

# SESSION 17:

## How to choose safe friends

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### Objectives

1. Participants will increase their skills in assessing the risks their partners pose.
2. Participants will increase their skills in initiating a relationship.
3. Participants will learn the differences between what girls and boys find attractive in a partner.
4. Participants will increase their skills in terminating a relationship.
5. Participants will determine what they want in a partner.
6. Participants will assess whether their sexual values put them at risk.

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### Rationale

The adolescents served in this program live in a world full of risks. From the point of view of acquiring HIV a major source of danger comes from the people with whom they associate. Their world is peer oriented, so that their friends and acquaintances are both supports and potential threats.

Thus, a critical skill for these adolescents is being able to assess the extent to which the people they meet and hang out with are likely to involve them in unsafe behavior. This skill means they must discriminate superficial appearances from risk taking actions. They must avoid stereotypes. Screening their friends and partners without putting them in a position of lying is critical. The thought of screening their peers is often an anathema.

A lack of social skills may prevent a teenager from initiating a relationship with someone desirable. These skill deficits may result in staying with easy but unsafe relationships. Therefore practice in starting conversations and making friends - particularly ones of the opposite sex - is included.

Misunderstanding about what behavior in a partner is attractive to boys and girls respectively can also lead to actions that encourage unsafe sex. If a girl believes that boys are attracted to highly provocative sexual flirtation, she opens herself up to coercive unsafe sex. In this session boys and girls express what their true preferences are.

Once in a risky relationship an adolescent may not know how to terminate it. Thoughts about the consequences of ending it may contain fears related to angry, hurtful, and rejecting scenes. The anticipated unpleasantness of it all may lead to the decision to stay where one is in a relationship - no matter how unsafe. Therefore practice in terminating a relationship is provided.

Sexual values also play a part in which partner one selects. For example, manipulative or coercive values lead to less concern about partners and increase the risk of unsafe sex. Without pushing for a particular set of sexual values, value issues are raised. If struggling with these dilemmas causes anxiety and concern, this discomfort may well lead to caution and need not be considered undesirable.

Finally the session is based on the assumption that making explicit what each group member wants in a

partner both personalizes the session and encourages questioning about whether current partners fit the qualifications. Thus, personal preferences cap the session off.

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## Procedures

1. Introduce the day's session and group members, having each member indicate what is the most important quality they want in a partner. Review homework on using self and successes had during the week. Check Feeling Thermometers
2. Use the butterfly exercise to demonstrate why screening partners is so important.
3. Explore what makes a person safe by having a panel - one of whom has HIV - and giving the group member limited questions with which to learn the correct identity. (From an idea by Robie & Matsui in Brick)
4. Role play screening partners in order to determine how safe they are.
5. Have the girls and boys separately decide on what behavior of the opposite sex is attractive and unattractive. Share the results.
6. Role play initiating a relationship.
7. Role play terminating an undesirable relationship.
8. Examine privately each person's sexual values.
9. Have each person list the qualities that he or she wants in a partner.
10. Close with homework on screening one person, checking Feeling Thermometers, and giving appreciation to members contributions during the session.

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## Materials

Tokens

Feeling Thermometers

Newsprint and marking pens

3 x 5 cards and pencils

Background Information for Panel

Name tags for panelists

Girls' Views of Effective Male Actions

Boys' View of Effective Female Actions

Blackout script (Danny and Debbie)

My Sexual Values

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## **Exercise 1: Introducing and reviewing**

### **Leader says**

I'm glad to see you back at Session 17 of "Stay Safe!"

In "Stay Safe!" one of the main goals is to help you cope with all the different things which contribute to your being involved with unsafe sexual behavior.

Today we will be working on how to choose safe friends.

By the way, would each of you hold up the condom that you carry with you at all times?

**Have each person hold up a condom that they have been carrying with them. Give tokens to those group members that produce them.**

You see, we don't want you to get HIV.

If you already are HIV-positive, we don't want you to make it worse for yourself by getting re-infected.

