

Sexual Systems II: Processes

A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum

Fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education.

NSES ALIGNMENT:

By the end of 12th grade, students will be able to:

AP.12.CC.1 – Describe the human sexual response cycle, including the role hormones play.

TARGET GRADE: Grade 12
Lesson 6

TIME: 50 Minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Desktop or laptop computer with PowerPoint and internet access
- LCD projector and screen
- PowerPoint: "Human Sexual Response"
- PowerPoint: "Myth or Fact"
- Worksheet: "Sexual Response: Myth or Fact?" – one per student
- Teacher's Guide – "Sexual Response Myth or Fact?" – one copy
- Sheets of red and green 8 ½ x 11 card stock or construction paper cut into rectangles, enough for each student to have one green square and one red square
- Index cards – one per student
- Extra pencils in case students don't have their own
- White board and markers

ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR LESSON:

- Either download this video for use in class (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-bsf2x-aeE>) or ask your IT person to unblock this link for class.
- Cut the red and green card stock into rectangles. Make enough for each student to have one red and one green rectangle.

LESSON RATIONALE:

Summary: This lesson provides an overview of the human sexual response cycle and clarifies common misconceptions about how bodies work. Presenting medically accurate and complete information about body parts and how they function when sexually aroused, this lesson helps normalize how bodies respond sexually. This lesson is intended to follow the Sexual Systems I – Parts lesson as it builds on the foundational knowledge about what parts are called and what their function is.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Describe the four stages of the human sexual response cycle. [Knowledge]
2. Name at least two facts and at least two myths about sexual response. [Knowledge]
3. Explain that it is normal for the body of someone who has been sexually abused or assaulted to respond to that sexual stimulation and does not indicate that the person actually enjoyed or consented to the act. [Knowledge]

A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:

Due to the biological focus of the human sexual response cycle, this lesson will be conducted using the language of the male-female gender binary. Please remember that a person's gender identity is not determined by, and may not match, their biology.

PROCEDURE:

STEP 1: Say, "I don't know that anything could set up today's lesson better than this clip. If you don't know this movie, these are two good friends who have not been in a romantic or sexual relationship together, but who talk about everything." Start the video listed above.

(5 minutes)

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STEP 2: Say, “Okay – so clearly they’re talking about the idea of someone faking orgasm during a sexual relationship – what we’re going to be talking about today is what actually goes on in the body when someone is experiencing all the stuff that made her behave the way she did. There’s got to be some common experience, because most people got that she was imitating sexual arousal and orgasm – even if he thought maybe she was sick at first!”

Start the PowerPoint on the Human Sexual Response Cycle. Go through the slides, using the following to supplement what’s on the slides. Say, “If you judge what goes on with people sexually by what you see in the media, a sex act starts with a change in lighting, funky music, and a few cheesy lines exchanged between the two – and then they go for it! But what’s going on in the body is actually pretty complex.”

[Go through slides two and three]. At slide four, say, “Regardless of our gender or biological sex, we all get started in the same way, with something called vasocongestion. This is just a fancy way of saying that blood flows to the pelvis and other parts of the body.

The inside of the penis and the inside of the clitoris both have what are referred to as caverns – basically, they’re like tubes that, when filled with blood, cause the penis or clitoris to become erect. There is also pooling of blood around other sexual body parts, such as nipples, testicles, labia, and more. That’s why the coloring in these areas can become deeper.”

Go to slide five and say, “The word ‘plateau’ really means a leveling off – but in terms of sexual arousal it’s really about the feeling of being aroused. There aren’t many noticeably new signs like in the excitement phase, it’s more that these signs continue to grow and become more pronounced. For example:

- Heart rate and blood pressure continue to rise
- Breathing becomes faster
- Muscle tension builds; involuntary contractions in the feet and hands may occur – this is normal!”

Say, “There are some things that are sex-specific. For people with a penis and scrotum, the testes tend to elevate slightly to prepare for the sperm to come out during ejaculation. In people with a vulva, the clitoris begins to retract under the hood, the uterus is fully elevated and the inner two thirds of the vagina expand fully.”

