Addendum to the
Health and Reproductive Curriculum
on Teen Sexuality

Lesson on Societal Hindrances to Abstinence
as Noted in North American Culture

Inserted in High School Health and Reproductive Curriculum
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Lesson #1 – Hindrances to Abstinence as Noted in North American Culture

The students will

- Become familiar with difference in male and female brain characteristics with regard to sexual stimuli, p.3-5.
- Review the detrimental effects of pornography, p.8ff.
- Note contrary nature of teen sexual activity with Owosso Public School’s Six Pillars of Character, p.7-8.
- Become familiar with the action steps that facilitate sexual abstinence, p.13-15.

Preparation (optional)

In preparation for this lecture, have students critique standard evening television genre with regard to cultural attitudes expressed about sex. One or two programs are sufficient. Options include movies, music videos, TV commercials and magazine ads. Key questions students are asked to answer: How do TV programs reflect or influence norms in American culture? and How is sex portrayed? (Note parental permission may be necessary if TV is restricted.)

- Distribute Key Words, Handout #1 prior to lesson.

Lecture

I. Introduction

A. Responses from viewing assignments. (Optional)

B. Why is it that adults overwhelmingly do not want teens engaging in sex while popular culture promotes sex even among teens? Media may be a reflection of culture, but it may also depict behavior which is not the norm and which may also be unhealthy.

1. Do responsible adults know something that the media regularly denies?

2. They do know something –

   a. Sex before marriage can lead to STD.

   1. Some diseases may be lifelong and life threatening.
b. Unwanted pregnancy

1. This leads to life altering choices:
   - abortion
   - adoption – may be most helpful to the baby, but never an easy decision.
   - early parenthood with the likelihood of living below the poverty line
   - education – dropout or increased stress in order to reach educational goals while parenting at the same time.

c. Damaged emotional heart

1. The more you give yourself away in a relationship, the more you run the risk of emotional scars which often lead to further trauma in the future. Distorted views of sexuality, love, and commitment can adversely affect future relationships.

II. Fundamental distinctions between female and male sexual stimuli

A. The media routinely tries to erase distinctions.

1. Males and females are the same with regard to the senses of sight and touch.

   a. Yet, research indicates a significant difference in amygdala responses. The amygdala is an almond shaped part in the brain which controls arousal responses related to fear, emotional responses and hormonal secretions.

   Our findings indicate that the amygdala mediates sex differences in responsiveness to appetitive and biologically salient stimuli; the human amygdala may also mediate the reportedly greater role of visual stimuli in male sexual behavior, paralleling prior animal findings, p. 411.

   For males, more than females, visual sexual stimuli seem to preferentially recruit an amygdalo-hypothalamic pathway. This accords with previous speculations that the amygdala is a critical initial structure in a processing pathway recruited in human males during the processing of sexually arousing visual stimuli. It is also in line with findings from animal studies, and with the efferent connectivity from the amygdala to the hypothalamus, which controls physiological reactions associated with sexual arousal. In summary, the current findings suggest a possible neural basis for the greater role of . . . . ¹ [emphasis mine]

2. Typically, sexual arousal in men begins with sight, while females are typically aroused through touch.
   a. Touch and sight pathways to sexual contact must be understood and monitored if sexual abstinence is to be attained.

   b. Male arousal is typically much faster, while females usually require greater levels of intimacy.

B. There is an impact on teen sexuality when studies are ignored and behavior is guided by the entertainment media.

1. Media (TV, videos, music, DVDs, movies, advertising) continually presents females with less and less clothing or tightly fitting clothing, which sets the norm for dress. This, in turn, affects the male visual pathway for sexual behavior.
   a. The problem is occurring in girls at younger ages. For today’s young girls, the pressure to look and act sexy is greater than ever.

   Clearly, something’s going on, so much so that the American Psychological Association (APA) recently convened a task force on girls’ sexualization. “There’s a real syndrome happening, and it’s picking up speed,” says Eileen L. Zurbriggen, Ph.D., who chaired the APA group. “Even little girls are now feeling they should look and act alluring.” Her committee found that this is harmful to girls on several levels.

   “The core issue is what they feel valued for,” Zurbriggen explains. “It’s as though factors like whether they’re smart or funny or kind or talented at something
like sports or art get erased.” And their self-esteem suffers for it. “The images their idols present are so idealized, most girls can’t attain them. That makes them feel bad about their own bodies, and this can eventually lead to anxiety and depression,” Zurbriggen says. Preoccupation with their “hot-o-meter” score can even hurt their school performance. “A girl’s mind becomes literally so full of worries about how she looks and what other people are thinking, she doesn’t have enough energy left to focus on learning,” says Zurbriggen.  

b. **Self-Esteem** concerns belief in oneself and self-respect. Young people are receiving the wrong message if they think dress or lack of it equates to the valuing of self. Inner qualities, such as the six pillars (p. 7-8), will build self-esteem which is a sure foundation when contrasted to the fleeting nature of physical appearance. Do weight, clothing, and jewelry truly reflect who we are as people?

