

Preparing Adolescents for Young Adulthood (PAYA)

Module II

**PERSONAL CARE
HEALTH
SOCIAL SKILLS
AND
SAFETY**

Handbook for Skill Development

Massachusetts Department of Children and Families

PAYA

MODULE II

Introduction

W

elcome! The life skills you'll be working on in this booklet include such vital topics as safety, relationships, and sexuality.

The module contains information and exercises for each of the topic areas to help you develop or strengthen your life skills. It will help you determine your skill level in related topic areas and target those skills in which you may need some assistance and practice. The Skill Plan will help you organize your effort as you work toward each goal.

As you move from one skill topic to the next, you will be increasing your understanding of the fundamentals of independent living and enhancing your abilities to make a successful and smooth transition to self sufficient young adulthood.

Remember, it's your future!

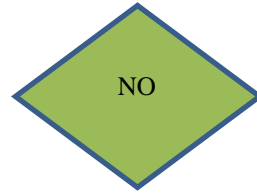
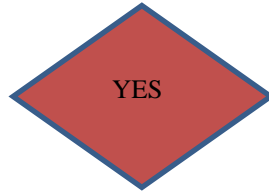
Good luck and enjoy yourself!

Independent Living Skills Module II

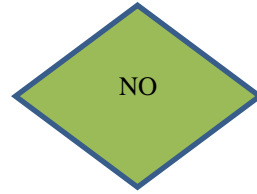
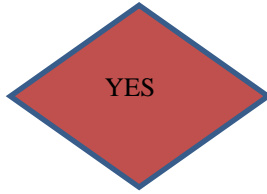
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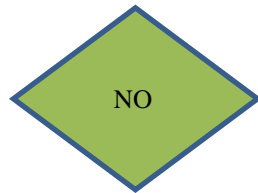
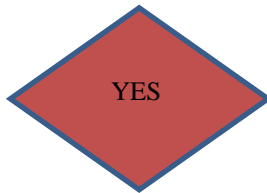
Can you identify your own strengths?



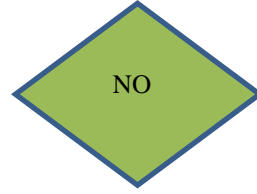
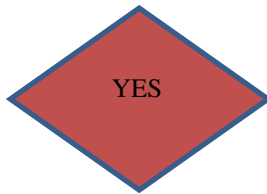
Do you know what you need help with?



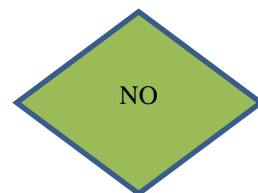
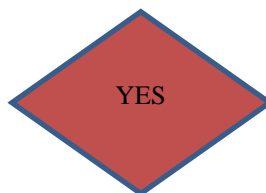
Have you identified your own personal goals?



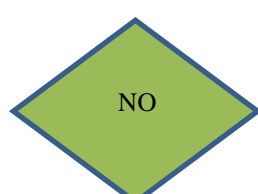
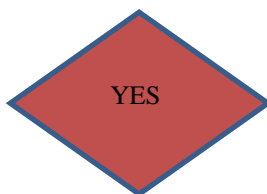
Do you have a community support network?



Have a healthy awareness of racial and ethnic identity?



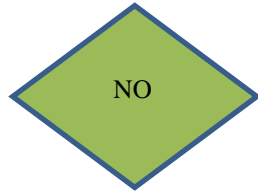
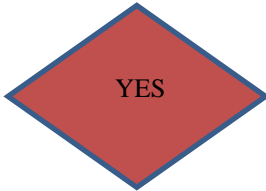
Understand the risks of cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs?



Personal Care, Health, Social Skills, and Safety: Please circle *Yes* or *No* or *Not Yet* to the questions below

Can you avoid high risk behavior and manage stress in a healthy way?	YES	NO	NOT YET
Do you know where to get help for personal safety concerns: physical/emotional abuse, dating violence, etc.	YES	NO	NOT YET
Do you know where and how to access mental health services?	YES	NO	NOT YET
Understand the need for preventative health care	YES	NO	NOT YET
Understand what a Medical Proxy is & know how to obtain one (youth 18 +)	YES	NO	NOT YET
Do you understand how to prevent sexually transmitted infections including HIV & know the local resources for testing, treatment, etc.	YES	NO	NOT YET

Do you have a PCP and have a Mass Health card and know to access coverage?



If you answered No or Not Yet to any of the prior questions, please do not worry. This book is designed to help you understand personal care, healthcare, safety, and social skills. Your social worker, case worker, and or foster parent can also help you with these new skills.

PERSONAL CARE SKILL ASSESSMENT

The following questions will help you identify the skills in which you excel and target those which you need to develop. By yourself or with your team, try to answer each of the questions as honestly as possible. After completing this independent living skills assessment, review it with your team and identify those skills you would like to strengthen.

	<i>I do not know how to do this</i>	<i>I need to know more about this</i>	<i>I can do/ have done this</i>
1. Have good personal hygiene skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Use toiletries appropriately.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Know which personal care items to buy that will improve my appearance and fit within my budget.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Take pride in my appearance; wear clean and neat clothing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Know which clothes should be hand-washed, dry-cleaned, or machine-washed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Can wash my own clothes using a washing machine, correct water temperatures, detergent, bleach, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Know how to iron clothes and sew on buttons.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Know where to take my clothes if they need to be dry cleaned and know how much it will cost.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PERSONAL CARE

Personal appearance is an important part of personal care. It is the visual appearance of a person, especially with regard to personal cleanliness and neatness of clothing. Why do you think it is important to take pride in your appearance?

What does your personal appearance tell others about you?

It is important to take time for your personal appearance and hygiene. If you plan your morning and evening routines, you'll be sure to have enough time for showering, hair care, dressing, etc., and still be able to get to school or work on time.

Consider the following:

Amanda has difficulty getting to school on time. Although she gets up pretty early, she always seems to be late for school. She spends a lot of time putting on her make-up and choosing what to wear. What advice would you give Amanda?

Are you ever late for school, work, or appointments? _____

If so, what delays you? _____



ACTIVITY

The following is a list of some personal care activities and a sample time chart to practice your scheduling.

Review the list, checking those activities appropriate for you and plan your daily routine.

Daily Personal Care Activities

- Plan What To Wear
- Iron Clothes
- Shower/ Bathe
- Brush and floss teeth
- Wash and dry hair
- Shave
- Put on make-up
- Eat nutritious breakfast
- Other: _____

Daily Routine		
<u>When</u>	<u>Task</u>	<u>Length of time</u>
A.M.		minutes
A.M.		minutes
A.M.		minutes
A.M.		minutes
A.M.		minutes
P.M.		minutes
P.M.		minutes
P.M.		minutes

Now using the above schedule, what time should you get up in the morning to be on time for school, work, etc.? (*Don't forget to account for travel time.*)

PERSONAL CARE ITEMS:

In order to take good care of our personal hygiene, we have to use some personal care items, like deodorant, toothpaste, soap, etc. Sometimes it can be confusing to find the right product.


Consider the following:


Ashley has dry skin, particularly during the winter time. She goes to a local drug store to buy moisturizing lotion. When she arrives in the right aisle, she is confused because there are about 20 different brands of lotions on the shelf.

When you choose your personal care items, what qualities are important to you?

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> price | <input type="checkbox"/> ingredients |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hypoallergenic | <input type="checkbox"/> appearance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> name brand quality | <input type="checkbox"/> fragrance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> recyclable materials | <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ |

Take an inventory of all personal care items you use frequently.

_____	

	_____



ACTIVITY

Go to your local drug store and research the costs and quality of personal care items you use frequently. Record the information in the chart below.

Personal Care Item	Purpose	Price

Now that you have taken an inventory of your personal care items, are there any you might be able to purchase more economically without losing the quality you want? Be sure to consider how often each personal care item has to be purchased.

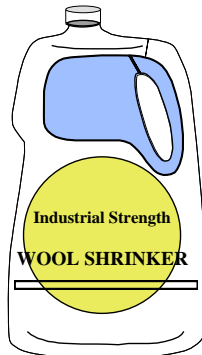
Are you satisfied with the products you use? If you have certain needs, such as special shampoos for your particular type of hair, and you've found a product that works for you, you may want to continue to buy it. Just remember to be sure that it fits into your budget.

CLOTHING

The kind of clothing we wear is usually important to us. Therefore, it is important to take proper care of it. Most clothing today is easy to care for. Our t-shirts, skirts, and jeans are “wash and wear” so if we take them out of the dryer and fold them, they’re ready to go. But sometimes there are exceptions.

Consider the following:

Ben got a new wool sweater for Christmas. He put it in the laundry with his other clothes and washed it in hot water. When he took out his laundry, Ben found his sweater to be half its original size.



What do you think happened? How would you wash wool?

HOW DO YOU WASH YOUR CLOTHES?

Take an inventory.

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Do you read labels to find out how to wash your clothes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you separate your laundry according to light and dark colors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you use laundry detergent and bleach?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you hand-wash clothes which can not be cleaned in a washing machine?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you iron your clothes, using the right temperature setting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you take appropriate clothes to the dry-cleaner?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Read the clothing labels below and explain how you would clean, dry, and iron each individual item.

100% Cotton	100% Silk Hand-wash Only	50% Polyester 50% Rayon	80% Wool 20% Cotton Dry Clean Only
Clean:	Clean:	Clean:	Clean:
Dry:	Dry:	Dry:	Dry:
Iron:	Iron:	Iron:	Iron:

A Note About Bleach

There are a number of different types of bleach – regular, color-safe, scented, etc. Probably the most common brand name is Clorox, but there are also generic brands, too. If bleach is used inappropriately it can cause severe damage to your clothes! Even “color-safe” bleach can be harmful if over-used. Be sure to read the label on the bottle before you buy it or use it.

Under what circumstances would you use bleach?

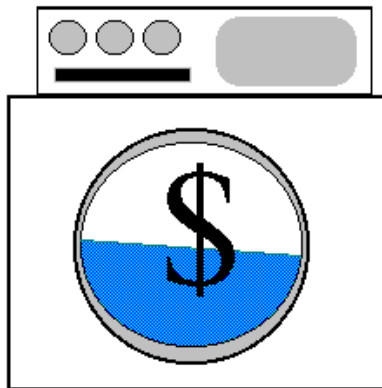


ACTIVITY

Not all homes have a washer or dryer. If you do not, you may need to use a local Laundromat.

Go to a Laundromat and estimate how much it would cost to do your laundry each week. Look at what services the Laundromat provides. When determining what you will need to bring with you to wash your clothes, you should consider the following.

- What are the hours of the Laundromat?
- Is there a change machine for quarters or payment cards for purchase?
- Is detergent available for purchase?
- Are my clothes safe if I decide to leave while they are being washed or dried?
- If there is no attendant on duty, is there contact information posted in case you have a problem?



My estimate for one week's washing and drying is

\$

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ACTIVITY

Go to a local dry-cleaner and inquire about the cost of dry-cleaning:

A Shirt	A Sweater	A Coat
\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____



ACTIVITY



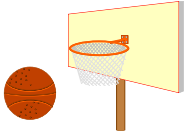

Ask your foster parent or another adult to help you do laundry by having them assist you in separating colors, measuring detergent, determining the correct water temperature to use, and how to operate the machine. If using a coin operated Laundromat, make a list together about the things you'll need. Once you are comfortable, you could start doing your own laundry whenever possible.

WHAT TO WEAR

Wearing the right kind of clothes to the right occasion can save you from embarrassment and missed opportunities. It can also send the message that you care about your appearance. The t-shirt and jeans you hang out in are not the same clothes you would wear to a job interview.

Take an inventory of your clothes and decide what you would wear at the following occasions:

I Would Wear:

<p>A Job Interview</p> 	
<p>High School Graduation</p> 	
<p>A Celtics Game</p> 	
<p>At Work</p> 	

The kind of clothes a person wears is often considered to be a part of his or her identity. There are times, however, where you might want to deviate from “your style.” It is not appropriate to wear jeans, sneakers, hats, or baggy clothing to a job interview, for example, even though you may feel more comfortable in those clothes.

In general, taking good care of your personal appearance is well worth the effort. It will leave a good impression on others and will often lead to opportunities that will benefit your future.

HEALTH CARE

SKILL ASSESSMENT

The following questions will help you identify the skills in which you excel and target those which you need to develop. By yourself or with your team try to answer each of the questions as honestly as possible. After completing this independent living skills assessment, review it with your team and identify those skills you would like to strengthen.

	<i>I do not know how to do this</i>	<i>I need to know more about this</i>	<i>I can do/ have done this</i>
1. Know whom to call and where to go for emergency medical care.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Can take care of myself when I get colds, the flu, minor cuts, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Know how to use an oral thermometer to take my temperature and know when a fever is serious.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Know which non-prescription medications to take for colds, fever, headache, diarrhea, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Know how to be sure that the tamper-proof seal has not been broken on a medication container.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Know how to get a medication prescription filled and follow the instructions on the label properly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Able to use prescription and non-prescription medication appropriately.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Understand why smoking is harmful to my health.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Keep my Medical Passport up to date and know my own medical history, as well as health risks specific to my racial/ethnic group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Know when a medical problem requires emergency room treatment instead of a scheduled appointment with the doctor.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<i>I do not know how to do this</i>	<i>I need to know more about this</i>	<i>I can do/ have done this</i>
11. Understand the importance of regular medical and dental care and have chosen a doctor and dentist for ongoing care.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Know how and when to call a doctor or a dentist for an appointment for a check up or for treatment of a medical or dental problem.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Know what medical insurance is, why it's necessary, and that it can be purchased individually or through many employers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Know that drug and alcohol abuse is very harmful to my health.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Know what first aid kit items I should have at home and know how to use them properly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Understand what sexually transmitted diseases are and how to prevent getting or spreading them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Know what the functions are of the various parts of the body, including sexual organs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Understand how pregnancy occurs and know how to prevent pregnancy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Know the importance of good nutrition and proper exercise in maintaining health.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Skill Plan One

Health Care and Sexual Health: Please answer *Yes* or *Not Yet* to the questions below

Know the names and contact information for own doctor(s) and dentist

Know own medical history, including immunizations

Have own Mass Health card & know how to access coverage when Mass Health ends

Understands purpose & dosage for prescribed & over the counter medications

Know which foods are nutritious & eat healthful foods

Understand the need for preventative health care

Know that exercise is important to health & is a good stress reliever

Understand what a Medical Proxy is & know how to obtain one (youth 18 +)

Know where to get support for any concerns regarding sexuality, sexual orientation/identity

Understand how to prevent sexually transmitted infections including HIV & know the local resources for testing, treatment, etc.

Understand how to prevent pregnancy – abstinence & birth control options and how to access them

Understand the implications of teenage pregnancy

Can you describe the qualities of a good parent?

Goal:_____ Tasks to Achieve Goal:_____

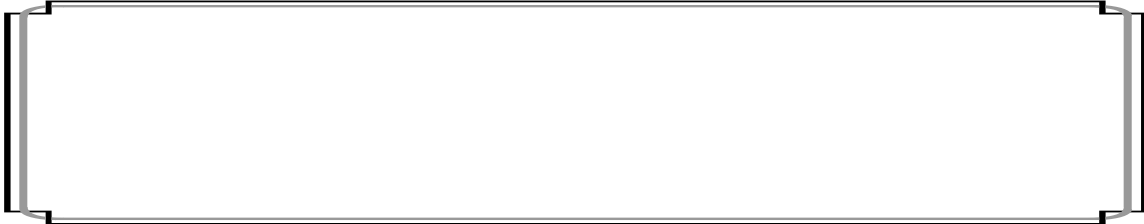
Who Will Assist:_____

Goal:_____ Tasks to Achieve Goal:_____ Who Will

Assist: _____

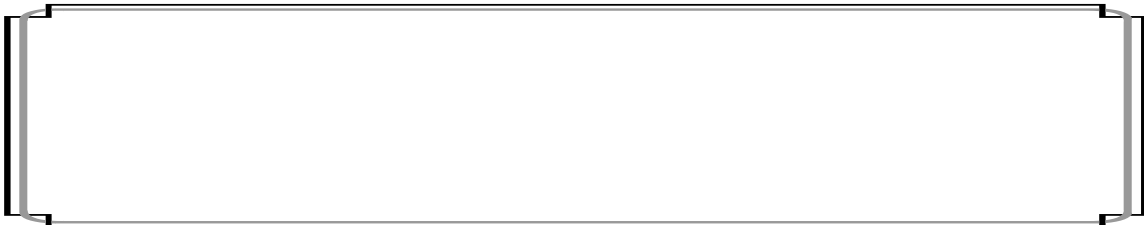
HEALTH CARE

Health care is the prevention and treatment of illness or injury in order to maintain mental and physical well-being. Why do you think it is important to take care of your health?

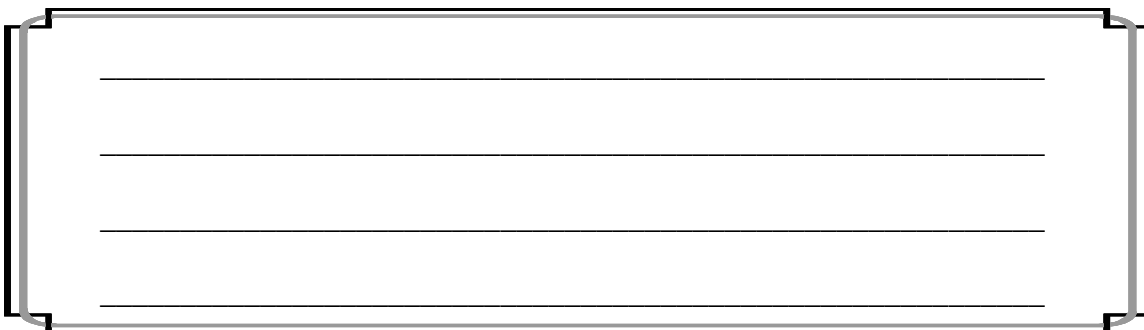


Consider the following:

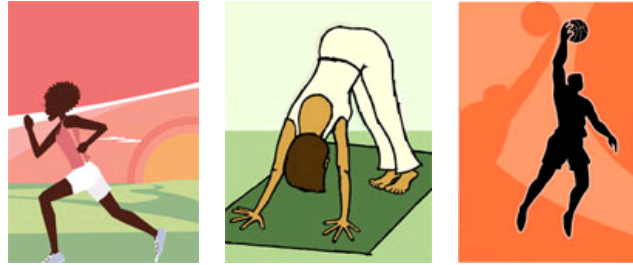
Vanessa doesn't take care of her health. She eats a lot of fatty and sweetened foods, doesn't like fruits or vegetables, and never exercises. When a friend tried to speak to her about her habits, Vanessa stated that she is still young and that only old people have to take care of their health. What do you think? Is Vanessa right?



What kinds of things do you think are important in taking care of your health?



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



Being physically active on a regular basis is an important part of keeping physically fit and can prevent certain health risks. Physical activity can be defined as any way you move your body to use energy. It can include things like walking, vacuuming, or carrying groceries. It can also include planned exercise such as playing basketball, swimming, or taking a yoga class.

Test your knowledge of fitness by answering TRUE or FALSE to the following statements. (Answers are listed below.)

1. Exercise gives you more energy.
2. Exercise slows down the aging process.
3. Exercising on a regular basis can give you more self confidence.
4. Exercising on a regular basis is an important part of maintaining a healthy weight.
5. Walking for only twenty minutes twice a day will not improve your physical fitness.

Answers

1. TRUE. If you are physically active on a regular basis, you feel more energetic and will be fit.
2. TRUE. Physical activity helps strengthen your body - your bones, muscles, ligaments, and tendons. It helps you improve your cardiovascular system so that your body works more efficiently while it strengthens your heart.
3. TRUE. Setting a physical activity goal and achieving that goal will give you a real sense of accomplishment as well as renewed confidence in yourself and your abilities. You don't have to train like an Olympic athlete; activities like walking to

school/work can be part of your plan. Be realistic. Set an attainable goal for yourself and stick to it.

- 4. TRUE. Physical activity burns calories, and it helps keep your body in great shape as well.
- 5. FALSE. Even walking just twice a day for twenty minutes will improve your physical fitness.

Do you want to exercise regularly but find you have a hard time getting going or sticking with it? Use the activity chart below to help you plan your fitness schedule for a week. Use the comments section to record how things went.

Date	Time	Exercise/Activity	Comments



Physical activity is not only healthy, but it can also be a lot of fun! Many communities offer a variety of free or low cost sports activities you can participate in. In addition, the YMCA or your local community youth center may offer access to their facilities and classes for a low fee.



ACTIVITY

Research your community for free or low cost exercise and sports opportunities which reflect your interest. If you find a program that you would like to participate in, speak to your foster parent or social worker who can help you come up with a plan to join the program.

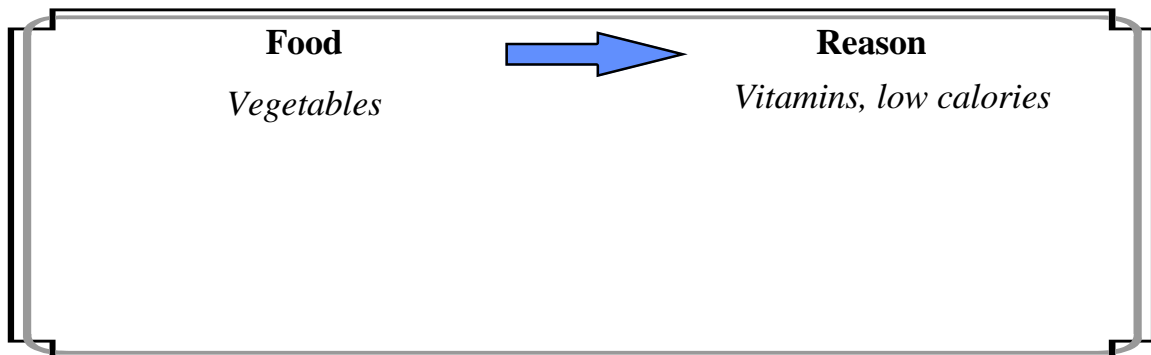
NUTRITION



Good nutrition and a balanced diet are important to keep us healthy. Eating the right amount of healthy foods can make you feel better, have more energy and help you fight disease. In addition, healthy eating can reduce your risk of injury due to stronger bones, and reduce your risk of obesity and related diseases such as diabetes. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to what food goes into your body. The keys to good nutrition are knowing **what foods to eat** and **how much to eat** as well as ensuring you are **physically active**. Eating well and being healthy is a lifelong commitment that should start when you are young.

Good nutrition and a balanced diet are important to keep us healthy.

What kind of foods do you think are healthy and why?

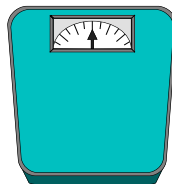


What kind of foods do you think are not so healthy? Why?

Food	→	Reason

Test your knowledge of nutrition by answering TRUE or FALSE to the following statements. (Answers are below.)

1. One cup of canned peas contains about 300 times more sodium (salt) than one cup of fresh peas. _____
2. One pound of body fat contains 3,500 calories. _____
3. One tablespoon of liquid honey has fewer calories than one tablespoon of whole granulated sugar. _____
4. All three types of fat (saturated, monounsaturated, and polyunsaturated) raise the level of cholesterol in the blood and can increase the risk of heart attack or stroke. _____
5. One cup of popcorn (without butter or margarine) has fewer calories than three potato chips. _____
6. A small order of French fries has the same amount of calories as a small ice cream cone. _____
7. You will have to walk one and a-half miles to burn off the number of calories in one regular donut. _____



Answers:

1. TRUE. Foods that contain preservatives or are processed have much more sodium than fresh foods. For example,
 - one cup of canned mushroom soup has 1,193 milligrams of sodium.
 - one cup of low fat cottage cheese has 921 milligrams of sodium
 - one fresh egg has 69 milligrams of sodium.

2. TRUE. Therefore, if you are trying to lose some weight and would like to lose one pound per week, you will have to either eat 3,500 fewer calories than you regularly eat or burn up 3,500 more calories through physical activity each week.
3. FALSE. One tablespoon of liquid honey has approximately 60 calories whereas one tablespoon of white sugar has about 46 calories. You should also be aware that sugar is an ingredient in many foods, including some you might never have suspected -- soups, spaghetti sauces, salad dressings, etc. Sugar appears under many different names on food product labels. Here are some of the most common:




4. FALSE. It is the saturated fats that raise the level of cholesterol in the blood. Red meats and dairy products contain a lot of saturated fats. Cholesterol is a kind of fat which our bodies produce. We actually need some cholesterol for our cells and to make hormones. Too much cholesterol, however, will stick to the walls of our arteries and eventually clog the flow of blood. That's when heart attacks or strokes can occur.

Monounsaturated fats do not affect the levels of cholesterol in the blood. Examples include olive and peanut oils. Polyunsaturated fats lower the level of cholesterol in the blood. Most vegetable oils are polyunsaturated. So when, you are planning meals, remember to choose polyunsaturated fats over saturated ones, and try not to eat too many foods containing saturated fats.

5. TRUE. One cup of popcorn (without butter or margarine) has only 25 calories while three potato chips have approximately 34 calories. If you are not sure which foods are high or low in calories, check a food calorie chart. What you learn may help you make better choices in planning what you'll eat for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks.
6. FALSE. The order of French fries has approximately 220 calories while a small ice cream cone has 150 calories. When you choose a snack or order at a fast food restaurant, be aware of what you'll be eating. Consider the nutritional value, the amount of fat, and the calories as well as your taste buds.

7. TRUE. A donut contains approximately 150 calories. If you walk for one and one half miles, you'll burn off approximately 150 calories.

How aware are you of all the things that you eat and drink during the day? To get a better idea of what your nutritional intake is, fill out the Daily Food Diary for one week. At the end of the week, review the diary with a friend, staff person, or foster parent.




Food Journal

Date: _____

Meal	Food / Drink	Carbs	Fat	Calories	Total Calories
Breakfast					
Lunch					
Supper					
Snacks					
Total for the Day					

Check 8 Ounce Glasses of Water



How Did I Do Today?

Excellent Great Ok Not Good Very Bad

Circle One Option

Day in Review



ACTIVITY

Now that you have kept track of your eating habits for one week, you can answer the following questions:

Do you eat enough nutritional foods? _____

How many meals a day do you eat? _____

If you skip meals, which meal do you skip the most often? _____

What kind of foods do you eat most often? _____

Do you eat mostly fruits and vegetables? Sweets? Fatty Foods? _____

How often in a day do you snack? _____

Do you sometimes eat when you're not hungry? _____

Are there certain times of the day that you get cravings? If so, When? What kind of things could you do to curb them? _____

Do you eat when you are in certain moods - sad, bored, nervous, etc.? If so, what could you do instead of eating? _____

Do you eat with other household members or do you eat alone? _____

Do you eat when you study? When you watch TV? _____

Are there foods that you avoid? _____

How often in a week do you eat at fast food restaurants? _____

How much water do you drink in a day? _____

Do you take vitamins or supplements? If yes, which ones? _____

Now that you have tracked your eating habits and answered the questions, do you understand a little better the role food plays in your life? Should you try to change your habits? If so, you might want to develop helpful strategies with your foster parent, social worker, or program staff.

My strategies are:

⇒

⇒

⇒

⇒

Note: If you feel you need more guidance about the role food plays in your life, please talk to a trusted adult. This adult may refer you to a nutritionist or doctor to get you the information you need.

To learn how to eat healthy, a great way to begin is by learning how to read food labels. Once you know how to do it, you can make informed choices about what you put into your body—and how much.

Food Labels¹

The nutrition facts label on your favorite breakfast cereal tells you it's full of vitamins and minerals. Do you think that makes it a healthy choice?

In fact, just because a food is high in vitamins doesn't mean it's healthy overall. Sure, it's great that your favorite cereal gives you a shot of vitamins and minerals. But what if it's also loaded with sugar?

¹ www.kidshealth.org References 2015

Eating healthy means choosing lots of different types of food throughout the day to get all the nutrients you need such as vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, fiber, and even fat. So how do you figure all this out?

Food Labels!

Labels give you information that can help you decide what to choose as part of an overall healthy eating plan. For example, it may be OK to eat a sugary cereal if you make up for it by not eating much sugary stuff for the rest of the day. Checking the labels on foods can alert you when a food is high in something like sugar so you can be prepared to make tradeoffs.

Food labels provide more than just nutritional facts, though. They also tell you what's in a packaged food, such as the ingredients. Ingredients are always listed with the main ingredient first. So if the first ingredient listed is sugar, beware. That food item may not be as healthy as it claims to be. Along with certain health claims, some food labels also state which country the food came from and whether the food is organic.

Making Food Labels Work for You

The first step in making food labels work for you is to look at the entire label. If you focus on only one part — like calories or vitamins — you may not be getting the full story, like how much sugar or fat is in the product. Check out the macaroni and cheese example below to see why the full story is important.

Sample label for Macaroni and Cheese

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%

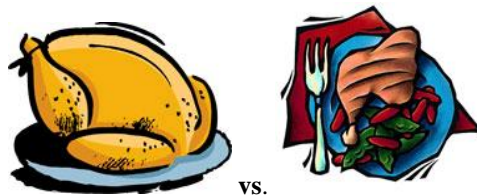
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A	4%
Vitamin C	2%
Calcium	20%
Iron	4%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Here are some tips to help you fully understand food labels:

1. Serving Size



Always start with the serving size amount. That's because all the information on the rest of the label — from calories to vitamins — is based on that amount.

Take note of how much a serving is (e.g., 1 cup, 8 oz). Sometimes a serving size will be way less than you're used to eating — like only half a cup of cereal. So it's important to know the amount.

2. Calories

A calorie is a way to measure how much energy a food provides to your body. The number on the food label shows how many calories are in one serving of that food. To get a rough idea of how many calories you need to eat each day, check out the U.S. government's MyPlate website.

The calorie from fat number tells you how many calories in that serving come from fat. For most people, no more than 30% of all the calories they eat in a day should come from fat. So if you eat 2,000 calories a day, no more than 600 of these calories should come from fat.

3. Percent Daily Value

These percentages show the amounts of nutrients an average person will get from eating one serving of that food. For the purposes of food labels, the government chose an "average" person as someone who needs 2,000 calories a day. So if the label on a particular food shows it provides 25% of vitamin D, that 25% is for a person who eats 2,000 calories a day.

But obviously some teens — like those who are growing rapidly or very athletic — will need more calories than 2,000 a day. And many will need less. If you need more than 2,000 calories, you may need to eat more than one serving to get the same percentage of that nutrient. If your calorie needs are less, you may not need to eat as much to get that same percent.

The percent daily value amounts are based on these nutrition guidelines:

- 60% of calories should come from carbohydrates
- 30% of calories should come from fat, with most fats coming from sources of unsaturated fats
- 10% of calories should come from protein

The percent daily value information can be complicated. But one thing it makes easy is showing at a glance if a food is high or low in a particular nutrient. Here's how:

- If a food has a daily value of 5% or less of a nutrient, it is considered to be low in that nutrient.
- A food is a good source of a nutrient if the percent daily value is between 10% and 19%.
- If the food has 20% or more of the daily value, it is considered an excellent source of that nutrient.

4. Fat

Total fat shows how much fat is in a single serving of food. Although eating too much fat can lead to obesity and health problems, our bodies do need some fat every day. Fats are an important source of energy and provide insulation and cushioning for the skin, bones, and internal organs. Fat also distributes and helps the body store certain vitamins.

Some fats are better than others. **Unsaturated fats**, which are found in vegetable oils, nuts, and fish, are often called "good fats." That's because they don't raise cholesterol levels like **saturated fats** and **trans fats** do. Both saturated and trans fats are considered "bad" because they can increase a person's risk for developing heart disease.

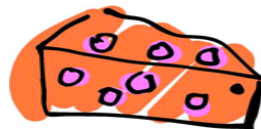
Saturated fats usually come from animal products like cheese, meats, and ice cream. Trans fats are naturally found in these foods too, but they are also in vegetable oils that have been specially treated (hydrogenated) so they are solid at room temperature — like shortening. The amount of saturated and trans fats that are in a food are shown on the nutrition facts label. Less than 10% of calories should come from saturated fats and keep trans fats as low as possible.

6. Cholesterol



HDL

vs.



LDL

Cholesterol isn't entirely bad for you — it's important in the production of vitamin D and some hormones, and to building many other substances in the body. The liver manufactures most of the cholesterol a person needs, but cholesterol is also found in the foods we eat.

Blood cholesterol comes in two major types: HDL (the "Healthy" kind) and LDL (the "Lousy" kind). Too much LDL cholesterol in a person's blood increases the risk of heart disease. So it's a good idea for even teens to watch how much cholesterol they eat, along with saturated and trans fats, which tend to raise levels of LDL cholesterol in the blood.

7. Sodium



Sodium is a component of salt. Almost all foods contain sodium because it adds flavor and helps preserve food. Processed, packaged, and canned foods are usually much higher in sodium than freshly made foods.

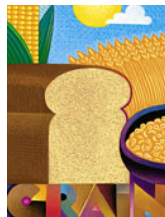
Small amounts of sodium keep proper body fluid balance. Sodium also helps the body transmit electrical signals through nerves. But too much sodium can increase water retention and blood pressure in people who are sensitive to it.

8. Carbohydrates



There are several different types of carbohydrates, including fiber and sugar. The best sources of carbohydrates are fruits and vegetables, along with whole-grain foods like cereals, breads, and whole-wheat pasta. Most of your daily calorie intake should come from carbohydrates, especially fruits and vegetables..

9. Fiber



Fiber, another kind of carbohydrate, helps keep your digestive system healthy. Fiber can also help reduce cholesterol levels. Best of all, fiber has no calories and it can help you feel full. So check the label and pick foods that have at least 3 grams of fiber per serving.

10. Sugars

Sugars are found in most foods. When a food contains lots of sugar, the calories can add up quickly. Soda, snack foods and other foods that are high in added sugar are considered “empty calories” because they usually don't offer a lot of other nutrients.

Checking sugar quantities on labels can be really eye opening. Often there's way more than you'd expect. For example, sometimes manufacturers cut back on fat but add sugar to keep a food tasting good. With a little label study, you may notice that some low-fat foods have nearly as many calories as their regular versions.

11. Protein



Most of the body — including muscles, skin, and the immune system — is made up of protein. If the body doesn't get enough fat and carbohydrates, it can use protein for energy. So be sure the foods you eat give you some protein.

12. Vitamins and Minerals



It goes without saying that you want to choose foods that are high in a variety of vitamins and minerals. Some of the most important for teens are vitamin A, vitamin C, B vitamins, vitamin D, calcium, and iron. Some vitamins — like vitamin C — are water soluble, which means that the body can't store them so they need to be consumed daily.

Food labels can't tell you what foods to eat — that's your decision! But they can help you find foods that taste good and treat your body right.



ACTIVITY

Sit down with the wrappers/boxes/cans/containers of your favorite foods. Review the food label and talk (as a family, a group, or with friends) about the serving size and healthy components as well as any unhealthy components. Are you surprised at what's in the items? Should you be eating more or less of the items?

Internet Activity



MyPlate.gov
Steps to a Healthier You

Go to www.MyPlate.org. There are many different activities on this site. A good place to start is with the Plan or Tracker. Both require that you fill in information about yourself as honestly as you can. One will help you determine quickly what and how much you need to eat. The other will give you an in-depth assessment of your diet quality and physical activity status. Remember if you'd like to talk to someone about this but don't feel comfortable sharing it with the adults in your life through the foster care system, your pediatrician or primary care physician will talk with you confidentially.

Internet Activity

Do you like to eat out at either restaurants or fast food establishments? Find out how healthy the items are by researching them online. For example, all of the big fast food restaurants have websites that show the nutritional content and values for all of their food. Go online and check out your favorite meal.



www.mcdonalds.com
www.burgerking.com
www.wendys.com
www.tacobell.com
www.subway.com
www.dunkindonuts.com
www.dairyqueen.com
www.dominos.com
www.papaginos.com

Now that you've looked up your favorite meals, are you surprised by what you found? Why or why not? Will knowing this information change your interest in going back? If you do visit again, would you order differently?

Note that becoming aware of what you are putting into your body is the first step towards eating more healthily. If you have a history of eating more junk food than healthy food, it may take a while to truly change your way of eating to make it healthier. One small step at a time.



ACTIVITY

Just because it SOUNDS healthy, doesn't mean it IS Healthy! Cooking Light magazine highlighted the foods below that can trick you into eating something you think is healthy, when in fact they may have ingredients that are not healthy.

Energy Bars

Energy bars can be high in calories, fat, and sugar. Now that you know how to read nutrition labels, be choosy!! Find ones with natural ingredients that are lower in calories and fat.

Pre-packaged Salad

These salads at take away stores and cafeterias can have fatty ingredients and dressings. Be careful of added meats, croutons, and cheeses. When ordering a salad at a restaurant, ask if these parts can be left off or you may choose to make your own salad at home.

Smoothies

Store bought smoothies can be very high in sugar and usually come in large portions. Some are even made with ice cream. Know the ingredients of the smoothie you are drinking. Even better, buy the ingredients at a grocery store and make them at home so you'll know for sure that it's a healthy smoothie!

Muffins and Bagels

Although muffins and bagels can have healthy ingredients, such as whole wheat and raisins, many other ingredients are not. Adding butter or cream cheese adds fats and calories. Also, at stores and bakeries the portions of these muffins can be very large, which takes away from the nutritive value of the product.

Reduced Fat Peanut Butter

In order to maintain the taste and reduce the fat, some funky stuff needs to go into that peanut butter. This could include sugar, high fructose corn syrup, or other additives. The fat in peanut butter is a healthy fat and should be used in moderation. Removing this fat actually takes out the healthy part of eating peanut butter.

Try and think of some other foods where the words can be misleading. Come up with a menu of alternative foods or balanced portions that can provide the similar tastes with more health value.

PERSONAL HEALTH CARE

Taking care of your personal health and obtaining the necessary health information and/or services is an important life-long task. You should also know your own health history (any illnesses, immunizations, allergies, etc.). Keeping yourself healthy involves not only getting proper medical treatment when you're sick, but also preventing health problems as well.

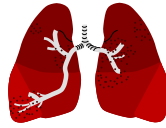
Consider the following examples:



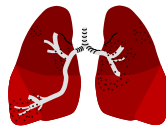
Micky has a cavity and is supposed to make an appointment with the dentist. However, he does not follow through. What long-term and short-term consequences do you think Micky might suffer by not scheduling a dentist's appointment?

Short Term:

Long Term:



Amber is a cheerleader at her high school. There is a history of asthma in her family. Recently, she has had trouble catching her breath, oftentimes during her cheerleading practice. However, her breathing always seems to improve after a little while. Amber is afraid that if she tells someone about her problem, she won't be able to be a cheerleader anymore. She thinks that her difficulty breathing might just go away by itself. Do you think Amber is right? What would you do?



Leah is having trouble sleeping. She is stressed out about school and her part time job. She isn't sure if her feelings are normal or if there might be something else wrong with her. Her friend from work suggested an over the counter sleeping pill. She is worried about the side effects so she called her doctor's office to make an appointment. She can't get an appointment for a week so she is considering taking the pills without consulting her doctor. Do you think this is a good decision? Why or why not?



Take some time and answer the questions below with a foster parent, staff, or social worker to evaluate your personal health care needs. Mark those questions that need some follow-up, and plan with your foster parent, program staff, and/or social worker how you will get the information or services you need.

