



Age Appropriate

Guidelines for Teaching Sex Ed Online

Teaching sexuality education online in the K - 12 environment is a new endeavor. We are diving into unfamiliar territory out of necessity, dedication to our students and participants, and with the knowledge that comprehensive information about sexuality is life-sustaining and life-saving. In this time of great need, we are called to this work with even more tenacity and veracity than before. But we are doing so with relatively sparse guidance or research on the pedagogy behind our mandate.

With this new approach to our standing mandate, we must ensure that we do not shift our attention away from what we know are critical elements of effective comprehensive sexuality education. We must continue to make sure our approaches are anti-racist, anti-ableist, LGBTQ-inclusive, and work to dismantle oppression. Issues around access to technology (predominantly to a computer rather than a smartphone and high speed, stable wifi) must be considered and addressed. We must be direct and prepared to discuss the intersectional ways that elements of oppression disproportionately impact People of Color and LGBTQ+ people. Youth oppression (lack of power, control, access, etc.) is also magnified in the move to online learning.

Within this document, you'll find information gleaned from researchers, planners, and implementers in the fields of sexuality, health, and education. The resulting product is a synopsis of our current understanding of best practices in K-12 online sexuality education. This is a living document, and we highly encourage you to engage with it critically. At UN|HUSHED, we're committed to creating great things - together. It is through community questioning and analysis of our materials, methods, and models that we are able to continuously improve everything we offer.

This document originated in the collective work of participants in the first UN|HUSHED web series, called *Teaching Sex Ed Online*. This series was created in the early days of the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic as schools (and thus sex ed classes) were being shut down across the country. The 45 participants who attended the hour-long session on age appropriate guidelines in how to teach sex ed online contributed to this content within developmental age groups. The professionals who participated in that session and who authored pieces of this set of guidelines include:

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That great wealth of information was gathered and organized, along with many other resources and research, by Karen Rayne, PhD, CSE and Jessica Smarr, MPH into the document you are currently reading.

It would be entirely possible to write an entire textbook on the developmental and pedagogical approaches to sexuality education in K - 12 online learning environments. This is true even given the dearth of information on the topic. What is here relies on the reader to fill in details about their students and participants, classrooms, online access, etc. It is most effective when used in connection with other UN|HUSHED documents, including our Glossary of Online Teaching Terms, Ways to Modify F2F Approaches to the Online Environment, and Tips for Modifying F2F Curriculum for Online Learning.

This is a living document and may be continued to be updated over time. This iteration was published by UN|HUSHED in June, 2020.

A NOTE ON ASSESSING NEEDS AND PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

Many families will need additional assistance as they support their children in the online learning process. Providing this support to parents and guardians is especially important with the youngest age groups, as they will need substantial help from adults as they access digital content. Some of the things you may need to discuss with parents are:

- Language barriers and translation needs
- Ability levels and potential barriers (for example, if a student has parents who are deaf, they may need a sign language interpreter during video chats)
- Ability to access school supplies like paper and writing instruments
- Technological device(s) available
- Internet connection
- Technological experience and comfort
- Time availability
- Basic needs (for example, whether or not a family may need assistance accessing food)
- Additional stressors (for example, an illness or death in the family)

To meet these needs, you will need support from your organization and your community at large. You may need to connect with other educators and organizations to share resources like WiFi hotspots, translators, or interpreters. Thankfully, we've already seen many needs met due to the creativity, effort, and compassion of educators and communities around the world.



DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE

The middle school years are a time of deep social and personal learning. They are the preparation at the end of childhood for the move into adolescence, a balancing act of eyeing the future before the real work of becoming an adult begins in high school.

Young people between the ages of 11 and 14 (as most 6th - 8th graders are) exist on a wide developmental spectrum. A young 11-year-old can still be very much a child, wanting physical, practical, concrete engagement that is based in stories and play while an old 14-year-old can already be working to provide support for their family, be sexually active, and thinking in complex, abstract ways. The vast majority of young people in this age range, however, actually inhabit both of the extremes and all of the spaces between. They need the easy accessibility of the ways that they learned and thought during childhood alongside the challenge of having complex ideas presented to them and an expectation of exhibiting deeply nuanced relationship skills. Curricular content that is able to span all of these elements is ideal.