2. This causes attraction by males, but for the wrong reasons.

a. Provocative clothing ramps up male sexual response at a time when young men should be learning to control sexual stimuli until they are prepared for the responsibility of parenthood and marriage.

b. The problem is occurring in earlier and earlier age groups.

“I notice boys talking about girls being ‘hot’ earlier than they used to,” says Richard Gallagher of the Parenting Institute of NYU. None of which, sadly, surprises him or other experts. “As girls are dressing provocatively at young ages, its sparking the sexual inquisitiveness of younger boys,” says Scott Haltzman, M.D., a Brown University psychiatrist who specializes in gender issues.  

3. Female teens are in search of intimacy through relationships. This should happen with their fathers, but often does not because of divorce and or male relational

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absence. Cautionary note: Sexual contact of any kind is NEVER appropriate among family members.

a. The result – female teens give their bodies away (the norm within the media) to males with the hope that this is how intimate relational bonding occurs with the opposite sex. It does not. Typically, males are not ready for such bonding until much later in life.

b. Progressive Levels of Intimacy. (Distribute Handout #2.)

4. New research also suggests that the more teens are exposed to visual sexual content, i.e. T.V., the more early pregnancy rates rise.

4 Our results indicate that frequent exposure to sexual content on television predicts early pregnancy, even after accounting for the influence of a variety of other known correlates of each . . . . The results of the present study suggests that adolescents who view substantial televised sexual content have an increased risk of

4 Laura Stanley, “Too Soon for Sex?” Ladies Home Journal (August 2006) : 60. Stanley writes, “Young women who have close bonds with their fathers are only about half as likely to have sex with their boyfriends as girls who have poor rapport with their dads.”

experiencing a pregnancy before age 20, compared with youths who view less sexual content on television. Given the negative consequences of early pregnancy for young people and for society, it is critical to recognize and to understand this association. . . . Young people receive a considerable amount of information about sex through television, and this information does not typically highlight the risks and responsibilities of sex. Our results suggest that television may have a substantial role in the high rates of teenage pregnancy in the United States. High rates of exposure corresponded to twice the rate of observed pregnancies seen with low rates of exposure.  

a. Also, consider the many other sources of sexual visual stimuli that teens are exposed to – the Internet, movies, video games, and music videos.

1. “Sixty-two percent of teenagers reported having a TV in their bedroom.”

C. The Owosso Public School’s Six Pillars of Character are compromised when females dress provocatively and males touch the opposite sex in ways that cause sexual arousal. (Distribute Handout #3.)

1. **Trustworthiness** is compromised because ulterior motives are often in play.
   a. Some level of trust must be present for consensual sex to take place. Yet, is the trust grounded in the pillars or something far less?

2. **Respect** is compromised because sexual partners end up using one another.
   a. When sex is reduced to a sport or common past time, an attitude of “What’s in it for me” can be observed.

3. **Responsibility** is compromised because teen sexual activity leads to highly risky behavior with emotional and physical consequences.

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a. The most responsible thing to do with regard to teen sexuality is to delay physical intimacy until marriage.

4. **Fairness** is compromised because sexuality is reduced to a sport where one or both partners use the other partner.
   a. Fairness is about equality and not usefulness.

5. **Caring** is compromised because males and females are not looking out for the best interests of their partners.
   a. To care for someone means to express true concern for someone else’s well-being.

6. **Citizenship** is compromised because among other things, citizenship means being a good neighbor and displaying a level of mutual respect toward others.
   a. Sex without marriage commitment can reflect a user-based mentality (entitlement) instead of service (giving). A *what’s-in-it-for-me* mindset is not constructive among the citizenry of any country as well as being a poor foundation with the opposite sex.

III. Pornography’s impact on the male *noetic* structure. (Distribute Handout #4.)

   A. Everyone has a *noetic* structure.

      1. *Noetic* comes from the Greek verb *noe* which means “to understand” or “to think”
         a. *Noetic* structure refers to the sum total of everything that a person believes, whether true or false.

   B. The belief system within males with regard to sex is most often shaped by visual stimuli.

      1. See II. B. p.4.

   C. The current scientific findings on pornographic viewing among males is disturbing.

      1. Pornography\(^8\) presents images of sexuality that are divorced from male relational bonding to the female and the moral decision making process.

