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APPENDIX OF HANDOUTS

SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - AND A RANGE OF ANSWERS.....

"DELAY IS....." CHECKLIST DESCRIPTION.....

RU READY - OR NOT QUITE YET? A CHECKLIST ON READINESS

CAN WE DO IT? YES WE CAN! IMMEDIATE WAYS OF INTRODUCING DELAY.....

TEN STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING DELAY

SOME LINES ABOUT DELAY FOR US AS WORKERS TO TAKE.....

IT'S NOT A TREADMILL, YOU CAN GET OFF.....

101 WAYS TO SHOW SOMEONE YOU LOVE THEM....WITHOUT HAVING SEX.....

INTRODUCTION

- **Work with the Ten strategies**

This manual offers exercises for exploring seven of the Ten Practical Strategies for raising Delay as an issue in our work with young people.

The eighth strategy is "Address gender issues – and do boys/young men's work". Reference to this runs throughout the exercises and is specifically raised in the "Lines to Take" carousel scenarios and the "Pressure Cooker" exercise under Dealing with Pressure. In all Delay training, matters relating to work with boys and young men to raise and address these issues should be well-profiled.

The ninth Strategy, "Work imaginatively with parents and carers" isn't dealt with directly in the course – but you may want to include it as a heading for a flipchart sheet under your Action Planning snowball at the end of training.

And the tenth Strategy, "Offer drama, excitement and alternatives to Sex" does not have a section devoted to it, but is covered by a sheet in the final Appendix of Handouts:

"101 ways to show someone you love them....without having sex"

- **Designed for use with adults**

These exercises were designed for use with adult staff and professionals when training them to integrate Delay approaches into their work, or to refocus on these. But all of them can either be used or adapted for use directly with young people. However in doing this, be aware and alert to the fact that some young people in any group we work with will in fact already have had sex – either of their own volition (more or less) or forced on them through abuse or exploitation. It's important therefore that we adapt exercises used with them to be sensitive to this reality.

- **Using the terms Early – not First – Sex**

It is vital that we remember always to talk about Delaying Early sex – not first sex – for the same reason as in the point above. Also, this allows for the possibility of our working with young people who have had sex to take time out from doing this again until they feel it is right for them. This will include support for teen parents in delaying further sex if this feels right for them – rather than going along with assumptions that just because they have a child they must be up for sex. See "It's not a treadmill – you can get off" in the Appendix of Handouts for more on this.

- **Delay approaches are relevant for young people of all sexualities**

The Delay approach is as relevant to the support, information and advice needs of young gay men, young lesbians and young bisexual people as it is to those of heterosexual young people.

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2-DAY "LET'S LEAVE IT TILL LATER" TRAINING COURSE - Outline

Day One

- Introductions/working together
- Our issues and concerns about young people/early sex
- Presentation on theory and model of self esteem – The Ten Practical Strategies

Lunch

- Either - Young people's rights – Bill of Rights and Bill of Sexual Health Rights
Or - "Why do young people have sex?"
- Our values about young people and early sex – The Values Floor Continuum
- Working on sensuality – My Senses Star and Senses Feast
- Senses treat homework

Day Two

- Dealing with pressure – The Pressure Cooker
- Saying 'No' – What Stops us, the Assertiveness Guidelines and the Gains from Saying No
- The power of friendship – The Friendship Flying Carpet
Ways of working with young people to strengthen friendships

Lunch

- Lines to take with young people – The Scenarios Carousel
- Building self-esteem – Our "Precious and Special" Flowers
Ways of working with young people to build self-esteem
- Action Planning on Integrating the Learning
- Evaluations and Endings

2-DAY "LET'S LEAVE IT TILL LATER" TRAINING COURSE

TRAINING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, participants will have had the opportunity:

- To look at the causes and effects of early sex and current research findings.
- To understand the role played by media and peer pressure on young people and early sex.
- To come to an understanding of what the Delay approach is.
- To become clearer about the distinction between Delay and Abstinence.
- To explore a range of practical ways of working with young people to help them to make positive and healthy decisions for themselves.
- To consider the concept of "readiness" for young people and to introduce a decision-making resource for them to use in assessing this.
- To gain skills to hand on to young people in how to say 'no' and resist pressure.
- To focus on alternatives to having sex for example in terms of exploring intimacy and sensuality in non-sexual ways.
- To consider the role played by friendships, supportive adults and professionals in supporting delay.
- To reflect on ways in which we can offer guidance and support to young people about delaying early sex.
- To try out a new approach to building young people's self-esteem.
- To share methodologies and insights drawn from our own experiences.
- To consider, clarify and recognize the values we bring to this work.
- To plan ways in which to implement the course learning, how to integrate these approaches into all aspects of practice and how to present and develop this work with young people.

2-DAY "TRAINING IT" MODULE – 2ND PART OF TRAINING DELAY TRAINERS

TRAINING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, participants will have had the opportunity:

- To reflect on the 8 main training exercises in the Delay course.
- To consider the learning from these for themselves, and ways in which to deliver these exercises most effectively.
- To practise responding to and fielding difficult, critical or hostile questions about Delay approaches.
- To become clearer about explaining the difference between Delay and programmes.
- To gain skills in managing avoidance and denial in people's responses to the need for Delay work with young people.
- To receive a copy of the Training Manual to support their delivery of Delay training in the future.
- To practise planning model staff training courses, presentations and sessions focusing on Delay work and using the exercises.
- To explore effective ways of dealing with difficulties in groups, of managing feelings which arise and problematic group members.
- To gain the understanding, skills and confidence to run the 2-day Delay course themselves and any of its elements.
- To reflect on their learning in the 4 day-training and changes they will make in their practice as a result.

THE REASONS THAT EARLY SEX HAPPENS

Rationale

This exercise is a vehicle to enable people to become clearer about the reasons driving young people to have sex and bring this into conscious awareness. It is a tool to use with young people to help them recognise why they might have sex and what the feelings/outcome resulting from this might be.

This in turn will give them the opportunity for reflection, for gaining greater self-awareness and through this will enable them to take greater control of their life choices and decisions, rather than simply being subject to what at times may otherwise feel like ungovernable forces.

EXERCISE ONE – WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE SEX?

The Brainstorm

Start with a brainstorm asking the whole group "Why do girls have sex?" Point out that you are primarily thinking of younger girls – say 13 and 14 year olds and specifically mean consensual and penetrative sex. Ask participants to call out all the needs girls may try to meet through having sex with someone else. Flipchart all their answers.

The answers tend to be wide-ranging. For example, "for status", "popularity", "to keep a boyfriend", "for attention", "for affection", "cuddles", "to rebel", "to feel grown-up", "to keep up with their friends" or "to belong" often figure. Having identified some of the reasons girls may be having sex, the needs they are seeking to meet through sex, it is useful to go on to discuss whether these methods actually *work*. Does having sex with someone necessarily make you popular or stop a boyfriend from leaving?

Ask if there are any other reasons for which **boys and young men** (again we're thinking of the younger end of the age group) might have sex which have not already been charted. Add these to the flipchart too – sometimes these include "to prove they're a man", "to show they're not gay", "to tell their mates".

In fact, the learning here may be that the reality of what actually happens to girls after sex is often very far from meeting these needs although it may sometimes in the short-term seem to

deliver. So, the initial motivating feelings of bleakness, loneliness or low self-esteem are in fact quite likely to be exacerbated, not lessened by an alienating sexual experience. Rather than helping them to feel better about themselves, it may in fact leave them feeling considerably worse.

When this is done and you have a flipchart full of needs young people hope to meet through sex:

a) Ask which ones of these needs given can only be met through having sex with another person (by this we are assuming penetrative sex). Usually there are only one or two – e.g. to lose your virginity, to get pregnant

b) Ask the group what they think about this mismatch of needs and young people looking to sex to meet these?

The group task

In advance, make out a group of 3 post-its for each group. Put these on a flip chart with a grid

A	B	C
POST-IT REASON/ NEED	WHAT MIGHT BE THE FEELINGS AFTERWARDS OR THE CONSEQUENCES?	HOW ELSE COULD THEY MEET THIS NEED? HOW CAN WE HELP THEM DO THIS?

Post-it reasons to put on the headings

The ones I usually use are:

TO SHOW LOVE	TO FEEL GROWN-UP	TO KEEP A BOYFRIEND
TO TELL THEIR FRIENDS	FOR AFFECTION	FOR STATUS

But others you choose for this exercise, according to the particulars and working environments of your group could also include: Everyone else is – to feel wanted – to rebel - for excitement – to feel loved – horny – for power – to prove they're normal - for a cuddle – they are drunk/stoned – because someone asked – to give love – because their girl/boyfriend wants to – for revenge – don't know how to say 'no'

Ask the group to discuss the need on each of their post-its in the **A** column and to fill in their ideas under columns **B** and **C**

Take feedback from groups – and think in advance of some answers to columns **B** and **C** e.g.

<i>Reason for sex/ Need</i>	<i>What might the feelings be afterwards?</i>	<i>How else to meet this need?</i>
For affection	Empty, used unlovable	Through strong loving friendships and self esteem building work

Processing the Learning

Ask the group

- a) What new understanding they have gained as a trainer through this exercise?
- and
- b) What are the implications of this exercise for Delay work?

Clearly, a key understanding should be that if young people look to sex to meet these needs they are likely to be disillusioned and disappointed, and often to experience blows to their own self-esteem, rather than improving it. Remember, too, that there may be some positive outcomes for young people who have genuinely made an informed, considered and emotionally-aware choice. Although we know that the levels of subsequent regret are very high for the younger end of young people who have sex, there will be some for whom this is a happy, close, mutually pleasurable and fulfilling experience.

The Ten Strategies of the holistic Delay approach are an attempt to work with young people to help them meet these needs in more reliable ways, so when they come to sex it will be because this is what they positively want and choose, rather than hoping it will solve other problems and be a universal panacea – something it usually signally fails to be!

EXPLORING OUR VALUES

RATIONALE

Most professionals involved in developing excellent sexual health services, advice, support and SRE for young people have become accustomed to living with tensions and dichotomies. For example there may be disparities between their own ideas and feelings about 13 year olds having sex, and their commitment to ensuring those same young people have access to high-quality support and services, when they are involved in sexual activities.

Living with these contradictions can be wearing – and we have become so steeped in the ethic of being non-judgemental, non-directive and not imposing our notion of morality on young people, that sometimes we may be in danger of ceasing to feel we have a right to our own values. Maybe we fear that these will somehow seep out and adversely affect our work with them. Or we may be anxious that if we voice any concerns or queasiness about the effects of very young people having sex, we are being reactionary and sex-negative – or will be perceived to be so by others.

It can be extremely debilitating constantly having to straddle this divide between our private feelings and our professional commitments. So it is important for the mental and emotional well-being of staff that as trainers we create a safe and confidential space for them to explore this disturbing area and to have the opportunity to discuss some of their unhappiness, reservations or understandable sadness, about the effects of early sex.

Being able to share these feelings in this way, with a trusted group can relieve a lot of the pressure people in this area. It can re-motivate them to continue to advocate for terrific services while also helping them accept that they can play a vital role in also supporting young people to delay early sex. In fact, these two supposedly disparate elements can be mutually supportive rather than oppositional.

