



Session 8

Safer Sex

8:1	Introductions	<i>15 min</i>
8:2	How to Handle Difficult Sexual Situations	<i>20 min</i>
8:3	Dealing with Rationalizations	<i>15 min</i>
8:4	Preparing for and Dealing with Slips	<i>15 min</i>
8:5	Making a Soap Opera or Music Video	<i>45 min</i>
8:6	Ending the Group	<i>15 min</i>

street smart

Session 8: Safer Sex

Objectives:

1. Participants will review a model for understanding why people engage in behavior that they know is risky.
2. Participants will learn how to deal with rationalizations that encourage unsafe sex.
3. Participants will enhance their learning and integration by engaging in a creative process.
4. Participants will achieve a sense of accomplishment and have a sense of direction.

Rationale:

From a learning theory point of view, when people engage in behavior that appears to be unhealthy, a set of reinforcements is at work to initiate and maintain the behavior. An expectation of positive rewards is one crucial factor. Consequently, it is important to have youth identify what "good" they and their peers might hope to receive from unsafe sex. Discovering and labeling these expectations can begin to change perceptions and can reduce the positive valence associated with unsafe sexual situations.

Since they know which behaviors are unsafe, youth need to justify why they continue to act unsafely. One of the key ways to do that is through rationalization. This session deals with which rationalizations are often used, and then provides practice in countering those rationalizations. Since it is hoped that the uncovered rationalizations are ones actually used by members of the group, paradoxical techniques are employed to make using these excuses less potent.

At this point, it is important to provide the participants with an opportunity to pull all of the experiences in the training together. Since the sessions are ending and the formal group will be disbanding, it is important that the participants engage in a final group effort using their creativity, and experience a sense of closure.

The main point of this session is for the participants to figure out why they engage in risky behaviors, and to learn how to argue against their rationalizations.

Procedures:

1. Have participants introduce themselves by using an adjective with the same first letter as their name.
 2. Explain the importance of recognizing feelings and teach participants how to assess their own comfort-discomfort levels through using the Feeling Thermometer and prepared examples.
 3. Discuss why people may engage in risky behaviors using a script to illustrate.
 4. Find out the reasons why group members and their friends might engage in unsafe sex.
 5. Create a media message (music video, soap opera, commercial).
 6. Review and discuss the media message.
 7. Discuss the ending of the group.
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Materials:

Goals of Street Smart

Ground rules newsprint

Feeling thermometer poster

Tokens

Newsprint and marking pens

Pat and Sonia script

People's Actions

Rationalization Cards

Goal Setting and Confidence Rating Sheet

Costumes and Makeup

Exercise 1: Introductions

(15 minutes)

Welcome! It's good to see you in "Street Smart."

As you may already know, we are trying to learn more skills on how to keep ourselves from getting HIV, and on how to lead the kind of life that we want for ourselves.

Let's go around and introduce ourselves. Tell us your name and an adjective that starts with the same letter as your name.

For example, you might say, "I'm Cool Carlos."

I'll start. I'm _____ .

Have everyone give their name and an adjective.

Very good.



Hand out tokens of appreciation to everyone.

These are tokens of appreciation.

We use them a lot to show group members how much we appreciate their contributions to the group.

So, if you appreciate someone else's comment or action, please give them a token.

You must say something to the other person when giving a token. It is important to hand the token directly to the other person.

The idea is to share positive feelings with others by distributing your pile of tokens by the end of the session.

Review last session's homework from the workbook. Even though the sessions are ending, if someone is new and doesn't have a workbook, give him/her one.

For all of you, what did you do in the last 24 hours to keep safer from HIV and STDs?

We are interested in even the smallest thing that you did because we want to see you stay healthy.

Your comments may also help someone else in the group.

Who would like to be the first person to tell us about a success you had in the last week (or since the last session) in keeping safer?

Encourage discussion.

Great.



Hand out tokens for any positive behaviors.

Who has a condom?

Ask them to hold up their condoms.

Great.



Hand out a special prize to those people carrying a condom (\$1).

And for everyone who was on time today, you get a chance to win today's lottery.

