

Resource 3 - The Barrier Game

Preventing Sexually Transmitted Infections (10-15mins depending on size of the group)

Aim of game - to demonstrate the rapid transmission of STIs.

You will need:

- A plastic or rubber glove
- Infection name labels for 4 STIs
- 4 volunteers

Don't tell the class this yet...

- Shaking hands with another individual represents sexual intercourse/genital contact
- The rubber glove signifies a condom

Let's Shake!

- Ask one volunteer to put on a glove (Dominant hand)
- Ask everyone in the room to get up and shake hands with someone; then mingle and shake, mingle and shake
- Make sure you don't shake hands; note anyone else who chooses not to shake hands
- After a few minutes ask everyone to sit down
- Ask three volunteers (current estimates suggest that in some communities 10% of young people (= 3/30) have an STI) to stand the front and give each a label to hold - Chlamydia, Herpes, and Gonorrhoea
- Introduce each infection asking the volunteer what they can tell you about themselves. (For example - Chlamydia - bacterial infection, no symptoms in most people, treated and cured by antibiotics. Or Herpes - viral infection, causes painful, cold sore like blisters, no cure only treat symptoms with tablets and cream).
- Ask the remainder of the group to stand up if they have shaken hands with any of the three volunteers standing at the front
- Then ask the remaining people sitting to stand if they have shaken hands with any of those standing. Continue until all pupils are standing.
- Ask everyone to sit again except the volunteer wearing the glove
- Taking into account any pupils that didn't take part in the game, explain that there were only two (or however many) people that haven't theoretically caught a sexually transmitted infection (STI), the person with the glove on (which represents a barrier method - condom, femidoms), and you.

You chose not to join in, thus exercising your power of choice, choosing not to shake hands or have sexual intercourse.

- Remind the students that the only effective way to avoid STIs is by not having sex; or by only having sex with someone who has proved negative in an STI test; but that a barrier method is one of the most effective ways of preventing transmission of most STIs

NB: To make this exercise more sophisticated, prior to the mingling/shaking exercise, ask 4 volunteers to represent: people who are celibate; a couple who are monogamous and people who only ever have sex with themselves (masturbate). These people can all mingle but not shake hands (hands in pockets) - they of course remain uninfected by STIs.