Informed and In Charge Program Overview

Summary

Our Informed and In Charge program (for students in 7th and 8th grade) allows students to learn to identify, establish, and cultivate healthy relationships through understanding personal values, goals, and decisions and assertive communication. Students will increase their understanding of sexuality, including ways to demonstrate respect, equity, and fairness. Students will also gain critical information and participate in opportunities to communicate about their bodies and their values around sexual decision-making. Throughout the program, students experience the power of a support system and build critical thinking skills for being sexually healthy. We work to ensure that students have the skills, knowledge, and support to take charge of their sexual health and avoid risky behavior.

Students participate in approximately 5 hours of healthy sexuality instruction where they are immersed in a safe and inclusive environment. Students are encouraged to ask questions and engage in interactive activities and discussions throughout the program. They explore values, practice responses in different situations, and think about their future. This helps students identify ways and reasons to avoid unplanned pregnancy and prevent sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

Students will be split into a girl group, facilitated by a female instructor, and a boy group, facilitated by a male instructor. Parents/guardians are welcome to contact Girls Inc to review instructional materials or address any questions or concerns. Your questions, concerns, and comments are always welcome as we work together to provide the best and most appropriate learning opportunities for your student. School staff will distribute permission slips for all Informed programs one month prior to scheduled programming. Follow-up will occur after 21 calendar days without a response, followed by the 10-day response. Students who have opted out of our program will receive alternative academic instruction from school staff during our programming.

Informed and In Charge Sessions & Objectives

Session 1: Introduction/Healthy Relationships

Purpose: To review healthy and unhealthy relationship characteristics, reemphasize between assertive, aggressive, and passive styles of communication, and practice assertive communication.

Objectives:

By the end of the session, students will be able to:

- Identify and explain at least two qualities that support healthy romantic relationship development.
- Identify and explain at least two qualities that are barriers to romantic relationship development.
- Name and explain the corresponding qualities found within the H.E.R.R.C acronym for healthy relationships.

Key Messages:

- Relationships may have healthy and unhealthy qualities. Healthy relationship qualities help make a relationship run smoothly.
- Communication is a key component of any healthy romantic relationship.

- Honesty, Equality, Respect, Responsibility, and Communication are five core qualities of a healthy relationship. It is important that any relationship you choose to have has these healthy qualities.
- Knowing what is healthy and unhealthy can help you make choices for your health and safety in relationships and in the future.

Session 2: Communication and Introduction to Anatomy
Purpose: to reemphasize between assertive, aggressive, and passive styles of communication and to practice assertive communication; to increase comfort using the medical names for the sexual and reproductive anatomy and to familiarize students with the functions of the sexual and reproductive anatomy

Objectives:
By the end of the session, students will be able to:
- Understand the different types of communication: passive, aggressive, and assertive.
- Begin communicating effectively in relationships
- Identify and name body parts of the sexual and reproductive system using medically correct terms
- Describe the functions of the body parts of the sexual and reproductive system
- Explain the process of the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, and seminal emission

Key Messages:
- Being assertive means standing up for yourself without interfering with the rights of others
- Relationships are healthiest when they exhibit clear standards and boundaries
- Learning about sexual and reproductive anatomy is normal and healthy.
- Knowing the names and sexual and reproductive anatomy helps you communicate any questions, concerns, thoughts, and/or feelings about your body.
- There are certain parts of the body that make reproduction possible. Your body is changing to accommodate the possibility of reproduction, but it's recommended to wait, if possible, until you are older so that your body and mind is better able to handle pregnancy and nurture the developing fetus.
    - Students will view a four-minute, high-quality, medically accurate and age-appropriate video depicting human development from fertilization through birth, including weekly fetal development, significant cellular growth and organ development milestones, and footage illustrating the early development of the brain, heart, sex organs, and other vital organs.
- Having sexual intercourse, getting pregnant, and parenting are personal decisions and no one should be pressured or forced into making any of the decisions.
- It is important to communicate with a parent or caregiver, or trusted adult, and medical professional if you are being pressured to have sexual intercourse, or become pregnant.