Have the lottery drawing. Each participant draws from a box and 2-3 of them will win a prize (e.g., a food coupon).



Put up "GOALS OF STREET SMART." (Also see end of session.)

During these sessions, we have focused on the feelings and thoughts that lead to actions that are unsafe.

For example:

You are drunk and meet this really hot guy.

You want to have a partner.

You go ahead and have unprotected sex.

The goals of Street Smart are to help you stay safer. We have given you the tools, information, and practice to help you keep yourself safe. Our goals are to help you:

1. Practice safer sex.
2. Get in touch with your feelings.
3. Get rid of thoughts that are self-defeating.
4. Take control of your life.
5. Feel confident about your ability to act safe.
6. Know where to go when you are in trouble and need help.

7. Know your own patterns of risk.
8. Make friends who can help you to stay safer.
9. Have fun while changing behaviors.

We are committed to making sure that this is a safe place to share feelings and thoughts, try out new behaviors, give feedback to each other, and to work together.



Put up “FEELING THERMOMETER POSTER.” (Also see end of session.)

Here is a Feeling Thermometer.

You can see that being the most uncomfortable is 100 and being very, very comfortable is 0. Where do you think you are?

What is your temperature on the Feeling Thermometer right now?



Have participants look at the poster of the Feeling Thermometer and have them indicate where they are on the thermometer.

Thank you.

It is important to stay in touch with how much comfort or discomfort you are feeling, and what those feelings mean.

Our role as facilitators is to help you learn how to stay safer.

That means we will present you with many opportunities to practice.

Over the course of these sessions, we have talked about many different situations that can put people at risk for HIV, STDs, and unwanted pregnancy.

We have dealt with situations that put you at risk that you may have encountered, and some situations that you may have never encountered.

The idea has been to incorporate many different experiences that can put you at risk, such as sex with persons of the opposite sex, sex with persons of the same sex, using and abusing drugs, selling yourself for drugs or money, and many others.

We don't expect that everyone will have the same experiences. We are all here to learn and help to keep each other safer.

One thing we have done to make it a safe place is to have ground rules.



Put up “GROUND RULES” newsprint. (Also see end of session.)

From our last session, the ground rules for Street Smart are:

1. Keep confidentiality. What you say is yours - what you hear is theirs.
2. Ask questions - there are no stupid questions.
3. If you are going to be in the group, be involved.
4. Don't judge others - accept group members as you would want to be accepted.
5. Agree to come "one more time" if you think you want to quit, give it a second chance
6. Don't come high.

What other rules would you like to add?



Encourage sharing and give out tokens. Catch someone doing something good.

Great! Let's do the next exercise now.

Exercise 2: How to Handle Difficult Sexual Situations (20 minutes)



Let's start off today with a quick role-play.

Who will be Sonia and who will be Pat?

Select volunteers.

While you two do the role-play the rest of us will observe.

We will look for what emotions you are showing and how you handle unclear sexual situations.

Select volunteer observers.

You watch the face of Pat, and you watch the face of Sonia to see what feelings they are expressing.

You look for emotion in the voice of Pat and you Sonia.

You watch the hands of Pat and you watch the hands of Sonia. Body language can be a good way to figure out how someone is feeling.



Ask actors where their *Feeling Thermometer* levels are before they begin the role-play.



CHOICE - to videotape or not

Who wants to be the camera person?

Select volunteer.

Thank you.



OK, now let's do the role-play.



Pat and Sonia

Sonia: Where were you last night Pat? We missed you at the party.

Pat: Remember that really hot guy I told you about last week? I ran into him on the street and he started up a big conversation with me, asking all this stuff about me. I couldn't believe he was interested in little old me.

Sonia: You mean that older guy? Oh, he is a beautiful work of art. How exciting!

Pat: It was great – he took me out to eat and then we went back to his place. He has a really nice place.

Sonia: Don't tell me – did you do it with him?

Pat: Of course! You think I am going to pass up an opportunity like that?

Sonia: Now, tell me my friend, did you use protection?

Pat: He didn't say anything about condoms and I certainly was not going to bring it up and ruin the whole night.