SEX ED NEEDS

While the middle school years are developmentally complex and varied, these are still the best years to begin a really robust comprehensive sexuality education program. There are a number of reasons why:

1. Most middle school age youth are either feeling sexual/romantic attractions or are aware that they will feel sexual/romantic attractions in the future and so need context for those feelings. Youth who do not - and do not expect to - have these feelings are often baffled by their peers' sexual/romantic attractions and need them explained.
2. Because the majority of middle schoolers are not sexually active, information about sexual activity is a mostly cognitive learning experience rather than an affective or identity related learning experience. This allows the information to be more readily integrated into future sexual and romantic decision making rather than feeling like it is a judgment on past or current decisions.
3. Middle school is when most young people begin to have access to unmonitored (or less strictly monitored) digital devices. If an individual young person does not have access, it is likely that their friends do as well. This allows access to a huge range of information about sex and sexuality. Rather than leaving young people to google information about sex and sexuality or to use pornography as their education, it better serves them to provide professionally presented education on sexuality that is constructed in age appropriate, targeted ways.

4. In addition to information, digital access provides social media access. The increased potential to form and build relationships outside of adult-created spaces shifts the potential dynamic between peers, leaving young people needing more information, guidance, and explanations of human relationships.

With such a driving need for information, the content of comprehensive sexuality education classrooms for 6th - 8th graders should include all elements of anatomy and physiology, body positivity, media and online safety, sexual orientation, gender identity, relationships (sexual, romantic, platonic, friendship, etc.), effective communication, how to ask someone out and how to break up with someone, conception, pregnancy, birth, contraception, unplanned pregnancy and parenting, STIs, how to buy condoms and access other kinds of sexual healthcare, dating violence, consent, sexual harassment, assault, and rape, how to manage emotional rejection, and sexual values.

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

Prior to the COVID crisis, middle schoolers averaged 4 - 5 hours a day of screen time prior to schools. While it is difficult to assess what the number of hours spent on digital devices might be since students are primarily learning online now, it is easy to assume that it has jumped substantially higher for most students.

Students in this age range can have up to 30 minutes of sustained attention, with 180 minutes of total recommended sustained attention or classwork per day. They should not spend more than 30 minutes per class or topic per day.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that students in this age range have no more than two hours (160 minutes) of screen time per day. However, the American Psychology Association recommends that rather than assessing the number of hours spent on a screen that a more useful metric is assessing the kinds of screen based interactions for their usefulness, quality, and elements of human connection. Particularly while all social contact and all learning are primarily (or exclusively) online, assessing the combined impact of quality and quantity of screen time is a useful approach.

As a facilitator it may be difficult to assess how the screen time that you require impacts students' overall levels of screen time because it has the potential to vary dramatically by student. Nevertheless, it must be considered. You can begin this process by considering whether you are requiring more than 30 minutes of screen time per day (or a combined 150 minutes per week) for your particular course, inclusive of both synchronous and asynchronous content. If you are, you should probably scale back your digital learning expectations. You may also consider ways to increase students' off-line learning, such as having them participate in off-line conversations about the topics and reporting back on them.

PEDAGOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ONLINE LEARNING

Below is a series of recommendations for effectively using online learning techniques for middle school age students:

