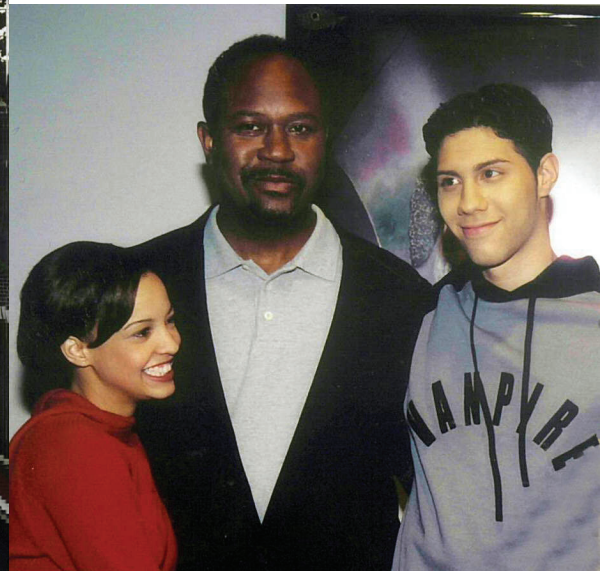




The Choice Game™

Teacher Guide





The Choice Game™

The Choice Game™ is fun, serious fun. Because it is fun, youth like to play the game. In making their own choices they don't feel "they are being talked down to". Instead, the interactive quality of the game gives youth a sense of empowerment in determining what direction their learning will take. This kind of participation optimizes learning because it's motivated by individual desire and personal interest. We think you and your students will truly enjoy The Choice Game™.

Focus group experiences have made abundantly clear The Choice Game's™ ability to initiate lively and meaningful discussions on the subjects it contains. Many possibilities are presented by the game; however, it's potential far outreaches the confines of classroom time, as we often experienced long after a student focus group. This gives individual teachers the opportunity to carefully select and guide what issues are most appropriate for their classes without ever worrying about exhausting the material.

More About Bandura's Social Cognitive Learning Theory

The Choice Game™ is based on Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Learning Theory, which emphasizes the importance of learners observing and internalizing the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions modeled to them. The theory can be summarized in four segments:

1. **Attention.** If our students are going to learn something, they must be paying attention to it. The Choice Game™ actors, music, and scripts make it easy for students to pay attention.
2. **Retention.** Our students must be able to retain and remember what they have paid attention to. Learning takes place when we store what we have seen modeled to us in the form of mental images or verbal descriptions.
3. **Reproduction:** Learners must translate the images or descriptions into actual behavior by internalizing what has been modeled to them. The Choice Game™ settings and situations are from the real world experiences and challenges of the youth in our focus groups; therefore, they can be easily duplicated by all students.
4. **Motivation.** Effective learning will not take place unless students are motivated to imitate the models they have observed. By engaging students in an interactive mode, The Choice Game™ inspires this motivation.



Choice Game Applications and Educational Strategies

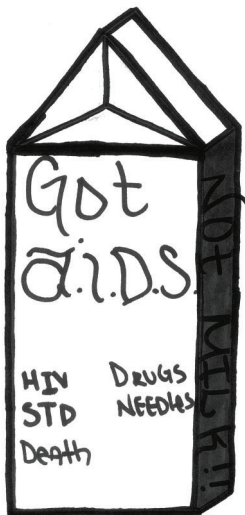
The Choice Game™ was designed as a highly flexible instrument that has many possible applications. These range from a highly structured course meant for the classroom setting to less formal group settings and even for private individual use. For your convenience a sampling of possible applications follows, in the introduction section.

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The Choice Game™

Chapter 3

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

This Weeks Objectives:

STDs and AIDS – CD-ROM Segment Choices: STDs and AIDS provides statistics and information that the only guaranteed protection is abstinence from sex and intravenous drug use.

- Explain the risks of being infected with a sexually transmitted disease.
- Explain the types of sexually transmitted infections.
- Identify the most common STDs and modes of transmission.
- Identify some medical consequences of having an untreated STD.
- Examine the emotional, psychological and physical consequences of pre-marital sex.
- Explain the positive outcomes of abstinent living.
- Abstinence as a protection against disease.
- Abstinence as a choice for better relationships.

The story:

This is a conversation between two young men after they have been in a health class on STDs. They have seen photos of diseased body parts. (Note: These photos are not a part of The Choice Game™ curriculum.) Their conversation leads to many stories about friends, relatives, feelings, and finally their own personal beliefs. The goal of STDs segment is to share medical and emotional information in a manner that makes it memorable. As the two young men state facts, the student actors of The Power Players of the NJ School of Medicine and Dentistry perform relevant scenes. The segment ends with each young man deciding how he is going to live his individual life. One wants to be a doctor and try to wait for sex until marriage. The other young man says, “If a girl wants to give it up, I’m going for the Gold Medal.”