Sonia: I can't believe you! Are you stupid?

Pat: Listen Sonia, he is older, he does not mess around with drugs and stuff -- this is a guy who has his life together, he is definitely safe.

Sonia: That's what you want to believe, but you never know.

THE END

That was great!



Give out tokens.

Where are your Feeling Thermometers now?



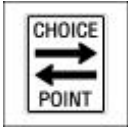
Get Feeling Thermometer readings for both actors.

Elicit what aspect each actor liked about their performance.

What did each of you like about how you played that role?

Elicit what each actor would have done differently.

What one thing would you do differently in your next role-play?



CHOICE

If role-play was videotaped, say:

Let's go to the videotape!

Have the whole group watch the videotape.



Observers, what feedback can we give our players?

First tell them what you observed about their emotions, body language, eye contact, etc.

Observers, now that you have watched the scene, what did you like about what the actors did, and what would you have done differently?



Encourage discussion and share tokens. Throughout the discussion that comes up, emphasize the point that in unclear sexual situations, it is important to figure out why a risk is being taken and to argue against any harmful rationalizations.

Thank you for your feedback.

Now, what do you think of Pat's answer about using condoms?

In an earlier session we went over why people keep acting in a certain way.

Give out "PEOPLE'S ACTIONS" handout to participants. (See end of session.)

And we said that people do things when they expect something good to come out of it.

For example, a person might have unsafe sex because they expect to make some money from it.

Or they might do it so that their partner will like them more.

What good did Pat think was going to come out of having unsafe sex with that older guy?

Obtain responses.

Let's try and figure out what you or your friends usually hope to get out of unsafe sex.

What good things do you usually think you are going to get out of it?

I will write them up here.



Write responses on newsprint. Make sure the list includes the following:

- ***Instant pleasure***
- ***Reduce loneliness***
- ***Could be the right person in my life***
- ***Be accepted***
- ***Fear of rejection***



Tell us where you are on the Feeling Thermometer.



Deal with extreme discomfort by exploring what thoughts are behind it. Be supportive. Give tokens for confronting discomfort and reducing uncomfortable feelings. Try relaxation if you wish.

Exercise 3: Dealing with Rationalizations (15 minutes)

Sometimes we tell ourselves that having unsafe sex is OK.

"Rationalizing" is the word used to describe making an excuse for ourselves.

It is how we explain away the fact that we did something that wasn't too smart.

In our role-play at the start of the session, what rationalization did Pat use for having unprotected sex?

Obtain responses.

When you start telling yourself that unsafe sex is OK, one way to deal with that is to argue against your rationalizations.

Let's say I told myself, "Nothing else is going right in my life now, so what have I got to lose?"

How would you shoot down that idea?



Encourage suggestions. Give out tokens.

I could say to myself, "First, you've got your life to lose. Second, if you keep telling yourself that life sucks, instead of doing something to make it better, you'll work yourself into a big depression."

Let's practice this together.

Each person will get a card with a rationalization on it.

Give out cards.

The first person will read their rationalization for not having safe sex and then pass the card to the person on their right.

The second person will argue against that rationalization.

Then they will turn the card over and read the suggestion on the back.

Is there anything unclear about this exercise?

OK, let's start.



CHOICE - ways to do the exercise

Pass out the cards one at a time. When the first person has answered, give a card to the second person. Keep going until everyone has had a chance to argue against a rationalization.

OR

To make this exercise shorter, pick out 4 rationalization cards and choose 2 pairs of participants to argue against them in front of the whole group.



This exercise can be videotaped.

Do the exercise.



You all did very well.

Encourage sharing of tokens.

How do you feel? Check out the Feeling Thermometer.



Obtain responses on feelings.

So, what did you think of the rationalizations?

Did they sound familiar?

Was it easy or difficult to come up with arguments against the rationalizations?



Encourage discussion and give out tokens. Throughout the discussion that comes up, emphasize the point that in unclear sexual situations, it is important to figure out why a risk is being taken and to argue against any harmful rationalizations.

