

# Sexual Decision-Making Case Studies

<b>Objective:</b>	Participants will identify circumstances that would make having sex a good or poor choice.
<b>Structure:</b>	Large group.
<b>Time:</b>	30 minutes.

## Procedure

1. **Read** the following case study to your group:

*Ann is seventeen years old. The summer after graduation, Ann was offered a job at a hotel outside of town. She took the job, even though it meant being away from her family and friends for three months.*

*At the hotel, Ann felt lonely. The other girls had worked at the hotel for several summers and seemed to be in a clique that excluded her. Then Ann met James. He was a really hot lifeguard and all of the girls wanted his attention. James became really interested in Ann and asked her out.*

*Suddenly, the other girls paid attention to Ann. They included her in their activities and pumped her for information about James. Ann wanted to be popular, so she decided to go out with James. Everyone would think she were nuts if she didn't.*

*James very quickly began to pressure Ann to have sex with him. He even made it clear he wouldn't keep dating her if she refused. One night, after getting high on beer and marijuana, James walked Ann back to the hotel and insisted that he go up to her room with her.*

2. **Ask** your group:

Ann needs to decide if she is ready to have sex with James or not. What factors does she need to consider (sample list follows)?

- Pressure (from James, from friends)
- Wanting to be popular, to belong
- Alcohol, drug use
- Attracted to James
- Looking back: will she feel good about her decision?
- STI protection
- Pregnancy prevention
- Alternatives to intercourse

3. **Ask** the group if, in this case, sex would be a good choice.

4. Next, **read** the following revised case study:

*Ann is seventeen years old. The summer after graduation, Ann was offered a job at a hotel outside of town. She took the job, even though it meant being away from her family and friends for three months.*

*At first, Ann felt lonely. Although the other girls had worked at the hotel over several summers and seemed to be in a clique, Ann persisted and eventually made a couple of friends. One evening, Ann met James. He was a really hot lifeguard and all of the girls wanted his attention. James became really interested in Ann and asked her out.*

*James was really nice to Ann and they spent a lot of time together. James taught Ann how to swim and Ann taught James how to play tennis. They took long walks together and talked about everything. They were inseparable and seemed very happy.*

*At one point during the summer, Ann and James started talking about having sex. They wanted to demonstrate their love for each other. They both agreed that if they were to have sex, they should use condoms in order to protect each other from unintended pregnancy and STIs.*

5. **Ask** your group:

What factors are present for Ann and James in deciding whether or not to have sex (sample list follows)?

- Good communication skills
- Equal relationship
- Sharing relationship (both contribute)
- Pleasure
- Love
- STI, pregnancy prevention
- Possible virginity

6. **Ask** the group if, in this case, sex would be a good choice.

7. **Ask:** Apart from the ones presented in these two case studies, what are some additional factors that people need to consider when deciding whether to have sex or not (sample list follows)?

- Comfort with own body
- Parental expectations
- Cultural expectations
- Religious expectations
- Freedom to say yes or no

8. **Conclude** by pointing out how difficult and important a decision it is to determine whether or not to start, or continue, a sexual relationship. Whether we are deciding for the first time ever or with a new partner, there are several factors that need to be considered. It is important that we weigh all factors in order to make good choices.

### **Extension**

Instruct participants to write their own case studies and to determine which circumstances are present that would make sex a good or poor choice.

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(Adapted with permission from: Planned Parenthood Federation of Canada (2001) *Beyond the Basics: A Sourcebook on Sexual and Reproductive Health Education*. Ottawa: Author.)