- Middle school age youth require substantial structure in order to feel comfortable in learning spaces. The online learning space is no different. They also require a high level of social interaction. Setting aside specific times for social engagement and learning will benefit the students and the facilitator.
- When doing asynchronous classes, use facilitator-made videos, which provides connection between the student, the facilitator, and the content. Seeing the facilitator's face, hearing their voice, and having access to some body language will all increase students' level of buy-in and connection to the classroom community.
- Students can make and/or find videos to share with the class as a way of extending their voice into the learning space and gaining autonomy in that space.
- It is critical that students have something interactive to do while in the online platform, whether it is synchronous or asynchronous. This can include things like having conversations with their peers on discussion boards, engaging in small breakout rooms, having show-and-tell, giving feedback/thoughts by polls, etc.
- The functions in a synchronous learning space, including chatting and small groups, offer ample room for creativity and activity diversity. For example, the chat function can be a place to roleplay a text conversation and the small groups can provide a place for more intimate conversations.
- There needs to be a certain amount of direct, personal contact to let students know that they are on the right track while learning, especially if there is homework involved. This contact can include elements such as specific, individual feedback, using students' names when calling on them, 1:1 emails or office hours, etc.
- Don't be hesitant for students to do solo work while in synchronous digital learning spaces. Everyone can be working silently on a task in the same way that they would in a F2F classroom setting.
- Having fun is a critical element of online learning - it may even be more important online than in a F2F classroom because many students won't believe it is possible or won't expect it online. Integrating elements like arts and crafts (everyone can use what they have at home or you can send supply boxes to students' homes), jokes, and silly videos can build rapport and community.
- When using videos, it is useful to either have points to stop and discuss (synchronous settings) or have guided questions for students to answer as they watch (asynchronous settings). This kind of moderation for engagement keeps students attention and provides a structure for integrating the new content into students' existing knowledge structures.
- Games are great!
- Remember your time limit for screen use!

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Tips for Modifying F2F Curriculum for Online Learning

The goal of any curricula is to find a way for people (students or participants) to increase their knowledge, skills, and/or abilities (KSAs) around a given topic or subject matter. This is the most basic premise, and needs to be the place you start. If you jump ahead, you may be founding your program on premises that work in F2F classrooms, but not online ones.

Questions to ask yourself/your organization:

These are the questions you should start with, along with additional things to think about and how you can find your answer to the question, should you not already have it:

1. How much modification can you do?

Additional considerations about this question: For programs that you have created, it is possible that you have freedom to modify however you want to. If you are working with an evidence-based program, you may have more freedom than you think.

Finding your answer: For your own programs or for evidence-informed curricula, check in with your organization to make sure that grants aren't relying on specific pieces of the curriculum to be fulfilled. For evidence-based programs, be in touch with your organizational lead, or the authors of the curriculum, for very specific instructions on Green, Yellow, and Red Light Adaptations in light of the current situation.

2. What are the KSAs or Learning Objectives you want to teach?

Additional considerations about this question: It may be that you are preparing to include your existing curriculum content without change, or it may be that you are planning for changes. Either way, start with laying out the details of what you want to cover.

Finding your answer: If you are considering modifications or new content, refer back to the content from Session 4: Short and Sweet for shortening the curriculum content for examples and discussions around what are appropriate things to consider content-wise at this time.

3. What modality will you be teaching through: synchronous (via video conferencing) and/or asynchronous (via Learning Management System, or LMS)?

Additional considerations about this question: Each of these modalities have a variety of specific platforms that they are taught through. Synchronous platforms include Zoom (currently the most common), WebEx, Blue Jeans, and more. Asynchronous platforms include Canvas and Blackboard (currently the two most common), Google Classroom

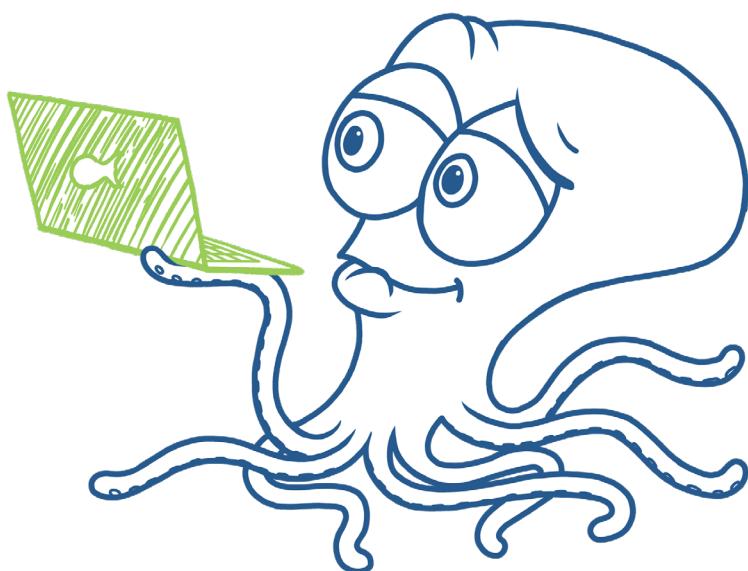
(currently gaining traction as the only free one), Moodle, Schoology, and more. Each of these platforms has different capacities. Knowing your platform inside and out is a huge benefit to creating effective, engaging, , and interactive online curricula and activities.

