

GET | REAL

Comprehensive Sex Education That Works



Adaptation Guidelines

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Adaptation Guidelines

The core components for *Get Real* specify the important elements and qualities of the program that must be implemented to ensure that it is effective; these guidelines specify possible adaptations that people may consider and how those adaptations might impact effectiveness. They fall into three categories: “Green light” adaptations are minor adjustments that are encouraged, either because they will not reduce effectiveness or because they might even improve effectiveness. “Yellow light” adaptations are those that should be implemented thoughtfully with caution and possibly guidance. These may be minor or more extensive. They might not reduce effectiveness in some situations but could reduce effectiveness in other situations. “Red light” adaptations are those that should not be implemented because typically they will reduce effectiveness. They are considered major adaptations.


In the table on the following pages, possible adaptations are color coded (green, yellow and red) with accompanying explanations describing the conditions under which an adaptation may be made or reasons why it should not be made.

Audience and Setting


Core Component: *Get Real* is designed for grades 6–8 or for participants ages 11–14; and the content is age appropriate for these grade levels. It could be used for grades 7–9 in some communities.

YELLOW 	Adaptation: Implementing <i>Get Real</i> with students who are not yet in the 6th grade (or not yet 11) or who are in high school (15 or older)
	Rationale and Guidance: It's important that the curriculum be appropriate to the cognitive and social developmental stage of the learners. It will not increase sexual risk behavior by being implemented with learners who are either too young or too old.

Core Component: *Get Real* can be implemented in either school or non-school settings, where the instruction resembles the instruction in the classroom.

RED 	Adaptation: Implementing the program in a setting or manner so that multiple participants do not attend consistently
	Rationale and Guidance: If the curriculum is implemented in such a way that students are not attending consistently, they will miss important activities, understandings and skills that are needed for subsequent classes. Students who do not attend the majority of classes will not only hinder their own learning, but the learning of the rest of the group.

Core Component: *Get Real* can be implemented in either school or non-school settings, where the instruction resembles the instruction in the classroom.

RED 	Adaptation: Trying to implement <i>Get Real</i> after school or in a community setting without taking steps necessary to recruit and retain youth
	Rationale and Guidance: If necessary steps to recruit and retain youth are not completed, then too few youth may participate and the program will not be effective.

Implementation Schedule

Core Component: At least 45 minutes should be available for each lesson. Two lessons may be taught in a 90-minute block.

GREEN	Adaptation: Lengthening classes beyond the required 45-minute block
	Rationale and Guidance: Lengthening classes can allow more time for review of previous lessons, discussion, questions, role-play practice, personalization activities and other activities.

Core Component: For optimal effectiveness, all lessons should be taught in sequence, nine in sixth grade, nine in seventh grade, and nine in eighth grade.

YELLOW	Adaptation: Changing the sequence of classes
	Rationale and Guidance: The classes and activities are presented in a particular order and are designed sequentially, with each class building off of the last. Changing the order in which lessons are taught could decrease youth comprehension of the material.


Core Component: The ideal class size is from 18 to 25 youth.

YELLOW	Adaptation: Implementing the program with fewer than 5 learners or more than 30 learners
	Rationale and Guidance: If there are fewer than five learners in the class at a time, some of the activities (ex. STI handshake, group discussions, role-play) may not be as effective. If there are too many students, it may become difficult to control the learners' behavior during some of the group discussions or participatory activities.


Core Component: The classes should be scheduled so that most youth participate in most classes.

RED	Adaptation: Implementing the program in a setting or manner so that multiple participants do not attend consistently
	Rationale and Guidance: If the curriculum is implemented in such a way that students are not attending consistently, they will miss important activities, understandings and skills that are needed for subsequent classes. Students who do not attend the majority of classes will not only hinder their own learning, but the learning of the rest of the group.

Core Component: All 27 lessons should be taught.