EXERCISE – OUR VALUES CONTINUUM

Minimum Time Needed

20 minutes

Process

- Whatever the agreement that has been made by the group about confidentiality, let them know that this exercise is entirely confidential and that nothing which comes up in these discussions can be shared outside the room except by the person who themselves voiced it.
- Put a piece of paper saying "Strongly Agree" on the wall at one end of the room and another saying "Strongly Disagree" at the other end.
- Tell people that you are going to read out a series of statements, one at a time. Ask them to concentrate on their personal – rather than their professional – responses to these and to listen to what their guts say rather than to their rational thoughts. Stress that this is a safe – and comparatively rare - space to explore some of our private feelings. Reassure them that doing this can give us insight both into ourselves and also to what may be going on for other people when we work with them on the topic of young people and early sex
- Emphasise, too, at this point that there are no right or wrong answers in this exercise. It's simply the chance to examine our own values and to listen to those of others and why they feel the way they do.

Stage One

Read out the first statement and choose your own order for these. As the first one, I usually use

I FEEL FINE ABOUT THIRTEEN YEAR OLDS HAVING PENETRATIVE SEX

When people have gone to where they 'guts' take them, ask them "Who'd like to say something about why they are standing where they are?" Listen, and then prompt other contributions. It's useful in particular to hear about the people who have gone to the furthest extremes, as this allows the group to hear the full spectrum of beliefs. If people stray into professional role, try to bring them gently back to their own feelings and values.

Equally, if people start trying to convince you or the group that although they find the idea of sex for 13 year olds difficult they would continue to advocate for services and support for them, reassure them that this is simply about their own values and can sit alongside service provision, but is often the bit we overlook or don't give time to.

Usually at this stage, the vast majority of the group go towards the "Strongly disagree" end of the room.

Stage Two

Once you have heard as many people as want to speak, it can be powerful to make your next statement

**I BELIEVE WE SHOULD OFFER ALL YOUNG PEOPLE EXCELLENT
SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES AND SUPPORT**

Or

**I BELIEVE IN THE RIGHT OF 13-YEAR OLDS TO ACCESS EXCELLENT SEXUAL HELATH
SERVICES AND SUPPORT**

This can lead to a mass exodus to the other end of the room, with most people usually placing themselves by or near the Strongly Agree end!

At this stage it is useful to hear why people are there – and then to ask the group if anything strikes them about their responses to these two very different statements? What does this dramatic migration from one end of the room to the other tell us? Of course, what people usually come to understand from this is that feeling difficult about the idea of very young people having sex in no way impede us from offering terrific support. This allows people to see that although they may not be entirely comfortable with the ideas of very young people having sex, this doesn't mean they have turned into some monster of reactionary and Victorian values!

It can also be helpful at this stage to point out the contradictions we have to reconcile and accommodate in the course of managing our professional and personal selves. If we embrace

these they can enrich rather than deplete or diminish what we bring to our work. I sometimes quote these lines from the American poet Walt Whitman to groups

*"Do I contradict myself? Very well then, I contradict myself
I am large – I contain multitudes"*

Or if you prefer a more modern view, Bono from U2 was once quoted in a newspaper interview as saying *"Slap bang in the middle of contradictions is the only place to be"*

Continue to read out statements and give the group time to discuss and process their values and feelings about these. You can make up your own statements or use some of the following

SEX IS JUST SEX – IT'S NO BIG DEAL

THE AGE OF CONSENT IS MEANINGLESS AND SHOULD BE SCRAPPED

I FEEL FINE ABOUT SEX BETWEEN FIFTEEN YEAR OLDS

SEX IS PRECIOUS AND SPECIAL AND BETTER IN A LOVING RELATIONSHIP

Processing the Learning

In this exercise, much of the learning happens through the series of discussions at each stage on this continuum. When you have finished discussing the last statement, you can ask people to go and sit in pairs and discuss the following

- Were there any surprises for them in their own reactions?
- What was the learning from listening to other people's thoughts and feelings?
- Is there anything else which occurred to them from doing the exercise?

Ask them to concentrate on the process and the feelings – not to revisit the arguments and topics.

Then bring people back into the big group and ask "What were some of the key issues for you which came out of the pairs?" to complete the processing.

The final point to make - if a participant doesn't do so - is that we have the right to our feelings and responses provided these don't inhibit the quality of the services and support we offer. Giving ourselves time and space to consider these in this way is likely to make us more comfortable in the work we do and the way we do it and to enhance our awareness, understanding and skills – as well as being better for our emotional health.

People often comment that it is a relief to have the time and opportunity to reflect in this way. They will talk about finding it helpful that other people share some of their concerns. They will mention that this relieves their sense of isolation and is useful in managing the tricky territory between some of our personally-held values and our desire and commitment to supporting young people's sexual health and right to services and support if they are sexually active.

WORKING ON THE SENSES AND SENSUALITY

RATIONALE

All too often, young people are missing out on sensuality entirely and may be having – or contemplating – lots of sex which is not in fact particularly pleasurable for them and is more about having "done it" than sexual and sensual enjoyment. It seems that the stage of exploring their own senses – either on their own or with a partner – is often by-passed in the rush to sex.

This exercise gives participants the opportunity to remind themselves of the simple – and often free – pleasures available to us if we consciously explore and notice our senses and the delights these can bring us.

EXERCISE ONE: MY SENSES "STAR"

Minimum Time Needed

20 minutes

Preparation

As the trainer, fill in your own Senses "Star" - for example you might put garlic and lavender under smell, birdsong and the crash of waves or coffee percolating under sounds and so on.

Stage One

Start by presenting your Star to the group, to give them a model to draw from. Then give out a blank Star – copy attached - to everyone in the group and ask them to put at least one thing in each "Sense" arm of the star.

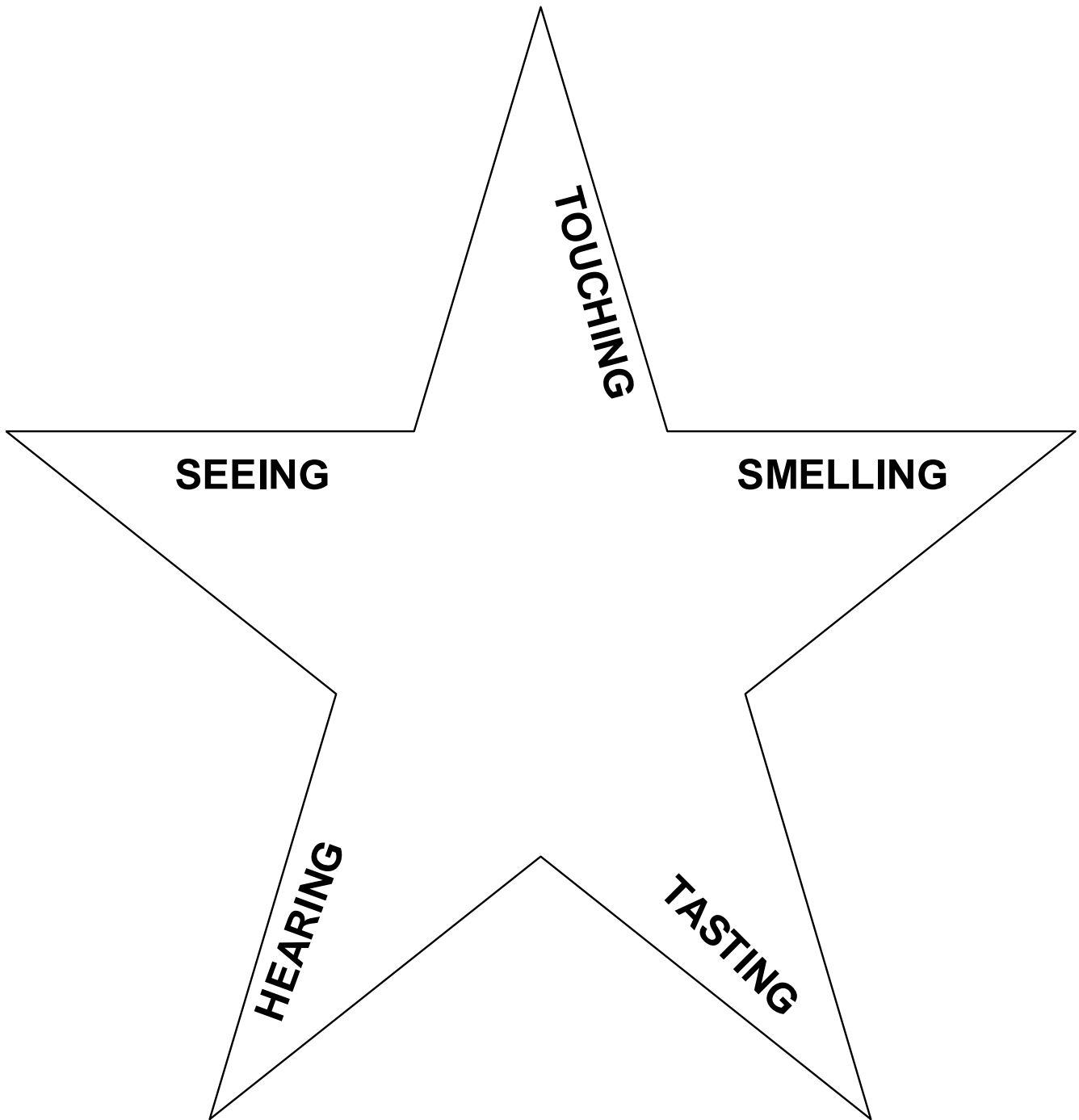
Stage Two

When people have put one or two things under each heading, ask them to go into pairs or three's and share what they have in their own Senses Stars. By talking about their own and listening to others, everyone's understanding will be broadened and their awareness of the range of sensory possibilities open to them will be heightened.

Stage Three

If there is only time for this one exercise, bring the large group back together at this stage and ask each person to choose one thing from their star and, in a group round, to feed this back. Then, go straight to Processing the Learning – picking up on some of the points explored at the end of this Senses section. If you have longer – go on to the second stage of the sensual exploration described through the next exercise – A Feast for the Senses.

MY SENSES STAR



EXERCISE TWO: A FEAST FOR THE SENSES

Minimum Time Needed

25 minutes

Preparation

Put together a range of objects which 'speak to' our senses. I carry mine round in a basket (a cardboard box or carrier bag would do just as well !) and continually add to it as I encounter and collect objects which have a sensual impact.

These objects could, for instance include:

Taste slices of fruits, salt crystals, chopped up herbs (parsley and mint), strong flavours (Worcester sauce, marmite, and pickles), sweet ones (chocolate spread, black treacle, honey and pear drops)

Sound wind-chimes, bells, a recorder, a rain-stick, a drum, a football clacker, a musical box, tapes of the sea or of bird-song

Touch feathers and satin, suede, hand-cream, emery boards and dried leaves, a teddy bear, chopped-up jelly, massage oil and smooth pebbles

Sight pictures, patterns, lovely designs - anything from wrapping paper to a five pound note, from a red cabbage cut open to expose its inner swirls to a book of photographs of butterflies.

Smell lavender bags, clove oil, twigs of rosemary, vanilla essence, dried cumin and coriander, scented candles, honey, cardamom pods and minty toothpaste.

Stage One

Lay out the objects on a piece of attractive fabric on the floor. Ask people to wander round trying out different things, invite them to 'play' and to notice keenly the effect on their senses. You can add to the pleasure of the experience still further by having music playing or by lighting scented candles.

Stage Two

Then ask people to pick up one object, one that they specially 'relate' to and that speaks to them and to go back to their seat with it. Go round the circle asking each person in turn to say what they picked and why, what was it they found so appealing to their senses?

