



# Session 1: Sexual Values

## PURPOSE:

This session is designed to increase participants' awareness of both their own values and beliefs about sex and sexuality and about the range of values and beliefs that other people might hold.

## OBJECTIVES:

As a result of this session, participants will be able to

- Discuss the ways that values and religion impact sexuality.
- Identify their own values and beliefs about sexuality.

## KEY MESSAGES:

- While everyone might not have religious beliefs, everyone does have beliefs and values about sex and sexuality.
- It helps to think about and know what your sexual beliefs and values are so that they can guide your sexual decision-making.
- Your sexual beliefs and values do not have to be the same as anyone else's. It's usually best to think about them on your own and to talk with people you respect as ways of figuring out your values and beliefs.

## AGENDA:

Activity 1: Question Box	10 minutes
Activity 2: What to Say About Religion	25 minutes
Activity 3: What to Say About Values	15 minutes
Break	10 minutes
Activity 4: I Believe...	25 minutes
Activity 5: Thinking Through My Values	15 minutes
Activity 6: Letters from the Family	15 minutes
Activity 7: Question Box & Closing	05 minutes

## MATERIALS:

- ☐ Chart paper and markers
- ☐ Letter(s) for each participant from parent(s) and other important adults
- ☐ Question box & questions from the previous session
- ☐ Pad of paper (one per participant)
- ☐ Pens or pencils
- ☐ Sheets of red, orange, yellow, and green paper (one of each)
- ☐ **Facilitator Resource: Example Values**
- ☐ **Facilitator Resource: I Believe Statements**
- ☐ **Facilitator Resource: Letter Home**
- ☐ **Facilitator Resource: Sexuality & Religion**



## PLANNING NOTES:

### GENERAL:

- You might choose to organize this session so that **Activity 3: What to Say About Values** comes before **Activity 2: What to Say About Religion**. If your participants are particularly unfamiliar with or uncomfortable talking about religion, do Activity 3 first. While it will not make as much sense logistically (religious beliefs often inform values), it may make the content more accessible for secular participants.

### ACTIVITY 3: What to Say About Values

- Prepare a piece of chart paper with the title “Values” and hang at the front of the room.

### ACTIVITY 4: I Believe...

- Collect pieces of paper in the following colors (could be colored paper or you could use crayons to cover white paper): red, orange, yellow, and green. Hang along one wall as a color continuum with space for participants to stand in front of the wall and move back and forth along the continuum.
- Read through the statements on **Facilitator Resource: Values Voting Statements** and pick 5 or 6. The goal is to pick statements that you think will be engaging and controversial for your participants to discuss rather than ones that they might mostly agree on.

## PROCEDURE:

### ACTIVITY 3: What to Say about Values

**Facilitator:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Tell participants that now you are going to talk about values. Read the following definition of values:

The word value has two meanings: The first is how much something is deemed to be worth. The second is what a person believes to be important or what kinds of behavior they think are appropriate.

Tell participants that you will be talking about the second definition today.

2. Ask participants to brainstorm values that people hold about sex and sexuality. As they brainstorm, write their ideas on the piece of prepared chart paper at the front

of the room. See **Facilitator Resource: Example Values** for possible statements that participants might suggest.

During the brainstorm, make the following points to participants as they flow naturally:

- People hold a wide variety of sexual values. Based on these different values, sometimes people disagree about what sexual behaviors and attitudes are appropriate.
- We have talked about sexual values in each of our sessions, although we haven't explicitly called them values.
- Everyone has learned sexual values from their parents and extended families.
- Sometimes personal values are different from religious beliefs and sometimes they are the same. It can be a hard moral struggle when a person's religious beliefs and their personal values are different.



#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What were the differences and similarities between your lists of religious beliefs and personal values? *(Example answers: One was more specific/general, one included more "nos" than the other, certain topics were found on one list and not the other, etc.)*
- What might people base their personal values on, if not religious beliefs? *(Example answers: Family values, cultural values, information from the media, information from partners, etc.)*
- How do you think people might figure out what to do if their personal values and religious beliefs are different? *(Example answers: Talk to a religious leader you trust, seek out information from credible sources in books or online.)*



#### ACTIVITY 4: I Believe ...

Facilitator: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Direct participants' attention to the color continuum on the wall. Let them know you are going to read a series of value statements out loud and they will move to stand in front of the space on the continuum that shows whether they agree (green) or disagree (red) with the statement.

2. Read the first statement from **Facilitator Resource: I Believe Statements** that you decided on based on the Planning Notes.

After participants arrange themselves on the continuum, invite volunteers from different perspectives to share why they are standing where they are. Encourage them to give their answers in language that describes their sexual values and their religious beliefs.

If all of the participants are standing in the same place, one of the facilitators should move to another place on the spectrum to provide another perspective, even if it is not their own. They can make this clear by saying something like, "If someone were to stand here, they might say it is because..."

3. Repeat step 2 with the additional statements you chose from the facilitator resource.



#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- a. Which statement was the easiest for you to decide where to stand?
- b. Which statement was the hardest to decide where to stand? Why was it the hardest for you?
- c. What sexual values or religious beliefs did you use to help you decide where to stand?





## I Believe Statements

1. It's a problem for people of different religions to date each other.
2. Young teenagers may think that they are in love, but people that young don't fall in love for real.
3. It's okay to talk someone into having sex as long as they agree in the end.
4. If someone is on birth control, they are probably having sex or want to have sex.
5. If someone carries condoms with them, they are probably having sex or want to have sex.
6. It's unlikely for someone to know what their sexual orientation is before they are even in high school.
7. A high school student and a middle school student can date each other without any problems.
8. It's important for my family to meet someone if I am dating them.
9. It's important for my friends to meet someone if I am dating them.
10. If someone is trans, they should tell someone that before they start dating.