

Risk and Desire



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Background

In the past years, the number of sexually transmitted infection cases has increased continually in Sweden. This is particularly true for Chlamydia, but HIV is also increasing. This increase is more substantial among young people than in other groups of society.

One explanation is an increase in sexually risky behavior in young people. In the context of risky behavior three factors are usually mentioned, which increase the risk of contracting a sexually transmitted infection:

- A. Frequently changing sexual partners.
- B. Sex under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
- C. Not using a condom.

All these factors are major causes for the dramatic increase of STIs in young people. Other factors are of course also involved, such as a lack of knowledge about STIs and about sexual health issues.

The purpose of this game is to promote knowledge and understanding of these three sexually risky behaviors. The game serves as a basis for working with the attitudes and values of young people, around these issues.

Distribution of Roles

You tell the class to stand on a line, side by side and all facing the same direction. It's good to have some space in-between participants, so they can move freely. There should be a larger, open area in front of the participants where they will be able to walk around. A good place to carry out this exercise would be a long hallway, a classroom, some other large room or outdoors.

Once the participants have lined up, you hand out their roles. They are asked to reflect on the roles they have been given for a brief moment. Questions to reflect on might be:

- What would your family look like?
- How do you like school?
- What do you do on weekends?
- What do you want from life?
- What do you do for fun?
- What don't you like to do?
- What does your future look like?

There are 30 roles in the game. They are either boys or girls. Their ages vary between 15-18 years old. Most of the characters are in high school, but some are still in middle school or have interrupted their studies. If there are less than 30 participants, it's a good idea to hand out the roles in pairs, so you end up with an equal amount of male and female characters.

It doesn't matter if you give a female role to a male, or the other way around. That might even enhance the participant's experience of the exercise.

Course of Events

Once the participants have had a chance to reflect on their roles for a couple of minutes, you ask them to listen to a number of statements. If a statement is true for them, that is, if they can answer "yes" to the statement, they will take one step forward. How long these steps will be depends on the space you're using. If a character takes many steps forward, that is an indication of having a sexual behavior which increases the risk of that person contracting or already having contracted an STI.

For each statement, the participants will become more unevenly spread out in the room. Once you think this difference is significant enough, the exercise is halted. That usually happens after around 15-20 questions. The participants are asked to remain standing where they are, and look around. Then, you as a game supervisor will initiate the reflection phase.

Reflection

The reflection is one of the most important parts of the game. The recommended timeframe is at least 20 minutes, but more time is even better. The order of the questions is important, it's a good idea to base the discussion in each individual's experience, to capture the impressions of the whole group. For each question, it's of course also important to ask follow-up questions to contextualize what the participants say or what they did in the exercise.

In the beginning of the reflection, it might be good for the participants to remain standing where they ended up in the game. Then, after a couple of questions, you can have them gather in a circle where everyone can see each other properly, which will make communication easier.

It's important that everyone get to speak in this discussion, to describe their impression of what happened. It's also important not to "hurry along" the discussion to get your points across. All participants need to get the chance to express themselves.

One simple way to structure the discussion is to first look at "what happened in the game," and then look further to examine corresponding examples in "real life." Is it possible to relate the issues of the game to real-life events?

Below are a number of questions, and an exercise that might be useful in the reflection phase.

Questions to Discuss

On the Experience

- What was it like to play another person?
- What was the point of giving you a role instead of letting you answer the questions as yourself?
- Did the roles and the statements seem realistic?
- Was it hard to decide whether to take a step forward at any point?
- Did you feel that there was a big difference between the choices of your character and the choices you would have made yourself?
- What did it feel like to take a step forward?
- What did it feel like to remain standing the same spot?
- What did it feel like to see someone else take a step?
- What were the roles of the different participants in the group?
- Can you see any patterns in the characters who took a lot of steps forward, compared to the ones standing still?
- What did it mean when someone took a step forward?

- What did it mean if a character ended up far ahead in the room, or far behind?
- How could you make young people change their behavior?

On Unprotected Sex

- Is it common for young people to change partners frequently? Why/why not?
- What is a “fuck buddy” and a one-night-stand? Is that common? Why?
- What is important to keep in mind for a person who changes partners a lot?

Sex Under the Influence of Alcohol or Other Drugs

- What is the connection between sex and alcohol? Why is that?
- Is it common for young people to go further sexually after drinking alcohol? Why/why not?
- What are the risks of having sex under the influence of alcohol or drugs?
- What is important to keep in mind when you’re under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, when it comes to sex?

