

Michigan Model for Health®
Healthy and Responsible Relationships:
HIV, Other STIs, and Pregnancy Prevention,
A Module for Grades 9-12

Overview

School-based HIV and sex education programs can impact young people's potentially life-altering decisions by helping them make choices that support healthy and responsible relationships and prevent HIV, STIs, and unintended pregnancy. The Michigan Departments of Education and Community Health have worked collaboratively with curriculum writers and a broad-based review committee to develop a high school curriculum addressing HIV, STI, and pregnancy prevention and completing the *Michigan Model for Health®* scope and sequence related to adolescent youth risk behaviors. *Healthy and Responsible Relationships* was designed to accomplish several outcomes:

- ◆ Emphasize abstinence and offer districts options for implementation with either an abstinence-based or abstinence-only approach;
- ◆ Include 22 lessons that are aligned with the National Health Education Standards, the Michigan Merit Curriculum Credit Guidelines for Health Education, research and best practice, and Michigan state statutes. Topics include: relationships and intimacy; HIV and STI facts; compassion for people living with HIV/AIDS; transmission risks; influences and the law; abstinence, communication, avoidance, and refusal skills; costs of teen pregnancy and parenting; risk reduction through condom and contraceptive use; testing; goal setting; and sharing with others;
- ◆ Include extensive family and community involvement through an introductory parent letter, family homework assignments, and activities that can involve community resources;
- ◆ Incorporate embedded assessments and correlations with items developed through the national Health Education Assessment Project (SCASS~HEAP).

Meeting the Mandates and Guidelines¹

Healthy and Responsible Relationships has been carefully aligned with the following:

- ◆ Michigan statutes regarding HIV and sex education, including the "A-K" requirements added in 2004 (MCL 380.1507b)
- ◆ National and Michigan Health Education Standards
- ◆ Michigan Merit Curriculum Credit Guidelines for Health Education (2007)
- ◆ State Board of Education *Policy To Promote Health and Prevent Disease and Pregnancy* (2003)
- ◆ Principles of effective school-based HIV/STI and pregnancy prevention programs

No other commercially developed curriculum addresses these key components, including requirements in Michigan statutes.

Abstinence-Based and Abstinence-Only Options

While many HIV, STI, and pregnancy prevention curricula are commercially available, none were found to have the flexibility and proper balance of abstinence and risk reduction messages to meet the needs of the variety of Michigan schools. *Healthy and Responsible Relationships* is an abstinence-based curriculum; however, it provides three options for implementation. Local school districts are encouraged to determine which type of HIV and/or sex education curriculum best meets their needs and select from the following options:

- ◆ abstinence-only
- ◆ abstinence-based without contraception, with the exception of condoms as disease risk reduction
- ◆ abstinence-based with contraception, including condoms

¹ For details regarding Michigan statutes governing HIV and sex education, the Health Education Standards, the Michigan Merit Curriculum Credit Guidelines for Health Education, the State Board Policy, and Principles of Effective Programs, go to the Michigan Department of Education's website at www.michigan.gov/healthed, Click on "HIV/STD and Sexuality Education".

Abstinence is emphasized throughout the curriculum as the only option that is 100% effective in avoiding sexual transmission of HIV, other STIs, and unintended pregnancy. Students learn how to avoid or escape from risky sexual situations that could result in infections or pregnancy. These strategies may be taught in an abstinence-only or an abstinence-based program. Finally, for the high school students who have decided to have sexual intercourse,² risk reduction strategies are taught so that the possibility of negative consequences can be minimized. These lessons may be taught in an abstinence-based program, but not an abstinence-only program.

Curriculum Themes

The following are key themes woven throughout *Healthy and Responsible Relationships*:

- ◆ Parents and families are the first and primary sexuality educators of their children.
- ◆ Families and schools working together are more effective than each working independently from each other.
- ◆ Relationships are central to an individual's life and impact decisions about abstinence and sex.
- ◆ Young people have the power to control their personal behavior. When they are equipped with the skills they need, they are better able to exert their power.
- ◆ Abstinence is the primary emphasis as the safest and healthiest choice for young people.
- ◆ Sexual behaviors have consequences. Each individual should know the possible consequences, how to avoid those consequences, and how to make healthy decisions now and for a lifetime.
- ◆ Sex education programs should address the needs of all students, including those who have abstained from sexual activity and those who are sexually active, now or in the future.

Teacher-Friendly Methods, Format and Materials

The curriculum incorporates a variety of instructional strategies to keep students motivated and engaged. Those include large and small group discussions, cooperative learning, skill development, role playing, worksheets, interactive activities, videos, group projects, family homework assignments, and field trips. For a complete list of videos included in *Healthy and Responsible Relationships*, go to www.emc.cmich.edu/9-12hiv.

As with other *Michigan Model* modules, the lessons in the manual are formatted for ease of use. Each lesson includes learning objectives correlated with the National Health Education Standards, lesson synopsis, time and materials chart, preparation, lesson procedure, student worksheets, teacher keys, teacher references, family worksheets, and assessment rubrics and/or checklists.

Teachers also receive a CD-ROM that includes:

- ◆ Print masters for student worksheets and handouts, and family resource sheets.
- ◆ Slide masters offered in black and white PDF or color PowerPoint options.
- ◆ Assessments offered in PDF or MS Word options.
- ◆ Support materials information.

Local District Review and Approval of Curriculum

Michigan law requires school districts to form a sex education advisory board to make recommendations to the local school board as to what sex education is appropriate for the local school district. *Healthy and Responsible Relationships* is available to school districts for preview in hard copy format or on CD.

For More Information

- ◆ Legal requirements regarding HIV and sex education in Michigan schools: Laurie Bechhofer, Michigan Department of Education, bechhoferl@michigan.gov
- ◆ Review copies of the curriculum and upcoming trainings: Regional School Health Coordinators www.emc.cmich.edu/michigan/how.htm#Coordinators
- ◆ Purchasing the curriculum and videos: Educational Materials Center, CMU, 800-241-8961, emc@cmich.edu

² Forty-two percent of Michigan high school students have had sexual intercourse according to the 2005 Michigan Youth Risk Behavior Survey.