Finding your answer: You might belong to an organization that has already made this decision for you or you might be part of making this decision. If the second is true, watch Sessions 5 and 6 of the Teaching Sex Ed Online Web Series, look through the Ways to Modify F2F Approaches handout, and the entirety of this handout for examples of what is possible with both modalities. You can investigate specific platforms for video conferencing (<https://www.softwareadvice.com/video-conferencing/>) and LMS (<https://www.softwareadvice.com/lms/>) platforms.

4. What are the available tools you have to teach this content? (Include: the physical space you and the learners will be in, the technology you and the learners will have, the amount of time and cognitive space that you and the learners have available, the technological support you will have in the creation of the program, etc.)

Additional considerations about this question: You can be creative! Don't feel constrained by the ways you have seen computer learning happen in the past.

Finding your answer: Begin by looking around and assessing what you have around you, both in terms of tech and physical space. Be honest with yourself about how many additional resources (like online systems) you're able to find and learn and write into your curriculum.



About Synchronous Curricula:

Online, synchronous learning offers a dynamic, engaging space for real-time connections between people who are not (or cannot) be together in person.

What's good about synchronous facilitation

- **Control**—facilitator can see participants and can determine their ability to interact with each other.
- **Dialogue**—real time interaction in large and small groups.
- **Screen sharing**—showing participants slide shows, video clips, and other elements displayed on your computer screen.

What's problematic about synchronous facilitation

Synchronous learning is not a perfect solution, as no modality really is. Being aware of the problematic nature of your modalities makes all the difference in being able to address them:

- **Technological complexity**—managing the details in a video conference call takes attention and involves a learning curve.
- **False sense of connectedness**—because it is possible to see each others' faces, but it does not offer true eye contact or the possibility of seeing full body language.
- **Security**—zoom bombing is one example, another would be participants taking screenshots or photos of the screen, and so on.

Some resources for creativity in synchronous learning

- #ZoomJam—A game jam about being together, apart, most of which will work with most video conference platforms: <https://zoomjam.org/>
- Creating Activities for Virtual Work—This is collection of videos, slides, and other details about being creative in video calls: <https://www.realisation-of-potential.com/creativity/creativity-activities-for-virtual-work/>
- Steve Dotto on YouTube: Knowing your platform will make the biggest difference!—These video tutorials are all about Zoom: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9BqPtCcSyHvQsbl2rumM4w>
- Tips from people who run synchronous meetings:
 - American Evaluation Association: <https://aea365.org/blog/tips-resources-for-virtual-gatherings-during-this-global-pandemic-by-elizabeth-diluzio-laura-zatlin/>
 - TaylorNewberry Consulting: <http://taylornewberry.ca/tips-for-meeting-in-a-virtual-world/>
 - Virtual meetings and Coronavirus: We need tech know-how but also compassion: <https://rpfacilitates.com/2020/04/01/virtual-meetings-and-coronavirus-we-need-tech-know-how-but-also-compassion/>

About Asynchronous Curricula:

Online, asynchronous learning moves at a slower pace than other learning modalities, and as such invites a deeper thoughtfulness within and among participants. There is also the possibility of participants engaging with the world around them in new and interesting ways that are difficult or impossible to recreate in synchronous settings (either F2F or online).

What's good about asynchronous facilitation

- **Organization**—you can readily create a calendar based organization system that allows students to easily follow along over time.
- **Time for reflection**—participants are never put on the spot, but rather really have time to dig into their thoughts before providing answers.
- **So many resources!**—this modality really lends itself to a network of information gathered from across the web.