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Do you know your medical history?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have any questions about the information in your medical history?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there someone you could ask about your medical history?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know when your last medical checkup was?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know when your last dental checkup was?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you make your own medical appointments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a family history of any particular disease?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have any allergies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you taking medication or getting any regular treatments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did either the doctor or dentist suggest you make another appointment to follow up on a problem?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do health problems often interfere with your daily activities (keep you out of work, school, sports, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a lot accidents or injuries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you think you have a problem with alcohol or drugs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do the people you live with or your friends think you have a problem with alcohol or drugs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you use birth control?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a doctor that you feel comfortable seeing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there any health problem you'd like to have checked or a question you'd like to ask if the service was free and confidential (just between you and the doctor)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you see a counselor or therapist?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If not, would you like to have someone with whom you could discuss your feelings and concerns?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

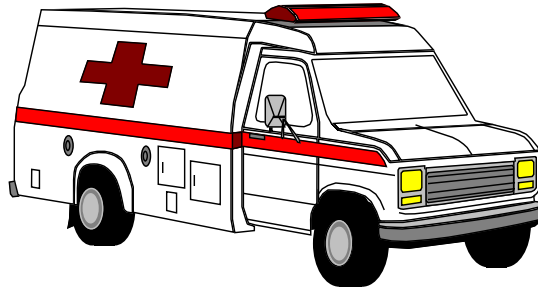
My Personal Health Care Needs:

I need to follow up on...

...by getting information or services from...



It is important to keep track of all your medical records. Be sure to put them in a safe and easily accessible place -- maybe your document portfolio. Not even doctors are able to read your mind. They need information to treat you properly. In a medical emergency or during a regularly scheduled doctor's visit, the more information you can provide to the medical care staff, the better they will be able to care for you.



Brian knew Jake was driving too fast that day but never would have thought there might really be a car crash. Nevertheless, here they were in an ambulance on the way to the emergency room. The EMTs (Emergency Medical Technicians) asked Brian if he was allergic to a list of things, and he had no idea whether he was or not.

Why did the EMTs ask Brian that question? _____

What information could Brian give them that would be helpful? _____

FAMILY MEDICAL HISTORY

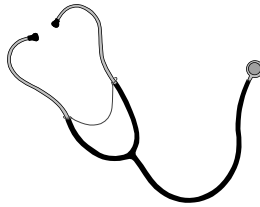
Family medical history is very important. If you do not have much family health history information available to you, you should ask your social worker, foster parent, family members, or staff to help you obtain the health history. When you go to your health care provider there are certain forms they will ask you to fill out that pertain to the health care history of your biological family members.

Family History

Have any of your blood relatives (brothers, sisters, parents, and grandparents) ever had any of the following medical problems?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes | <input type="checkbox"/> Migraine headaches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TB skin test (positive results) | <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol or drug problem |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High blood pressure | <input type="checkbox"/> Epilepsy, convulsions, or seizures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anemia | <input type="checkbox"/> Psychiatric problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heart attack before the age of 60 | <input type="checkbox"/> Stroke |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kidney problem | <input type="checkbox"/> Birth defects |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mental retardation | <input type="checkbox"/> Death at a young age |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning problem | <input type="checkbox"/> Stomach or intestinal problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arthritis | <input type="checkbox"/> Asthma |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Cancer (Type: _____) |

Let's look at Bob's example:



Bob is 17 years old and has been in foster care for two and a half years. Recently, he has been suffering really bad headaches which aspirin doesn't seem to help. He and his foster mother are at the doctor's office now, where Bob is trying to fill out the health questionnaire the nurse has given him. Bob is having a hard time answering some of the medical history questions, especially those about his sisters, brothers, parents, and grandparents.

What should Bob do? _____

Who could help him? _____

What should he tell the doctor or nurse? _____

What can he do for “next time” to be better prepared for this kind of thing? _____

Do you need to obtain more information? If so, use the chart below to plan how you will get additional information about your medical history:

<i>I need more information about...</i>	Strategy
	⇒
	⇒
	⇒
	⇒
	⇒

Contact your health care provider’s office. Ask for a copy of the medical forms that they ask patients (particularly new patients) to fill out. Make sure you ask for a family medical history form as well as sexual history form and any others they use. You can ask the staff at the office to mail, fax or email you the form, depending on what you would prefer.

Once you receive the forms, answer the questions that you know and put a question mark (?) next to those you don’t know.

Then review this questionnaire with your social worker and/or foster parent or program staff to help you find the missing information. Once you have this information, talk about where you are going to keep it. It should be part of your permanent records that you have access to if you change placements.



ACTIVITY

Here is a sample Health Questionnaire, similar to one that you might be asked to fill out when you visit a new doctor or clinic. Answer the questions that you know and put a question mark (?) next to those you don't know. Then review this questionnaire with your social worker and foster parent or program staff to help you find the missing information.

Health Questionnaire



Name :

Address :

Date of Birth :

What questions or health problems would you like to see the doctor about today? _____

Are you taking any medication? Yes No

If Yes, what medicines do you take? _____

Medical History

Where were you born? _____ Hospital
_____ City

How much did you weigh at birth? lbs. and oz.

Did your mother have any problems during her pregnancy? If so, describe. _____

Did she take any medication? _____

Were there any complications with the birth? _____

Have you ever been admitted to the hospital? Yes No

If yes, please list the dates, hospitals, and reasons for hospitalizations: _____

Have you ever had an allergic reaction (to medicine, food, a bee sting, etc.)? Yes

No

If yes, list the substance to which you are allergic: _____

Have you ever had surgery (operations)? Yes No

If yes, please describe: _____

Have you ever had any broken bones or any serious injuries? Yes No

If yes, please describe: _____

Check any of the following illnesses and health problems that you have had or presently have:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anemia | <input type="checkbox"/> +TB Test (positive results) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asthma | <input type="checkbox"/> High blood pressure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hay fever | <input type="checkbox"/> Migraine headache |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chicken Pox | <input type="checkbox"/> Seizures (convulsion, epilepsy) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Measles | <input type="checkbox"/> Thyroid problem |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heart murmur | <input type="checkbox"/> Concussion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pneumonia | <input type="checkbox"/> Cancer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illness (other than colds, flu, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Back/joint pain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stomach/intestinal problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Pelvic infection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kidney problem | <input type="checkbox"/> Uterus or ovary problem |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blood clots or vein problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hepatitis, jaundice | <input type="checkbox"/> Miscarriage or abortion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Urinary tract infection | <input type="checkbox"/> Venereal disease (VD) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vaginal infection | <input type="checkbox"/> Trouble seeing from a distance
(near-sightedness) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Short or tall for age | <input type="checkbox"/> Trouble seeing things close up (far-
sightedness) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overweight | <input type="checkbox"/> Wear glasses / contact lenses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Underweight | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mononucleosis | |

- Frequent headaches
- Frequent tiredness
- Can't get to sleep easily / insomnia
- Sleep too much
- Cold or heat intolerance
- Dizziness
- Fainting or passing out
- Skin problem
- Severe acne
- Difficulty hearing
- Earache
- Wheezing
- Cough
- Heart skips a beat / palpitations
- Heart races
- Stomach pain
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Ringing in ears
- Sore that doesn't heal or change in wart or mole
- Blurred vision
- Constipation
- Nosebleeds
- Gum or mouth pain
- Recent toothache
- Breast lump
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty with bowel movements
- Infrequent bowel movements
- Diarrhea
- Blood in stool
- Blood in urine
- Frequent urination
- Pain with urination
- Bed wetting
- Bleed or bruise easily
- Excessive thirst

List any other illnesses or health problems below:

Females Only: Visit to the gynecologist

Your age when you first got your period	_____
Cycle length (How long does your period usually last?)	_____
Irregular (Does the time of your period change from month to month?)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
On what date did your last period start?	_____
Cramps	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Excess bleeding with period	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Vaginal discharge	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Have had a pelvic (internal) exam before?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Date of last pelvic exam	_____
History of past pregnancy: Have you ever been pregnant? Have you had a miscarriage or abortion? (List responses and dates below.)	

Males and Females

Are you sexually active? Yes No

Check all methods of birth control you use:

- Condoms (rubbers)
- Birth control pills

- Diaphragm and spermicidal jelly
- Contraceptive foam or suppositories
- Sponge
- IUD
- Withdrawal
- Rhythm
- Norplant
- Depo Provera

Substance Use

Do you smoke cigarettes? Yes No

If yes, how many cigarettes do you smoke a day? _____

How many years have you been smoking? _____

Have you ever tried to stop? Yes No

Do you drink alcohol? Yes No

If yes, what kind of alcohol do you usually drink? _____

How often do you drink? _____

Why do you usually drink? _____

How much do you usually drink on those days that you do drink? _____

Do you ever drink by yourself? Yes No

Do any of your friends use alcohol? Yes No

Do you use drugs? Yes No

Have you used any of the following drugs in the past month?

Marijuana Yes No

Cocaine Yes No

Acid Yes No

Speed Yes No

Others (please list) _____

Do you use any needle drugs? Yes No

If yes, which types? _____

Are you worried about your drug or alcohol use? Yes No

If yes, please describe. _____

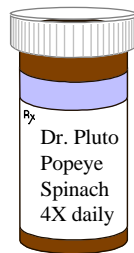
Is anyone else worried about your drug or alcohol use? Yes No

Would you like to talk to someone about your use of substances? Yes No

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Maintaining your physical health is not something you can do alone. It is crucial to have at least one health care provider you can trust. You also need to understand about prescription medications, over the counter drugs, immunizations, and the type of health insurance you have as a youth in foster care.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS




Prescription medicine is ordered by a doctor to treat a patient's specific condition. You should always tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other medications. This could determine what medication is prescribed to you for your current medical problem so your medications do not interact with each other. Even though you may not experience an allergic reaction between the medications, one medication may make the other medication ineffective. So be sure to tell your doctor about any other medications you are currently prescribed.


The label on the bottle or container will tell you how many times to take the medication each day. It is especially important to follow these instructions if you are taking psychotropic medication. The label will also have your name, your doctor's name, the date the prescription was filled as well as the expiration date, the name of the drug store and the prescription number. Other red, orange, blue or yellow labels may also be pasted to your prescription bottle. Read all labels carefully. The smaller labels will tell you about some possible side effects of the medication and specific directions about how to take the medicine. Some of these labels may tell you not to take the prescription with certain foods, not to be in direct sunlight, or not to drive a car while taking the prescription so make sure you read all labels carefully. And finally, prescription medication is written for a particular patient for a specific illness. Consequently, **you should never take medication that was prescribed for another person.** You don't know if the dose would be correct for you or if the prescription will interact with other medications you may be taking. So be safe! If you think you need medication for an illness or condition you are experiencing, call your primary care physician for your own prescription.



ACTIVITY

Read the following medication labels. Describe in the box beneath each label where and how often you would take the medication as well as what possible side effects each medication might have or what precautions you would want to take.

	XXX Pharmacy 555 Main St Boston, Mass
Rx 000	Refills 0
Dr. XXXXXX	
John Smith 1243 North St Boston, MA	
Take 1 capsule 3Xday for 10 days.	
MedicNAME Orig. Date 6/1/2013 Disc. After 6/1/2014	
FINISH ALL MEDICATION	
TAKE WITH FOOD ONLY	

	XXX Pharmacy 555 Main St Boston, Mass
Rx 001	Refills 0
Dr. XXXXXXXX	
John Smith 1243 North St Boston MA	
Take 1 Tablet every four hours for one week.	
WARNING: MAY MAKE YOU DROWSY. DO NOT DRIVE AN AUTOMOBILE OR OPERATE HEAVY MACHINERY WHILE TAKING THIS MEDICATION.	
NOT TO BE TAKEN WITH DAIRY PRODUCTS.	

Remember to ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist the following questions before you take any medication:

- Why do I need to take this medication?
- Are there any special instructions I should follow?
- What effects will the medication have on my body?
- Does this medication react with any other substances?
- How will I know if I am allergic to this medication? What are the symptoms of an allergic reaction?



If you think you have the symptoms of an allergic reaction, stop taking the medication immediately and call your doctor. The most serious allergic reactions to medication are difficulty breathing or a rash or hives on your body. **NOTE: If your breathing quickly becomes difficult, call 911 or go to the emergency room immediately!**

If there is no allergic reaction or any other complication, be sure to finish all the doses of medicine prescribed for you. Do this even if you feel better and you think you are “well” before you have completed the doses.



ACTIVITY

Consider the following:

Erika has a terrible respiratory infection. She goes to her health care provider and she writes her a prescription for an antibiotic. The provider asks her if she is taking any medications and Erika mentions that she has been on birth control pills for 4 months. The provider says that the antibiotics will interfere with the birth control pills and they will not be as effective during this cycle and that she should use back-up protection. What should Erika do about birth control during this time?

Answer: Erika should continue to take her birth control pills as usual. She should also use a back-up method such as a condom for the next 1.5 months. If a condom is not an option, she should abstain from sexual activity during this time. In addition, she should take the full course of the antibiotic prescribed to her. Erika should call her health care provider if she has any questions.

Immunizations

During your teen years, you'll get a diphtheria and tetanus shot booster (every 10 years), 3 hepatitis B shots, a booster of mumps, measles, and rubella (MMR), and a chickenpox shot (if you haven't had the disease). Before you travel abroad to countries in Latin America, Asia, or Africa, you should get the Hepatitis A vaccine. If you plan to go to college, you should discuss with your health care provider about getting the meningococcal vaccine to lessen your risk of getting the very serious infection, meningitis (inflammation of the brain tissue). In addition, girls will be given the HPV vaccine.

HPV Vaccine for Girls?

There is a new vaccine called Gardasil that helps prevent cervical cancer and other conditions caused by certain types of Human Papillomavirus (HPV). Maybe you've heard about the HPV vaccine from a friend, trusted adult, or your health care provider. So why is it such a big deal? It is the first vaccine that helps prevent a major type of cervical cancer! Not sure if the vaccine is right for you? Ask your health care provider.

The vaccine is approved by the FDA for girls' ages 9 – 26 years. Since it is most effective if you get it before you are exposed to the HPV virus it is recommended that all girls' ages 11 – 12 years get the vaccine.

The vaccine is given in 3 shots. It is important to plan on returning to your health care provider for the second and third shots as the vaccine will not be completely effective if you don't have all three doses of the vaccine.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Before you find a health care provider, it is important that you understand what type of insurance you have currently as a youth in state custody, and how long you will be covered. It is also important that you know what will happen as you transition out of the foster care system. Health insurance is complex. Most adults struggle to understand it so don't be discouraged if it takes you time to figure everything out.

It is the law in Massachusetts that every resident must have health insurance. Young people who live in DCF placement (foster care, residential program, at college with DCF support)

have MassHealth as their health insurance. Young people who leave DCF at or after age 18 also have MassHealth, however, this MassHealth plan ends once the young person turns 26 years old if he or she is not involved with DCF.

Once a young person is no longer in the care of DCF he or she may be eligible for health insurance through an employer or a school. Anyone not eligible through an employer or who are not enrolled in post secondary education should apply for Masshealth. This application can be found by going to www.mass.gov and clicking on “MassHealth”. If MassHealth deems an applicant unqualified, then the applicant is then referred to the Massachusetts Health Insurance Connector Program. This program can help applicants identify affordable health insurance available to the public.

There may be other factors in a person’s life, such as a disability that may qualify a person for MassHealth. Other considerations are age and the size of a person’s family. For additional information on MassHealth products and eligibility go to the website, www.mass.gov/eohhs/consumer/insurance .

Consider the scenarios below and determine how you would obtain health insurance.

1. You are going to college and are still receiving placement support from DCF. Your health insurance would come from the following source:
 - a. MassHealth through DCF
 - b. College health insurance product
 - c. Apply to MassHealth and see if you are accepted.
2. You have reached the age of 18 in care but are going to work full time and no longer wish to be involved with DCF. Your health insurance would come from the following source:
 - a. MassHealth
 - b. The Massachusetts Health Insurance Connector Program
 - c. A private pay health insurance company
3. You are a full time student and are 26 years old. Your DCF case is closed. Your health insurance would come from the following source:
 - a. MassHealth
 - b. Private pay health insurance company
 - c. Your school

Answers

1. A. If you are in the care of DCF, even though you may be in college, your health insurance comes from MassHealth. If your school charges you for health insurance, you must waive that charge in the beginning of the school year by providing proof of insurance through MassHealth. Then make sure the charge is removed from your bill.
2. A. All youth who reach the age of 18 in DCF care and then leave the Department’s care are covered under MassHealth until they turn 26 years old.

3. C. All full time college students are offered health insurance through their school. The charge for this insurance appears on the student's bill from the college.

If you are not eligible for MassHealth, don't go to college, or don't work full-time for one employer, private insurance is available through provider companies such as Blue Cross/Blue Shield. This may be an option for you in the future but private insurance can be very expensive. And they usually have deductibles (a certain amount of money you are required to pay before the insurance covers the rest).

But even though private health insurance can be expensive, having **no** insurance is very risky and could end up being far more expensive than insurance.

If none of the options listed above are viable possibilities for you at this time, you will have to pay for doctor's visits and health care facilities from your own pocket. Thankfully, many community health programs offer medical care services on a sliding fee basis. That means that the fee for services is based on your income. Some even provide free check-ups and emergency care in certain locations. However, these services are not available in all communities.



ACTIVITY

Research lower cost or free health care options in your community and list their location and phone numbers below.



Finding a health care provider³

As a young person in foster care your current placement may be too far from the provider you saw at one time or maybe you feel you would rather have an adult provider instead of a pediatrician now. Either way, it is important to know how to find a health care provider that is right for you. Going to a primary health care provider that you trust is a very important part of taking care of yourself.

Why do I need a primary health care provider?

You need a primary health care provider so that your health can be checked regularly to catch any problem early so that it does not become worse. Your primary care provider can help you make smart choices to stay healthy. Your provider can talk with you about your health risks, such as smoking, alcohol, sex, seat belts, and nutrition and give you advice about treatments. If you have a serious or unusual medical problem, your provider can refer you to a specialist, someone who knows much more about that kind of problem.

What should I look for in a primary health care provider?

Primary health care providers can be physicians, nurse-practitioners, or physician's assistants. First you should decide if you want your health care provider to be a woman or a man. You need to feel comfortable with your health care provider, since it is important to share personal information and any health problems with her or him. You need to find a health care provider who will listen to your concerns and answer your questions. Your health care provider should take the time to explain things clearly to you. You should also try to find a health care provider who is not too far from your home.

To find a provider, you can ask trusted adults, friends, and relatives for the names of health care providers that they go to and like. If you have MassHealth, you can check their website at www.mass.gov and click on Mass Health for a list of providers. You can also check the "Physician Select" service of the Web Site of the American Medical Association, at www.ama-assn.org. Or you can call a doctor referral service at a hospital or a local medical society for a referral.

³ www.youngwomenshealth.org referenced 2015

Once you have decided on a qualified provider, you might want to try calling their office and asking a few questions. You first need to find out if the provider is covered by your health plan and if she or he is taking new patients. And if English is your second language, ask if the provider or someone else in the office speaks the language you are most comfortable speaking.

Going to Your Health Care Provider

Do I need to bring anything to my first check-up?

You should take a copy of your health records, including immunizations you have had, to your first check-up. You can get these records from your old provider if you know who that is, or from the school you attend (or attended). Also, bring any medicines you are taking, or bring a list of those medicines. At your check-up, talk about any allergies or reactions that you have had to medicines you have taken.

What will happen at my check-up?

Your primary care provider will ask you questions about your general health, such as headaches, sore throats, infections, and stomachaches. They will also ask about any surgeries you may have had. For young women, she or he will also ask you about your gynecologic history, such as when you started your menstrual periods, how often they occur, and whether you have ever had a sexual partner or sexual intercourse. For all young men and women she/he will also ask about your health habits, such as if you smoke, drink, engage in sexual activity or use seat belts. You will also be asked about your nutrition, stress level, **family medical history** (see the next section for more information), and moods, such as depression. Check-ups will also include measuring your height, weight, and blood pressure. Your ears, eyes, throat, neck, heart, breasts, and abdomen will also be checked. For girls, your provider will discuss when it is time to have your first pelvic exam.

Try to be open with your health care provider. You need to decide if you feel comfortable talking to and sharing information with him or her. You should ask any questions that you may have. You can always write them down before your appointment so you don't forget! You might want to bring someone along to help you ask questions.

What about confidentiality?

Sometimes being in the foster care system can make you feel that everyone “knows your business”. When it comes to your medical information, you don't need to be concerned about confidentiality.

The Health Information Privacy Accountability Act (HIPAA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of a patient's health information. All health care providers and health insurance companies must abide by the law when dealing with a patient's medical information. The

HIPAA Law grants a patient the right to determine how and with whom your medical information will be shared.

Because of this right, your providers will ask you to sign release forms in order to share your medical information with other doctors or specialists you may need to see. They will also need to share your information with your insurance company so your medical bills will be paid. In addition, you may want to consider signing a release form for a trusted adult, such as your foster parent, your social worker, and/or a family member so they can help you understand the medical information you may receive.

You should also know that you can limit the medical information that is shared. For example, if your employer needs a doctor's statement that you can return to work because of your back problem, that is the only information that would be shared. Your doctor would not share your entire medical history. When social workers ask you to sign a release form to speak with your therapist, the dialogue between you and your therapist can still remain confidential. Your worker only needs to know you are attending therapy and working on your issues.

So when you are asked to sign a release form, it is okay to ask questions. Why does the person or provider need this information? How much information will be shared? If you feel satisfied with the answers you receive, you can go ahead and sign the release form and know your confidentiality is protected under the HIPAA law.

What is a Health Care Proxy?

Once you turn 18, you should consider signing a Health Care Proxy. A Health Care Proxy is a legal document that allows you to appoint someone you know and trust to make medical decisions for you if, for any reason and at any time, you become unconscious and are unable to communicate these decisions for yourself. The person you name as your Proxy should be fully aware of your wishes regarding your medical care. This person should be someone you can trust to carry out your wishes should you become incapacitated.

Under the Massachusetts Health Care Proxy Law, the person you appoint will make decisions about your health care ONLY when you are, for any reason, unable to do this yourself. This means that your Proxy can act for you if you are temporarily unconscious, in a coma, or have some other condition in which you cannot make or communicate health care decisions. Your Proxy cannot act for you until your doctor determines in writing, that you lack the ability to make your own health care decisions.

Acting with your authority, your Proxy can make health care decisions that you would make, if you were able. If you give your Proxy full authority to act for you, he or she can consent to or refuse any medical treatment, including treatment that could keep you alive.

Your Proxy will make decisions for you only after talking with your doctor about all the options regarding diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment of your illness or condition. Your

Proxy will have the legal right to get any information, including confidential medical information, necessary to make informed decisions for you.

It is important that you talk with your Proxy so that he or she knows what is important to you and what is expected of them as your Proxy. You should also talk with your doctor when you are healthy about what you would want if you were no longer able to take care of yourself due to a medical condition. Should your circumstances change in the future, such as through marriage or divorce, and you wish to cancel an existing health care proxy, you can simply sign another proxy at a later date. After you have filled out and signed the form, make several photocopies. Keep the original then give a copy to your doctor who will put it in your medical file. Then also give a copy to your Proxy and any other individuals who may be involved in your health care decision making, such as family members or an attorney.

There are several different versions of health care proxy forms that can be used in Massachusetts. Speak with your doctor about the best one for you.



ACTIVITY

Questions to consider when choosing a healthcare proxy.

These questions can be sad and difficult to consider. These are excellent questions to talk through out loud with a trusted adult (maybe one that has already chosen a health care proxy and can relate to the experience).

1. What are my wishes if I was in an accident and could not speak for myself? Would I want extreme measures taken to save my life? Would I want to be kept alive by breathing and feeding machines? Would I be willing to give up walking, talking, or eating by myself in order to live?

2. If I am in an accident and can no longer make decisions for myself, is there someone in my life currently that I would trust to make decisions for me based on my personal wishes and values? Who is this person?

3. Am I comfortable asking this person to be my health care proxy? Will this person be willing to sign a health care proxy form and will this person keep this form safe so that he/she can find it and present it if needed?

4. What if diseases affect my brain and my ability to make decisions for myself? Who would be willing and able to work with doctors and other health care providers to make sure that I receive either short or long term care?

MINOR ILLNESSES

If you do not have any symptoms which indicate the need for medical attention, you might be able to treat minor illnesses with over-the-counter medication. However, always evaluate carefully whether or not you should see a medical professional. If any symptoms persist, you need to get medical assistance! As with all prescription drugs, you need to read the instructions and warnings carefully before using any over-the-counter medication.



ACTIVITY

Visit your local pharmacy or drug store and research products designed to treat various minor illnesses. Record your findings in the chart on the next page.

Minor Illness	Medication	Price	Possible Side Effects/ Warning Signs
Upset stomach			
Fever			
Common cold			
Headache			
Allergies			
Heartburn			
Menstrual Cramps			
Others:			



ACTIVITY

Caring for Yourself

Making the right decisions about how to respond to illnesses and health problems is very important. Read the following examples and discuss with your social worker, staff, or foster parent how you would best handle the following situations.

You wake up in the morning with an upset stomach. You feel as if you have diarrhea and might vomit. What would you do?

You wake up in the middle of the night with a pounding headache. You are dizzy and have abdominal pain. You take your temperature and see that it reads 104°. What would you do?

You are on your way home from work and feel as though you are getting a cold. Though you don't have a fever, your muscles are aching and your sinuses are congested. What would you do?

You are watching TV in the early evening when, all of a sudden, you discover that you have a rash. You have a temperature of 100°. What would you do?

You are home alone and you decide to help your foster mother out by making the salad for dinner. While you are cutting up the vegetables, you cut your finger and can't seem to stop the bleeding. What would you do?

Emergencies can happen at any time. Responding to medical emergencies quickly and efficiently could save your life. What kind of circumstances would lead you to call 911 or immediately seek medical care at the emergency room of your local hospital? I would seek medical help in the following situations:

EMERGENCY
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Sometimes symptoms of illnesses might be mistakenly identified as harmless when they actually may indicate serious health problems. Therefore, it is important to always seek medical help if you have any questions. It is better to be safe than sorry.

For example, various cancers can have the following seven warning signals:

- 1) Change in bowel or bladder habits.
- 2) A sore that does not heal.
- 3) Unusual bleeding or discharge.
- 4) Thickening or lump in breast or elsewhere.
- 5) Indigestion or difficulty in swallowing.
- 6) Obvious change in a wart or mole.
- 7) Nagging cough or hoarseness.

If you have a warning signal or any medical concerns, see your doctor.



Health Risks

You are in control of your personal health. While exercise, proper nutrition and regular check-ups with your health care provider can help you to maintain good health and may prevent health problems, choices you make about certain behaviors and habits can increase your risk for problems with your health and quality of life.

What kind of behaviors/habits do you think could be harmful to your health?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

In the following sections we will discuss some behaviors and habits which could have a negative impact on you and impose a serious risk to your health.

Health Risk: Pressures and Fitting In

Many youth report that they feel pressure to try drugs, start smoking, or become sexually active. That feeling is common to most young people in high school. But if you spend time connecting to yourself and your trusted adults and good friends, there are ways to ignore the pressure. Recognizing the influences in your life (both positive and negative) makes it easier for you to make important choices about who to hang out with and whether or not to try drugs or alcohol. Hang out with people who support you and be careful of people who are always negative.

Also, be aware that there is a lot of “information” floating around the Web about drugs, smoking, and alcohol. And there is a lot of misinformation spread by word-of-mouth. The movies, music and other media don’t always accurately portray the risks involved in using these substances, so consider the source and make sure the information you receive is accurate.

Health Risk: Drugs

There is a complicated list of reasons why people try or use drugs. Some people do it to change the way they feel, or numb pain but by taking drugs, they haven't changed the situation. They've only **distorted it** for a little while. And since many use drugs to “escape” the reality of addiction isn’t happy and can be quite unpleasant. Addicts often say that drugs ended up isolating them from friends and family and made them feel more alone.

Remember no one “plans” to become an addict, and every one of the millions of people with drug dependency started out thinking they had it “under control.” But with the very first use, chemical changes occur in the brain that may lead to addiction. **Drug addiction is a disease.** Also with every additional use, the user increases his or her chance of becoming addicted.

If you are interested in learning more about the science and facts about drug addiction, the National Institute on Drug Abuse published "Drugs and the Brain" in 2007. You can read it at: <http://drugabuse.gov/scienceofaddiction/brain.html>

The Social Reasons Why People Use Drugs:

- **Stress.** Family problems, changing schools (or placements), pressure to do well in school.
- **Boredom.** Wanting to have fun, but with few outlets.
- **Depression.** Feeling isolated or alone, hopeless about the future and wanting to escape.
- **Self-Medicating.** Using drugs or alcohol to cope with past trauma.
- **Curiosity.** Not everyone who takes drugs is a heavy user, and many quit after the first try. But studies show that experimenting with pot and alcohol can lead to harder drugs. For example, the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse reports that if a person has smoked marijuana more than one hundred times, the likelihood of using cocaine goes up 70 percent.
- **Fitting in.** Being popular is a key desire for most of us. Unfortunately, some take risks against their own judgment in order to hang with the cool clique.
- **Learned Behavior.** Some young people who watch their parents dealing with their problems by taking drugs may follow their example during difficult times.
- **Lack of Self-Esteem.** People who don’t feel good about themselves are more likely to do things that are harmful. Most drug users and drinkers will admit they do it to fill up an empty feeling inside.

- **Feeling Unsure about Sexuality.** Young people dealing with same-sex attractions may be drawn to drinking and drugs in order to ease fear and confusion. (adapted from *Finding Our Way: The Teen Girls Survival Guide*. Abner and Willarosa, 1995)

So knowing some of the reasons why young people use is helpful. The list below is not an exhaustive list but it will give you information about some of the most commonly used drugs. If there is a drug you've heard about and wonder what it is or why people use it, ask a trusted adult. Or do an internet search. But make sure the source of the information is trustworthy because there is a lot of misinformation available.

The Basics About Commonly Abused Drugs

The drugs and drug categories listed below are some of the most commonly used and abused by young people in the United States.

- ▶ Cocaine and crack
- ▶ Hallucinogens
- ▶ Heroin
- ▶ Inhalants
- ▶ Marijuana
- ▶ Methamphetamine
- ▶ Prescription and OTC drugs
- ▶ Rohypnol
- ▶ Steroids
- ▶ Synthetic Drugs

▶ Cocaine and crack

Cocaine is a white powder made from coca leaves. Crack is another form of cocaine that is usually smoked. Crack and cocaine are stimulants that give an immediate high that lasts a few minutes. Cocaine and crack cause sweating, sleeplessness, loss of appetite and increased heart and pulse rate. At higher dose levels users may feel very anxious and panicky.

Risks

Cocaine and crack affect the body and emotions. After using cocaine and crack, many people feel tired and depressed. Cocaine and crack use can cause heart attacks and strokes. They can also make you stop breathing.

Street Names: Blow, C, Marching powder, Nose candy, Snow

▶ Hallucinogens

Hallucinogens are strong mood-changing drugs with unpredictable psychological effects. LSD, or “acid,” is sold as tablets, capsules, liquid, or on absorbent paper. PCP is illegally manufactured as tablets, capsules, or colored powder and can be snorted, smoked, or eaten. DMT is another hallucinogen that is synthetic. It usually comes in powder form. Other hallucinogens can come in many forms, including plants and cough suppressants.

Risks

Because hallucinogens alter your brain, they can affect the way you move, react to situations, think, hear and see. These drugs skew your perception of time, reality and the environment around you.

Hallucinogens affect your self-control and emotions. They can cause you to mix up your speech, lose control of your muscles, make meaningless movements and do aggressive or violent things. These drugs can make you feel confused, suspicious and disoriented.

Hallucinogens powerfully affect the brain, distorting the way the senses work and changing impressions of time and space. People who use these drugs a lot may have a hard time concentrating, communicating, or telling the difference between reality and illusion.

Using hallucinogens increases your heart rate and blood pressure. This rapid increase can lead to heart and lung failure, possibly causing coma or even death. At low to moderate doses, PCP use causes breathing to become shallow and flushing and profuse sweating may occur. Generalized numbness of the extremities and loss of muscular coordination also can occur.

Names / Street Names: Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) Street Terms: Acid, Mellow yellow; Mescaline Street Term: Cactus; Psilocybin/psilocin Street Term: Mexican mushrooms; DMT, Dimitri

▶ Heroin

Heroin is a white or brown powder made from opium poppies. Users may snort, smoke or inject it. Heroin is a depressant. It also impairs the thinking process, which affects the way you act and make decisions.

Risks

Heroin is highly addictive, and because of the way people use it, it enters the brain almost immediately. Users build up a tolerance very quickly and need more and more of the drug to feel the same high they did the first time they used it. Because the strength of heroin varies and its impact is more unpredictable when used with alcohol or illicit drugs, the user never knows what might happen with the next dose.

Street Names: Dope, H, China White, Mexican Brown, Smack

Inhalants

Inhalants are substances or fumes from products such as glue or paint thinner that are sniffed or “huffed” to cause a high. Inhalants affect your brain with great speed and force and keep oxygen from reaching your lungs. Animal and human research shows that most inhalants are extremely toxic. Perhaps the most significant toxic effect of chronic exposure to inhalants is widespread and long-lasting damage to the brain and other parts of the nervous system.

Neurons in a part of the brain called the hippocampus can also be damaged by inhalants. The damage occurs because the cells don't get enough oxygen. Since the hippocampus helps control memory, someone who repeatedly uses inhalants may lose the ability to learn new things, may not recognize familiar things, or may have a hard time keeping track of simple conversations.

Risks

Inhalants can cause sudden death. “Sudden sniffing death” can happen when a person uses inhalants even in a single session. Users can die by suffocation, choking on their vomit, or having a heart attack because the heart beats irregularly and more rapidly. Other risks include: nausea, seizures and fatal accidents. Chronic use can lead to liver, lung, and kidney problems as well as muscle weakness. Prolonged abuse can negatively affect a person's cognition, movement, vision, and hearing.

Street Names for using inhalants: Air blast, Huffing, Moon gas, Whip-its

Marijuana

Marijuana has a chemical in it called tetrahydrocannabinol, better known as THC. A lot of other chemicals are found in marijuana, too—about 400 of them, some of which are carcinogenic.

Risks

Weed affects a user's judgment, motor coordination, and short-term memory. Weed can cause increased heart rate and make some users extremely anxious or paranoid. Smoking marijuana also causes some changes in the brain similar to those caused by long-term use of cocaine and heroin.

Research found that students with an average grade of “D” or below were more than four times as likely to have used marijuana in the past year as students who reported an average grade of “A.” Students who have smoked marijuana within the past year are more than twice more likely to have cut class than those who did not smoke, while health problems associated with using marijuana can keep students from attending school due to illness.

FACT: Approximately 45% of Massachusetts high school students surveyed in 2005 reported using marijuana at least once in their lifetimes.⁴

Regular marijuana users often have shortened attention spans, decreased energy and ambition, poor judgment, high distractibility, and impaired ability to communicate and relate to others. Young people who use marijuana weekly have double the risk of depression later in life.

Street Names: Pot, Blunt, Bud, J, Weed, Trees, Spliff, Blaze

Meth

Methamphetamine, or meth, is a synthetic chemical that acts as a stimulant. It is snorted, injected, smoked or swallowed. Users experience an initial rush that lasts only a few minutes. Oral or intranasal use produces a euphoric high, but not a rush.

Creating a sense of energy, meth can push the body faster and further than it's meant to go. It increases the heart rate, blood pressure, and the risk of stroke.

Risks

In the short term, meth causes mind and mood changes, often making the user feel very anxious. Long-term effects can include chronic fatigue, paranoid or delusional thinking, hallucinations and mood disorders.

Meth is very powerful and highly addictive. Users can become tolerant to its effects, and need to increase the amount they take to feel the same way they did the first time they took it.

Meth increases heart rate, blood pressure, and the risk of stroke. It can kill you the first time you take it. An overdose of meth can result in heart failure. Long-term physical effects such as liver, kidney, facial scarring, and lung damage may also kill you.

Street Names: Crank, Ice, Stovetop, Crystal

Rohypnol

Rohypnol (AKA roofies, date rape drug) is a prescription sedative (not approved for use in the United States) that has no taste or odor when dissolved in a drink. It causes users to feel drowsy, forgetful and spacey.

Risks

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, **Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance System, Youth Online: Comprehensive Results**. <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/yrbss/> 2014.

Rohypnol is more dangerous when mixed with alcohol. Rohypnol can cause a kind of amnesia – users may not remember what they said or did while under the effects of the drug, making it easier for others to take advantage of them.

You can become dependent on Rohypnol. Withdrawal symptoms range from headache, muscle pain, and confusion to hallucinations and convulsions.

Street Names: Roofies, Date rape drug

Steroids

Anabolic (“muscle-building”) steroids are man-made substances closely linked to the male hormone testosterone. These drugs are available by prescription only to treat certain medical conditions. They are only safe for use when a doctor monitors the person taking them. Abuse of steroids – often in an attempt to gain more muscle mass – can lead to serious health problems.

Risks

In both men and women, steroids can cause severe acne, male-pattern baldness, cysts and oily hair and skin. In males, steroid abuse can lead to shrinking of the testicles and breast development. Side effects for females can include facial hair growth, menstrual changes and deepened voice.

Using steroids can make you hostile, violent and angry for no reason. You can experience uncontrollable outbursts of frustration and combativeness often referred to as “roid rage.”

Steroid abuse has been associated with cardiovascular disease, including heart attack and stroke, even for athletes under the age of 30.

Prescription and Over the Counter Drugs

Prescription drugs are medications that are prescribed by a doctor to cure or treat diseases or illnesses such as common infections or even cancer. These drugs have been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and found to have medical benefits when prescribed and taken exactly as directed by a health provider.

However, the FDA also warns that prescription drugs can be dangerous or even lethal when taken without a prescription or not taken as directed by the health provider or the packaging. To ensure the safety of the patient, the FDA requires prescriptions or detailed directions on the packaging to make sure the patient takes these drugs as intended. The very reason that these drugs require a prescription or detailed directions is because these drugs can be dangerous if they are not taken as directed.

Over-the-counter (OTC) drugs are medications that you can buy at a pharmacy without a prescription and are used to treat an illness such as the common cold. However, like prescription drugs, OTC drugs can be dangerous or lethal if not taken as directed by the packaging. Taking prescription or OTC drugs not as directed by the prescribing health provider or not as directed by the packaging is not safe — and can lead to addiction or death.

You should never share drugs, increase or decrease dosage or frequency, or take prescription or OTC drugs in a way that's different from how they are prescribed by your doctor or recommended according to the label. You never know how it could affect you. Also, don't mix prescription or OTC drugs with other substances, including alcohol, because it can lead to dangerous drug interactions.

Risks

When abused, prescription and OTC drugs can be just as dangerous as illicit drugs. Side effects of prescription drugs and withdrawal from them varies with the drug abused, but common effects include poor concentration, disorientation, apathy, feelings of confusion, addiction, anxiety, hostility and aggression, respiratory depression, dizziness, slurred speech, excessive sweating, nausea and vomiting, tremors, convulsions, lack of energy, increased heart rate and breathing, heart attacks, coma, and death.

The health risks of abusing OTC cough and cold remedies include impaired judgment/nausea, loss of coordination, panic attacks, psychosis, headache, vomiting, diarrhea, dizziness, loss of consciousness, insomnia, addiction, restlessness, numbness of fingers and toes, abdominal pain, irregular heartbeat, aches, cold flashes, high blood pressure, seizures, coma, and death. These risks can occur when these drugs are taken in very high dosages.

Many of these drugs can be addicting. Between 1995 and 2005, treatment admissions for prescription painkillers increased more than 300 percent.

There are three kinds of prescription drugs that are commonly abused. Opioids—painkillers like **Vicodin**, **OxyContin**, or **codeine**. In addition, Valium and Xanax which are depressants are also commonly abused.

