



Title: Abortion

Level: SENIOR PHASE

Code: S.11

Links to Curriculum for Excellence

In terms of Curriculum for Excellence this level is concerned with extending or deepening what is described at Fourth Level.

Experiences and outcomes	Benchmarks
Using what I have learned I am able to make informed decisions and choices that promote and protect my own and others’ sexual health and wellbeing. HWB 4-47b I know how to manage situations concerning my sexual health and wellbeing and am learning to understand what appropriate sexual behaviour is. HWB 4-49a I know how to access services, information and support if my sexual health and wellbeing is at risk. I am aware of my rights in relation to sexual health including my right to confidentiality, and my responsibilities, including those under the law. HWB 4-48a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the rights and responsibilities required for safe and enjoyable sex. • Explains how to access both local and national information, guidance and help.

Learning Intentions

- Young people know that abortion/termination of pregnancy services are available.
- Young people know that all sexual health services are confidential.

Success Criteria

- I can describe what happens within abortion/termination of pregnancy services.
- I understand that time matters when deciding on options available to women when they are pregnant.
- I understand and can talk about my right to confidentiality in the provision of sexual health services.

Resources to support this activity

- Film: *Let’s Talk about Abortion*
<http://www.lothiansexualhealth.scot.nhs.uk/pregnancy/termination/Pages/default.aspx> (duration 3 minutes 40 seconds)
- Young people’s questions about abortion answered online: <https://www.brook.org.uk/our-work/young-peoples-faqs-about-abortions>
- The teacher/educator must insert information about local services in the slide set.

Activity

Most of the learning activity outlines on this resource are offered as approximately 50-minute sessions. This activity and information may not use a 50-minute slot (this depends on the time young people want and use for discussion) and so might be considered as part of a lesson also focusing on other topics, or where more time is used to extend other learning as part of the RSHP programme.

This session is designed to provide accurate information about services and support available to inform about abortion/termination of pregnancy. This can be a topic that individuals feel strongly about. We must also remember that there may be young people or indeed educators facilitating this session with personal experience of termination of pregnancy – it is important then to ensure that an individual does not feel judged or exposed to potential breaches of confidentiality. The suggestion then, is to present this as an information session. Where there is discussion, it is intended that this fosters empathy for women who are in the position of making decisions to terminate a pregnancy.

While information does refer to under 16s, it is likely most learners in Senior Phase will be 16 or over, where young people in your group/class are not, the information about confidentiality and support is particularly important.

1. To begin, introduce the topic as being a session with information about abortion. Use the slide:

What is abortion?

Abortion is when a pregnancy is ended so that it doesn't result in the birth of a child. Sometimes it is called 'termination of pregnancy'.

2. Acknowledge that people can have strong opinions about abortion, the rights and wrongs of it, and that you understand this - but in this lesson the main point is to give some facts so that the young people feel able to make their own informed decisions should they ever be in a situation where they or their partner are considering an abortion. Also acknowledge that this is not a simple issue.
3. Use the slide to show that when a woman becomes pregnant she has options/slide:

When a woman becomes pregnant she has 3 options:

- Continue the pregnancy and become a parent.
- Continue the pregnancy and arrange for adoption or fostering.
- End the pregnancy with an abortion.

4. Ask the young people to reflect on the circumstances that inform such decisions/slide:

Discussion: What kind of circumstances might a woman be in that she would consider each of these options? Think of them all, one by one, after a while feedback on your discussions.

5. **How many women have abortions?** Share the slide, ask for thoughts or questions that arise, some may be informed by the short animation that follows.

How many women have abortions?

- Unplanned pregnancy is very common; around half of all pregnancies are unplanned: for 1-in-5 unplanned pregnancies, a woman will choose to have an abortion.
- 1-in-3 women in the UK has an abortion at some time in their life.
- The decision to have an abortion is not easy and it can be a very emotional time for those involved; talking it through with experienced professionals can help.

6. What have abortions got to do with young men? Use the initial slide with the question to generate some discussion. Then the follow-up slide (bullet points) to explore issues/reflect on whether the young people also raised these points. (See the NOTE at the end of the Activity plan, this should help you prepare for these discussions)

What have abortions got to do with young men?