What's problematic about asynchronous facilitation

Asynchronous learning is not a perfect solution, as no modality really is. Being aware of the problematic nature of your modalities makes all the difference in being able to address them:

- **It's easy to be distracted**—with so much text and so little real-time interaction, participants who are not excited about asynchronous learning are often lost very quickly.
- **It's hard to be trauma-informed**—without being able to see participants, you must rely on them to directly share if something is upsetting or triggering.
- **Very few pedagogical ideas/insights**—this platform just hasn't yet inspired creativity on the part of facilitators and teachers.

Some resources for creativity in asynchronous learning

- Insidious pedagogy: How course management systems impact teaching—This article is old (2009), but provides insight into the potential for creative, non-linear, LMS-based education: <https://firstmonday.org/article/view/2530/2303>
- QM (Quality Matters) K-12 Rubric—This sounds like a great resource by which to judge the quality of an online educational program, with eight general standards and 43 specific review standards. But there is a significant fee associated with it, so I haven't seen it: <https://www.qualitymatters.org/qa-resources/rubric-standards/k-12-secondary-rubric>
- Resources & Tips for Remote Education During School Closures: <https://thejournal.com/articles/2020/03/16/resources-tips-for-remote-education-during-school-closures.aspx>



Ways to modify F2F approaches

Teaching Sex Ed Online

F2F Approach	Synchronous Platform	Asynchronous Platform	Sex Ed Specific Thoughts
Anonymous questions	The good news is that if your video platform doesn't include a process by which participants can ask anonymous questions, there are a plethora of other options available to you. PollEverywhere (for synchronous settings) and Google Forms (for asynchronous settings) are two great platforms that have anonymous options.	The good news is that if your LMS doesn't offer a process by which participants can ask anonymous questions (because most of them don't), there are a plethora of other options available to you. PollEverywhere (for synchronous settings) and Google Forms (for asynchronous settings) are two great platforms that have anonymous options.	Answering every single question that's asked can be daunting, particularly when participants have time to sit and think about what they want to ask (or even text a friend to see what they should ask!). Consider how long it may take you to answer every anonymous question as a factor in how often you invite participants to ask them. If you ask for them, but don't answer them (or at least address why you aren't answering them), participants may lose trust in the online process.
Brainstorming	The platform that seems to be filling this space for most facilitators is Mural (mural.co). There are other ways to brainstorm depending on the size of the group and if everyone has at least sound capacity, like the facilitator writing on a physical white board in front of their webcam or a white board app. (A white tiled bathroom shower also works with a whiteboard marker!)	A Google Doc works really well for asynchronous brainstorming. Everyone can access it and anyone can change or add things. These may also be downsides, however, because it means that participants may overwrite something that someone else has added. To that end, including google doc etiquette is a critical element for settings that use it.	Brainstorming within a sexuality context always requires immediate feedback and interaction with ideas, as they are suggested. All young people know examples of language and ideas that are harmful and hurtful and these surface regularly during brainstorming sessions. It is the facilitator's job to quickly address them rather than to let them sit as part of the visual brainstorming process. However, this is substantially more difficult to do if participants are adding their own ideas (as through Mural or a Google Doc). If you are allowing participants to add their own ideas to a brainstorm, either synchronously or asynchronously, be sure to address the group rules and dynamics prior to opening the brainstorm, and address anything problematic that is added as quickly as possible.

