

# WISE GUYS CURRICULUM

*Designed specifically for young men 11- 18 years old.*

The Wise Guys: Male Responsibility Curriculum is designed to prevent adolescent pregnancy by reaching adolescent males. The program acknowledges young males as "whole" individuals with a variety of needs and desires. Participatory lessons and activities focus on assisting them to ask themselves the questions: Who am I?; Where am I going?; and How do I get there?

The curriculum will lead the facilitator in communicating accurately and openly with adolescent males about issues concerning self, values, future goals, and sexuality. The curriculum manual is a 250+ page guide for instructors with all of the educational material, handouts and activities needed to bring the program to a group of adolescent males.

## **Chapter 1: Myself**

Young men with high self-esteem are less vulnerable to external sexual pressures from the media, their peers, and the opposite sex. Sessions will include confidence-building exercises and discussions about the relationship between self-image, self-talk, and behavior. Specific activities will include how we feel about ourselves influences:

- Our lives
- The way others feel about us
- How we can perform better and achieve more
- The belief each of us has unique and special strengths
- How the way we feel about ourselves influences our decisions

## **Chapter 2: Personal and Family Values**

Skills will be introduced which enable students to become aware of their personal and family belief systems. When adolescent males have a clear understanding of what they value, they often choose responsible attitudes and behavior. This section will include information on how values:

- Are qualities, characteristics or ideas which we feel very strongly about
- Affect our decisions, goals, and behavior.
- Are influenced by family, society, religion, and the media.

## **Chapter 3: Communication and "Masculinity"**

Young men who learn to communicate effectively can say "no" to negative influences in their lives without showing aggression. This chapter illustrates how stereotypical male attitudes can lead to problems in interaction with the opposite sex, ranging from verbal harassment to dating violence. Additionally, students will be introduced to communication skills, including reflective listening, assertiveness, and body language. The main topics of this chapter are:

- Masculinity as an inherent quality of an individual, which isn't dependent upon sexual promiscuity.
- Good communication skills can enable an individual to feel good about himself and get along better with others.
- Good communication skills including listening, expressing feelings, and recognizing non-verbal communication, and can prevent miscommunication in dating behaviors.

## **Chapter 4: Sexuality**

People are sexual beings at birth and will be sexual beings all their lives. In this chapter, the young men will learn that much more encompasses their sexuality than the physical acts most commonly associated with it. This chapter offers information on:

- Male and female anatomy, including the functions of all reproductive organs and genitalia
- Puberty, and how it affects young men and women
- Conception, and how men are often misinformed about the process and details of childbirth

## **Chapter 5: Dating Violence**

Dating Violence is an alarming phenomenon among youth. College and high school campuses deal with numerous reports of physical and sexual abuse. This does not include the countless number of individuals who are emotionally abused each day. In this chapter, the young men will become aware of the issues of dating violence and learn the components of a healthy relationship. This chapter focuses on:

- Identifying qualities of healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Increasing awareness of dating violence and abuse
- Preventing dating violence

## **Chapter 6: Abstinence and Contraception**

Young men and women often hear about "safe sex," but few know that the only real safe sex is no sex. This chapter includes information on:

- Delaying the initiation of sexual intercourse
- Protecting themselves and their partner, as a method of reducing their risk.

## **Chapter 7: Sexually Transmitted Infections**

Nationwide, there is an epidemic of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). This chapter stresses the physical and emotional problems caused by STIs. It also emphasizes abstinence as the only means of not spreading STIs. This chapter focuses on:

- Myths about AIDS and other STIs
- Methods of transmission, identification of symptoms and treatment

## **Chapter 8: Goal-Setting**

When teens set goals, they are less likely to become parents prematurely. This chapter provides participants with tools for establishing goals. Although goal-setting activities conclude each session, this specific chapter develops skills for setting reasonable short-term and long-term goals. This chapter emphasizes:

- Goals are something a person wants to accomplish and works toward
- Goals are not goals unless energy is directed towards them
- The relationship between values and goals
- How decisions made now can affect future goals

## **Chapter 9: Decision-Making**

The exercises in this chapter strengthen skills for gathering information and making informed choices. Decision-making techniques teach young men to evaluate different aspects of their behavior. These sections include:

- Defining alternative solutions for various problems or situations
- Every decision, including "not making a decision", has a consequence
- Better decisions result from the use of a conscious decision-making process
- All goals involve making decisions. Having enough information to weigh the risks and benefits gives one better options in life choices.

## **Chapter 10: Parenthood**

Male adolescents are presented information concerning premature fatherhood and how it can harm their economic, social, and emotional well-being. This chapter outlines the responsibilities of parenthood and the problems teenage parents generally face. This chapter emphasizes:

- Teen parents often have babies with health problems
- Teen parents frequently drop out of school
- Teen parents are less likely to find a job
- Teen parents often become dependent on assistance from the government
- Early parenthood affects young men as well as young women