

Risky Business: Reducing the Risk of Alcohol Abuse, Sexual Assault, and S.T.D.s

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(The workshop was designed with input from Jeff Brooks-Harris, the CSDC staff, and the CSDC interns)

Goal: To provide information and skills to college students so they may reduce their risk of alcohol and drug abuse, sexual assault, and sexually transmitted diseases.

Group Size: Minimum of eight students (dorm setting); maximum of 20 students (classroom setting).

Time Required: Minimum of 50 minutes; can be adjusted to accommodate special requests.

Physical Setting: Classroom or dorm lounge

Materials: Index cards, character description cards, 5 handouts:

1. General Facts about Alcohol, Sexual Assault, Sexually Transmitted Diseases
 2. Continuum of Alcohol Use/Abuse (facilitator can also use a large presentation board)
 3. Decision-Making Questionnaire
 4. Risky Business Guidelines
 5. Workshop Evaluation
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Overview of Workshop:

I. Reflecting on Experience

A. Scenario and Reactions

B. Introduction to the Workshop

II. Assimilating and Conceptualizing

A. General Facts about Alcohol & Durg Use, Sexual Assault and STDs

III. Experimenting and Practicing

A. Alcohol: Alcohol Use Continuum

B. Sexually Transmitted Diseases: Sexual Definition Cards

C. Sexual Assault: Prevention Strategies

IV. Planning for Action

A. Decision-Making Questionnaire

V. Closing

Detailed Outline:

I. Reflecting on Experience

The opening section of the workshop is designed to provide students with an opportunity to reflect on their feelings about alcohol and sex. The fictional scenario that follows illustrates a "risky" situation that may occur on any campus.

[Facilitator begins the presentation with the following dialogue]

"College is an exciting adventure with a multitude of opportunities. However, there are some risks that you should be aware of. It is important to be aware of these risks and learn how to play safe. My name is _____ and I am from _____. Today, I would like to start by reading a story. After I have read the story, I will ask you a few questions. Please write your comments to the questions on the cards I am handing out."

[Facilitator gives participants index cards and reads the following story]

SCENE I

"It's Friday night and you are about to go on a date with a person you have had a crush on all semester. You are wearing new clothes, perfect for the occasion. Your date looks even better than you remembered. You have decided to have dinner at a favorite restaurant. Before ordering your entrée, you both decide to have some wine. You and your date spend the remainder of the time enjoying your meal laughing and talking about all the things you have in common. After the check has been paid, you decide to pick-up some beer and go back to your place to watch a movie and get comfortable. Before the movie begins, you offer your date a drink. You feel very comfortable with your date and after a while, you begin to kiss and you continue to share drinks and make-out.

SCENE II

You wake-up Saturday morning not remembering what happened after you started kissing. You open your eyes and stretch. As you roll over, you notice that you have no clothes on and that your date is lying next to you, naked.

[Facilitator says the following]

"Please write your answers to these questions on your cards."

1. What do you think the people in this situation would be thinking or feeling?
2. If this were one of your friends and they told you this happened to them, what would you tell them?

"I am curious to know what some of your thoughts are. Would anyone like to share?"

[If students do not share, the facilitator can share his/her feelings and ask if anyone agrees or disagrees]

Workshop Introduction

[Facilitator says the following]

"The reason for this exercise and the reason we are here today is to talk about the ways college students are at risk for alcohol and drug abuse, sexual assault, and sexually transmitted diseases. In this **RiskyBusiness** workshop our goal is to give you helpful information and skills in order to reduce your risk of alcohol and drug abuse, sexual assault, and sexually transmitted diseases."

[Facilitator writes themes on blackboard or newsprint and says the following]

"In order to reduce your risk of alcohol and drug abuse, sexual assault, and sexually transmitted diseases, **Risky Business** focuses on several themes:

1. Self-awareness,
2. Decision Making, and
3. Communication.

We are going to start by developing self-awareness through educating ourselves on the facts around these issues.

II. Assimilating and Conceptualizing

This section enables students to gain knowledge about the seriousness of the alcohol & drugs, sexual assault, and STD's. It is helpful to have additional information on each issue available for the students in case they have further questions. The facilitator may also want to mention that the statistics were obtained from reputable sources (see statistics handout).

[Facilitator gives students handout titled, **General Facts about Alcohol & Drug Use, Sexual Assault, STD's** and says the following]

"This handout has statistics on alcohol & drug use, sexual assault, and sexually transmitted diseases. I am not going to tell you what to do. But, I want to provide you with accurate information so that you can make informed choices. I would like to go around the room and take turns reading this information. Who would like to begin?"