Condom Demonstrations	<p>This is fairly easy to do, because you just present the demonstration via video rather than doing in person. What is more complex is having the participants practice putting a condom on a penis model. Depending on your resources, you might be able to include condoms and a cucumber as part of a class supply list, or mail each participant a package of condoms and have them bring a cucumber to class to practice with (make sure that you mention that the cucumber is a stand-in for a penis model and that putting a condom on a penis is what they should do to protect against pregnancy or disease transmission).</p>	<p>This is fairly easy to do, because you can either record yourself putting a condom on a penis model or link to a YouTube video of someone else putting a condom on a penis model. Recording yourself, when possible, is better because it builds connections between you and your participants that may otherwise feel missing in an asynchronous classroom. What is somewhat more complex is having participants practice putting a condom on a penis model. If your participants' technology and resources are sufficient, you can have them record themselves putting a condom on a cucumber (make sure that you mention that the cucumber is a stand-in for a penis model and that putting a condom on a penis is what they should do to protect against pregnancy or disease transmission).</p>	<p>It is useful to remember that putting a condom on is a relatively simple procedure when compared to having a conversation about condoms and other forms of contraceptives and STI prevention methods with a partner or a potential partner. It may not be worth a substantial amount of your time to focus on how to replicate the portion of this activity where participants practice putting a condom on a penis model. Rather, focus on how to convey dialogue through role play or other activities.</p>
Creative expressions (writing or drawing)	<p>If participants are assigned to prepare their written or drawn expression prior to class, they can take a picture of it and send it to the facilitator. The facilitator can make a slide show of all the contributions or a subset of them to display via a slide show during class. If participants create their expressions during class, they can turn on their cameras to share visuals or they can turn on their microphones to share written words with their fellow participants.</p>	<p>Participants can easily share written words via discussion board. You can allow participants to respond to others' posts or not, depending on the goal of the assignments. Participants can share pictures they've drawn via the same medium if they are able to take a photograph of their picture and post it or by directly uploading digital photographs.</p>	<p>Previewing participant-created content (as with the slide show example) allows the facilitator to preview the content to attend to anything that is potentially problematic before it is distributed to all of the participants.</p>

Games and other physical activities	Translating games/physical activities that were designed for a F2F experience into a synchronous, online experience can be very difficult (like going to a store to buy condoms), easy (like having small groups brainstorm synonyms for sexuality related words in breakout rooms and then report back to the big room), technology heavy (like turning a physical card game into an online card game), or somewhere in between. Whether you are able to do this will depend on your learning goals, the specifics of the game, and the resources you have available to you. There are an increasing number of games available online, and using those is a great idea!	Playing games that are designed for a F2F experience in an asynchronous format is incredibly difficult. There are a few games (often called simulations or sims) that are specifically designed for learning in an asynchronous way, but there are few (possibly zero) designed for sexuality education. As education increases its digital integration, it is possible that we will see increasing numbers of sims for sex ed online. In the meantime, it may be possible to modify some of your F2F games if you are creative with the tools available in your LMS.	As with all content related to sexuality and sexual health, and particularly when it is being presented digitally, it's critical to keep a trauma informed lens in mind. While this is as true with games and physical activities as with everything else, it may be easier to forget about in an attempt to be more fun.
In class speaker	Have a speaker come in and participate in the Zoom from their own location. Be sure to do a test run with their technology beforehand!	Have a speaker work with you to collect readings for the week, write your LMS processes, respond to them, and grade them (as applicable).	This is a great thing! Especially if you know people who are able to come and speak who are part of a population that your participant group may not have much connection with or experience hearing from. Some examples include someone who is HIV positive, who is trans or nonbinary, has been in an abusive relationship, etc. You do need to make sure that the speaker is prepared and ideally has experience discussing their personal experiences in a public environment. Collecting questions from your participants to share with the speaker beforehand is often useful.