RED 	Adaptation: Teaching fewer than the 9 classes and the activities within them each year, or not teaching all 27 lessons across the middle-school grades
	Rationale and Guidance: Research studies of other curricula demonstrate that deleting activities or classes can reduce their effectiveness. As demonstrated by the logic model, every activity is designed to affect an important risk and protective factor that, in turn, affects sexual risk behavior. Omitting one or more of the classes would dilute the program's ability to address one or more of these factors, and, therefore, reduce its overall effectiveness.

Core Component: At least 45 minutes should be available for each lesson. Two lessons may be taught in a 90-minute block.


RED 	Adaptation: Shortening each class to less than 45 minutes
	Rationale and Guidance: The curriculum was designed for 45-minute or longer classes. If classes are shortened, either the activities must be cut or time for discussion, reflection, personalization, review etc. must be shortened. Any of these changes could decrease learning.

Program Leaders


Core Component: Educators for *Get Real* should have good rapport with youth and be trained through the *Get Real* Training of the Educator process. They should be familiar with the content, comfortable discussing the material, and experienced teaching skills-based programs.

YELLOW 	Adaptation: Implementing <i>Get Real</i> with classroom teachers or educators who do not have all the qualities often deemed important in educators, e.g., ability to connect with youth, credibility with youth on this topic, experience teaching a skills-based curriculum, comfort talking about sexuality, and considerable background knowledge about adolescent sexuality
	Rationale and Guidance: <i>Get Real</i> may still be effective if the educators lack one or more of these qualities but are well trained.

Core Component: Educators for *Get Real* should have good rapport with youth and be trained through the *Get Real* Training of the Educator process. They should be familiar with the content, comfortable discussing the material, and experienced teaching skills-based programs.

YELLOW 	Adaptation: Using peers to help implement the curriculum
	Rationale and Guidance: Using peers to help implement activities can improve effectiveness if they are properly selected and trained appropriately and if they are chosen to help with appropriate activities (e.g., modeling a role-play).

Core Component: Educators for *Get Real* should have good rapport with youth and be trained through the *Get Real* Training of the Educator process. They should be familiar with the content, comfortable discussing the material, and experienced teaching skills-based programs.

RED 	Adaptation: Failing to train the educators to teach the content, to implement the interactive activities and to discuss the sexual topics comfortably
	Rationale and Guidance: Educators who will be facilitating the curriculum are required to complete the <i>Get Real</i> Training of the Educator process, which includes a 10-hour, self-paced, online course, followed by 2 days of in-person training. Follow-up sessions are offered to teachers when they begin implementation.

Preparation

Core Component: If the curriculum is implemented in a school setting, appropriate approval should be obtained from the school and parents. If implemented in non-school settings, appropriate approval should be obtained from the host organization and parents, and steps necessary to recruit and retain the ideal group size for the full length of implementation should be taken.

RED



Adaptation: **Implementing the curriculum without obtaining appropriate approval from parents**

Rationale and Guidance: Parents are the primary sexuality educators of their children and should be notified that the curriculum is being taught. Please contact PPLM for resources and support materials that could help this process along.

Core Component: If the curriculum is implemented in a school setting, appropriate approval should be obtained from the school and parents. If implemented in non-school settings, appropriate approval should be obtained from the host organization and parents, and steps necessary to recruit and retain the ideal group size for the full length of implementation should be taken.

RED



Adaptation: **If implementing in a school setting, not informing the school about the contents of the curriculum and not obtaining appropriate approval from the school**

Rationale and Guidance: Sexuality education is a controversial topic. Thus, it is important to fully inform the school about the curriculum and its contents and to obtain appropriate approval from the school authorities. Not doing so may cause the program to be terminated.

Core Component: If the curriculum is implemented in a school setting, appropriate approval should be obtained from the school and parents. If implemented in non-school settings, appropriate approval should be obtained from the host organization and parents, and steps necessary to recruit and retain the ideal group size for the full length of implementation should be taken.


RED




Adaptation: **If implementing out of school, not informing the host organization about the contents of the curriculum and not obtaining appropriate approval from the host organization**

Rationale and Guidance: Sexuality education is a controversial topic. Thus, it is important to fully inform the host organization about the curriculum and its contents and to obtain appropriate approval from that organization. Not doing so may cause the program to be terminated.

