

## **Great Choices...**

*What teens want and need to know to make healthy decisions*

Great Conversations has developed a curriculum for middle adolescent teens and their families focused on teen decision-making on substance use and sexual activity. The goal is to address the large demand in the community for a family-based program that delivers accurate information on high-risk teen behavior in the format and style of our popular classes for pre-teens.

### **Curriculum Focus**

Content focus of first class:

Decision-making, navigating and understanding sources and effects of peer pressure, myths and facts on substance use – alcohol, drugs, smoking

Instructor: Julie Metzger RN, MN

Content focus of second class:

Decision-making around sexual behavior - STD's, contraception, attractions, healthy relationships

Instructor: Rob Lehman MD

Both classes will include a combination of engaging lecture, question/answer, role-playing scenarios, multi-media (short videos), parent/child problem solving, and handouts.

### **Class Objectives**

#### Making Decisions on Drugs and Alcohol

Upon completion, the student will be able to:

- Describe how teen decision-making is impacted by brain development.
- Describe two differences between teen and adult brain and body response to drinking/substance use.
- Describe 3 ways that peers can influence teen decision-making on substance use.
- Describe 3 ways that the media can influence teen decision-making on substance use.
- Describe 3 realistic ways to turn down an offer to participate in drug or alcohol use.
- List two resources teens have when making decisions around substance use.

## Making Decisions on Sex

Upon completion, the student will be able to:

- Describe two ways that a teen's perception might differ from normative teen sexual behavior and why that happens.
- Identify two ways the media influences teens' sexual behavior.
- Be able to identify at least three STD's and their characteristics.
- Be able to identify at least three methods of contraception and their effectiveness.
- Identify ways to negotiate through three typical situations of sexual decision-making.
- Know at least two places to go for information on teen sexual behaviors.

### **Rationale**

- High-risk teen behavior – drinking, drugs, sex, and smoking all double in incidence between 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Teens who report a strong connection and communication with parents delay high risk behavior. Evidence exists from multiple studies that teens continue to look to parents to be an important and vital influence on delaying high-risk behavior, yet parents often feel uncertain, ineffective, and unable to have these important conversations.
- The teen brain is under construction, which makes it particularly vulnerable to substance use.
- One of the primary tasks of teens is impulse control as their brain continues to create neural pathway connections to the pre-frontal cortex. Opportunities to problem-solve and rehearse scenarios give teens a chance to think through the cost and consequences of behaviors and expand their options for response.

### **Our background:**

In addition to creating and teaching *For Girls Only* and *For Boys Only* for many years, Julie Metzger and Rob Lehman have a wealth of experience talking to teens, parents, and professionals on teen development and behavior. Rob Lehman lectures frequently on sexually transmitted diseases and teen sexual health throughout the Pacific NW, and Julie Metzger has developed a health curriculum on decision-making for middle and high school students that she has given to hundreds of students in Palo Alto and Seattle. A full bio and list of talks can be found on their website at: [www.greatconversations.com](http://www.greatconversations.com)