Exercise 4: Preparing for and Dealing with Slips (15 minutes)

Staying safe means being prepared for slips. A slip is when you do something that you promised yourself you wouldn't do. Like you weren't going to have sex without a condom ever again, but you met this really hot guy and you did it anyway.

We just looked at the many ways you can rationalize doing something you said you weren't going to do and learned ways to argue against it.

In our previous session we identified the triggers, person, places, situations and feelings that might lead to a slip, and the options you have for dealing with those triggers.

Another way to be prepared for dealing with slips is to be clear on what you want for yourself in the long run.

Hand out "GOAL SETTING / CONFIDENCE RATING" Sheet. (See end of session.)

We are going to do this handout one column at a time.

In the first column, list of all the things you want to do, be and have in the next three years. Be sure to include having safer sex and being sober when you have sex.

Let your dreams soar: it's important that you write down what you truly feel. You're the only person who will see your list.

Allow five minutes for everyone to write down their lists. Encourage them to list as many goals as they can.

In the next column, use a scale of 1 to 10 and write down how important each goal is for you. 1 means not that important, and 10 means very important. No one else will see your list.

Allow a few minutes for participants to rank the importance of each goal.

In the last column, use a scale of 1 to 10 and write down how confident you are of achieving each goal.

So let's say you want to have safer sex.

This goal is really important for you, because you don't want to get HIV or an STD.

But imagine that you meet this really sexy guy (a definite trigger). How confident are you of being able to say no to having unprotected sex with him?

Allow a few minutes for the participants to write down their confidence levels for each goal.

Now look at your sheet and compare how important a goal is to you to your confidence in being able to make it happen. The bigger the gap (like if something is a 9 on importance for you, but only a 2 on confidence) then the greater the chance that you might slip on this goal.

Who wants to share what they found?



Encourage discussion and pass out tokens. Throughout the discussion that comes up, emphasize the point that in risky situations, it is important to figure out why a risk is being taken and to argue against any harmful rationalizations.

Great job!

Let's do a quick check-in with the Feeling Thermometer. Where are you right now?



Discuss Feeling Thermometer levels.

Exercise 5: Making a Soap Opera or A Music Video about Staying Safe (45 minutes)



I would like you to make a rap music video, a soap opera, or commercial on safer sex.

We will videotape your performance, and then we'll watch the tape and talk about it.

Think about all the things that you have learned in these sessions.

You definitely have a lot that you could talk about.

What are the most important things that you want to communicate?

You will have 30 minutes to get your media message together.

Then we will film it, watch it, and review it.

Here are some props and makeup that you may want to use.

Point out the props, makeup, and video equipment..

What are some of the jobs needed to make a soap opera, music video, or commercial?

Elicit answers such as director, actors, script writers, camera people, etc.

You can make whatever type of media that you want, but you need to decide quickly.

Think about all of the issues we have talked about in this group, both today and over the whole 8 sessions.

Try and come up with a song or scenario that incorporates what you have learned, and that gives other young people like yourself the message that staying safe is respecting and loving yourself as well as respecting and loving your partner.

Your video should last about 5-10 minutes.

Is everybody clear on what we're going to do?

Answer any questions.

My job is to tell you how much time you have left so that we can get everything in.

Go to it!

Allow 30 minutes for creating the soap opera. Make sure that each participant has a role as an actor, director, camera person, etc. Without intruding, remind the participants of the time and keep to the schedule. The group will need about 15 minutes for viewing the finished product and debriefing.

That was great!

Now, let's watch the tape.



Watch the tape. Make sure everyone can see the screen.

How do you feel after looking at your production?



Have participants share their Feeling Thermometer levels.

So what did you think about what you created?

Encourage discussion.

How about giving out strokes for this work of art that all of you made.



Encourage giving appreciation. Hand out tokens for supporting each other.

That was a fantastic job!

Exercise 6: Ending the Group **(15 minutes)**

We have crammed a lot of learning into a very short amount of time.

I would like to know what all of this has meant to you.

Tell me about the experiences you have had in this group.

Encourage sharing of what the sessions meant to the participants.



How do you feel now?

Take Feeling Thermometer readings.

Take a moment and get comfortable.

Now, concentrate on your breathing. **Pause.**

If you want to, you can close your eyes.