Tips and Suggestions

- Make sure to take notes on what happens during the game, what the participants do and how they reason. This will help you in the reflection phase.
- Pause the game a couple of times and ask the participants to introduce their characters. This might make them more interested and make them reflect on what is happening.
- Make sure that as many people as possible get to speak during the reflection phase.
- Make sure to not give all participants roles of the same sex. Variation works best.
- A good follow-up of the game may be to let participants write down the thoughts and ideas they had during the reflection phase.

Roles, High School Version

<p>Ville, 18 years old</p> <p>Social Studies program. Heterosexual. Parties a lot. Always has lots of new girlfriends and different “fuck buddies.”</p>	<p>Ershad, 15 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Heterosexual. The coolest guy in school. Frequently does totally wild things at parties. Loves sex and girls.</p>	<p>Demetrios, 17 years old</p> <p>Auto Mechanics program. Heterosexual. Parties about once a month. Frequently has a new girlfriend. Never uses a condom when having sex.</p>
<p>Jonathan, 16 years old</p> <p>Esthetics program. Homosexual. Is dating a guy. Faithful. Drinks too much sometimes. Does not use a condom.</p>	<p>Lukas, 18 years old</p> <p>Child Care program. Heterosexual. Does not drink alcohol. Has a girlfriend who is on birth-control pills. Loves his girlfriend.</p>	<p>Erik, 17 years old</p> <p>Music program. Heterosexual. Single. Only has sex with someone if it really feels right. Always uses a condom.</p>
<p>Linus, 15 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Heterosexual. Just lost his virginity with his first girlfriend ever. Rarely drinks, and not very much. Knows that condoms are important, but is inexperienced in using them.</p>	<p>Sebastian, 16 years old</p> <p>Science program. Homosexual. Parties sometimes. Currently single. Sometimes cheats on his partners. Always uses a condom.</p>	<p>Joakim, 17 years old</p> <p>Just quit school. Heterosexual. Organizes his own parties. Has had a “fuck buddy” for a month now. Would like a more serious relationship. Thinks it’s up to the girl to use birth-control pills. Doesn’t use a condom.</p>
<p>Zoran, 18 years old</p> <p>Soccer High School. Bisexual. Is shy with both girls and boys. Drinks to boost his confidence.</p>	<p>Abbe, 18 years old</p> <p>Hotel and Restaurant program. Heterosexual. Has had a girlfriend for two years but cheats on her with a friend’s girlfriend. Rarely drinks alcohol. Never has sex without a condom.</p>	<p>Ivan, 15 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Heterosexual. Is a virgin but wants to have sex as soon as possible. Doesn’t know much about sex and girls. Wants to look cool in front of his friends, but is actually pretty insecure.</p>
<p>Carl, 16 years old</p> <p>Individual program. Bisexual. Just ended a relationship. Looking for someone new. Used to do drugs but doesn’t any more.</p>	<p>Geza, 17 years old</p> <p>Forestry program. Heterosexual. Frequently drinks beer on weekends, but rarely gets too drunk. In love with his ex-girlfriend, who doesn’t love him back. They still have sex occasionally.</p>	<p>Marcus, 18 years old</p> <p>Carpentry program. Heterosexual. Was arrested for being too drunk once and doesn’t drink anymore. Secretly has a competition going with a friend, over getting laid with as many girls as possible.</p>