Core Component: In either setting, parents and other caring adults are paramount to the success of *Get Real*. Schools or organizations should host a parent evening where parents can view the curriculum and ask questions. Parents should be made aware of the impact of their active participation in the curriculum, via the take-home Family Activities.


RED 	Adaptation: Parent evening is not hosted
	Rationale and Guidance: <i>Get Real</i> considers parents and other caring adults to be the primary sexual health educators of their own children. Thus, it is important to fully inform parents and other caring adults about the curriculum and its contents and to answer any questions they may have about the curriculum. Not doing so may cause the program to be terminated.

Core Component: A Family Letter and Family Activity should be sent home with each student after every lesson in the curriculum. *Get Real* considers parents and other caring adults to be the primary sexual health educators of youth and maintains transparent communication between educators, students, and families.


RED 	Adaptation: Family Letters and Family Activities are not sent home after each lesson
	Rationale and Guidance: <i>Get Real</i> youth behavior outcomes of delaying sex are linked to the family engagement communication and activities in curriculum. Not facilitating this component with fidelity may cause the program to be unsuccessful, and lead to poor health outcomes for youth.

Content


Core Component: Cover the topics specified in the core components that include the following: functional knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, norms, skills and parent/caring adult communication.

GREEN 	Adaptation: Updating and/or customizing statistics and other reproductive health information
	Rationale and Guidance: Reproductive health statistics, technology and services change quickly and often. Youth should have the most up-to-date, relevant information so that they can make the most informed decisions. *Please utilize www.getrealeducation.org for updated statistics and resources*


Core Component: Cover the topics specified in the core components that include the following: functional knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, norms, skills and parent/caring adult communication.

GREEN 	Adaptation: Making activities more interactive, appealing to different learning styles (especially if technology is being incorporated into the lesson)
	Rationale and Guidance: As long as the information remains medically accurate and includes everything that would have been covered, incorporating technology or other interactive means can help maximize and reinforce learning for all youth.


Core Component: Cover the topics specified in the core components that include the following: functional knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, norms, skills and parent/caring adult communication.

GREEN 	Adaptation: Updating/adapting myths held by young people
	Rationale and Guidance: Myths about sexual health and risk may vary from one community to another, determining which myths are most common in your community and among your potential learners and then addressing and refuting these myths can increase learning.

Core Component: Cover the topics specified in the core components that include the following: functional knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, norms, skills and parent/caring adult communication.


GREEN 	Adaptation: Updating references to popular media and culture
	Rationale and Guidance: Popular media and cultural references may vary from one community to another and change rapidly. Determining what is “in” among your potential learners and then addressing the messaging (and potential misinformation) portrayed can increase learning.

Core Component: Cover the topics specified in the core components that include the following: functional knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, norms, skills and parent/caring adult communication.


YELLOW 	Adaptation: Adding activities to reinforce learning
	Rationale and Guidance: Although it can be helpful to include additional activities to meet the specific needs of youth in your community, adding too many activities could make the program too long and create retention problems. Prior to adding activities, consider these questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does this activity compromise the other messages and determinant reached in this lesson? 2. Will this activity be distracting or pull youths' attention away from the other activities in this lesson? 3. Is this activity critical to the desired behavior change/outcome pre-determined within the lesson?

Pedagogy

Core Component: All the activities are implemented as designed and in sequence, using the teaching strategies specified.

GREEN 	Adaptation: Reinforcing information with additional visual material
	Rationale and Guidance: Some students learn best visually and so providing additional visual reinforcement may increase learning so long as doing so does not replace other learning strategies.

Core Component: All the activities are implemented as designed and in sequence, using the teaching strategies specified.

GREEN 	Adaptation: Customizing role-play scenarios (e.g., using wording that is more reflective of youth culture)
	Rationale and Guidance: Changing the names and setting of a role-play so it's more relevant to youth (or so that the names in the role-play are not the same as the youth in your group) can help them to participate more fully and personalize the learning.

Core Component: All the activities are implemented as designed and in sequence, using the teaching strategies specified.