\(^8\) Pornography – The English term is derived from two Greek words: Porneia – immorality, prostitute and Grapheia – to write. The English term is generally understood to mean anything “intended primarily to arouse sexual desire. This is the understood definition of the term as used in this lesson. U.S. Courts have had difficulty in defining
a. Objectifying of women.

“Pornography delivers an image of masculinity that is dominate, that is removed from emotion, that is removed from any moral decision. . . . Pornography portrays women as things to be penetrated. Women exist for male use.” – Bail Dines, Ph.D., Wheelock University, Boston, MA.  

“In men, prolonged exposure to pornography creates and enhances sexual callousness toward women . . . Prolonged exposure to pornography, it must be remembered, results in both a ‘loss-of-respect’ for female sexual autonomy and the disinhibition of men in the expression of aggression against women.” – Dr. James B. Weaver

b. Keep in mind that one out of four women will be raped by the age of 20.

The United States has the highest occurrence of rape among countries which report such statistics. It is four times higher than that of Germany, thirteen times higher than that of England, and twenty times higher than that of Japan. 

2. Adult male studies indicate pornography exposure leads to distorted information about sex and the possibility of addiction.

obscene or pornographic content. Justice Potter Stewart remarked during a case involving obscenity, “I shall not today attempt further to define [obscenity] and perhaps I could never succeed in intelligently doing so. But I know it when I see it.” The legal standard for pornography was established by the supreme court. “In Miller v. California, 413 U.S. 15, 93 S. Ct.2607, 37 L. Ed. 2d 419 (1973). Chief Justice Warren E. Burger stated in Miller that pornographic material would be classified as obscene if it met three criteria: (1) the work, taken as a whole by an average person applying contemporary community standards, appeals to the prurient interest; (2) the work depicts sexual conduct in a patently offensive way; and (3) the work, when taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.” p.3. http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/porn/etc/definition.html.

9 Jon Schneider, A Drug Called Pornography. (CA, 2000 – 2007), DVD.

10 Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, Hearing on the Brain Science Behind Pornography Addiction and the Effects of Addiction on Families and Communities (Presented Thursday, 18 Nov. 2004 at 2:00 p.m. in Room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building).

11 See www.sa.rochester.edu/masa/stats.php. Young women need to understand that not all men have rape tendencies. Yet, the occurrence of rape has increased as unhealthy views of sexuality, found in pornography, have increased in the U.S.
a. Pornographic images of females or sex with females is fantasy. Real life (wives or girl friend) does not measure up to images on the page or viewing screen.

b. Distortions can lead to addiction – How does it happen?

1. Tolerance → dependence → withdrawal (pain that requires more)

2. Pornography viewing releases the same endorphins in the brain as drugs.

a. Process : (arousal → relaxation → fantasy)

3. The brain has normal mood stabilizers, but repetition leads to the non-release of stabilizing chemicals – Psychological addiction occurs.

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In general, all highs involve neural release transmitter endorphins. These are produced by drugs, but also the same process occurs in risk takers, body builders, workaholics, and pornography viewing. 12

As Internet addiction takes hold, the brain’s executive region, known as the anterior cingulate, loses ground. This is an area in the front part of the brain that is responsible for decision making and judgment. Intervention for these addictions involves not only holding the dopamine system at bay but also strengthening these anterior neural circuits. 13

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12 Jon Schneider, A Drug Called Pornography. See also iBrain, Surviving the Technological Alteration of the Modern Mind by Dr. Gary Small and Gigi Vorgan (New York, Collins Living, 2008), 48. “When we think of addiction, we usually associate it with alcoholism or drug abuse. However, the same neural pathways in the brain that reinforce dependence on those substances can lead to compulsive technology behaviors that are just as addictive and potentially destructive. Almost anything that people like to do – eat, shop, have sex, gamble – has the potential for psychological and physiological dependence. But the access, anonymity, and constancy of the Internet has helped create several new forms of compulsive behavior fueled by the World Wide Web and other digital technologies.”

13 Dr. Gary Small and Gigi Vorgan. iBrain, Surviving the Technological Alteration of the Modern Mind. (New York, Collins Living, 2008), 49
4. Pornographic images are very difficult to remove from the male memory.

Pornographic visual imagery results in the same chemical release as experienced in fight or flight situations.

D. Consider the explosion of pornography since the middle of the 20th century.

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14 Ibid, 59.