Processing the Learning

Open a discussion up in the group about our senses, using questions such as

- Was there any learning for you in doing that?
- How much attention do we pay to our senses - and what is the effect of overlooking them?
- What can some of the benefits be of giving more time to noticing and enjoying our senses?
- What might the effect be of doing sensory awareness work with young people? What are the links with sex and pleasure, for example?
- What opportunities can we take with young people to increase their awareness of sensuality and their senses and their understanding of the rewards and pleasures these can bring them?

Some of the points which emerge in this discussion, or which it is worth your raising if no-one mentions them are:

- Often we rush through life and take our sense for granted. So bringing them back into focus in this way can enrich our lives.
- Small treats can pay huge rewards in terms of relaxation, self-esteem building and an antidote to difficult and problematic things happening for us.
- Sometimes it takes a bit of thought to set up sensual treats for ourselves, but it is worth doing this and just occasionally putting ourselves first in this way. We are born with these wonderful gifts but then all too frequently ignore or forget them. Giving attention to this aspect of our humanity can benefit our emotional and mental health – and of course our self-esteem.
- If we do not pay attention to our sensual needs, we may end up trying to meet these through sex, when there may in fact be far more reliable ways of doing this.
- Often sensual treats are free or very cheap – it doesn't have to be a 5-star spa or a Caribbean beach. Just noticing ordinary things like the feel of fresh sheets, the pattern of clouds racing across the sky or the purring of our cat can bring small pleasures which in the course of a day or a week add up to a significant experience.
- Research tells us that people thrive when they have touch in their lives – for example, stroking a pet can bring down high blood pressure. All too often, the only opportunity for

- touch in young people's lives is only accessed through sex. Doing sensory work can raise their understanding of other ways of meeting this fundamental need.
- It is worth asking if anyone censored or did not write something down in their Senses Star. Sometimes a participant will, for example, say "I wanted to put 'smelling my little boy's skin' or 'stroking my baby' but I was anxious it would sound dodgy". This can be a very useful way into discussing how in our society we have collapsed together the sensual and the sexual and that part of the purpose of focusing on senses alone is to claim these back for ourselves, not simply as an inevitable prelude to sex.
 - Equally, if there are jokes and giggles in the group around this exercise – for example about 'massage' – it can be useful to draw attention to how in our society we have sexualised all touch and the importance of disentangling sexuality and sensuality.

If we do this work well with young people it should have two positive outcomes:

- a) It will put them in touch with their senses so they can meet their own needs
- and***
- b) If they are aware of the possibility of sensory enjoyment, they are more likely to insist on pleasure when they ***do*** have sex.

Senses Treats Homework

Ask people to give themselves a Treat for their Senses that evening. This could be a candle-lit bubble-bath, a bar of chocolate or simply noticing and relishing something like the feel of the rain, the crunch of autumn leaves or being warm and comfortable in bed. Ask them to try to sharpen their awareness of their senses – and see if there are any surprises for them in doing this.

If you meet again, ask them as an opening round to report what their sensory treat was and their learning from this. Suggest they build this in as a regular feature of their lives.

DEALING WITH PRESSURE

RATIONALE

When people are asked at the start of the Delay course about their Issues and Concerns relating to young people and early sex, anxieties about the pressure on young people to have sex are often first and foremost in their thoughts. These pressures are seen to come from peers and partners, the media and a generally over-sexualised culture and from the assumption – which is in fact an inaccurate and a key misconception – that everyone over 12 is “at it”! In fact, the average age of first sex is still over 16.

This exercise gives staff and professionals an invaluable experiential insight into the possible background we are dealing with when a young person presents at a clinic, asks for condoms or seeks our advice and support. It can provide a vivid illumination of the hidden nine-tenths of the ‘iceberg’ which may be hidden from us in our interactions with young people. Understanding what may in fact be going on for them can help us tailor our responses, and ensure we do not simply deal with the ‘presenting problem’. In the case of the scenarios considered in this particular exercise, it can help us grasp the vital importance of working on Delay issues with young people who may be at risk of having sex which is not really of their own choosing.

This exercise is primarily an awareness-raising one. The five sections which then follow all then offer practical strategies for enabling young people to develop emotional resilience and a strong sense of self. This means that that when they come under pressure to have sex, they will have the understanding, skills and support to resist this. These sections are:

- On saying ‘no’
- On friendships
- On lines we can take as workers with young people
- On developing a sense of rights
- On practical approaches to self-esteem building

Doing this work well with young people can enable them to take responsibility for their own choices and decisions – including the one to delay sex until they are ready for it, until it is genuinely an informed choice. Furthermore, giving them the awareness and skills to resist the pressure for sex allows them to prioritise their own wishes and needs and not simply give away their rights, bodies and choices to others.

EXERCISE - THE PRESSURE COOKER

Minimum Time needed

30 minutes

Stage One

Split the group into two halves. Ask each half to stand in a line down the middle of the room, facing the other half – these lines should be not more than 3 feet apart. Get the people in each line to stand as close together as possible in the row, to make a more compact group.

Put up the first scenario on the board at the front of the room. This reads

**JEN IS 13. SHE COMES TO THE YOUTH CLINIC TO GET THE PILL.
HER BOYFRIEND, 15, WHO SHE'S BEEN GOING OUT WITH FOR 3 WEEKS HAS TOLD
HER HE'LL HAVE TO FIND SOMEONE ELSE IF SHE WON'T HAVE SEX.**

Stage Two

Ask everyone in the group to think about all the things Jen may be feeling, thinking, wondering, anxious about – everything that may be going on for her when she comes to the clinic. Give them a minute or so to reflect on this quietly on their own.

Then say you are going to be Jen, and the group is going to be her inner voices and feelings. You will walk down the pressure cooker, through the middle of the two lines – and as you pass by each person they should say something Jen may be thinking. They should speak in the first person and it can be a good idea to model this for them in your introduction. For example, you could say "Jen might be thinking to herself *I'm so confused or I don't want to lose him or I'm the only one who hasn't done it* - and so on."

Let people know it doesn't matter if someone has already said what you've planned. It's fine to repeat it as thoughts are bound to be circling round and round Jen's head. Say that when you have got to the end of the line, you're going to turn round and come back so they may want to think of something else. If they can't think of anything else, just repeat what they said the first time on the second go. But in fact, it's amazing that people usually find out that they have lost and lots to say about this, given this chance, and demonstrate great sensitivity, empathy and imagination.

Stage Three

Now walk down through the Pressure Cooker slowly, allowing each person to speak (zig-zagging, taking it in turns across the lines). When you reach the end, pause for a moment and then slowly walk back, again giving people the time to speak as you pass.

When you have reached the end, leave a moment's silence for people to absorb what has happened – the litany of anxiety, fear, poignancy and neediness is usually a powerful one to have witnessed, participated in and listened to it.

Then ask – “How was that?” and you will probably unleash a stream of feelings – shock, sadness, upset, and empathy with Jen's dilemma. Allow certain points to emerge – and if they don't come spontaneously, then you may like to prompt them through asking questions. These may include:

- There tends to be little if any mention of pleasure or desire to have sex, simply the imperative to “do it” to keep her boyfriend
- Usually there is a strong sense of Jen's isolation and lack of anyone to talk to about all her feelings and the situation she finds herself in.
- Jen's voices do not usually include ones which talk of *her* rights – for example to make her own choices for herself, rather than giving in to the needs of others
- It can be useful to ask “If Jen came to use one of our services, how do you think she might present?” At this stage people often identify that she may appear confident and carefree about her decision – and that this may mask the troubled feelings we heard in the Pressure Cooker. This may lead participants on to understand that it will be important for staff to feel confident to explore what is going on under a facade of bravado and to realise that we need to train people in the skill of gentle enquiry, rather than just accepting what things at face value.

Stage Four

Finally, ask people to think of just one thing that they'd like to say to Jen to relieve the pressure she's feeling. Walk down the line just once, giving them the opportunity to say this line and to be part of the solution. This can relieve some of the upset and the sense of desperation on Jen's behalf which can be generated by the earlier part of the exercise.

Stage Five

Take down Jen's scenario and set the Pressure Cooker up again. This time present them with Darren's scenario.

**DARREN IS 15. ALL OF HIS FRIENDS SAY THEY'VE HAD SEX AND
HE'S TIRED OF BEING CALLED A POOF.
SO HE'S GOING TO SHAG A GIRL BEFORE HE'S 16 NEXT MONTH.**

You may want to ask the group if someone else would like to have the experience of "being" Darren and walking through the Pressure Cooker – although make it clear there's no pressure (!) to do so. Remind them how to do this – walk slowly giving each person the chance to contribute, don't reply or comment at all and when you reach the end, turn slowly and return up the line.

Run the Pressure Cooker experience the same way as in Jen's scenario – again ending with the question "How was that?" at the end. This time people are likely to discuss some of the following

- How many pressures Darren is feeling to prove his masculinity
- The fact that a major motivator is wanting to be able to tell his friends
- His strong sense of feeling under enormous pressure to perform
- This is accompanied by his being in the grip of fears that he may not be able to
- Again, there may be little reference in his thoughts and feelings to love, desire, intimacy or pleasure

Now ask people to reflect on what we may see when Darren comes to a service – and how we can make it possible for him to discuss these hidden feelings and fears.

Stage Six

As with Jen's situation, finally, ask people to think of just one thing that they'd like to say to Darren to relieve the pressure he's experiencing. Walk down the line just once (or ask the person who took on Darren's role to do so) giving everyone the opportunity to offer this reassuring line.

Before people sit down, debrief them quickly in case the exercise has stirred up strong identification with Jen or Darren – for example by asking them to tell the person next to them what star sign they are or what they had for breakfast.

Stage Seven

Then, at the end of the exercise put Jen and Darren's scenarios up side by side and ask the group "Does anything strike you about this?" And of course at this stage the penny usually drops that Jen and Darren may well be a couple – both likely to end up having sex they don't really want to meet a completely different set of needs. This can be an extremely powerful realisation – so give the group time to discuss the implications.

Processing the Learning

In addition to many of the questions suggested as the exercise unfolded, you may want to encourage the group to consider the following:

- What do the things Jen and Darren were thinking and feeling tell us? The gendered nature of pressure is interesting to explore at this stage. Jen is usually focused on pleasing others and anxious about approval – for example from her boyfriend, parents, friends and clinic staff as well as having fears of pregnancy. Darren on the other hand tends to be focused on performing and being a good enough 'man'.
- Most of both Jen's and Darren's thoughts and feelings will be likely to be about anxieties and fears – very few if any about pleasure.
- At this stage, people are often bowled over by thinking about what may be going on for Darren, sometimes at the expense of giving proper attention to Jen's predicament. Watch out this doesn't happen, and ensure that people understand that empathising with Darren explains the pressure he's putting on Jen but doesn't excuse this.
- Help the group be clear that Darren's under huge pressure, but that passing this on to Jen is no solution. It is the pressure itself that needs to be addressed and challenged. Our role to interrupt and challenge Darren's behaviour while empathising with his feelings and the effects of the pressure he's under. Both he and Jen need to be helped to understand that it's unacceptable for this pressure simply to be passed on to her.

If you have time it can be helpful to send the group into pairs to discuss their main points of learning from the Pressure Cooker experience and have a group discussion about this, in which a range of different leaps in awareness may emerge.

People often comment that this could be a powerful exercise to run with young people – and of course it is. But you might to discuss with the group how it could be set up safely enough with a group some of whom may be going through the Jen or Darren scenario themselves – or for whom this may revisit painful past experiences. In fact this may mean it is all the more important to address these issues. Carefully handled, exercises like this can relieve young people's experience of isolation or of feeling they are the 'only one' to experience such dilemmas.