Sexually Transmitted Diseases: Focus Groups on the Issues

“Are you sure you don’t always know you have an STD when you have one?” This question was repeated many times by the focus youth. They also reacted soberly to the medical fact that most STDs go undiagnosed and untreated because they can remain “invisible” for so long. “And how?” they wanted to know, “could a virgin get an STD?” This opened a learning discussion on the transmission of infections.

Virtually every teen thought they needed to know more about STDs. They clearly understood that HIV was incurable, but were surprised to discover that although sexually transmitted viruses could be treated, none could be cured. In their words, “Kids would really like to talk about this stuff,” and they saw The Choice Game™ as a vehicle for opening up some very important discussions.

Prompted by the script, the subject of virginity drew encouraging admiration and respect for girls who remained virgins. To a lesser degree, abstinent boys were thought to be “strong”, but a double standard was obvious. Despite their support for the idea of virginity, most thought it almost impossible. As one youth put it, “I don’t live in the ‘Brady Bunch’ world. Of course, I would like to live somewhere where dreams can come true.”



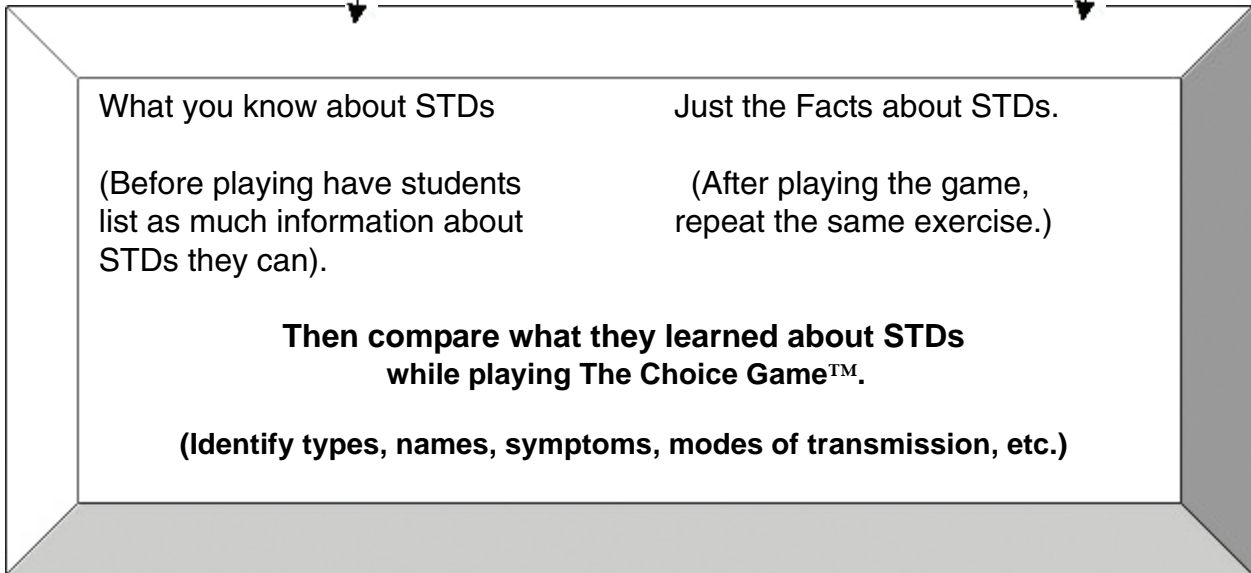
5 of the 10 most common reportable infectious diseases in the U.S. are the STDs: AIDS, Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Hepatitis B and Syphilis. When last compared in 1997, these five STDs accounted for 87% of all reported infectious diseases.¹

¹ JAMA HIV/Aids Resource Center: *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report- Ten Leading Nationally Notifiable Infectious Diseases—United States, 1995. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, October 18, 1996, Vol. 45, No. 41.*

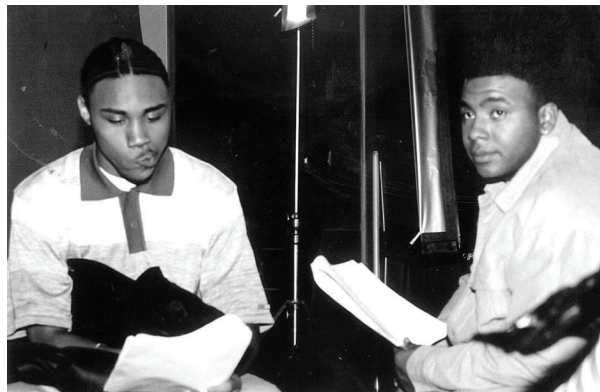
Suggestion: Find out what your students already know about STDs.

