

# TEACHING YOUR CHILD HEALTHY SEXUALITY

A conversation about the WHY, WHAT, and HOW of teaching your kids about healthy sexuality.

At Defend Innocence, we believe that empowering communities with knowledge is one of the best ways to prevent child sexual abuse. Thank you for your willingness to facilitate learning in your circle of influence. You are an essential part of everything that we do. Here are some best practices to consider before, during, and after the presentation.

## BEFORE

- **Communicate clearly** when and where the presentation is taking place.
- **Prepare teaching materials:**
  - Download the video onto your computer and watch it all the way through.
  - Read the discussion guides for all three parts.
  - Print handouts ahead of time—worksheets and one infographic (see Part 2).
- **Arrive early and set up:**
  - Ensure AV equipment is present, plugged in, and functioning properly.
  - Arrange seating in circle, if possible, to encourage discussion.
  - Have pens available for people to take notes and complete writing activities.
  - Start the video in full-screen mode and **PAUSE** it on the opening title for Part 1.

## DURING

- **Add energy to the room.** Be friendly, positive, and enthusiastic.
- **Trust the material *and* your intuition.** Follow the organization and activities outlined in the research-based discussion guides while being yourself and considering the needs of your group. Share personal experiences that enrich and illustrate critical principles.
- **Sit with the group, if possible.** Larger groups may require you to stand.
- **Encourage discussion:**
  - Create a safe environment where people can be honest and candid.
  - Thank participants for comments.
  - Help as many people as possible participate.
  - Don't allow one person to dominate the conversation.
- **Manage time.**
- **Emphasize the invitations to act.**

## AFTER

- Review what went well and what can be improved for your next presentation.
- Congratulate yourself for the efforts you've made to improve your community!

# TEACHING YOUR CHILD HEALTHY SEXUALITY DISCUSSION GUIDE

## Part 1: Why teach your child about healthy sexuality? (15–20 min)

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Teaching healthy sexuality at any age can reduce the risk of childhood sexual abuse.

### EXPLAIN:

We're going to discuss the the why, what, and how of teaching your kids about healthy sexuality. Let's start with the why. Research shows that children who don't know about "sexuality...are more vulnerable to sexual abuse."<sup>1</sup>

### ACTIVITY AND DISCUSSION:

- **Watch:** Here's a video to get us thinking about the topic. As you watch, look for one benefit that comes from teaching healthy sexuality.
  - Press PLAY to start the Everyday Conversations video (3:41). Remember to press **PAUSE** to discuss after the video.
- **Interact:** (3-5 minutes)  
Have participants turn to their neighbor and discuss the following question:
  - How does teaching healthy sexuality help reduce the risk of sexual abuse?
- **Discuss:** (3-5 minutes)  
Invite a few people to share an insight they heard from their neighbor with the full group.

### CALL TO ACTION:

Invite participants to have a conversation this week with their partner or someone else about the importance of teaching healthy sexuality to deter sexual abuse.

<sup>1</sup> Wurtele, S. K., Kenny, M. (2011). Normative Sexuality development in childhood; Implications for developmental guidance and prevention of childhood sexual abuse. *Counseling and Human Development*, 43(9), p. 2.

# TEACHING YOUR CHILD HEALTHY SEXUALITY DISCUSSION GUIDE

## Part 2: What are your views on healthy sexuality? (15–20 min)

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

The most effective way to prepare to teach healthy sexuality to your kids is to first clarify your own views and then decide what you will teach them.

### EXPLAIN:

Before you can teach your kids about healthy sexuality, you need to spend some time thinking about what your own views are based on your experiences and values. Let's watch parents talk about some of these topics. As you listen, consider your views.

### ACTIVITY AND DISCUSSION:

- **Watch:** Press PLAY to start the From Parents For Parents video (4:46). Remember to press **PAUSE** to discuss after the video.
- **Explain:** You just heard parents share experiences and talk about some of their views on sexuality and how these things helped them teach their kids. Now I want you to consider some of the same topics.
- **Write:** (5-7 min.)  
Distribute a copy of the "What are your views on healthy sexuality?" worksheet to each participant and have them get started filling it out. After a few minutes, remind your group about the individual reflection at the end of the worksheet.
- **Explain:** Based on research, Defend Innocence has developed infographics that offer guidelines about what to discuss at every age throughout your child's development.
  - Show an infographic example you printed and brought with you.
  - Press PLAY on the video, then PAUSE on the texting instructions.

### CALL TO ACTION:

Invite participants to text "TEACH" to 69922 to request an infographic that will help them have an age-appropriate conversation with their child.

- **Explain:** After texting teach to the phone number, you'll receive a response with keywords and age ranges. Simply reply with one of the six provided keywords and receive the corresponding infographic. Request as many as you'd like!

# TEACHING YOUR CHILD HEALTHY SEXUALITY DISCUSSION GUIDE

## Part 3: How should you teach about healthy sexuality? (15–20 min)

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Now is the time to have frequent, little, age-appropriate conversations about healthy sexuality with your child.

### EXPLAIN:

You can start the conversation about healthy sexuality before your child can even talk. For example, you can start talking and teaching about body parts when your child is a baby. And if you haven't started the conversation, now is the time! Let's watch an example of a parent recognizing an opportunity to have a conversation.

### ACTIVITY AND DISCUSSION:

- **Watch:** Press PLAY to start the Embrace the Awkward video (1:29). Remember to press **PAUSE** to discuss after the video.
- **Explain:** Let's practice how you might respond if you were in the situation we just saw in the video. You can also use your own age-appropriate scenario to practice how to respond. You might want to think about your child (or a child in your life).
- **Interact:** (5-6 min.)  
Have participants turn to their neighbor and take turns practicing being the parent. After a few minutes, prompt them to switch.
- **Discuss:** (5-6 min.)  
Bring participants back together to discuss these questions:
  - Who would like to share what they said as a parent?
  - What challenges did you find having this discussion? How could you overcome them?

### CALL TO ACTION:

Invite participants to have a conversation with their child about healthy sexuality. This conversation can be any length, anytime, anywhere!

### REVIEW:

- Briefly review the three focuses and desired outcomes from this presentation.
  - Teaching healthy sexuality at any age can reduce the risk of childhood sexual abuse. Have a conversation about this with your partner or someone else.
  - The most effective way to prepare to teach healthy sexuality to your kids is to first clarify your own views and then decide what you will teach. The researched-based infographics from Defend Innocence can help.
  - Now is the time to have frequent, little, age-appropriate conversations about healthy sexuality with your child. Have more conversations starting today.