<p>Nattanit, 17 years old</p> <p>Social Studies program specializing in Environmental Issues. Heterosexual. Parties a lot. Always has a lot of new boyfriends and “fuck buddies.” Used to be engaged.</p>	<p>Madeleine, 15 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Heterosexual. The most popular girl in school. Frequently does totally wild things at parties. Loves sex and older guys.</p>	<p>Maria, 16 years old</p> <p>Hairdresser program. Heterosexual. Parties frequently, but doesn’t drink a lot of alcohol. Often has a new boyfriend. Never uses a condom when having sex.</p>
<p>Noor, 17 years old</p> <p>Health Care program. Homosexual. In a relationship. Faithful. Drinks some alcohol and sometimes does drugs. Doesn’t use protection.</p>	<p>Alexandra, 16 years old</p> <p>Child Care program. Heterosexual. Does not drink alcohol. Uses birth-control pills. Loves her boyfriend. Engaged.</p>	<p>Zeynep, 16 years old</p> <p>Individual program. Heterosexual. Single. Only has sex with someone if it feels really right. Doesn’t use birth-control pills. Always uses a condom.</p>
<p>Aida, 15 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Heterosexual. Just got her first boyfriend and is having sex with him. Rarely drinks, and not very much. Knows that it’s important to use a condom, but her boyfriend doesn’t like to.</p>	<p>Sandra, 18 years old</p> <p>Science program. Homosexual. Parties sometimes. Currently single. Has cheated on previous girlfriends. Always uses protection.</p>	<p>Linda, 18 years old</p> <p>Just quit school. Heterosexual. Works as a DJ on weekends and knows everyone who’s “in.” Has had a “fuck buddy” for a month. Would like a more serious relationship. Uses birth-control pills. Doesn’t like using a condom.</p>
<p>Emma, 16 years old</p> <p>Health Care program. Bisexual. Is shy with both girls and boys. Drinks to boost her confidence. Sometimes has sex drunk. Rarely uses a condom.</p>	<p>Niyosha, 18 years old</p> <p>Hotel and Restaurant program. Heterosexual. Has had a boyfriend for two years but is cheating on him with a classmate. Rarely drinks alcohol. Never has sex without a condom.</p>	<p>Emira, 15 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Heterosexual. Is a virgin but wants to loose her virginity. Doesn’t know much about sex, but likes to talk about it. Often makes out with guys. Is going on a trip to Greece with her friends for the summer.</p>

Roles, Middle School Version

<p>Ville, 16 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Heterosexual. Parties a lot. Always has lots of new girlfriends and different “fuck buddies.” Lost his virginity in seventh grade.</p>	<p>Ershad, 15 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Heterosexual. The coolest guy in school. Frequently does totally wild things at parties. Loves sex and girls.</p>	<p>Demetrios, 14 years old</p> <p>Eighth grade. Heterosexual. Parties about once a month. Frequently has a new girlfriend. Never uses a condom when having sex.</p>
<p>Jonathan, 15 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Homosexual. Is dating a guy. Faithful. Drinks too much sometimes. Does not use a condom.</p>	<p>Lukas, 16 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Heterosexual. Does not drink alcohol. Has a girlfriend who is on birth control. Loves his girlfriend.</p>	<p>Erik, 14 years old</p> <p>Eighth grade. Heterosexual. Single. Has had sex once. Only wants to have sex with someone if it really feels right. Always uses a condom.</p>
<p>Linus, 15 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Heterosexual. Just lost his virginity with his first girlfriend ever. Rarely drinks, and not very much. Knows that condoms are important, but is inexperienced in using them.</p>	<p>Sebastian, 16 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Homosexual. Parties sometimes. Currently single. Sometimes cheats on his partners. Always uses a condom.</p>	<p>Joakim, 16 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Hates school. Heterosexual. Organizes his own parties on weekends. Has had a “fuck buddy” for a month now. Would like a more serious relationship. Thinks it’s up to the girl to use birth-control pills. Doesn’t use a condom.</p>
<p>Zoran, 14 years old</p> <p>Eighth grade. Bisexual. Is shy with both girls and boys. Drinks to boost his confidence.</p>	<p>Abbe, 15 years old</p> <p>Eighth grade. Heterosexual. Has had a girlfriend for two years but cheats on her with a friend’s girlfriend. Rarely drinks alcohol. Never has sex without a condom.</p>	<p>Ivan, 15 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Heterosexual. Is a virgin but wants to have sex as soon as possible. Doesn’t know much about sex and girls. Wants to look cool in front of his friends, but is actually pretty insecure.</p>
<p>Carl, 15 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Bisexual. Just ended a relationship. Looking for someone new. Used to do drugs but doesn’t any mpre-</p>	<p>Geza, 15 years old</p> <p>Eight grade. Heterosexual. Frequently drinks beer on weekends, but rarely gets too drunk. In love with his ex-girlfriend, who doesn't love him back. They still have sex occasionally.</p>	<p>Marcus, 16 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Heterosexual. Was arrested for being too drunk once and doesn’t drink anymore. Secretly has a competition going with a friend, over getting laid with as many girls as possible.</p>