GREEN	Adaptation: Adding more time for debriefing or additional process questions
	Rationale and Guidance: Adding more debriefing or process questions may increase learning, provided the conversation does not become redundant and does not retract from time that could be spent on pre-existing curricular activities and discussions.

Core Component: Review learning from prior classes to enhance mastery of material and reinforce learning.

GREEN	Adaptation: Creating and adding assessment tools
	Rationale and Guidance: In many school settings grading and assessment is the expectation. Adding in reviews, homework or quizzes is acceptable so long as the messaging and learning remains consistent.


Core Component: All the activities are implemented as designed and in sequence, using the teaching strategies specified.

YELLOW	Adaptation: Modifying condom activities (Ex. Watching a video of someone doing the condom demonstration rather than the teacher doing it; using a less representational, more abstract penis model; using images rather than a full demonstration)
	Rationale and Guidance: Condom demonstrations and activities are CRITICAL to learning correct condom use. However, it is important to be sensitive to the community norms while incorporating as much youth practice/ learning as possible.


Core Component: All the activities are implemented as designed and in sequence, using the teaching strategies specified.

YELLOW	Adaptation: Adding other health goals that contradict, compete with or dilute the program's focus
	Rationale and Guidance: If learners are given messages about many behaviors, e.g., sexual behavior, tobacco use, alcohol use, drug use, nutrition, exercise, violence, etc., the impact of the message about any one of these behaviors may be diluted by the messages about all the other behaviors, and learners may become less attentive and less open to the messages about sexual risk behavior. <i>Get Real</i> can be effective when implemented as a unit in a larger health education course, but its effectiveness may be diminished if its lessons are interspersed throughout many other lessons with other health goals.


Core Component: All the activities are implemented as designed and in sequence, using the teaching strategies specified.

<p>YELLOW</p> 	<p>Adaptation: Adding activities to address additional risk and protective factors</p>
	<p>Rationale and Guidance: After conducting an assessment of youth, you may learn there are other important determinants of sexual risk-taking behavior that are not addressed in <i>Get Real</i> and that you believe should be addressed. For example, you may learn that alcohol and/or other drug use is quite prevalent among your group of youth, and you may want to add activities to strengthen avoiding drug and alcohol use. It is possible to add activities to address other risk and protective factors, but it is important to focus on risk and protective factors highly related to the sexual risk behavior and factors that can be changed through prevention programs. It is ideal to engage a prevention science specialist if making these types of adaptations.</p>


Core Component: Use the varied pedagogical techniques (e.g., mini-lectures, brainstorming, games, small-group work, role-plays, and process questions) and maintain the interactive nature of the activities to engage youth and facilitate learning.

<p>YELLOW</p> 	<p>Adaptation: Replacing or supplementing activities with videos</p>
	<p>Rationale and Guidance: Care must be taken that the video is culturally appropriate and addresses the same determinants as the original activity.</p>


Core Component: All the activities are implemented as designed and in sequence, using the teaching strategies specified.

<p>RED</p> 	<p>Adaptation: Not implementing each activity as specified</p>
	<p>Rationale and Guidance: Certain types of instructional methods are particularly effective in changing the risk and protective factors. Role-play, for example, is a particularly effective method of teaching skills and improving confidence in those skills. Implementing other teaching methods, or omitting activities, may reduce the impact on those risk and protective factors.</p>


Core Component: All the activities are implemented as designed and in sequence, using the teaching strategies specified.

	<p>Adaptation: Not teaching all the content areas in order to save time or to avoid any possible controversy</p>
	<p>Rationale and Guidance: Research studies of other curricula demonstrate that deleting activities or content areas can reduce their effectiveness. This is especially true of topics such as condoms or other forms of contraception. As demonstrated by the logic model, every activity is designed to affect an important risk and protective factor that, in turn, affects sexual risk behavior. Omitting one or more of the content areas would dilute the program’s ability to address one or more of these factors, and, therefore, reduce its overall effectiveness.</p>

Core Component: All the activities are implemented as designed and in sequence, using the teaching strategies specified.