15 Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, *Hearing on the Brain Science Behind Pornography Addiction and the Effects of Addiction on Families and Communities* (Presented Thursday, 18 Nov. 2004 at 2:00 p.m. in Room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building).

1. 1953 was a pivotal year for the pornography explosion. Playboy hit the news stands at main street book stores. Hugh Heftner made the magazine respectable by including articles about politics, culture, and current events. Between 1969-1974 a battle ensued between Playboy and Penthouse magazines. Images became more graphic. Penthouse won and led to another publishing giant, Larry Flynt’s Hustler magazine. As a group, these three magazines helped lay the groundwork for a multibillion dollar business.

2. Today, TV viewing, movies, and music DVDs often depict various forms of pornography.

3. Then came the Internet. Pornography proliferated on the Internet and is impossible to eradicate as it grows exponentially around the globe.

   a. The result is that the sexual beliefs found in the noetic structure of many people are being shaped by fantasy instead of reality.

   b. . . . at least one-third of Internet users engage in some type of online sexual activity. Forty million Americans visit Internet porn sites at least once each month, and 35 percent of all downloads are pornographic. Some people simply email sexually explicit jokes or humorous images; others find the accessibility, affordability, and the anonymity of more intense cyber sex irresistible. . . . The accessibility and anonymity of the Web, both at home and at work, help make it particularly tough for sex addicts to abstain.  

17 Schneider.

18 Small, 58.
4. The newest blight on the cultural scene is sexting.\textsuperscript{19} Teen age girls and boys are taking nude or partially nude pornographic photos of themselves and sharing with boyfriends and girlfriends via a cell phone text message.

a. Consider the risks.

1. Shame and injury to self-esteem if the images are downloaded to the internet and/or given to people who may wish to use the photos against you.

2. Sexting is contrary to the values of what has been covered in the pornography portion of this curriculum.

3. Sexting is counterproductive in view of warnings noted within the curriculum.

4. Teens may be prosecuted under state and/or federal child pornography statutes.\textsuperscript{20}

5. Sexual predators are always on the look out for their next victims.

IV. Action steps to take which promote sexual abstinence in a culture that promotes sexual contact. (Distribute Handout #5.)

A. Women, be discreet in how you dress, keeping in mind that your dress and actions may inadvertently be causing sexual arousal in the males around you.

1. This may not be your intent, but be aware of how you may be affecting those around you by virtue of your dress.

2. Fashion should not dictate your ethics.


B. **Women**, remember that you are prone to desire intimate relationships with males, but this need is best met within your family and requires restraint. Cautionary note: domestic rape or improper touch by male family members is NEVER appropriate.

1. In selecting a marriage partner, the ability of your male suitor to bond with you is key to a decision to marry more than mere physical attraction. Sex before marriage can and does inhibit objectivity with regard to this life changing decision. Does this male, and potential marriage partner, exhibit inner qualities (six pillars of character) sufficient for a life long commitment?

C. **Women**, pornographic images, which may be attractive to some females, also exist and should be avoided. All forms of pornography objectify those who are depicted in pictures, video, and prose.

1. To objectify is to view someone as an object for self-gratification.

D. **Men**, remember that females are human beings that should be respected and not objectified. Using touch and intimacy to engage in sex prior to the commitment of marriage is an expression of a User and not a Lover.

1. Be aware that engaging in sex prior to marriage can inhibit objectivity with regard to this life changing decision. A prospective female marriage partner must be viewed in a much wider context than mere appearance. Does she bond with you, and are her inner qualities (six pillars of character) conducive for lifelong commitment? Are you desirous of merely using her physical features for your own gratification? Does she follow the pillars of character?

E. **Men**, avoid all forms of pornography. Pornographic images are etched into the memory and cause distortions in the wholesomeness of sex and will likely affect a future relationship with females.

F. **Men**, never view females as objects or challenges to conquer.
G. Men, revealing dress is as inappropriate for you as it is for females. Displaying the body in order to feel in style places emphasis upon the physical rather than inner qualities. Who you are as a person should occupy your mind more than how you dress.

H. All young people should avoid the dangers and liabilities of sexting.

I. All young people must avoid the lies and distortions about sexuality that are so apparent in popular culture. Do not shape your beliefs and behavior from depictions created in a studio.

J. Passion (sexual drive) is best controlled by avoiding “alone alone” situations. An example of “alone” is when a couple is having dinner while seated by themselves at a restaurant engaged in a private conversation. “Alone, alone” situations are when couples, as an example, are in a home by themselves for a period of time.

K. Save sex for marriage when you are prepared to enter into a commitment that is grounded in the Pillars of Character. The Six Pillars of Character are not only conducive for the educational environment, but also for all of life, which includes marriage.