We want to slow the spread of HIV and AIDS in ourselves, our friends and the community.

Also we want you to know your goals and to reach the goals you have set.

Each one of you has plans for the future.

**Ask a few group members where they want to be in 3 years. Give tokens.**

I am convinced that you will make things better for yourselves.

By being here at Stay Safe you have already started.

Let's go around and introduce ourselves.

Tell your name and tell us what is the most important quality you want in a partner.

Just say "I'm Buddy, and the most important quality I want in a partner is being able to trust them."

I'll start. I'm \_\_\_\_\_ and what I want in a partner is \_\_\_\_\_.

**Have everyone give their name and what is the most important quality they want in a partner.**

That was great.

How are you feeling right now on the Feeling Thermometer?

**Encourage responding and pass out tokens for participation.**

Remember how important it is to stay in touch with how much discomfort you are feeling and to label correctly what those feelings are.

At the end of Session 16 I asked you to try using self-talk.



And each of them has sex with two more people.

Can I have two volunteers to help me make these circles?

One of you take the right side and the other the left side.

**Select two volunteers and have them draw two circles next two each of the last circles.**

And each of them has sex with two more people.

**Have the volunteers draw the circles and keep going until the page is filled out like a big butterfly. Thank the volunteers and have them sit down.**

As you can see, every time you have sex, you are not just having sex with one person.

In a way you are having sex with everybody that your partner and your partners' partners have had sex with.

You are having sex with everyone on this page.

And you don't know what all these people have been doing.

Let's illustrate this a little more.

I need four volunteers who will serve on a panel.

**Select four volunteers. Give each one a background statement.**

#### Bill

You are a high school jock. You think girls exist to have sex with. You and your friends keep points for every time you score. You are way ahead of most of your team mates. You are big, handsome and very macho. You must have sex at least several times a week. You often use crack to get girls loose. You are scared to death of getting HIV and always use a condom. You have been tested 3 times and are HIV-negative.

#### Franco

You ran away from home when you were 13 and have lived on the streets for two years. You are gay and sell yourself often to make money for food. You refuse to have anal sex, and usually give blow jobs. You try never to swallow cum. You have also engaged in water sports if customers want it. You would like to find someone your own age who you could love and be with for a long time, but so far that hasn't happened. You are not infected with HIV.

#### Cindy

You are sixteen and an intravenous drug user. You have tried to get off of it on your own but have failed every time. In general your life is pretty poor, and four times you made an attempt to kill yourself. You live on the streets and steal to pay for your habit. A year ago your best friend died with AIDS. That really scared you. Since then you haven't shared any needles. Several times you engaged in prostitution to get some money, but you always had the guy pull out before coming. You have been lucky so far and are not HIV-positive.

Fran

You go with the in-crowd at school. You are good looking and popular. You have dated Harold for three years and have felt safe having unprotected sex together. You are positive that neither of you had sex with anyone else during the three years you have been going together. Neither of you use drugs. Before you, Harold went to prostitutes often. He didn't know that he got HIV. He began to show signs that looked like they might be AIDS. You got scared and were tested in secret. You are HIV-positive. Without knowing it Harold passed it on to you.

***Have the four people sit at a table and face the group. Have a name sign in front of each person. Introduce each panelist.***

One of these four people is HIV-positive.

The rest of you must try to find out who that person is.

You can ask any personal question that you want, but it has to be a question that can be answered with either a "yes" or a "no."

And you cannot ask them directly if they are HIV-positive.

You cannot say, "Are you HIV-positive?"

Each of you has two chances to ask a question.

If you are on the panel and someone asks you a question that isn't covered in the background statement, feel free to just make up an answer.

But don't change what the background information says.

Has everybody got the idea?

Go ahead and ask your questions.

***Give each person in the group the chance to ask two questions. If the question cannot be answered with a "yes" or "no," help them to rephrase it. When all the questions have been asked, pass out cards and have them write the name of the person they think is HIV-positive on a card and hand it in.***

Let me read out who people think is HIV-positive.

