Circle #1—Sensuality

* Body image—Feeling attractive and proud of one's own body and the way it functions influences many aspects of life. Adolescents often choose media personalities as the standard for how they should look, so they are often disappointed by what they see in the mirror. They may be especially dissatisfied when the mainstream media does not portray or does not positively portray physical characteristics the teens see in the mirror, such as color of skin, type or hair, shape of eyes, height, or body shape.
* Experiencing pleasure—Sensuality allows a person to experience pleasure when certain parts of the body are touched. People also experience sensual pleasure from taste, touch, sight, hearing, and smell as part of being alive.
* Satisfying skin hunger—The need to be touched and held by others in loving, caring ways is often referred to as *skin hunger*. Adolescents typically receive considerably less touch from their parents than do younger children. Many teens satisfy their *skin hunger* through close physical contact with peers. Sexual intercourse may sometimes result from a teen's need to be held, rather than from sexual desire.
* Feeling physical attraction for another person—The center of sensuality and attraction to others is not in the genitals (despite all the jokes). The center of sensuality and attraction to others is in the brain, humans' most important "sex organ." The unexplained mechanism responsible for sexual attraction rests in the brain, not in the genitalia.
* Fantasy—The brain also gives people the capacity to have fantasies about sexual behaviors and experiences. Adolescents often need help understanding that sexual fantasy is normal and that one does not have to act upon sexual fantasies.

Circle #2—Sexual Intimacy

* Sharing—Sharing intimacy is what makes personal relationships rich. While sensuality is about physical closeness, intimacy focuses on emotional closeness.
* Caring—Caring about others means feeling their joy and their pain. It means being open to emotions that may not be comfortable or convenient. Nevertheless, an intimate relationship is possible only when we care.
* Liking or loving another person—Having emotional attachment or connection to others is a manifestation of intimacy.
* Emotional risk-taking—To have true intimacy with others, a person must open up and share feelings and personal information. Sharing personal thoughts and feelings with someone else is risky, because the other person may not feel the same way. But it is not possible to be really close with another person without being honest and open with her/him.
* Vulnerability—To have intimacy means that we share and care, like or love, and take emotional risks. That makes us vulnerable—the person with whom we share, about whom we care, and whom we like or love, has the power to hurt us emotionally. Intimacy requires vulnerability, on the part of each person in the relationship.

Circle #3—Sexual Identity

* Gender identity—Knowing whether one is male or female. Most young children determine their own gender identity by age two. Sometime, a person's biological gender is not the same as his/her gender identity—this is called being *transgender*.
* Gender role—Identifying actions and/or behaviors for each gender. Some things are determined by the way male and female bodies are built or function. For example, only women menstruate and only men produce sperm. Other gender roles are culturally determined. In the United States, it is considered appropriate for only women to wear dresses to work in the business world. In other cultures, men may wear skirt-like outfits everywhere.
* Sexual orientation—Whether a person's primary attraction is to people of the other gender (heterosexuality) or to the same gender (homosexuality) or to both genders (bisexuality) defines his/her sexual orientation.

Circle #4—Reproduction and Sexual Health

* Factual information about reproduction—Is necessary so youth will understand how male and female reproductive systems function and how conception and/or STD infection occur. Adolescents often have inadequate information about their own and/or their partner's body. Teens need this information so they can make informed decisions about sexual expression and protect their health. Youth need to understand anatomy and physiology because every adolescent needs the knowledge and understanding to help him/her appreciate the ways in which his/her body functions.
* Feelings and attitudes—Are wide-ranging when it comes to sexual expression and reproduction and to sexual health-related topics such as STD infection, HIV and AIDS, contraceptive use, abortion, pregnancy, and childbirth.
* Sexual intercourse—Is one of the most common behaviors among humans. Sexual intercourse is a behavior that may produce sexual pleasure that often culminates in orgasm in females and in males. Sexual intercourse may also result in pregnancy and/or STDs. In programs for youth, discussion of sexual intercourse is often limited to the bare mention of male-female (penile-vaginal) intercourse. However, youth need accurate health information about sexual intercourse—vaginal, oral, and anal.
* Reproductive and sexual anatomy—The male and female body and the ways in which they actually function is a part of sexual health. Youth can learn to protect their reproductive and sexual health. This means that teens need information about all the effective methods of contraception currently available, how they work, where to obtain them, their effectiveness, and their side effects. This means that youth also need to know how to prevent STD infection. They must know how to prevent pregnancy and/or disease.
* Sexual reproduction—The actual processes of conception, pregnancy, delivery, and recovery following childbirth are important parts of sexuality. Youth need information about sexual reproduction—the process whereby two different individuals each contribute half of the genetic material to their child. The child is, therefore, not identical to either parent. [*Asexual* reproduction is a process whereby simple one-celled organisms reproduce by splitting, creating two separate one-celled organisms identical to the original [female] organism before it split.] Too many programs focus exclusively on sexual reproduction when providing sexuality education and ignore all the other aspects of human sexuality.

Circle #5—Sexualization

* Flirting—Is a relatively harmless sexualization behavior. Nevertheless, upon occasion it is an attempt to manipulate someone else, and it can cause the person manipulated to feel hurt, humiliation, and shame.
* Seduction—Is the act of enticing someone to engage in sexual activity. The act of seduction implies manipulation that at times may prove harmful for the one who is seduced.
* Sexual harassment—Is an illegal behavior. Sexual harassment means harassing someone else because of her/his gender. It could mean making personal, embarrassing remarks about someone's appearance, especially characteristics associated with sexual maturity, such as the size of a woman's breasts or of a man's testicles and penis. It could mean unwanted touching, such as hugging a subordinate or patting someone's bottom. The laws of the United States provide protection against sexual harassment.
* Rape—Means coercing or forcing someone else to have genital contact with another. Force, in the case of rape, can include use of overpowering strength, threats, and/or implied threats that arouse fear in the person raped. Youth need to know that rape is always illegal. Refusing to accept *no* and forcing the other person to have sexual intercourse always means rape.
* Incest—Means forcing sexual contact on any minor who is related to the perpetrator by birth or marriage.