Go to slide six and say, “The orgasm phase is the peak of sexual tension, when it’s all released. In people with a penis and scrotum, this usually comes with ejaculation; with people with a vulva, the various muscles of the uterus and inside the vagina and elsewhere will contract in different ways. For some people with a vulva, ejaculation is possible as well.”

Explain that one of the most common questions people ask is what an orgasm feels like. Explain that how it feels will depend on the individual. Say, “For some people, the tension builds up to a release that feels almost explosive – one big burst. For others, there may be more of a rolling feeling – a series of contractions. Other people may experience it altogether differently. It also can happen one way during one sex act, and differently during another sex act.

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For people with a penis, orgasm is actually two different experiences that happen very close together: Emission and expulsion. When semen gathers at the top of the urethra, people with a penis will feel like ejaculation is inevitable. This is an important sensation for them to become familiar with, particularly if they and their partners are practicing the withdrawal method. The better they know when this “point of no return” is, the less likelihood of an inadvertent, unprotected ejaculation. Shortly after they have reached this point, the semen comes out (which is “expulsion”). Sometimes, it will shoot out all at once; sometimes it will come out in spurts; other times it will flow out more like lava oozing down the side of a volcano. Like with people with a vulva, there is much diversity here – and the type of orgasm and ejaculation can differ from act to act.”

Go to slide 7 and say, “The fourth phase of this cycle is ‘Resolution.’ This basically means that everything goes back to its pre-aroused state; anything that was engorged with blood no longer is and returns to their previous sizes. Heart rate and blood pressure return to normal resting rate. Skin flush starts to go away, and the skin will return to its typical color or tone.

People with a penis will enter what is called the ‘refractory period,’ a period of time during which they cannot get another erection. This can last from several minutes to several days, depending on their age, amount of desire they have for their partner, interest in sex, etc.

It’s really important for people to look at this information as researched-base and everyone is different. There is nothing wrong with someone if their sexual response cycle varies from this, or if it varies from itself as well. Everyone is different--some kind of touch will produce a lot of pleasure for one person and maybe another type will not. The media would lead us to believe that people have orgasms every time they have sex--but that’s not true for all people. We are all different and that is normal.”

(20 minutes)

STEP 3: Explain that there are a lot of myths and misinformation out there about sexual response and how it is connected to sexual behaviors. Tell the class that they are going to do an activity now where they will look at some of these.

Distribute the green and red cards to each student. Say, “I am going to put a number of statements up on this next PowerPoint. Your job is to determine whether you think the statement is a myth or a fact. If it’s a myth, then take your red card and hold it up like this” (raise the red card up as if you were raising your hand to be called on in class). Say, “If you think it’s a fact, then take your green card and do the same” (do the same with the green card).

Start the “Myth or Fact” PowerPoint. Read the statement on the first slide aloud, and ask students to raise their card. Validate or provide the correct response, using the Teacher’s Guide to explain why each is a myth or fact. Continue until you have gone through all the statements.

Once you have gone through all of the statements, ask whether there are any other questions they may have about human sexual response.

(19 minutes)

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STEP 4: Distribute the index cards to the students. On the white board, write, “Something new I learned today is...” and “One thing I still have questions about from today is...” Ask students to write one sentence stem on one side of the card and the other on the other side, and then complete both. Tell them they should not write their names on these.

Collect the cards, and end the class.

(6 minutes)

Note to the Teacher: *You will need to determine whether you will have time during the next class session to return to the questions and respond to those that are still outstanding. If you cannot, you may wish to create a fact sheet with their questions, grouped by category, and the answers.*

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

The mini-lecture at the beginning will achieve the first learning objective. The myth and fact activity and discussion will achieve the second and third learning objectives.

HOMEWORK:

None.

Worksheet: Sexual Response: MYTH OR FACT?

INSTRUCTIONS: Determine whether each of the following statements relating to human sexual response is a myth or fact, then hold up the green rectangle if a fact and the red rectangle if a myth.

