

Minnesota Sexuality Education Resource Review Panel

Summary of Panel Review

Review Date: November 2007

Thinking About Abstinence (2008)

DVD/VHS (21 minutes)

Target Audience: Stated Audience: Grades 7th – 12th
Recommended by panel: Grades 7th – 9th

Cost: \$139.95 plus shipping

Distributor: Human Relations Media

41 Kensico Drive, Mount Kisco, NY 10549 • 800.431.2050 • www.hrmvideo.com

The Minnesota Sexuality Education Resource Review Panel **Does not recommend** use of this video for the following reasons and with the following reservations:

Review Summary:

The video *Thinking About Abstinence* provides testimonials from diverse teens who have chosen to abstain from sex. Video and materials intend to address specific topics like sex in the media, why boundaries matter, confusing love and sex, risks and consequences of sex before you're ready, the importance of choosing friends, resisting drugs and alcohol, and setting life goals. Cost includes pre- and post-tests as well as a teacher's resource book and student handouts.

The panel **does not recommend** the video *Thinking About Abstinence* for the following reasons:

- Much of the information is inaccurate and value-laden.
- Activities and video scenarios use scare tactics and shame as motivation.
- Messages are not positive – sex negative focus (e.g. people who are abstinent are good, focused and admirable; and people who have sex are in for a lifetime of heartache and danger.)
- Scenarios and activities presented do not allow for open conversations about sexual health or skill building for communication, negotiation or defining boundaries.
- Provided no clear definition of “sex.”
- Visuals and graphics in guide were minimal and not effective.

The panel recognizes the following positive aspects of the video *Thinking About Abstinence*:

- Provides one consistent and strong message, abstinence is good.
- Shared another message that you can abstain from sex at anytime in your life.
- Video was current and would be visually appealing for youth.

Overall, the panel **does not recommend** the video *Thinking About Abstinence* for the intended audience. In addition to the above comments, the panel felt the material was not appropriate for high school students.

Thinking About Abstinence (2008)

Assessment Criteria	Mean Score	Comments
Accuracy of Information - Provides basic, accurate information about teen sexual health, e.g., risks of teen sexual activity, ways to avoid intercourse or use methods of protection against pregnancy and STDs, human growth and development, relationships, etc.	1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presents opinions as fact. ▪ Uses out of date information and statistics. ▪ Shame-based & not evidence-based, no mention of sex and protection. All sex is bad sex.
Focus - Focuses on ways to promote sexual health e.g., reducing one or more sexual behaviors that lead to unintended pregnancy or HIV/STD infection; understanding healthy physical/emotional development; developing healthy relationships, etc.	1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not much information on sexual health; only one option to reduce risk = abstinence. ▪ Very focused on abstinence, but not in healthy way or with any useful advice.
Messages - Delivers and consistently reinforces a clear message, e.g., states message multiple times in multiple ways.	2.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promotes abstinence by making sex a shameful and negative activity. Very punitive. ▪ Though the message was poor, it was extremely consistent. ▪ Never gave clear definition of “abstinence”. Inaccurate definition of rape!
Addresses Social Pressures – Video demonstrates social pressures that influence sexual behavior. Guide includes activities that address social pressures that influence sexual behavior.	2.2 1.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Addressed issues about alcohol & boys/girls pressure, but did not allow for a discussion or give any facts/statistics
Communication Skills – Video provides examples of being assertive, using negotiation and refusal skills, making decisions, etc. Guide includes activities to practice assertive skills, negotiation and refusal skills, decision-making skills, etc.	1.4 1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No negotiation and refusal skills presented. Did not give any examples of how to say “no”
Teaching Methods - Engages participants and helps them personalize information	1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does not or would not engage students who have already been sexually active or have been sexually abused. ▪ Alienating and offensive statements repeatedly made
Appropriateness for Audience - Incorporates behavioral goals, teaching methods, and materials that are appropriate to the age, sexual experience, and culture of the students (as stated by publisher.)	1.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More appropriate for middle school, it can work with younger kids, but not with older kids ▪ Activities are too young for high school
Multicultural Perspective – This resource is most appropriate for the following audiences.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No mention of GLBT youth, person(s) with disabilities and very heterosexist ▪ Not urban friendly and very middle class focused
Teacher-Friendly - Is well organized with clear, thorough instructions or discussion guide. Minimal assembly or preparation time required.	2.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extremely easy to use ▪ Activities are simple
Facilitation Skills Required - How knowledgeable and skilled must the facilitator be to use this resource effectively?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Show the movie and use guide, there is no way to discuss this info.
Presentation Quality – How appealing is the product (e.g. visual quality, sound quality, graphics, etc.)?	2.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentation quality was good, but the content was poor.
Overall Recommendation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recommend Highly - 0 ▪ Recommend – 0 ▪ Reject - 12