Large group discussion	This is hard to do in a synchronous classroom with more than 10 or so participants. In fact, unless you and your participants all have extraordinary technology and internet access, large group synchronous discussions should just be skipped in favor of small group discussions.	This is the standard discussion option in most LMS's. It's high quality, useful, and can produce really effective discussions, especially when you opt for responses to be threaded and require participants to respond to one or more post from one of their peers.	For a best practices approach to asynchronous discussions, you have to read everything! You don't have to respond to everything, but you should actively take part in the conversations, as you would in a F2F large group discussion.
Lecture	You can lecture in a video call just the same way as you would in a classroom, including presenting your slides. However, in the online space it's very difficult to tell if your participants are paying attention to a lecture. They may turn their screens to black (for legitimate reasons like their wifi can't handle the load) or because they are tuning out or even walking away. They may click off of the video conference screen so that they can take notes (legitimate) or because they're messaging a friend (not legitimate). While they may zone out in a classroom, this is obviously different. So keep lectures short - absolutely no more than 5 minutes for 6 - 8th grades, 7 minutes for 9 - 10th grades, and 10 minutes for 11 - 12th grades. Immediately follow any lecture time with an active engagement activity.	You can record yourself giving a lecture, just as you would in a flipped classroom, and students can use it in much the same way. They will be able to pause the video to work out details or take notes. The videos must be short - absolutely no more than 5 minutes for 6 - 8th grades, 7 minutes for 9 - 10th grades, and 10 minutes for 11 - 12th grades - and make sure that they provide information that directly applies to an activity that comes immediately after the video in the classroom flow. This can be something like a short, factual, multiple choice quiz, but is ideally more dynamic and engaging. Have a look over the other approaches for ideas.	When lecturing F2F, you are able to assess participants' reactions to your lecture. Even though you will miss some reactions, you will have something to gauge the flow of your lecture. This is never true in online lectures, whether they are synchronous or recorded. This means you will not know if a student is hurt or triggered by something you say, and so your attentiveness to your language and how it is trauma informed is critical. This guide by Cardea on trauma informed sex ed is a great introduction to the topic and should probably be required reading for people working in online sex ed every six months or so: http://www.cardeaservices.org/resourcecenter/guide-to-trauma-informed-sex-education (available in English and Spanish)

Passing around items (i.e., menstrual products or contraception options)	<p>Have either videos or an assortment of high quality pictures, from different angles, and showing all elements of the item. For example, when showing images of a tampon, there should be pictures of each of the following: a tampon in its closed wrapper, a tampon mostly out of its wrapper, a tampon without the wrapper, a tampon partly pushed out of its applicator, and a tampon pushed completely out of its applicator. This step-by-step imagery will allow you to verbally go over each element of a tampon in detail. You could potentially include some of these items, especially disposable menstrual products, in a list of class supplies.</p>	<p>There are often YouTube videos that capture details of these items, but if you cannot find one that you feel adequately shows the item you are trying to provide information around, you could create your own or you could use the picture technique described in the synchronous options and post them in your LMS along with detailed descriptions.</p>	<p>The things that facilitators pass around during sex ed classes are typically items that people use and manipulate in very personal ways. Finding ways to be as clearly detailed as possible when modifying the F2F experience of actually holding them will offer a substantial support to participants who have never seen or held these items but who may find themselves needing to use them without any additional F2F support.</p>
Readings	<p>While in person it's common to ask for volunteers to read things aloud, this is somewhat more difficult to do as part of a synchronous class because there are not the same kinds of body language cues. Instead, you can integrate the written words into PowerPoint slides and read them yourself or include videos of people on YouTube reading. Follow up with small group discussions or integrated polls that ask for responses.</p>	<p>These are easy to provide to participants as part of the learning flow, in a discussion board question (if you would like responses), as a video of you (or someone on YouTube) reading it, etc. Participants can respond via the discussion board.</p>	<p>Whether synchronous or asynchronous it's important that readings are used to create participant engagement. Similar to lectures, keep them short and sweet. You also have the option of adding on short quizzes at the end of the reading. These quizzes aren't necessarily for grades, but to clarify participant engagement and to make sure they grasped the information from the reading. This data also allows you to keep track of participant progress at different points throughout a class.</p>
Referring to resources	<p>This is relatively easy to do, as all platforms have a chat box where you can drop in book titles, links, images, and more.</p>	<p>This is incredibly easy to do, either through the discussion boards, announcements, or a combination of both.</p>	<p>Some facilitators are heavy on providing additional resources and some facilitators don't give out as many. This is as true online as it is in F2F classes. Online classes do lend themselves to more additional, outside resources because they are so easy to give. Make sure that your resources are accurate, live, and up to date every time before distributing them.</p>