Street Names for various prescription drugs: Depressants; methaqualone, Street Term: Ludes; OxyContin, Street Term: Hillbilly heroin; Ritalin (methylphenidate), Street Term: Vitamin R

Synthetic Drugs

Synthetics drugs are created constantly. Chemists who wish to evade arrest can simply shift the formula slightly and come up with something new that might not be listed in the text of laws that ban drugs. These drugs are serious and are extremely harmful. DMT is a synthetic

drug that has hallucinogenic affects. Bath Salts are a drug that has stimulating affects. Finally, synthetic cannabinoids also known as synthetic marijuana is also known as K2 or spice. Both types of drug are sold in deceptive packaging, being labeled as plant food, fish food, "soothing bath salts," incense or potpourri. They have imaginative and fancy names. There are as many as a hundred different chemicals that might be included in either of these formulations.

Risks

Some users have experienced severe episodes of psychotic behavior. Paranoia, extreme anxiety and hallucinations can result in aggressive, even homicidal behavior. Compounds used in Spice have also caused rapid heart rate, increased blood pressure, vomiting and confusion. It has also been associated with heart attacks.

Street Names for various synthetic drugs: Bath Salts, K2, Spice, DMT

Health Risk: Alcohol

Alcohol

Alcohol comes in many forms: beer, wine, and liquor. It is a depressant – it slows your body down, making it difficult to think clearly. Alcohol can also make people aggressive and violent.

Did you know: recent research shows that alcohol is the most common date rape drug.

Alcohol impairs a person's ability to make decisions. Alcohol is linked to an increase in violence, sexual activity, teen pregnancy, use of tobacco products, traffic accidents, and much more.

Underage drinking is a common experience - three out of every four students (75%) have consumed alcohol (more than just a few sips) by the end of high school. About 41% of students have consumed alcohol (more than a few sips) by 8th grade.⁵

Risks

Because it reduces inhibitions, drinking alcohol may make you act in a way that would embarrass you under normal circumstances. It can also make you do dangerous things that you wouldn't normally do. Drinking too much (binge drinking) can cause alcohol poisoning, which can lead to coma and even death. Alcohol use increases the risks of liver damage, mouth, throat, esophagus and larynx cancer and heart disease.

⁵ National Institute on Drug Abuse, "Monitoring the Future: National Results on Adolescent Drug Use". 20014



ACTIVITY

Possible Signs of Addiction

There are risks involved even in trying drugs or alcohol. Even a first time experience could end with a car accident, violent behavior, damage to your health, etc. You can become addicted to drugs a lot quicker than you might think! Certain drugs are thought to be habit-forming from the first use.

- ❖ You get high more than two times a week
- ❖ You do it without thinking about whether you want to do it
- ❖ You don't have any friends who don't get high
- ❖ You're using more and more drugs to get the same high
- ❖ You get high on your own
- ❖ You get high just to get high – not to socialize
- ❖ People who know you say they are concerned about your use

Use the following quiz to test your knowledge about drugs.

True or False

- _____ 1) Alcohol is a drug.
- _____ 2) Marijuana can cause a decrease in the male hormone, testosterone, and lower sperm production.
- _____ 3) Marijuana is psychologically addictive.
- _____ 4) Black coffee will help sober up a person who is drunk.
- _____ 5) Experimenting with “coke” for the first time is not dangerous.
- _____ 6) Sniffing glue, paint thinner, or other deliriants can cause serious brain damage.
- _____ 7) Frequent use of “coke” by injection can produce “coke bugs” - the sensation that insects or snakes are crawling under the skin.
- _____ 8) “Angel dust” is actually an animal tranquilizer.
- _____ 9) THC (the main chemical in marijuana) stays in the body for about one month after use.

_____10) Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause birth defects in the unborn baby.

Answers:

- 1) TRUE
- 2) TRUE
- 3) TRUE
- 4) FALSE
- 5) FALSE
- 6) TRUE
- 7) TRUE
- 8) TRUE
- 9) TRUE
- 10) TRUE

IF You Are Using.....

Remember, using drugs doesn't make you a bad person. This is something you do, not who you are. When you are ready, help is there for you. Speak to your foster parent, social worker, school guidance counselor, doctor, or even a trusted friend and tell them you want help with your drug problem. No one can do this for you, but you will not be alone.

When Your Parents Use Drugs or Alcohol

Did you know that ... **one out of four people under the age of 18 in the U.S. is exposed to alcoholism and drug dependence in their families.** (*American Journal of Public Health*) It's important to remember that it's not your fault that your parents use drugs. For immediate help, call the Nine Line at 800.999.9999 (This hotline is free and open 24 hours a day, seven days a week). The answers below may help you understand a little better why your mom or dad uses drugs or alcohol.

Q: WHY DOES MY MOM OR DAD KEEP DRINKING TOO MUCH OR USING DRUGS?

A: Adults have trouble dealing with their problems too, if you are worried about your parent's drinking or drug use, he or she might have a disease – alcoholism or a drug addiction. These illnesses can cause a loss of control and serious emotional and mental complications that require professional help and counseling

Q: IF THEY ARE SICK, WHY DON'T THEY GET HELP?

A: It's very hard for people to admit that they have a problem. Sometimes people don't realize how much control drugs have over their lives. Or, they might be terrified of asking for help or dealing with real life without drugs or alcohol.

Q: IF MY PARENT HAS A DRUG PROBLEM, WILL IT HAPPEN TO ME TOO?

A: Addiction to drugs and alcohol tends to run in families, but genetics or heredity is not the only factor. (A person can also develop a substance abuse problem even if a family member does not have the problem.) Also your environment and peer influences can influence drug use, too, so it's important to find healthy ways to deal with stress and problems.

Q: IS IT MY FAULT THAT MY PARENT USES DRUGS?

A: No! You can't control your parents. You don't make them drink or use drugs, and unfortunately, you can't make them stop either. You didn't cause the disease and you are not the problem.

Q: WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

A: You can't control what your parent does about his or her problem, but you *can* get **help for yourself**. Consider speaking with a trusted adult like a teacher, aunt or uncle, counselor or coach. They will be able to support you during this tough time. There are also many groups with trained professionals who are willing to help you and your family.

Visit the **National Association for Children of Alcoholics** at <http://www.nacoa.org/cankids.htm> or the **Alateen** web site at <http://www.ma-al-anon-alateen.org/> for more information and help call the **NineLine** anonymous hotline – 24 hours a day, seven days a week at [1-800-999-9999](tel:1-800-999-9999) or check out the resources listed at the end of this section. Your parent can also seek help by calling **NCADI 1-800-788-2800**.

Remember:
There are a lot of teenagers who are dealing with this very same problem.
You don't have to feel alone anymore. Reach out for help.

Concerned?

“What can I do?”

If you or someone you care about needs help, there is a lot that you can do! There are a number of treatments to choose from. The form of treatment will be determined by the drug a person is using, what the user is willing to go through to ‘kick the habit’, and sometimes, even how much time and money a user has to devote to the treatment. Some outpatient

programs are free, some group therapy sessions are offered on a daily basis. Using some of the numbers listed below will allow you to get help for yourself or your friend.

What's more, you can be a force for change in your community, your school, and in your life. Agencies exist that need YOU to get the message out about the desire to feel good without drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes. Calling some of the numbers below and **getting involved** will get you on your way to becoming a powerful voice for change in your own life and the lives of others!

Resources

Alateen / Alanon

<http://www.ma-al-anon-alateen.org/>
508.366.0556

National Association of Children of Alcoholics

A website helping youth know what to do when their parents abuse alcohol
<http://www.nacoa.org/cankids.htm>

Alcoholics Anonymous

Boston AA

www.aaboston.org
617.426.4666

Northeast Massachusetts AA

<http://www.aaemassd21.org/>
978.957.4690

Southeast Massachusetts AA

<http://www.district9aa.com/> Foxboro and Wrentham area
<http://www.aacapecod.org/> Cape Cod and the Islands

Worcester AA

www.aaworcester.org
508.752.9000

Western Massachusetts AA

<http://www.westernmassaa.org/>
413.532.2111

MA Substance Abuse Information & Education Helpline

<http://www.helpline-online.com/index.aspx>
800.327.5050

National Alcohol and Substance Abuse Information Center Hotline

<http://www.addictioncareoptions.com/>

800.784.6776 Open 24 hours a day

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI)

<https://ncadistore.samhsa.gov/catalog/drugs.aspx?>

800.788.2800 (24 hours a day/7 days a week) for referrals

Above the Influence

National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign

A youth resource for drug and alcohol addiction

www.abovetheinfluence.org

Nine Line Hotline

Covenant House

A website for young people looking for answers to tough questions

www.nineline.org

800.999.9999

S.A.D.D., Students Against Drunk Driving, (508) 481-3568. The only student-based activist organization dealing with underage drinking, drug abuse, and death due to drinking or drugging, and driving.



Health Risk: Smoking



Do you smoke or are you thinking about trying to smoke? Have you ever stopped to think about how smoking is affecting your body and your life? Most young people are aware that people who have smoked for awhile can get lung cancer and emphysema and eventually die, but many don't know about all of the bad things that smoking can do to them right now. If you smoke, you owe it to yourself to find out about the effects of smoking on your life now. This section provides some information about what smoking is doing to your body and some of the common reasons why people keep smoking even though they know it's bad for them. These are important things to think about to help you decide if you should start or continue smoking.⁶

Why is cigarette smoking bad for me?

Everyone knows that smoking can cause cancer when you get older, but did you know that it also has bad effects on your body right now? A cigarette contains about 4000 chemicals, many of which are poisonous. Some of the worst ones are:

- Nicotine: a deadly poison
- Arsenic: used in rat poison
- Methane: a component of rocket fuel
- Ammonia: found in floor cleaner
- Cadmium: used in batteries
- Carbon Monoxide: part of car exhaust
- Formaldehyde: used to preserve body tissue
- Butane: found in lighter fluid
- Hydrogen Cyanide: the poison used in gas chambers

Every time you inhale smoke from a cigarette, small amounts of these chemicals get into your blood through your lungs. They travel to all the parts of your body and cause harm.

What do all these chemicals do to my body?

As you might imagine, even small amounts of the poisonous chemicals in cigarettes can do bad things to your body. **Here are some facts about what smoking cigarettes do to you:**

⁶ www.youngwomenshealth.org Referenced 2015.

- Smoking makes you smell bad, gives you wrinkles, stains your teeth, and gives you bad breath.
- Smokers get 3 times more cavities than non-smokers.
- Smoking lowers your hormone levels.
- When smokers catch a cold, they are more likely than non-smokers to have a cough that lasts a long time. They are also more likely than non-smokers to get bronchitis and pneumonia.
- Teen smokers have smaller lungs and a weaker heart than teen non-smokers. They also get sick more often than teens who don't smoke.

What happens to my lungs when I smoke?

Every time you inhale smoke from a cigarette, you kill some of the air sacs in your lungs, called alveoli. These air sacs are where the oxygen that you breathe in is transferred into your blood. Alveoli don't grow back, so when you destroy them, you have permanently destroyed part of your lungs. This means that you won't do as well in activities where breathing is important, like sports, dancing, or singing.

Smoking paralyzes the cilia that line your lungs. Cilia are little hairlike structures that move back and forth to sweep particles out of your lungs. When you smoke, the cilia can't move and can't do their job. So dust, pollen, and other things that you inhale sit in your lungs and build up. Also, there are a lot of particles in smoke that get into your lungs. Since your cilia are paralyzed because of the smoke and can't clean them out, the particles sit in your lungs and form tar.

I know smoking is bad for me, but I really like it.

Many teens like the feeling that smoking gives them. This good feeling is from the nicotine in the cigarettes. Some teens think smoking will help them lose weight or stay thin. Many teens also feel like smoking gives them a sense of freedom and independence, and some smoke to feel more comfortable in social situations. If this sounds like you, **you should stop and think about whether the things you like about smoking are really worth the risks.**

- Nicotine can make you feel good, but is feeling good (a feeling you can also get from healthy activities like playing sports) really worth all the bad things cigarettes do to you? If you smoke, you'll get sick more often. You also have the chance of getting lung cancer or emphysema, which will make you really sick for a long time before you die. If you are very sick, that good feeling from nicotine won't seem so important anymore.
- Smoking doesn't really help people lose weight. If that were true, every smoker would be thin.
- Smoking lowers your hormone levels.

Do you think that smoking is a sign that you can do what you want? That you are in control of your life?

Think about it this way: When you decide to start smoking, you are doing exactly what tobacco companies want you to do. They spend millions of dollars every year on advertising to try to get new people, especially teens, to smoke. Once they have you hooked, **THEY** are

controlling YOU. You are forced to buy their products in order to support your addiction. Do you really want a big corporation controlling your life and telling you how to spend your money?



Why should I stop smoking if I'm not addicted?

Many people don't realize they are addicted to smoking. They think they can easily quit any time they want. But when they try, they forget it is extremely difficult. Unfortunately, it is very easy to get addicted. Cigarettes are just as addictive as cocaine or heroin. Even if you only smoke one or two cigarettes a day and even if you've never bought a pack of cigarettes yourself, you are at risk. Stressful situations or hanging out with friends who smoke might cause you to smoke more and become addicted. Try going a whole week without smoking at all. If you find this difficult, you are probably addicted to cigarettes.

If I quit smoking, won't I gain weight?

Many people are afraid to quit smoking because they think they will gain weight. In reality, many do gain a little but not enough to change how they look. People don't gain weight because they stop smoking. They gain weight because they start eating more. Often, people confuse the feeling of craving nicotine with hunger and eat to try to make this uncomfortable feeling go away. Smokers are also used to having something in their hands and in their mouth, so they may pick up food to replace holding a cigarette. To keep from gaining weight, try these things:

- Drink sips of water instead of eating when you feel uncomfortable.
- Eat carrot or celery sticks or other healthy, low calorie foods.
- Exercise. This will also help take your mind off smoking and make you healthier.
- Keep busy. You will be less likely to eat when you're not really hungry if you are doing other things.

I'll quit in a year or two when I'm ready.

A lot of people put off quitting smoking, thinking that they'll do it when the time is right. Only 5% of teens think they will still be smoking in 5 years. Actually, about 75% of them are still smoking more than five years later. If you smoke, it will never seem like the right time to quit and quitting will never be easy. The longer you smoke, the harder it will be to stop and

the more damage you will do to your body. **Here are some reasons to quit sooner rather than later:**

- Most teens would rather date a non-smoker.
- You'll save money if you quit smoking. A pack of cigarettes costs about \$5.00. Even if you only smoke a couple packs a week, you're spending about \$40 per month and \$480 per year on smoking. Think of all the other things you could use that money for.
- You only have one pair of lungs. Any damage you do to them now will be with you for the rest of your life.
- The longer you smoke, the better your chances are of dying from it. One out of 3 smokers die from smoking and many more become very sick. Think about your friends who smoke. 1/3 of them will die from smoking if none of you quit.

Smoking can have serious effects on your life. The longer you smoke, the more damage you do to your body and your health. Most people who begin smoking as teens say that they wish they had never started. The decision to start or continue smoking is all up to you and no one can make you stop, but you should think really hard about whether it is the best thing for your body and your life.

Health Risk: Electronic Cigarettes and Vaping

The electronic cigarette and or vaping pipe, aims to deliver nicotine without the harmful effects associated with tobacco. It has become increasingly popular for smokers looking for a possible healthy alternative to tobacco or who are trying to quit smoking. While they may contain less harmful chemicals, science is still trying to decipher the harmful effects. In one study, researchers found small amounts of formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, acrolein and three other toxic compounds. The study also found metal particles -- cadmium, nickel, and lead -- in both e-cig vapor and cigarette smoke. Nicotine exposure also is a concern; the drug can be deposited on surfaces through e-cigarette vapor. *American Chemical Society*



ACTIVITY

If you are a smoker or have ever been tempted to start smoking or vape, or know someone who does, the following questions and information might be helpful to you!

Why do you think most people start to smoke? (Or why did you start to smoke?)

What are some of the ways you can counteract the reasons you listed above? For example, if you listed stress, what are some other ways to deal with stress that would be better for your body?

Does smoking or using chew or spit tobacco make people more interesting, mature, or more attractive?

Do you think that smokers or people, who use tobacco products are better liked, more respected, or make more money than non smokers?

What do you say if...

The scenario: You really like a certain boy who smokes. He offers you a cigarette every time he lights up. You really don't want to start smoking but you really like him and want him to like you.

Your response: _____

The scenario: You are hanging out with a group of kids who smoke and someone offers you a cigarette.

Your response: _____

The scenario: A best friend asks you to hand him a cigarette while you two are watching TV and encourages you to smoke, too.

Your response: _____

The scenario: Your older brother or other close relative is making fun of you for not smoking.

Your response: _____

You will be offered tobacco by someone at some point in your life. Knowing ahead of time how you feel about it and what you want to do may ease the stress in the moment and help you make a decision that feels right to you. Talk to a trusted adult about your responses above. How can the adult support you in your choice?

What are the health risks and disadvantages of smoking or using chew or spit tobacco?

Take an inventory of your knowledge of facts and health risks related to smoking and chew and spit tobacco.

Multiple Choice

_____ 1) Cigarette smokers are more likely than non-smokers to die of cancer of the

- a) lungs b) larynx c) esophagus d) lips, tongue, or mouth e) all of these

_____ 2) What gives cigarettes their rich country flavor?

- a) propane b) butane c) formaldehyde d) hydrogen cyanide

_____ 3) How many chemicals in cigarette smoke cause cancer?

- a) none b) 1 c) 13 d) 60

_____4) Using chew and spit tobacco can cause:

- a) cavities b) mouth, lip and tongue cancer c) ulcers d) gum disease
e) all of the above

True or False

- _____1) Lung cancer can be cured very easily.
_____2) People who don't smoke can get lung cancer.
_____3) When a person stops smoking, lung tissues return to normal on their own.
_____4) City smog is worse for you than cigarettes.
_____5) Low-tar, low-nicotine cigarettes are safer than other kinds.
_____6) Children whose parents smoke are more likely to smoke than children of non smokers.
_____7) It doesn't matter if adolescents smoke because they can easily stop.
_____8) The same chemicals found in cigarettes are also found in rat poison, floor and toilet cleaners, insecticides, and car exhaust.
_____9) Using chew and spit tobacco is safer than smoking cigarettes.
_____10) Secondhand smoke does not cause any serious health problems.
_____11) Quitting smoking will make you gain a lot of weight.
_____12) Smoking in movies accurately reflects reality.
_____13) Chew and spit tobacco contain less nicotine than cigarettes.
_____14) Most adolescents smoke.

Multiple Choice Answers

1. e) all of the above.
2. All of the answers given. They're all deadly.
3. d) There are 30 known carcinogens in cigarette smoke, and probably more that haven't been discovered yet.
4. e) All of the above. Smokeless tobacco isn't harmless.

True or False Answers

1. FALSE. Nine out of ten cases of lung cancer are incurable.
2. TRUE. Occasionally, people who don't smoke will get lung cancer. But 80% of all lung cancers are caused by smoking.
3. TRUE. Unless the lungs are already too severely diseased, they start to repair themselves almost immediately. The body begins to heal itself within hours of quitting.
4. FALSE. Air pollution plays no significant role in lung cancer.
5. TRUE. There is no completely safe cigarette.
6. TRUE. Children who have smoking parents and older siblings are more likely to start smoking themselves.
7. FALSE. Once smoking has become a habit it is very difficult to quit. In fact, 3 out of 4 adolescents who smoke have made at least one serious, but unsuccessful attempt to quit.
8. TRUE. There are over 4,000 different chemicals in cigarettes.
9. FALSE. 50% of people who are diagnosed with oral cancer are dead in 5 years.
10. FALSE. Second hand smoke can cause or contribute too many serious health problems such as cancer, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), heart disease, and respiratory infections.
11. FALSE. Studies show that the average weight gain is no more than five pounds. However, quitting smoking will help you become more energetic and less out of breath so you can get into even better shape than before!
12. FALSE. In reality, smokers tend to be poorer and less educated while in movies they are rich and powerful. In reality, smoking kills smokers, secondhand smoke kills non-smokers, and families suffer while tobacco companies make billions of dollars in profit.
13. FALSE. Chew and spit tobacco contain *more* nicotine than cigarettes.
14. FALSE. 84% of Massachusetts teens choose not to smoke. In Massachusetts and many other states, you cannot smoke in restaurants, bars, and other places.

Tobacco kills more people than homicide, illegal drugs,
suicide and AIDS combined.

DID YOU KNOW?

! A person who smokes one pack of cigarettes a day inhales a full cup of tar in just one year.

!! When you take one puff of a cigarette, your heart beats ten extra times per minute.

!!! Lung cancer kills 439 people each day in the U.S. (Lung Cancer Alliance, 2008)

!!!! There are more than fifty million ex-smokers in the United States.

!!!!! More than 25% of all the fires in the United States are caused by careless smokers.

!!!!!! In the United States oral cancer kills one person every hour.

Quitting:

The best way to deal with smoking is, of course, not starting. Once you get in the habit, it isn't easy to quit. Consider this example:

Doug is playing basketball on his local high school team. He is a really good player and might have a chance to get a scholarship to a local college. However, Doug has started smoking. Now, during the games, he is short of breath and doesn't seem to have as much energy as he used to. Doug does not believe that this is a result of smoking since he has only smoked for eight months. He feels that it would be hard for him to quit, particularly because his girlfriend also smokes.

What do you think of Doug's dilemma? How would you help Doug quit?



Quitting smoking and other tobacco products takes a lot of commitment and you have got to believe that you can do it. Smokers will often think (mistakenly) that they will gain a lot of weight once they stop smoking, but studies show that the average weight gain after quitting is not more than five pounds. If you do want to stop smoking, chewing or spitting, the following organizations provide information and assistance:

Tobacco Resources

Massachusetts Smokers' Helpline

To talk to a counselor privately and for free about quitting smoking call:

For English and other languages, call 1-800-Try-To-STOP (1-800-879-8678)

For Spanish, call 1-800-8-DEJALO (1-800-833-5256)

For people with hearing impairments, the TTY line is 1-800-TDD-1477 (1-800-833-1477)

The Quit Tips Line

Available 24-hours a day, when you call The Quit Tips Line, you will hear a free, recorded message with a helpful tip on quitting smoking. The messages change daily.

1-800-8-GET-A-TIP (1-800-943-8284)

Try To Stop

If you or someone you know wants to quit smoking TryToStop.org is an online resource with expert advice, articles, downloads, a bulletin board, and much more.

www.TryToStop.org

Make Smoking History

Find information on preventing and quitting smoking, laws, second hand smoke, and smoking's impact on you.

www.makesmokinghistory.org

National Spit Tobacco Education Program

For more information about chew and spit tobacco and how to quit go to:

www.nstep.org

In Person Support

Many hospitals and medical centers all over Massachusetts offer one-on-one counseling. These programs vary in cost, so call ahead or talk to your insurance company. To find the program closest to you, go to

www.makesmokinghistory.org/quitting-smoking/support-and-counseling.html (For Programs in MA only)

<http://www.trytostop.org/iwant/local-programs.asp> (For Programs in MA, NH, and RI)

C.H.A.M.P.S.S.

Do you want your parent/guardian/foster parent to quit smoking? Children Helping and Motivating Parents to Stop Smoking is a resource for young people who want to help their most trusted adults quit.

www.champss.com

The 84

Don't smoke? If you are a part of the 84% of Massachusetts adolescents who don't smoke, get involved with The 84 as they work to fight big tobacco.

www.the84.org

Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program

250 Washington Street, 4th Floor

Boston, MA 02108-4619

617-624-5900

Summary:

My Reasons And Strategies To Not Start Smoking Are:

or

My Reasons and Strategies To Quit Smoking Are:

Other Possible Health Risks

Suicide

According to the Massachusetts Suicide Prevention Program, suicide is an intentional injury and is the **third leading cause of death for young people** (ages 15 to 24); only accidents and homicides occur more frequently. **LGBTQ youth are at an increased risk for suicide**, and those LGBT youth who have been the victims of harassment or violence are at the highest risk.

Suicidal Thinking and Behavior among High School Students in MA as indicated in 2011 survey.

Did you know?

- 25% of students reported feeling sad or hopeless for two weeks or more in the past year.
- 13% of students have seriously considered suicide in the past year.
- 12% of students made a suicide plan.
- 7% of students attempted suicide.
- 2% of students received medical attention for a suicide attempt.
- GLBTQ youth attempted suicide 4 times more often than other youth and made a suicide attempt with injury 5 times more often.

Recognizing the Warning Signs

According to the Massachusetts Suicide Prevention Program four out of five teens who attempt suicide have given clear warnings. Pay attention to these warning signs. If you recognize these signs in others or yourself, **seek help**.

- Suicide threats, direct and indirect
- Obsession with death
- Poems, essays and drawings that refer to death
- Dramatic change in personality or appearance
- Irrational, bizarre behavior
- View a temporary situation as a permanent one
- Overwhelming sense of guilt, shame or reflection
- Changed eating or sleeping patterns
- Severe drop in school performance
- Giving away belongings

Helping A Suicidal Friend

Offer help and listen. Depressed teens should be encouraged to talk about their feelings. If you are concerned about a friend, listen but also seek the help of a trusted adult. **Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem.** Trust your instincts. If it seems that the situation may be serious, seek immediate help. Break a confidence, if necessary, in order to save a life. **You should always seek professional help.** It is essential to seek expert advice from a mental health professional that has experience helping depressed teens.

Making a Safety Plan

If you are struggling with suicidal thoughts, having a safety plan in place can help you get through the difficult moments. If you are in counseling, you should develop your plan with your counselor. Consider what thoughts, moods, or situations trigger your thoughts of suicide. Identify coping skills you could utilize to keep yourself safe. Make a list of professionals, agencies, trusted adults and friends who could help you through a crisis. If you don't have a therapist but are struggling with suicidal thoughts, you should seek professional help. In the meantime you should develop a safety plan with a trusted adult who could also help you find a counselor. Below is a form you could use to develop a safety plan.

People I can ask for help:

1. Name _____

Phone _____

2. Name _____

Phone _____

3. Name _____

Phone _____

Professionals or agencies I can contact during a crisis:

1. Clinician Name _____

Phone _____

Clinician Pager or Emergency Contact #

2. Clinician Name _____

Phone _____

Clinician Pager or Emergency Contact #

3. Local Urgent

Urgent Care Services

Address _____

4. Suicide Prevention Lifeline Phone: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

If you or someone you know is struggling, contact the resources below:

Suicide Resources

Samaritans: Massachusetts 24 hour Crisis Hotlines

- Massachusetts Statewide **Teen** Hotline: 800.252.8336
- Merrimack Valley **Teen** Line: 603.357.5505
- Fall River/New Bedford: 508.673.3777, 866.508.HELP
- Cape Cod and the Islands: 508.548.8900, 800.893.9900
- Western Region call statewide Teen Hotline: 800-252-8336

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

800.273.TALK (8255)

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Suicide Prevention Program
617.624.6060
www.mass.gov/dph

Hotlines/24 hour crisis lines

Youth Crisis Line (Nine Line)
1-800-999-9999

National Hopeline Network
1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)
<http://www.hopeline.com>

Samaritans Statewide Hotline: 1-877-870-HOPE (4673)

EATING DISORDERS

Eating disorders are more common in cultures focused on weight loss and body image. Unfortunately, we live in a culture where celebrities and athletes obsess about maintaining low weight. Body dissatisfaction and dieting may lead to unhealthy and dangerous eating behaviors for both men and women. Sometimes, these eating patterns can lead to eating disorders. Fortunately, there has been an increased awareness about these types of illnesses. Eating disorders are treatable. There are resources and specialists that can help.

Anorexia, bulimia, and compulsive overeating are seriously affecting the physical and psychological well-being of countless young people who are preoccupied with gaining or losing weight.

DEFINITIONS

Anorexia: In the obsessive pursuit of thinness, those with anorexia deliberately starve themselves and often become malnourished. Compulsive exercise, laxative, and/or diuretic abuse are characteristics. If anorexia is not properly treated, the disease can be fatal.

Bulimia: Those who are bulimic compulsively eat and then, to prevent weight gain, purges through self-induced vomiting, use of laxatives, diuretics, strict dieting, fasting, vigorous exercise, or a combination thereof. This addictive binge-purge cycle is often done in secret and can progress from once or twice a week to multiple times a day. Without treatment, bulimia can be fatal due to cardiac arrest or kidney failure. The health problems a teen may suffer from are not as obvious as with anorexia. For example, someone may have a normal weight or even be overweight, but still have bulimia. Also, they may be secretive about their eating habits so that even their family and friends are not aware that they have a problem.

Bulimia is serious and can cause permanent damage to the teeth, stomach, digestive track, and heart.

Compulsive Overeating: Compulsive overeaters are unable to control their food intake and repeatedly attempt to lose weight by dieting. While there may be some initial success at weight loss, the weight is ultimately gained back plus additional pounds. Fluctuations in weight and medical complications, such as hypertension and even diabetes, may be characteristic of this disease.

Common symptoms of eating disorders include:

1. Obsessively thinking about “feeling fat”
2. Intense fear of becoming fat or gaining weight
3. Feeling of loss of control while eating
4. Allowing your weight to determine your self-esteem
5. Feelings of guilt or shame after eating
6. Repeated and unsuccessful attempts to diet
7. Bingeing (eating large amounts of food in a short period of time)
8. Feeling self-conscious or embarrassed about eating (sneaking food or lying about eating habits)
9. Strict dieting
10. Fasting
11. Self-induced vomiting
12. Laxative and/or diuretic use
13. Compulsive exercising
14. Eating for emotional comfort, or to relieve stress or depression
15. Looking forward with pleasure and anticipation to the moments when you can eat alone
16. Eating when you’re not even hungry
17. Eating sensibly in front of others and then making up for it when you’re alone.

From materials developed by The Radar Institute, Los Angeles, California

If you have these symptoms you are at risk for serious health problems and you should contact a health care provider immediately.

What causes eating disorders?

There are many different theories regarding the causes of eating disorders. Most likely, eating disorders are caused by a combination of psychological, family, genetic, environmental and social factors. An individual may have a family history of mood disorders such as depression. Eating disorders are often associated with feelings of

helplessness, sadness, anxiety, and the need to be perfect. This can cause a person to use dieting or weight loss to provide a sense of control or stability.

Teens who participate in competitive sports that emphasize thinness or artistic activities, such as ballet, running, gymnastics, cheerleading, or skating are more likely to develop an eating disorder.

Family stress of any kind can also be a significant factor contributing to the development of these illnesses. Dealing with difficult transitions, such as being placed in foster care, loss, or teasing about weight from friends or family may trigger eating disorders.

What do I do if I think I may have an eating disorder?

If you think that you or a friend may have an eating disorder, it is very important that you talk to your health care provider immediately! If you are too nervous or scared to contact your health care provider on your own, try talking to an adult who is someone you trust like a foster parent, teacher, relative, or family friend. They can help you make sure that you receive the help you need. Even if it is scary to get help for an eating disorder, your life may depend on it!

How are eating disorders treated?

Since eating disorders are usually a medical and psychological problem, treatment usually includes working with a team of specialists: a therapist, a nutritionist, and a doctor or nurse practitioner. Treatment is individualized to fit a teen's specific needs.

Web Resources

For more information about treatment of eating disorders, how to help a friend with an eating disorder and other issues check out the following web resources:

www.youngwomenshealth.org

www.nationaleatingdisorders.org

www.familydoc.org

www.maritalks.org

If you feel that you are suffering from an eating disorder, it is important to get help immediately. Even if you are not sure, you should make an appointment to speak with your doctor. If you cannot do this by yourself, please ask for assistance from a trusted friend or caregiver. If you are a caregiver of a youth and are worried that he/she may have an eating disorder, seek help on that person's behalf right away.

Body Piercing

Many different cultures have pierced their bodies for centuries. If you look in a history book, you will find that Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans did body art, such as piercing and tattooing. People pierced their bodies for decoration to show the person's importance in a group, or because they thought it protected them from evil. Today, we know much more about the risks of body piercing. Body piercing is a serious decision. Before you decide what you want to do, ask your friends and trusted adults what they think.

What are teens saying about body piercing today?

Ask other teens that have been pierced what they thought of the whole experience. How much did it cost? Was it painful? How long did it take to heal? If they had the chance to do it over again, would they?



Some tips from teens:

- YOU do **NOT** have to pierce your body to "belong."
- YOU can **ALWAYS** change your mind or **WAIT** if you are not sure.
- If YOU do decide to have your body pierced, **NEVER** pierce your own body or let a friend do it because you can run into very serious health problems.

What are the risks with body piercing?

The most serious risks are infections, allergic reactions, bleeding, and damage to nerves or teeth. Infections may be caused by hepatitis, HIV, tetanus, bacteria, and yeast. If the piercer washes his/her hands and uses gloves and sterile equipment and you take good care of your piercing, the risk of infection is lowered (but still exists).

Did you know that...

- You CAN get and/or spread a serious infection including HIV, if the piercing equipment hasn't been sterilized properly.
- Infections caused by bacteria getting into the puncture of the piercing may also happen later, even after the piercing has healed.
- If the studio uses a piercing "gun" to do body piercings, **LEAVE!!** Piercing guns cannot be sterilized and should **NOT** be used for body piercing.

Another cause of problems from piercings is the wrong kind of jewelry for the area pierced. If the jewelry is too small, it can actually cut off the blood supply to the tissue, causing swelling and pain. If the jewelry is either too thin or too heavy or if you are allergic to the metal, your body can sometimes reject the jewelry (your body reacts against the jewelry because it is a "foreign object").

Know the risks before you have your body pierced...

- Bacterial infection (where you had the piercing)
- Excessive (a lot of) bleeding
- Allergic reactions (especially to certain kinds of jewelry)
- Damage to nerves (for example, you may lose feeling at the area that gets pierced)
- Keloids (thick scarring at the piercing site)
- Dental damage (swelling and infection of tongue, chipped and broken teeth, choking on loose jewelry)

If I decide that a piercing is important to me, where should I go?

You should ask friends and relatives with piercings where they went and if they liked the place. Look for a place that does a lot of piercings and that only employs piercers with piercing licenses. Some states make piercers get a license, while other states do not. So there are actually people who are doing body piercings with very little training! As you can imagine, this can be very dangerous for you. However, the APP, which stands for the [Association of Professional Piercers](#) (a professional organization of piercers), makes safety rules for people who do piercings. Make sure that there is a certificate on the wall that says the piercer is registered with the APP. You may need to bring a copy of your birth certificate.

If you are under 18 years old in Massachusetts, you will need your parent's or guardian's permission. Your parent/guardian will need to go with you to the piercing salon and sign a consent form.

What should I look for in a piercing salon?

When you go into a salon, look around. Is the place clean? The shop should be kept clean and sanitary. The lighting should be good so the piercers can see well while working. Do they wash their hands and use sterile gloves and instruments? All the instruments should either be brand new and disposable (meant to be thrown away after one use) or be sterilized in pouches. If the piercer uses disposable needles, you should see him/her open sealed packages of the needles! The piercers should throw away the needles in a biohazard container after using them.

Remember, piercing guns should NEVER be used since they cannot be sterilized and can cause infection. If the salon you go to uses a piercing gun, LEAVE!!!

How should I clean my new piercing?

Follow these steps to prevent infection

1. **Wash your hands** first with soap and water before touching or cleaning the pierced area. (Don't let anyone else touch the pierced area until it is healed.)
2. **Remove any crusty material** from the site and from the jewelry with warm water.

3. **Gently wash the area** around the piercing with antibacterial soap (liquid soap works the best).
4. **Gently rinse** off all of the soap and crusty discharge.
5. **Gently dry the area** with a paper towel or plain white napkin. (Bacteria can stay in cloth towels.)
6. **Do steps 1-5 twice a day until the skin heals.** (Over-washing or over-scrubbing can irritate the area.)
7. **Do NOT use antibacterial ointments** because they don't allow air to get to the area and they trap bacteria.

Be on the lookout for signs of infection that may include one or more of the following: redness, swelling, discharge, bad smell, a rash at or around the piercing site, or a fever. If you think you have an infection, DON'T try to take care of it by yourself. Make an appointment to see your health care provider.

Body piercing is a big decision. After understanding the risks, we hope that this information will help you make a decision that's best for you. If you do decide to get a body piercing, we hope that you will follow the guidelines in this section. Go to a reliable salon/piercer, buy good jewelry, keep the site clean and away from irritating materials, and see your health care provider if you have symptoms of an infection.

Tattoos / Body Art

It is illegal for a person under the age of 18 years old to obtain a tattoo in Massachusetts. Therefore any tattoo artist who is willing to do it is breaking the law and cannot be trusted to comply with safety regulations.

Safety guidelines for tattoos/body art are similar to those laid out in the section above for piercings. If you are 18 years or older and are considering a tattoo, ask people you trust where they got theirs. The shop you go to should be kept clean and sanitary. Do the employees wash their hands and use sterile gloves and instruments? All the instruments should either be brand new and disposable or be sterilized in pouches. The tattooing instruments should be kept in an autoclave. An autoclave is a machine that sterilizes the tattooing instruments. You should ask your tattooist to show you their sterilization equipment. It also helps to read reviews on yelp.com. In addition, look in the shop and ask if they are a certified tattooing shop with the board of health. If the piercer uses disposable needles, you should see him/her open sealed packages of the needles! The tattoo artists should throw away the needles in a biohazard container after using them.

After obtaining a tattoo, follow the aftercare instructions for the body art site. If you have any questions about caring for your tattoo, contact your health care provider.



ACTIVITY

Laurie wanted to get her ears pierced and asked her friend Gina where she should go. Gina had pierced her sister's ears and offered to pierce Laurie's ears for her. Laurie liked that idea because it would save her some money. But when Laurie saw Gina get a sewing needle, she began to question if it was a good idea to have Gina pierce her ears.

Should Laurie let Gina pierce her ears? Why or why not?

Where should Gina go to have her ears pierced? What should Gina look for to make sure there is no health risk?



SAFETY SKILLS

SKILL ASSESSMENT

The following questions will help you identify safety skills in which you excel and target those which you need to develop. By yourself or with your team try to answer each of the questions as honestly as possible. After completing this independent living skills assessment, review it with your team and identify those skills you would like to strengthen.

	<i>I do not know how to do this</i>	<i>I need to know more about this</i>	<i>I can do/ have done this</i>
1. Know what telephone numbers to call for medical emergencies, fire, and/or for police assistance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Know what to do/who to call if I think someone (child or adult) has ingested a poisonous substance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Know what to do or who to call if I think someone is following me or trying to hurt me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Know what gas smells like, what to do, and the telephone number to call if I suspect a gas leak.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Know the importance of learning the best fire escape routes in the house/apartment in case of fire.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Use preventive safety measures to keep myself safe at home, i.e. lock doors and windows when appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Know and follow the basic rules for preventing fires at home: no smoking in bed, frayed electrical cords should not be used, gas stove should not be used for heat, and extension cords should be used properly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Understand the importance of having a smoke detector in my home, how to check it and replace the battery when necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Use caution when throwing away matches, smoking materials, or any hot substance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<i>I do not know how to do this</i>	<i>I need to know more about this</i>	<i>I can do/ have done this</i>
10. Understand the importance of safely storing cleaning, painting, and other toxic materials away from children and pets.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Know what to do if caught in a fire.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Know which type of fire not to use water to extinguish.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Know how to use a fire extinguisher.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Have successfully completed a First Aid course and/or CPR training.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Safety

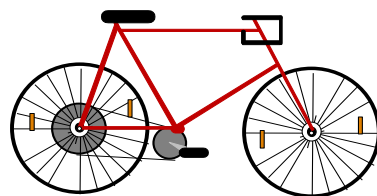
Injury Prevention

Many injuries are predictable and preventable events and are referred to as unintentional injuries. These injuries are classified as accidents and include motor vehicle related incidents, falls, poisonings, drownings, and burns. Some injuries are considered intentional and these involve injuries as a result of suicide, homicide, assault, abuse, and other violent acts.