	<p>Adaptation: Failing to use visual materials</p>
	<p>Rationale and Guidance: Many students learn best visually. Taking the time to create effective visual materials can increase learning.</p>

Core Component: All the activities are implemented as designed and in sequence, using the teaching strategies specified.

	<p>Adaptation: Deleting condom activities, such as not doing the condom demonstration</p>
	<p>Rationale and Guidance: Studies have demonstrated that when condom activities are deleted from curricula they are less likely to increase condom use. Further, these activities address theory-based risk and protective factors such as attitudes and norms toward condom use and general condom-use skills and efficacy. Completing condom activities, or the condom demonstration, does not offer permission for students to engage in sexual intercourse and does not make students more likely to engage in sex. Therefore, the condom and contraceptive activities should not be deleted.</p>

Core Component: Create a safe and inclusive learner-focused environment by establishing class rights and responsibilities, including mechanisms for asking sensitive questions and actively involving participants.

RED	Adaptation: Not creating Group Rights and Responsibilities
	Rationale and Guidance: Creating the group rights and responsibilities is important. Students need to feel safe and comfortable asking questions, completing role-plays and participating in other activities. The group rights and responsibilities list contributes to classroom management and to a general feeling of safety and comfort in the learning environment.

Core Component: Create a safe and inclusive learner-focused environment by establishing class rights and responsibilities, including mechanisms for asking sensitive questions and actively involving participants.

RED	Adaptation: Not maintaining classroom management and a safe learning environment
	Rationale and Guidance: Classroom management and a safe learning environment are critical to youth success and learning. Without them, activities may become chaotic; students may not be as attentive and therefore may not participate fully or personalize important messages.


Core Component: Create a safe and inclusive learner-focused environment by establishing class rights and responsibilities, including mechanisms for asking sensitive questions and actively involving participants.

RED	Adaptation: Not using praise and reinforcement
	Rationale and Guidance: Learners may feel uncomfortable discussing sexual topics. Offering appropriate praise and reinforcement is important to creating a safe environment and student learning.


Core Component: Use strategies for supporting parents/guardians as the primary sexuality educators for their children, including assigning and encouraging Family Activities, which are the primary vehicle for encouraging communication on key topics between students and parents or other caring adults.

RED	Adaptation: Family Letters and Family Activities are not sent home after each lesson
	Rationale and Guidance: <i>Get Real</i> youth behavior outcomes of delaying sex are linked to the family engagement communication and activities in curriculum. Not facilitating this component with fidelity may cause the program to be unsuccessful, and lead to poor health outcomes for youth.


Core Component: Use the varied pedagogical techniques (e.g., mini-lectures, brainstorming, games, small-group work, role-plays, and process questions) and maintain the interactive nature of the activities to engage youth and facilitate learning.

RED 	Adaptation: Replacing interactive activities with lectures or other non-interactive activities
	Rationale and Guidance: Multiple studies indicate that interactive activities are more effective at involving young people, getting them to personalize information and thereby change their behavior than passive or non-interactive activities.

Core Component: Use role-plays, following the procedure in the lessons: (1) explain and model the skills, (2) provide large-group and individual practice, and (3) offer corrective feedback to enhance the learning objectives of selected lessons.

RED 	Adaptation: Not implementing the role-play activities
	Rationale and Guidance: The different role-plays throughout the curriculum teach different skills. If the different skills are not taught, youth learning could be affected. In addition, youth must have the opportunity to practice communication skills so that they can use them effectively and comfortably in the real world. If role-plays are skipped or not facilitated, students will be less likely to master those skills and use them successfully in real life.

Core Component: State key messages about important values and sexual behaviors clearly and reemphasize them repeatedly.

RED 	Adaptation: Failing to emphasize a clear message about behavior
	Rationale and Guidance: Emphasizing a clear message about behavior is one of the most important characteristics of effective programs. Therefore, it is very important to emphasize the <i>Get Real</i> messages that abstinence is the healthiest choice for teens; that correct and consistent use of condoms offers excellent protection against pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections when people are sexually active; and that Social Emotional Learning skills are critical to healthy relationships, leading to positive sexual health.