

CHALLENGE TEAM UK

Content and style of presentations – Information

Presentations are designed to educate and inspire teens. Presenters are not professional actors or performers and have varied experience in public speaking. They share one important thing in common – a strong belief in the value of saving sex for marriage. A hallmark which captures the attention of the audience is sincerity. Presenters are volunteers (aged between 18 and 25) who speak about a lifestyle choice that they have made.

Presentations last approximately one hour and are best followed by a short time allowed for questions from the audience. A presentation is best delivered to year groups of 60-150 students, rather than to class groups. The optimum age group is Years 9 to 11.

In a punchy, honest and natural way, presenters talk to pupils about sex and relationships. The speakers are not anti-sex, nor are they trying to scare kids away from sex. Rather, they believe that sexuality is so special that it should be given the respect that it deserves. They talk about the difference between thinking short term and thinking long term.

Using humorous skits and short interactive talks they inform students about possible physical and emotional consequences of sex. They talk about bonding with another person, about sexual desires, about sexually transmitted infections and about babies when you are young. They talk about abuse and rape. They talk about alcohol. The young men explain why they have decided to save sex for their future marriage partner.

There are no moral overtones and there is no religious content. The presenters do not 'preach' at pupils, nor tell them what they should or should not do. The choice of saving sex is presented as an attractive and realistic option to consider. The presentation is suitable for pupils from all backgrounds, the majority of whom, studies have consistently shown, aspire to be married one day.

Three or four presenters use their own experience and stories to inform the presentation. Each presenter has a different background and this is sensitively used to give the presentation reality and application. Because they are young people themselves, team members can understand the issues their peers are dealing with. They are full of energy and eager to enjoy their life to the full, just like the teens they speak to.

A presentation begins with a light-hearted sketch, after which the presenters introduce themselves and the subject of sex and relationships. The purposes of sex are established and differentiated between those which are long term and those which are short term. Long term purposes are identified as creating bonds of love and creating babies. Sex is presented as a unique and special gift which everyone has to give – at the time they choose and to the person that they choose.

Next the possible consequences of sex are explored. Unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections are discussed. Condom use and condom failure is covered. The fact that condoms reduce risk but do not eliminate it is explained. The only 100% effective protection against unwanted pregnancy or infection is to save sex.

The emotional bonds created by sex are then discussed. Marriage is highlighted and the benefits of saving sex for marriage are explained. Interspersed with personal stories and humorous skits, the presenters cover topics of friendship and relationships, dating, abuse and rape. The possibility of starting over for those who regret previous sexual experiences is presented positively. The issues of peer pressure, sexting and pornography are raised.

How a strong relationship can be built is illustrated and marriage is presented as the place where best friends can have sex in a safe and secure environment and love can be maintained.

The freedoms brought by choosing to save sex are then detailed. Freedom from worrying about being pregnant or having got someone pregnant, freedom from worrying about contracting or transmitting sexually transmitted infections, freedom to fully enjoy the present and make plans for the future, freedom to enjoy friendships with both sexes without overtones, being valued for who you are, standing out from the crowd and respecting yourself are all presented positively. The dangers of alcohol and the value of choosing friends wisely are raised.

Who runs Challenge Team UK?

The concept of the Challenge Team started in Canada in the early '90s. A group of students decided they wanted to challenge the prevailing culture and toured schools with amazing success. Numbers of presenters and interested schools grew. The UK organiser is Sue Relf, an experienced project manager and development worker who runs a local community centre and has been involved in youth and community work for many years. Sue's husband was previously a member of the Senior Management Team of a local comprehensive school. Challenge Team UK is a Charitable Trust (No.1058747). The first UK tour took place over a four week period in the early spring of 2004. Since then tens of thousands of teens in the UK have witnessed a presentation.

Trustees are:

Dr John Chaplin MB BS DTMH (a pioneer in AIDS prevention programmes)
Christine Fidler BA
Glyn Oliver
Ieva Blaikie LLB
Dee Thompson BM BS

How is Challenge Team UK funded?

Presenters are volunteers. Partnerships with other agencies are sometimes arranged to deliver presentations in some areas. Host families nearby to schools are used if at all possible to provide free accommodation while touring. Costs are kept to a minimum. The school fee covers travelling and other expenses. Challenge Team UK has simple administrative procedures and no expensive overheads. The trust also receives unsolicited donations from supporters.

Take a serious look at an old concept...

save
~~safe~~ **sex**
...a great way to live

Who are the presenters?

Presenters are recruited for varying periods of time. They are interviewed and carefully selected and are:

- committed to the lifestyle choice of saving sex for marriage
- experienced in working with teens, good communicators and good relationally
- good team players with leadership potential
- able to supply excellent references

Before each tour the presenters attend an intensive preparation programme when presentations are prepared.

How to book a presentation:

For information on when teams are available email info@challengeteamuk.com or telephone 01323 721047.

Some feedback from previous tours:

"I can fully recommend a visit from Challenge Team UK. The team effectively combines theatre with an interactive approach. The pupils are made to feel at ease and learn about saving sex in a factual way. The event fully complements our SRE programme and I will definitely be inviting the team back soon."

Dr Suzanne Saito, Head of PSHEE at Blessed Thomas Holford Catholic College, Altrincham

"Presenting on the theme of sex to adolescents cannot be easy yet the team managed to do it in a way that was fun, interactive and never dull but informative, challenging and appropriate. At no time were they patronising or condescending and so they held the attention of their three audiences throughout. Most importantly, the feedback from pupils was very positive. I spoke to many who praised the presentation highly and clearly got a lot out of the session. Although they would not use such terms, my impression from all they had to say was that they felt more *empowered* in terms of their own bodies and decisions they might wish to make in the future. The staff who saw it were equally effusive in their praise.