Remember one positive way to follow up this exercise – whether with staff and professionals or with young people themselves - is to introduce the checklist on readiness ***"RU Ready- Or Not Quite Yet?"***. This resource can help young people – the real Jens and Darrens of this world – decide when they are genuinely ready for sex on their own terms, rather than to fit in with other's agendas, pressures and imperatives.

RESISTING PRESSURE AND SAYING 'NO'

EXERCISE ONE- SAYING NO : WHAT STOPS US AND WHAT HELPS US?

Minimum Time needed

40 minutes

Preparation

Head a flip-chart sheet with the words "What Stops Us Saying No?"

Stage One

In the large group, ask people to think about all the things which stop them easily saying 'No'. What do they fear people will think of them? What are they anxious may happen? Ask them to think for example of saying 'no' to friends (to lending money or going out maybe), at work (to taking on extra responsibilities perhaps), to parents (coming home for Christmas is usually one which evokes groans of recognition!), to partners (this might be to going out or to sex maybe), to children (having all their friends for a sleep-over or washing the whole team's football kit).

Make it clear that you are asking about the fears and anxieties which stop us saying 'no' when we really have a choice. We are looking at those times we say 'yes' when our guts are telling us 'no, no, no' - not issues such as the threat of violence, rape or sacking from a job which take you into another territory. You are dealing here those occasions on which you could say 'no' and want to say 'no', but unaccountably still find the words "Yes of course....." coming out of your mouth! What is it we fear that people will think about us, feel or do in these instances? The kind of list this brainstorm is likely to result in is often something like this:

What Stops Us Saying 'No' – the fears of what people will say/feel/think about us	
We'll upset someone	We'll be seen as lazy
We'll let people down	We'll be seen as unwilling
We'll be seen as obstructive	We'll be seen as unhelpful
Rock the boat	We'll be seen as selfish
'Bolshy'	We'll be seen as difficult
Seen as stubborn	We'll feel guilty
Uncertain of people's reaction	We'll be seen as not a team player
We'll be seen as a spoilsport	We'll be seen as boring
We won't be asked again	We'll be seen as not a good friend
It will make us unpopular	We'll hurt people's feelings
We'll be seen as inadequate	We'll be seen as unsupportive
We'll miss out	We'll disappoint people
We'll be stuck with 'no' forever	We'll damage others' self esteem

It can be helpful to point out that these are – in the vast majority of cases – fears and fantasies rather than the truth or reality. Most of us – when we were toddlers at 3, 4 and 5 – were told that saying 'no' was rude, disobedient, cheeky and selfish. We internalised these messages about

saying 'no', as small powerless people do – and have carried them around with us at an unconscious level ever since. The fact these can be traced back to such early messages means saying 'no' can feel frightening because we still fear that it will lose us the approval, friendship and love of others.

Stage Two

Then introduce the group to the guidelines for saying 'no' assertively

GUIDELINES ON SAYING 'NO'

- **Your immediate feelings will usually tell you whether you want to say 'yes' or 'no' to a request**
- **If you're not sure then ask for some specific information so that you know exactly what you are committing yourselves to**
- **Say 'no' for yourself, rather than referring to a higher authority or circumstances beyond your control**
- **If you don't say 'no' directly, then you will find ways of saying it indirectly**
- **Make it clear that you are refusing the request and not rejecting the person, the role, the job or the friendship**
- **The skill of self-disclosure is a big help in saying 'no'**
- **When you say 'no' to something you don't want to do, you are saying 'yes' to yourself and your own importance**
- **Saying 'no' and surviving the guilt gets easier! Reassure participants that we do survive the initial guilt caused by saying no although it feels incredibly difficult to do at first – but it truly does get easier with practice.**

Stage Three

Ask the group to spilt into pairs and each to describe to their partner a time they wanted to say 'no' and didn't when using these guidelines would have helped them. Encourage them not to choose a disastrous and life-changing event like agreeing to marry someone they didn't really want to – but something real nonetheless but on a less traumatic scale! Then ask them to think about what the gain would have been for them if they had said 'no' in this way.

Stage Four

Ask each person to feed back just what the gain would have been for them if they had used these guidelines for saying 'no' and in this way had been able to take greater control over what happened. Head a flipchart sheet with 'Gains from Saying 'No'' and chart their responses. These gains are likely to include things like this:

Gains from Saying 'No'	
More time	Doing what I want to
Quality rather than just quantity	Satisfaction
Achievement	Being a good role model
Self-esteem	Belief in myself
Respect from others	Self respect
More energy	Better relationships/greater trust

You can point out at this stage that all these factors add up to a positive recipe for self-esteem and for building a sense of ourselves being worth looking after. If people are resistant at this stage, it can be worth saying:

- o They don't have to use this tool and these guidelines – but having this skill in their repertoire at least means they have a choice. Whether they use them or not is then entirely up to them.
- o Admittedly this way of saying 'no' using these guidelines doesn't work 100% of the time – but mostly it does. Certainly it works better than the alternative – not saying no because we're still in thrall to the fear and fantasies about what people will think of us explored in Stage One of the exercise . That way lies exhaustion, resentment and the feeling that we are giving away our choices in order to please others.
- o You don't have shares in this! But if we're to model saying 'no' for the young people we work with, it's going to mean stopping being a doormat and taking back some control over our lives.

Stage Five (if time)

Split the group up into smaller groups and ask them to think of activities for working with young people on the skills to say 'no' and on avoiding pressure.

And finally...

This exercise is really useful in demonstrating graphically why the 'Just Say No' approach will never work – because it overlooks the powerful messages we have internalised about the dire consequences we fear if we say 'no'. Until young people are more aware of this, and of the barriers they may feel to saying 'no', then no amount of sessions and tips simply on how to say 'no' will have any effect. You can then build on it the awareness gained through this exercise and introduce all sorts of practical activities to build skills and confidence – but this work on the *feelings* about saying no is the foundation stone for all the rest.

EXERCISE TWO - WHAT 'NO' MEANS

This exercise is a way of exploring the meaning of 'no' in young people's lives – and seeks to redress some of the negative associations which accumulate round the word, replacing it with a more positive notion of how saying 'No' can be a positive act of empowerment and liberation.

The activity – A "Saying No" Diamond Ranking/Diamond 9

Prepare a set of 9 post-its in advance by writing a statement one each one of what 'No' means in your life. For example, you could choose 9 statements from the following possibilities:

- **Making positive choices for yourself**
- **Making decisions**
- **Saying 'yes' to your own needs and wishes**
- **Not just going along with the crowd**
- **Weighing up possible outcomes and choosing between them**
- **Standing up for your beliefs**
- **Sticking up for yourself (or others)**
- **Refusing to be a doormat**
- **Taking more control of your life**
- **Taking responsibility for yourself**
- **Risking disapproval from others**
- **Facing up to your fears of disapproval or rejection**

You will need a set of 9 post-its for each small group or pair to work with. Working in small groups or pairs, give a set of the 9 statements to each group or pair and ask them to discuss these. Their task is to rank them in order of importance, putting the ones they think are most important in terms of describing what 'no' truly means at the top of the diamond and the ones they think are least relevant last. You can also give them two blank post-its, to add in any other aspects of saying 'no' which are important to them. Stress that there is no right answer or order. This is simply a way of discussing what is important to them in terms of what 'no' can mean. At the end, the shape should resemble a diamond like this

```
      X
     X  X
    X  X  X
     X  X
      X
```

To take the feedback from this, some of the questions to stimulate discussion could be:

Which aspects did you have most discussion over? Which was hardest to agree about, and why?

What was your reason for choosing the one which came top?

Which ones did you add on your blank post-its and why?

Thanks to Gill, Angie & Neil – Cornerhouse Hull – for the original idea this exercise is based on

RESISTING PRESSURE AND BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS

RATIONALE

This exercise explores the importance of friendships in building our self-esteem. In addition, it reinforces the notion that young people get many of their emotional resources from their good friends, and can draw on them for support in making choices which are positive and healthy for them, rather than simply going along with a crowd. In the research focus groups carried out with young people by the Centre for HIV & Sexual Health (reported in "Really Ready?" 2006) participants named good friends as their main source of support in managing to resist the pressure to have early sex.

In times when competitiveness, bitchiness, and minor forms of bullying can prevail, it is especially essential that we encourage young people to think about the gifts, strengths and delights friendship can bring them. This then needs to be further reinforced by helping them gain the practical skills and emotional awareness to make and sustain strong, nurturing friendships which will see them through difficult times.

Finally, we need to remember that young people can get a strong sense of themselves, of being loved and valued and held in affection from their friends. If they are experiencing all these positive things through friendship, they are much less likely to feel they need to have sex to provide themselves with these – something which it all too often in fact fails to do for them.

EXERCISE - FRIENDSHIP FLYING CARPET

Minimum Time needed

30 minutes

Preparation

Draw the outline of a Friendship Flying Carpet on a flip chart (outline attached)

Have a pad of post-its ready.

Stage One

Break the group into pairs. Ask each partner in the pair to spend a few minutes describing a good friendship they have. Offer a range of possibilities from which they can choose. This can be a deep old friendship with someone they've known since primary school or someone they only met last year, a recent one with a person they get on with at work, a 'soulmate' they tell their

deepest secrets to, a neighbour they exchange kindnesses with or a sibling they've known all their lives. Try not to use the term 'best friend' here as many people have a range of friends rather than one 'Best' and it is important no-one feels left out or unable to find someone they could describe, even if this is an acquaintance-friend rather than a lifelong one.

The only proviso is that this must NOT be a friendship with their sexual partner. Specifically ask people to consider issues such as the following

- What do you value in this friendship?
- How does it make you feel about yourself?
- What positive role does your friend play in your life?
- What does the friendship help you do, feel, be, aspire to?

Ask them to decide in their pair who is going to go first and give them 2-3 minutes to describe their friendship. Then let people know when it is time to swap over and for the second person in the pair to describe their friendship, in the same ways.

Stage Two

Ask the group each to choose just one of those positive things the friendship gives them and to write this on a post-it. Let them know this needs to be one they are happy to share with the large group.

Then one by one invite people to come up and put their post-it on the flying carpet, tell us their friend's name and say what the friendship gives them, enables them to be, to feel or to do. It's worth modelling this to the group by telling them "For example you might say "This is my friend Jen, she helps me be myself" or "My friend Rachel challenges me and makes me think" or "This is Tom, he encourages me to try new things", or "My friend Sarah gives me good advice"

Stage Three

Ask the group "What was the learning for us in doing this for ourselves and in hearing others' experience too?"

Typically points, raised at this stage include:

- Friendship is great for our self-esteem and for overcoming self-criticism. Often in this exercise people will say 'My friend knows all the awful things about me – and still loves me nonetheless.'

- It's rare - and positive - to be asked to reflect on our friendships. We can take our friendships for granted – which in itself is in a way quite nice, a comfortable area in our lives.
- In our society, much more attention is given to sexual relationships than to friendships – this exercise is one way of redressing that imbalance.
- In our friendships we practice key relationship and communication skills. They are often the places where we learn about ourselves and where we have the space to talk about our feelings as well as listening to those of others.
- Because friendships help us to feel valued and special, they can be a great antidote to negative feelings about ourselves. For the same reasons, they can also give us the strength to withstand pressure.
- We can learn through our friendships that it's ok to go through a rocky time – and forgive or be forgiven for rows and difficulties, some crucial key conflict-resolution skills.
- Our friends are there for us when other people let us down and teach us we have the right to expect to be treated well.