On the left side of the chalkboard write

On the right side of the chalkboard write

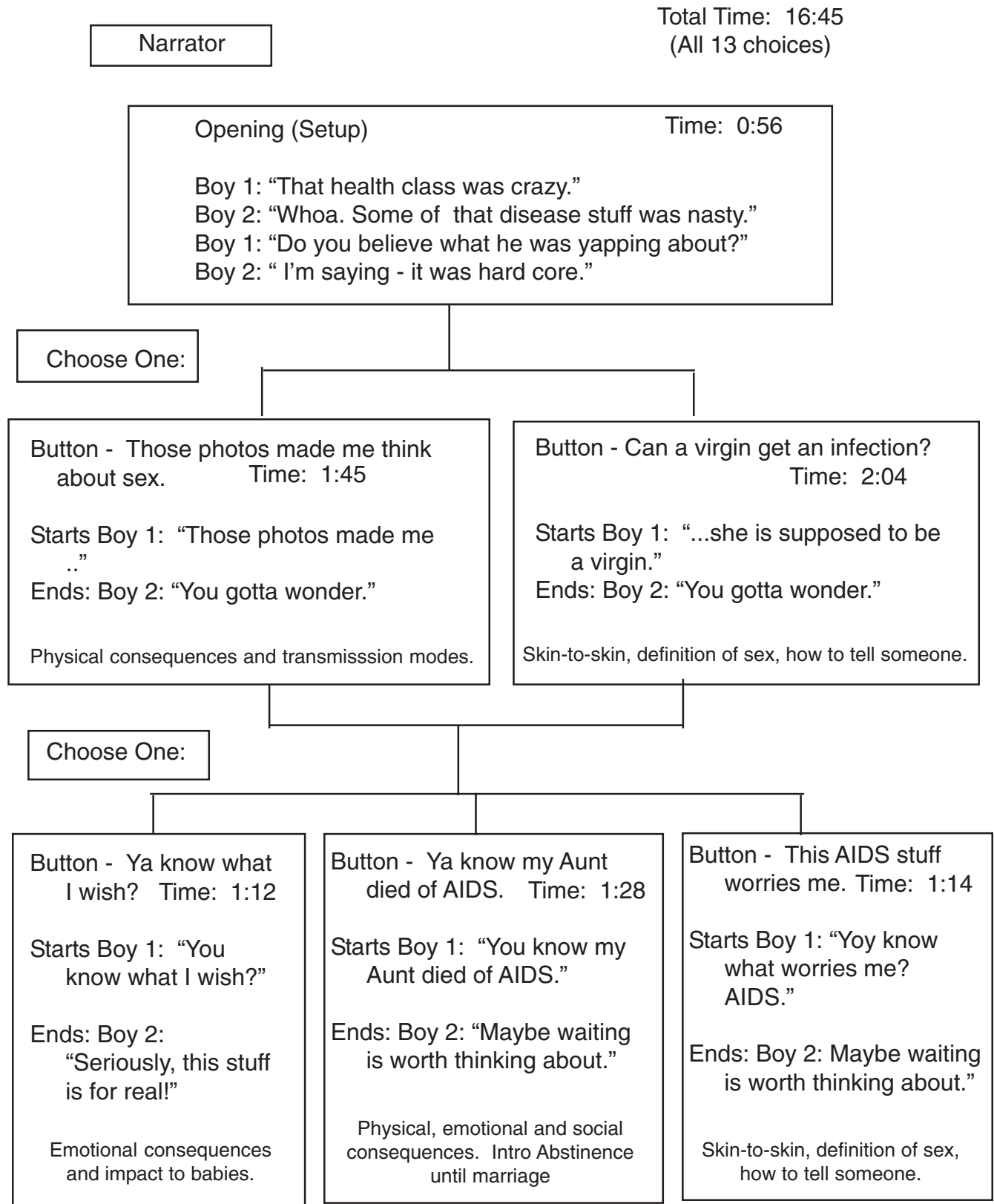


The Choice Game's™ treatment of sexually transmitted diseases opens with two teen boys in a locker room talking about sex. What could be more typical? These two guys just left a graphic presentation of STDs in Health class that really made an impression. The medical information provokes a lot of talk, but can it affect their choices about sexual behavior?



“That health class was crazy.” “Yeah, some of that disease stuff was nasty.”

STDs Script - Flow Chart - First Half



Top half of STD flow chart

“Trying to scare us is so played out,” is a sentiment shared by many teens. What they say they really want, is to be respected. That includes honest and mature discussions in which they can contribute meaningfully in.