[The facilitator should ask students if they understand the message that the statement is conveying. The facilitator may provide additional information as needed to support each fact. After completing this exercise, the facilitator says the following]

"So you see, college students are at a high risk for the all three issues; particularly because they are often connected to each other. Now, I would like to give you some information about alcohol & drugs, sexual assault, and sexually transmitted diseases that will further assist you with your decision-making process."

III. Experimenting and Practicing

This section provides students with the opportunity to determine if they are (1) participating in high-risk drinking that can lead to alcohol abuse, (2) participating in high-risk sexual activity, or (3) behaving in ways that increases their risk of being involved in a sexual assault.

A. ALCOHOL

[Facilitator says the following]

"We will begin by looking at the way we make decisions around alcohol. Can have some volunteers?"

[Facilitator may invite students to stand in a line in the front of the room or sit at their desks for this exercise. Facilitator gives students handout titled, **Alcohol Use Continuum**]

[Facilitator says the following]

"This **Alcohol Use Continuum** illustrates categories of drinking behaviors. First, look over the different categories for a moment and think about which category your current drinking behavior falls into. Next, I would like to have a few volunteers who would be willing to read these cards that illustrate various drinking behaviors."

[Facilitator gives students Description Cards in **non-sequential** order. The Description Cards are usually typed in large print on brightly colored paper. Each card should have one description on it]

"I would like each of you make sure that no one sees your card. Please read only the top portion of your card when I give the signal. I would like the rest of the group to pay close attention to the descriptions. After the card has been read, I am going to ask the group to place the character in a category on the continuum. I will also ask the group to identify specific behaviors that influenced their decision."

Alcohol Continuum Description Cards

- "I'm Fred. I am a twenty-year-old student from Ohio. I have some friends who are older than me. When we hang out, they always offer me a beer, but I always say "No thanks".

"I HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT I PRACTICE ABSTINENCE.

- "I'm John. I celebrated my 21st birthday last night. My friends took me to dance and bought me a few rounds of Long Island ice tea. I got pretty wasted. I woke- up with a bad hangover.

I HAVE BEEN TOLD I AM AN EXPERIMENTAL USER.

- "I am Susan. I am a senior in college and have a very active social life. On Fridays, my friends and I put a six-pack of beer into the car and hang-out at the beach. On Saturdays,

we usually go out dancing. I tend to drink when I am at the dance clubs. I think that I am less shy around guys after I have had a drink or two.

"I HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT I AM A SOCIAL DRINKER.

- "I am Pat. Things are not going too well. My friends are on my case because I got into a heavy fight at party last week. I can't seem to keep up with my school work. I also got a \$50 fine for being intoxicated in public last night. I don't know what everyone's problem is. I'm just trying to have a good time.

"I HAVE BEEN TOLD I PARTICIPATE IN DRINKING WHICH LEADS TO PROBLEMS.

- "I am Danny. I am a Junior in college. I had my first drink at 9am today. Sometimes when I drink I can't stop drinking and I don't remember what I do. My friends want me to go out with them tonight. I told them I would go if they brought the beers.

"I HAVE BEEN TOLD I AM AT THE EARLY STAGE OF ALCOHOLISM.

- "I am Candice. I am a senior in college. I have been feeling pretty guilty and depressed. Sometimes I just sit in my room and drink until I can't feel the pain. When I don't drink, I get the shakes. When I do drink, I have blackouts. Lately, I have needed more and more alcohol to get high.

"I HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT I AM IN THE MIDDLE STAGE OF ALCOHOLISM."

- "I am Tom. I am a freshman in college. I have a hard time sleeping at night I have stopped going to my classes because I often oversleep, so I am failing my courses. I have stopped going out with my friends lately, because I would rather stay in my room and drink a case of beer in front of the television. My parents think I have no ambition. They are threatening to send me to a treatment center for addicts. I tell them not to worry because I have everything under control."

"I HAVE BEEN TOLD I HAVE ALCOHOL ADDICTION.

B. SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

[Facilitator says the following]

"As you can see, one decision a person makes about alcohol is whether he or she is going to be an abstainer, an experimental user, or a social drinker. In addition, when drinking becomes a problem a person can become an alcoholic. Next, we are going to focus on something that is closely related to alcohol use -- sexually transmitted diseases. Can anyone tell me why alcohol use and sexually transmitted diseases may be closely related?"

[The facilitator should provide examples of "risky" sexual situations that may occur due to alcohol and drug use]

"I have another set of cards that I will need help reading. Can I have a few volunteers to help identify the differences between Safer Sex and Unsafe Sex?"

