**Tips for Answering Difficult Questions**

* **It’s okay to say, *“I don’t know.”***

You can say something like, *“That’s a good question, but it isn’t covered in this lesson. You might want to ask a nurse or another trusted adult about that question.”*

* **Let students know that personal questions are not appropriate.** Please do not share your personal beliefs with students, and avoid sharing information about your personal sexual practices.

**For Example: When did you first have sex?**

You can say, *“I do not share my personal behaviors, so that is not a question that I will answer.”*

* **Students often ask “permission seeking questions,” seeking your permission to participate in a particular behavior.** For example: Is it better to…? Is it okay to…? Is it safe to…?

When you get permission seeking questions:

* + Avoid using the word “normal” when answering the question
	+ Acknowledge that the question is a good question
	+ Refer students to a trusted adult for further discussion

**Here is a common example: Is it okay for me to have sex if I use a condom?**

Say something like, *“The only 100% way to avoid getting an STD or getting pregnant is not to have sex. If someone does choose to have sex, a condom will help reduce his/her risk of getting an STD or getting pregnant, but remember that condoms are not always 100% effective.”*

**Is it better for me to have oral sex rather than vaginal sex?**

*While someone cannot get pregnant from oral sex, oral sex is not safer than vaginal sex. Someone could get an STD from both vaginal and oral sex.*

**If you have oral sex, does it mean you are still a virgin?**

*There are many different beliefs about what virginity means. However, the most important thing to remember is that oral sex is sex and can increase the risk for STD’s and HIV.*

**Is it okay to have sex with my boyfriend if I love him?**

*Even if two people love each other, it doesn’t mean that they are ready or want to have sex. There are many different ways for people to express love for each other that do not involve sex. Remember, not having sex is the only 100% effective way of not getting pregnant or getting an STD.*

* **Remember, keep it simple and brief when answering questions.** Teens & young adults are concrete thinkers, and are most likely to remember the first and last things you say.