This portion of The Choice Game™ is directed at some of the subject areas that should be honestly discussed before youth become sexually involved. Unlike the other game segments, the plot is not constructed around a critical choice. Rather, this section is divided by subject discussions and the storyline ends in a critical decision that each teenager must one day make.

Choose the risks of sexual involvement.

OR

Embrace the benefits of abstinent living.

**A fact to share,
not to scare.**

AIDS continues to be one of the leading causes of death among 15 – 24 year olds. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that half of all new HIV cases occur in those younger than 25. (The recent decline in HIV rates is not reflected in young people.)²

The Choice Game™ Survey:

Sometimes statistics almost seem to “talk.” Consider the following:

Although 77% of the teens surveyed believed they would have sexual intercourse as a teenager, only 22% said they did not desire to wait for marriage. And 60% were sure that they would like to learn more about abstinent living.

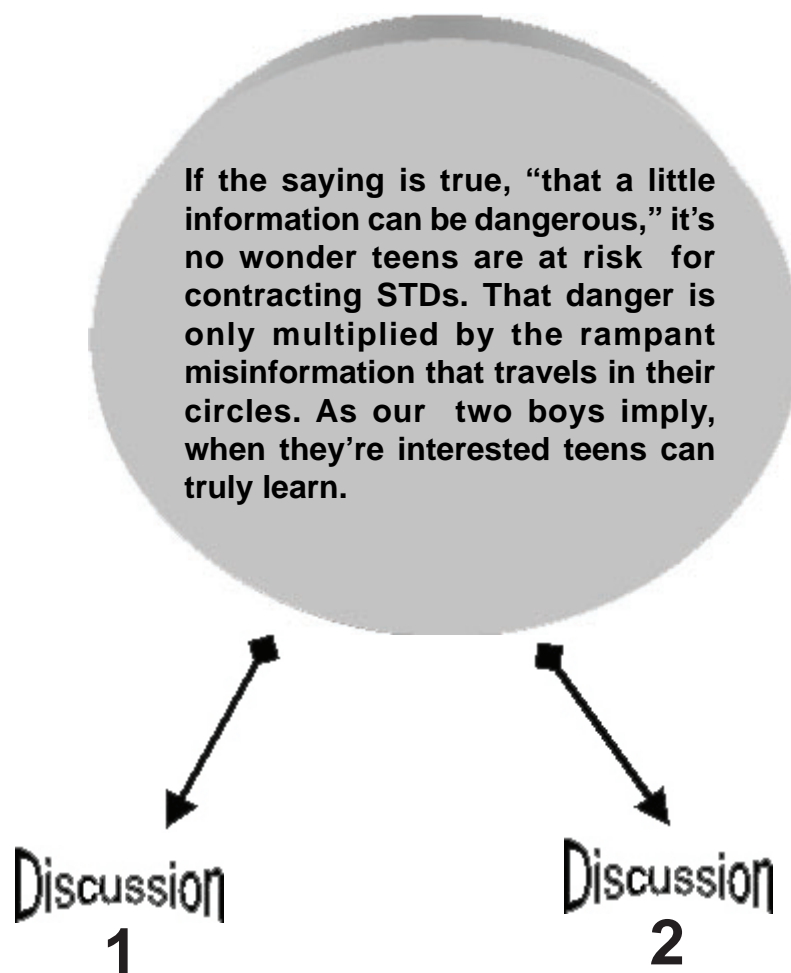
61% believed that sex could lead to serious problems, but 51% said when it came to STDs, they “tried not to think about it.”

37% of the high school teens identified themselves as being sexually active and 80% said that they had a sexual encounter, but only 17% believed they could not change their sexual behavior if given good enough reasons to do so.

Finally, considering that 3 million teens are infected with an STD every year, it is alarming that 0% of the teens we surveyed did not know whether or not they carried a sexually transmitted infection.¹

¹ The Choice Game™ Focus Group Data, Newark NJ, 2001.

² *Young People at Risk: HIV/AIDS Among America's Youth*, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, National Center for HIV, STD and TB Prevention, Divisions of HIV/AIDS Prevention, March 11, 2002.



Ugly genital warts grab their attention, but learning that STDs can be invisible makes them think.

The Trojan Horse:

Have a nicely wrapped box visible to the class. Let them beg you to open it. At your choosing, open the gift to reveal the messy – if possible, smelly - garbage wrapped inside. Compare it to an attractive man or woman carrying an unseen bacterial or an incurable viral STD.

One boy is amazed to learn that a virgin can pick up a STD. His friend, “Doc”, paid careful attention and reinforces what the “Sex Man” had to say.

Any genital contact, infected skin contact or disease carrying bodily fluids can and do carry bacterial and viral pathogens.

Make the announcement that “Anyone who has had sexual contact should strongly consider being tested for an STD. Your health depends on it.”