- If the young woman is in a relationship with a boy/young man, then the decision about an abortion impacts on both partners.
- The young man might want to think about what becoming a young Dad would mean to him and his life.
- The fact that there can be unplanned pregnancies that result in an abortion might help young men to think about using condoms and supporting a partner to use contraception.
- A young man might want to speak about what he feels.
- A young man might disagree with his partner and need to talk about that.

7. Watch the short animation. Having considered the topic so far, explain that a short film has been made that explains what happens when a young person goes to a sexual health service where they can talk about or be offered abortion services.

Let's Talk about Abortion:

<http://www.lothiansexualhealth.scot.nhs.uk/pregnancy/termination/Pages/default.aspx> (duration 3 minutes 40 seconds) Take any initial responses, use the final slides to affirm key points.

8. How could I support a friend? Having considered some of the circumstances that might inform a decision to respond to an unplanned pregnancy with a termination ask the young people to think about and share some views on this question. Before starting, just remind the class/group of the sensitive and complex nature of circumstances and choices.

9. Important information. These 5 slides give the key points to be affirmed from the animation, discuss and check understanding as you go. Also, *end with sharing information about your local sexual health services for young people.*

Time really matters	The sooner you come to a clinic or go to your GP to confirm you are pregnant and discuss what you'd like to do the more options you have.
If you decide to consider having an abortion what happens at that appointment?	This appointment can last up to a maximum 3 hours. There will be time to talk through your decision to have an abortion. You will have an ultrasound scan to confirm how many weeks pregnant you are. There will be self-tests for STIs and a blood tests including HIV and syphilis. If you want to go ahead there are consent forms to sign. You will discuss types of contraception available for the future. You will get a date for the abortion.
There are 2 types of abortion	There are Medical and Surgical. Most abortions are called Early Medical abortions, this mean taking pills to end the pregnancy. Surgical and later Medical Abortions take place in a hospital. The woman would be asleep for a later surgical abortion when the doctor removes the content of the womb.

If you are under 16	If you are under 16, you will always be admitted to hospital and will need a trusted adult to take you home. This will happen no matter how many weeks pregnant you are.
Confidentiality	Remember that all services provided are confidential.
If you need to talk about any of these issues	INSERT LOCAL SERVICE DETAILS HERE Young people your age also get good advice from ChildLine by phone or online chat.

NOTE: Abortion and boys and young men

This explanatory note is taken from this document produced by the national agency, Brook, and is available here: <https://www.brook.org.uk/attachments/efcabortioneeducationtoolkit.pdf>

Abortion education is as relevant for young men as it is for young women: for a couple in a relationship, a decision about pregnancy will impact on both partners. It is important therefore that young men have an equal opportunity to consider how unplanned pregnancy and abortion might affect them. By giving young men the space to consider this, it helps them to think more about their rights and responsibilities in a sexual relationship, and to develop the motivation to use condoms properly and consistently to avoid unintended pregnancy. If a young man has or goes on to have experience of unplanned pregnancy with a partner, it is important that he knows who he can talk to and where he can go for help and support, as well as being able to signpost his partner to appropriate agencies. This is especially important when a couple are not in agreement about what the outcome of a pregnancy should be, which can be a very difficult situation for a young man to face. Signposting to young men’s services is an important part of abortion education.

Additional material

You may want to extend your learning on this topic. **Education for Choice** (EFC) was a Brook project dedicated to enabling young people to make informed choices about pregnancy and abortion. More here: <https://www.brook.org.uk/our-work/category/education-for-choice>

Connecting with home

As part of our learning about relationships, sexual health and parenthood (RSHP) young people are being given information about abortion services, sometimes called termination of pregnancy services. This information is a straightforward description of what an abortion is and where to get informed medical support and advice. You can find out more about abortion/termination of pregnancy from your local Health Board. Just go online and search the name of your health board and add *sexual health* or *termination of pregnancy*. For example, you could search *NHS Highland sexual health* or *NHS Lothian termination of pregnancy*. This short animation has been made by the NHS to describe these services: Let’s Talk about Abortion:

<http://www.lothiansexualhealth.scot.nhs.uk/pregnancy/termination/Pages/default.aspx>

Practitioner Notes