Once again, thank you very much for the presentations. We all feel that it was money well spent!"

Assistant Headteacher, Christ the King Catholic School, Nottingham.

"All three year groups gave positive feedback. Some Year 10 girls said it was the best presentation they had ever seen in a PSHCE context."

PSHCE Co-ordinator, Ratcliffe College, Leicester

"This morning at the school they gave the most marvellous presentation. There was a real chemistry with our Lower Sixth Form. Their timing was perfect; and there was a nice balance of laughs and the serious message. I was impressed with how they got the 'fear factor' in; but emphasised the 'freedom' message so well (above the fear)"

Head of Lower Sixth, Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School, London

"As always – excellent. The Team had youth, innocence, experience and sincerity – the audience had clear empathy with them."

Head of Year 9, Gravesend Grammar School, Kent

"I am just e-mailing to say thank you. You did a presentation at my school and I am very grateful that you did. It felt like everyone around me did have boyfriends and were doing stuff that I hadn't. I felt really pressured and like an outcast. After your performance I realised that this wasn't true and I'm very grateful to you for making me realise it. I think that your performances are fantastic and I really admire you for doing it and spreading a message that teenagers don't often hear. I'm going to save sex for marriage and I bet many others like me will too." **Student**

"I didn't have a clue about saving sex, but it's a good idea. Now that I know about it others should learn about it too." **Student**

"It helped my classmates understand the decision I made years ago." **Student**

"A lot of people in schools are pressured to have sex and Challenge Team could help them." **Student**

How Challenge Team supports Ofsted recommendations and Government guidelines for Sex and Relationships Education in Secondary Schools

Reference document: Sex and Relationships Education in Schools, Government Briefing Paper No 0613, 16th July 2015

Relationships:

Young people, when asked about their experience of sex education at school, often complain about the focus on the physical aspects of reproduction and the lack of any meaningful discussion about feelings, relationships and values. Sex and relationships education set within the framework for PSHE across the four key stages will significantly redress that balance. (p5)

The Challenge Team presentation focuses on relationships, feelings and values and not on the physical aspects of reproduction.

Sex and relationships education will help young people to respect themselves and others, and understand difference. Within the context of talking about relationships, children should be taught about the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and for bringing up children. The Government recognises that there are strong and mutually supportive relationships outside marriage. Therefore, children should learn the significance of marriage and stable relationships as key building blocks of community and society. Teaching in this area needs to be sensitive so as not to stigmatise children on the basis of their home circumstances ... (p5)

The Challenge Team presentation explains why it is important for young people to respect themselves and their sexuality. It explains the meaning of marriage and its value to individuals in a sensitive way by using Team members whose own home circumstances have involved divorce or growing up without an intact married family. All surveys conducted amongst young people from all family backgrounds consistently include marriage in their top four aspirations.

Abortion:

The key task for schools is, through appropriate information and effective advice on contraception and on delaying sexual activity, to reduce the incidence of unwanted pregnancies. (p7)

The Challenge Team presentation does not give contraceptive advice. It focuses on delaying sexual activity, reducing the incidence of unwanted pregnancies.

Academies and Free Schools:

The Model Funding Agreement for Free schools provides an example of the arrangements set up by Academies and Free Schools regarding SRE. It states that:

'The Academy Trust shall have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State, further to section 403 of the Education Act 1966, on sex and relationships education to ensure that children at the Academy are protected from inappropriate teaching materials and they learn the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children.' (p8)

The Challenge Team presentation focuses on the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and the bringing up of children without stigmatising children from families where parents are not married.

DFE Review of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education: The PSHE Association has recently updated its guidance for schools on developing and improving their SRE policies. The Sex Education Forum also has a range of useful resources to help schools improve their SRE programmes, as do other organisations which seek to raise standards in SRE education. (p9)

Challenge Team UK aims to raise standards in SRE education and has been visiting schools since 2005. During that time Challenge Team has spoken to 135,000 young people in schools up and down the country.

Ofsted report on PSHE and the teaching of SRE 2013:

Sex and relationships education required improvement in over a third of schools. In secondary schools it was because too much emphasis was placed on 'the mechanics' of reproduction and too little on relationships, sexuality, the influences of pornography on students' understanding of healthy sexual relationships, dealing with emotions and staying safe.' (p12)

The Challenge Team presentation does not cover 'the mechanics' of sex, but covers relationships, sexuality, the harmful influence of pornography, dealing with emotions and staying safe.

Reforms to Independent School Standards; teaching about same-sex marriage:

Teaching about marriage must be done in a sensitive, reasonable, respectful and balanced way. Teachers are subject to professional requirements, the school curriculum, school policies and anti-discrimination duties towards colleagues and pupils. No school or individual teacher is under a duty to support, promote or endorse marriage of same sex couples ... Subject to the above, nothing in the Act affects the rights of schools with a religious character to continue to teach about marriage according to their religious doctrines or ethos. Any views expressed about marriage of same sex couples, by governors, teachers, other school staff, parents and pupils, may reflect the religious ethos of the school. (p17)

Challenge Team teaching about marriage is done in a sensitive, reasonable, respectful and balanced way. Challenge Team material contains no religious references. No views about same-sex marriage are expressed, but rather these are left to the discretion of the school. The presentation applies to everybody. It is entirely consistent with Christian teaching and so is appropriate for both faith and non-faith schools, state maintained schools and free schools and academies.

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