If these points do not come up in the debrief group discussion, it can be worth raising them as questions, to increase the group's awareness of the importance of friendship – for example by asking 'What kind of skills do we learn through friendships?'

Processing the Learning

- It may be useful to ask the group why they think the only person you're not allowed to describe is a sexual partner, even if that is who people think of as their best friend? If people don't come up with the answer themselves, then explain that this exercise is about re-establishing the importance of friendships which are non-sexual and nurturing. Because in the long-run in the context of Delay work, we want to encourage young people to meet some of their social, relational and emotional needs through friendships and gain greater skills and understanding in this area. Currently so much status is accorded to sexual relationships that the effect is to downgrade the importance of friendships, so this exercise is about redressing that imbalance.
- You may also want to ask about why we don't use the term 'best friend'? Make sure the point is made that we want young people to build up a range of friendships, each of which may feed and speak to different parts of themselves. If young people invest totally in one person and that friendship fails, it can leave them feeling isolated, needy and vulnerable.
- It is also helpful to draw people's attention to the fact that as workers we can be positive

role models for young people in terms of the friendships and alliances we demonstrate and talk about which offer us support, succour and fun. So it is helpful to watch for opportunities to model the positive power and central importance of friendship to young people.

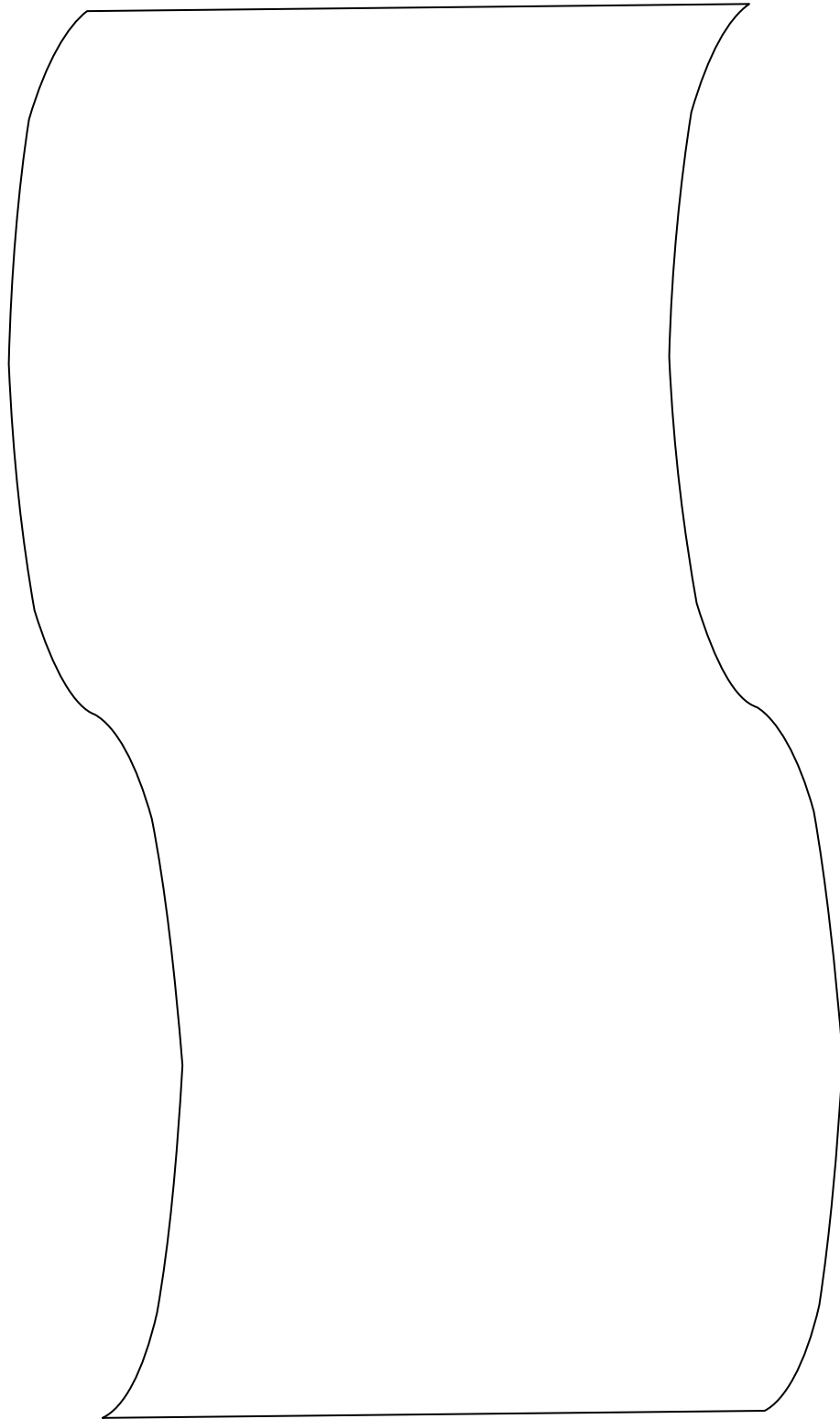
- We all have the need for affection and belonging, for warmth and someone who cares about us. If young people can meet these needs reliably through friendship, they are much less likely to look to sexual relationships and partners for this.
- Classically, the first thing those 'grooming' young people for prostitution do is to cut them off from their friends and to create total dependence. This is precisely because they're clever enough to recognise that friendship is a powerful creator of self-esteem and feeds our selfhood in positive, strengthening ways. So we need to ensure that all young people – boys as well as girls – have access to this great source of support.
- Ask the group why they think the image of a Friendship Flying Carpet is used here? If they are unsure, it's worth drawing out the following points – friendship is magical and practical, it can transcend obstacles, picks us up when we're down, it's exciting and exhilarating, it helps us move on, it gets us out of messes and trouble, and can take us on a journey to great places.
- In all – it's a ride of a lifetime and young people need both an awareness of the role of friendships in their lives and the skills and tools to make and sustain excellent ones. Only in this way will they be able to deal effectively with the pressures to have sex and to meet their emotional needs outside a sexual relationship.

Working with young people to build friendships

If you have time, build on the learning by splitting the group into 4's or 5's and asking them to share ideas they have tried in practice or they have heard of for supporting the development of young people's friendships.

In doing this, ask them to guard against simply making a list of activities to do with young people – something more deliberate and conscious is called for here. They need to identify ways of working in which opportunities are provided for developing some of the constituent aspects of friendship and builds emotional capacity. This might for example include things such as communication skills, conflict resolution, giving positive feedback and listening skills or working on projects together to build support and a sense of shared achievement.

FRIENDSHIP FLYING CARPET



FRIENDSHIP QUIZ

MOST YOUNG PEOPLE LOVE QUIZZES AND YOUTH MAGAZINES KNOW THIS, SO THEY FILL THEIR PAGES WITH QUESTIONNAIRES ABOUT WHAT "TYPE" YOU ARE.

PLAY ON THIS INTEREST BY MAKING UP A FRIENDSHIP QUIZ WHICH MIGHT LOOK SOMETHING LIKE THIS

- **I AM A GOOD FRIEND WHEN I.....**
- **I COULD BE AN EVER BETTER FRIEND IF.....**
- **A GOOD FRIEND ALWAYS.....**
- **A GOOD FRIEND NEVER.....**
- **THREE THINGS I'D LIKE MY FRIENDS TO KNOW ABOUT ME ARE.....**
- **THREE QUALITIES I LOOK FOR IN A FRIEND ARE.....**
- **THREE THINGS WHICH MAKE ME A GREAT FRIEND ARE.....**

THEN DISCUSS THESE ONE BY ONE IN THE GROUP, SO YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE THE CHANCE TO LEARN FROM OTHERS AS WELL AS REFLECTING ON THE QUALITIES THEY BRING TO THEIR FRIENDSHIPS.

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RESISTING PRESSURE AND BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM

RATIONALE

One of the Ten Strategies which make up the Delay model is "Providing young people with trigger thoughts". Among the examples given of these is the one drawn from the practice of my former colleague Julia Hirst, from when she was an SRE teacher. She used to say to young people in her classes – "If you're coming under pressure from someone to have sex or someone's trying to push you into doing something you don't really want to, I want you to put your arms round yourself for a moment and say

'I am very precious, and very special'

and only then make your decision." Again and again young people would tell her that they had done this, and it had made all the difference in coming to their final decision. Just asking young people to give priority to themselves, even for 30 or 40 seconds can have a profound effect.

The more young people believe that they are special and that they are in the centre of their own lives - not just on the peripheries of the lives of people they are trying to please - the more likely they will be to resist pressure. This in turn will make them more equipped to make their own choices, informed by a real understanding of what is best for them, not just what they hope will bring approval from others. So when they do remind themselves they're "precious and special", and still know that this is the right choice for them and not just to please someone else, it is so much more likely that the sex they have will bring them intimacy and pleasure.

It is this notion of informed choice, of a decision taken with our own well-being in mind, of touching base with our own needs and readiness rather than compulsively looking after other people's which is the true cornerstone of Delay work.

The exercises in this section take that idea as its foundation stone, using it as a reminder to participants that they have unique and special qualities which make each of them different and special.

EXERCISE ONE - PRECIOUS AND SPECIAL FLOWER OR STAR

Minimum Time Needed

30 minutes

Preparation

You will need a pack of small post it 'marker' notes as the petals – or rays of light - for this exercise, and enough pieces of A5 paper for each participant to have one. This exercise can take the form of a Precious and Special Flower or Star. I offer these choices because in some boys' work, it may be more relevant and appropriate to present the idea of an "I'm a Star" exercise rather than the flower.

In true Blue Peter fashion, prepare a "flower" or "star" of your own beforehand. This should have a circle in the middle with your name written on it and round that a number of petals stuck to make a "flower". Each should have on it a quality or skill you can claim – for example mine includes "I make great porridge", "I am a strong sea- swimmer", "I take unusual pictures" and "I am a loyal and loving friend".

Stage One

Ask everyone to spend 5 minutes on their own making up their own flower. In order to give them inspiration and some raw materials for this, along with the A5 paper and the post-it petals, give out copies of the "Precious and Special" qualities sheet (attached at the end of this exercise). Make it clear, though, that this list is simply an aide-memoire, a catalyst to help them if they're floundering - and that if they can think up qualities for themselves, that's even better.

Stage Two

When people have completed their flowers, ask them to go into pairs to describe theirs to their partner. At this stage, encourage them to explain why they chose the qualities they did and to say a little more about these. Allow about 5 minutes for people in pairs to complete this.

Stage Three

On a flipchart sheet on the stand, draw a large circle in the middle - this is the 'hub' of your group's Precious and Special flower.

Then bring people back to the large group and say they need to choose one of their qualities which they are happy to share with the whole group. Ask them then to come up, one at a time, with their chosen petal, to stick it onto the flower hub and to say "I am precious and special because I am" This can be a nervy and testing thing for people to do – so ensure that you are extra-encouraging.

Also at this stage watch out for people qualifying and undermining what they say. In fact in setting up this part of the exercise I usually ask people to be alert to this possibility. I say something like "Try not to say 'I can be quite a good listener sometimes if I'm not too tired, on a good day, with the light behind me'...or whatever!" which usually gets a laugh – while also striking a chord of recognition.