1. Sex is best explored and discovered by two people in the context of a committed marriage.

2. When men or women meet the opposite sex, levels of intimacy are naturally experienced. Sex before marriage can circumvent the processes of intimacy (levels of knowledge) which can impair rational decision making.

L. The use of alcohol will often lead to compromise in character which may lead to sexual intimacy that would not have taken place without its use.
Works Cited


Handout #1

Health and Reproductive Curriculum

Keywords

**Noetic Structure** – encompasses the sum total of everything a person believes whether true or false.

**Objectify** – To view people as objects for self-gratification.

**Pornography** – English term derived from two Greek words: *porneia* – immorality or prostitution, and *grapheia* – to write. The term is generally understood to mean anything intended primarily to arouse sexual desire.

**Provocative** – tending to stimulate sexual or erotic feelings.

**Self-esteem** – belief in oneself or self-respect.

**Sexting** – use of cell phone technology to communicate pornographic pictures.

**Sexual addiction** – addicted to sex or sexually stimulating literature, pictures, videos, and objects.

**Sexual stimuli** – that which evokes erotic desire.
Handout #2
Health and Reproductive Curriculum

Progressive Levels of Intimacy

- Sexual Intercourse
  - 8. Lifelong commitment
  - 7. Private knowledge
  - 6. Committed relationship
  - 5. Character traits observed
  - 4. Very familiar
  - 3. Hand holding
  - 2. Attraction
  - 1. First acquaintance

- Unhealthy
  - Sexual bonding occurs before a fuller knowledge (intimacy) of the

- Healthy
Handout #3
Health and Reproductive Curriculum

Six Pillars of Character

1. ________________ is compromised because ulterior motives are often in play.
   a. Some level of trust must be present for consensual sex to take place. Yet, is the trust
      grounded in the pillars or something far less?

2. ________________ is compromised because sexual partners end up using one another.
   a. When sex is reduced to a sport or common past time, an attitude of “What’s in it for
      me” can be observed.

3. ________________ is compromised because teen sexual activity leads to highly risky
   behavior with emotional and physical consequences.
   a. The most responsible thing to do with regard to teen sexuality is to delay physical
      intimacy until marriage.

4. ________________ is compromised because sexuality is reduced to a sport where one or both
   partners use the other partner.
   a. Fairness is about equality and not usefulness.

5. ________________ is compromised because males and females are not looking out for the best
   interests of their partners.
   a. To care for someone means to express true concern for someone else’s well-being.

6. ________________ is compromised because among other things, citizenship means being a
   good neighbor and displaying a level of mutual respect toward others.
   a. Sex without marriage commitment can reflect a user based mentality (entitlement)
      instead of service (giving). A what’s-in-it-for-me mindset is is not constructive
      among the citizenry of any country as well as being a poor foundation with the
      opposite sex.
Handout #4
Health and Reproductive Curriculum

The Distribution of Pornography

I. Key Words.

A. Noetic Structure.
   1. Greek – Noe ______________________ or _____________________

   2. Noetic Structure (belief system) refers to the sum total of everything a person believes whether ____________ or ________________.

   3. In regard to sex, a male’s belief system is often shaped by V____________ S______________.

B. Pornography can have similar effects on the male brain as drugs.

   1. Sex addiction is similar to other addictive behaviors such as alcohol and drugs.

   2. Process

      A____________________
      R____________________
      F____________________
Handout #5

Health and Reproductive Curriculum

Action Steps

**Women**, be discreet about dress.

**Women**, use restraint in emotional bonding with males.

**Women**, avoid objectifying men.

**Men**, avoid objectifying women.

**Men**, avoid all forms of pornography, male or female.

**Men**, never view females as challenges to conquer.

**All young people**, avoid the dangers of sexting.

**All young people**, do not shape beliefs and behavior from depictions created in a studio.

**Passion** – avoid alone, alone situations.

**Save** sex for marriage.

**Alcohol** usage often compromises character.
Learning about sexuality and achieving sexual health begins during childhood and continues throughout our lives. Questions about sexuality tend to increase during adolescence and, ideally, sex education should begin before a young person’s sexual initiation. Standards for Curriculum-Based Reproductive Health and HIV Education Programs. UNESCO International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education. Advocates for Youth: Programs that Work. Becoming a Responsible Teen (BART): An HIV Risk Reduction Program for Adolescents ETR Associates, 2012 (3rd edition) B.A.R.T. helps teens clarify their own values about sexual activity, make decisions that will help them avoid the risk of HIV infection, and learn skills to put their decisions into action.