<p>Nattanit, 15 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Heterosexual. Parties a lot. Always has a lot of new boyfriends and “fuck buddies.” Used to be engaged.</p>	<p>Madeleine, 15 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Heterosexual. The most popular girl in school. Frequently does totally wild things at parties. Loves sex and older guys. Does drugs sometimes.</p>	<p>Maria, 16 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Heterosexual. Parties frequently, but doesn’t drink a lot of alcohol. Often has a new boyfriend. Never uses a condom when having sex.</p>
<p>Noor, 14 years old</p> <p>Eighth grade. Homosexual. In a relationship. Faithful. Drinks some alcohol and sometimes does drugs. Doesn’t use protection.</p>	<p>Alexandra, 16 years old</p> <p>Eighth grade. Had to repeat eighth grade. Heterosexual. Does not drink alcohol. Uses birth-control pills. Loves her boyfriend. Engaged.</p>	<p>Zeynep, 16 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Heterosexual. Single. Only has sex with someone if it feels really right. Doesn’t use birth-control pills. Always uses a condom.</p>
<p>Aida, 15 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Heterosexual. Just got her first boyfriend and is having sex with him. Rarely drinks, and not very much. Knows that it’s important to use a condom, but her boyfriend doesn’t like to.</p>	<p>Sandra, 15 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Homosexual. Parties sometimes. Currently single. Has cheated on previous girlfriends. Always uses protection.</p>	<p>Linda, 16 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Heterosexual. Parties every weekend and knows everyone who’s “in.” Only hangs out with older people. Has had a “fuck buddy” for a month. Would like a more serious relationship. Uses birth-control pills. Doesn’t like using a condom.</p>
<p>Emma, 16 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Bisexual. Is shy with both girls and boys. Drinks to boost her confidence. Sometimes has sex drunk. Rarely uses a condom.</p>	<p>Niyosha, 15 years old</p> <p>Eighth grade. Heterosexual. Has had a boyfriend for two years but is cheating on him with a classmate. Rarely drinks alcohol. Never has sex without a condom.</p>	<p>Emira, 15 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Heterosexual. Is a virgin but wants to loose her virginity. Doesn’t know much about sex, but likes to talk about it. Often makes out with guys. Is going on a trip to Greece with her friends for the summer.</p>
<p>Felicia, 16 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Bisexual. Is ending her current relationship. In love with a friend. Has a fake ID and sometimes goes drinking at bars with her older sister.</p>	<p>Ida, 15 years old</p> <p>Ninth grade. Heterosexual. Drinks on weekends, but rarely gets too drunk. Goes out with a guy who she has sex with, but she isn’t in love with him.</p>	<p>Kim, 14 years old</p> <p>Eighth grade. Heterosexual. Has had sex with a lot of guys compared to her friends. She thinks that having lots of sex will make her popular. Doesn't drink alcohol.</p>

Statements for the Game Supervisor

Choose from these statements during the game. Make sure you use statements from all categories. You can either pick statements at random or choose the ones you like best. However, make sure to vary the order in which you read out the statements.

General

- * I wouldn't be bothered by catching an STI.
- * I would never get tested to see if I have an STI.
- * I find it embarrassing to go to the youth sexual health center.
- * I always say yes to sex.
- * I have had sex.
- * I never or rarely think of the risks of STIs.

Sex with Several Partners

- * I've had several "fuck buddies."
- * I change partners pretty often.
- * I'm sometimes unfaithful and have sex with other people than my partner.
- * I think it's important to have had sex with a lot of different people.
- * I have at some point had sex with more than one person at the same time.
- * I feel that it's easier for me to get to have sex on trips abroad.
- * I've had several one-night-stands.

Sex Under the Influence of Alcohol or Other Drugs

- * I sometimes have one-night-stands when I'm drunk.
- * I'm often drunk, and that makes me do things I wouldn't have done if I'd been sober.
- * Alcohol makes me feel good and makes me not think about the next day.
- * Sometimes when I'm drunk, I go further than I meant to when it comes to sex.
- * I'm easily convinced to do things I might not actually want to do when I'm drunk.
- * I often want to have sex when I'm drunk.
- * I think sex feels better when I'm drunk.

Unprotected Sex

- * If I or the person I have sex with is using birth-control pills, we will not use a condom.
- * I rarely use a condom when I have sex.
- * I think sex without a condom it feels better, so I don't use one.
- * If I have sex with someone I don't know, it's possible that I will not use a condom.
- * I think it's difficult or complicated to use a condom, so I don't use them.
- * I think it's too expensive or hard to get condoms, so I don't use them.

- * I think it's embarrassing to tell the person I'm having sex with that we should use a condom.
- * I use interrupted intercourse to avoid STIs and pregnancy.
- * I never talk to my friends about birth control or STIs.
- * I sometimes have unprotected sex when I'm on vacation abroad.
- * I think protection is my partner's responsibility