Role play	<p>If participants have access to video cameras and microphones, you can invite them to volunteer to role play with each other. Most video programs will allow participants to volunteer by virtually raising their hands, turning on their video (if it is typically off), raising their actual hands or a piece of paper (if their video is typically on). This will only work if you have a group who is really excited about role playing! If your group is somewhat less excited about role play, you can have them create scripts (either to act out or to just read through). This can be done in pairs or small groups in breakout rooms and then shared out with the whole group in a variety of ways.</p>	<p>There are at least two creative ways for roleplays to take place asynchronously:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) The facilitator can assign small groups to create scripts for a scenario that are then shared with the large group. (2) The facilitator can assign a large group discussion where each participant begins an interaction or dialogue. responds to at least two of their peers' beginning dialogues, and makes sure that the conversation they started continues. 	<p>Facilitator engagement with role plays online is just as crucial as facilitator engagement is F2F. Because role playing brings up many examples of problematic communication and potentially triggering responses, facilitators always need to be on top of their game when creating this kind of environment. Given the difficulties of ensuring that triggering issues are fully addressed in the online space, role plays need to be even more closely tended to. Therefore, facilitators should respond to online roleplays immediately after the roleplays or scripts are presented and in the same format.</p>
Small group discussion	<p>This is a well loved component of many sex ed classrooms, and doesn't need to go away just because you're working in an online, synchronous setting. Most video meeting and conference platforms have the capacity for small breakout rooms. The facilitator can assign participants to the rooms and provide them with questions to discuss and then participants can return to share their conversations with the large group just as they would in a F2F classroom.</p>	<p>Most LMS's allow you to put together small discussion groups. Reporting out to the large group can happen, although it may be best for the small groups to submit a file summarizing their discussion to the facilitator who then posts that for everyone to see and (potentially) respond to. A slide show, where each group has their own slide reporting out, is a great way to do this.</p>	<p>When you are putting together breakout rooms for synchronous discussions, each group should have between 4 and 5 participants a facilitator in it to maintain and support respectful dialogue and redirect as needed. It is possible that for a particularly strong group, or an older group, a facilitator will feel comfortable either letting the participants discuss independently or assigning a peer leader to each small group. However, even in this situation, the facilitator should still move constantly between the rooms to provide support, information, and guidance.</p> <p>For asynchronous small group discussions, you have the benefit of reading everything that is said, and you should. This allows you to respond directly to problematic or inaccurate information.</p>

Voting activities	<p>Voting activities are where participants stand at different points from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, pick between predetermined solutions/options, etc, and can be very effective in an online space. Many video platforms have an integrated polling function. If yours doesn't, you can always use an external one like Poll Everywhere and provide the link in the chat box. You can also use a program like Google Forms for participants to fill out prior to the session (it is not as useful synchronously). If your participants all have video and associated wifi capacity available to them, you can ask them to have red, yellow, and green pieces of paper on their desk to hold up in front of their faces OR everyone can give a thumbs up, to the side, or down OR you can have everyone type a number to indicate a preference into the chat box and wait until your go-ahead to hit send all at once.</p>	<p>Many LMS's have polling systems. If yours does not, you can use third party platforms, like Google Forms or Survey Monkey. Participants can answer the questions and you can post the collected responses and invite dialogue about them in a discussion board.</p>	<p>It is critical to respond to and discuss voting activities. Because these answers are often so personal, leaving them unaddressed can feel disrespectful to participants.</p> <p>Discussing the results of a voting activity poll in a synchronous setting can be done very similarly to a F2F classroom. The facilitator can discuss why people may have answered as they did, provide input from perspectives that are different from the class's, and even invite individual participants to share their thoughts if they have microphone access.</p> <p>When discussing the result of this kind of activity in an asynchronous setting, it is important to highlight all parts of the spectrum and discuss potential motivation for where people may have selected to land. This doesn't mean sharing your personal opinion, just a possible opinion. You may decide to provide space for participants to actively discuss their answers or not.</p> <p>If you are collecting anonymous responses, participants may actually appreciate using a platform other than the video/LMS platform because it adds a layer of protection.</p>
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