

Intimacy and Affection

Objective:	Participants will identify ways of showing love, intimacy, and affection that do not involve a risk of pregnancy or STI.
Structure:	Large group.
Time:	25 minutes.
Materials:	Blackboard or flipchart.

Procedure

1. **Introduce** the activity by asking participants why we have sex (e.g. reproduction, pleasure, to show love/feeling, etc).
2. **Point out** that there many ways to express intimacy and love. Some involve physical intimacy, and others involve emotional intimacy. Couples can show their affection for one another without risk of pregnancy or STIs.
3. Ask participants to **brainstorm** ways to show love and sexual feeling. List these on the blackboard or flipchart. For example:
 - Holding hands
 - Hugging
 - Talking
 - Letters or e-mails
 - Exchanging phone calls
 - Massage
 - Kissing
 - Vaginal intercourse
 - Masturbation
 - Anal intercourse
 - Petting
 - Touching
 - Oral sex
 - Mutual masturbation
 - Cuddling
 - Watching a romantic movie

4. Lead a discussion by asking the following:
 - What is affection? (**fondness**) Intimacy? (**physical and/or emotional closeness**) Love? (**deep affection, passion**)
 - Are some activities more intimate than others? (**Point out that people view intimacy differently, e.g. some view kissing as more intimate than others do.**)
 - Which activities are least intimate? Most intimate?
 - Which behaviours encourage the development of emotional intimacy?
 - Must you have vaginal or anal intercourse in order to be intimate with your partner?
 - Is it necessary to love someone in order to be intimate?
 - How do the media portray intimacy? Is its depiction realistic?
5. **Conclude** by pointing out that there is a range of sexual intimacy, not all of which involves vaginal or anal intercourse. While we often think that intercourse is the ultimate goal of all sexual activity, there are other ways of showing intimacy that will satisfy both partners, while avoiding STIs and/or pregnancy. In fact, there is no “goal” with sexual activity.

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