

# U Choose to Know



## Regrouping, Refocusing, and Reengaging Your Students

We get it! Managing a classroom of middle and high school students can present its challenges, especially when the topic is sex education. Students are bound to have a wide range of emotions and reactions based on their varying levels of experience with the content. As educators, it's important to equip ourselves with the tools to create and maintain a calm, comfortable, and productive learning environment when we teach sex education.

### Class-wide strategies

Strategies	Examples
<b>Build Specific Group Agreements</b>	<p>Help students develop some specific group agreements related to sex ed. Encourage students to think about what a safe, caring, understanding, and sensitive environment looks like. Remind students that the classroom does not allow bullying or harassing each other and that what is discussed inside the classroom must stay inside the classroom, except the learning.</p> <p><b><i>Please note that if there is any abuse disclosed by a student, it must be reported.</i></b></p> <p>You may have students sign group agreements like they are a contract. Remember to refer back to these agreements daily and when challenges arise!</p>
<b>Help Prevent Hurtful Comments Before They Are Made</b>	<p>I'm sure we can think of some words or actions that trigger hurt, shame, or embarrassment for students. Triggers may allow us to be more mindful of our words and actions because of how it may make others feel.</p> <p>However, young people may not realize how comments such as "That's so gay," or "Eww, I would never try anal," can hurt their peers.</p> <p>Remind your class that no one should make fun of someone for what they say or share and that the classroom should feel like a safe and open environment for everyone to learn.</p> <p><i>continued on next page...</i></p>

Strategies	Examples
<p><b>Encourage Questions</b></p>	<p>Create an anonymous question box for the classroom. Allow students to ask as many questions as they'd like and encourage them to write them down and place them in the box. Ask every student to put something in the box even if they don't have a question. This way, no one is stigmatized for using the box.</p> <p>This activity encourages a safe environment while also decreasing the likelihood of unruly classroom discussions.</p>
<p><b>Give Students A "Heads Up" About What's Coming Next</b></p>	<p>Sometimes just giving a gentle reminder about the content and even addressing some common questions or concerns that come up can make for an easier transition into difficult content.</p> <p>Idea: Similar to an anonymous question box, allow students 1-3 minutes to write down their thoughts or opinions—no matter what they are—about the upcoming lesson. Let them know the purpose of the activity is to hear what they have to say before the lesson begins. Be sure to collect a response from each student and choose a few common misconceptions to debunk.</p> <p>Tell them that being open-minded allows them to learn new and helpful information about the topic.</p>
<p><b>Praise appropriate behavior</b></p>	<p>We've all heard this one before! But maybe making this more personal and thoughtful can do the trick.</p> <p>For example, you continuously address a student for making inappropriate comments and talking out of turn. However, today that student is engaged in appropriate behavior (even if for a short amount of time). Try giving them praise. You might take them aside and say, "I am so proud of you for being mindful of your words today."</p> <p>Not only does this strategy reinforce positive behavior, but it also encourages behavior change for students who are struggling to act in a positive way.</p>
<p><b>Get Active!</b></p>	<p>If you see your class is being energetic and lacking focus, match their energy with a quick engaging activity.</p> <p><b>Ideas:</b>    <a href="#">Icebreakers</a>    <a href="#">Dance Party</a></p> <p>Let the class choose the activity. Set a timer for five minutes and explicitly explain that when it goes off everyone must go back to their seats and wait quietly for instruction.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>continued on next page...</i></p>

Strategies	Examples
<p><b>Limit Personal Stories</b></p>	<p>Encouraging students to relate content to their own experiences can seem like an effective way to engage students, but it can lead to problems with staying on topic and staying on time. It can also lead to other disruptive behavior.</p> <p>So when a student starts sharing a personal experience, encourage them to be general in their comments and questions so things don't get too personal in the classroom.</p>
<p><b>Find Other Ways to Engage Students</b></p>	<p>Getting a quiet or non-verbal student to engage can present quite the challenge, especially when discussing such personal content.</p> <p>Never take offense to what may seem like a disengaged student. This may be an indicator of trauma or triggering content for them.</p> <p>Other ways to engage students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Check-in with them privately</li> <li>» Allow them to lead an activity</li> <li>» Allow them to pass out handouts or write notes on the board</li> <li>» Place students in small groups to discuss content</li> </ul>
<p><b>Practice Gratitude</b></p>	<p>Just like all of us, young people want to feel appreciated for a job well done. A simple, yet sincere, "Thank you for being attentive as we discussed STIs today. I look forward to teaching and learning with you again," can go a long way!</p>





## Here are some resources on classroom management:

### **[National Education Association: Classroom Management](#)**

This resource provides tips on how to handle difficult students and situations that may arise in the classroom.

### **[Scholastic: Classroom Management Articles \(PreK-8\)](#)**

This resource lists various creative classroom management strategies from teachers and Scholastic experts.

### **[Southern Poverty Law Center's Teaching Tolerance Project: Reframing Classroom Management: A Toolkit for Educators](#)**

Teaching Tolerance has a toolkit for educators to develop classroom management strategies, provided by over 1,200 teachers. Some of the sections you should definitely check out:

- » *Six Phrases That Disempower Students—and How to Flip Them*
- » *Teacher Habits That Can Make Behavior Worse*
- » *Teacher Habits That Support Students Development and Success*
- » *Six Ways to Redirect Classroom Disruption*

### **[U Choose: The Teacher's Guide to Sex Ed](#)**

U Choose has developed an online course for providing quality sex ed. Be sure to check out ***Lesson 4: It's Not Just What You Say: Techniques & Approaches for a Healthy Sex Ed Class***. You can access the course by logging on to Baltimore City Public School's Blackboard and clicking on the U Choose logo.



For more information,  
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