

*Love Notes 4.0*

**Alignment with Healthy Youth Act**

**RCW 28A.300.475)**

**And the**

**Guidelines for Sexual Health Information and Disease Prevention**

## HEALTHY YOUTH ACT

1. Be medically and scientifically accurate. [Love Notes 4.0 was reviewed in 2023 by the Family and Youth Services Bureau at the US Department of Health and Human Services and was found to be medically accurate.]
2. Teach abstinence and other methods of preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease. [Lessons 11 and 12]
3. Be age-appropriate. [Ages 14-24]
4. Be appropriate for students regardless of gender, race, disability status, or sexual orientation. [Yes]
5. Are age and culturally appropriate. [Yes]
6. Adhere to the 2005 Department of Health (DOH) / Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) [Guidelines for Sexual Health Information and Disease Prevention \(PDF\)](#). [See Below]

## GUIDELINES FOR SEXUAL HEALTH INFORMATION AND DISEASE PREVENTION

1. Are age and culturally appropriate. [Ages 14-24]
7. Use information and materials that are medically and scientifically accurate and objective. [Love Notes 4.0 was reviewed in 2023 by the Family and Youth Services Bureau at the US Department of Health and Human Services and was found to be medically accurate.]
2. Encourage and improve communication, especially around growth and development, with parents/guardians and other trusted adults. (The quality of parent-child communications about sex and sexuality appears to be a strong determinant of adolescents' sexual behavior). [All Lessons contain Trusted Adult Connection. Communication Skills in Lessons 9, 10, 11, and 12]
3. Identify resources to address individual needs, for present and future concerns and questions. [Not covered]
4. Enlighten young people to develop and apply health-promoting behaviors, including disease prevention and detection and accessing accurate health information that is age appropriate. [Lessons 11 and 12]
5. Provide information about sexual anatomy and physiology and the stages, patterns, and responsibilities associated with growth and development. [Not Covered]

6. Stress that abstinence from sexual activity is the only certain way to avoid pregnancy and to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV. [Lesson 12]
7. Acknowledge that people may choose to abstain from sexual activity at various points in their lives. [Lesson 12]
8. Address the health needs of all youth who are sexually active, including how to access health services. [Lesson 12]
9. Provide accurate information about STDs including how STDs are and are not transmitted and the effectiveness of all FDA approved methods of reducing the risk of contracting STDs. [Lesson 12]
10. Provide accurate information about the effectiveness and safety of all FDA-approved contraceptive methods in preventing pregnancy. [Lesson 12]
11. Provide information on local resources for testing and medical care for STDs and pregnancy. [Not Covered]
12. Promote the development of intrapersonal and interpersonal skills including a sense of dignity and self-worth and the communication, decision-making, assertiveness and refusal skills necessary to reduce health risks and choose healthy behaviors. [All Lessons]
13. Recognize and respect people with differing personal and family values. [Lessons 2 and 13]
14. Encourage young people to develop and maintain healthy, respectful and meaningful relationships and avoid exploitative or manipulative relationships. [Lessons 5 – 8]
15. Address the impact of media and peer messages on thoughts, feelings, cultural norms and behaviors related to sexuality as well as address social pressures related to sexual behaviors. [Lessons 1-2; Lesson 12; Appendix]
16. Promote healthy self-esteem, positive body image, good self-care, respect for others, caring for family and friends and a responsibility to community. [Lessons 1-3]
17. Teach youth that learning about their sexuality will be a lifelong process as their needs and circumstances change. [Lesson 8 and 13]
18. Encourage community support and reinforcement of key messages by other adults and information sources. [Trusted Adult Connection in each lesson]

**Characteristics of Effective Sex Education Programs:**

1. Deliver and consistently reinforce a clear message about abstinence as the only sure way to avoid unintended pregnancy and STDs; and about using condoms and other forms of contraception if they are sexually active. (This appears to be one of the most important characteristics that distinguish effective from ineffective programs.) [Lessons 11-12]
2. Focus on reducing one or more sexual behaviors that lead to unintended pregnancy or HIV/STD infection. [Lessons 8; 11-13]
3. Are based on theoretical approaches that have been demonstrated to influence other health-related behavior and identify specific important risky behaviors to be targeted.

