

Minnesota Sexuality Education Resource Review Panel

Summary of Panel Review

Review Date: September 2005

***Making Sense of Abstinence: Lessons for Comprehensive Sex Educators* 2005** Manual

Target Audience: middle school, high school, and college-age

Cost: \$25.00

Distributor: Planned Parenthood of Greater Northern New Jersey

196 Speedwell Ave., Morristown, NJ 07960 • 973-539-9580 • www.ppgnnj.org

The Minnesota Sexuality Education Resource Review Panel **Highly Recommends use of *Making Sense of Abstinence* for the following reasons and with the following reservations:**

Review Summary:

Making Sense of Abstinence is a resource for comprehensive sex educators who want to provide accurate abstinence information and encourage students to define what abstinence means to them and how to effectively choose abstinence. The goal of this sixteen-lesson manual is to help young people explore the complexities of sexual abstinence in ways that respect their ability to make responsible choices when they learn accurate information, clarify their values, and develop interpersonal skills.

Educators can use this manual to:

- Build new comprehensive sex education programs
- Supplement or expand existing comprehensive sex education programs
- Integrate a thoughtful discussion of abstinence into many other curriculum areas
- Strengthen programs for prevention of pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and HIV/AIDS
- Present the choice of abstinence from intercourse, or any other sexual behavior, as a viable alternative and an individual right at any time in any relationship

This panel highly recommends this manual. It consistently focuses on realistic and personal expectations of abstinence and uses abstinence as a discussion springboard for other related topics. For teens that use or want to choose abstinence, it provides discussions, self-reflection, worksheets, role-plays and activities to prepare them for their choice. The manual takes many perspectives and approaches to provide a clear, consistent message. This message encourages individual understanding, definitions, and practice of abstinence. The manual includes activities that address social pressures and assertiveness skills.

Making Sense of Abstinence is not a curriculum and therefore urges educators to use lessons in a flexible manner to fit their audiences and goals. Though the activities are appropriate for many groups, the facilitator may need to modify the language and activities to fit a multi-cultural group or those with different learning styles. It offers a section on defining abstinence for the GLBT population. Some material may be too personal for a classroom setting and some audiences. Facilitator prep work may be necessary to make the lessons fit within the time available.

The panel **highly recommends** *Making Sense of Abstinence: Lessons for Comprehensive Sex Educators*.

Title (date)

Assessment Criteria	Mean Score	Comments
Accuracy of Information - Provides basic, accurate information about teen sexual health, e.g., risks of teen sexual activity, ways to avoid intercourse or use methods of protection against pregnancy and STDs, human growth and development, relationships, etc.	4.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information is accurate, however, does not include complete and accurate citations.
Focus - Focuses on ways to promote sexual health e.g., reducing one or more sexual behaviors that lead to unintended pregnancy or HIV/STD infection; understanding healthy physical/emotional development; developing healthy relationships, etc.	4.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides a consistent focus on “real life” sexual abstinence. ▪ Uses abstinence as a starting point for good discussion on many related issues. ▪ Provides good “tools” for youth who practice abstinence. ▪ Manual assists in good decision-making without scare tactics or “sex-negative” language.
Messages - Delivers and consistently reinforces a clear message, e.g., states message multiple times in multiple ways.	4.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clear message encouraging individual understanding, definition and practice of abstinence. ▪ Consistent information and messages offered from many perspectives and approaches.
Addresses Social Pressures - Includes activities that address social pressures that influence sexual behavior.	4.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good job of addressing social pressures through role plays and activities.
Communication Skills - Provides examples of and practice with being assertive, using negotiation and refusal skills, making decisions, etc.	4.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contains good activities on assertiveness. ▪ Must be careful how you use of some lessons in terms of personal and student privacy.
Teaching Methods - Employs a variety of teaching methods designed to involve participants and have them personalize the information.	4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good use of discussion, self reflection, worksheets, role plays and interviewing family. ▪ Some activities may be too personal for a classroom setting. ▪ Adaptation may be needed for different learning styles.
Appropriateness for Audience - Incorporates behavioral goals, teaching methods, and materials that are appropriate to the age, sexual experience, and culture of the students (as stated by publisher.)	4.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Very adaptable to audiences of different ages. ▪ May be more applicable to high school and college-aged students than middle school students.
Multicultural Perspective - This resource is most appropriate for the following audiences.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adaptation needed for exercises to include names representing diverse races and languages. ▪ Includes a lesson on defining abstinence for GLBT people. ▪ Lacks information for students who experienced sexual assault/abuse/coercion.
Teacher-Friendly - Is well organized with clear, thorough instructions or discussion guide. Minimal assembly or preparation time required.	4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Urges educators to use lessons in a flexible manner; clearly states that it is not a curriculum. ▪ Lots of prep work needed for some lessons. ▪ Contains easily adaptable/modifiable lessons.
Facilitation Skills Required - How knowledgeable and skilled must the facilitator be to use this resource effectively?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Needs a strong facilitator who can handle a discussion about sensitive topics and has excellent personal and professional boundaries.
Presentation Quality – How appealing is the product (e.g. visual quality, sound quality, graphics, etc.) ?	3.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Handouts could be more professional and visually appealing, but prefer low price of the manual to fancy graphics.
Overall Recommendation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recommend Highly - 12 ▪ Recommend - 3 ▪ Reject - 0