



Video Transcript: Counseling Adolescent Clients to Resist Sexual Coercion

Narrator (00:00):

This video was produced by the Reproductive Health National Training Center, RHNTC. Counseling adolescent clients to resist sexual coercion. According to the Public Health Service Act, a Title X funded agency must certify that it provides counseling to minors on how to resist attempts to coerce minors into engaging in sexual activities. This video demonstrates one example of how to start a conversation with an adolescent client about sexual coercion, including defining sexual coercion, describing the characteristics of a healthy relationship and providing refusal skill techniques for adolescents to resist sexual coercion.

Narrator (00:47):

Now, let's see what this might look like during a family planning visit.

Jamie (00:52):

Hi Grace. I'm Jamie, the nurse practitioner. Thanks so much for coming in today. Just a reminder that everything we talk about here is confidential, meaning I won't tell anyone else, unless you tell me you're hurting yourself, someone else or have you've been harmed, in which case I will need to reach out to get some more help. Do you have any questions about that?

Grace (01:12):

No, that sounds good.

Jamie (01:15):

Okay, great. So Grace, tell me a little bit about why you're here today.

Grace (01:19):

Well, I'm hoping to get on some sort of birth control. My boyfriend wants to have sex and I definitely don't want to get pregnant.

Jamie (01:29):

Sure. First, it's great that you came in to see me, and I love hearing that you're taking care of yourself and looking for protection. We can definitely talk about your options for birth control. Before we do that, would you mind telling me a little bit about your relationship with your boyfriend? You said he wants to have sex, but how do you feel about that?

Grace (01:50):

I don't know. He really likes me a lot, but I'm not totally sure I'm ready to have sex yet.

Jamie (01:56):

I can totally understand having mixed feelings, but it's not okay for anyone to make you feel like you should have sex when you aren't 100% sure you want to. Does it feel like he's pressuring you in any way you're not totally comfortable with?

Grace (02:10):

I don't know. He started asking for sex a lot and it's getting harder and harder to say no. Yesterday, he said that if I really loved him, it wouldn't be such a big deal. And now I guess I'm scared. I don't want to lose him.

Narrator (02:27):

Sexual coercion is unwanted sexual activity that happens when someone is pressured, tricked, threatened, or forced in a nonphysical way.

Jamie (02:38):

It's absolutely not okay for him to put you in that position. I'd like to talk about some refusal strategies you can use. What do you do if you feel like he's pressuring you to do something you're not ready for?

Grace (02:51):

Well, I try to say no loudly and move away from him. Sometimes I even just get up and leave. It's pretty much only an issue when I'm alone with him at his house.

Jamie (03:03):

It sounds like you already know how to say no and use your body language to create some physical distance between you two, which are two great strategies, but is there any way to avoid going to his house alone?

Grace (03:15):

Yeah, I guess it is easier when we're hanging it out with a group of friends or somewhere public like the movies.

Jamie (03:23):

Being with a group of people or suggesting alternative activities is a great strategy that can help you delay sex. One thing some of my patients find helpful is if you ever find yourself in an uncomfortable situation, you can say you have to go to the bathroom and text a friend who can then come pick you up.

Grace (03:41):

Yeah, I can try that. But what if that doesn't work? What if he gets mad that I'm leaving or something?

Jamie (03:50):

The priority is to make sure you are safe. It's important to talk regularly with your partner so you can both share your feelings, including if you're not ready to have sex. Discussing your needs and boundaries with your partner can help you support and respect each other's decisions. It

can be helpful to have a trusted adult, like a parent who you can call in a situation where you don't feel safe. It's never okay for anyone to pressure you to do something you're not ready for. And if they do, that's on them. It's not your fault.

Narrator (04:22):

If a client is being coerced, a provider should listen, nonjudgmental and respond supportively. Connect client with resources and services. Evaluate whether information prompts mandatory reporting.

Jamie (04:36):

Is it okay if I show you something? This is a healthy relationship wheel. All of these pieces are part of being in a respectful relationship. Which statements on this wheel would you say describe your relationship with your partner? Accountability means accepting responsibility. Safety means refusing to intimidate or word manipulate. Trust means accepting each other's word and giving the benefit of the doubt. Honesty means communicating doubt openly and truthfully. Cooperation means asking, not expecting. Support means supporting each other's choices.

Grace (05:13):

I think we're pretty good at offering encouragement for each other. And he does listen to my opinions.

Jamie (05:21):

That's great to hear. You know, sometimes relationships can be strengthened by talking openly with the other person about what you're feeling. A healthy relationship is based on respect, honesty, and trust. I know this is a lot to think about. Do you have any questions I can answer about this while we're here today?

Grace (05:40):

No, I don't think so. I do want to try to talk to my boyfriend about this stuff.

Jamie (05:47):

Great. I'm glad to hear that. If you do think of any questions, please don't hesitate to come back in and see me. I also want you to know that you've made a really healthy choice by waiting to have sex. There are benefits to waiting to have sex, and I'm happy to share more about that if you'd like. You came in to talk about getting on birth control. Do you still want to talk about that?

Grace (06:09):

Yes, no matter what I choose, I want to be prepared for when I am ready to have sex.

Narrator (06:16):

To ensure effective communication with adolescent clients, always meet with clients alone for a portion of their visit. Remove distractions. Start with small talk to make clients feel comfortable. Discuss and protect confidentiality as well as the limits of confidentiality and duties for reporting. Address the client's reason for visit. Avoid jargon or complex medical terminology. Be patient centered and use inclusive language. Listen to the client. Respect an adolescent's experience and autonomy as you do with all clients. Learn more at rhntc.org.