Injuries are a leading cause of death and disability nationwide. Injuries are expensive to treat and are the leading cause of death among Massachusetts residents ages 1-44, and the fourth leading cause of death among all age groups combined. According to recent statistics, in 2005, there were 2,657 injury deaths among Massachusetts residents. The leading cause of these deaths was poisoning, which included drug overdoses, and accounted for 30 percent (1 in 3) injury deaths in the state. The leading causes of nonfatal injury events were falls, poisonings, sports, and transportation-related injuries. Being aware of how to prevent many of these injuries is an important step in keeping yourself and others safe.

Bicycle Safety

More children are killed each year in traffic and bicycle accidents than by any other injury. As more and more adults bicycle to work and bike for recreation, serious injuries can occur if cyclists and motorists are not careful and respectful of each other.



Everyone who rides bicycles should know the rules of safe bicycling. Hand signals and proper use of roads should be observed by all bikers. Riders should also wear reflective clothing or tape at night so that they can be seen by drivers and bicycles should also have reflectors. It is also a law in Massachusetts that children twelve years or younger are required to wear bicycle helmets that meet the safety standards to the Snell Memorial Foundation or the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

Car Safety

One of the most exciting moments for young people is when they get their driver's license. It is a huge step toward independence as an adult!!! It also comes with huge responsibility.

When you are behind the wheel, you are not only responsible for your own safety, but for the safety of your passengers and other people on the road.

Would You Ever Drive with Your Eyes Closed?

NO!!! That's what most people would answer right away. But studies now show that if you text while driving that's actually what you're doing.....driving with your eyes closed. According to studies, it takes 5 seconds to text 2 words. So while you're looking down to text, you are not seeing the road or anything else ahead of you as your car moves forward.

It is against the law in Massachusetts for anyone to text and drive, and youth under the age of 18 are prohibited from using cell phones at all while driving. So obey the law and **DO NOT TEXT AND DRIVE!** Five seconds can make a life time of difference.....

Arrive Alive.....Don't Text and Drive!!!

DRIVERS.....Know the Cell Phone Law

The state of Massachusetts has a law regarding mobile phone use while driving. **Drivers of all ages are prohibited from using mobile devices for texting, emailing, or accessing the Internet while operating a motor vehicle.** Fines are \$100, \$250, and \$500 for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd offenses. Operators over age 18 can use mobile phones for calls as long as one hand remains on the wheel and use of the phone does not interfere with their driving.

However, **drivers under the age of 18 cannot use a cell phone for any reason, including talking on the phone, while operating a motor vehicle.** Penalties in addition to fines are license suspension for 60 days, 180 days, or 1 year.

Personal injury or property damage caused by a negligent operation of a motor vehicle is a criminal offense. **If you crash because you were using your phone, you will face criminal charges and loss of license. SO DRIVE RESPONSIBLY!**

Consider the following:



ACTIVITY

Amy recently got her license and asked Casey if she wanted a ride home from school. Casey was glad to say yes because it meant she wouldn't have to take the bus home. But as they were driving home Casey noticed that Amy was swerving on the road. When she glanced over to Amy, Casey was shocked to see her texting while she drove. Casey didn't have her license but she knew texting was dangerous and against the law. Should Casey say something to Amy? What should she say?

Even though Casey and Amy are friends, should Casey continue to ride with Amy?

Fire Safety and Prevention

Did you know that most fatal fires occur when people are sleeping, usually between midnight and 6 a.m.?

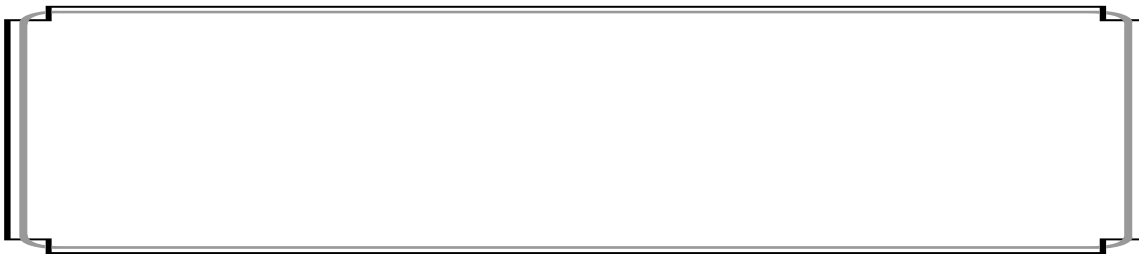
It's true! This is one reason why it's so important to have smoke detectors/alarms in your home or apartment. They will wake you when there is a fire, giving you time to escape. People who don't have smoke detectors may not wake up in time to escape the killing heat, smoke, and flames of a house fire.

Fire Safety Information

- Most fire deaths occur from smoke rather than burns. As a house fire burns, it gives off toxic gases, often carbon monoxide, which can kill.
- Smoke detectors are, therefore, one of the most important life saving devices you can own. Every home/apartment should have at least one smoke detector. Under Massachusetts law, landlords must provide smoke detectors in a building with three or more apartments. In some cities, such as Boston, all homes and apartments **must** have smoke detectors.
- Have smoke alarms installed outside all sleeping areas and on every level of your home. Test monthly and replace battery annually.
- Provide smokers with large, deep ashtrays. Wet butts and ashes before emptying ashtrays. **NEVER smoke in bed** or while drowsy.
- Give space heaters space. Keep them at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn—including you. Unplug them when not in use.

- Be careful while cooking. Wear tight-fitting or rolled-up sleeves when cooking. **NEVER leave cooking unattended.** If a pan of food catches fire, slide a lid over it and turn off the burner.
- Don't use water on a grease fire. Instead use baking soda, a fire extinguisher, sand, etc.
- Fire extinguishers can be used to put out small fires and can help clear an escape route. Don't waste time trying to put out a house fire, however; that's the fireman's job. **Your job is to escape.**
- Multi-purpose fire extinguishers are important household safety devices. The extinguishers labeled "ABC" are the best ones to buy; they can put out most fires -- wood, paper, cloth, flammable liquids, and electrical wires/appliances.
- If your bedroom is above the first floor and you don't have a fire escape stairway outside one of your bedroom windows, you should have a fire escape ladder. Should the stairway ever be blocked by fire, you'll have an escape route from the window. Fire escape ladders are collapsible and can be stored in a closet or under the bed.
- You should always sleep with your bedroom door closed. Should a fire occur, the closed door will temporarily hold back the heat and the smoke. Plan your fire escape route and have practice fire drills regularly.
- If more than one person lives in your building, have a designated meeting place so you will know that everyone got out of the building safely. This way firefighters won't enter a burning building looking for someone who is safely outside.

What would you do first if you woke up at night and discovered there was a fire in your home and the smoke alarms were blaring?



Fire Escape Tips:

Fire officials recommend that you roll from the bed to the floor. Temperatures will be lowest there. Then crawl along the floor where the air will be less smoky and the heat less intense. Cover your nose and mouth with a cloth (if possible, a wet cloth).

Touch the door before you open it. If it is hot to the touch, do not open it. Use another escape route. If it's cool, brace your shoulder against the door and open it slowly. Be ready to slam it if smoke or heat rush in.

Get out quickly!

- ❖ Do not waste time trying to put out the fire.
- ❖ Call the fire department from a neighbor's house.
- ❖ Every second counts!
- ❖ If you cannot escape through the door, use the window. If you're on the first floor, you're in luck. If not, choose a window that overlooks a ledge or roof that you can climb onto and wait for help to arrive.
- ❖ Remember, if you sleep above the first floor and do not have a fire escape stairway outside one of your bedroom windows, you should have a fire escape ladder. If no ladder is available, straddle the window sill by putting one leg out the window and keeping the other inside.
- ❖ Keep your head outside and wait for help.

Three very important words to remember **if your clothes ever catch fire** are:

STOP -- Stop where you are. Do not run.

DROP -- Drop to the ground or floor and cover your face with your hands.

ROLL -- Roll across the ground to smother the flames.

Treatment: Cool the burn immediately with cool water only. Never immerse the burn for more than 15 – 20 minutes.

Preventing Crime at Home

Did you know that approximately 50% of burglars get into homes through unlocked doors and windows? It may seem hard to believe, but it's true.



ACTIVITY

How well do you protect yourself from crime in your home? Answer the questions below to find out.

1. When someone rings your doorbell or knocks on the door, do you ever open the door without knowing who is out there?

2. Do you ever hide your house keys under the doormat? In the mailbox? On top of the door frame?

3. Have you ever given your key ring with all your keys to a mechanic or parking lot attendant?

4. Have you ever received a “wrong number” telephone call and told the caller your telephone number?

5. Have you ever left your door unlocked while you made a quick trip to the store or to a neighbor’s house?

If you answered “Yes” to any of these questions, you’re putting yourself at risk. Don’t make it easy for a burglar to get into your home. Follow the safety tips below.

Crime Prevention Tips for Home Safety

- Don’t open the door to anyone you do not know without first finding out who the person is and what he/she wants.
- Install a peephole or wide-angle viewer in your door so you can see who is outside without opening the door. A short chain between the door and its frame is not a good substitute, as it can be easily broken.
- Ask to see an identification badge or card for any repairman, meter reader, policeman, etc., before you allow him or her into your home.
- Put deadbolt locks on your doors, not the spring latch type with the key hole in the knob.
- Be sure to keep your entry way, porch, and yard well lit.
- Do not put any personal identification on your key ring.



- Give only your ignition key to the car mechanic or parking lot attendant.
- Don't give any information to "wrong number" callers. Ask what number the person was trying to reach.
- Hang up immediately on any threatening or harassing telephone calls. If the caller persists, call the police and the telephone company.
- If anyone calls you and asks for personal information such as your social security number, bank account number, or date of birth hang up. Even if they say you won a prize and they need your personal information to be sure you're the winner, don't be fooled. **DO NOT GIVE THEM ANY PERSONAL INFORMATION!**
- If you'll be away from home for a few days or so, ask someone to pick up your mail or have the post office hold your mail until you return.
- You can also buy inexpensive timing devices to turn on and off inside lights, a radio, or a television set at different times during the evening or night.
- Burglars hope to avoid confrontations, so make your home look occupied.

Emergency / First Aid



Every home should have a First-Aid Emergency Kit. Does yours? _____

What items do you think should be included in a first-aid kit?

In addition to the first-aid kit, what are some other items you should have in your home to care for minor medical problems or to provide emergency treatment until professional care can be obtained?

Did you think of these items for your first-aid kit:



- antiseptic cream or ointment
- Band-Aids (different sizes)
- gauze pads
- antiseptic lotion/cream
- roll of gauze bandages
- scissors
- white adhesive tape
- cotton balls

Other important household medical care items include:

- aspirin
- non-aspirin pain reliever
- cold medicine
- tweezers
- thermometer (to test for fever)



ACTIVITY

Research emergency numbers in your community and write them in the Emergency list below. Add these numbers to your contact list on your cell phone or post the list in a visible place nearby your home phone.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS	
FIRE	
POLICE Emergency	
POLICE Non-Emergency	
MEDICAL Emergency	
AMBULANCE	
HOSPITAL	
Health Care Provider	
POISON	
GAS COMPANY Emergency	
OTHERS:	

Personal Safety

As you get older, you will find that you probably have more freedom to go about the community or do other activities. But with the additional freedom comes additional responsibility, and it is important to be aware of what you can do in order to keep yourself safe in a car, on the street, around bullies, or on the internet.

Safety on the Streets

How do I keep myself safe at a party?

New social settings like parties are a fun way for you to spend time with your friends. Most of the time parties are a safe way to hang out with your friends, but sometimes things can happen that can make a party a dangerous place to be. It's important to think ahead and know what to do if a party gets out of control.

Here are some very important tips on how to keep you safe at a party:

- **Never walk away with strangers.** There will probably be people that you don't know at a party. Stick with a group of your friends you know. It's OK to meet new people, but it's always safer to go home from the party with the friends you went to the party with!
- **Never be alone with someone who has been drinking or taking drugs.** Alcohol and drugs affect people differently so someone that you know well could act very differently and be a threat to you if they are under the influence.
- **Always get your own drink.** You should always get your own soda and open it for yourself. That way you know exactly what you are drinking, and you can be sure that no one put any drugs or alcohol in your drink.
- **Never put your drink down.** It is important that you always keep an eye and a hand on your beverage. If you set your drink down or get it from someone else, then there is a possibility that a person could put alcohol or a date-rape drug into your drink. These drugs dissolve leaving no taste or color, so you wouldn't even know if a person were trying to use them on you. The effects of these drugs are extremely dangerous and often lead to rape situations. If you do set your drink down and walk away, just go and get yourself another one and leave the first one on the table or pour it out.
- **Avoid alcohol and drugs.** Taking drugs or drinking alcohol puts you at risk. You may be taken advantage of because your judgment will be impaired.
- **Tell your parents and friends where you are going.** It is important that your family and friends know where you are. They may need to contact you or, more importantly, you may need to contact them if you find yourself in an uncomfortable or dangerous situation.

- **Never get in a car with someone who has been drinking.** You have probably heard that you shouldn't drink and drive. But also, never get into a car with someone who has been drinking. Drinking and driving puts your life in very serious danger, and it also puts other drivers on the road and other innocent people, like children playing near the road, in danger, too. Call a trusted adult to pick you up or go home with someone who has NOT been drinking at all. Even one or two drinks can affect a person's judgment, reaction time, and ability to drive safely.

What can I do to develop a safety plan for different social situations?

No matter what the situation is, you can develop a plan to help keep yourself safe. Read the following list and develop your safety plan right now!

- Tell your guardians/foster parents where you are going, who you will be with, and when you will be back.
- Carry a cell phone in case you need to make an emergency phone call. Don't forget to keep emergency numbers and the phone number of a taxi service in your wallet, backpack or add them to your contact list on your cell phone.
- Stay in well-lit public places.
- Stick with another person or a group of your friends.
- Be aware of strangers. If you talk to them, don't volunteer too much information about yourself.
- Pick code words with family and friends - words that you can say when you are concerned so that you can let your trusted adult know over the phone that you are uncomfortable and want to be picked up from wherever you are. (Make sure you talk with your trusted adults ahead of time so they know the signal - so when you call you can get picked up right away.)

What do I do in an unfamiliar neighborhood?

There are certain things that you can do to keep yourself safe until you are near home. **Here are some tips:**

- **Walk with another person** whenever possible. There is always safety and comfort in numbers, so the more the better. It is important that you are aware of your surroundings - look up and down the street on both sides and even behind you. If you are alone, keep your headphones off so you can hear what is going on around you. Walk quickly and confidently to your destination.
- **Trust your instincts** when you are walking in an unfamiliar neighborhood. If you are worried that you are being followed, cross the street to see if the person does the same. Do not be afraid to start running if you need to - don't wait until the person is very close to you to begin running. Go to the nearest store, restaurant, or police station.
- **Don't fight with someone** who tries to take your belongings. If a person grabs your purse or bag, just let go and do NOT struggle with them. If you fight, you risk getting hurt. Money and other belongings can be replaced - your safety is the most

important thing. Try yelling to get help from the people around you. Then go to the nearest police station to report the crime.

Know the warning signs and how to protect yourself:

- **Be aware** of anyone in a car who stops to talk to you or ask you for directions if you are walking down the street. Try to keep your distance from the car and **never** offer to get in the car even if it sounds like the stranger is going in the same direction that you are headed.
- **Be assertive.** If a person that you don't know comes up to you to start a conversation, you don't have to talk to them if you don't feel comfortable. Don't be afraid to sound rude if someone keeps bothering you. Stay calm and firmly say you don't want to talk with them. Say 'No' loud enough for others around you to hear it. If you don't want to talk with someone, don't do it.
- **Be careful who you trust on the street.** Not all dangerous strangers are immediately rude or forceful when you first meet them. It is important that you are aware of strangers, both men and women, who seem charming. Remember that you do not have to share any information. Just because a stranger tells you where *they* live, it doesn't mean that you have to tell them where *you* live.
- **Be prepared.** Check out self-defense classes in your city or town. Your local police department or school might offer classes that can teach you how to protect yourself and how to handle uncomfortable situations. Thinking ahead and planning for your safety is a way to feel powerful and confident!



ACTIVITY

Meredith had moved to a new foster home recently and had gotten off the bus at the wrong stop. She thought her foster home was only a few streets away so she decided to walk the rest of the way. After a few minutes, she noticed a man behind her and thought he might be following her. She decided to cross the street and really became concerned when the man crossed the street, too. Meredith didn't have a cell phone. She looked around the neighborhood and didn't see any other people or anything familiar. Meredith was really starting to feel scared. What should she do?

What could Meredith do ahead of time so she wouldn't find herself in an unsafe situation again?



Gangs in your community

It's hard to talk about street safety without talking about gangs. Many youth in Massachusetts are growing up in communities where there is more than one gang. While street gangs are found mostly in urban areas, it is possible to have them elsewhere. The names, symbols, gestures, codes, etc... that exist in gangs are too many to mention and change too frequently to put in a life skills book.

If you are concerned about gangs in your community, talk to a trusted adult. If you know someone who is in a gang that wants to get out, or if you are in one and want to get out, talk to a trusted adult. If the adult you trust isn't sure how to help you, don't stop there. School guidance counselors, street youth workers, law enforcement officials, etc... can be helpful resources.

Bullying

What is bullying?

Bullying is an act of violence perpetrated by one or more people on one or more victims. Bullying includes:

- **Physical bullying:** hitting, kicking, pushing, choking, punching
- **Verbal bullying:** threatening, taunting, teasing, starting rumors, hate speech
- **Exclusion from activities:** When a young person is systematically excluded from participating in activities with others, i.e. "Don't let Sean do it." "Don't talk to her." "No one wants Jay on a team".

If you are being bullied

- Try to stay calm and look as confident as you can.
- Be firm and clear and tell the person bullying to stop.
- Get away from the situation as quickly as possible.
- Tell a trusted adult what has happened right away.

After you have been bullied

- Tell a teacher or another adult in your school (if that's where it happened).
- Tell your foster family / guardians.
- If you don't feel comfortable telling an adult by yourself, ask a friend to go with you.

- Keep on talking until someone listens and does something to stop the bullying.
- If your school has a peer support service, use it.
- Don't blame yourself for what happened.
- Don't suffer in silence. Get help.

Bullying hurts and you don't have to endure it. If you are on the receiving end of bullying, there are many things that can be done to make your life easier. Don't suffer in silence.



ACTIVITY

Mark didn't enjoy school. He doesn't have a lot of friends so he just quietly does his school work. Most of the kids leave him alone. But one student is always picking on him. He calls him a loser and other hurtful names. Once he pulled Mark's glasses off and threw them on the ground. Another time he grabbed his backpack and emptied everything out. Mark knows he is being bullied but is afraid if he tells someone, the situation will just get worse. What do you think Mark should do?

What could Mark do to make friends at school so he wouldn't feel so alone?

When you are talking to an adult about the bullying incident(s) be clear about:

- What has happened to you
- How often has it happened
- Who was involved
- Who saw what was happening
- Where it happened
- What you have done already.

Resources

Stop Bullying Now

Practical research-based strategies to stop bullying in schools

www.stopbullyingnow.com

National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center

A federal resource for communities working to prevent violence committed by and against young people

<http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/index.asp>

Cyberbullying

Have you ever been put down, made fun of, threatened, or verbally attacked online? If you answered “yes”, you have been cyberbullied. Other examples of cyberbullying can include mean text messages to your phone or other handheld digital devices, embarrassing statements or lies about you in a chat room, blog or bulletin board. No matter what kind of technology is used, cyberbullies send cruel messages to their victims and sometimes to others (such as the victim’s classmates) that they probably wouldn’t say face-to-face.

What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is about negative online communication between kids, preteens and adolescents, *but not adults*. If adults become involved in this kind of behavior, it is called harassment. The negative remarks are in the form of a threat or statement that is meant to make someone feel bad. It is usually a lie but can be something real that the victim shared with someone. It can be one statement but in most cases it is frequent messages over time that is meant to torment the victim. The victim can be cyberbullied by one person or many people, or the cyberbully can get others, even adults, to do their dirty work for them. The people that end up sending nasty messages may not even know that they are being used by the cyberbully. It can be someone who used to be your friend or someone you don’t know very well. Research shows that when someone is cyberbullied, the victim often cyberbullies back. The results are never good.



ACTIVITY

Which of the following are examples of cyberbullying?

Sydney sent Mae an email that said she was fat, stupid and ugly. Yes___ No___

Maria sent Mike repeated emails that he was hot, that she wanted to go to the prom with him, and then she cc'd all her girlfriends and said, "It was only a joke." Yes___ No___

Aidan sent a text message to Jose's cell phone threatening him that if he went out with Taylor he would beat him up Yes___ No___

Kim posted a note in a popular after-school study group chat that Shawna was the biggest jerk in the 10th grade. Yes___ No___

If you answered 'YES' to all 4 examples, you are correct. All are examples of cyberbullying.

How is Cyberbullying different from bullying?

Bullying is when a person(s) harasses another person face to face. Bullies can exist at school, in your neighborhood or other places, but you know who they are because they make fun of people or tease them in person.

Cyberbullying is done using computers or hand held digital devices such as cell phones. You may or may not be able to figure out who the cyberbully is because their identity is often hidden behind digital or computer technology. Cyberbullying is not only cruel to those who are victims; it is a serious danger as hurtful material can reach many more people than in person. It can ruin friendships and cause a lot of damage to a person's self-esteem. There have even been a few cases in the news where teens have committed suicide because they were the targets of repeated cyberbullying.

What makes a teen become a cyberbully?

Some teens who get involved in cyberbullying don't realize the impact or consequence of what they say online or in a text message. They may feel that saying something online or via a text message is not as bad as if they said it in person. It may even start out as a joke. Others use cyberbullying because they don't have the courage to say something face to face. Anyway you look at it cyberbullying is wrong because the remarks are usually untrue, very hurtful and usually harmful to the victim.

What should I do if I am the victim of cyberbullying?

Although the first emotion you feel may be anger and the desire to get even, *don't respond*. If you respond, you will likely email or text something about the other person you will regret later. Remember if you react on the same level, you are considered a cyberbully, too. Instead, do not respond but save the messages in a folder and get off the site or out of the chat room (wherever the remark was made) right away. Get the support of a close friend and tell a parent(s) or guardian or other adult you trust.

In extreme cases (when there have been serious threats made) *it may be necessary for you and your trusted adult to report the situation to your Internet Service Provider **and** to the police. In this case, you should be prepared to answer the following questions:*

1. What kind of threat was it? (direct or indirect)
2. What was said exactly? (print the text)
3. What type of technology was used to make the threat?
4. How often has the threat occurred? (once, many times, more each day)
5. Do you know who is responsible for the threats? (You know exactly who it is or think you know who is doing it, or you have no idea who is making the threats).

Although it's unfair that this is happening to you, do not bully back! Be sure to tell your foster parent(s), program staff or guardian(s) about the cyberbullying before it goes too far, and tell the police if someone has made serious threats to you.

Here are some important tips to decrease the risk of cyberbullying:

- **Never, ever give your password out** to anyone except your parent(s) or guardian and never borrow anyone else's password either.
- **Don't join in on the bashing.** If someone says something rude about another person, remove yourself from the discussion or chat and/or let others know that it is wrong to say cruel things about anyone.
- **Be careful what you send people through emails.** Always check the source of an email before you forward it as it may contain a virus or inappropriate pictures. In other words, know *what* email or text message you are sending and *to whom* you are sending it.
- **Don't forward emails with personal information.** It's easy to hit the send button and send a funny joke to share with your friends but be aware that when you do this you run the risk of forwarding the sender's personal information, too. Either ask the sender for permission to forward the email or delete the sender's personal information before you hit the forward key.
- **Don't hide behind your computer.** If you are upset with someone, first cool down. Next organize your thoughts and make a point to meet with the person and talk it out. It's never a good idea to email or text a message that you wouldn't say directly to a person.
- **Never pretend to be someone you are not** in chat rooms or social networking sites. Its okay to use a nickname and not to give out personal information, just don't pretend to be another person.

Cyberbullying Resources

Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use
<http://new.csriu.org>

What Is Sexting?

Sexting is the act of sending sexually explicit messages or photographs via text message to someone else's cell phone or computer. Sexting is sometimes prevalent in schools as teenagers send sexual images of themselves or others to friends. At times these images may be taken without the person's knowledge or forwarded to others without their consent. This can lead to tremendous humiliation and embarrassment for the person whose images were sent.

Sometimes sexting occurs when explicit photos are sent between boyfriend and girlfriend. The problem with sending this type of material over cell phones is that the sender is unable to control who else will see these images. Once one person receives the image, he or she can forward that material to others. Even if a teenager intended to send the sexually suggestive picture only to her boyfriend, it could be quickly forwarded to half the school with the click of a button. Unfortunately, once these images get out, there is no way to get them back. Simply deleting them from a cell phone or computer does not mean they are completely destroyed.

When sexting occurs among teens under the age of 18, the action may be prosecuted under the state's child pornography laws. Even if a teen consents to sending the images, it is still considered child pornography. Under current state law, conviction of child pornography is a felony and anyone convicted must register as a sex offender. Further consequences of such a conviction could include school suspension, ineligibility for financial aid, restrictions regarding employment and where someone can live. So consider the serious consequences as a result of sexting and **DO NOT BE INVOLVED IN SEXTING!!!**



ACTIVITY

Deidre thought it would be fun to surprise her boyfriend, Evan, with a sexy picture of herself for his birthday. So she took a picture of herself in her underwear and sent it off to Evan's cell phone. When she arrived at school on Monday, she noticed some other kids looking at her and laughing. A couple of boys even whistled at her. Finally one of Deidre's girlfriends told her that almost every kid in the school had received a picture of Deidre in some sexy underwear. When Deidre confronted Evan he said he had only sent her picture to three of his friends.

What do you think happened? How did all the other students get the sexy pictures of Deidre?

What should Deidre do about her predicament? What should she learn from the situation?

Safety on the Internet

The Internet has opened up a whole new world for people of all ages. You can shop, plan a vacation, send a picture to a relative, talk with friends, and even do research for your class project. Most people agree that since the Internet has been around, it has changed our lives for the better. But unfortunately this new way of finding information and communicating comes with risks. For example, when you visit an unfamiliar neighborhood or go to a party, you think of ways to stay safe. You also need to use similar guidelines when you're using the internet. Being aware of the possible dangers when communicating on-line will keep you safe!

Can I trust everything that I read on the Internet?

The answer is NO! Being able to tell if something on the Internet is reliable, accurate, true or real is tough for adults and even harder for teens. There's lots of information out there. Some of it is good information but some of it is just plain bad and not true. Everyone, even adults, must first question any information they read on the Internet until they can figure out if the information is true or false. **Here are some general tips on how to tell if a web site and information is reliable:**

- **Web sites that end in .gov are generally reliable because they are connected with our government.**
- **Look for the name of the organization and the author of the web site and when the information was updated.** Reliable web sites often have a list of references or contacts where you can find out where the information originally came from.
- **If you are looking for facts, check out a few different web sites to compare information.** If you are in doubt, double check facts at the library. This way you will know which web sites give you correct information.
- **Ask your teachers about reliable web sites to go to for homework help.** Once you find a reliable web site, you can bookmark it so you can easily find it later.

- **Ask your health care provider about web sites to go to for reliable health information.** When you get a recommendation from a professional, it most likely will be a respected web site with reliable information.
- **Reliable web sites usually have reliable links** — so when you get lucky and find a great web site, you most likely will get to know other good sites too.

Does it matter what on-line name I choose for myself?

Yes! You should NEVER use your real name as your on-line name. You may already know this but it is a common mistake that teens and adults make. By using your real name, anyone knows immediately who you are and with a little bit of work, they could probably find out even more about you. This is especially true in chat rooms where you can get comfortable chatting with someone and suddenly realize they know your name, age, where you live, and where you go to school.

What kind of on-line name should I choose?

You probably want your name to describe who you are but again you need to be careful about the name and words you choose. Remember when you're talking on-line to people you don't know well, some people may unfairly judge you by your on-line name. For example, if you choose a name like: hotbabe13, people will get the wrong impression of you and you most likely will get unwanted e-mails from people who are just responding to your on-line name. **Remember employers and colleges often check social media sites to learn more about you.** You don't want to choose an on-line name that could prove embarrassing or unprofessional.

What is a chat room and are they safe?

Some Internet services allow you to talk with other people in a chat room, a place that you can go to and talk to more than one person at a time. Chat rooms are often organized around topics such as sports, hobbies, or fan clubs. There are so many different kinds of chat rooms that it's possible to talk to people all around the world, 24 hours a day. But "chatting" often causes people to give out too much personal information, so be cautious about what information you share. If someone says things that make you feel uncomfortable or starts asking inappropriate questions leave the chat room immediately!

Before you enter a chat, be sure you have your foster parent's or guardian's permission to do so!

Is it okay to share my password with my best friend?

NO! You should not share your password with any of your friends, even your best friend. The only people who should know your Internet or e-mail password are your parent/guardian and you! Your password is private. If you let someone else know what your password is — whether it is a total stranger or even your best friend — then they can read anything that you

may want to keep private. Another person could use bad language or go to inappropriate sites under your name. You are required to enter a password for a reason — to keep yourself safe!

Is there anything that I shouldn't tell someone on the Internet?

Yes! Just like you wouldn't walk up to a stranger and tell them your name, where you live, where you go to school or give them your phone number, you shouldn't share this kind of information on-line either. It is very important that you don't e-mail or instant message anyone that you don't know or share any information that can identify you. Don't put your picture on the Internet unless you are e-mailing a friend or family member. If you are talking to a stranger, you have to be *really* careful because there are adults who take advantage of young people.

Remember:

- Don't e-mail your photo or any information that identifies YOU.
- Never give clues about yourself, where you live, where you work, where you hang out with your friends, where you shop etc.
- Never, ever share your name, address, phone number, etc.
- Don't give out credit card information over the Internet.

How can I tell if someone is telling the truth on the internet?

The scary thing is that it's REALLY hard to tell if someone is telling the truth. There are people out there who misrepresent themselves and stalk young girls and boys on the Internet. For example, someone may lie and tell you that they are much younger or even older than they are. Since you can't see them, you never know if they are telling the truth. Even if you try to check on the person by reading their on-line profile, a person can easily lie about themselves and their age. Remember that some people who use the internet are not trustworthy and could hurt you.

What do I do if someone I talk to on the Internet wants to meet in person?

Due to all the risks involved with meeting a stranger in person, **it is best to never meet with someone that you met on-line.** If someone that you met on-line wants to meet you in person, you should tell your parents, guardian, or trusted adult right away.

NEVER meet anyone that you have met on-line even if you think that you really have gotten to know someone well. This is the biggest risk you can take and can put you in danger. Keep yourself safe while using the internet.



ACTIVITY

Consider the following:

Patty turned 18 and has just gotten her license. She really wants to start saving for a car, so she has been applying to a lot of different jobs. There was one that she really wanted, but she still hadn't heard if she got the job. Patty decided to follow up with the employer who interviewed her. When she spoke with him he said he was going to be honest with her. He felt her interview went well, but it is the store's policy to check social media sites before they offer someone a position. When they checked her Facebook page, what she posted raised questions and they decided to offer the position to someone else. Patty was so disappointed but remembered she had posted pictures of herself at a party having a "good time".

What conclusion do you think the employer made after seeing Patty's Facebook page?

If Patty is serious about getting a job, what should she do?

Make sure to ask yourself if there is anything on your own Facebook page that you should perhaps take down. A good rule to follow is:



IF YOU WOULDN'T POST IT ON A HIGHWAY BILLBOARD, YOU SHOULDN'T POST IT ON THE INTERNET!!!

Internet Safety Resource

StopBullying.gov
www.stopbullying.gov

Young Women's Health Program
Children's Hospital Boston
www.youngwomenshealth.org

SOCIAL SKILLS

SKILL ASSESSMENT

The following questions will help you identify the skills in which you excel and target those which you need to develop. By yourself or with your team try to answer each of the questions as honestly as possible. After completing this independent living skills assessment, review it with your team and identify those skills you would like to strengthen.

	<i>I do not know how to do this</i>	<i>I need to know more about this</i>	<i>I can do/ have done this</i>
1. Can communicate and interact appropriately in various social situations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Can tell others when I am upset or angry and express my feelings appropriately.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Can start conversations with new acquaintances.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Know how to handle conflicts with a friend, teacher, supervisor, or family member without using physical aggression.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Am aware of my values.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Know how to make good decisions by weighing the pros and cons.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Am aware of my cultural background.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Know what is important to me in friend/relationships.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Can participate in social activities with peers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Know where and how to get help if cannot handle or end an argument with a friend, teacher, employer, family member, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Know how to solve problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Can set appropriate goals for myself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<i>I do not know how to do this</i>	<i>I need to know more about this</i>	<i>I can do/ have done this</i>
13. Can set personal goals and work to accomplish them with minimal help.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Can make/keep friendships with people of the opposite sex.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Can be honest with friends and say what is on my mind.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Can set limits and boundaries with friends/peers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Know how to say “No” to a boyfriend/girlfriend who wants to get more sexually involved than I do.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Aware of the consequences of teenage pregnancy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Can plan and invite peers to social activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Know how to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Skill Plan Two

Personal Care and Well Being: Please answer Yes or No to the questions below

Can identify own strengths

Know what I need help with

Have identified own personal goals

Have a community support network

Have a healthy awareness of racial & ethnic identity

Understand the risks of cigarettes, alcohol & drugs

Avoid high risk behaviors

Can manage stress in healthy ways

Know where to get help for personal safety concerns: physical/emotional abuse, dating violence, etc.

Know where & how to access mental health services

Goal: _____ Tasks to Achieve Goal: _____

Who Will Assist: _____

Goal: _____ Tasks to Achieve Goal: _____

Who Will Assist: _____

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT & POSITIVE IDENTITY

As a youth in foster care you have an experience that is different from those of youth who are not in foster care. As you mature, it is important to realize that there are many things that you will have to decide for yourself. How you feel about yourself, how you choose to respond to situations in your everyday life, and who the people are that you trust are all decisions you will need to make for yourself.

Personal Development

Knowing who you are is an important step toward feeling confident in decisions you will need to make as you get older. Knowing who you can turn to for understanding and guidance when you need it is also an important part of your development. No matter whom we are, we all need the love and support of people we can depend on and trust. The people in our support group will change and grow over time as we meet new people and experience new circumstances in our life.

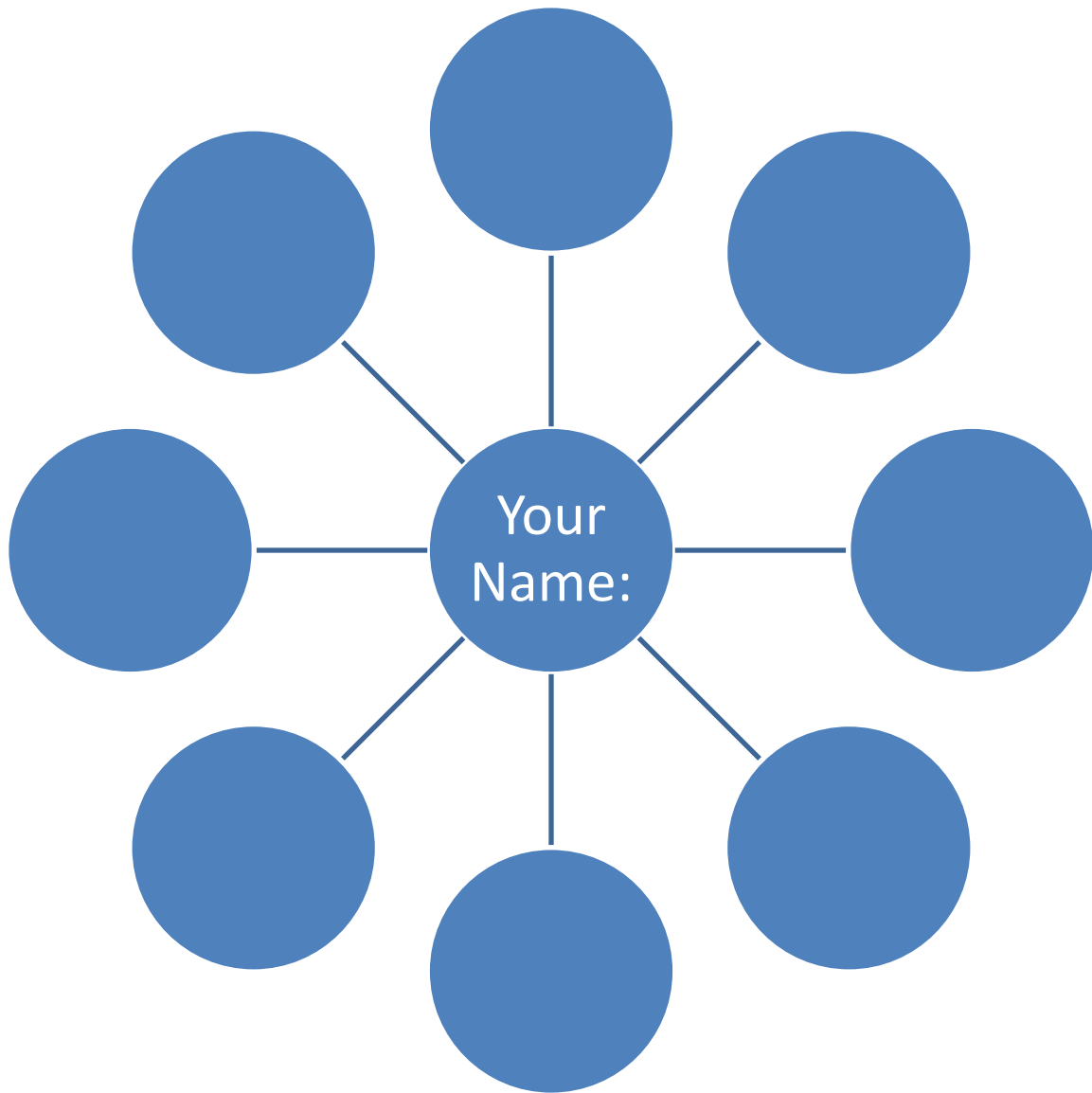


ACTIVITY

My Support Map

This exercise will help you consider some of the important relationships in your life. Sometimes we focus so much on one relationship (parent/guardian, sibling, significant other) that we don't recognize how many other relationships we have that are a support to us. Below you can create a "map" of your support system, which was adapted from "The Teen Relationship Workbook" by Kerry Moles, CSW. In the center circle, put your name or paste a photo of yourself. In the boxes connected to you, write the names and telephone numbers of the people or organizations who are or could be a part of your support system. This means anyone you could call on for help or support in any area of your life from a serious personal problem, to a health care decision, or to helping you with your homework. Feel free to draw in extra boxes if need them.





Examples of people and places you might have in your support system...

- Parent(s)
- Foster Parent(s)
- Brothers or sisters
- Foster brothers or sisters
- Social worker
- Outreach worker
- Grandmother
- Aunt or other family members
- Close friends
- Your school
- A teacher you trust
- Your counselor or therapist
- Youth Center
- Your church, temple, or place of worship
- Your dating partner
- Crisis hotline or youth line
- Your doctor
- A group you belong to
- Your coworkers or boss
- Other _____
- Other _____
- Other _____

Once you've completed your map, find a quiet moment to reflect on who you included in your support system. Who are your strongest supports? Are there any relationships you would like to change or work on to improve that relationship? Think about what you could do to bring about the change you want. If you find yourself feeling confused about what to do, who in your support system can you talk with about these feelings?