**Theoretical Approaches and Targeted Risky Behaviors**

- **Theoretical Approaches** Love Notes 4.0 is built upon several well-established theoretical frameworks demonstrated to influence health and relationship behaviors:
- **Theory of Change:** The program operates on the hypothesis that pregnancy prevention is most effective when it expands beyond contraceptive education to include the development of healthy relationship skills, self-efficacy, and a focus on "deciding" rather than "sliding" through life transitions.
- **Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP):** The curriculum adapts evidence-based communication and conflict management skills from the PREP model (University of Denver), which has decades of research supporting its efficacy in improving relationship quality and stability.
- **Positive Youth Development (PYD):** LN 4.0 utilizes a strengths-based approach that focuses on building assets and appealing to youth aspirations rather than solely emphasizing risk avoidance.
- **Social-Cognitive and Skills-Building Theories:** The program emphasizes modeling and practicing specific behavioral skills—such as the **Speaker-Listener Technique** and **Time Out** skills—to regulate emotions and improve interpersonal interactions.

**Identified Risky Behaviors** The program specifically targets and identifies several critical risky behaviors:

- **Unintended Pregnancy and STIs/HIV:** Addresses risky sexual behavior by increasing contraceptive/condom use and promoting abstinence among those who choose it.
  - **Intimate Partner Violence (IPV):** Focuses on preventing "dangerous love" by teaching youth to identify "red flags" and early warning signs of verbal, emotional, and physical abuse.
  - **Sexual Assault and Lack of Consent:** Includes specific lessons on defining and navigating authentic consent, sexual ethics, and the role of alcohol in sexual decision-making.
  - **Impulsive "Sliding" into Relationships:** Targets the risk of quickly entering sexual or cohabiting relationships ("sliding") without clear intent or knowledge of a partner's character.
  - **Digital Risks:** Addresses modern risky behaviors such as cyberbullying, sexting, and sex trafficking.
4. Provide basic, accurate information about the risks of teen sexual activity and about ways to avoid intercourse for protection against pregnancy and STDs. [Lesson 12]
  5. Include activities that address social pressures on sexual behavior. [Lessons 3; 7-8; 12]
  6. Provide modeling and practice of communication, negotiation and refusal skills. [Lessons 9-12]
  7. Employ a variety of teaching methods designed to involve the participants and have them personalize the information. [Various activities, discussions, art, videos, and media included in the lessons]
  8. Incorporate behavioral goals, teaching methods and materials that are appropriate to the age, sexual experience, and culture of the students.

**Behavioral Goals** The curriculum is designed around clear, measurable behavioral outcomes:

- **Informed Sexual Decision-Making:** Encourages youth to define a personally meaningful context for sex and to set clear boundaries.
- **Pregnancy Prevention:** Achieving a proven 46% reduction in pregnancy rates for participants through increased contraceptive use and delay of sexual activity.
- **Conflict Regulation:** Goal-oriented practice of "fighting fair" and exiting negative communication patterns (e.g., the "Four Danger Signs").
- **Teaching Methods and Materials** LN 4.0 uses an **activity- and media-based approach** to engage diverse learners:

- **Active Learning:** Lessons include role-plays, drawing (e.g., "Relationships Today" icebreaker), sculpting, and interactive scenarios.
- **Culturally Relevant Media:** Incorporates popular music videos (e.g., Billie Eilish, Kelly Clarkson), YouTube clips (asapSCIENCE), and films written by diverse youth (Scenarios USA).
- **Participant Journal:** An essential tool for individual reflection, helping students apply skills to their own lives and relationship histories.
- **Trusted Adult Connection:** Intentional activities that bridge the classroom and home by requiring students to discuss concepts with a parent or mentor, a proven protective factor.

### Appropriateness for Age, Experience, and Culture

- **Age Appropriateness:** Specifically designed for older teens and young adults (ages 14–24), with language and scenarios tailored to their developmental stage.
  - **Sexual Experience:** The curriculum is inclusive of all experience levels—it is relevant to those who have never been in a relationship, those currently active, and those who are already expecting or parenting (secondary pregnancy prevention).
  - **Cultural Inclusivity:** Scenarios are written by diverse youth to reflect various backgrounds. The program is inclusive of **LGBTQ youth**, addressing their specific needs regarding attractions and healthy relationships. Additionally, PowerPoint slides are customizable to include photos that represent the local population.
9. Last a sufficient length of time to complete important activities adequately—i.e., more than a few hours. (Generally speaking, short-term curricula may increase conceptual understanding, but do not have measurable impact on the behavior of teens). [13 Lessons lasting approximately 1 hour] In a 5-year federal evaluation of the Love Notes program the researchers at the University of Louisville found the following behavioral impact of the program compared to teens in the control group. The teens in the Love Notes group were more likely to use condoms and contraception, more likely to have sex less frequently, more likely to choose to remain abstinent, more likely to choose to stop having sex, and **46% less likely to get pregnant** during the year following the program. This is why we are confident the length of the program is sufficient to make a measurable impact on the behavior of teens.
  10. Select educators who believe in the program they are implementing and provide them with quality training [Training in Love Notes 4.0 is encouraged for all educators and required for federal grantees]