If someone does come up and make a joke about their quality that puts themselves down or undermines what they are saying, gently ask them to go back and try again – this time seriously. Affirm them when they do manage to do this without sabotaging themselves. I have been known to ask someone three times to try this – and in that instance he finally succeeded brilliantly and courageously. But we have to be tenacious with this and not collude with self put-downs from group members.

Processing the Learning

When everyone has come and put their petal up – discuss the whole process with the group. You could start off by asking a general question – "So how was that?" and allow people to let off their initial feelings.

Then break it down into its constituent parts – "How was it making your flower?" If no-one mentions it (but usually, in my experience, someone does) ask "How would it have been if I hadn't given you the list of qualities?" People will frequently say "My mind went blank, it was helpful to have something to look at and then I started to think of my own".

Ask – "How was it sharing this with a partner" – this is often the bit people say they enjoy most, and it's helpful if someone contributes "It was nice listening to my partner talking about their qualities" or you might want to ask them specifically about that part if it doesn't arise spontaneously.

Finally, ask "How was it coming up to share your quality in front of the group?"

Responses will often include ones about feeling nervous and anxious that the rest of the group won't believe they actually have this quality, that in other words it is inauthentic. "I was worried people wouldn't believe it was true of me", "I chose a nice safe one", "I put 'a good listener' and then was worried that people would feel I hadn't listened well during the course"and so on.

Points to draw out of the group about this include:

- We all believe our bad qualities, but are unsure about our good ones. So I sometimes say "If I'd asked you to make a flower of your faults would that have been easier?" which usually prompts an emphatic agreement and a bit of a laugh.
- We worry that claiming qualities is arrogant, big-headed and conceited because it goes counter-culture. We're supposed to be modest and to put ourselves down – otherwise people say "She really loves herself" or "He's really pleased with himself", but isn't that how we want people to be ? It is worth pointing out that there is a difference between positive self-esteem and becoming a monster of vanity and selfishness. But often in our culture one is equated with the other, and we're encouraged to be self-critical and self-deprecating, never to be self-affirming.
- Ask the group why they think we act as though simply claiming a quality will bring Western civilisation as we know it crashing down?! And what is the effect on all of us of living in a society which is so averse to self-praise?
- It is really helpful to have a list of qualities for people to choose from, because people often say their mind goes blank when asked to think of positives about themselves exactly *because* it's so counter-culture.
- Remind people that it is important for us as workers to work on our own self-esteem continually if we are to be positive role models for young people, in the spirit of Maya Angelou's words – "To love others, first of all we must love ourselves. We can't hand on what we haven't got". So getting better at this isn't self-indulgent, it's an important part of professional development!

Let's Leave It Till Later – A Manual for Training 'Delay' Trainers

- What stops us claiming our qualities is usually a harsh internal self-critic, but we can with practice lessen this or at least cease to believe it tells us the truth. For more on this see the "Chatterbox" exercise in "GirlPower – How Far Does It Go?"
- Ask people how it was listening to others claim their qualities – both in pairs and in the large group? Usually people will reply that it was moving, heart-warming, pleasurable. This is useful because it counteracts the self-critical voice and re-connects people with the reality of what other people really think about us.
- This exercise is often really hard the first time people do it, but gets better with practice. Sometimes you will have someone in your group who has become more adept and less embarrassed at claiming their own qualities and they can be really helpful role models, testifying to the positive effect of doing such an exercise – a trainer's gift. Someone I had in a group once said "I know now that I have beautiful warm brown eyes – and really believe it. It's taken a lot of exercises like this to get there – but they really do eventually work"
- Remember that small acts can bring about profound changes in self-esteem. One participant in a group I ran worked with boys with challenging behaviours. She had sought for a way to let them know simply that she affirmed them and regarded them as worthy of respect. So she began shaking hands with them when she met them each week – and this brought about a major change in how they related to her, and then eventually to their behaviour with and attitudes toward other adults in the school too.

EXERCISE TWO – MOSAIC OF QUALITIES

A variation on this theme is a similar exercise called Mosaic of Qualities.

Minimum time needed

30 minutes

Preparation

Have a whole pile of post-its, each with a positive quality from the Precious and Special list on it – or others of your own making. Put these up on sheets round the walls.

Stage One

Ask people to go round the room and to pick off the sheets post-its of at least 5 qualities they can claim for themselves. Suggest they do this without talking to other people, and that they notice what is going on for them as they do this – in other words, how they are feeling about it.

Stage Two

When they have chosen their qualities, ask them to go into pairs and share these as in the previous exercise.

Stage Three

Again, as in the Precious and Special Flower exercise, ask people to choose one post-it and to come up one by one to put these on the flipchart paper and say "I am....." and name the quality.

Processing the Learning

This will be virtually the same as in the Flower/Star exercise above. However there is an additional point in the de-briefing stage. This can be drawn out by asking "Why do people think I suggested doing the first stage – picking the post-its – without speaking?"

This usually leads participants to discuss their anxieties about being seen by others choosing qualities, feeling self-conscious and worried others would be critical of their choice. So at this stage in the exercise, they might be likely to laugh with others about their choice, put themselves down or collude unthinkingly in someone else doing this. Doing this part quietly lessens the possibility of this happening – and also encourages people to concentrate on what is going on for themselves rather than getting caught up in conversations or jokes to lessen their anxiety about what they are doing.

Let's Leave It Till Later – A Manual for Training 'Delay' Trainers

Precious & Special			
Stick up for my beliefs	Fun-loving	Sensual	Responsible
Bubbly	Flexible	Tender	Empathise with others
Strong	Curious	Good cook	A good sister
Forgiving	Sentimental	Determined	A good mother
A dreamer	Ambitious	Professional	Supportive
Thoughtful	Good listener	Hopeful	Romantic
Understanding	Fun	Easy-going	Happy-go-lucky
Kind	Brave	Expressive	Capable
Trustworthy	Purposeful	Good at maths	Inventive
Easy to get on with	Honest	Funny	Compassionate
Quick witted	Generous	Strong beliefs	Efficient
Tenacious	Active	Sensible	Good planner
Practical	Articulate	Full of ideas	Fit
Appreciative	Hard working	Good dad	Great friend
Assertive	Impetuous	A good laugh	Passionate
Optimistic	Loving	Head strong	Open minded
Reliable	Spiritual	Strong champion	High standards
Enthusiastic	Dramatic	Emotional	Committed
Creative	Adventurous	Clear thinking	Intuitive
Team player	Imaginative	A good swimmer	A good singer
Visionary	Good with money	Courageous	Intelligent
Good hostess	Good at writing	Good gardener	Young at heart
A nice smile	Good at handling stress	Flirtatious	Fearless
Good at solving problems	Good at meeting deadlines	Good at giving positive feedback	Good at giving affirmation
Artistic	Achieve my goals	Rise to a challenge	Reflective
Lots of ideas	Playful	Sexy	Gregarious
Powerful	Meticulous	Merry	Nice clothes
Sociable	Pursue my dreams	Clever	An enquiring mind
Risk taking	A tough battler	Good at design	Insightful
Big hearted	Musical	Smart	Extravagant
Good dancer	Careful	Attractive	Graceful
Extravagant	Good brother	Sporty	Imaginative
Make things happen	Not afraid to challenge	Challenge constructively	Conscientious
Intellectual	Good handwriting	Canny	Ambitious
Lively	Relaxed	Flamboyant	Musical
A good mediator	Rigorous	Look after myself well	Shrewd
Good tempered	A good leader	Reflective	Willing to experiment
Positive	Wise	Good memory	Energetic

RESISTING PRESSURE AND LINES TO TAKE, TRIGGER THOUGHTS & GIVING YOUNG PEOPLE THE WHOLE PICTURE

RATIONALE

A youth worker who came on one Training Delay Trainers course told us a salutary story about herself. The previous week a girl she worked with had asked her "My boyfriend wants us to have sex but I'm not sure – what do you think?" The worker replied "Well, what do you want to do?" "I don't know", said the girl "But he said if I really love him I would – what should I do?" "Well, how do you feel about it?" asked the worker. "I can't make up my mind, do you think I should?" the girl answered. "It's really up to you alone to decide" said the worker. And, in retelling this story to the group, she said "I've just realised that she asked me three times what I thought. But I'm so well-versed in never speaking about my own opinions, just asking young people theirs, that I wouldn't tell her. This was even though she clearly wanted to know where I stood on the matter and was asking for guidance – I still wouldn't give any and kept deflecting her questions"

This is just one story that sharply illustrates how anxious we are about offering any guidance, advice or ideas. Our training has prepared us well to be blank sheets and simply to reflect back to young people and help them explore their own feelings. But adolescence is a turbulent and often a questing time – we do not necessarily do the young people we work with any favours by refusing ever to put ourselves and our beliefs in the picture. Offering our ideas when asked doesn't constitute being judgemental, disapproving or moralising. It simply provides them with one extra perspective to add into the picture and into the process of weighing up their decision.

In the Focus groups which have been carried out with young people on Delay by the Centre for HIV & Sexual Health (reported in Really Ready? 2006), one young person is quoted as saying:

"In the long run there's nothing anyone can do if they've made their mind up. But information and advice may help them re-consider. One-to-one, people could chat to them and ask them "Are you ready?" and if they've thought of other options.

This tells us quite clearly that it is worth being prepared with some lines we can take to raise Delay issues and to affirm young people's rights not to have sex. Sometimes when young people are wavering, these lines could play a very real part in helping them come to a decision. There is a Chinese proverb which claims that "Luck is where preparation meets opportunity". Having considered the range of possible ways in which we might introduce the notion of young people's right not to have sex till they themselves are genuinely ready makes it more likely we will be prepared to discuss this with them, when the opportunity arises.

EXERCISE - LINES TO TAKE CAROUSEL

Minimum time needed

30 minutes

Stage One – Making the Carousel (minimum group size of 10)

- Split the group into 2. Ask half the group to make a circle of chairs in the centre of the room facing outwards, and then ask the other half to take their chairs to make a circle surrounding the inner circle, but this time facing inwards. Each person in the inside circle should be facing a paired partner in the outside circle. If you have an uneven number in the group, make the outer circle one bigger than the inner one, and have one three along with the pairs. This sets up a "carousel" which provides a way of participants having lots of brief conversations with a whole range of different group members about their ideas for Lines to Take as workers, faced with a range of different dilemmas presented by young people relevant to introducing Delay ideas.

Stage Two

- Give the whole group one situation at a time and explain the purpose is for the pair to discuss their reactions and responses to this. Make it clear that they are simply discussing this scenario as themselves, in their professional roles. They are not 'playing' the young person. The task you are setting them is to come up with direct and simple lines workers could take with young people – a script that can be prepared and practised in advance, if you like.
- At this stage, banish any anxieties by reassuring people that this isn't role play. Pairs should make sure both partners get a chance to contribute. Allow them between 3 and 5 minutes for this conversation, depending on the levels of interest and engagement. You can assess this by the level of 'buzz' in the room.

Some suggested Scenarios for the Carousel follow. But it's more important that you choose relevant situations for the professionals you are training and that will be recognisable to them, than using these ones off-the-peg regardless of the issues arising in the group you're training.

SOME POSSIBLE CAROUSEL SCENARIOS

Leanne is 14. She tells you in a class/youth work session this lad she really likes says only minging losers are still virgins at 16

Craig is 15. His girlfriend – 14 – wants them to have sex because all their friends have, but he's not sure. There's a party on Saturday night and he's anxious she'll want it to happen then

Rachel - 13 – is frightened of getting pregnant but wants to have sex with her boyfriend to show she loves him

Shelley is 13 but says she looks 16. She's started seeing Kevin – this lad of 16. He's had sex with all his girlfriends before so she'll have to

Rob is 16. He's never had sex with a girl and is starting to wonder if he ever will. He just wants to talk to someone about how desperate he's feeling.