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem refers to how you think and feel about yourself. It is your sense of self-worth, your belief about how valuable and worthy a person you are. People with high self-esteem are confident and usually feel good about themselves. People with low self-esteem usually feel badly about themselves and doubt their worth or value as a person.

How do we get self-esteem?

Self-esteem usually comes from messages you get about yourself. These messages can come from other people (like parents, teachers, or our peers), the media, or from yourself. When we get negative messages from other people, we often believe these messages, internalize them, and develop low self-esteem. When we get positive messages from other people that tell us how great we are, we usually learn to tell ourselves that we are valued as a person, and we develop high self-esteem. Positive self-esteem does not mean we are perfect. It takes into account that we are human and we sometimes make mistakes. When we have positive self-esteem, we treat ourselves with respect and understanding, just as we would treat a person we love.

How can I build my self-esteem?

Self-esteem doesn't only come from the messages other people send you – it also comes from the messages you send yourself, called 'self-talk'. If you are used to hearing negative messages from other people, chances are those are the messages you will send yourself. One way to build your self-esteem is to re-train yourself to engage in positive self-talk. Positive self-talk is when you focus on your strengths and positive qualities, reminding yourself that you are a good and valuable person.

Think of your brain as a human computer where you can "input" and "delete" information. To improve your self-esteem, you need to delete negative messages you are sending yourself and replace them by inputting new positive messages about yourself.

Here are some examples of positive self-talk:

"I am a good and caring person and deserve to be treated with respect."

"I am capable of achieving success in my life."

"There are people who love me and will be there for me when I need them."

"I deserve to be happy."

"I am entitled to make mistakes and learn from them."

Why is good self-esteem important?

Good self-esteem is important for everyone because it helps you keep a positive outlook on life and makes you feel proud of the person you are, both inside and out. Most teens with good self-esteem find life much more enjoyable. They tend to have better relationships with peers and adults, find it easier to deal with mistakes or disappointments, and are more likely to stick with a task until they succeed. Good self-esteem gives you the:

- **courage** to try new things
- **confidence** to believe in yourself
- **strength** to make healthy choices for your mind and body now and throughout your life

Treating yourself with respect and realizing that every part of you is worth caring for and protecting will help you keep a healthy attitude towards yourself.



ACTIVITY

Building good self-esteem is not always easy and can take a long time, but knowing that **you can improve your self-esteem is the first step.**

Finish the sentences below:

1. I am a strong person. An example of a time when I was strong is _____
_____.
2. I am capable of being happy. A time I was happy was _____
_____.
3. I am a good friend. A time I was there for a friend was _____
_____.
4. I am capable of making decisions for myself. A time I made a good decision was _____
_____.
5. I am lovable. People who love me without abusing me are _____
_____.
6. One thing I am good at is _____

Repeat often to practice positive self-talk.



ACTIVITY

Who Am I?

I AM!

My Gender Is: _____

My Race/Ethnicity Is: _____

My Economic Background Is: _____

My Religion/Spiritual Background Is: _____

My Talents Include: _____

My Interests Include: _____

My Age Is: _____

My Sexual Orientation Is: _____

Other Social Groups to Which I Belong: _____

Of all the Social Groups to Which You Belong, Which Do You Identify Most Strongly With? _____

Discuss your responses with a trusted adult.

Adapted from www.advocatesforyouth.org.

RESTLESS ATHLETIC
DISABLED
TOUGHER
NORMAL
LONELY
PACIFIC ISLANDER
THOUGHTFUL
SELF DEFINING

LESBIAN
GAY
QUEER
BISexual
SPIRITUAL
BICENDER
ASexual
TERMINED
FAITHFUL
MOROC
SMART
KIND
DIFFERENT
BLACK
EVOLVING
QUICK
REVEALING
EVERYTHING
EXCITED
WONDERFUL
BRIGHT
AMAZING

BREATHING
SHORT
RESERVED
BRAVE
TRANS
AWARE
INTERSEX
FEMINE
COURAGEOUS
AWESOME
AFRICAN
OUTSTANDING
BIBRACIAL
AMERICAN
ADORABLE
TRANS
GENDER
LEADER
NORMAL
STRONG

SHORT
THOUGHTFUL
BROAD
GRACEFUL
PREMIUM
LOVEABLE
FUNNY
RESPECTED
ARTICULATE
CAUTIOUS
EXTRAORDINARY

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

This next section in the workbook will focus on the different social and interpersonal skills that we need in order to get along with others and function well within our community setting. The first of these skills we will focus on are values.

Values

Values are the beliefs and attitudes we have come to accept as a result of what we have been taught, what we have experienced, and the people we are in relationships with. Our values are our internal compass that guides us in our thinking, our beliefs and our behavior.

In order for us to make good decisions, we have to know who we are. We have to know what is important to us and what is not. Our values are the foundation beneath many personal skills like decision making, communication, and problem solving. Our values often direct our relationships with others and our actions in general. For example, if someone is an honest person, he or she would not cheat on a test or steal from a store. Their basic value of honesty would not allow them to do this.

No one is born with a set of values. We all develop our values “along the way.” We learn to distinguish right from wrong, develop preferences and establish a set of ideals that we learn to live by. However, our values are not carved in stone. They can change due to our life experiences or new information. Different people have different values, each according to his or her own development, personalities, and cultural backgrounds.



ACTIVITY

Who Am I? What Are My Values?

Values help you to discover what is important to you and what is not. They will help determine who your close friends are, which jobs you might choose, and how you take care of yourself. Everyone has values in all areas of life, but we might not always be aware of them. Values can change due to different life experiences and events. You can explore your values by asking yourself general questions like the following:

- What do I like to do?
- What can I do well?
- Who are my friends?
- What do I look for in a good friend?

- Which adults do I respect?
- Why do I respect them?
- What makes me happy? Proud?
- What makes me sad? Angry?
- How do I want to be treated by other people?
- Is there something that I'd like to change about myself?

The answers to these questions will help you discover some of your own values: the things you care about, the things you admire -- in yourself and in others around you. Discovering your own values is a first step on the road to achieving personal goals.

Throughout life, you will meet different and interesting people for the first time. You may want to tell them something about yourself and your values, let them know where you're coming from and what kind of person you are. Completing the following sentences will help you understand yourself a little better.

One thing I admire about myself is: _____

A good friend is someone who: _____

It makes me laugh when: _____

When I am 25, I will: _____

I appreciate adults who: _____

The person I admire most is: _____

If I had a million dollars, I would: _____

I don't like it when a person: _____

If I could have any job in the world, I would be: _____

One thing that is really important to me is: _____

If I could change one thing in the world, I would: _____

Now look back at the sentences you completed. Did you discover something new about your values?



ACTIVITY

Now write three sentences that will tell someone new (a friend or employer) about you and your values.

Think about how these values relate to any goals you may have. Do they work together? If not, why not?



ACTIVITY

Beginning to think about your values will also assist you with your ability to make good decisions and set goals for yourself in various areas of life. Complete the following exercise to explore what is important to you.

Read these statements and decide if you agree or disagree:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Not Sure	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
1. A good friend is someone you can count on in hard times.				_____
2. The best thing to do is what other kids are doing.				_____
3. A good friend is easy to find; anyone can be a good friend.				_____
4. It's always better to let adults make decisions about what's right for me.				_____
5. A good parent lets you make your own decisions every time.				_____
6. Teenagers can make good parents.				_____
7. What's happened to me in the past doesn't affect how I feel and act today.				
8. A good friend might not always tell you what you want to hear.				_____
9. It's better to live alone than with roommates.				_____
10. Kids in foster care never get a fair chance on the outside.				_____
11. It's good to have someone to depend on for help and support.				_____
12. Sometimes kids who have had problems can be the best support for other kids.				_____
13. The most important thing about a job is how much money you make.				_____
14. It's more important to be healthy than rich.				_____
15. It's important to live by your values.				_____
16. It's easy to get a job even if you drop out of high school.				_____
17. It's okay to have sexual intercourse with someone you just met.				_____

Talk about your answers with a friend or a trusted adult. You will discover places where you agree and other places where you disagree, due to the differences in your personal value systems. Your values also might change as you get older as a result of the different life experience you'll have.

Once you have explored your values in general, you can determine your values in specific areas of life. Awareness of your values will assist you in making good decisions and setting useful goals for yourself. For example, if you determine that you value education, you might plan for higher education options.



ACTIVITY

By listing the things that are most important to you in each of the areas of the chart, you can begin to identify your values.

Education	Recreation	Money
Employment	Friendship	Health

Discuss what you wrote with a trusted adult. Do you have goals that match what's important to you? Do you think you might work to change anything after considering your values?

Once again, values *can* change. As you start to make decisions and work towards your goals, it will be important to re-evaluate to ensure that your values and goals are in sync. For example, you may find it important to have an apartment soon, even at the expense of buying a used car. You may find it important to have a roommate to help you pay the rent, but in 5 years you may value privacy more and desire to live alone. You may really need a car to commute to work. Again, your values change based on your experiences.

Positive values can help us to live our lives in a healthy way and guide us through difficult and confusing situations. Most of us establish values in many areas of life. It is particularly valuable to determine what is important to us in the areas of friendship and relationships.



ACTIVITY

Exploration Exercise

Answer the following questions.

- Do you think that what others think of you is important?

- How do you choose your friends? Kindness? Status? Popularity? Other reasons?

- Have you ever been misjudged by someone who really didn't know you?

- Do you believe that everybody is equal? Why or why not?

- What do you think people feel about others who are different?

- What do you think about people who are different? Why?

As you can see, our values determine so many decisions we make throughout our life. Our relationships, education, career choices, health decisions, and even who we marry are all aspects of our life that are determined by our values. As you move through the PAYA module you will understand more clearly how much our values are woven into the decisions we make and how our values can influence us throughout our lifetime.



CULTURE & IDENTITY

We cannot talk about values without talking about culture. Culture is the combination of values, beliefs, and practices of a particular group. Our perception of the world, our feelings and expectations about ourselves and others are determined by culture that we have been exposed to. By the time we reach adolescence, we have already interacted with many people. We feel comfortable with some of these people in a way we don't with others. It is probably the common culture we share with them that makes us feel more comfortable. Culture is important because it gives us a sense of belonging. Ethnicity, race, and religion are just some of the examples of culture that we identify with. Being a teen, a student, a member of a sports team, a member of a church group and even being in foster care are other examples of groups that possess an identifying culture.


Cultural Roots

Being aware of your cultural roots can be an enlightening experience. It can explain how you look, how you speak, and what foods you like. Knowing your cultural roots is an important aspect of who you are. We all grow and change as we meet new people and have new experiences. These new friends and experiences will influence us as they introduce various other cultures into our lives. Our cultural roots will always remain a part of us as our values and beliefs evolve to reflect the new influences in our lives.

Do you remember a time when you felt a connection with someone who shared your cultural background? How did you feel connected to that person?



Do you feel connected when you are with other foster youth?



Some of us might not be aware of our cultural background. The following exercise will help you think about your own cultural roots.



ACTIVITY

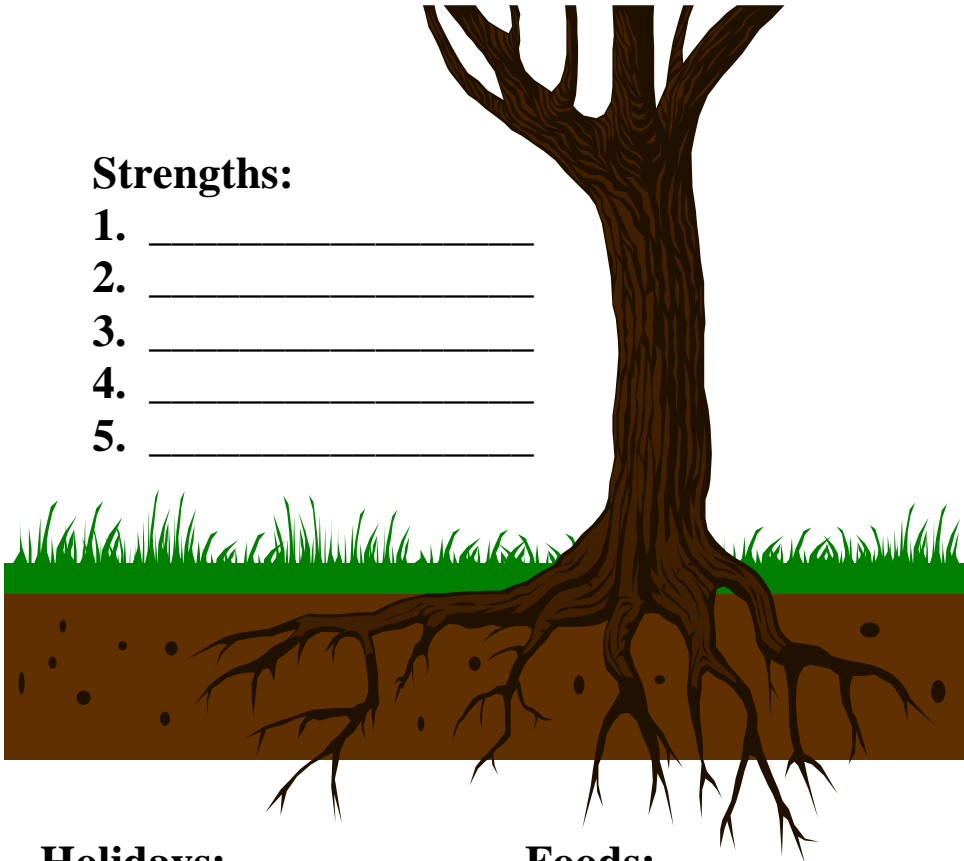
Your Name: _____

Your Cultural Background: _____

KNOWING YOUR ROOTS

Strengths:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Holidays:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Foods:

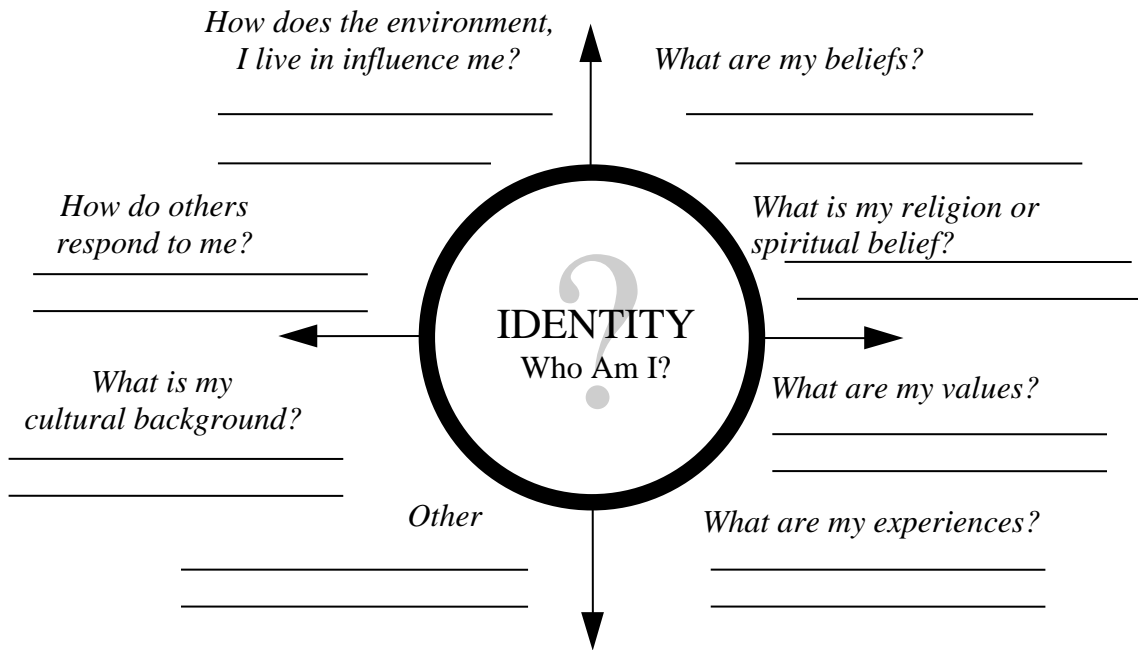
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

The University of Oklahoma National Resource Center for Youth Services, 1990

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Developing a cultural identity is an important part of establishing who we are. Some of our values are based on our cultural background and help us to establish our identity.

Utilize the chart below to help you think about your cultural background and identity.



Consider the following:

Maria, now seventeen, came to the US from the Dominican Republic when she was twelve. Maria lives in a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood. Although she has learned some English, she is afraid to speak it because she does not want others to make fun of her. Although Maria wants to go to college, she is not sure if she will make it because of her background.

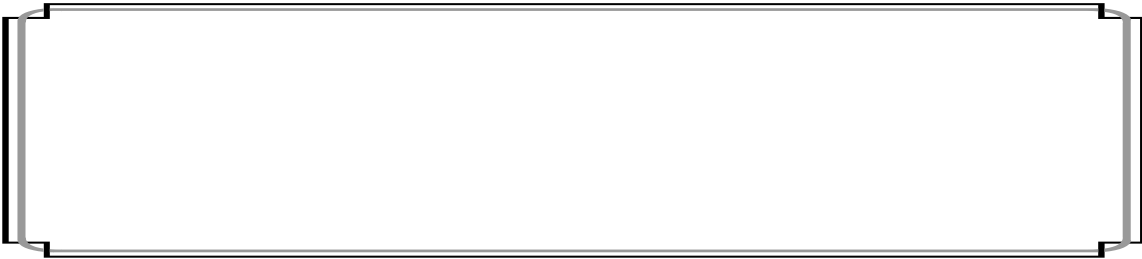
What advice would you give to Maria?

Michael is Cambodian and has been in the U.S. for the last eight years. His parents don't speak English and the traditions and values of their culture are very important to them. Michael attends high school and has many African American, Hispanic, and white friends. He speaks primarily English and he values the way of life in the U.S., participating in many U.S. traditions. He is confused about his identity and cultural background. What advice would you give Michael?



Manuel is a seventeen-year-old Latino youth who came into care eighteen months ago. Special efforts were made to place him with a traditional Latino family who are very active in their Spanish-speaking community. Manuel makes excuses to avoid attending Latino activities, preferring to hang out with his white and African American friends, and he refuses to speak Spanish although his educational record indicates that English is his second language.

Where do you think Manuel is in the process of developing his cultural identity?



Do you have any advice for Manuel?



VALUING DIVERSITY

Now that you have researched your own cultural background, you have probably established that most of your family and ancestors (except for those of you who are American Indian) have immigrated to the U.S.A. at one point or another from all over the world. The United States is often described as a “melting pot” because so many people from so many different nationalities learn to live together even with their cultural differences.

We value diversity when we appreciate, not just tolerate, the diverse and unique qualities of those who are different from ourselves. The diversity is seen as a difference, but one that is appreciated and celebrated and, therefore, enriches us all.

What advantages does cultural diversity bring to society?



We Are All One Family Under The Sky

by Maria, 18

I would like to send this message to all my brothers and sisters out there who think they should just stick with their color or their culture. It's not too late to start working with each other. No matter what color you are or what country you are from, we are still a family.

I wish a lot of people would stop being prejudiced and would just stick with each other, just like a family. Color doesn't matter to me. What matters is what type of person you are inside!

I just want everyone to remember: "We are all a family under the sky."

What are your thoughts on Maria's article? Do you agree with her? Why or why not?



What could get in the way of all people getting along?



Valuing diversity is an important social interpersonal skill. The first step in becoming more aware of cultural differences and learning to respect and to respond to them is to explore your own cultural values and attitudes. Please read the following statements and check the box which corresponds to your response.

Exploring Cultural Attitudes

	Agree	Disagree
I would like to travel to different countries.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I accept opinions different from my own.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I respond with compassion towards homeless people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would feel uncomfortable in a group in which I am the ethnic/racial/gender/sexual minority.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I tell or laugh at ethnic/LGBTQ jokes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am comfortable with people who are LGBTQ.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have close friends of another ethnic/racial group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I prefer to conform rather than disagree in public.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People who speak a different language or act differently from me interest me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Adapted from a handout used in an Oklahoma Juvenile Personal Training Program workshop on “Working with Latino Youth and Families,” 1992.

Often, misconceptions and lack of knowledge about diverse populations can lead to wrong assumptions and poor judgments.

Where do prejudice and misconceptions about diverse groups come from?

A close look at your values and where they come from will give you some idea of who you are and who you aren't. For ethnic/racially diverse youth and LGBTQ adolescents, this process sometimes begins with the pressure to conform to the dominant culture.

What do you think youth have to do to value themselves, their culture, other minority groups, and the dominant culture?

Do you think you would feel comfortable being different or being a member of a minority group?



ACTIVITY

Imagine that you had to leave the US tomorrow to go and live in a different country. What do you think it would be like?

How would you communicate?

How would living in a foreign country affect each of the following aspects of your life?

- Language:

- Family:

- Friends / Support System:

- Food:

- Education:

- Housing:

- Jobs:

- Customs:



ACTIVITY

Some people differentiate between the different types of diverse populations. While a person might be tolerant and supportive of some groups, he or she might not be tolerant of others. The following activity is designed to explore your comfort level on the differences of people such as physical ability, race, ethnicity, age, etc. Be as honest as you can when answering the questions.

1) Joe was in a car accident a few years ago. He is paralyzed from the waist down and has neurological damage which makes his face twitch. Joe has moved to a new neighborhood recently. Tomorrow is his first day at a new school.

- How do you think Joe feels?

- How do you think other students will react to him?
-

- How would you interact with Joe? Why?
-

2) Tanya is African-American. She will attend a new school tomorrow in a primarily white neighborhood after years of attending a school with primarily students of color.

- How do you think Tanya feels?
-
-

- How do you think other students will react to her?
-

- How would you interact with Tanya? Why?
-

3) Sean is an openly gay male. He recently was placed in a new foster home in a new town. In his old school, he had many gay and straight friends. He has to attend a new school tomorrow.

- How do you think Sean feels?
-

- How do you think other students will react to him?
-

- How would you interact with him? Why?
-

Why do you think some people may react differently to each of these young people?

Discuss your responses with a trusted adult. Did any of your responses surprise you?

Sexual Orientation (LGBTQ)

Sexual orientation is one of the many ways that people can be different from each other. While some people think this is a big difference, it is just one part of a person – just like age, ethnicity, gender, or skin color. In this section we will discuss what LGBTQ is and some of the challenges faced by those with a sexual orientation that is not heterosexual in a culture where heterosexual people are in the majority.



What Does Being LGBTQ Mean?

When people say LGBTQ, they are usually talking about people who identify themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and everything in-between. Since a lot of people identify themselves in lots of different ways, LGBTQ can describe anyone who doesn't identify as "straight" or heterosexual. It's important to note, however, that many people choose to not put a label on their sexual orientation.

I think I might be LGBTQ.

Discovering that you are LGBTQ can take a long time for some people, while others know when they're really young. Our culture and our media are dominated by the acceptance and celebration of heterosexual or straight relationships. For a young person who does not identify that way, he or she has to try extra hard to find people to help them develop this side of themselves in a healthy and happy way. As a result of this, it can at times be confusing and lonely when you are attracted to people of the same sex as you, or when you are attracted to both males and females (some people call this bisexuality). You don't have to be having sex to know your sexual preference. There are lots of people who know well before they become sexually active with a partner whether they are gay or straight. If you're still unsure about your feelings, don't worry, there's no need to label yourself right away, or ever. Don't be afraid or embarrassed of your feelings or how you express yourself sexually, like being tall or short, blond or brunette, being LGBTQ is just another part of who you are. Ignoring your feelings just keeps you and others from knowing your true self.

Should I come out?

When LGBTQ people reveal their sexual orientation to someone else, it's sometimes called "coming out". The coming out process is different for everyone, and there are no rules anywhere saying that you have to come out to anyone. It's a really personal thing

that should only be done when you feel ready – not because someone else thinks you should.

Everyone chooses to “come out” a little differently and no two coming out experiences are the same. Some people will only tell close friends and family at first and slowly tell more people as time goes on. Others don’t feel comfortable telling people who are closest to them or choose to share their identity with newer friends or those who they feel are less likely to judge them. Others will tell everybody all at once while some people choose to stay “in the closet” their whole lives.

Coming out can be really scary, especially if you don’t know how people will react. Many people need to come out to themselves and develop confidence in how they feel about being LGBTQ before they come out to others. In this process there are peers and adults that are trustworthy that can be the people that can support a LGBTQ person in coming out to themselves. You can try and feel out your friends and family first, but you don’t always know how someone will respond to you. There are some things you can ask yourself that might make the process go smoother for you. Some questions that might be helpful for you to ask yourself are:

- Do you have one trusted friend or adult that you could tell first?
- Do you know what you plan to say?
- How will you answer questions about your sexuality?
- What might be the best time and place to bring up this issue?
- Will your privacy be respected by the people you choose to tell?
- Have you thought about what people’s reactions might be, both positive and negative?
- Can you be patient with your family and friends if they need some time to accept what you have told them?
- What kind of views do your friends and family have about people who are LGBTQ?
- Do you have a support system you can turn to if it doesn’t go as planned?
- How will you access this support system if you need it?

If you feel good about your answers, then you may be ready to come out. The first time is usually the hardest. It usually gets easier the more you do it, and you will have to do it more than once. Remember, some people may need time to process what you have told them while others will accept you no matter what.

If you don’t feel good about your answers, it may help to talk to someone about what you’re feeling. Here are some great resources you can check out:

Peer Listening Line: 800.399.7337
GLBT National Helpline: 888.843.4564

Being LGBTQ in the Foster Care System

If you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered or queer, not having people to support or accept you can make you feel there is no one else like you. If you are LGBTQ and in the foster care system, know that you are not alone.

There are many resources you can access within the foster care system and through the school you attend. Your social worker, foster parent, and school officials can all help you access the services you need. There are also many resources for you that exist in Massachusetts and throughout the United States. Many of them can be accessed by phone, internet and at a public library. See the resources at the end of this section.

Remember, you are not alone.

Come out when you're ready,
not because someone else thinks you should.

What can I do to show support for a friend who comes out to me as LGBTQ?

Most of us know someone who is gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or queer and you should feel good that they trusted you enough to tell you, because it's not always easy to tell people. Be as supportive as you can. Reassure your friend that you will respect their confidentiality. Treat your friend just like all of your other friends by asking about his/her relationships, joking around and listening when your friend needs to talk about the latest issue in his or her life. Another way you can be supportive is if you hear someone say something hurtful or hateful, express that you are not comfortable with their comments. Speaking up takes courage. The more we all speak up, the more we will help end prejudice against LGBTQ youth and adults.



ACTIVITY

Read the following statements and scenarios and write down your thoughts. Discuss your responses with a trusted adult.

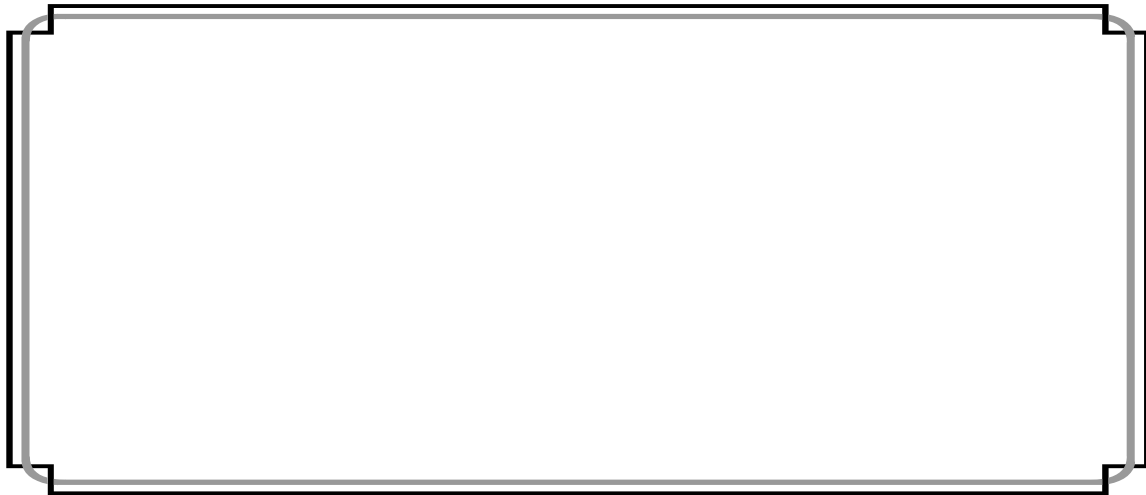
Think of some milestones for young people in our culture. Some examples are dances, proms, first boyfriend/girlfriend, first day of high school.

What might be some differences in the ways that heterosexual and homosexual youth might experience these milestones?

Is there a way for ALL young people, gay and straight, to help make these milestones available, safe, and positive for one another? What are some of your ideas?

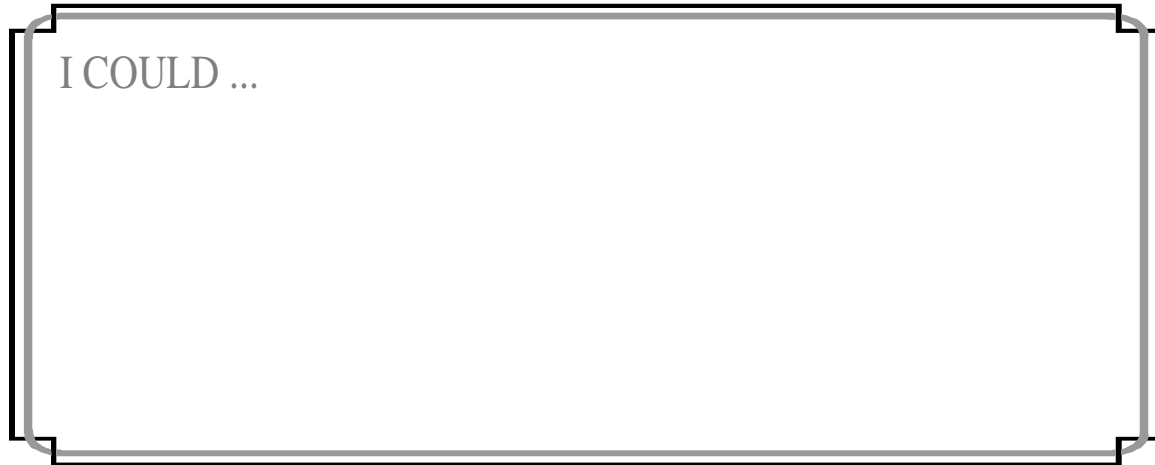
Consider the following:

Your best friend with whom you grew up with and have known for your entire life tells you that he/she thinks he/she is gay or lesbian. What would you do? Would your relationship change? If so, how do you think it might change?



Think about yourself and what makes you different from other people in your life. Is this difference a good or a bad thing? What are things that other people in your school or community have done to make you feel included and valued? What could you do to make others feel valued?

I COULD ...



LGBTQ Resources

Fenway Community Health

Peer Listening Line – Anonymous and confidential phone line that offers gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth a “safe place” to call for information, referrals and support.

800.399.7337

Massachusetts GLBT Youth group (BAGLY)

617.227.4313

JRI – Health Services

Boston GLASS Community Center – A drop-in center for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning young people between the ages of 13 – 25. A safe place to hang out, make new friends, and just relax; with board games, discussion groups, a TV and DVD player and documentaries, computer stations, a resource library, living room, and a kitchen. A staff of fulltime professionals is available to offer support with issues such as coming out, health, relationships, work, school, family.

617.266.3349

www.jri.org

GLBT National Helpline

<http://www.glnh.org/>

888.843.4564

Social Skills

Social skills are the life skills that help young people grow up to be self-reliant, capable, and competent. Social skills equip young people to:

- Deal with the choices and situations they encounter;
- Form and maintain healthy relationships;
- Avoid stress or deal with it in a healthy manner;
- Be effective in school and at work; and
- Be a positive influence on their community.

There are many social skills, but we will highlight a few of them in this section including decision making, problem solving, peaceful conflict resolution and anger management.

Decision Making

How Can I Make Good Decisions?

Every day you make *many* decisions. Some are big decisions; others are small. Some are more important than others. Some decisions you can make by yourself while with other decisions, you may need and want advice from a friend, parent, or trusted adult. As an adolescent, you have started to make new decisions about friends, sexuality, jobs, clothes, etc. Making good decisions in all these areas is important now and in the future. Unwise decisions can bear serious consequences. You will be faced with additional important decisions when living on your own. Good decision making skills will enable you to handle problems and temptations successfully.

What is My Decision Making Style?

People have different decision making styles and come to solutions in different ways. Here are four young adults. Evaluate how they make decisions.

Nick:

I make decisions pretty fast. If I am in a store, I don't spend a lot of time checking everything out. I usually buy one of the first things I see. I don't have a lot of patience. I'll take any job I am offered, and I'll try anything once!

Kim:

I look around to see what other people do before I do anything! I usually follow what my best friend does, even if it's not the best thing for me.

Tyrone:

I take forever to make a decision. I could take days to decide what clothes to wear. I think I'm afraid to make decisions sometimes, especially important ones. Last week I lost a chance at a good job because I couldn't decide whether to apply or not.

Teresa:

I try to talk with someone when I have a decision to make. I ask my friends or my foster mother or Mrs. Abrams, my teacher, for help. Then I think about what's best for me before I decide. Then I do it!

Does one of these people sound like you? Which one?

Do you have a friend like Nick, Tyrone, Kim, or Theresa?

Try the following exercise to think about your own decision style. Check just one box per category to show how you would make the decision.

Decide Now:

How can I decide what to wear this morning?

- Do it quickly; grab the first thing I see.
- Take lots of time.
- Put it off as long as I can.
- Read my horoscope.
- Talk to a friend.
- Talk with an adult.
- Find out what other people are wearing.
- Think first about what I'll be doing today, where I'll be going during the day.

Decide Now:

My friends are starting to drink beer every Friday after school. Should I join them? When I make this kind of decision I would probably...

- Just do what I feel like at that moment.
- Do what my friends are doing.
- Try to avoid the situation as long as I can.
- Do what is cool to do.
- Try to talk to a friend before I get in the situation.
- Read about drugs and alcohol and decide for myself.
- Just stay away from those friends.
- Talk with an adult to help me decide.

Decide Now:

What dentist should I call to use in the years ahead. When I make this decision, I will probably...

- Do it quickly, point to any name in the phone book.
- Take lots of time: visit and meet with at least two dentists.
- Talk with a parent.
- Talk with a friend.
- Find out whom other people go to.
- Put it off until I have a toothache.
- Read my horoscope.
- Let my social worker make the decision for me.

After completing these exercises, how would you describe your decision-making style?

I Usually Make Decisions By . . .

Five Important Steps

As you have seen, there are many ways to go about making a decision. You can talk with a friend or just pick the first thing that comes your way. There are many ways that people use to help them make good decisions -- and that's by taking it one step at a time. Taking these steps one at a time can help you make better decisions because they make sure you look at all parts of a problem and considering all your options when deciding whether to buy a car -- or deciding whether to participate in training for a new job. It will help you think about the decision, get advice, and then decide what is best for you. Here are the five steps:

1. Ask what decision has to be made.
2. List two or more alternative solutions and talk them over with someone else.
3. Think about the consequences of each solution, for yourself and for others.
4. Choose one solution that will work for you.
5. Evaluate the decision you make and see if it works.

Look back at your check marks. Are they usually in the same box? Do they change based on the kind of decision you are making? How do you make decisions?

- Quickly.
- With help from others and some careful planning.
- Slowly, never actually decide.
- By doing what others do.
- Not at all, let others decide for me.
- By reading my horoscope.

The five steps can help you slow down, think, and get help from others when you need to make an important decision. You might not need to use these steps to make a decision about what to wear to work or what to eat for breakfast each morning. However, they can help you make decisions about important questions:

- What kind of job and career should I prepare for?
- What schools/educational programs should I attend?
- What kind of friends do I want?
- How should I deal with alcohol and drugs?
- How can I keep myself healthy and strong?
- What do I want for myself as an adult?

Try the five step method to help solve these problems. First, look at the example below:

Decide Now:

I'm used to having someone else (like my DCF worker) make decisions for me. Now all of a sudden she's talking about having take part in planning for my own goals. She wants me to decide how many hours I can work after school and still get my school work done. I can't decide how many hours to work: two hours each day or five hours each day.

1. *Ask yourself what decision to make.* The decision is: Should I work two hours a day (ten hours per week) or five hours each day (25 hours per week)?
2. *List two or more alternative solutions.*
 - a. work two hours each day
 - b. work five hours each day
 - c. work two hours each day and few extra hours on the weekends.
3. *Think about what will happen when you make your choice.*
 - a. Work two hours each day

Pros:

- Get a little bit of extra money
- Still have time for school work and friends; school is important for better job in the future
- Build up job experience and recommendations
- Not too tiring

Cons:

- Not enough extra money
- Feel too wimpy -- not really working
- Hate school and want to get a real job
- I can handle more than two hours

b. Work five hours each day

Pros:

- More money -- can save for the future
- Maybe get a better job recommendation

Cons:

- Might be too tired at night
- No time for other things: school and friends
- If I flunk, then I might drop out

c. Work two hours each day and a few extra hours on weekends

Pros:

- Can get schoolwork done and still get some extra money
- Can work as much as I want on weekends
- Gives me time for friends during the week

Cons:

- Really cuts down on weekend social time with friends
- Might need to rest up on weekends

4. *Make your choice.* Which option would you choose in the example above?

Why? _____

5. *Evaluate.* Will your decision work? What do other people think of your decision? _____

Decide Now:

You have been saving for your senior prom which is next month. You have worked out a budget for the cost of tickets, flowers, car, etc., and have decided that you need \$300 in order to attend. You have \$302 left in your savings account from a DCF internship you did. On Friday, your friends ask you to go out for pizza and the movies with them. You really would like to go, but if you spend money on the movie and eating out you will not have enough for the prom. What would you do?

1. Ask: (*What decision has to be made?*) _____

2. List: (*2 or more different solutions*).

a: _____

b: _____

c: _____

3. Think: *(about the results of each for yourself and others).*

a: (positive): _____

(negative): _____

b: (positive): _____

(negative): _____

c: (positive): _____

(negative): _____

4. Choose: *(Make your decision here.)*

5: Evaluate: *(Do you think your decision will work out well? What do others think of your decision?)*





ACTIVITY

Think about the decisions you will make in the next few months (or years). Write down two important decisions in the designated space. Use the five step method to make your decisions. Discuss the outcome with your foster parent, social worker, outreach worker, staff, and/or family members.

Friends

Choose a decision that you need to make regarding friendship.

1. **Ask:** _____

2. **List:** _____

a. _____

b. _____

3. **Think:**

a. positive: _____

negative: _____

b. positive: _____

negative: _____

c. positive: _____

negative: _____

4. **Choose:** _____

5. **Evaluate:** _____



Jobs

Choose a decision that you need to make regarding employment.

1. **Ask:** _____

2. **List:** _____

a. _____

b. _____

3. **Think:**

a. positive: _____

negative: _____

b. positive: _____

negative: _____

c. positive: _____

negative: _____

4. **Choose:** _____

5. **Evaluate:** _____

Personal Health

Choose a decision that you need to make regarding your personal health.

1. **Ask:** _____

2. **List:** _____

a. _____

b. _____

3. **Think:**

a. positive: _____

negative: _____

b. positive: _____

negative: _____

c. positive: _____
negative: _____

4. **Choose:** _____

5. **Evaluate:** _____

Problem Solving

Problem solving is an important skill you use every day. In our lives we are constantly solving problems. The better you are at it, the less stressful your life will be.