[Facilitator gives students Sexual Definition cards in **sequential order**]

"Will the person with card #1 please read his/her card"

"I am Henry. We are going to tell you how we lower our risk for STDs and HIV. For us, practicing Safer Sex includes:

- Abstaining
- Dry Kissing
- Masturbation on Healthy Skin
- Touching
- Fantasy "

"I am Fred. I know that practicing Possibly Safe Sex includes:

- Protected Vaginal Intercourse
- Protected Anal Intercourse
- Oral Sex with a Condom "

"I am Sandy. I know that practicing Risky Sex includes:

- Oral Sex without a condom
- Wet Kissing
- Masturbation on Open or Broken Skin
- Alcohol & Drug Use Before Sex "

"I am Dale. I know that practicing Unsafe / Dangerous Sex includes:

- Unprotected Vaginal Intercourse
- Unprotected Anal Intercourse
- Intravenous Drug Use/Sharing Needles

[In order to facilitate a discussion, the facilitator should use the following prompts. If the facilitator is unable to answer a question, he/she should refer students to the Health Center or provide students with the 1-800-AIDS hotline]

1. Can someone tell me why wet kissing is considered to be "risky"?

Answer: The "risk" involved in wet kissing does not have to do with saliva. In fact, a person would need to swallow a gallon of saliva before contracted HIV through saliva. Wet kissing is "risky" because it may expose a person to contaminated blood (through cuts or abrasions in the mouth).

2. Can someone tell me why touching is considered to be "safer sex"?

Answer: Touching involves no fluid contact. In order to get HIV, a person would need to have direct contact with another persons bodily fluids or blood.

3. Is there such a thing as 100% "safe sex"?

Answer: Abstaining from any form of sex is only way to stay 100% safe.

C. SEXUAL ASSAULT

[Facilitator says the following]

"In addition to the decisions we make around safe sex, we also make decisions about why or when we have sex and also about how we communicate about sex. We may make decisions that put us in "risky situations" for things like sexual assault. I have a few more cards with information on sexual assault. Who would like to volunteer to read?"

[Facilitator gives students cards with information about sexual assault in **sequential order**]

"Will the person with card #1 please read first... card #2...card #3... etc.

- "I am April. We are going to tell you how we lower our risk of sexual assault. Sexual Assault is: any unwanted, forced, coerced, tricked sexual activity without the other person's consent. An absence of consent means that the other person has not verbally said 'YES' to sex."
- "I am Jamie. I can decrease my risk of sexual assault by: (a) deciding early if I want to have sex or not; (b) deciding if I am interested just in sex or in an ongoing relationship; and, (c) by recognizing and dealing wisely with peer pressure."
- "I am Dan. I can decrease my risk of sexual assault by: (a) communicating my limits and boundaries clearly; (b) by not trying to read between the lines; (c) by getting a clear picture of what my partner is saying."
- "I am Fran. I can reduce my risk of sexual assault by: (a) not giving mixed messages; (b) trusting my gut feelings; and, (c) by using alcohol responsibly."

[Facilitator should use the following prompts to facilitate a discussion. If the facilitator is unable to answer a question, he/she should refer students to a local sex abuse treatment center or counseling center]

1. Does going on a date mean a person has consented to have sex?
2. What can a person say if he/she feels pressured into doing something?
3. What do we mean when we say "communicating boundaries?" Can someone give me an example of a boundary.
4. What do we mean by "reading between the lines" or "mixed messages," can someone give me an example?

[Facilitator should close this section by asking students if they have any further questions about any of the issues they have discussed. If the facilitator is unable to answer a question he/she should refer students to a local resource.

IV. Planning for Action

This section provides students with the opportunity to reflect on their values concerning alcohol and sex. In addition, it enables students to identify how they can incorporate the workshop information into their personal lives.

[Facilitator gives students handout titled, Decision-Making Questionnaire and says the following]

"I hope you can see how self-awareness, decision-making, and communication are tools that will help you to reduce your risk in these three areas. However, knowing how to make informed decisions about risky situations doesn't necessarily mean we will put this information to use when we leave today. Therefore, I would like to give you the opportunity to practice what you have just learned."

"The questionnaire I am handing out will help you explore the ways you make decisions about alcohol and sex. The questionnaire is anonymous. No one but yourself will see your answers, so you can be as honest as you like."

"We know that there are people here today who chose not to drink or use drugs and there are people who chose not to be sexually active. It's okay to express these decisions on the questionnaire."

[Facilitator gives students approximately 4 to 5 minutes to complete worksheet]

V. Closing

The facilitator should close the workshop by asking students if they have any further questions.

[Facilitator says the following]

"I hope that the last part of this workshop increased your self-awareness of your values, your decision-making process, and your style of communicating. We are now at the end of the workshop. I want you to remember that college is an exciting adventure with a multitude of opportunities. However, there are some risks that you should be aware of. It is important to be aware of these risks and learn how to play safe. Overall, I hope that this workshop has given you the opportunity to see why alcohol and sexual activity can be "Risky Business". If you decide that you do have further questions feel free to see me after the workshop or make an appointment with me at _____.