

RA Sexual Health Programming Guide

1: What's the need?

This packet is intended to support you through programming around sexual health. This is important information that will be used throughout one's life and is a key component of wellness. Oftentimes sexual health is not taught in middle or high school so it is essential for students to gain knowledge on prevention strategies, communication skills, and resources during their time at NAU. Sometimes people feel embarrassed or ashamed to talk about sex; however, the more informed one becomes, the better they can protect partners and themselves. Sex is a normal and natural part of life, and being knowledgeable on this topic can help prevent and navigate negative outcomes like an STI or unintended pregnancy that could be a possible barrier to academic success.

- By the age of 25, roughly one in two sexually active people will get an STI (GYT, 2017)
- Only about 62% percent of college students use condoms during vaginal sex, even fewer with oral or anal sex (NAU ACHA, 2017)
- When asked about relationship desires, only 16% of college males and 9% of college females report that they want sexual encounters with no expectations (Everfi, 2018)
- 28% of NAU students report having 2 or more partners in the last year (NAU ACHA, 2017)

2: Helpful approaches/messages VS. Unhelpful approaches/messages

Helpful Approaches:

Keep a positive outlook	STIs and their consequences can be serious and should not be taken lightly, but that does not mean things have to be "heavy" the whole time. Address the health risks of STIs, but focus the majority of your program on communication between partners, prevention of STIs and unintended pregnancy, and the importance of testing and early treatment
Discussing/showing various barrier methods	It is important to show a variety of barrier methods that partners can use during sexual activity. Solely focusing on external/male condoms, could exclude those that do not use that type of barrier for protection.
Making it relevant to all attendees	Remember that not everyone is dating or having sex. It can be helpful to frame it like this "I can recognize that not everyone in this room may be dating or having sex and may not be thinking about doing so for a long time, but this is helpful information to have at any point in your life or even to share with a friend".
Keeping things inclusive	Try using these terms to make your content relevant to all individuals. Remember: Not everyone will be engaging in a certain type of sexual activity. "Partner" in place of "boyfriend/girlfriend" "People with penises/vagina" instead of "men/women" "Barrier method" vs. "condom" "Safer sex" instead of "safe sex"

Unhelpful Approaches

Giving opinions or guessing	Sometimes you may get tricky questions as an RA, so it is imperative to only provide an answer if you have accurate information. Sharing wrong information or giving your personal opinion could be harmful to someone's health. If you do not know simply say "I'm not totally sure on that, but let me do some research or reach out to an expert and I can get back to later."
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Using slang terms	When programming, it is important to avoid use derogatory or confusing slang terms. If you have to repeat the word for clarification that is okay, but avoid these when presenting or creating a board.
Sharing personal stories	<p>Your residents look up to you and may want to hear about your experiences related to sex and contraceptives. However, as your residents' superior your own values and beliefs could influence their behaviors, so it is important to avoid sharing personal stories unless very relevant and appropriate. Our goal is to provide unbiased, accurate sexual health information. Here's an example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appropriate: "I've had friends that have gotten STI tested at Campus Health and they said it was easy and confidential." - Inappropriate: "My partner and I don't use condoms because we don't like them or feel the need to". <i>This statement could sway your resident to think they shouldn't/don't need to use condoms</i>

3: The Basics:

STI Transmission:

- Sexual contact (intercourse [oral, vaginal, anal], kissing [if sores present], skin-to-skin genital contact)
 - Passed through fluids, blood, sores, semen, & breastmilk
- Parasitic STIs can be passed through sharing of or close contact with sheets or clothes
- Using or sharing unclean needles (tattoos, piercings, drug use)
- Mother-to-child transmission (pregnancy, during birth, breastfeeding)

Types of STIs:

Viral (Not curable, but treatable)	Bacterial	Organisms/Parasitic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIV • HPV • Herpes • Hepatitis B 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chlamydia • Gonorrhea • Syphilis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pubic Lice (crabs) • Trichomoniasis

Symptoms of STIs:

- STIs are *often* asymptomatic, meaning they often do not show symptoms
- Symptoms may include: Discharge (change is odor or color); itchiness, irritation, or pain with sex or urination; sores; rash or redness, change in odor; organisms (like public lice); fatigue
- If someone is displaying these symptoms and has had unprotected sex, they should see a medical provider

Ways to prevent STIs and reduce sexual risk:

- Abstinence
- Using barriers methods (external condoms, internal condoms, dental dams)
- Getting tested for STIs
- Limiting number of sexual partners
- Communication among partners
- Vaccines (HPV and HEP B)

Barrier Methods:

- Health Promotion offers FREE barriers – Join The Condom Club to get 30 free condoms each semester
- Barriers (such as condoms and dental dams) are the only type of contraceptives to prevent from BOTH STIs and unplanned pregnancies. Birth control (such as the pill and IUD) does not protect against STIs

- External condoms (AKA male condoms) come in a variety of types: latex, non-latex, flavored, textured, colored, different sizes, and so much more!
- Internal condoms (AKA female condoms) can be inserted into the vagina or anus prior to intercourse
- Dental dams are rectangular pieces of latex that can be placed over the vagina or anus to reduce fluid transmission during oral sex

More about STIs

- Bacterial and parasitic STIs are curable, but that does not mean you are cured for life – Like the cold, you can contract these STIs more than once.
- Viral STIs can be treated to help with symptoms, but are not curable. If a viral STI is contracted, it's important to work with a medical provider to find treatment options to help you manage the symptoms and stay well
- Early detection and treatment is important. When left untreated, STIs can cause serious health outcomes. Testing and treatment are key!

Getting Tested

- Health Promotion partners with Coconino County Public Health Services District to bring free or low-cost testing
 - Free HIV tests and \$20 for chlamydia and gonorrhea testing once a semester. Check the HP event calendar for dates
- NAU Medical Services has STI testing (located in the HLC)
 - \$20 chlamydia testing in Medical Services every 2nd and 4th Wednesday from 2-5 p.m.
 - Additional STI testing available during regular business hours
- Coconino County Public Health Services District (CCPHSD), Planned Parenthood, and North Country HealthCare all offer STI testing off a sliding scale fee. CCPHSD also has a teen clinic serving individuals through age 19 providing reduce cost sexual health services
- Getting tested after having unprotected sex is recommended, but even if you are having protected sex, it's recommended to get tested once a year
- Most STIs have a window period to when they show up on tests, which is generally 2 weeks. This means that if someone had unprotected sex yesterday and were tested today, it is very unlikely it would show up on tests. They will have to wait 2 weeks in order for the tests to show results. Check with a healthcare provider if you are concerned or unsure when to get tested

4. Putting it Into Practice:

1. Host a sexual health trivia in your hall – host it like a true trivia night and play the host! Have students get in groups and quiz them on their sexual health knowledge.
2. Create a bulletin board on the proper steps of using barrier methods, interesting sexual health facts, or on an STI testing event
3. Sexual Health Skits! Have residents get in small groups and assign each group either an STI, barrier method, or type of contraceptive method. Residents will look up accurate information on their phones or laptops on the assigned topic and create a brief, informative, creative, appropriate (set ground rules that these should be appropriate & respectful), 2-3 min skit. Think commercials, dramas, open mic, whatever! Give them 5-10 minutes to prepare.
4. Play Sex Phrase. The goal is for one student (or a pair if that seems more comfortable) to get their peers to say a vocabulary word from one of the Sex Phrase categories without using the word itself – only give them 30 seconds to add a competitive factor. Categories can be anatomy, barrier methods, birth control methods, resources on campus, etc.
5. Two Truths and a Lie: STI Style. Participants will examine educational material about sexually transmitted infections, distinguish between STI myths and facts, and suggest sources to get medically accurate information.
6. Utilize educational videos from Planned Parenthood or Laci Green (Youtube)
 - <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/for-educators/digital-tools>
 - <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/teens/sex/all-about-consent>

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TD2EooMhqRI>

*Getting Barrier Methods for your Program:

- Free barrier methods from Health Promotion are **only** given for active programs, meaning you are provide some sort of in-person education. A passive program is a bulletin board, goodie bag, etc.
- **Always** provide some additional information on sexual health and risk reduction along with barrier methods. Health Promotion has testing and risk reduction handouts you can use.
- Consider the following: Will the condoms be tampered with through your activities? Will a lot of condoms be wasted during this activity? Do all your residents want condoms? Some residents are not sexually active, are allergic to latex, or prefer to use other types of barriers.

5: Reliable Sources:

- Planned Parenthood: <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/stds-hiv-safer-sex>
- Columbia University - Go Ask Alice: <https://health.columbia.edu/services/go-ask-alice>
- Besider: <https://www.bedsider.org/>
- The Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/std/>
- Online Birth Control Class: <https://nau.edu/birthcontrol>