Some problems are minor like how to get to school on time when you've missed the bus. As you take on the responsibilities of adulthood, you will have to make some very important decisions which will affect your future. You will also need to find solutions for new and unfamiliar problems. Although decision-making and problem-solving is not always easy, practice can make it easier.



ACTIVITY

Find solutions and make decisions about the following problems.

(1) You live in your own apartment. You come home from a birthday party at 11:30 p.m. Standing outside your door, you realize that you have lost your house keys. What would you do?

Possible Solution:	
Pros:	Cons:
Decision:	
Evaluation:	

(2) Your supervisor tells you that you are laid off. You think you have done a good job and worked hard for him. You need the job to pay for your rent and food. Also, you believe that you deserve an explanation. What would you do?

Possible Solution:	
Pros:	Cons:
Decision:	
Evaluation:	

(3) You are enjoying living alone in your own 1 bedroom apartment. Your rent, however, is \$950 a month, and even though you work full time the rent takes up a large portion of your income. One of the people you know from work has suggested that you move in with her to share expenses. She has a 2 bedroom apartment, and you would only have to pay \$550 in rent. However, you don't particularly like that person, and you are not sure if you could get along with her in that kind of living situation.

Possible Solution:	
Pros:	Cons:
Decision:	
Evaluation:	

(4) You are thinking about buying a car. A friend of yours has a 10 year old pick-up, with 150,000 miles on it, which he would sell to you for \$1,400. You have taken it to a mechanic who says the car is in good shape and should last you for at least two years. However, you also went to a car dealership and looked at new models. The salesman tried to convince you that you are able to afford a new car, paying \$1,000 down and \$250 a month for the next five years. You earn \$1300 a month and pay \$600 in rent. You have a few other expenses plus you know you will have additional expenses like gasoline and car insurance at \$140 per month. What would you do?

Possible Solution:	
Pros:	Cons:
Decision:	
Evaluation:	

Communication

Communication refers to the ability to exchange information and feelings. Have you ever heard the expression, “Say what you mean; mean what you say”? If we were all able to communicate clearly, there would be no misunderstandings between one another. Sometimes when we are frustrated or anxious, we aren’t able to express ourselves the way we would like. Often when we are angry or upset, we say things we don’t really mean and regret later that we said hurtful things to another person. All of us are used to communicating information, but many times we don’t think about how we communicate. Working to communicate in a comfortable and effective manner takes practice and is a vital step in building strong, healthy relationships.

A very positive way to communicate is to use “I messages”. “I messages” do not accuse or blame the person you are speaking to. They help build cooperation and respect in relationships. The speaker takes responsibility for his or her feelings, and speaks in a way that others will listen.

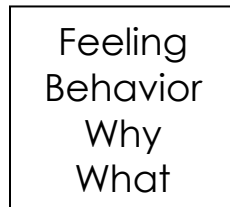
“You messages” interfere with effective communication. “You messages” blame and accuse the other person. They are much more likely to be met with resistance and a defensive response from the person you are speaking to. “You messages” will often shut down communication.

“I messages” take practice. Here’s how they work:

- **State the feeling or problem**
I feel really angry...
- **Describe the behavior**
...when you don’t clean up your dishes.

- **Because**
I don't think it is fair to the rest of the family.
- **Explain what you want**
I want you to be responsible for cleaning up after yourself.

The key is to remember the following:



ACTIVITY

Scenario 1:

Vanessa and Caroline have been dating for 4 months and are studying together for a test. Vanessa keeps texting a friend. It's really annoying and frustrating to Caroline. Finally, she says, "You are so inconsiderate! You are always annoying me. You are going to make me fail the test!"

Help Caroline communicate with Vanessa using "I messages".

Feeling: _____

Behavior: _____

Because: _____

What you want: _____

Scenario 2:

Jessica is waiting for Rakeem to pick her up for their date. He told her he'd be at her house by 7:00 pm, but as usual, it is 7:35 and he isn't there yet. He isn't answering his cell phone. It's frustrating to Jessica because she rushed through dinner with her foster family and was stressed in finishing her homework and getting ready to go out so she would be ready at 7:00 pm. Rakeem finally arrives at 7:45 and Jessica blurts out, "You are always so late! You never do what you say you'll do. You make me crazy!"

Help Jessica communicate with Rakeem using "I messages".

Feeling: _____
Behavior: _____
Because: _____
What you want: _____

Understanding Types of Communication

When we communicate with others, we may use one of four forms of communication: passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive, or assertive.

Passive Communication is a style in which individuals have developed a pattern of avoiding expressing their opinions or feelings, and as a result, fail to get their own needs met. Passive communication is usually due to low self-esteem. Rather than express themselves, passive communicators avoid confrontation at all costs, allowing anger and resentment to build. They usually speak softly and apologetically and often say “I’m sorry”, even when they are not at fault for the situation that has occurred.

Aggressive Communication is easy to identify. It is a style in which individuals express their feelings and opinions in a way that violates the rights of others. Thus, aggressive communicators are verbally abusive (and can become emotionally and physically abusive) in order to get their needs met. Aggressive communication is also due to low self-esteem. Aggressive communicators react quickly to situations they don’t like by criticizing and humiliating the other person and take control by dominating that person or situation.

Passive-Aggressive Communication is a style in which individuals appear passive and agreeable to others but are really angry or annoyed. People who are passive-aggressive communicators will seem pleasant, and even smile to others, but will then turn around and talk behind your back. They cannot deal with confrontation so instead, they express their anger and resentment by subtly undermining the other person.

In contrast, **Assertive Communication** is a healthy style in which individuals clearly state their opinions and feelings, and firmly advocate for their rights and needs without violating the rights of others. Assertive communication is born of high self-esteem. These individuals are confident, speak calmly and clearly, and are strong advocates for themselves while being very respectful of the rights of others. They listen to others and do not allow others to abuse or manipulate them.

Assertive communicators are individuals who feel connected to others, feel in control of their lives, and are able to mature because they address issues and problems as they arise. They create a respectful environment for others to grow and mature. Assertiveness allows us to take care of ourselves and is fundamental for good mental health and healthy relationships.



ACTIVITY

In the statements below, determine if each statement is assertive, passive, aggressive, or passive-aggressive.

1. _____ “You’re a fool if you think you can make the swim team.”
2. _____ “I think you will benefit more from trying the homework questions yourself than from copying my homework.”
3. _____ “I’m sorry. It’s probably my fault that you’re in a bad mood.”
4. _____ “I don’t think that we should be drinking a bottle of beer, but if we don’t tell anyone, hopefully our parents won’t catch us.”
5. _____ “If you don’t come to the party, I’ll tell everyone what a lame loser you are.”
6. _____ “I don’t want to see a movie; I would rather do something more active because I’ve been sitting all day.”

For the situation below, write a passive, an aggressive and an assertive response.

Your friends are trying to persuade you to have a party at your apartment on a weekend when your roommate is away. You know that your roommate wouldn’t want a party at the apartment.

The passive response: _____

The aggressive response: _____

The assertive response: _____

Discuss your responses with your foster parent, staff person, or trusted adult.



ACTIVITY

Consider the following:

Tina and Antonio have been dating for six weeks. They enjoy each other's company and get along well. Tonight they had planned a night out at the movies. They were supposed to meet at the theatre at seven o'clock. Tina arrived twenty minutes late, and Antonio is really aggravated.

ANTONIO: What on earth is the matter with you?

TINA: Antonio, I am. . .

ANTONIO: Don't even try making up excuses. I have been waiting here for twenty minutes!

TINA: Listen, please, I . . .

ANTONIO: The movie's been on now for at least fifteen minutes. It's too late to go in now. You have ruined the night!

TINA: Antonio, let me explain. I was. . .

ANTONIO: I hope you're happy. I really wanted to see that movie. I should have gone out with my friends!

TINA: Antonio, I'm really getting angry. Why won't you let me explain?

ANTONIO: You're getting angry? You don't have any right to be angry. You're the one who's late!

TINA: I don't have to stand here and listen to you yell at me. I'm going home. Don't ask me out again.

Tina turns around and leaves. Antonio is puzzled. He does not understand why Tina went home and doesn't want to see him again. All he wanted to do was to get his point across. He really likes her and wondered what went wrong.

What do you think went wrong?



How could Antonio have made his point in an assertive rather than an aggressive manner? Fill in Antonio's parts as well as Tina's responses in the exercise below.

ANTONIO:

TINA:

ANTONIO:

TINA:

ANTONIO:

TINA:

ANTONIO:

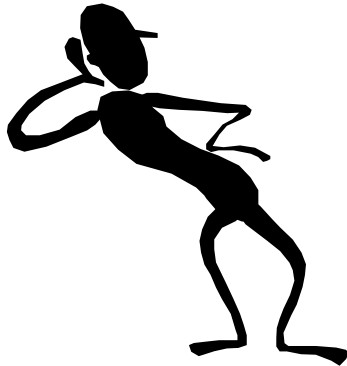
TINA:

Active Listening

One of the most frustrating experiences for any of us is to try to communicate with someone who doesn't know how to listen! Listening is one of the most important communication skills.

Often we put all of our focus on talking. We think if we could just explain something better, we could solve a problem. Have you ever tried to explain something—all in vain—because the other person wasn't listening to what you were saying?

The goal of communication is to try to understand the other person. Effective listening is a skill that can be learned with practice, it can become one of your best habits! Becoming a good listener will help you in every facet of your life.



Verbal vs. Non-verbal Communication

Communication can be divided into verbal and non-verbal expressions. So far, we have focused on the verbal means of communicating with others. However, **body language** is important as well. Non-verbal communication can consist of gestures, facial expressions,

eye contact, movements, posture, etc. Sometimes we can anticipate what the other person is going to say just by their body language.



ACTIVITY

Consider the following:

Gloria's boyfriend, Peter, sent her a text telling her that he wanted to talk to her about something. He asked Gloria to meet him at the library after school. Gloria and Peter had been dating for a few weeks and Gloria was all excited because she was certain Peter was going to ask her to the prom. She had hinted to Peter that she wanted to go to the prom and today was the last day to buy tickets. When she got to the library Peter was waiting outside, sitting on the steps looking down. When Peter looked up and saw Gloria, he didn't smile or get up to meet her like he usually did.

How do you think Gloria felt *before* she saw Peter?

How do you think she felt *after* she saw Peter and why do you think she felt that way?

What do you think Peter is going to tell Gloria?



ACTIVITY

Consider the following

Mr. Hill was interviewing applicants for a sales position in his retail store. The young man who had just finished his interview had made a good impression. Carl was neatly dressed in a suit and tie, had a firm handshake, and smiled often. Jason was the next candidate to be called in to his interview. Jason wore a tee shirt, sneakers, and cargo pants to his interview. As he shuffled into the interview room, he was surprised when Mr. Hill wanted to shake his hand. Jason hadn't shaken hands with too many people but he extended his hand anyway and gave Mr. Hill a loose handshake. Throughout the interview, Jason kept glancing at his watch.

What do you think Mr. Hill's first impression of Jason was?

What do you think Mr. Hill's first impression of Carl was?

Who do you think got the sales job and why?

Being aware of your own body language is an important part of good communication. Everyone should be aware of our body language to make sure it coincides with the words we speak. If it doesn't, we might be sending conflicting messages to others, and that can lead to serious misunderstandings in any relationship.

Can you think of a time when you sent mixed messages to someone because of your body language?

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict resolution is another term for solving or resolving differences. Good communication skills are necessary to resolve conflicts, whether the conflict is between two people or two nations. All of you have probably been in situations where you did not agree with others. In those situations, it is important to negotiate and, at times, even compromise.

What starts a conflict?

Although there are lots of different causes for conflicts, they usually stem from people's wants and needs. For example, maybe you want to lie around for a while on a Saturday morning but your foster mother needs your help her with chores. You want to watch one TV show and your sibling wants to watch another. When different needs or wants exist, conflict results. People can have disagreements without consequences because they agree to disagree. However, when one person, a group, or a nation believes they are right, serious conflict can occur.

Conflict Triggers

Needs and wants, hurt feelings, bad moods, and many other things can trigger conflict. What triggers your conflicts? Things people say? Looks they give? Unfairness? What role do your feelings play? One way you can help yourself handle conflicts better is to understand what annoys or upsets you. These are your triggers. Once you can identify your triggers, you can begin working on ways to avoid conflict.

Take this quick self-test to find out how you deal with conflict.



ACTIVITY

When I have a conflict...

- I try to calm down before I react.

- I do my best to avoid physical fighting.
- I believe I have more to gain by working things out.
- I listen to what the other person has to say.
- I try to see how I'm responsible instead of just blaming the other person.
- I look for ways to solve the problem rather than win the argument.
- I'm willing to compromise.
- I avoid using put-downs.
- I speak my truth, but I do it respectfully.
- I try to put myself in the other person's place instead of only focusing on my own stuff.

How many times did I answer yes?

- ✓ **Five or more?** If so, you're already a conflict solver a good part of the time. Keep at it! Also know that you'll become an even better conflict solver by working to turn your "no" answers into "yes" answers.
- ✓ **Fewer than five?** You're not there yet...but you can get there. Choose one new idea to try and do it until it starts to come more easily. Then choose another. Also continue doing whatever you said yes to.
- ✓ **If you answered yes to the third statement,** you've already made an important start. Being willing to work out conflicts is the first big step on the road to becoming a conflict solver.

Why do you think conflict resolution and negotiating is important in all relationships?

What skills/qualities do you think are important in resolving conflicts?

How do you usually deal with conflicts in a relationship?



How can good negotiation skills help you to be assertive and in control?



What could you do if anger interferes with your ability to solve a conflict?



Create your own example (story) which reflects good conflict resolution and negotiation skills.

MY EXAMPLE:



Peaceful Conflict Resolution

When people aren't willing to resolve their differences, blame becomes part of the conflict. No one takes responsibility and the conflict is never resolved. You can end up having the same conflict over and over again. The conflict can escalate into angry words that can then lead to shoving, hitting, or worse. When people aren't willing to work things out, they can find themselves in conflict all the time.

If you have difficulty working through conflict, consider the following exercise.



ACTIVITY

Take this quick test to see which obstacles could be getting in your way.

- I want to be “right” and show that the other person is “wrong”.
- I don't want to look weak.
- I feel like people will take advantage of me if I compromise.
- I don't like the other person.
- I'm afraid of looking stupid.
- I feel too angry to deal calmly with the situation.
- I want to take things out on the other person.
- I want to get even for something the other person said or did.
- I don't know how to change. Fighting is the only way I've ever dealt with conflict.

Do any of these statements apply to you? Don't be surprised if some do. We all experience one or more of these obstacles when conflicts arise, depending on the situation or person we're in conflict with. We don't have to let these barriers continue to stand in our way. Every one of us has the power to prevent conflicts from escalating. Somebody has to take that first step, and that somebody could be you. How you handle your conflicts at home, at the mall, in your neighborhood, and at school will make a difference as to whether the world will become a more peaceful place.

Consider Mediation

Mediation is a way of helping solve a disagreement. A mediator helps people work out the problem without getting in the middle of it. If you find yourself involved in a conflict with someone, and you don't know how to resolve it, you should consider mediation. In school, a guidance counselor or teacher can mediate. Maybe your school has a *peer*

mediation program where kids are trained to help other kids resolve their conflicts. You can always talk with your social worker or a trusted adult to help you resolve an issue.

Peaceful Conflict Resolution Resources

There are many resources on peaceful conflict resolution, both on the internet and in the library. Here are a few to get you started:

Peace Learning Center
Indianapolis, IN
317.327.7144
www.peacelearningcenter.org

School Mediation Associates
Watertown, MA
617.926.0994
www.schoolmediation.com

The Kids' Guide to Working Out Conflicts: How to Keep Cool, Stay Safe, and Get Along. By Naomi Drew, M.A. Free Spirit Press. Minneapolis, MN 2004



Relationships

Throughout our lives, we all depend on social interactions with others. During adolescence, friendships, dating, and relationships are an important part of life for most. Our experiences with friends and relationships can influence us greatly. Positive interactions with others help us feel good about ourselves, while bad experiences might have a negative impact on our sense of self-worth. Interacting positively with others and building healthy relationships might not always be easy, both require many skills. In the following section we will build on the skills we have discussed in the previous exercises to work on the social skills necessary to develop positive friendships and relationships.

Healthy Relationships

Healthy relationships are fun and make you feel good about yourself. You can have a healthy relationship with anyone in your life, including your family, friends and dating partners. Relationships take time, energy, and care to make them healthy. The relationships that you make in your teen years will be a special part of your life and will teach you some of the most important lessons about who you are. This section was included to help you understand different kinds of relationships, what makes each relationship special, and how to communicate in a positive way. Here the focus is on non-romantic relationships. These relationships are important because they can often last a lifetime and can give you a sense of permanency, knowing that you have a strong support system that you can rely on in times of difficulty.

What makes a relationship *healthy*?

Communication and sharing are two of the important qualities of any healthy relationship between two people. It allows them to be able to talk and listen to one another. You and the other person can figure out what your common interests are. You can share your feelings with the other person and trust that they will be there to listen and support you. In healthy relationships, people don't lie. Communication is based on honesty, respect, and trust. By listening carefully and sharing your thoughts and feelings with another person, you show them that they are an important part of your life.

Disagreements may still happen, but you learn to stay respectful and talk about how you feel. In healthy relationships, working through disagreements often makes the relationship stronger because people respect each other for who they are.

How do I know that I have a healthy relationship with someone?

You know that you are in a healthy relationship with someone because you feel good about yourself when you are around that person, and you like spending time with them. Healthy peer relationships involve an equal amount of give and take in the relationship. You should feel safe around the other person and feel that you can trust him or her with your secrets. Healthy relationships include trust and respect, which are very important

parts of a family relationship, good friendship, or dating relationship. By learning how to build healthy relationships now, you will be able to have healthy relationships with the people you meet throughout your life.

If you don't feel that there is communication and trust, you are probably in an unhealthy relationship. You may want to try talking to the other person about how you are feeling. Unhealthy relationships can make you feel sad, angry, worried, or even scared. If you decide that you need to end a relationship, you may want to talk to a trusted adult for advice about what would be the best way to do that.

Real Life: Family

"My foster sister is so annoying! She is driving me crazy!"



Your siblings, whether they are biological or foster, can upset you sometimes. They can do this even when you don't live under the same roof. You may get angry if they take something that is yours, go into your room, or bother you when you have friends over. Older siblings may try to boss you around and tell you what to do. Younger siblings may borrow your things or want to be around you all the time.

When you argue with your friends, you can go home and get away from them. When you argue with a sibling that lives with you, they are in your living space and you may feel like you can't get away from them. **Talking things out and coming up with rules that you and your siblings agree on will make living together a lot easier.**

Here are some ways to handle an argument and help you to avoid fighting with your siblings:

- **Go for a walk or go to separate rooms in the house,** before you lose your temper in an argument.
- **Talk to your parents or foster parents about what is bothering you.**

- **Set up your own personal space.** Even if you share a bedroom, make a little space (even in a corner of your room) that is all yours. Tell your brother or sister that they need to knock before coming into your bedroom or your special area of a shared bedroom.
- **Respect your brother or sister's personal space, too.** Whether it is their room or a part of your shared bedroom, they will be more likely to show you the same respect in return.
- **Pick your battles.** Try to figure out what is really bothering you. This will help you know if the problem is worth arguing about. Some issues may be more important than others.

Consider the following.

Shari and her foster sister, Gina, fight all the time. Shari is angry with Gina because she barges into her room and takes her things without asking. Gina complains that Shari yells too much and spends all of her time on the phone.

How would you feel if you were Shari, and what would you do to get along with Gina?

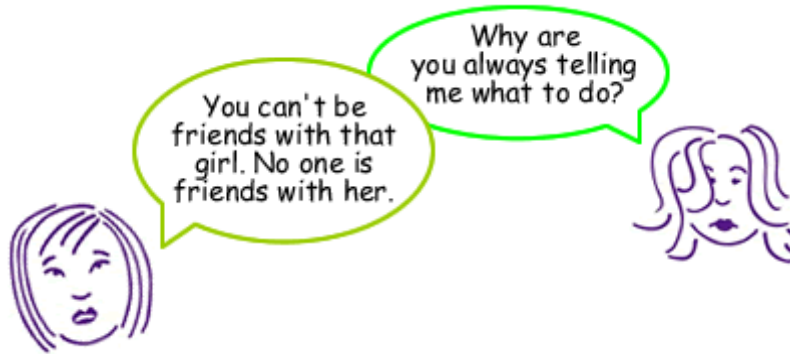


How would you feel if you were Gina, and what would you do to get along better with Shari?



Real Life: Friends

"Why should I do what YOU say?"



Friendships can be complicated at this time in your life. You may be making new friends while you are trying to keep old friends. One thing that can make any relationship complicated is peer pressure. Peer pressure is when you choose to do something you usually *wouldn't* do, or you stop doing something that you normally *would* do because you are worried about what your friends will think. Some friends may pressure you to do something because "everyone else does it," such as making fun of someone. One of the biggest challenges that you may have to face is standing up to a friend.

Here are tips to help you handle a disagreement with a friend:

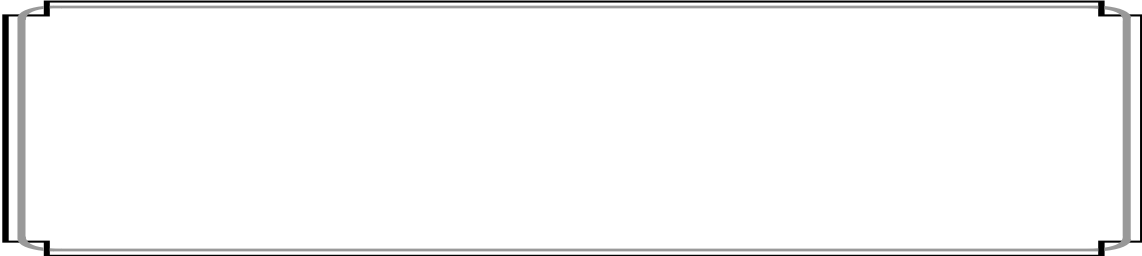
- **In a healthy friendship, you should not be afraid of losing a friend because you say "no".** Good friends should respect your right to say no about anything and not give you a hard time. It is important that you show your friend the same respect when he or she says no to you.
- **If you and your friend have a disagreement or an argument, it doesn't mean that you have an unhealthy relationship.** You will not always agree with what your friend has to say. As long as you and your friend can talk to one another and listen to what each person has to say, you should be able to work through a disagreement. Healthy friendships involve trust and being able to respect each other's differences.
- **The friends that you make and the relationships you develop will help you learn a lot about yourself.** Your friendships may be the most important thing to you right now. Through these friendships, you will learn what qualities you value in friendship as well as the kind of friend you want to be to others.

Consider the following.

Abby and Maria have been friends for a long time. Abby has been upset because Maria always decides where they are going and what they are going to do. Maria also tells Abby

who she can be friends with. Abby is beginning to feel a lot of pressure to do what Maria tells her to do.

If you were Abby, how would you feel and what could she do to feel better about her friendship with Maria?



Why do you think Maria acts the way she does?

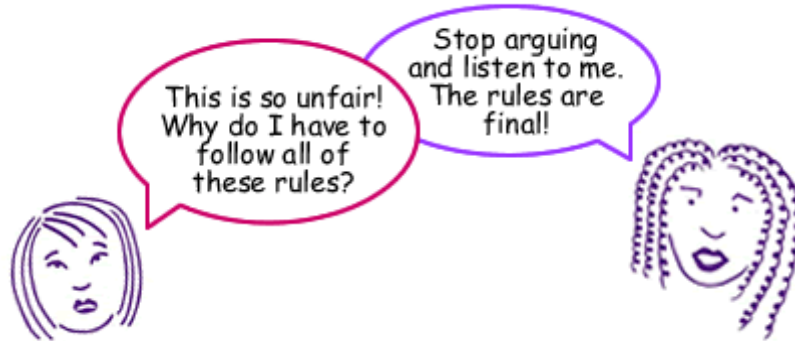


Do you think Maria and Abby have a healthy relationship? Why or why not?



Real Life:

"I hate these stupid rules!"



Your relationship with your parents/foster parents /guardians may be confusing at times. This is true of almost every adolescent in whatever home environment they have. As you are maturing and changing, you have more responsibilities and also more freedom to spend time with other people like friends or dating partners. While you may feel ready to make your own decisions about where and when you go to places, your parents/foster parents/guardians will put limits on you. The reason that they do this is because they care about you and want to keep you safe.

Normal tension between adolescents and parenting adults exist and can put stress on the relationships. **Here are some tips for how to avoid and handle disagreements with your parents, foster parents or guardians:**

- **Discuss the rules ahead of time** and not at the last minute. This way you will be able to tell what they might say “yes” or “no” to before you make plans. Talk with them. They can explain to you why each rule is in place, and you can let them know your feelings about the rules. This exchange of ideas may help you both understand the other’s perspective.
- **Try to remain calm** and do not lose your temper when your parent/foster parents say “no” to something. You will show them that you are responsible and mature by talking instead of yelling and listening to what they have to say.
- **Follow each rule that they set.** If your parent/foster parents tell you to be home at a certain time, stick to it. They will worry about your safety if you are late. By being responsible and by following rules, they may be willing to negotiate at a later time in the future, especially if they know that you will follow their rules.
- **Pick your battles.** Try to figure out what issues are really important to you. Some issues may be more important than others. If there is a rule you would like changed, try talking to your parents/foster parents. If you are respectful when you present your argument, you may be able to negotiate a change. You might even suggest a trial period which will give you the opportunity to show that you will be

responsible and won't abuse your new privilege. Remember all healthy relationships require good communication.

Consider the following.

Colby has been arguing with her parents/foster parents a lot lately. Colby just turned 17, and she feels that many of the rules/curfews are now unfair.

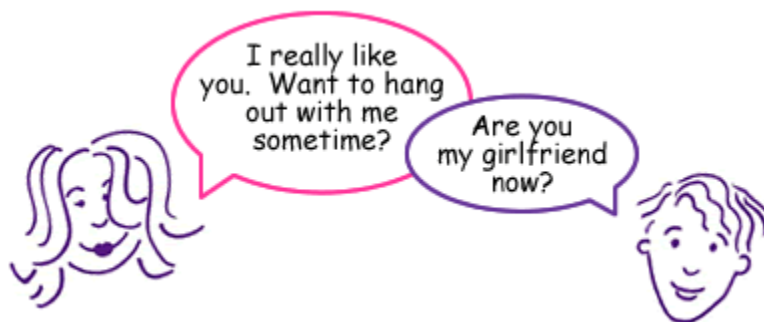
If you were Colby and felt the rules in your home were unfair, what would you do?

What do you think the parents/foster parents should do to address Colby's concerns?



Remember that healthy relationships are about feeling good about who YOU are and feeling SAFE with another person. By getting to know yourself, it will get easier to recognize the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships. Communication, trust and respect are the key ingredients for healthy relationships, and that is especially true with dating relationships.

Real Life: Dating



There is no best age for teens to begin dating. Every person will be ready for a dating relationship at a different time. Different families may have certain rules about dating, too. When you decide to start a new dating relationship, it should be because you care about someone and not because you feel like you have to have a boyfriend or girlfriend. A dating relationship is a special chance to get to know someone, spend time together and share your thoughts and feelings with each other.

Healthy dating relationships should start with the same ingredients that healthy friendships have, such as good communication, honesty, and respect. Dating relationships are a little different because they may include physical affection. As with all relationships, it may be tempting at first for you to spend all of your time with your new partner. However, making special time to spend together and apart means that you will be able to work on having a healthy relationship with the person you are dating without causing conflict with other people in your life, like your friends and family.

You should NEVER feel pressured to do something that you don't want to do. Your partner should always respect your right to say "no" to anything that makes you feel uncomfortable. It is important that you are both clear with each other about your values and your limits. By talking about how each of you feel about a lot of things, you may avoid getting into situations where you are pressured into making a decision on the spot about something very important.

Here are some tips for starting a healthy dating relationship and ways to stay safe:

- **Get to know a person** by talking on the phone or at school before you go out with them for the first time.
- **Go out with a group of friends to a public place** the first few times you are spending time together.
- **Plan fun activities** like going to the movies, a picnic, the mall, a walk, etc.
- **Be clear with the other person** about what you feel comfortable doing and what time your parent(s) or guardian(s) expect you to be home.
- **Tell at least one friend and especially your parents/foster parent or guardian** where you are going, who you will be with, and how to reach you.

Dating relationships can be a fun and exciting part of your life now. They may be a little confusing, especially if dating is new to you. Once you know that the person that you like, likes you, too, you may be unsure of what to do next. You can start by learning about what makes a dating relationship healthy. The most important thing to remember is staying safe, especially when you begin to date.



ACTIVITY

Anna and Jamal like each other. They met a few weeks ago at a party. They want to get to know each other but don't know what to do next. What should they do?

Describe what is important to you in a dating relationship. Are the qualities you look for in a friend the same ones you value in a person you would date? Why or why not?

One way to shield ourselves against negative experiences is to live by our positive values and expectations.

Consider the following:

Emily is a junior in high school. Josh, a senior and the captain of the football team, asks her out on a date. Emily is not sure what to do. She knows that Josh is fooling around a lot and has heard him bragging to his friends about having had sex with many girls. Her best friend fell for him and has been hurting since Josh broke up with her after only four dates. On the other hand, Emily thinks that Josh is very attractive and it would be pretty cool to be seen with such a popular guy. Emily hopes that he really likes her and wonders if things might be different for her.

How would personal values help Emily make a decision?

Activity:

Find two endings to Emily's story using the two different set of values below.

Values:

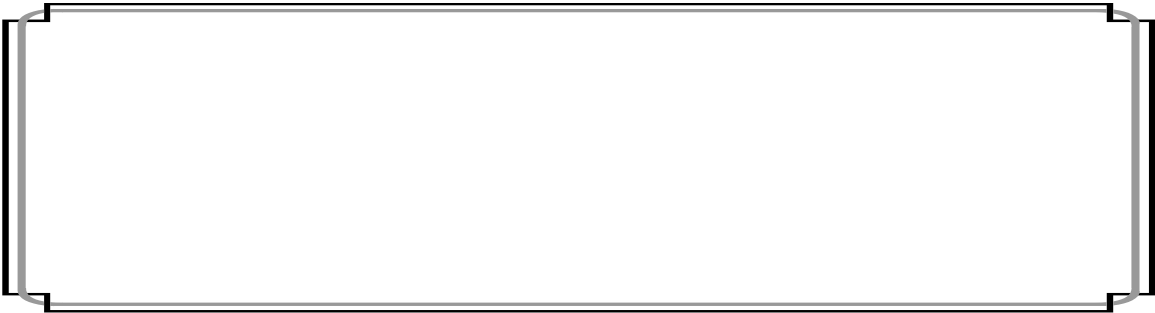
- Enjoys hanging out with the popular crowd
- Starts dating right away
- Dates anyone who asks her
- Lets others set limits

End of The Story:

Values II

- Trust
- Getting to know someone before dating
- Long-lasting relationships
- Set limits and expectations
- Values friendship

End of The Story:



Which of your two endings do you think is best for Emily and why?



How would you handle a situation like Emily's?



Values also help determine the quality of friendships and relationships.

Consider the following:

Chandra and Isaac have been dating for a while and getting along pretty well. Lately, however, Isaac has been having a difficult time. He has a lot of personal problems and is having trouble in school. He wants to talk to Chandra about it, but she tells him that she doesn't want to deal with problems. She just wants to have fun times like they used to.

Do you think that Chandra and Isaac have different values? Describe.



Do you think Chandra and Isaac will continue dating? What would Chandra need to do for the relationship to continue?



Consider the following:

Aaron and Melanie have been going out for several months. Melanie never really thought about it before now but thinks that she might be in love with Aaron. Aaron believes that he loves Melanie, and he hates the thought of her liking someone else. He is often jealous and always wants Melanie to tell him exactly where she is or what she is doing. For the past few weeks, Aaron has been asking her to call and get his permission before she goes anywhere. When Melanie tries to explain to him that he should trust her, he tells her that if she really loved him she would do what he wants. Melanie does not like to be controlled and kept from her friends but is beginning think that love means you have to give up everything for the other person.

Consider:

What are Aaron and Melanie's values or concepts about love?



Do you agree with their values/concepts? Why or why not?



What do you think might happen in their relationship?



Love

For the purposes of this section we are talking about romantic love. Romantic love is an intense physical attraction toward another person. However, romantic love is far from simple. The intense attraction that you feel toward another person may make you feel excited, energized, nervous, depressed or even obsessed.

Love seems to be the center of much of our society's attention. We hear love songs on the radio, watch movies about happy or unhappy love, and every so often, we'll hear the people around us talking about being in love. Love seems to have great power and influence over us. Myths and stories about many different kinds of love go back thousands of years. What, in actuality, is love?

What is your definition of love?



What is the difference between friendship and love?

What is the difference between dating and love?

How would you know if you were in love?



How do you know if it is love or just a physical attraction?

Figuring out the difference can be difficult because intense physical feelings are hard to separate from intense emotions. Love includes feelings of contentment, affection, attraction, and understanding. It involves a connection and concern for each other as well as an appreciation of each other. Mature adult love may also include commitment and a desire to build a lasting partnership.

For adolescents, love is often about being with someone you're attracted to. Attraction has more to do with sexual drive. At this time in your life, your body is humming with hormones that come with developing into adulthood. These hormones create sexual feelings. Sexual feelings lead to sexual thoughts. These feelings are normal and so are the thoughts.

Just because you have sexual thoughts and feelings toward someone doesn't mean you need to act on them. You can express these feelings through fantasies, writing, music, or art, and you can redirect sexual energy through sports, exercise, dance or drama. All of these are safe ways to lessen your sexual drive.

Remember that while you may have sexual feelings for someone you love, don't assume that you "love" everyone you're sexually attracted to.

What qualities are most important to you in a loving relationship?



Just as in friendly relationships, your values in regard to love are important. All too often, we engage in relationships we expect to be loving ones but they turn out differently. Many of us probably dream about the perfect love and are convinced that, magically, the right person will come along and we'll live happily ever after.

The truth is that we are rarely able to live out a "fairy tale" love. A love relationship takes a lot of work and commitment by everyone involved. If we approach love with

unrealistic expectations, we're likely to be disappointed, less caring, and perhaps miss out on something special.

Consider the following:

Susie is having lunch with her friends at school. She points out the girl at another table that Susie thinks is really cute. Although she has never spoken to her, she tells her friends that she is "so much in love with her!"

Can Susie really be "in love" with her? Why or why not?

Although we might be attracted to someone as soon as we meet him/her, love develops over time. The term "falling in love" implies that we don't have any control over who we have loving feelings for. It's actually a misleading expression. Similar to our choices in friendships, we can control who we fall in love with and influence the quality of a relationship to a certain extent.



ACTIVITY

Things To Think About

Loving relationships are often defined as "partnerships." Why do you think that is so?

Do you think the personal skills (communication, decision-making, and conflict resolution) important to good friendships and general relationships are also important in loving relationships? Why or why not?

What do people mean when they say things like “Love is giving and receiving?”

What do you think is important in a loving relationship?

Decision-making in Relationships

So far we’ve talked about relationships and we’ve talked about decision-making with friends and family. In this section we are going to discuss decision-making in romantic relationships. Two of the biggest topics are deciding to have sex and how to say no to sex.

Adolescence is a time of sexual awakening. During your teen years, you will discover in yourself a whole new range of sexual interests, feelings, and urges due to the maturation of the sexual and reproductive systems in your body. You will become aware of your own sexual orientation which most psychologists agree has been set since the age of five or six, and you will experience sexual attraction based on that orientation. The issues of relationships and sexuality are very complex. They not only include your physical development, but your personal skills, cultural issues, and expectations as well. You will face important decisions about relationships and intimacy which will have a great impact on the rest of your life. You have to be prepared to make them!

Making the right decisions and choices may prevent you from getting hurt, engaging in unhealthy or destructive relationships, an unwanted pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases. Many of you probably struggle with your own identity and expectations in regard to relationships and sexuality. Some of you might have made some poor choices. However, there are many skills to make good decisions which promote healthy relationships that can be learned and will be addressed in the following section.

MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

Knowledge about yourself and your personal skills in regard to relationships and love form the foundation to develop a healthy sexuality. Unfortunately, the term “sexuality” is often misunderstood as “sleeping with someone.” Like relationships in general, the issue of sexuality is not about having sex. Sexuality includes how we deal with our sexual feelings and the decisions and boundaries that we make. It involves respect, communication, and the many ways we can give and receive love. Sex is glorified through the media, through movies and television, and we encounter many messages about sex throughout the day whether we like it or not.

Following are some common myths and misconceptions about sex:

- ***Love equals sex.*** All too often people think that love and sex are interchangeable when they are really two different notions. It is possible to have a healthy sexuality, love someone, and not sleep together. Contrary to popular belief, many teens are not sexually active.
- ***Everyone is having sex and it really isn't a big deal.*** A recent study shows that more and more teens decide to wait to have sex until they are older or get married. Sex is a complex and intimate step to take, one which requires not only physical maturity but emotional and mental maturity as well.
- ***Sex is always a wonderful and pleasurable experience.*** The truth is that often, particularly if you are not ready, it is not pleasurable and you will end up getting hurt. Making the right decisions about sex is more important than ever, not only to protect you from a negative experience or an unwanted pregnancy but also from dangerous sexually transmitted diseases.
- ***Having sex will help to keep someone in a relationship.*** The reality is that if a relationship is not working without sex, it won't work with it. Sex has so many complex implications that it can be disastrous for a relationship that isn't on solid ground.
- ***Some people can become closer and find love through sex.*** The act of sex itself will not provide anyone with the love they are looking for.
- ***People have to live up to their partner's expectations.*** Some people might believe that if their boyfriend or girlfriend is ready to have sex, they should be ready as well. The only expectation you have to live up to is your own!
- ***Kissing and fondling inevitably leads to sex.*** Sex is never inevitable. It is a choice. We all set our own boundaries as to how far we're willing to go and what we can handle emotionally. It is important that both partners respect those boundaries.



ACTIVITY

With these misconceptions in mind, think back to the personal skills discussed in the previous section. Utilize your values, communication techniques, and conflict resolution skills to work on the following exercises.

1. Austin and Julie have been going out for almost three months. One evening they are alone at home and start to kiss. Austin tells Julie how much he loves her and that he wants to have sex with her. Julie tells him that she likes him a lot, but she is not sure if she is ready to have sex. She feels that they haven't known each other long enough and thinks that she is too young to engage in a sexual relationship. Austin tells Julie that being in love means that two people sleep together, and if she really liked him as much as she said she did, she would sleep with him.

- What is Austin's misconception?

- What advice would you give to Julie?

- What could Julie say to Austin?

JULIE:

AUSTIN:

JULIE:

AUSTIN:

It works the other way around, too!

2. Aaron could not believe that Jeanette would ask him out. He is the envy of every other boy in school! They are on their second date. Jeanette asked Aaron to sleep with her tonight, but he said "no." She got angry and told him that everyone is having sex and it won't be a big deal. If he wouldn't have sex with her, someone else would. Now Aaron is afraid that Jeanette will never ask him out again. He thinks he might have made a mistake.

- What is Jeanette’s misconception? _____
- What advice would you give Aaron? _____
- Does it seem funny that a girl asks a boy to sleep with her? Why or why not?

- What could Aaron say to Jeanette?

