



Dear Educator,

**Why choose *ESTEEM* as your student character development, adolescent safety, and sexual risk avoidance curriculum? Because *ESTEEM* helps to improve student awareness of and tendency toward making healthy decisions. The more teens are aware of dangers and consequences of risky behaviors, the more prepared they will be to avoid such situations. Teens that “wait” stay in school longer, and *ESTEEM* has been proven effective in helping teens understand the impact of their choices!**

Sex tends to cut education short. Studies show that sexually active teens — whose numbers grow by 7,000 a day — are more likely to drop out of high school and quit college than are teens who abstain from sexual activity. Teaching abstinence in schools, proponents say, counters not only lower academic achievement but greater risks of depression and disease.<sup>1, 2</sup>

The curriculum is designed by a coalition of dedicated people, including students, science teachers, coaches, counselors, nurses, doctors, SHAC members and parents. *ESTEEM* uses multiple teaching styles throughout the **5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> grades and High School workbooks.**

- FACTS:**
- \* One in four teenage girls nationwide has a sexually transmitted disease (STD).<sup>3</sup>
  - \* Research shows that teen sex can deflate self-esteem, erode optimism, and spoil the quality of intimate relationships.<sup>4</sup>
  - \* Sixty-six percent of teens who have had sex wish they had waited longer.<sup>5</sup>

***ESTEEM* is a peer-reviewed<sup>6</sup> curriculum that teaches the same core topics throughout all five grades/levels while appropriately increasing the maturity level of the content each year.**

*Topics include:*

- Lesson 1: Goal setting for improved academic outcomes / Career planning
- Lesson 2: How to navigate positive and negative media influences
- Lesson 3: Puberty and human development / True cost of teen pregnancy / Understanding Fatherhood
- Lesson 4: Explanation of the major STD's / Benefits of waiting / Character counts
- Lesson 5: Legal consequences of cyberbullying, sexting, human trafficking / Child support / Family & criminal laws
- Lesson 6: Dangers of drug, alcohol, and tobacco use / Brain development
- Lesson 7: Peer pressure and refusal skills / Bullying / Depression, suicide, and self-harm
- Lesson 8: Communication skills / Problem solving steps / Increasing emotional intelligence / Time-out steps
- Lesson 9: Real friendships / Gangs and cliques / Dating standards / Breaking-up right / renewed abstinence / Abusive relationships
- Lesson 10: Reviewing goals / Self-discipline / Having a growth mindset / True love, commitment, and healthy marriage

Each 90 page workbook includes 10 lessons which can be delivered in 45 min – 90 min segments. Students receive their own workbook which they use as a personal journal and which becomes an incredible resource they can take home after the course. Teachers are trained in a fun and interactive 6-hour certification training.

For more information, to order curriculum, or to schedule a facilitator training call 903.758.2762 or email [tonya@esteemjourney.com](mailto:tonya@esteemjourney.com)

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Enclosure: below

1. National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), 2001. 2. Note: “Abstinent teens” means teens who didn’t have sex before age 18; “sexually active teens” means those who did. Respondents were 19 to 25 when surveyed. 3, 4, 5. [http://www.hhs.gov/opa/initiatives/psunc/speakup\\_campaign1.pdf](http://www.hhs.gov/opa/initiatives/psunc/speakup_campaign1.pdf). 6. Tobin, T. (2011). *ESTEEM* and *FACTS*: Creative Ways to Teach Healthy Lifestyles to Youth from Diverse Backgrounds. *Creative Education*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 193-198.



Excerpts from a longitudinal evaluation of *ESTEEM* conducted by Tary Tobin, PhD, University of Oregon:

**Proportion of adolescents who understand that abstinence from sexual activity is the only certain way to avoid out-of-wedlock pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease.** The list below shows the combined percentage of youth, after the ETAP program, who “Agree” or “Strongly agree” with the following statement: “The best way for teenagers to avoid unintended pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) is to wait until they are married before having sex.”

2001-2002: 76%; 2002-2003: 78%; 2003-2004: 84% in Grades 7 and 8, 78% of high school students; 2004-2005: 83%; 2005-2006: 78%; 2006-2007: 83%; **2007-2008: 90%.**

**“Proportion of participants who report they have the refusal or assertiveness skills necessary to resist sexual urges and advances.** Agree” or “Strongly agree” with the following statement: “If someone tries to get me to have sex, I feel confident I can say no.” 2001-2002: 64%; 2002-2003: 77%; 2003-2004: 70%; 2004-2005: 76%; 2005-2006: 77%; 2006-2007: 78%; **2007-2008: 77%.**

**Proportion of youth who commit to abstain from sexual activity until marriage.** The list below shows the combined percentage of youth, after the ETAP program, who responded “Yes” to the following question: “Whether or not you have ever had sex, in the future do you plan to wait until marriage?” 2001-2002: 59%; 2002-2003: 59%; 2003-2004: 56%; 2004-2005: 67%; 2005-2006: 64%; 2006-2007: 65%; **2007-2008: 64%.**

**Proportion of participants who intend to avoid situations and risk behaviors, such as drug use and alcohol consumption, which make them more vulnerable to sexual advances and urges.** The list below shows the combined percentage of youth, after the ETAP program, who “Agree” or “Strongly agree” with the following statement: “My friends and I can have fun without sex, drugs, or alcohol.” 2001-2002: 75%; 2002-2003: 84%; 2003-2004: 80%; 2004-2005: 84%; 2005-2006: 84%; 2006-2007: 84%; **2007-2008: 85%.**

#### **What students have said about the *ESTEEM* program:**

“I stand strong in my virginity...it's great to know someone out there shares my feelings.” Nathan 17

“I really appreciate the messages virginity rules sends out to teenagers.” Casey 17

“I think it is really important to tell teens that just because your friends are having sex doesn't mean you have to, there are other options.” Melissa 19

“Abstinence means not being sexually active, being safe, and doing what's right.” Jon 13

“To me it means when you hold off on having any sexual contact of any kind because of values and personal preferences.” Andrea 13

“It means that I can have a future with a good career, and no STD's or STI's.” Erica 12

“Abstinence is choosing not to engage in something, despite how good it might look because you know that it is better not to.” Larry 18

“My boyfriend and I both have chosen to be abstinent (...) because it helps us keep a strong relationship.” Amanda 17

“I choose to be abstinent because I don't want to end up pregnant, with a sexually transmitted disease, or have to deal with the emotional effects of sex.” Roxanne 13

“I want sex to be a gift shared only with my future wife after marriage.” Marcus 18