***Read out the names.***

Tell us why you guessed as you did.

***Discuss the reasons given. Give tokens for good question and reasons.***

The person who is HIV-positive is Fran.

Fran tell us how it happened.

***Listen to Fran's story.***

What do you think of that?

***Discuss the choice and reactions.***

There are two main points to what we just did.

First, you can't tell by looking.

Second, it is not who the person is, it is what they do that leads to HIV.

So what are your Feeling Thermometer readings now?

***Get feeling readings.***

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***Exercise 3: Finding out how safe my friend or partner is***

We just made two points: you can't tell by looking and it is what people do that counts.

So how do you find out if your partner is safe?

For many teenagers the thought of screening partners is hard to imagine.

So that is what we want to practice.

What feelings would you have if you were to screen a partner?

***Encourage sharing of feelings.***

Practicing may help some of those feelings decrease.

First, let's look at what questions we might want to ask.

We don't want to put our friends in the position of lying to us.

That means we wouldn't ask most people if they are HIV-positive.

What kinds of questions would you ask a partner if you were trying to find out if they were safe?

***Put group member's suggestions up on newsprint. Make sure the list includes questions such as the following:***

1. **What actions does a person take to practice safer sex?**
2. **Who is responsible for practicing safer sex - boy, girl, top, bottom?**
3. **Do you usually use a condom?**
4. **Do you use intravenous drugs?**
5. **Do you share needles?**
6. **Have you had lots of girl friends (boy friends)?**
7. **Where do you come from or where do you live?**
8. **Do you have a condom with you?**

That looks like a good list.

Now let's try to screen a partner in role playing.

Who will be the boy and who will be the girl?

**Select volunteers.**

You meet for the first time at a party.

The girl's goal is to find out if the guy is a safe risk.

The guy's goal is to get the girl into bed.

I need to give the boy a little background information before we start.

**Take boy aside and tell him that he is a big stud. He has had sex with many girls and doesn't believe in using condoms. He likes girls to have his babies.**

Let's make sure everyone else has something to watch for during the role play.

**Assign all other group members a role. Watch for: feelings, facial expressions, body language, self-confidence, assertive about her needs, doesn't put the boy on the defensive, keeps at it, respects boy's needs.**

So what is the girl's goal?

**Make sure girl can state goal of assessing partner.**

What is the boy's goal?

**Make sure boy can state goal of having sex with girl.**

How do you both feel now?

**Get feeling levels.**

OK, go ahead and do the role play.

Find out how safe he is.

**Allow the role play to go for a few minutes. Have other group members become the players, if you wish. Then stop and discuss.**

That was very good.

I want to ask the boy and the girl how you feel now, what you liked about what you did, and what would you do differently.

**Obtain responses.**

What feedback can you give our players?

First tell them what you liked, what you observed, and then tell them what you would do if you had been role playing it.

**Encourage feedback.**

We'll try another role play.

Who will be the boy and who will be the girl?

**Select volunteers.**

This time it will be the boy who wants to find out if the girl is safe.

The girl's goal is to have sex with the boy.

I want to give the girl some background.

**Tell the girl that she uses iv drugs a lot and is a prostitute to pay for it. When the guy will use a condom, she encourages it, but most guys won't use one. This guy looks like he might give her some money afterwards. Business has been slow recently.**

Here's the scene. The boy was walking along, and the girl said "hi" to him.

They talked and then went someplace where they could have sex.

They have been playing around and feeling each other up when the boy decides he better find out about her.

He doesn't want to get HIV.

Please stand toe to toe and keep your hands down at your side.

Let's make sure everyone else has something to watch for during the role play.

**Assign all other group members a role. Watch for: feelings, facial expressions, body language, self-confidence, assertive about his needs, doesn't put the girl on the defensive, keeps at it, respects girl's needs.**

So what is the girl's goal?

**Make sure girl can state goal of wanting sex.**

What is the boy's goal?