Aaron:

Jeanette:

Aaron:

Jeanette:

3. Anthony and Brenda have been going out for four months. Although initially they had a good relationship, they’ve been fighting lately and spending less time together. Tonight they met at the park and Anthony told Brenda that he thinks they should break up. Brenda doesn’t want to lose him. They haven’t slept together before, but Brenda is debating whether or not to ask him to have sex with her. She figures that way she might not lose him and maybe they would feel close and love each other again.

- What is Brenda’s misconception? _____
- What advice would you give her? _____
- How could Brenda let Anthony know how she feels by doing something other than by sleeping with him?

Brenda:

Anthony:

Brenda:

Anthony:

4. Zachary and Christine have been going out for two weeks. On Saturday, they drive to the beach and start to kiss and touch each other. When Christine tells Zachary to stop, Zach gets angry and tells Christine that she has led him on and that now she has to go through with it.

- What is Zachary’s misconception? _____
- What advice would you give Christine? _____
- What could Christine say to Zach?

Christine:

Zach:

Christine:

Zach:

Remember that the decision whether or not to have sex is a very personal one and should not be based on circumstance. Only you can decide whether you are ready. **You can say no at any time! Nobody should be pressured into any kind of sexual relationship.**

Things to Consider Before Having Sex.....

People have sex for many different reasons...to feel pleasure, to feel closer to their partner, to take what may be the next step in their relationship. People use the word sex to mean lots of different activities that can happen between a woman and a man, a man and a man, and a woman and a woman. The decision to start having sex is a very personal one that may involve a lot of thought by both you and your partner. There is no “right” time to start having sex...the right time is when you feel ready and safe. The right time is different for everyone.

Some things to consider before you have sex.

- Who and what influences how you think and feel about sex?
- What values do you have about sex?
- Who can you talk to about the decision to have sex?
- Do you feel you need to be in a relationship before you have sex?
- Do you understand the risk of pregnancy or STDs?
- Is there someone you would feel comfortable talking to after you have sex if it doesn't work out as you expected?

The answers to these questions are different for everybody and there are no right or wrong answers to any of them. Your views might even change over time depending on your situation or partner. But remember, whether you're ready to have sex or not, is a question that only you can answer. If you want to talk with someone about this decision, speak with a trusted adult in your life, or call the Sexual Health Helpline at 1-877-627-3933 and speak with a counselor.



Violence in Relationships

Relationship violence is emotional, verbal, physical, or sexual abuse that happens between people who have had a dating, intimate/sexual, or family relationship now or at any time in the past. It can happen in both gay and straight relationships. It can happen to people in long-term relationships or with people who only casually date. It can include people who live together and people who don't.

Some people think that relationship violence can only happen to adults if they're married or living together, but it can happen to anyone no matter what age. If someone does something to control you, put you down, or hurt you, it's violence and it's not okay. When violence occurs between people who live together, it is called **domestic violence**. Relationship violence is considered a type of domestic violence; all the laws that apply to and protect adults also apply to adolescents as well.

A lot of people do not report this abuse for a lot of different reasons. Even if it isn't reported, it's against the law. People being hurt or controlled in a relationship have a right to ask for help.

The first step in stopping abuse is being able to identify it!



ACTIVITY

Would you know if you're being abused by someone? Here are some questions to help you find out. Please answer "Yes" or "No".

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Do you feel confused about your safety in your relationship with your boyfriend or girlfriend?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does he or she pressure you to do things that don't feel comfortable to you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your boyfriend or girlfriend extremely jealous or possessive?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does he or she try to run your life?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does he or she threaten you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your boyfriend or girlfriend assume he or she knows what's best for you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Does he or she make decisions that affect you without talking to you first? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are your friends concerned about your safety? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are you afraid of your boyfriend or girlfriend? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your boyfriend or girlfriend try to keep you from your friends or family? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have you been threatened or actually hit by your boyfriend or girlfriend? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your girlfriend or boyfriend text message or call you constantly and want to know where you are at all times? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you've answered "Yes" to any of these questions, you are at risk. Don't allow it to continue! There are many people who can help you. Ask your trusted adult to help you get in touch with someone who can help you change your situation.

Below are some examples of relationship abuse.

- **Physical abuse** includes pinching, hitting, pulling hair, slapping or anything that hurts your body.
- **Verbal abuse** includes name-calling, insults, and purposefully saying things in front of other people that hurt or embarrass you.
- **Controlling behavior** like saying what you can or can't wear, being extremely jealous or possessive, keeping you away from your friends or family, controlling who you see or what you do is abuse. Texting you constantly to find out where you are, what you're doing, and who you're with is abusive behavior. Early in a relationship this kind of attention can be perceived as romantic. Persistently demanding to know where you are and who you are with is not romantic, it is abuse. Everyone has the right to do what they want, whenever they want, and with whom without someone else becoming angry or abusive.
- **Sexual assault** includes touching you in places where you don't want to be touched, not listening when you say "no" or "stop" to sex, or forcing you to do sexual things that you do not want to do.
- **Emotional abuse** such as threatening to kill you or your family members, friends or pets, threatening to commit suicide, saying that the abuse is your fault, or simply denying that abuse is happening are all forms of emotional abuse.

Relationship violence can be really intense and sometimes it's hard to see that you're in a violent or controlling situation. It can be especially difficult if you truly love or have feelings for the other person. **The best person to keep you safe is YOU.** If you think you might be in an abusive relationship, try talking to a close friend or family member

that you trust – someone who can be there for you if you need his or her support. If you feel like you have nobody to talk to, there are resources that can help.

If you or someone you know is dealing with violence in a relationship, call Massachusetts' Safe Link at **1-877-785-2020**. TTY callers, dial **1-877-521-2601**. You can also call the National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline at **1-866-331-9474**.

Resources

See it and Stop It – Teen dating violence

www.seeitandstopit.org

Safe Link Domestic Violence Hotline

Casa Myrna Vazquez

877.785.2020

Llámanos

Domestic Violence Hotline (Spanish-speaking)

800.223.5001

National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline

866.331.9474

Jane Doe, Inc.

The Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence

www.janedoe.org

Are you being abusive?

It's hard to admit that you're being abusive. Some people don't know what they're doing can be considered abuse, or don't know how to stop. If you think you're being abusive to another person, help is available. Contact the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Batterer Invention Services Program at www.mass.gov/dph or call 617.624.5497.

If you are concerned that your behavior may be abusive, ask yourself the following questions.

Does your boyfriend or girlfriend seem afraid of you sometimes?

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Have you been jealous or possessive of your boyfriend or girlfriend? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you criticize him or her or call him or her names when s/he disagrees with you? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Can your boyfriend or girlfriend get angry with you without you becoming angrier? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you sometimes yell or swear when you are upset at your boyfriend or girlfriend? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have you put your boyfriend or girlfriend down in front of your other friends? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Has your boyfriend or girlfriend said that you're trying to control him or her? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are you afraid you might be violent toward your boyfriend or girlfriend some day? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have you driven your boyfriend or girlfriend away with your anger? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you've answered "Yes" to any of these questions, you need to seek help. There are many people who can help you. Instead of feeling helpless or taking out your anger on others, **do something about your problem**. Ask your trusted adult to help you get in touch with someone who can help you change this behavior!

It may be shocking to learn how often extreme cases of domestic violence can end in death. According to the American Psychology Association, more than 3 women each day are murdered by their male partner in the United States. If you or someone else that you know is a victim of violence in a relationship, it may be hard to ask someone for help, but getting support is one of the best things you can do for yourself.

Resources

U.S. National Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-799-7233

Mass Batterers Intervention Programs
www.massresources.org/batterer-intervention-html

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is emotional, verbal, physical, or sexual abuse that happens between people who have had a dating, sexual, or family relationship now or at any time in the past. It usually refers to situations where the partners are living together or married and can also be referred to as intimate partner abuse. Domestic violence can happen to anyone regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or income.

According to national statistics, in the United States 1 in 3 women who are victims of homicide are murdered by their current or former male partner. The following are other statistics you should be aware of.

- One in 4 women will experience domestic violence during their lifetime.
- Women experience more than 4 million physical assaults or rapes by their partner each year, while men are victims of nearly 3 million physical assaults.
- Women ages 20-24 are at the greatest risk for domestic violence.
- Women are more likely to be killed by their partners than men.
- Victims are most at risk when they try to leave the relationship.
- Every year more than 3 million children witness domestic violence in their home.
- According to the U.S. Department of Housing, domestic violence is the leading cause of homelessness among families.

The Cycle of Violence

Sometimes it's hard to realize or admit that you're in a violent or controlling situation. If you think you might be, understanding the cycle of violence may help you identify your risk. The 'Three Phases of Violence' was adapted from Safe Horizon, a national organization committed to preventing and assisting victims of domestic abuse.

- **Phase I: Tension Building** – The first phase of the violence cycle is tension building. During this cycle, the abuser becomes more and more anxious, moody, demanding, and may bully the victim. Isolating the victim from his or her family and friends, and controlling the victim's behavior occur during this phase of the cycle. As the abuser's anxiety escalates, the victim may also become anxious, anticipating the violence that is likely to occur. Some victims have stated that they will intentionally provoke the abuser in order to relieve the tension and get the abuse over with.
- **Phase II: Battering** – In the second phase of abuse the violence occurs. This can involve physical violence, sexual assault, as well as extreme emotional violence. The abuser will often falsely accuse the victim of inappropriate behavior to justify the attack. The abuser may threaten to kill the victim or himself if he or she tries to leave the relationship. In fact, victims are most at risk when they try to leave, which is why most victims stay as long as they do.

- **Phase III: The Honeymoon** – This phase is called the honeymoon period because the abuser becomes thoughtful and even affectionate. They are remorseful and apologize for their behavior. They may bring the victim flowers or other gifts, and promise that the abuse will never happen again. The honeymoon phase is another reason that victims often don't leave. This phase reminds the victim that the relationship can be good at times, and they believe the abuser's promises that the abuse will never occur again. As the violence escalates and becomes more frequent, the time between phases become shorter in duration, and the situation becomes more dangerous for the victim. It is at this point that some victims choose to leave.

Making a safety plan

If you think you are in an abusive relationship, you should establish a safety plan that you can rely on if you find yourself in danger. Speak to a counselor, a trusted adult or friend who understands your situation and can help you develop a plan.

- Memorize the phone numbers you may need in an emergency. Besides 911, know the numbers of people or hotlines that can help you. You may not be able to take your cell phone with you so you need to memorize the numbers you will need to keep yourself safe. Know the location of hospitals, police departments, or other facilities that are open 24 hours a day so you will have a safe place to go.
- Plan how you will escape if you need to leave the house in a hurry. Where will you go? Will you have transportation? Will your abuser know where you are or are you confident he or she won't be able to find you?
- If you have children, make sure they know how to call 911 or know a safe place to go such as a neighbor's house.
- If possible, pack an emergency bag ahead of time. Include money, keys, identification, medication and any other items you may need. Go to the Safe Horizon website @ www.safehorizon.org to see a full list of items to pack in an emergency bag.

Once you leave you should consider going to court and taking out an order of protection or restraining order. That would make it against the law for your abuser to have any contact with you and it should give you protection against further abuse.

If you suspect that you are experiencing domestic violence or any other kind of violence, remember:

- You are not alone.
- You are not to blame.
- You do not deserve to be abused.
- You have rights.
- You can get help.

You should talk to a close friend or family member that you trust – someone who can be there for you if you need their support. It may be hard to ask someone for help, but getting support is one of the best things you can do for yourself. If you feel like you have nobody to talk to, there are resources and organizations that can help.

Resources

Safe Horizon

www.safehorizon.org

1-800-621-4673 (HOPE)

Safe Link Domestic Violence Hotline

Casa Myrna Vazquez

877.785.2020

Llámanos

Domestic Violence Hotline (Spanish-speaking)

800.223.5001

Jane Doe, Inc.

The Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence

www.janedoe.org

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)

What is CSEC?

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) is a form of child abuse that occurs when children are forced or coerced into engaging in commercial sexual acts by exploiters or pimps. It is sexual abuse and remuneration in money, goods, or services, or the promise of money, goods, or services to the child or a third person or persons. It's defined by an element of organization and/or intent, and/or the context of the commercial sex industry. The child is treated as a commercial and sexual object. CSEC is a crime and sadly, CSEC takes place at rates higher than most people realize.

Exploiters and pimps target vulnerable youth, many of whom have histories of abuse and neglect. Children who run away from home frequently fall prey to the lure of love and security falsely promised by exploiters or pimps. A strong sense of loyalty to the exploiter or pimp and intense fear of violence often blinds the child from seeing themselves as a victim and prevents them from seeking help. Information was received by *Roxbury Youthworks, Inc.*

Resources

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

1-800-843-5678

National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC)

24 hour hotline

1-888-373-7888

Reporting suspected human trafficking

1-866-347-2423

Mentoring Agencies for survivors and prevention

Roxbury Youthworks (GIFT and BUILD)

617-427-8095

JRI My Life, My Choice

617-779-2179

Sexual Assault

Sexual assault is any sexual activity you don't want regardless of who the other person might be. It doesn't matter if the person is someone you know or someone you don't know. Sexual assault can happen with anyone, including strangers, people you know but aren't close to, and boyfriends and girlfriends. It can happen in straight, gay, or lesbian relationships to girls, guys, or people who are transgender. It can be something as simple as someone touching you where you don't want to be touched, or something as violent as rape. Rape, which is forcing you to have sex with a person against your will, is the most extreme form of sexual assault. Assault can be if someone makes you look at or be a part of pornography or prostitution. It's also sexual assault when someone is too drunk, high, disabled or too young to give their permission to any type of sexual activity. It's still considered sexual assault if you agree to do something and then change your mind and tell the other person to stop. If they don't stop, it is assault.

Frequently Asked Questions about Sexual Assault:

“Can it be rape or sexual assault if it was someone who I know?” Actually, most rape and sexual assault are by someone the victim knows. Sometimes it's someone the survivor knows really well, such as a family member or even someone

you're in a relationship with. No one, no matter how well they know you, has the right to sexually abuse you --ever.

“What if I was drunk or high?”

Unwanted sexual behavior can still be considered sexual assault even when someone has been drinking alcohol or using drugs. Sexual assault can happen when you are too drunk or high to give your permission for sex and someone else disrespects your right to decide what happens to your body. **Statistics show that young women are at significant risk during the first semester of freshmen year at college.** They are meeting new people, trying to fit in, and as a result, will often find themselves in unsafe situations with people they don't really know. Remember, **you are the best person to keep yourself safe.** Be aware of your circumstances and make good decisions.

“What if I was dressed really sexy?”

Dressing sexy is not an invitation for someone to disrespect you or touch you inappropriately. Your choice of clothing does not say that it is okay for sexual activity to happen.

Remember that you always have the right to say 'NO'.

Something may seem okay to you at first, but it's okay to stop if you begin to feel weird or stops feeling okay. If you state any time that you want to stop, the person you are with must respect your wishes and stop, or it becomes a case of sexual assault.

If you have been sexually assaulted...It's important to understand that **it's not your fault** and nothing you did or didn't do could make it your fault. **It's okay to feel scared,** confused, vulnerable, shocked, ashamed, or guilty—these feelings do not mean you're weak. They are normal reactions if you have been sexually assaulted. There are some things you can do to take care of yourself after an assault:

- **Go to a safe place**, like a friend's or family member's home, hospital or police station.
- **Call a rape crisis center hotline.** A trained counselor can talk to you about what happened, your options, and even go to the hospital with you if you want. **It is free and confidential, so no one will know you talked to them.**
- **Go to a hospital** as soon as possible. At the hospital you can be checked out and treated for any injury or infection. You can also be treated for a possible pregnancy. If you want to, the hospital can also collect evidence about the assault. You can have evidence collected now, even if you aren't sure whether you want to report the assault to the police.
- **Try not to clean up or change clothes before you get to the hospital.** This can make it easier to find evidence from your abuser. If you have already washed or changed, it may still be possible to find some evidence.
- **Call your local police or 911** if you want to report the assault. If you don't want to make the call yourself, hospital staff can make it for you.
- **The most important thing is to remember that what you choose to do after a sexual assault happens is completely up to you. You can**

choose to do all or none of these things. And you can choose to stop or change your plan at any time.

Getting Support.....

Sometimes fear, shame, or pride may make it hard for us to admit that we need help. It takes strength to ask for support when we need it. There's no reason for you to deal with this by yourself...don't be afraid to reach out to someone who can help you.

If you feel like you don't have anyone to talk to, you aren't alone. There are people who can help. Rape crisis centers and other groups give free help to people who have gone through domestic violence or sexual assault. These places have people who can listen and support you and give information without prejudice or judgment. They can help you set up a plan of action to help you get back on your feet as a survivor.

If you are the survivor of a sexual assault in Massachusetts and need information or someone to talk to contact a Rape Crisis Center. For a list of centers see www.mass.gov/dph.

If you are anywhere else in the US, you can contact RAINN the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (www.rainn.org) at **1.800.656.HOPE(4673)**. They can offer you support and reassurance, as well as help you to connect with a rape crisis center near you.

If you think you might be experiencing violence in a relationship, or if you are worried about a friend, help is available. Contact the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline at **1-866-331-9474**.



Anger Management

Anger is a natural emotion and we all feel angry on occasion. But it is important to be able to manage your anger for your own well-being. People who manage their anger get sick less often, and feel better emotionally. Although anger is a natural emotion, sometimes anger can lead to behavior that is out of control. It may even feel like the anger is controlling you. When that happens, it is called rage. Rage is uncontrolled anger

that can have serious consequences for you and others. Road rage, assault, domestic violence, and sexual assault are all consequences of uncontrolled anger.

Why do I have trouble controlling my anger?

Many teens have trouble managing their anger. There are many reasons why someone cannot manage their anger. The reasons are different for everyone and may be a combination of different things. Perhaps you have witnessed violence at home, or in your neighborhood or at school. This can make it even harder to understand your own anger. Witnessing anger in others can make you think this is normal behavior and that anger is a way of solving problems or resolving conflict. Rather than solve problems it creates problems that could have a negative impact on both your health and your relationships. It may be hard for you to control your anger because you haven't yet learned how to deal with the emotions you feel inside. Whatever the reason, the next step is moving forward to work on ways to understand what triggers your anger and how to stay in control.

Are there some situations that make you feel particularly angry?

Think about the last few times you became really angry. You may realize there's a pattern. By becoming more aware of what upsets you, and how you feel when you are angry, you can take control of it before it takes control of you!

Keep in mind that your thoughts, feelings and behaviors are all connected. Your thoughts affect your feelings, which then affect your behaviors. Your behavior can also affect your thoughts, which can affect how you feel.



Since they are all related, making one change—either with your thoughts, feeling or behaviors—will make a big difference and could eliminate any consequences you might experience as a result of your anger.

Why should I control my anger?

Even at a young age, having difficulty controlling your anger makes your body more likely to have physical problems that can occur now or later. This happens because your mind and your body are connected. These feelings can actually put stress on your body which can lead to *medical problems* such as high blood pressure or stomach problems.

Having problems with managing your anger can also increase your risk for developing *mental health concerns* such as depression, eating disorders, or substance abuse issues.

How can I tell if I'm getting too angry?

Your body has a few ways of letting you know when you are getting too angry. Some common feelings may include:

- Your heart races - it beats very fast and may even feel like it's pounding in your chest
- You breathe faster - it may feel like you can't catch your breath
- Your muscles tighten - your body feels stiff
- Your body temperature increases - you feel hot and may even sweat a lot

What are some ways I can learn to control my temper?

The best way to control your temper depends on your willingness to understand your anger. Every person needs to take time to think about the changes they could make that would help them prevent an angry outburst. The following are some helpful ideas.

- **Pay attention to what upsets you.** When you can figure out what triggers your angry feelings, you can make decisions that will help you stay in better control. Is it a particular person or certain circumstances that triggers your anger? When faced with a difficult situation or conflict, think about what has happened. Remember that there are many ways to look at the same situation.
- **Pay attention to how your body feels when you are angry.** Remember that your mind and body are connected. When you notice your body beginning to become tense, take a deep breath and assess the situation.
- **Take responsibility for your actions.** You can actually decide on how you will behave in certain situations ahead of time. Can you even think of ways to avoid the situation? If you utilize good decision making or problem solving skills, you can change the outcome of a situation. Use these skills to prevent yourself from making quick judgments that could result in serious consequences to you and others.
- **Think about the consequence of your behavior.** Realize that how you behave affects those you love and others around you. Allowing an angry situation to escalate to rage has serious consequences for those involved. Many people are incarcerated for serious crimes because they were not able to control their anger. Don't let this happen to you!

What if my anger feels out of control?

Take quick action! If your angry feelings begin to take control over you it is important to do something to keep yourself and others around you safe. Here are some helpful tips:

- **Leave the scene.** Take yourself away from the person and/or place where you became angry. A change of scenery can help you "cool off" your angry feelings.
- **Walk away instead of driving away.** Walking is a great way to get your anger out. Avoid driving to prevent yourself from driving too fast and putting yourself and others in danger.
- **Choose safe ways to deal with anger.** Utilize relaxation techniques. Take deep breaths, repeat a calming word, relax your muscles, utilize your skills to decrease your anger. Do not drink, become assaultive, or pick up a weapon.
- **If you feel you are a danger to yourself or others, call 911 or go to the closest emergency room.** It is important to get help immediately!

What do I do with the anger I feel?

Find a safe way to express it! There are many safe ways to express your anger. Here are a few ideas:

- **Talk to someone you trust.** Call or meet with a trusted adult you feel comfortable with and who is a good listener. Telling your social worker or a foster parent how you are feeling is important so they can recommend additional help you may need.
- **Exercise.** Get that anger out by taking a long walk, working out at the gym or playing a sport. Exercise stimulates the release of a chemical in the brain called "endorphins" that make us feel happy.
- **Write in a journal, draw, paint, or do other art projects.** Let your feelings out by writing about them in a journal or creating a poem or drawing. For some people, being creative is an outlet for their anger and helps them manage their feelings.
- **Listen to or play music.** Music has a way of calming our mood. Listen to your iPod, sing along with the car radio, or play an instrument. Finding a favorite song that calms you can help you avoid angry confrontations.
- **Rest.** Anger often takes our energy away and makes us feel exhausted. It's fine to take a break, nap, or go to bed early. Sleep helps us focus so we can deal with our feelings better.

Controlling your temper is hard at first. When you slip up, give yourself a break but take responsibility for how you acted and how it affected other people. A useful way to do this is to apologize. "I'm sorry" is a powerful phrase when it is sincere. It can help do damage control for your relationships as well as for your own well-being.



ACTIVITY

Consider the following:

When Joey went to school on Monday, he knew he was in a bad mood. He and April had broken up over the weekend and Joey was really upset about the break-up. When he saw April between classes talking and laughing with her friends, it really annoyed him because she didn't seem upset at all. Shortly after that his friend Tim came up to Joey and slapped him on the back when he said 'hi'. Without waiting to see who it was, Joey reacted by swinging around and pushing Tim who fell against the lockers.

Who do you think Joey was really angry with? _____

How could Joey have handled the situation with Tim differently? What should he do now?

.Consider the following:

Anthony was driving to work. He had spent time with his girlfriend that afternoon and now he was running late. His boss didn't like it when Anthony was late so he was trying to get there as soon as possible. The car in front of him was going slow and kept braking. Anthony began honking the horn at the other driver but the driver still didn't speed up. Anthony could feel himself getting anxious about being late. When they came to a traffic signal and the other driver stopped on a yellow light, Anthony got really angry. Now he would be even later because he was stuck behind the other driver. When the cars stopped, Anthony got out of his car and started yelling at the other driver. When the driver yelled back, Anthony punched him in the face through the open car window. Witnesses called 911 and the police came.

What do you think happened to Anthony when the police arrived?

There were several things Anthony could have done to prevent the situation from escalating. What could he have done?

Who was responsible for Joey being late for work? _____



Sexual Health:

Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the assurance of having safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled.

This section will address healthy sexuality and what goes into that as well as healthy sexual relationships.

Healthy Sexuality

Healthy sexuality. Healthy sexuality refers to our bodies, our feelings and the perception we have of ourselves because of cultural and social influences. We are all sexual beings and healthy sexuality involves feeling positive about our sexuality and our sexual relationships.

What you need to know

In this section you will find the facts about contraception (birth control) and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. This is important information you need to know before you become sexually active. Having an understanding of the facts and possible risks of being sexually active can help you avoid the risks of STD's and pregnancy before you are ready to be a parent.

Contraception / Birth Control

All sexually active individuals are at risk for pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Contraception (birth control) is a way of preventing unwanted pregnancy and, in some cases, STDs.

Many contraceptives, when used correctly each and every time a couple engages in intercourse, will provide good protection against unwanted pregnancy, but regarding STDs, the amount of protection varies from contraceptive to contraceptive. Although only one form of contraception provides 100% protection – abstinence – there are a few that provide excellent protection. Most contraceptives are inexpensive and available to young people either through your doctor or pharmacist.

Why don't some people like using contraception?

Some people make excuses for not using contraceptives. Some of the more common excuses are:

- It spoils the romance and spontaneity of the moment.
- It lessens the sensitivity, feeling and enjoyment.
- It costs too much.
- It means you don't trust your partner.
- It's not natural.
- It's embarrassing to discuss with your partner.

Some people give many other reasons for not wanting to use contraception, but they are all just excuses to cover up the real reasons. Here are a few of the real reasons why some people don't want to use contraception.

The person does not know the risks involved in unprotected intercourse.

Many people are not as educated regarding the risks involved in unprotected intercourse. Some people still don't know that unprotected intercourse can lead to pregnancy and STDs. People will make excuses for not wanting to use contraception because they don't believe in the possible dangers involved. If you come across a person like this, educate him or her, and of course, protect yourself.

The person does not care about the risks involved in unprotected

intercourse. Some people don't care if their partner becomes pregnant or infected with an STD, even one that could lead to AIDS. These people will use every excuse not to use contraception. These people are not respectful of their partner. Protecting yourself from disease and/or pregnancy is a mature decision and shows respect for yourself and your body. So protect yourself or be prepared to say 'NO' to your partner.

The person believes that unplanned pregnancy and STD infection only happens to other people.

If you know someone like this or you believe this yourself, it's time to consider the facts. Even though each person is unique, we all have something in common with everyone else – a human body that can get sick.

Anyone who participates in unprotected intercourse is asking for an unplanned pregnancy or STD. Certainly you may beat the odds for a while, but not every time. An unplanned pregnancy or STD will change your world forever. Regardless of where a person is from, no one is immune to unplanned pregnancy and STDs. Protect yourself.

The person is not confident using a contraceptive and feels embarrassed.

Purchasing condoms or getting a birth control prescription filled can make you feel embarrassed. The best solution for this problem is practice. The more times a person does something, the better at it he or she becomes. The more confident and comfortable a person is doing something, the more likely it will become a positive habit.

Who is responsible for contraception – the male or female?

The answer is **BOTH!** Since a pregnancy or an STD will affect both the male and female, both are equally responsible for protection against unwanted pregnancy and STDs.

However, since **females** are the ones who become pregnant, it is necessary to protect yourself at all costs. It is your life and goals that will drastically change should you become pregnant. Do not count on your partner alone to be responsible, regardless of how you feel about him romantically. You will likely be the primary caregiver of your baby both before and after they are born. Depending on your partner alone to be

responsible for preventing pregnancy may not be enough. So protect yourself until you are ready to become a parent.

Males should not think they will have no responsibility should they father a child. Even though the female becomes pregnant, you are still responsible for sharing the care of the child, which lasts many years. At the very least, you will be legally required to pay eighteen years of child support, and the responsibility of caring for a child will dramatically change your plans for your education, career, financial situation and family life. Every sexually active male should be mature and responsible enough to carry and use latex condoms. **Be respectful of yourself and your partner and prevent becoming pregnant at a young age.**

The Methods

What do we mean when we talk about birth control effectiveness? All birth control methods are going to work best when they are used correctly. When a birth control method is used incorrectly, its effectiveness goes down. For example, condoms are between 79% - 98% effective at preventing pregnancy. If used correctly, they are 98% effective. One example that decreases the effectiveness of condoms is using an expired one or an old one that's been in a wallet a long time.

For a birth control method to be as effective as possible, make sure you follow the directions provided with the birth control, and ask your doctor or pharmacist if you need help figuring out how to use it. Or you can call the Sexual Health Helpline at 877-MA-SEX-ED to get help from a counselor. Following are the most common birth control methods used by young adults.

Condoms:

What they do: Condoms prevent pregnancy by trapping sperm before, during and after a man ejaculates. Condoms are the only birth control methods that can also protect against STDs like HIV. Latex and polyurethane condoms can also prevent HIV and other diseases spread through sex. **Important:** condoms made of animal skin, like lambskin, do **NOT** protect against sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

Pregnancy and spread of STDs can occur if condoms aren't used properly. Follow all the directions included in the package on how to use condoms correctly.

Side effects: None, unless you have a latex allergy. If latex irritates your skin, try a polyurethane condom.

Where to get condoms: You don't need a prescription and anyone can get them. You can get them at the drug store, grocery store, family planning clinics, or even in some vending machines.

Effectiveness: Condoms can be up to 98% effective if used with spermicide.

Diaphragms/Cervical Caps/Shields

What it does: Diaphragm/Cervical Caps/Shields block sperm from getting inside the female's uterus. They must be used with spermicidal cream, foam, or jelly to be most effective. The spermicide works by killing the sperm. They do **NOT** prevent sexually transmitted infections (STDs). Condoms are the only forms of birth control that also offers protection against STDs.

Side effects:

Generally there are very few side effects. However, some women may experience vaginal irritation, pain or discomfort, or urinary tract infections. There is also the risk of Toxic Shock Syndrome, a rare but serious disorder, if the device is left in longer than the recommended period of time.

Where to get a diaphragm, cervical cap, or shield: Women need to get a prescription, and it has to be fitted by a trained doctor or health care provider. The doctor will also demonstrate how to use the device and how to properly take care of it. It is recommended that the diaphragm and cap be replaced every one to two years.

Effectiveness: The **diaphragm** is 84% - 94% effective. The **cap** is 86% effective, but it is less effective if a woman has already had a baby.

The Pill

What it does: Birth control pills contain artificial hormones that prevent pregnancy. They are chemicals that are like the ones a woman's body makes naturally. The most common type of birth control pill is a combination of estrogen and progestin hormones. They stop a woman from ovulating, or in other words, it stops her body from releasing an egg from the ovaries. The Pill does **NOT** prevent sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Condoms are the only form of birth control that also offer protection against STDs.

Side effects: Side effects of the pill can include nausea, weight gain, headaches, and breast tenderness. For most women, these side effects disappear within 3 to 6 months. Also, cigarette smoking increases the risk of serious side effects (i.e. stroke, blood clots, and heart attacks). The risk increases with age (over 35) and heavy smoking (15 cigarettes or more a day). Many women consider quitting smoking when they want to start using birth control pills. If you are a smoker, you can ask your doctor for help to quit.

Where to get the pill: A woman can get it with a prescription from her doctor/nurse practitioner, or through a family planning clinic. She can fill the prescription at a pharmacy, a health clinic or a family planning clinic.

Effectiveness: 92% – 99%. **However, some medications, like antibiotics, can make the pill less effective.**

The Patch

What it does: The patch is like a thin, square sticker that contains the hormones progesterin and estrogen. It stops a woman's body from ovulating (releasing an egg from the ovaries). It does **NOT** prevent sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). As you know by now, condoms are the only forms of birth control that also offer protection against STDs.

Side effects: They can include headaches, nausea, breast tenderness or mood swings. Some women may have irritation where they put the patch. Changing the location of the patch each week will make this less likely to happen.

Where to get the patch: A woman needs a prescription from her doctor/nurse practitioner, or through a family planning clinic. She can fill the prescription at a pharmacy, a health clinic or a family planning clinic.

Effectiveness: 92% – 99% effective.

The Shot

What it does: The shot contains the hormone progesterin and it stops the male sperm from reaching the female egg. The shot can also stop ovulation for some women and it usually lasts for 3 months. The shot does **NOT** prevent sexually transmitted diseases. Condoms are the only forms of birth control that also offer protection against STDs.

Side effects: The most common side effects are weight gain, acne, breast tenderness, irregular bleeding, depression. In some cases, a woman may not have her periods for a period of time. Prolonged use of the shot can also result in loss of bone density. Women should talk with their doctor or a health care professional about these risks before starting.

Where to get the shot: Women need a prescription from a trained doctor, health care provider, or at a family planning clinic.

Effectiveness: 97% - 99.7% effective.

The IUD

What it does: IUD stands for intrauterine device. It's very small, T-shaped, and is made of either plastic or plastic wrapped in copper wire. IUDs basically turns the uterus into an unfriendly environment for sperm. IUDs do **NOT** prevent sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Condoms are the only forms of birth control that also offer protection against STDs.

Side effects: Women may experience side effects, but in most cases, they will go away after a couple months. The side effects include abdominal pain, spotting between a woman's period, or possibly heavier periods. Very rarely, it is possible for a woman to get a pelvic infection or have the IUD fall out.

Where to get the IUD: Women need a prescription to get an IUD, and it has to be placed by a doctor or health care professional.

Effectiveness: IUDs are 99.9% effective as long as they remain in place. Follow instructions regarding how to check the proper placement of the IUD.

The birth control methods described here include the most common, frequently prescribed and used methods, but there are other methods available. More information on other methods such as natural family planning can be found at the resources listed at the end of this section. For the latest information on birth control, call the Sexual Health Helpline at 1-877-627-3933 and speak to a counselor.

Guide to Contraceptives (Birth Control)

Type	Effective?	STD PREVEN	Cost	Get if from
Abstinence	The best	Yes	\$0	
Morning-after pill	Excellent	No	\$35-\$60*	Clinic / Doctor
Depo-Provera	Excellent	No	\$20 per month*	Clinic / Doctor
Birth Control pills	Excellent	No	\$0 - \$30	Clinic / Doctor
Nuva Ring	Excellent	No	\$0 - \$80per month	Clinic / Doctor
Ortho Evra	Excellent	No	\$0 - \$56	Clinic / Doctor
Condom	Very good	Yes++	\$0 - \$10	Drugstore / Clinic
Female condom	Very good	Yes++	\$6	Drugstore / Clinic
Diaphragm	Good	No**	\$15 - \$50*	Clinic / Doctor
Spermicide	Fair	No**	\$5 - \$15	Drugstore
Cervical cap	Fair	No	\$50*	Clinic / Doctor
Today Sponge	Fair	No	\$3	Internet / Drugstore

Emergency Contraception:

If you have unplanned sex, is there something you can do? Whether your condom broke or you got caught up in the moment, there **is** something you can do after unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy. You can use emergency contraception (EC). However, there is *nothing* you can do to protect yourself from STDs *after* the fact.

Emergency contraception (EC) is a type of birth control pill that can be used when a woman is worried about becoming pregnant after having unprotected sex. It is also called Plan B®, or the ‘morning after pill’ because it works best if it is taken as soon as possible after unprotected sex. Some possible reasons to take EC are because:

- * The condom broke or slipped off
- * Birth control wasn’t used or failed
- * Unplanned sex
- * Sex was forced

Tip: EC can be used up to 120 hours (5 days) from the time a pregnancy risk has occurred. But don’t wait! The sooner EC is taken, the better it works.

EC is a totally safe birth control option if there is a risk for pregnancy, but it is best used as a back-up method in case regular birth control fails.

How EC works

Like birth control pills, the ‘morning after pill’ (Plan B®), contains artificial hormones to prevent pregnancy. These hormones act like the chemicals a woman’s body naturally makes. EC pills contain higher amounts of the same hormones found in regular birth control pills. EC can prevent pregnancy in a number of ways, depending on where a woman is in her monthly menstrual cycle.

EC pills **cannot** cause the termination of a pregnancy. Emergency contraception contains hormones that prevent pregnancy from happening by stopping the egg and sperm from meeting and/or attaching to the uterus. EC cannot stop a fertilized egg from growing once it has attached and begun to grow in the uterus.

Emergency Contraception does not cause an abortion. If a woman is already pregnant, it won't harm her body or her pregnancy.

Effectiveness of EC

The Plan B® method of emergency contraception is very effective. In fact, the sooner Plan B® is used, the more effective it is.

- Taken within 24 hours (1 day) of unprotected sex, it is 95% effective at preventing pregnancy.
- Taken within 72 hours (3 days) of unprotected sex, it is 89% effective at preventing pregnancy.

- Taken within 120 hours (5 days) of unprotected sex, it is about 75% effective at preventing pregnancy.

EC should not be used as your primary form of birth control. If you are sexually active, choose a type of birth control that is more suitable for regular use.

Got more questions? Call the Sexual Health Helpline at 1-877-MA-SEX-ED. They can help you find out the fastest and cheapest way to get EC when it's needed, as soon as possible.

How to Use Plan B®

If a woman has a pregnancy risk and is using Plan B®:

- The first dose should be taken as soon as possible, within 120 hours (5 days) of unprotected sex.
- The second dose should be taken 12 hours later.

Are there side effects?

The most common side effects of EC are nausea (feeling like you need to throw up), vomiting, and small changes in timing and flow of a woman's period (menstrual cycle). Stomach pain, breast tenderness, dizziness, tiredness, headaches, and irregular bleeding may also happen, though these generally last only a day or two after taking EC. Taking EC may cause a woman's next period to occur a few days earlier or later than expected.

If a woman doesn't get her period within three weeks after taking EC, she may be pregnant. She should find out for sure by taking a pregnancy test or contacting her doctor or a family planning counselor.

Does EC protect against STDs?

No. EC does not protect against sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) like HIV or chlamydia. Condoms are the only birth control methods that also protect against STDs like HIV.

How and Where do I get EC?

Women and Men 18 and Older:

Any woman or man 18 years old or over does not need a prescription to buy Plan B® in a pharmacy in the United States. If you are 18 or older all you need is a government-issued photo ID that shows how old you are and you can buy EC at any Massachusetts pharmacy that sells it. Under the law, Massachusetts pharmacists are not allowed to refuse to sell EC because of their personal objections or religious beliefs.

Women under 18 or women without I.D.

Women under the age of 18, or women who do not have a photo I.D. need a prescription to buy EC over the counter. Women under 18 with a prescription can go to any pharmacy to fill the prescription.

Many family planning centers also provide EC. For many teens, this is a great option because it will cost less. If you have questions about where to get EC or if you'd like to find a family planning center near you, call the Sexual Health Helpline at 1-877-MA-SEX-ED.

	Plan B® Over the Counter	Plan B® Prescription from a Doctor	Plan B® Prescription from a Specially Trained Pharmacist
Age Requirements	18 and older	No restriction	No restriction
ID Required	Yes (Government Issued with Date of Birth)	No	No
Who Can Pick It Up	Any male or female 18 or older	The patient, a friend, a family member or someone acting on behalf of the patient.	The patient must be screened by the pharmacist. The patient, a friend, a family member or someone acting on behalf of the patient can pick it up.
Covered by Insurance	No	Maybe (Depends on health insurance. MassHealth will pay for it.)	Maybe (Depends on health insurance. MassHealth will pay for it.)
Cost	\$35 to \$60	Depends on whether health insurance pays for it in part or fully.	Depends on whether health insurance pays for it in part or fully.

MDPH 2008

Sexual Health Resources

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Division of Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Prevention

866.749.7122

Family Planning Program

617.624.6060

www.mass.gov/dph

Massachusetts Sexual Health Helpline

1-877-MA-SEX-ED

Advocates for Youth

www.advocatesforyouth.org

The Underground Guide to Teenage Sexuality

By Michael Basso

Fairview Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2003

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) are one of the risks you take when you have sex without the proper protection. A STD is any disease that you might get by exchanging bodily fluids such as semen, vaginal fluids, or blood. Being sexually active and intravenous drug use are the two most common ways to become infected with an STD.