Stage Three

- After the pair has finished discussing their first question and has found at least one line to take - ask the whole of the outside circle to move round one place anti-clockwise. They will be sitting opposite a new partner and you can then ask them to discuss this situation again, this time with a new partner and to think of further Lines.

Stage Four

- Allow 2 or 3 minutes for this second conversation. Then ask the pairs to feedback on some of Lines which they have agreed would be effective in this situation in raising the Delay agenda. As trainer, chart the Lines which are fed back which are specific to Delay.
- Be careful at this stage that people don't slip into general counselling topics – keep them specifically focused on how they would introduce and profile Delay topics in each situation. Ask for quick one-liners they could use to introduce the idea of Delay.

Stage Five

- Move the carousel round one more time and give the new pairs their second situation, again for everyone to discuss. Move on again and let the next pair consider the same issue and then take the feedback as described above. Repeat this process with as many situations as time allows.

Processing the Learning

At the end of the process, you should have a range of specific Lines to Take which group participants could share back with other colleagues in their teams. Think back to the story told in the Rationale at the beginning of this section, about the youth worker who wouldn't answer the girl's question. This pattern is very deeply ingrained in many workers who feel they must only ever be entirely non-directive and must never offer an opinion however much the young person seeks it. Discuss this with the group. Ask what they think *is* proper for us to say – and what isn't.

Why this isn't role play

This carousel is set up to trigger a number of conversations in pairs in a short time. However, I am not suggesting here that role play should be used, for the following reasons:

- These informal paired discussion allow people to explore a range of responses and options and to try out different ideas and Lines – whereas role play tends to go down one route and one conversation
- Because role play is sometimes inexpertly facilitated, participants can be nervous and cautious of it or have had bad experiences in the past. This can then set up a degree of anxiety and resistance in the group which can take a while to dispel – and this is not always the best use of training time.
- This manual is supporting a 4-day Training Trainers course and it would take at least a day just to train a group where some people may not previously have run role play to do so competently and responsibly – time which simply isn't available in a packed 4-days.

However, where experienced trainers feel comfortable facilitating role-play, this exercise could equally well be run along those lines.

RESISTING PRESSURE AND WORKING TO INCREASE YOUNG PEOPLE'S SENSE OF RIGHTS

RATIONALE

All too often we may start work on strategies around Delay without addressing one fundamental underlying cause of early sex - that young people may not realise they have the right to say 'no' to something someone else wants. I am reminded of a course participant who worked with young people in the Looked After system who said "the girls I work with have sex because they're asked – not for any other reason".

So we need to ensure that young people know there is a stage beyond being asked. This stage is being clear they and *only* they have the right to decide what happens to their body and whether they share it with someone else. And since this awareness is so often lacking in their lives, we need explicitly to spell it out to them.

This should entail work over years on building a sense of rights and entitlement in young people. However, one exercise which can provide a strong foundation stone for this work is working to develop a Bill of Rights. This can be a powerful tool for enabling young people to explore what equality and justice would mean in their lives.

Once they have got this sense of how things can be, we can then work with them to develop the skills to claim and assert these rights in their everyday lives. Doing a similar exercise with staff and professionals can give them useful pause for thought about what they believe are the rights of their pupils, students or service users and how they can adapt their services to be more responsive to these.

Of course these are not formal Human Rights which would stand up in a court of law or at Strasbourg. They are simply the kind of conditions which we can support young people to claim in their everyday lives, providing they have enough understanding, skills and preparation to do so. This process of becoming aware of their rights should equip them to say "no" to people who are trying to put pressure on them or coerce them. They are therefore the foundation-blocks of excellent decision making and healthy choices. This exercise has clear links, too, with those on Saying 'No' (see above).

EXERCISE ONE - BILLS OF RIGHTS

Minimum time needed

30 Minutes

Stage One

Divide the group into smaller groups - say of 4, 5 or 6. Ask at least one group to work on young people's general rights and at least one group to look at young people's sexual health rights

Ask each small group to draw up a Bill of Rights which they believe young people should be able to claim in their lives. Allow at least 15 minutes for this stage. Before they split to undertake this task, ask them to ensure that each time they come up with a right, they ask themselves this question – *why* is it a right? This is to avoid this turning into a process simply involving drawing up a 'wish-list' of slogans.

Stage Two

Bring the group back together to share their lists and compare, contrast and discuss these. Ask them questions here which will draw out their thinking and discussion – for example:

- Did any of these rights cause particular discussion?
- Were there any particular areas of disagreement?

Stage Three

If there is time, split the group again and get smaller groups to think of ways in which they might support young people to develop an awareness of a rights agenda. These methods might include, for example:

- Getting young people to draw up their own Bill of Rights in any form they choose.
- Displaying a Bill of Rights for young people using your service on the walls.
- Building up a "Rights" programme or project in which you take one right each week or each session and explore how young people could claim this in practice.
- Produce their Bill of Rights in a portable form so they can keep this with them – for example you could print this on cards and have these laminated, so everyone can have a copy.
- Working with staff teams to discuss what they believe are the rights – and responsibilities – of the young people they work with.

Processing the Learning

It may be useful to ask some of the following questions:

- What fears and anxieties can stop us from claiming our rights?
- Which rights do we find easiest to claim and why might this be so?
- Which rights are most difficult for us to claim – and what might the barriers be?
- What can help us in claiming and asserting our rights?

Examples of Bills of Rights groups have developed include:

Bill of Sexual Rights

I have the right to excellent Sex and Relationships Education

I have the right to have control of my fertility

I have the right to masturbate

I have a right to say 'no' to sex I don't want and to the kind of sex I don't want

I have the right to pleasure

I have the right to sex in a caring and loving relationship

I have the right to know the law around young people and sex

I have the right to my own sexuality and not to be judged because of this

I have the right to good information – including about pregnancy and STIs

I have the right to access contraception and condoms

I have the right...

To feel safe all the time

To have my questions answered

To decide for myself what I would like to do

To be listened to

To have my feelings respected

To be myself

To be different

To my own feelings

To express my own ideas

To change my mind

To say No

To choose my beliefs and values

To guidance, help and support

To make mistakes and take risks

Finally – we need to remind young people that rights come with responsibilities, too – and that in fact the last line of every Bill of Rights should read.....

“.....and remember – everyone else has these rights too!”

This stops this exercise becoming a charter for selfishness and ensures it is about mutual respect and care.

Developing this work further

It can also be helpful to work with staff teams on developing a Bill of Rights for their Service Users - for example in youth clinics or sexual health clinics. One Teenage Pregnancy team in the West Midlands produced the set of Rights below on a training day:

WE BELIEVE THAT YOU HAVE THE RIGHT

To Support

- In being listened to and having your questions answered honestly
- In being referred on to specialised services as and when needed
- In developing practical skills such as decision-making and saying 'no' which will support your health and wellbeing
- In understanding your own body, health and feelings
- In being able to take control of your own life
- In making decisions about your life and your own sexuality

To Information

- To receive clear non-judgmental, sensitive information relevant to your background and lifestyle
- To clear, accurate information delivered in accessible form in a range of styles and languages to suit you

To Services

- To free and confidential health services - and to clarity about what level of confidentiality you can expect from difference services and agencies
- To services which are convenient and easy to access - and where needed to be offered support in using these

To Positive Health and Wellbeing

- To be free from exploitation, abuse, harassment, coercion or pressure
- To be taken seriously and treated with dignity, respect and sensitivity
- To be treated as an individual in a way that celebrates differences in gender, ethnicity, ability, sexuality, age, experience and health
- To take the best possible care of yourself

ACTION PLANNING

RATIONALE

For many training participants, this can be one of the most significant aspects of the day – the stage at which they consider how to feed their learning, new awareness and just-acquired skills back into their work practice.

ACTION PLANNING SNOWBALL

Minimum Time Needed

30 minutes

Preparation

Head up a series of flip-chart sheets with such lines as:

Integrating Delay approaches into our SRE work (in formal or informal settings)

Integrating Delay approaches into our Sexual Health Service planning, delivery and evaluation

Integrating Delay approaches into Staff training and Professional/Personal Development

Integrating Delay approaches into Planning and Commissioning processes and work with Boards

Integrating Delay approaches into Work with Parents and Carers

Integrating Delay approaches into Boys and Young Men's work

Integrating Delay approaches into Support work for Teen Parents

Integrating Delay approaches into Media/Information/Publicity/ and Materials development

It is best to choose not more than 5 headings, just select those most pertinent to the group you are working with.

Stage One

Divide the large group up into smaller groups of 4 or 5 people (it is good to have at least 3 small groups – and preferably 4 or 5)

Give a headed sheet to each group and ask them to discuss these approaches to the work and to write down at least three ideas for developing Delay in this area of work practice. Ask them not

simply to write down a list but to consider each point, discussing how they will do this in practice - because this isn't just a brainstorm but needs to be meaningful action-planning.

Stage Two

Give groups at least 5 minutes on this first task. Then move the sheets round, each sheet moving on to the next group. So, for example the group that was discussing SRE work is now looking at Service planning and Delivery, those looking at Service Planning and Delivery are now discussing Staff training, and so on. Ask groups to read and discuss what has already been recorded by the previous group and once they have done this, to try to add at least 1 more point more of their own.

Stage Three

Give groups at least 4 minutes on this process. Then move the sheets on again, with the same instructions.

Move the sheets round as many times as you have time for. If possible, it is good for every group to work on each of the sheets you have prepared for them.

Stage Four

If time allows, ask groups to look at the final sheet they are working on and to choose 2 or 3 of the best ideas – maybe the simplest or easiest to put into practice – to feed back to the large group and discuss with them

'Quick wins' and 'Slow Burn' – adding an extra dimension

A further and very helpful refinement on this exercise was devised by the North East Region Training Delay Trainers group. They suggested that action planning should be divided into two parts. The first is 'Quick Wins'. These are aspects of work practice which can be introduced or amended with minimum resources or preparation – and so can be achieved immediately or at least within 6 months. The second is 'Slow Burn'. These are those longer-term strategies which may need extra resources, specialist staff training or the support and agreement of various Strategic groups.

It is useful to put these two sub-headings onto the headed sheets so groups can discuss the time-line needed for each of their suggestions and ideas, and can then write them under the appropriate headings. Ask them to ensure they get at least one idea under each of these sub-headings.

DELAY - SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Understandably, concerns and requests for more information are often voiced by those starting to explore the notion of Delay. A list of some of these follows – with just a few possible answers which I hope help to clarify, put the record straight, alleviate anxieties and give the fullest possible picture of just what 'Delay' means.

Tell me more about this Delay idea?

- With abstinence one end and 'anything goes' the other – we're suggesting something different. Delay supports young people to say 'no' till they're ready and then to know how to have safer sex and access condoms and contraception. It's about helping young people feel confident and that they have the right to say 'no' when they're not ready for sex – and 'yes' once they are.

When young people live in such a sexualised culture, not having sex could damage their self esteem

- Delay is about building self-esteem, not confusing sex as a replacement for self-esteem and focuses on teaching young people the skills to negotiate this sexualised culture. In our experience, it's usually young people with low self-esteem that usually have early sex to feel better about themselves - and then regret it

Telling young people to Delay may seem fine – but what about the pressure on them to have sex?