Be cool and just listen to my voice.

Imagine being an eagle.

When you breathe out, imagine that you are soaring high in the bright blue sky. **Pause.**

Breathe out again. **Pause.**

You are gliding easily on the wind.

The whole world is far below. **Pause.**

As you breathe out again, your powerful wings lift you higher. **Pause.**

With each breath out, say, "I sail on the stream of success."

"I sail on the stream of success." **Pause.**

"I sail on the stream of success." **Pause.**

"I sail on the stream of success." **Pause.**

How does that feel?

Encourage expressions of feeling.

You have shared a lot with each other.

You have seen each other role-playing, answering questions, learning new skills, talking about their feelings, and being creative.

You have gone through a great deal together.

What compliments would you like to give to the members of the group?

What do you appreciate about them?



Encourage the participants to share compliments. Give out lots of tokens.

I am going to hand out some postcards. Imagine it is three years from now and you are sending a postcard back to the group.

What would you say? Maybe you would write:

“Dear Group, I am living in my own apartment, and working at a job I love.”

“Dear Group, I just got my GED and started college last month.”

Or, “Dear Group, I have a beautiful son, and I take good care of him.”

Think about it, and write us a postcard from three years in the future.

Pass out 3x5 cards and pencils. Allow a few minutes for participants to write out their messages.

Who will begin and read their card to the group?

Have each participant share their card. Encourage them to talk about their goals for the future.

Let's just hang out and say good-bye to each other.

I am sure that our paths will cross again.

I feel really glad that I got to know all of you.

END OF SESSION 8

Goals of Street Smart

1. Practice safer sex.
2. Get in touch with your feelings.
3. Get rid of thoughts that are self-defeating.
4. Take control of your life.
5. Feel confident about your ability to act safe.
6. Know where to go when you are in trouble and need help.
7. Know your own patterns of risk.
8. Make friends who can help you to stay safer.
9. Have fun while changing behaviors.

Feeling Thermometer

<u>Level</u>	<u>Triggers (Situations, People, Places, Feelings, Things)</u>
Very uncomfortable 100	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Uncomfortable 75	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Mildly Comfortable 25	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Very comfortable 0	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Ground Rules

1. Keep confidentiality. What you say is yours - what you hear is theirs.
2. Ask questions - there are no stupid questions.
3. If you are going to be in the group, be involved.
4. Don't judge others - accept group members as you would want to be accepted.
5. Agree to come "one more time" if you think you want to quit, give it a second chance.
6. Don't come high.

Sonia and Pat

- Sonia: Where were you last night Pat? We missed you at the party.
- Pat: Remember that really hot guy I told you about last week? I ran into him on the street and he started up a big conversation with me, asking all this stuff about me. I couldn't believe he was interested in little old me.
- Sonia: You mean that older guy? Oh, he is a beautiful work of art. How exciting!
- Pat: It was great – he took me out to eat and then we went back to his place. He has a really nice place.
- Sonia: Don't tell me – did you do it with him?
- Pat: Of course! You think I am going to pass up an opportunity like that?
- Sonia: Now, tell me my friend, did you use protection?
- Pat: He didn't say anything about condoms and I certainly was not going to bring it up and ruin the whole night.
- Sonia: I can't believe you! Are you stupid?
- Pat: Listen Sonia, he is older, he does not mess around with drugs and stuff -- this is a guy who has his life together, he is definitely safe.
- Sonia: That's what you want to believe, but you never know.

THE END

People's Actions

People will continue to behave in a certain way if.....

1. They expect something good to come out of it.
2. Something that they want does come out of it.
3. Something good comes out of it often.
4. Anything negative that comes out of it happens a long time after the good part.

People will behave effectively in their best interests if.....

1. They know what is in their best interest.
2. They have the necessary skills to behave effectively.
3. They have opportunities to learn skills in several different ways: observing, imitating, and practicing.
4. They believe that they can be effective and have effective tools.
5. They fit into the environment in which they live and the environment supports them.

Rationalization Cards

CARD 1, FRONT, RATIONALIZATION

"I've waited so long to have sex that I'm sure nothing will happen just this one time."