**Make sure boy can state goal of wanting to find out if the girl is safe.**

How do you both feel now?

**Get feeling levels.**

OK, go ahead and do the role play.

Find out how safe she is.

**Make sure they stand toe to toe with hands kept down at the side. Allow the role play to go for a few minutes. Have other group members become the players, if you wish. Then stop and discuss.**

That was very good.

I want to ask the boy and the girl how you feel now, what you liked about what you did, and what would you do differently.

**Obtain responses.**

What feedback can you give our players?

First tell them what you liked, what you observed, and then tell them what you would do if you had been role playing it.

***Encourage feedback.***

So what did these two role plays do for you?

***Discuss***

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### ***Exercise 4: What do girls and boys like in partners?***

Often male and females don't really know what the other group finds attractive.

What this misunderstanding can lead to is doing things that turn off the other person.

Let's find out what the girls and boys in this group find attractive.

I want the girls and boys to meet separately and list five actions you like and five that you don't like in a member of the opposite sex.

Just to give you some ideas I'll give you each a list.

You don't have to use the items on the list.

Has everyone got it?

Five things you find attractive and five you don't like in a girl or boy.

Try to put it in terms of actions.

For example, do girls like a boy who works out in a gym?

***Pass out the lists and have each group work on developing their preferences.***

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### ***Girls= Views of Effective Males= Actions***

1. He displayed a good sense of humor.
2. He was sympathetic to her troubles.
3. He showed good manners.
4. He kept himself well-groomed.
5. He made an effort to spend a lot of time with a particular woman.
6. He offered to help her.
7. He showered daily.

8.                   physically fit to create a healthy appearance.
- 9.
10.    He wore attractive outfits.  
          He told people how important he was at work.
- 12.
13.    He showed off his ability to drink a lot.  
          He had sex on the first date.  
          He let a woman control the conversation.
- 16.
17.    He wore sexy clothes.  
          He flexed his muscles.
- 19.
20.    He flirted verbally and visually.

### ***Boys= Views of Effective Girls= Actions***

1.    She displayed a good sense of humor.
2.    She kept herself well-groomed.
3.    She was sympathetic to his troubles.
4.    She showed good manners.
5.    She showered daily.
6.    She kept herself physically fit to create a healthy appearance.
7.    She made up jokes to make men laugh.
8.    She made an effort to spend a lot of time with a particular man.
9.    She wore stylish, fashionable clothes.
10.   She offered to help him.
11.   She wore skimpy clothes to impress guys.
12.   She acted sexy to interest him.

13. She gave encouraging glances to guys.
14. She tried to appear indifferent to the guy she really liked.
15. She slept around with a lot of guys.
16. She pretended to be helpless.
17. She told him things he wanted to hear.
18. She showed off her driving skills.
19. She showed off her physical strength.
20. She bragged about her accomplishments.
21. She wore earrings.

Please put your choices up on newsprint when you are finished.

***Allow about ten minutes for the groups to work.***

OK, will the boys give us their list.

***Have the boys put and explain their list.***

Now will the girls put up their list.

***Have the girls put up their list and explain it.***

What do you think of these lists?

What are the similarities and differences?

***Encourage discussion. Check for surprises.***

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### ***Exercise 5: How to start a relationship***

Suppose you meet someone you like and the person seems safe to you.

How would you get the relationship started?

The more comfortable you are the less likely you will get yourself into an awkward situation.

Remember when you have sex with someone you are doing it with a person.

A person has likes and dislikes, their own special feel and smell, all different qualities, their own particular looks.

If you don't think you are doing with a person, you care less about protecting them or you.

We are going to role play getting started talking to someone.

Who will be the boy and who will be the girl?

**Select volunteers.**

You like this girl, and you want to get to know her.

You also want her to like you.

Here are a couple of suggestions before you start.

Ask open ended questions - ones she can't answer with "yes" or "no" because that way you will get her to talk.

Listen hard. Really pay attention to her.