- Yes, there are pressures. So Delay is about equipping young people and workers with the awareness, skills and practical strategies to recognise, resist and deal with these.

What about young gay men – they've got the right to explore their sexuality

- Yes, of course. Delay is relevant to all young people whatever their sexuality. It's about empowering young people to make their own choices and also to access excellent services when they need them – all key issues for young gay men.

Delay's fine – but lots of young people we're working with are already having sex

- Delay is about empowering young people to get off the sexual treadmill if they want to and to take time out to evaluate/identify what they themselves want from a relationship. Research tells us that the majority of young people who have sex early regret their experiences and do not enjoy them. So Delay is not about first time sex or virginity – it helps young people be clear that just because they've had sex already doesn't mean they have to again, until they want to for themselves.

We work with whatever young people bring us and they want to talk about sex

- Talking about sex is an integral aspect of Delay work. Delay is a holistic approach and we want to give young people the space and time to reflect on the idea of readiness, rather than just assuming that they will all be having sex.

The curriculum's full – we can't take on one more thing

- This is about a new angle on what we're already doing – not something special and new and different. It's about using the time and resources we already have and introducing the Delay message into this. You can get the message across in 2 sentences

I've heard about Delay work – is it a new word for Abstinence?

- No – it's definitely not abstinence. For example it doesn't promote sex only within marriage or take a "Just Say No" approach. It's about supporting all young people to make positive choices, to have time to think about their decisions and delay sex until

they're ready. It also involves giving them the resources and understanding to have safer sex once they are sexually active – and ensuring they know they have the right to pleasure and fulfilment in sex.

Isn't the whole concept of Delay a bit judgemental?

- No, assuming every young person is having sex is judgemental - and so is assuming that all young people are enjoying the sex they're having. Delay is about helping young people make their own informed judgements and is anything but judgemental. It supports young people in making choices, and offers them the opportunity to stop and think – as well as providing and publicising excellent sexual health services. So we're not taking away their right to have sex, we're adding in the right *not* to as well.

Young people have the right to have sex

- Absolutely – and it should be about quality sex when they **do** have it, but in fact early sex often results in regret. So they also have the right to support and information to ensure they don't regret the sex they have, to say 'no' to sex until they are ready and to terrific sexual health support and services too.

I'm anxious if I start doing this work, people will think I'm promoting abstinence

- I can understand your anxiety. It's up to all of us to keep reiterating the Delay message so people realise Abstinence is just about saying 'no' and Delay provides skills for young people to make positive choices. It supports young people to say 'no, I'm not ready' while also enabling them to say 'yes' when they genuinely are - and to know the difference.

Young people are driven by their hormones and they want to have sex

- Some young people may want to have sex - however, research tells us that not all young people do want to have sex, or that they're not enjoying sex the sex they're having. We acknowledge that hormones may create difficulties for young people – however the Delay message is about equipping young people with the skills to meet these needs in a variety of ways (e.g. through sensuality, friendships, self-esteem etc). Not all young people want to have sex, and if they do there are lots of ways they can have develop intimacy with someone first before moving onto sex.

Shouldn't we be helping young people make choices, not telling them what to do?

- Yes absolutely - Delay is about empowering young people to make their own choices and helping them put these into practice effectively. We aren't telling them what to do; we are skilling them up to make informed decisions about their own life. We have an obligation to provide knowledge and information to equip young people and help them make the right choices for them at the right time. So Delay focuses on choice – including the choice to say 'no' while acknowledging the pressures on young people.

Isn't this rather a mixed message – on the one hand you're teaching about Delay, and on the other hand you're dishing out condoms?

- Delay has two parts – putting off sex till you're ready and negotiating/practising sex once you are. That's not mixed, it's complementary. We issue condoms **and** support young people to wait till they're ready – both activities are about choice and keeping young people safe. And being prepared is different from intending to do something. As one course participant said - "Just because I carry Nurofen doesn't mean I intend to get a headache!" We also point out the use by date on condoms and say they've got ages, there's no rush to use them!

DELAY IS.....

1. Supporting young people to make choices about sex that feel right for them and helping them to decide when they are really ready
2. Giving young people the skills to say 'no' to pressure they come under to have sex e.g. from peers, boy/girlfriends, the media and cultural assumptions
3. Ensuring all young people have access to excellent SRE which offers them space to grow in emotional awareness and self-esteem, in understanding themselves and others as well as the more 'mechanical' issues such as how to use condoms properly, contraception and accessing services and support
4. Giving young people friendship skills so they can meet many of their social and emotional needs through friends rather than looking to sex to deliver this
5. Balancing messages that it's fine to delay sex till it's a positive decision with good, accurate information and the skills to negotiate sex when they do choose to take this step – and being positive about intimacy, sex & pleasure
6. Discussing with young people what makes a good relationship and how to explore non-sexual ways of being intimate and close to someone
7. Understanding that many young people we work with won't be having sex – in fact the majority under 16 won't – and some won't be happy with the sex they are having, and making this clear in how we work with them
8. Being clear that this is relevant to all young people – heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual and those questioning their sexuality
9. Giving the message that sex isn't a treadmill – you can get off. Just because you've already had sex doesn't mean you have to go on – you can take time out for yourself and stop for a while till you know you're ready
10. AND ...alongside all of this providing excellent high-quality sexual health services and support which enable young people to access condoms, contraception, emergency contraception, abortion and support for choices about sexuality – as well as a place to talk about relationships, sex and sexuality and to get support for saying 'no' to unwanted sex

RU READY - OR NOT QUITE YET?

- You feel you could say no if you wanted to
- You can have fun together without anything sexual involved
- You each want it for yourself, not for the other person or to fit in with friends or others' expectations of you
- Nobody's forcing you, pressuring you or making you
- You have discussed using condoms and contraception, and agreed what happens next and whether or not to tell your friends afterwards as well as talking about the implications if you become pregnant

You probably won't be ready for sex till you can tick all these boxes. But remember even once you are ready - it still doesn't mean you have to!

Remember too that just because you've already had sex - it doesn't mean you have to again .
You can take some time out

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In consultation with young people from Calderdale,
West Yorkshire

CAN WE DO IT? - YES WE CAN!

Some ways in which we can integrate Delay Messages into all our work....

"I'M JUST WONDERING WHERE YOU ARE IN ALL OF THIS?"

SHARE THE HANDOUT OF "LINES WE CAN TAKE AS WORKERS" WITH OUR TEAMS & COLLEAGUES

ALWAYS MENTION THE RIGHT TO SAY NO IN SERVICE PUBLICITY, CONDOM CARDS ETC

ROLL OUT THE "RU READY?" CHECKLIST

"I'M VERY PRECIOUS AND VERY SPECIAL"

ENSURE ANY STAFF TRAINING ON SRE OR SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES OR RELATED ISSUES INCLUDES WORK ON INTEGRATING DELAY MESSAGES INTO PRACTICE

These approaches can be taken in many work areas - such as PSHE sessions, sexual health services, youth and community work and care settings

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TEN STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING DELAY

- **Address and build strong friendship skills**
- **Building a sense of rights, self-esteem & aspirations**
- **Offer drama, excitement and alternatives to sex**
- **Address gender issues and do boys work**
- **Assertiveness skills, dealing with pressure, lines to say "no"**
- **Ensure excellent SRE including condoms, sexuality, contraception, how to access services and lots of work on relationships**
- **Work imaginatively with parents and carers**
- **Give them 'trigger' thoughts**
- **Work on sensuality and the senses**
- **Give young people the whole picture**

SOME LINES ABOUT DELAY FOR US AS WORKERS
TO TAKE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

"I'm not happy with that - I want something better for you"

"If you're not sure then you're probably not ready"

"Putting off sex for a while can help you feel more in control of your life"

"Just because you're saying 'No' for now doesn't mean you always will"

"If he'd/she'd dump you if you won't - do you really want him/her?"

"How do you feel about it?"

"You do have the right to say 'no' you know"

"It's not unusual for someone of your age not to be having sex"

"Most people aren't having sex yet - even though they may say they are!"

"Whenever you say 'no' to one thing, you're saying yes to something else"

"Most people don't have sex till after they're 16, you know"

"What kind of relationship do you want?"

And of course..... "I'm wondering where YOU are in all of this?"

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IT'S NOT A TREADMILL, YOU CAN GET OFF

Sometimes we discuss sex as though the only life stages are before and after starting to have it with a partner. This attitude is a real pitfall when working with young people, because it understandably can lead them to assume that once you have started to be sexual with someone else, you always will be. It buys into the old lie that there is no reason not to be sexual.

However, many young people may have sex once or twice or a few times for a whole range of reasons, to see what it's like, out of curiosity or the desire to get it over with, to prove they are normal and all their 'bits' work, to be able to say they have done it or to belong to the gang.

We can let young people know in all the ways we talk with them about sex and relationships that it's fine to take time out for themselves. This could mean putting sex aside and coming back to it later, once they want to explore this aspect of their experience with a partner they feel sure of and committed to. So starting doesn't contain an imperative of carrying on. To paraphrase from Mastermind, we can let them know it's fine to say "I've started – but that doesn't mean I have to finish".

Working with young people on this, we can ask them to consider all the reasons they might want to take time out from being sexual with someone else, when they have already had sex at least once.

For example, these might include:

"I want to concentrate on other things – like school work or activities"

"Because I didn't like it that much"

"I don't want to risk getting pregnant yet – there's too much else I want to do first"

"I only did it the first time because I didn't know how to say no/felt I had to/was pushed into it – and I'm not going to let that happen again"

*"I want to wait for someone who wants **me**, not just for a sex machine"*

"It's boring....."

"I got talked about afterwards and people shouted "slag" when I went past and I hated that"

"I only did it to tell my friends – and now I have, I don't want to go on"

101 WAYS TO SHOW SOMEONE YOU LOVE THEM.... WITHOUT HAVING SEX

There is no avoiding the fact that we live in a highly-sexualised society and it has become something of a cliché to comment on how sex is used to sell everything from ice-cream to Big Brother. This obviously results in huge pressures on young people – and we know from their own testimony that they feel at the sharp end of this.

One result of this monolithic cultural importance we have attached to sex is that it is hard to feel like a serious, fully adult person with a strong identity without being sexual. Another is that it monopolises the airspace, giving off the impression that everything has to be about sex. So it's interesting to consider all the non-sexual ways in which people can show they care for someone. Some years ago, North Buckinghamshire Health Promotion produced an excellent poster based on this concept called *"101 Ways to show someone you love them without having sex"*. Brighton Sexual Health Promotion Team has more recently worked with a group of young people to produce their own version – now a key Delay course handout.

- Work with a group to list all the possible ways they can think of to show someone you love them without having sex. These might be - taking them on a picnic, writing them a poem, giving them a head massage, buying them a packet of love-hearts, cooking them a romantic dinner, washing their car, singing a karaoke love song duet with them, leaving a single flower on their desk, buying their dog a squeaky toy.....the list is probably literally endless.

Then ask - How would they like someone to show them their affection in ways that don't include sex? Once they have identified what some of these could be, if they have a partner – why not ask for these demonstrations of affection – and give them? If they are already being sexual with a partner, perhaps they will discover that they get a greater sense of being treasured and values through these things. And if they don't have a partner, it will give them a menu of things to try out as signs of love once they are in a relationship, without necessarily having to look to sex for this.

**FOR MORE DETAILS ON ANY OF THE MATERIALS IN
THIS PACK OR ON THE "LET'S LEAVE IT TILL LATER"
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