If you're having sex or thinking about having sex, it's important to know about STDs. If they go untreated, some of these infections can cause pain and scars which could cause problems having a baby in the future. Some STDs can be cured – but some, like HIV, cannot.

FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT STDs.....

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are 110 million STDs among men and women in the United States.
- In America, more than 20 million people get an Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) every year.
- Young people age 15-24 account for 50% of all new infections.
- The annual number of new infections is roughly equal among teen girls (51%) and teen boys (49%).
- One in four teens will contract an STD every year.
- HPV (Human Papillomavirus) accounts for the majority of prevalent STIs in the U.S.
- STDs (including the HIV virus which causes AIDS) can be spread through all manners of sexual contact. In terms of sexually transmitted diseases, sexual contact is described as any kind of intimate contact involving these four areas of the body: penis, vagina, mouth, or anus.
- You can be infected with an STD more than once and can even have more than one STD at the same time. Treatment for an STD does not make you immune from getting it again.
- STDs cannot be contracted by sitting on toilet seats or touching door knobs. Most STDs need to occupy warm, moist places to survive, which is why they affect the areas they do and will not last long outside of/away from the human body.

- HIV/AIDS is not a gay men’s disease. STDs including AIDS can affect men, women, and children. A pregnant woman can infect her baby and anyone can get an STD through intravenous drug use..
- STDs can result in infertility or sterility if left untreated. It is important to get treatment even if the symptoms of the STD go away. The STD will remain transmissible and may continue to affect the body until it has been treated. **NO** STD will go away by itself.
- Your risk of getting an STD increases with the number of sexual partners you have.
- A person who has been diagnosed with an STD has an obligation or contact all his or her sexual partners so that they, too, can get the necessary medical treatment.
- In Massachusetts, minors may be examined and treated for an STD without parental consent.

Prevention of STDs:

There is only one sure way to protect yourself against the risk of infection, and that is to have no sexual contact. Abstinence is the surest, safest, and most effective method of prevention. However, if you do have sex, you must protect yourself. Here are some recommendations. These are not guaranteed methods of preventing STDs, but if you use them in combination, you will lower your risk of infection.

- A male should use a latex condom or “rubber” during sexual intercourse and other forms of foreplay.
- A female can use the vaginally inserted female condom or **INSIST** that her male partner use a latex condom. However, the male and female condoms should not be used together as they can pull each other off.
- For oral sex, use a dental dam, plastic food wrap, or a condom. .
- Have sex with fewer people.
- Talk with your partner about getting tested for STDs.
- If you and your partner have not been tested, wait to get tested before you have sex.
- Choose not to have sex.

Protect yourself! Remember young adults (under age 25) currently account for 50% of all new infections. If your partner refuses to use protection, refuse to have sex!

Types of STDs:

It is important to understand the different types of STDs so you will understand the importance of protecting yourself and receiving treatment should it become necessary.

Bacterial STDs are caused by different types of germs called bacteria. These can usually be treated successfully with antibiotics. However, getting a bacterial STD and receiving

treatment, does not mean you can't be infected again if you do not protect yourself. These bacterial STDs include:

- Chlamydia
- Gonorrhea
- Syphilis

Viral STDs are caused by viruses, which are living germs even smaller than bacteria. Viral STDs can be treated to alleviate symptoms, but cannot be “cured”. Viral infections may go dormant and not exhibit symptoms at times, but viruses like HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis B stay in a person's body for the rest of their life. They include:

- Herpes
- HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus, a virus that weakens your immune system and makes your body vulnerable to life-threatening illnesses)
- HPV (Human Papillomavirus, which can cause genital warts and cell changes on the cervix)
- Hepatitis B

A third type of infection called **parasitic** infection is caused by a parasite (an organism like a small insect that lives on or inside an animal or human). Some examples are:

- Crabs (pubic lice)
- Scabies
- Trichomoniasis (trich)

Do I have an STD?

STDs can be passed through vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Some STDs can also be transmitted if you use a “dirty” intravenous needle. So if you're having sex you could be at risk and the truth is many STDs in the early stage don't have symptoms that can be seen or felt. The only way to know for sure if you have an STD is to have regular testing for STDs if you are sexually active. All youth, gay or straight, are at risk of getting an STD if they are sexually active..

So get tested if you suspect you may have contracted an STD. It is important to know what is normal for your body. If you notice something that isn't normal for you, get it checked out. Some things that might not be normal could be things like:

- Discharge (yellow, white or greenish liquid) from the vagina or penis
- Bleeding that is different than a normal period
- Bumps or sores around the vagina, penis, anus, or mouth
- Burning or pain while peeing
- Itching around the vagina or penis or in the pubic hair
- Stomach pain, or pain during sex

If you're looking to get tested for an STD, you have a few different options. First, if you're comfortable seeing your doctor, and you currently have a primary care doctor, s/he can test you for STDs.

If you don't have a doctor you regularly see, or you're not comfortable going to your regular doctor for STD testing, there are other places you can go. In Massachusetts, there are STD clinics and HIV/STD testing centers that provide private testing for free or low cost. There are two different ways to get a private STD test at a clinic; you can get either a **confidential** or **anonymous** test.

Confidential testing means giving your name and some personal information to a clinic, but that information stays between you and the clinic unless you sign forms letting them give your information or test results to another person, like your doctor. All STD tests (except HIV) in Massachusetts are confidential tests.

Anonymous testing can be done without ever giving your name at all. When you go to the clinic, you will be identified by a code and any tests you have done will only have that code on them. This way, your name always remains unknown. In Massachusetts, HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is the only STD you can get tested for anonymously.

If you are under 18, you have a right to confidential STD testing. However if you get tested using your medical insurance, it may show up on a bill your parents/guardians can see. If you're worried about this, you can get tested without using your insurance.

If you are in Massachusetts and want to find a testing site near you, or have questions about STDs, call the Sexual Health Helpline at 1-877-MA-SEX-ED or check out the references at the end of this section.

If I get tested, what should I expect?

When you go to get tested, you can talk to the doctor, nurse, or counselor about which tests are right for you. For girls, the doctor might want to look at the area around the vagina, or inside the vagina using a speculum (a piece of equipment that lets the doctor see the cervix). They might use a cotton swab to collect a sample to be tested for some STDs. For guys, the doctor might want to use a cotton swab to collect a sample from inside the penis.

If you are getting tested for syphilis or hepatitis B, the doctor will draw your blood.

You can now get tested for some common STDs (chlamydia and gonorrhea) just by peeing in a cup. Talk to your provider about whether that's the best option for you.

If you are getting tested for HIV, there are three different types of tests. Your provider may draw blood, prick your finger to get a couple drops of blood, or swab the inside of your mouth. Not all clinics or doctors offer all three types of tests, so if you are

interested in a specific kind of test, it's best to call your provider first. For more information on HIV testing, call the Massachusetts Sexual Health Helpline at 1-877-MA-SEX-ED.



Sexually Transmitted Diseases STD Cures and Treatment Guide

Disease	How do I know if I have it?	What will happen if I don't see a doctor?	Is it curable?	How is it treated?
AIDS	4-6 weeks after infection there may be flulike symptoms (fever, tired, swollen glands), but then no symptoms usually occur until AIDS develops	Death (almost always)	No	Healthy lifestyle, antiviral drugs, or anti-infectant drugs to help prevent infection.
Chlamydia	<u>Male:</u> Painful urination and watery discharge (fluid) from the penis. Sometimes there are no symptoms. <u>Female:</u> Sometimes itching, burning, or discharge (fluid) from the vagina. Usually there are no symptoms.	Possible sterility (no children)	Yes	Antibiotics such as tetracycline
Genital Herpes	Painful, bubbly blisters on the genitals. Often there are no signs or symptoms.	Blisters may disappear and come back again. Possible damage to developing fetus (brain damage or "still birth")	No	Acyclovir will help heal the blisters.

Genital warts	Small cauliflower-like bumps on the genitals	May spread or lead to cervical cancer in females	No	Liquid nitrogen, laser surgery, or podophyllin liquid will all help remove the warts, but the warts may grow back
Gonorrhea	<u>Male:</u> Usually no symptoms, but may have a burning discharge (fluid) from the penis. <u>Female:</u> Usually no symptoms. Possibly a discharge (fluid) from the vagina.	Sterility (no children) for both males and females.	Yes	Antibiotics such as penicillin G, or ceftriaxone and doxycycline
Hepatitis B	Yellowing of the skin and eyes, fever, nausea. Usually there are no symptoms.	May not cause any harm, but may cause liver damage or possibly death.	No	There are no treatments. A drug called Hepatitis B vaccine will prevent a person from getting Hepatitis B.
Non-Gonococcal urethritis	<u>Male:</u> Thin, clear, watery, or milky discharge from the penis. <u>Female:</u> Burning urination.	Sterility (no children) or possibly arthritis for both males and females.	Yes	Antibiotics
Pubic lice (crabs)	Severe itching and possibly tiny blood spots on underwear.	Severe itching will continue.	Yes	Kwell or malathion (sold at drugstores)
Syphilis	<u>First stage:</u> Chancre (a painless sore that will go away). <u>Second stage:</u> Rash will develop on palms of hands and body. <u>Third stage:</u> Insanity, paralysis, death.	Death.	Yes	Antibiotics such as penicillin. (If you are allergic to penicillin other antibiotics can be used)
Vaginitis (also referred to	<u>Male:</u> Possibly no symptoms, or red and tender skin on the penis. <u>Female:</u> Pain, irritation, redness, itching, odor, different types of discharge from the vagina (thin and foamy; thick, white, and cheesy; or greenish in color). Common in	Symptoms will continue.	Yes	Flagyl or Monistat

as yeast infection or Candida albicans)	females.			
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Basso, Michael J., The Underground Guide to Teenage Sexuality. Fairview Press, Minneapolis, MN 2003. pgs.186 – 188.



STD Resources

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Division of Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Prevention

866.749.7122

Family Planning Program

617.624.6060

www.mass.gov/dph

Massachusetts Sexual Health Helpline

1-877-MA-SEX-ED

SIECUS

Sexuality Information and Education Council of the US

www.siecus.org

HIV/AIDS

Everyone has heard about HIV or AIDS. There is a lot of information out there. Here are some important facts.

What does AIDS stand for and what is it?

AIDS is short for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome – a condition that develops over time because of a weak immune system. AIDS is a term used to describe when a person’s immune system is so weak that it cannot protect the body from germs.

What is HIV?

HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus which means that this virus weakens the body’s immune system. The virus begins to destroy the person’s immune system until the body cannot protect itself from disease. When it reaches this state, a person has HIV/AIDS.

How can I become infected with HIV?

You can become infected with HIV by getting someone else’s HIV-infected body fluids into your body. The body fluids that can have enough HIV in them to infect you are blood, semen, prelubricating fluid (the fluid that comes out of the penis before ejaculation), vaginal secretions and breast milk.

Other fluids from the body like saliva and tears do not have enough HIV in them to infect someone. Even if you were to have a deep, wet (“French”) kiss with someone infected with HIV, there would not be enough saliva to infect you.

For HIV to enter into your body, infected fluids must enter a cut, tear, or other opening in your body where there is broken skin. These are the ways that HIV is transmitted (caught) and these are the fluids:

Ways HIV is transmitted	Fluids
Vaginal intercourse (penis entering the vagina)	Blood, semen, prelubricating fluid, vaginal secretions
Oral intercourse (using the mouth to stimulate the genitals)	Blood, semen, prelubricating fluid, vaginal secretions
Anal intercourse	Blood, semen, prelubricating fluid
Drug use (sharing IV drug needles)	Blood
Blood transfusion (receiving blood)	Blood
Breastfeeding	Breast milk
Mother to unborn child	Blood

Ear / body piercing (if infected piercing tools are reused)	Blood
Tattooing (if infected tattooing needles are reused)	Blood

There have also been some medical accidents where nurses or doctors have accidentally stuck themselves with used needles or sharp objects that had HIV-infected blood on them.

Activity for Youth

Fact or Myth

Put an F for Fact or a M for Myth in the space for each statement below. Answers are on next page.

_____ 1. Unprotected intercourse (of any kind) and sharing IV (in the vein) drug needles are the two most common ways of becoming infected with HIV.

_____ 2. There is a chance you could get HIV from toilet seats, sharing the same glass or being in a swimming pool with a HIV-infected person.

_____ 3. Heterosexual couples (man and woman) cannot give each other HIV.

_____ 4. A HIV-infected person looks tired and ill.

_____ 5. You can get a HIV test without anyone finding out.

_____ 6. You can get HIV from someone who is not infected by HIV but is a carrier for HIV.

_____ 7. The window period for a person who is infected with HIV to test positive on a test is 6 weeks to 6 months.

_____ 8. If you have unprotected sex with someone who is infected with HIV you will get HIV.

Answers:

1. **Fact:** Unprotected intercourse is responsible for 70% and sharing infected IV drug needles is responsible for 25% of all HIV infections in the US

2. **Myth:** In fact, there is no risk of contracting HIV from toilet seats, sharing the same glass or being in a swimming pool with an HIV-positive person.

3. **Myth:** Anyone who engages in risky behavior, like unprotected intercourse, or sharing infected IV drug needles or having unprotected sex with someone who shares infected IV

drug needles can get HIV. Whether you are white, black, Asian, Hispanic, rich, poor, heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, smart, not-so-smart, beautiful, not-so-beautiful – if you engage in risky behaviors like unprotected intercourse or sharing infected IV drug needles, you are at risk of becoming infected with HIV.

4. **Myth:** A person with HIV looks normal. There is no way you can tell someone is infected by looking at him or her. The person looks fine, feels fine and may not even know that he/she is infected.

5. **Fact:** You can get anonymous testing if you don't want anyone to find out. You will be given a barcode or number and not be asked your name. Make sure you ask to ensure the test is anonymous. Some are confidential but not anonymous.

6. **Myth:** A person who is not infected with HIV cannot infect other people.

7. **Fact:** The window period for a person who is infected with HIV to test positive for HIV is 6 weeks to 6 months.

8. **Myth:** If you have unprotected sex with someone who is HIV positive, there is a chance you will not get HIV. Why take a chance?

HIV / AIDS Resources

AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts

617.437.6200

<http://www.aac.org/>

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

HIV / AIDS Bureau

617.624.6000

Massachusetts Sexual Health Helpline

1-877-MA-SEX-ED

National HIV/AIDS, and Sexually Transmitted Disease Hotline

1.800.342.AIDS

This is a free call available 24 hours a day, every day.

Youth Embassy

A website that provides information and resources for sex, relationships, your body or problems you may be having.

www.youthembassy.com

SIECUS

Sexuality Information and Education Council of the US

www.siecus.org

TEENAGE PREGNANCY

Sad but true. Here are some facts you should know about teenage pregnancy:

FACT: Most babies born to teenage mothers will grow up in poverty.

FACT: Teenage pregnancy is the leading reason female students will drop out of high school.

FACT: Teenage mothers will earn much less money throughout their lives than women who waited until their twenties to have children.

FACT: Babies born to teenage mothers are more likely to have low birth weight and birth defects.

FACT: Many fathers of children born to teenage mothers will not be involved in their upbringing.

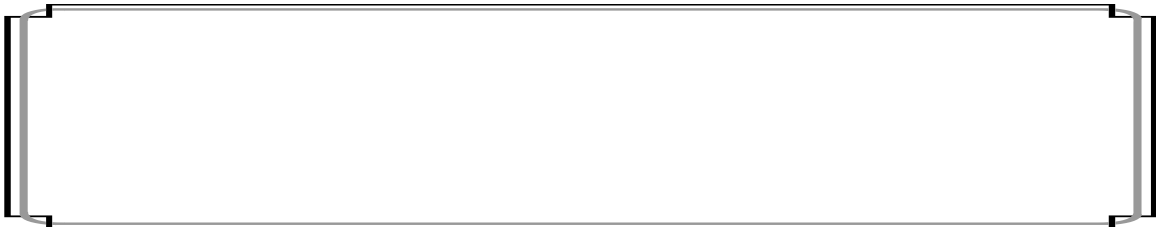
FACT: The stress of being a teenage parent is enormous, and many teens are not able to cope with it.

FACT: Many teenage parents do not have the parenting skills necessary to raise a child in a nurturing, loving, and consistent environment.

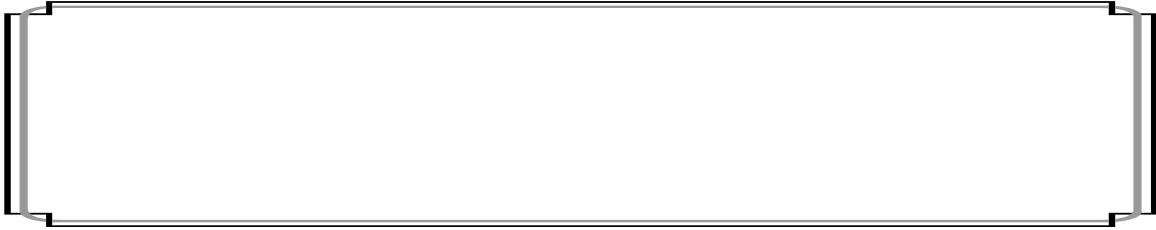
FACT: Many teenage parents are isolated from their peers.

Consider:

Imagine what your life would be like if you were pregnant or about to become a father. How would your life change?



What do you think your life and your child's life would be like?



Some youth have misconceptions about pregnancy and wrongfully view having a child as a possible solution to their problems.

Consider the following:

Emily, 17, is in a foster home. She is debating whether or not to try to get pregnant. Emily thinks that by having a child, she will become independent, have money, and be respected.

Are Emily's reasons valid? Are these good reasons for having a child? What do you think?



Being a teenage mother does not automatically gain you respect in the community. You have to earn it by demonstrating that you are a good parent by responsibly caring for your child. Most teens are not ready nor equipped to be good, responsible parents. They need to complete their education, obtain a stable living environment, and gain emotional maturity before having children. Emily may or may not qualify for financial assistance and even if she does qualify, it will be available to her only for a brief period of time. She would have to work very hard to support herself and her child for many years.

Consider the following:

Paul is thinking about asking his girlfriend to have his baby. He thinks that it is cool to have a child and that he would be more respected by his peers.

What do you think of his reason for wanting a child?



None of Paul's reasons are valid, either. It is totally irresponsible to have a child because it is "cool". Having children is a big decision, one which everyone has to carefully consider and prepare for. **NO** child deserves to be born for the purpose of benefiting the image of one of his/her parents! Paul's friends will probably not respect him anymore if he acts so irresponsible, and Paul will have to pay child support for many years -- something he hasn't thought of!

Can you think of additional invalid reasons and misconceptions regarding parenthood?



Are you ready to be a parent?

Some people decide that they don't want to have sex unless they're ready to be a parent. Others decide that they will have sex, but take steps to prevent pregnancy, like using birth control. If you are not very certain that you are ready to be a parent, then you may want to seriously consider either not having sex or avoid having sex without some dependable type of birth control.

Unplanned Pregnancy

An unplanned pregnancy can be a scary thing for anyone. The most important thing to remember is that you're not alone. If you find yourself in this situation, whatever you decide to do, there are people and resources to help you.

If you suspect that you or your partner might be pregnant, the quickest and most accurate way for a woman to know for sure is to have a pregnancy test. Anyone can buy an over-the-counter pregnancy test from a drug store. You don't need an ID. You can get an inexpensive or free test and receive counseling at a local family planning clinic.

Getting tested at a family planning clinic is a really good option and one you should consider. If you find out that you are pregnant, you'll probably have a lot of questions

that a doctor, nurse or family planning counselor will be able to answer. Talking to a professional will also help you get connected to whatever care or services you need.

If you think you might be pregnant, don't wait! Get a pregnancy test as soon as you can. The sooner you know, the more options you have.

If you have questions, you can always call the Sexual Health Helpline at (877) MA-SEX-ED. The counselors there will answer any questions you have.

Pregnancy Options:

If you are facing an unplanned pregnancy, you have choices to make and issues you may want to think about. **Your options when you are pregnant are:**

- 1) Choose to have the baby and parent your child, or
- 2) Choose to have the baby and make an adoption plan
- 3) Choose to have an abortion to end the pregnancy

Getting Support

If you are having difficulty figuring out what to do, you can try talking to a trusted adult about your pregnancy. If you are in a relationship with the baby's father, you may want to talk with him so you will know how he feels about your pregnancy. Another good idea is to contact a family planning clinic. It may sound scary to go to a clinic under these circumstances, but the people who work there are professionals and will treat you with respect. They won't judge you or lecture you. You may need to give them your name and other information, but if you live in Massachusetts, all of your information will be strictly confidential. They can also help you find the words to talk to a trusted adult if you need to tell them about your pregnancy.

Pregnancy Scare

Often when someone has a pregnancy scare they decide to stop having sex until they figure out a birth control method that works for them. This could mean getting condoms or talking to her or his doctor or a health care provider about birth control options. It could mean deciding to wait to have sex until both partners are ready to be parents. If you are having sex without birth control, but aren't ready to have a baby yet.

1) If you choose to have the baby and parent your child:

Parenting

A pregnancy and a baby will have a huge affect on your life and your body. When a woman is pregnant, she needs to go to a health care provider much more often to make sure she and the developing baby are healthy. This is called ‘prenatal care,’ since prenatal means before birth. You may also need to make some major lifestyle changes in order to deliver a healthy baby. For example, some physical activity may be more difficult or not recommended for pregnant women. Smoking anything (cigarettes, weed), using drugs, drinking alcohol, poor eating habits, and even not getting enough sleep can all put your pregnancy and baby at risk. It is important to talk with your health care provider to see what prenatal health care and lifestyle changes they recommend for you.

Being a parent can affect your life in many ways. Some challenges include expenses, such as diapers, baby food, clothes, baby furniture, toys, childcare, etc.

Activity:

Price the baby items below. You can visit a department store, or use a store’s website or sale flyer to help you determine the correct costs.

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>COST</u>
Crib	_____
Mattress	_____
High Chair	_____
Stroller	_____
Car seat	_____

(Car seats are dependent upon the baby’s age and weight).

Estimate the cost of a week’s worth of the following:

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>COST</u>
Baby formula	_____
Baby food	_____
Diapers	_____
Wipes	_____

Were you surprised by any of the costs? _____

Can you think of any other expenses related to caring for a baby?

Everyone needs someone!

Like any other challenge in life, family and friend support is important. If there are people who you trust who can help out, including assistance with things like parenting advice and child care, it can make parenting easier to manage.

Finding safe and reliable **child care** will be one of the biggest challenges you will face. It will be your responsibility to keep your child safe. That means knowing that he or she is being cared for by a responsible person at all times if it can't be you. It also means there could be times when you will have to tell a friend or relative, or even the baby's father, that you are not comfortable leaving your child with them. That will be hard to do, but your child is dependent on you keeping him/her safe. So you will need to be strong to protect your child and ensure he or she is safe at all times.

There are also organizations in the community that can help you be a responsible parent. Many places offer free or low-cost support for new parents and people who are about to be parents, including counseling, parenting classes, and classes on effectively dealing with stress (because seriously, as cute as those little babies are, they can be really stressful). There are also programs like the WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) program that help make sure you are able to provide your child with healthy meals.



ACTIVITY

Are you emotionally, financially, and socially equipped to be a good parent at this point in your life?

How would you support your child?

What impact would parenthood have on your future goals?

If you were a teen parent, what would your life look like a year from now? In five years? In ten years?

Imagine for a moment that you are a baby, ready to be born. Would you choose yourself as a parent?



ACTIVITY

Some youth have misconceptions about pregnancy and view having a child as a possible solution to their problems.

Consider the following:

Andrea has had a lot of tough experiences in her life. She thinks about getting pregnant so she'll have someone who will love her. She also has difficulty in school and thinks that if she got pregnant, she could drop out and would not have to worry about her education anymore.

What are Andrea's assumptions? Are these good reasons to have a child? Do you think Andrea's life will be easier if she becomes a parent?



Bringing a child into the world will not solve personal or emotional problems. In fact, it can cause more confusion and add to current difficulties. Education will probably be an ongoing concern for Andrea because it will be very difficult to support both herself and her child on minimum wage employment.

Consider the following:

Lately, **Lisa** and her boyfriend have been fighting constantly. Recently, her boyfriend told her that he is thinking about breaking up with her. Now she is thinking about getting pregnant in order to save their relationship.

What is Lisa's assumption? Will this path ultimately lead to what Lisa wants? Why or why not?



Having a baby does not save a relationship. It may motivate people to stay together for the short term, or even find a way to co-parent over the course of a lifetime. However, having a child brings additional stressors to a relationship and creates new conflicts. Following is realistic advice from a teen prevention website.

"Aunt Sarah's List"

Things We ALL Need to Say to Teens and Young Adults

Getting pregnant or causing pregnancy, having babies, and starting families are perhaps the most important things we ever do, with generational effects. These major steps need to be thought about carefully, not stumbled into. We think and talk about so many less important things all the time; what's for dinner, March Madness brackets, or what movie to see this weekend. Surely the event of when to become a parent, with whom, and under what circumstances deserve at least the same amount of time and attention.

1. Babies need adult parents.

2. "If it happens, it happens" is no way to start a family, or "I just never thought about it" isn't either.
3. Babies don't cement relationships; they often put great stress on them. Be sure you are in a solid relationship before you begin a family.
4. Sex has meaning, risks, and consequences. It's not a casual activity. Take it seriously.
5. Babies don't give unconditional love; they demand it from the adults around them.
6. Children do best when they are raised by parents who are committed to each other and to years of devoted parenting.
7. *To boys and men:* Making babies doesn't make you a man. Being a devoted parent and father may.
8. *To girls and women:* Sex won't make him yours and babies won't make him stay.
9. Personal responsibility and parental responsibility mean it's not just about "me" the adult—it's also about what's in the best interest of children, communities, and future generations.

Adapted from "The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy"
<http://the.nationalcampaign.org/resource/aunt-sarahs-list>

Having a child is an enormous responsibility which influences the rest of a parent's life. Every child in this world deserves love, security, safety, and a good start. This requires great sacrifices on the part of each parent, which are difficult at any point in life, and even more so, during adolescence.

Resources for Parenting:

- For more information about programs to help out with prenatal care, parenting and having a healthy baby, call the Massachusetts Sexual Health Helpline at 1-877-MA-SEX-ED.

2) If you choose to have the baby and make an adoption plan:

Adoption

An unplanned pregnancy can be difficult if you and your partner are not ready to parent a child, but have decided that abortion isn't right for you either. You may want more information about adoption. Adoption is a legal process which permanently places a child with a parent or parents who are ready to care for a child. By choosing adoption, you will be providing someone (or a couple) with a child who might not be able to have one on their own. Remember it's up to each person to figure out what to do in this situation, and what feels right for one person may not feel right for another. Whatever your reason, if you are unable to parent, and don't wish to have an abortion, then you may want to learn more about adoption.

Carrying a pregnancy to full-term and going through the adoption process may seem scary, but there are services available to help you along the way. These include personal

support and counseling as well as support for anyone close to you who may also be affected by the decision.

In Massachusetts, you have to work with a licensed agency or service provider to help you make an adoption plan that is best for you and your baby. There are many types of adoption agencies as well as types of adoption. Once you choose an adoption agency, the agency can then help you decide what type of adoption works best for you and your baby. Agencies will provide resources and support for people who are having a difficult time and will help them get through the adoption process.

You should also know that someone under 18 can give consent for an adoption in Massachusetts. They don't need to get permission from a parent or guardian.

Get Support - Adoption Resources:

- MA Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE)
<http://www.mareinc.org/howtoadopt.html>

3) If You Choose to Have an Abortion:

How do I decide what to do?

While many people have strong opinions about abortion, you must decide for yourself how you feel about it. It is a difficult decision to make and one that you should not make alone. Although it may be difficult to talk with a trusted friend or adult, it would be helpful to you to have someone to support you whatever you decide to do. Before you make your final decision regarding what you will do about your pregnancy, you should seek counseling to fully understand the medical procedure and the subsequent concerns both medically and emotionally that you will be facing should you go ahead and have an abortion.

What you need to know.....

It is your right to decide what to do with your body without feeling judged, pressured, or criticized. This is an important decision that you have to make based on your own situation. Abortions are safe and legal in Massachusetts. The earlier the pregnancy is terminated, the safer it is. Mass Health and most other health insurance plans do cover abortions.

If you are under age 18.....

If a woman is under age 18, Massachusetts law requires both the woman's consent and the consent of a parent or legal guardian. If you find it is too difficult to confide in your parent or guardian, you will need to go before a judge for a confidential authorization for the abortion. If you need help to speak with your parents or guardian, or to go before a judge, you can call the Planned Parenthood Counseling and Referral Hotline at 1-800-682-9218 (option 3). They will support you in whatever decision you have made, and

will even provide you with a free lawyer who will help you go to court and talk with a judge.

Abortion Resources

To get more information about abortion, see the following resources:

Post Abortion Support

www.4exhale.org

Pregnancy Options

<http://www.pregnancyoptions.info/>

Sex Etc.

<http://www.sexetc.org/topic/abortion>

The Value of Counseling

Sometimes it can be hard to cope with all of the changes that happen during your childhood, adolescence and young adulthood. Throughout this module it has been recommended that you seek professional help at times if you are having trouble dealing with certain situations or emotions. If you do find yourself struggling at any time in your life, you may find counseling to be a helpful way of sorting things out.

Everyone feels sad or lonely at times. We can often feel anxious, angry, or even guilty about something we might have done. Often we work through these negative feelings ourselves, or find it helpful to confide in a trusted adult. If these negative feelings persist and you find yourself struggling with your daily life, it may be time to consider professional counseling.

People seek counseling when painful feelings they are experiencing become overwhelming. Many of these painful feelings are due to loss. There are many different kinds of loss that affect people. Death is certainly the most recognizable form of loss, but a loss is often experienced when relationships end in other ways, too, such as through divorce, foster care, or an illness. In fact, any change can lead to feelings of loss.

Consider the following:



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Grace was getting ready to graduate from high school. She had worked hard for 4 years and was proud of herself for reaching her goal. She was excited about graduating and was looking forward to going away to college in the fall. At times Grace found herself feeling kind of sad and she didn't really understand why since she had achieved everything she had been working for. Why do you think Grace felt sad sometimes? What could she do to lessen her feelings of sadness?

Anyone who feels that the pain from a loss is too much to handle should think about talking to a professional, such as a school counselor, psychologist, social worker, or member of the clergy. If someone has already experienced a loss, each new loss can sometimes bring up painful feelings and memories. Counselors can be helpful when people feel they are having trouble getting over a loss. The most important things to remember about coping with loss are:

- Be patient with yourself
- Find healthy ways to let your feelings out
- Let people who are close to you offer their support
- See a counselor if you feel like you could use help with getting through your loss

Positive Mental Health

Staying mentally healthy isn't just about treating illness. There are lots of things we can do to help prevent ourselves getting ill in the first place, and more we can try if we do encounter problems. As a young person in foster care you have likely experienced a high degree of trauma or suffering. However, most young people are resilient and able to bounce back from difficult times. One of the most important parts of life skills development is strengthening and utilizing the tools you have to be mentally healthy and less stressed. This is a constant process throughout life for every human being and your strategies and abilities will change as you grow and experience life.

Tips for Positive Mental Health

There are many things you can do to gain or maintain positive mental health. Following is a list of things you can do, many of which you may already be doing. Check out the list for a few quick ideas for maintaining a positive outlook.

- Talk about your feelings with someone you trust
- Spend time with friends and loved ones
- Laugh
- Avoid alcohol and drugs
- Eat well
- Get enough sleep
- Improve your coping skills
- Set realistic goals
- Manage your stress
- Get involved in the community
- Find a hobby
- Keep a journal
- Do something good for someone else
- Listen to music to relax or lift your mood
- Ask for help
- Get professional help when needed



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For one week at the end of the day, write down three good things that happened to you that day in a notebook or your journal. How is your outlook at the end of the week? Is it more positive? Why or why not?

All of us have both negative and positive things happen to us throughout our day. It's not unusual for people to focus on all the negative things that we experience daily. Most people feel this exercise helps them redirect their attention to the good and positive things that happen to us through the course of our day. In fact, many people continue the exercise after a week and make it a part of their daily life.



What Are My Personal Goals?



It is never too early to ask yourself, “What do I want in life? As an adolescent or young adult, it is important to ask yourself this question now. Up until this point in your life, many decisions about YOUR life have been made for you by other people. Now is the time for you to begin making decisions for yourself. It is exciting to think about the life you want for yourself! What are your dreams? What do you need to do to achieve those dreams? What goals do you need to set? The answers to these questions are complex and your goals and dreams will change and evolve over your lifetime. It is important to start planning now for the life you want for yourself in the future.

As a young person, you can have a real sense of the vision you want for your life and how to make it happen. Whether or not your vision is realized depends on you. Your self-esteem, the actions you take, your responses to situations you encounter, the choices you make every day, and the relationships you develop will all contribute to your success. Setting a goal and accomplishing it requires different skills, perseverance, and hard work. However, achieving a goal you have set for yourself feels good and helps you realize the life you want for yourself.

Setting and Attaining Goals

When setting personal goals, it may be helpful to ask yourself the following questions. Think about where you see yourself in 5 years, then 10 years. Where will you live? What will you do for work? Will you still be in school?



ACTIVITY

Take a few minutes to think about where you see yourself in 5 years. Be specific about your plans and what you envision for yourself.

We have talked a lot about personal values, decision making, and personal goals. Now it is time to practice making decisions about future goals.

The following exercises will help you map out your short and long term goals in four different areas and the steps you need to take to achieve those goals. By working through the activity you will give yourself guidelines for living. Remember your vision will change over time, it happens to everyone, so you will need to adjust your goals and actions accordingly. Working to make your vision come true will give you a stronger sense of personal power and enhance your self-esteem.

① Education

① **Ask.**

What are two educational options I would consider once I finish high school or complete my GED?

Option A

Option B

② **List.** *What are ways of obtaining more information about each option?*

What are the entry requirements for each educational program? What are the possible career options and wages after I complete my education?

③ **Think** (*about the results*).

What are some good and difficult aspects about each option?

- A. Option A is good because _____
but it might be hard because _____
- B. Option B is good because _____
but it might be hard because _____

④ **Choose.**

If you could choose only one, which option would you choose:

Option A

Option B

Why? _____

⑤ **Evaluate.**

Did this checklist help you make a decision about what educational option you want to pursue? In what ways?

② **Jobs.**

① **Ask.**

What are two jobs or careers you might like to have when you are 22 years old?

Job/Career A

Job/Career B

② **List.** *What are some ways you could get those jobs?*

What are the entry requirements for each job or career? How can you find out if there are a lot of openings in this type of employment?

③ **Think** (*about the results*).

What are some good and difficult things about each job or career?

- A. Job A is good because _____
but it might be hard because _____
- B. Job B is good because _____
but it might be hard because _____

④ **Choose.**

If you could choose only one job or career, which one would it be?

Job A

Job B

Why? _____

⑤ **Evaluate.**

Did this checklist help you make a decision about what job you might want to obtain? In what ways?

Name one personal goal you have about work and jobs: _____

③ **Health.**

① **Ask.**

How can I keep myself healthy?

② **List.**

What are some habits that will help me stay healthy?

Foods

Activities & Exercises

③ **Think** (*about the results*).

- A. It's good to eat healthy food because _____

B. It's important to exercise because _____

C. One thing I like, that I might have to be careful about is _____

④ **Choose.**

In order to stay healthy, I will be sure to _____

and stay away from _____

⑤ **Evaluate.**

Did this checklist help you think about personal health goals?

Name one personal goal you have for your health _____



4 Friends.

① **Ask.**

How will I make new friends as I become an adult?

② **List.**

Three places I might meet new friends/

A.

B.

C.

③ **Think** (*about the results*).

A. One easy thing about making new friends here (A) is _____
_____ but one difficult thing is: _____

B. One easy thing about making new friends here (B) is _____
_____ but one difficult thing is: _____

C. One easy thing about making new friends here (C) is _____
_____ but one difficult thing is: _____

④ **Choose.**

One way I will try to find new friends is _____

⑤ **Evaluate.**

Did this checklist help you discover helpful ways to make new friends?

Name one personal goal you have for your future friendships _____

You can use the goal setting/decision making chart below to set new goals or evaluate your present ones in all areas of life. Short term goals often help us get moving in the right direction. They are the steps we take to achieve our long term goals. With that in mind, summarize your personal goals below.

	Short Term	Long Term
Education		
Employment		
Health		
Money Management		
Friends/Relationships		
Family		
Recreation		
Transportation		
Living Situation		

Remember, personal goals can change due to new information, different circumstances, and personal experiences. Your goals may change throughout your lifetime, especially when you are young. Don't be afraid to change your direction as new ideas and opportunities present themselves. Whatever your goals are, if they're what you want, go for it!

Being Your Best

Being your best is easy to say but difficult to do. Being your best does not mean just trying. Being your best means taking everything you are as a person – all of your special talents and skills, weaknesses, limitations, and conditions – and using them to your full capacity and advantage. Being your best means striving to reach your full potential. It is this struggle that builds you as a human being, that makes you stronger and better able to overcome the many challenges you will face throughout your life.

Being your best does not mean being THE best. You will always be better at something than someone else, and there will always be someone better than you at something. Reaching your full potential is what makes you a winner and a success in your life. The only person you need to compete against is you.

How do I reach my full potential?

A very experienced health and sexuality teacher, Michael J. Basso, in his book The Underground Guide to Teenage Sexuality, has a list of his key lifestyle areas below that summarize a lot of what is in this module:

Nutrition. The fuel you put into your body will determine how you feel, grow, recuperate, and perform.

Physical Activity. Exercise strengthens your bones and muscles, including your heart. The stronger your body is, the more you are able to do, and the better you are able to perform. The better your performance, the closer you move toward reaching your potential. The good news about exercise (both physical and mental) is that it doesn't matter how strong you are right now. If you just challenge yourself appropriately each day (not too hard, but by small improvements over time) you will become stronger and better.

Sleep. Most young people do not get enough sleep. When you sleep, essential hormones are produced that allow you to grow and become stronger. All the exercise in the world will not make you stronger if you are not getting enough sleep. Turn off the television, power down the computer, hang up the phone and get at least 8 hours of sleep per night.

Social Health. If you have at least one good friend in this world, you're doing very, very well. Try to maintain a solid friendship with someone you can share ideas and feelings with and who makes you feel comfortable being yourself. To stretch yourself, try to start a conversation with someone you don't know at least once per week.

Spiritual Health. Spiritual health means strengthening your spirit, the life energy within you. Some of the best ways are by being honest, treating people fairly, and

helping people when they need it. A strong spirit will energize you and give you strength not only to do the right things, but to do things to the best of your ability.

Stress Management. Find healthy ways to get rid of the stress in your life. Writing in a journal, exercising, walking, making art, practicing a skill or hobby- all relieve the built-up tension in your body, allowing you to think clearly and focus on the things you need to do to be your best.

Balance. Nothing done in excess is healthy. Balance school work with hobbies, vigorous exercise with relaxation, chores with fun time, friends with family. When you do anything to excess it means that other important areas in your life suffer and weaken, and your overall ability to perform will decrease.

Practice! Practice the skills you want to improve over and over again. Perfect your talents, reduce your weaknesses and limitations, and be persistent.

What if I'm not good at anything?

You may not believe this, but every person is good at something. Each person is born with strengths, special skills, or talents. Unfortunately, many people will never take the time to discover what their strengths are, let alone develop them.

If you're stuck, use your trusted adult(s) to help you figure this out. Sometimes when we can't see what is special about us, the people who care about us can help us.

<p>You have a jewel within you. Find it, polish it, and use it to make yourself a success. Only you can.</p>