Give her some genuine strokes.

That means compliment her, but don't fake it.

Last, remember the list of what girls like.

Have you got it?

Here's the scene.

You see her standing alone at a party.

Go up to her and see what you can do.

The girl's goal is to see if you like this guy.

So what are your goals?

**Have the boy and the girl tell the group what their goals are. Help them if the goals aren't clear.**

How do the two of you feel now?

**Check out feeling levels.**

The rest of us will observe and give feedback.

I'll give you things to look for.

**Assign observer roles: feelings, body language, listening, giving compliments, asking open ended questions, doing what girls like, not doing what girls don't like.**

Go ahead and get started.

**Allow a few minutes of role playing. If you wish, let other group members step into the roles.**

That was very good.

I want to ask the boy and the girl how you feel now, what you liked about what you did, and what would you do differently.

**Obtain responses.**

What feedback can the rest of you give our players?

First tell them what you liked, what you observed, and then tell them what you would do if you had been role playing it.

***Encourage feedback.***

Now we'll reverse it, and the girl will try to get to know the guy better.

I need a girl volunteer and a boy.

***Select volunteers.***

You have been in a group session together.

You sat next to this cute guy, and you want to get him to like you and to start up a conversation.

The group session is over.

Let's have the two of you sit next to each other.

***Ask the girl what her goal is and help her be clear that she is to have the guy like her and to keep a conversation going.***

What is your goal with this guy?

The guy's goal is to see if he likes this girl.

Have you got that? ***(To the guy)***

How do the two of you feel now?

***Check out feeling levels.***

The rest of us will observe and give feedback.

I'll give you things to look for.

***Assign observer roles: feelings, body language, listening, giving compliments, asking open ended questions, doing what boys like, not doing what boys don't like.***

Go ahead and get started.

***Allow a few minutes of role playing. If you wish, let other group members step into the roles.***

That was very good.

I want to ask the boy and the girl how you feel now, what you liked about what you did, and what would you do differently.

***Obtain responses.***

What feedback can the rest of you give our players?

First tell them what you liked, what you observed, and then tell them what you would do if you had been role playing it.

**Encourage feedback.**

So what did you learn from these role plays?

**Encourage discussion.**

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## **Exercise 6: How to end a relationship**

Sometimes people stay in relationships that aren't any good for them because they don't know how to end them.

What kinds of feelings have you had when a relationship ended?

**Encourage sharing of feelings after a relationship.**

People are afraid of anger, rejection, loneliness, hurt.

So a good skill to have is stopping a relationship.

I need two people to help me take a look at this.

Who will play Danny and who will play Debbie in this Blackout?

**Select volunteers, give them scripts and have them read aloud.**

### Danny and Debbie

DANNY: I'm sorry, baby. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

DEBBIE: I don't like being hit. I told you before that if you go upside my head one more time, we are through.

DANNY: Oh, please don't leave me. I won't do it again. I promise.

DEBBIE: That's what you said last time. I wasn't fooling around. Either you pack up and leave by noon or I'll find some other place to live.

DANNY: You're serious? It's my drinking. I never hit you when I'm not drinking.

DEBBIE: Danny, there is a lot I like about you. I don't want to give you up, but nobody is going to hit me twice. There is nothing that would make me stay with someone who does that. I agree the drinking is a big part of it. So go to AA.

DANNY: One more chance.

DEBBIE: You had your one more chance.

DANNY: Damn!

DEBBIE: I'm sorry that you're hurt and angry, but I come first in this business. I'm going out now, and I will respect you a whole lot, if when I come back, you are gone.

THE END

A great scene!

**Give out tokens.**

What are you both feeling?

**Get feeling readings.**

So what did you like or not like in how Debbie handled this situation?

**Encourage discussion.**

Let's do one role play around ending a relationship.

**You can either obtain a situation from the group about ending a situation or use the one below. Use the same process.**

Who will be Donna and who will be Sam?

**Select volunteers.**

Here is the situation.