How would you argue against this rationalization?

CARD 1, BACK

Suggestion: Why wait until you are frustrated and starved? You can have good sex without taking a risk. Besides all it takes is one time to get HIV.

CARD 2,FRONT, RATIONALIZATION

"I didn't insist that my partner use a condom because my partner was so good looking. I may never have the chance again."

How would you argue against this rationalization?

CARD 2, BACK

Suggestion: There are plenty of good-looking people who practice safer sex. Also it is not logical to say "You'll never have the chance again." Does it make sense to put yourself at risk for "good looks?"

CARD 3, FRONT, RATIONALIZATION

"I want to practice safer sex, but I'll hurt my partner's feelings if I insist on my partner using a rubber."

How would you argue against this rationalization?

CARD 3, BACK

Suggestion: Are you hiding your fear of getting in a conflict? What about your feelings? It's hard, but you can say "no." Is hurting your partner's feelings more important than putting yourself at risk?

CARD 4, FRONT, RATIONALIZATION

"I wanted to practice safer sex, but my partner was in me before I knew what was happening."

How would you argue against this rationalization?

CARD 4, BACK

Suggestion: Maybe you didn't know what was happening until it was already done. Aren't you more responsible for what you do than your partner is?

CARD 5, FRONT, RATIONALIZATION

"I had planned to practice safer sex, but it was the drugs. I didn't think I'd get so messed up."

How would you argue against this rationalization?

CARD 5, BACK

Suggestion: If you don't know what drugs do to you, then maybe being more careful is a good idea. Aren't you aware of how hard it is for you to say "no" when using drugs?

CARD 6, FRONT, RATIONALIZATION

"I have been so depressed lately. When my partner said, "I really want you," I didn't care about being safe. I just knew that good sex would raise my spirits."

How would you argue against this rationalization?

CARD 6, BACK

Suggestion: Having someone to want you may make you feel better for the moment, but you know that unprotected sex won't do much in the long run for your depression. Are you forgetting that unsafe sex is poor medicine?

CARD 7, FRONT, RATIONALIZATION

"We just saw each other on the street and knew we were going to do it. No one spoke. Talking about unsafe sex is the last thing we wanted to do. How could I say I wouldn't do it without a rubber?"

How would you argue against this rationalization?

CARD 7, BACK, RATIONALIZATION

Suggestion: How about some sign language, like pushing it away. You could also put a rubber on without saying a word. The rubber speaks pretty loud.

CARD 8, FRONT, RATIONALIZATION

"We've been together for a year and neither of us has slept with anyone else. Besides, we're in love. We don't use rubbers. What could go wrong?"

How would you argue against this rationalization?

CARD 8, BACK

Suggestion: Think of what could really go wrong. If you love each other so much, why put each other at risk? Together the two of you could solve the problem of love and safer sex.

CARD 9, FRONT, RATIONALIZATION

"I was so turned on I just couldn't break away and get a rubber from the bathroom."

How would you argue against this rationalization?

CARD 9, BACK

Suggestion: Wouldn't it have been fun to get turned on again after you went and got the rubber? Why weren't there rubbers in the bedroom? Couldn't you do something that was safe and didn't require a rubber?

CARD 10, FRONT, RATIONALIZATION

"My partner wants to do it this one time without a rubber. I guess once won't hurt me."

How would you argue against this rationalization?

CARD 10, BACK

Suggestion: Maybe this once you'll be lucky and it won't hurt you, but what if you're not lucky? Why take the chance? And what makes you think it's going to stop after one time?

CARD 11, FRONT, RATIONALIZATION

"Nobody I know uses rubbers. They would laugh at me if they found out."

How would you argue against this rationalization?

CARD 11, BACK

Suggestion: It is hard going against the crowd, but sometimes you have to put yourself first and be the smart one. Which is better living or not being laughed at? And how sure are you that everyone will laugh? Besides where will they be seven years from now?

Goal Setting and Confidence Rating Sheet

Goals	Importance (1-10)	Confidence of Getting It (1-10)
BE		
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
DO		
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
HAVE		
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____