

Independent Living Instructors and Social Workers: This Page Is for You

Use *Represent* in IL Classes

This issue's IL section starts on page 30. It focuses on sex and relationships, and helps teens consider what kind of relationships they want for themselves. Teens can read these stories as background which will help them realize that their peers think these are important issues. However, it's hard to learn these skills by reading, so the following lessons include active involvement. The more you can get the teens involved, the more the lessons will stick with them.

Following is a plan for how to bring this issue's theme to your independent living class. (If you have feedback on how the lessons work with your group, we'd love to hear it! Please call 212-279-0708 x114.)

Topics: Several stories in this issue are about sex, protection, and consequences. This exercise vividly shows how HIV (or other STDs) can be transmitted. After reading one or more stories, announce that you are going to do an activity.

Goals: Reinforce need for condom use. Reinforce idea that only no sex is truly safe sex. Reinforce how STD's are spread from person to person to person.

What You'll Need:

- Enough index cards for the group and pens/pencils.
- Mark three of the cards as follows.
 - Place an "X" in the corner of one card. (This is the "HIV positive person.")
 - Write a C in the corner of one card (for condom use or safer sex practitioner)
 - On one card write DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON ANY CARD AND DO NOT LET ANYONE WRITE THEIR NAME ON YOUR CARD (This is the "abstinent person")
- d) Write "B" on the rest of the cards for birth control other than condom use.
- Keep the "X" card for yourself.

Activity and Discussion: 45 minutes

- Give students the card. Tell them they have three minutes to walk around and get three other students and you, the teacher, to sign their cards. After they are done they should go back to their seat. (Do not tell them at this time what the letters mean.)

- Tell the students that the X on your card means you are HIV positive. Remind them what this means. (If any student reacts strongly to your announcement—makes a sound of disgust or a nervous giggle—ask that student why they responded that way. This can be a good opportunity to have a short discussion about students' fears and attitudes.)

- Read the names on your card and ask them to please stand. Then everyone still seated should read the names on their cards. If any of them have the names of people who are standing then they must stand. Continue with the process until all students are standing except the "abstinent person."

- Tell the students that for the purpose of this exercise, writing their names on cards or having other people write sign their cards represented having sex. Everyone standing put themselves at risk of getting HIV by exchanging names with the teacher or someone the teacher had exchanged names with and so on.

- Tell the student with the "C" card to sit down. Tell the class that this student had a C on their card which means they always used a condom.

- Ask your students to notice that one person did not stand up. The reason this student did not stand is because he or she was instructed not to allow anyone to record their name on their card. He or she was playing the role of someone who is abstinent.

Discussion points:

- How many people did the one HIV positive person potentially infect? Are they surprised?

- Is it hard to use a condom all the time? What problems may develop?

- In real life how does it feel to be someone who does not have sex? Do people give them a hard time?

- The teacher or facilitator should stress that in this game, you (the teacher) were in control of what role students would play. In reality, they are in control and responsible for the decisions they make.