Donna and Sam have been going together for two years.

Because they both said they weren't seeing anyone else they have been having unprotected sex.

Donna finds out that Sam has been having sex with several other girls.

She is terrified of getting HIV.

She wants to end the relationship.

Donna's goal is to end the relationship.

Sam's goal is to keep the relationship going.

So what are your goals?

**Make sure Donna and Sam are clear about their respective goals.**

The rest of us will observe and give feedback.

I'll give you things to look for.

**Assign observer roles: feelings, body language, expressing her needs, respecting his needs, keeping calm, not letting him get to her, sticking with it, showing confidence.**

Go ahead and get started.

**Allow a few minutes of role playing. If you wish, let other group members step into the roles.**

That was very good.

I want to ask the boy and the girl how you feel now, what you liked about what you did, and what would you

do differently.

**Obtain responses.**

What feedback can the rest of you give our players?

First tell them what you liked, what you observed, and then tell them what you would do if you had been role playing it.

**Encourage feedback.**

So what did you learn from these role plays?

**Encourage discussion.**

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**Exercise 7: What are my sexual values?**

There are times when what you believe about sex influences who your partners are.

For example, if you are a guy and believe that girls are things to use for your sexual pleasure, you might care less about who you choose to have sex with.

So take a moment and answer the questions on the value sheet I'm going to pass out.

This sheet is for your own information, and you won't be asked to pass the sheet to anyone else.

**Pass out the form called "My Sexual Values." Pass out pencils also.**

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**My Sexual Values**

**INSTRUCTIONS: Read each of the value statements listed below and check off whether you agree or disagree with the statement.**

1. Be responsible when you have sex by not bring grief or hardship to your partner - such as creating an unwanted child or giving them HIV.  
Agree\_\_\_\_\_ Disagree\_\_\_\_\_
2. Do not force your partner to have sex.  
Agree\_\_\_\_\_ Disagree\_\_\_\_\_
3. Do not manipulate your partner into having sex through drugs, alcohol or deception.  
Agree\_\_\_\_\_ Disagree\_\_\_\_\_
4. Respect your partners wishes and pleasures.  
Agree\_\_\_\_\_ Disagree\_\_\_\_\_
5. Only have sex when it will make you feel good about yourself.

- Agree\_\_\_\_\_ Disagree\_\_\_\_\_
6. Only have sex when it will make your partner feel good about you.  
Agree\_\_\_\_\_ Disagree\_\_\_\_\_
7. Only have sex when it will make your partner feel good about her or himself.  
Agree\_\_\_\_\_ Disagree\_\_\_\_\_
8. Only have sex when you are in love with your partner.  
Agree\_\_\_\_\_ Disagree\_\_\_\_\_
9. Only have sex with someone you respect.  
Agree\_\_\_\_\_ Disagree\_\_\_\_\_
10. Do not have sex just because you can.  
Agree\_\_\_\_\_ Disagree\_\_\_\_\_

How do you feel now?

***Obtain feeling level readings***

What do you think about your sexual values?

***Discuss. The point is not to set absolute standards or to come up with a right or wrong answer. The point is for the group members to struggle with the issues raised.***

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***Exercise 8: What do I want in a partner?***

The last thing for today is to think about what you want in a partner.

The question can be asked in all different ways: What attracts you in a partner? What turns you on? What do you want your partner to be like?

However you ask it, list five qualities you want your partner to have.

***Pass out cards. Allow a few minutes for group members to write down the qualities they want in a partner.***

Will anyone share what kinds of things are important to you?

***Encourage sharing.***

We are at the end of the day's session.

How do you feel?

***Obtain feeling levels.***

What comments do you have about today's session?

***Discuss reactions.***

Let's give strokes to group members for their contributions to all the work you did.

***Encourage giving strokes.***

For homework talk to one person and try to find out how safe they might be.

I'll see you for session 18 at \_\_\_\_\_ (time) on \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

**END OF SESSION 17**