Session 3: Anatomy Continued/Sexually Transmitted Infections
Purpose: to increase comfort using the medical names for the sexual and reproductive anatomy and to familiarize students with the functions of the sexual and reproductive anatomy; to provide basic facts

about Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) including modes of transmission, types of STIs, and prevention options

Objectives:
By the end of the session, students will be able to:

- Identify and name body parts of the sexual and reproductive system using medically correct terms
- Describe the functions of the body parts of the sexual and reproductive system
- Explain the process of the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, and seminal emission
- Name sexually transmitted infections and possible symptoms
- List ways STIs can be transmitted
- Identify behaviors that can put a person at risk for a sexually transmitted infection.

Key Messages:

- Learning about sexual and reproductive anatomy is normal and healthy.
- Knowing the names and sexual and reproductive anatomy helps you communicate any questions, concerns, thoughts, and/or feelings about your body.
- STIs are very common among teens. It's important to know the facts to prevent transmission and contraction of STIs.
- Often, there are no symptoms of STIs. If sexually active, getting tested is key for your health.
- Abstinence is the only sure way to prevent sexually transmitted infections.
- The best way to avoid STIs and associated health problems is a mutually faithful, monogamous relationship in the context of marriage.

Session 4: Consent/Sexting
Purpose: to define sexual consent and sexual coercion, and explore aspects of being able to give free and informed consent; to understand the pressures young people face to take and share sexts and the consequences of doing so, both legal and social.

Objectives:
By the end of the session, students will be able to:

- Define the terms consent, sexual consent, sexual assault, and sexual coercion.
- Evaluate the implications and consequences of sexual assault on a victim and those associated with the victim
- Analyze, evaluate, and refine personal communication patterns.
- Understand the pressure to send sexts and the possible consequences of sending sexts, including the legal consequences

Key Messages:

- Consent is voluntary, affirmative, freely given, and part of an ongoing conversation about mutual agreement to do something
- Consent cannot be assumed or implied by silence, previous sexual history, or clothing
- Permission to do any type of sexual activity needs to be asked for and clearly given before proceeding.

- Many young people find themselves under pressure to send sexts. It's important to consider the repercussions of sending sexts.
- Once a sext is sent, it is out of your control and can be very difficult to control who sees it, and can easily be spread around
- It is illegal for minors (people under age 18) to send sexts.

Session 5: Abstinence
Purpose: to clarify attitudes and beliefs about abstinence in order to make informed decisions when setting sexual boundaries with others.

Objectives:
By the end of the session, students will be able to:
- Define sexual abstinence
- Clarify personal attitudes and beliefs about abstinence
- Consider reasons for using and not using abstinence

Key Messages:
- The decision to abstain can be made throughout a person's life.
- Abstinence is a far more complex concept than is often portrayed.
- Being successful in abstaining involves knowing one's own personal boundaries and definition and being able to clearly communicate those boundaries and definitions.
- The best way to avoid pregnancy as well as STIs and associated health problems is a mutually faithful, monogamous relationship in the context of marriage.

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Girls Inc will be partnering with your child's school to deliver a program focusing on the prevention of adolescent pregnancy. All curriculums are in line with the Indiana Academic Standards for Health and Wellness, and support abstinence as the best course of action for young people.

Both female and male students will participate in a program called Informed and In Charge. Female and male students participate in the program in gender-specific classrooms. This interactive, engaging, and informative approach has helped young adolescents, age 11-17, to make wise and more responsible decisions. This program focuses on self-responsibility, sexual responsibility, family communication, and developing positive life outcomes.

Students will also receive medically accurate information in sessions that center on values, healthy relationships, assertiveness and communication skills, female/male health and hygiene,avoiding risky situations, the benefits of abstinence and pregnancy/disease prevention, and consent.

You are welcome to contact Girls Inc to address any questions or concerns. Your questions, concerns, and comments are always welcome as we work together to provide the best and most appropriate learning opportunities for your student.

Thank you,
Candace Studebaker
Director of School Partnerships
Girls Inc of Shelbyville/Shelby County
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317-392-1190

Your student's class is scheduled for the Informed Together program to be presented this school year. Please indicate below whether or not you give permission for your child to attend the program at school.

If the form is not returned to school by _____, then your child will be automatically opted-in for the program. Please sign and return this portion to your child's teacher.

My child _____

_____ will be permitted to participate in the Informed Together program.

_____ will NOT be permitted to participate in the Informed Together program.

Parent/Guardian Signature_____