are not always 'up for it' or have multiple 'amazing orgasms' (or even achieve an orgasm every time). Porn does not show how sex fits into a loving relationship or how important it is to be considerate and respectful to each other. It does not show the importance of practising safe sex. Porn can give the impression that the man's enjoyment is more important when in reality sex is most enjoyable when both partners feel equally valued and give pleasure to each other. You should never assume that your partner is willing to do, or would enjoy, something you've seen in a porn movie. Expecting sex to be the same as in the porn movies could leave you dissatisfied with real-life sex.

Watching porn can affect your body image

Porn does not reflect what ordinary bodies look like. In real life breasts and penises come in all different shapes and sizes. People have wobbly bits and body hair. Porn stars have often had body enhancements, e.g. breast implants, and the footage has been airbrushed to present a certain look. Comparing yourself or the body of your partner to that of a porn star may well cause you both to feel frustration and a sense of 'not measuring up', or not looking 'big enough'. Feeling inadequate can affect your self-esteem and the ability to enjoy having sex. Watching pornography can be addictive, which can lead to isolation and feelings of both guilt and shame.

Asking someone to send you a naked picture of themselves is just a bit of harmless fun

Not true. The making, possessing and distributing of indecent images of anyone under 18 is illegal. If you keep pestering someone for indecent pictures it's actually sexual harassment, which is a form of serious bullying. If sexted images come to the attention of the police they may choose, depending on the circumstances, to take away the person's phone or computer for investigation and it can take up to a year before these are returned. The person taking or distributing the photos could get a police caution, or in severe cases be put on the sex offenders' register. This means they would have a police record, which can have a huge effect when they want to apply for jobs or even voluntary work **at any point in the future.**





Getting naked in front of your webcam could have lasting consequences.

Anything that goes into cyber space has the potential to get into the wrong hands. You can't know for certain who is watching or what someone is doing with your images. Once an image is in cyber space you have lost control over it and you can never fully remove it.

If you wouldn't be happy for these images to be seen by a future employer, your parents, your friends or your future partner, don't do it!





Personal

There is something wrong with you if you don't want to have sex

Sexual feelings are affected by hormones; some people develop sexual feelings later than others; some people choose to never have sex; some wait till they're married; some people have a low sex drive. All these show perfectly normal behaviour. We are all different, we have different feelings and we make different choices.

You can lose your virginity without having sex

There is a difference between tearing your hymen and losing your virginity. The hymen is thin layer of skin that partially covers the entrance to the vagina. The hymen can be broken through sport or inserting tampons; not all girls have hymens (they may have been born without one). This does not mean you are no longer a virgin.

You lose your virginity the first time you have sexual intercourse.

Having sex means different things to different people

When people talk about sex (sexual intercourse) they are usually referring to penetrative sex, where a man inserts his penis into the vagina or anus of a sexual partner. It can however refer to various sexual activities, including sexual intercourse or penetrative sex, oral sex and mutual stimulation.

If a boy has wet dreams it means he is desperate to have sex

Wet dreams (means a boy ejaculating in his sleep) is a normal part of puberty and it shows that a boy is able to ejaculate and is developing physically. It does not mean that he is mentally or emotionally ready to have sex yet.

Having a crush on a mate might mean you're gay

It's normal to be attracted to the same sex sometimes - it doesn't necessarily mean you're gay. However, if you've felt this way very strongly for a long time, you could be bisexual or gay and there are organisations to help you to deal with any issues arising from this (see www.youngstonewall.org.uk).

Sexual orientation (or sexuality) is about who you have sexual feelings for, and include:

- Heterosexuals (people who are straight) who only fancy members of the opposite sex.
- Homosexuals (people who are gay) who only fancy members of the same sex. Girls who fancy other girls can also be called lesbians.
- Bisexuals who are attracted to both sexes

As a teenager, your sexual feelings can be very intense and it's completely natural for your attention to jump between different people - and different genders - quite frequently. This can be confusing. Sexuality doesn't develop overnight, so don't be in too much of a hurry to put a label on yours. If you really want to know if you're gay or straight be patient and pay attention to your feelings and sexual urges. Eventually these will show you exactly where you stand.





There are many useful websites dealing with this issue but they are localised: type in LGBT to find services in your local area, for example:
www.letstalkaboutit.nhs.uk





Useful websites

www.nhs.uk

www.thesite.org

www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/advice

www.webmd.com

www.fpa.org.uk

www.fryp.org.uk/relationships/sex

www.teenagehealthfreak.org

www.getthelowdown.co.uk

www.avert.org

www.ashbrook.org.uk

www.youngstonewall.org.uk

www.challengeteamuk.com

www.letstalkaboutit.nhs.uk

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'Gillick competency' and 'Fraser guidelines'

Gillick competency and Fraser guidelines refer to a legal case which looked specifically at whether doctors should be able to give contraceptive advice or treatment to under 16-year-olds without parental consent. But since then, they have been more widely used to help assess whether a child has the maturity to make their own decisions and to understand the implications of those decisions.

In 1982 Mrs Victoria Gillick took her local health authority (West Norfolk and Wisbech Area Health Authority) and the Department of Health and Social Security to court in an attempt to stop doctors from giving contraceptive advice or treatment to under 16-year-olds without parental consent.

The case went to the High Court where Mr Justice Woolf dismissed Mrs Gillick's claims. The Court of Appeal reversed this decision, but in 1985 it went to the House of Lords and the Law Lords (Lord Scarman, Lord Fraser and Lord Bridge) ruled in favour of the original judgement delivered by Mr Justice Woolf:

"...whether or not a child is capable of giving the necessary consent will depend on the child's maturity and understanding and the nature of the consent required. The child must be capable of making a reasonable assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of the treatment proposed, so the consent, if given, can be properly and fairly described as true consent."

The Fraser guidelines refer to the guidelines set out by Lord Fraser in his judgement of the Gillick case in the House of Lords (1985), which apply specifically to contraceptive advice:

"...a doctor could proceed to give advice and treatment provided he is satisfied in the following criteria:

- 1) that the girl (although under the age of 16 years of age) will understand his advice;*
- 2) that he cannot persuade her to inform her parents or to allow him to inform the parents that she is seeking contraceptive advice;*
- 3) that she is very likely to continue having sexual intercourse with or without contraceptive treatment;*
- 4) that unless she receives contraceptive advice or treatment her physical or mental health or both are likely to suffer;*
- 5) that her best interests require him to give her contraceptive advice, treatment or both without the parental consent."*