1. When a person with a penis ejaculates, a little over a cup of semen comes out.

MYTH

FACT

2. Anyone can experience multiple orgasms.

MYTH

FACT

3. If someone with a penis has an erection and gets close to ejaculation, but doesn't, it can be harmful to their health ("blue balls").

MYTH

FACT

4. During vaginal sex, the partner with a penis urinates a little inside their partner's body.

MYTH

FACT

5. A person with a penis wakes up most mornings with an erection.

MYTH

FACT

6. It is a good idea for someone with a penis who wants to last longer during sex to take Viagra just before, particularly the younger they are.

MYTH

FACT

7. If someone's vagina does not become lubricated enough naturally, it is a good idea to use vegetable oil or Vaseline to make sexual touching feel better.

MYTH

FACT

8. If someone's body becomes aroused during a sexual assault, it means it wasn't really an assault.

MYTH

FACT

Teacher's Guide – Sexual Response: MYTH OR FACT?

INSTRUCTIONS: Determine whether each of the following statements relating to human sexual response is a myth or fact, then hold up the green rectangle if a fact and the red rectangle if a myth.

1. When a boy or man ejaculates, a little over a cup of semen comes out.

MYTH

FACT

Actually, only about a teaspoon of semen, the fluid that contains sperm, comes out each time someone with a penis ejaculates. If that person ejaculates frequently, there actually may be less each time after that. In that teaspoon is somewhere between 250 and 500 million sperm!

2. Anyone can experience multiple orgasms.

MYTH

FACT

While it is less common for people with penises to have multiple orgasms, it is possible. And not everyone with a vulva can have them, or have them during every sex act. It's normal if someone does and it's normal if they don't.

3. If someone with a penis has an erection and gets close to ejaculation, but doesn't, it can be harmful to their health ("blue balls").

MYTH

FACT

Although it can feel achy and uncomfortable for someone of any gender to get into the excitement and plateau phase without reaching orgasm and releasing the tension that's built up, it doesn't do any physical harm. Plus, no one should pressure someone or have sex with someone else just to relieve that person's or their own tension – there's always masturbation for relieving sexual tension.

4. During vaginal sex, the partner with a penis urinates a little inside their partner's body.

MYTH

FACT

Nope! Inside the body is a small muscle that closes off the tube leading from the bladder into the urethra, the tube through which urine and semen leave the penis. When someone approaches ejaculation, that muscle tightens so that urination isn't possible during ejaculation.

Teacher's Guide – Sexual Response: MYTH OR FACT?

5. A person with a penis wakes up most mornings with an erection.

MYTH

FACT

There are different explanations for why this happens – but they're all physiological. That means, morning erections don't carry any other meaning to them other than the fact that the openings inside the penis have opened enough for blood to fill them. It does not mean the person needs to have sex. Usually, this erection will go away by itself – or, the person can masturbate if they wish.

6. It is a good idea for someone with a penis who wants to last longer during sex to take Viagra just before, particularly the younger they are.

MYTH

FACT

No! No! No! No one, of any age, should take Viagra, or any other medication, without it being medically necessary. While some people might hear, "Wow, an erection that lasts four hours or longer?" and think "Awesome!" – it can actually be quite painful, and sometimes requires a trip to the ER to remedy.

7. If someone's vagina does not become lubricated enough naturally, it is a good idea to use vegetable oil or Vaseline to make sex feel better.

MYTH

FACT

While there are ways to add lubricant to a vagina, oil-based lubricants are not a good idea. If latex condoms are being used, the oil can break down the latex in the condom. The oil also may smell or taste unpleasant. Water-based lubricants, such as K-Y Jelly will not break down the condom. Prolonged kissing and touching can also increase vaginal lubrication.

8. If someone's body becomes aroused during a sexual assault, it means it wasn't really an assault.

MYTH

FACT

Human sexual response is a physical reaction – the body responds to sexual touch because it was wired that way. It can be very confusing to someone who is sexually abused or assaulted if they get an erection or their vagina becomes lubricated. But it does not mean anything other than their body is working correctly. Unfortunately, their body doesn't understand whether a sex act is consensual or non-consensual.