

Creating an HIV Protection “Backpack”

Teacher Note: This activity should only be used in conjunction with an “Opt Out” Prevention Lesson.

Directions

- Tell the class to imagine an “HIV Protection Backpack” filled with tangible and intangible ways to protect against HIV infection. Have the class define: tangible (referring to a thing one can touch) and intangible (referring to an idea or trait).
- Have the class brainstorm about what could go into the imaginary backpack that would enable one to abstain from sexual intercourse and alcohol and other drug use. Draw the following diagram on the board. Record students’ answers in the appropriate columns.

AN ABSTINENCE “BACKPACK” FOR HIV PROTECTION

TANGIBLE	INTANGIBLE
Photos of parents, family members (reminders of people who support abstinence decisions).	Assertiveness, self-confidence, and the courage to avoid risk behaviors.
Community resource list.	Good decision-making skills.
An address book—a reminder that you have friends who share your values.	Religious/ethical beliefs that promote abstinence.
A list of things you can say to peers who try to convince you to do risky things.	The sensitivity not to pressure others to engage in risk behaviors—and the self-esteem to say “no” to risk behaviors.

- Have the class brainstorm about additional contents of the backpack that could enable one to protect against HIV if one does not abstain from sexual intercourse. The second part of the backpack chart may look like the one below.

A RISK-REDUCTION “BACKPACK” (ADDITIONS TO THE ABSTINENCE “BACKPACK”)

TANGIBLE	INTANGIBLE
Male latex or polyurethane condoms (to use correctly, every time).	The wisdom to choose a partner who shares your commitment to reducing risk.
Female condom (FC2- to use correctly, every time)	The self-esteem to refuse to have sexual intercourse unless condoms and other risk-reduction measures are used.
Instructions on using condoms correctly.	The awareness that, even if you have had sexual intercourse, you always have the right to choose abstinence in the future.
Water-based lubricant.	The awareness that even if you have had sexual intercourse without a condom in the past, it is never too late to start protecting yourself and your partner by using one.