



EMPOWERING EDUCATORS: BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN COMPREHENSIVE SEX EDUCATION THROUGH SKILLS-BASED LEARNING

June 2026

Quick Reminder

To ensure a respectful and focused learning environment, and to protect the intellectual property of the facilitators:

- Please don't take photos or videos during the session
- Please don't share or repost the slides or materials—they're just for attendees



Thanks so much for understanding!

Trailhead Institute's Youth Sexual Health Program

Working to Institutionalize Sex Education (WISE) Initiative within the Youth Sexual Health Program is a statewide initiative that supports school districts in implementing sustainable health education and sex education.



Ocean Candler
YSH Program Manager

Group Agreements

Share Knowledge

Ask Questions

Share the Air

Practice Self-Care

Expect and Accept
Non-Closure

Objectives

Objective 1

Participants will explore CSE laws and standards that support sexual health units.

Objective 2

Participants will explore strategies to increase facilitation confidence and youth participation through skills-based learning.

Objective 3

Participants will leave with actionable ideas to implement skills-based and project-based CSE.

How would you define Comprehensive Sex Education?

Comprehensive Sex Education

"Sex education is the provision of information about **bodily development, sex, sexuality, and relationships**, along with **skills-building** to help young people communicate about and **make informed decisions** regarding sex and their sexual health."
–Advocates for Youth

CSE In Colorado

What is our current comprehensive sex education law, House Bill 19-1032?

CSE In Colorado

If a school district decides to provide sex education, it must be/include...

- Comprehensive and Medically Accurate
 - Intentionally scaffolded across age-ranges, and rooted in scientific evidence.
- Culturally Sensitive and Inclusive
 - Inclusive of LGBTQ+ youth and culturally relevant and responsive to historically marginalized youth -- youth of color, immigrant youth, intersex youth, youth who have been sexually victimized, etc.
- Inclusive of Positive Youth Development
 - Focuses on helping youth acquire the knowledge and skills they need to become healthy adults.
 - Core pillars of PYD are: Strengths-Based, Inclusive, Engages Youth as Partners, Collaborative and Sustainable.
- Instruction on healthy relationships and consent
- If pregnancy is discussed, information on all pregnancy options must be mentioned
 - Parenting, adoption, abortion and safe haven laws

Instruction may not...

- Use shame-based or stigmatizing language
- Perpetuate gender stereotypes

Positive Health Outcomes of CSE

Builds skills to make healthy and authentic decisions about relationships and boundaries

Decreases experiences of IPV, sexual assault and sexual violence

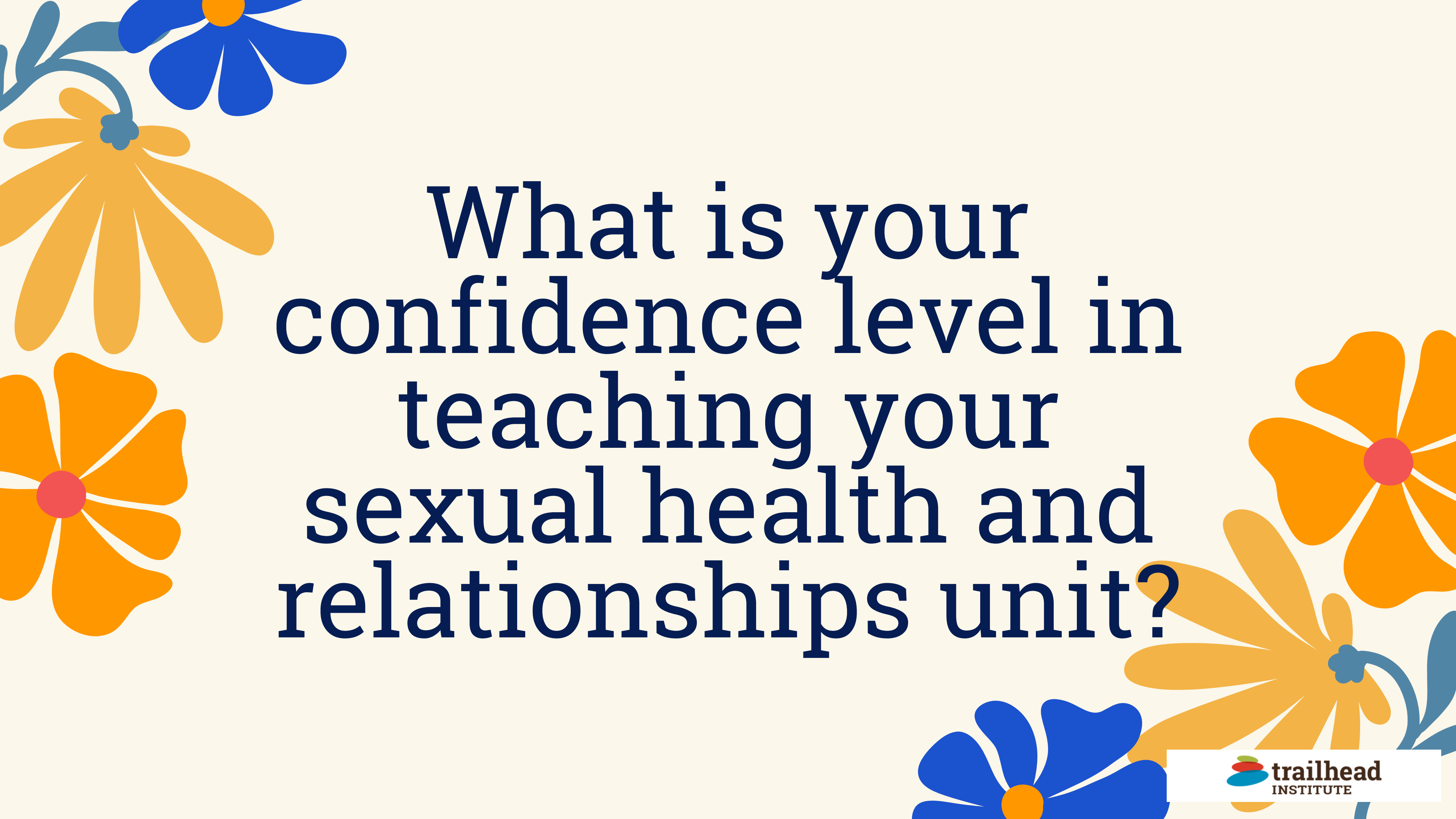
Increases access to sexual healthcare, support and resources

Delays timing of first sex and increases likelihood of using safer sex practices

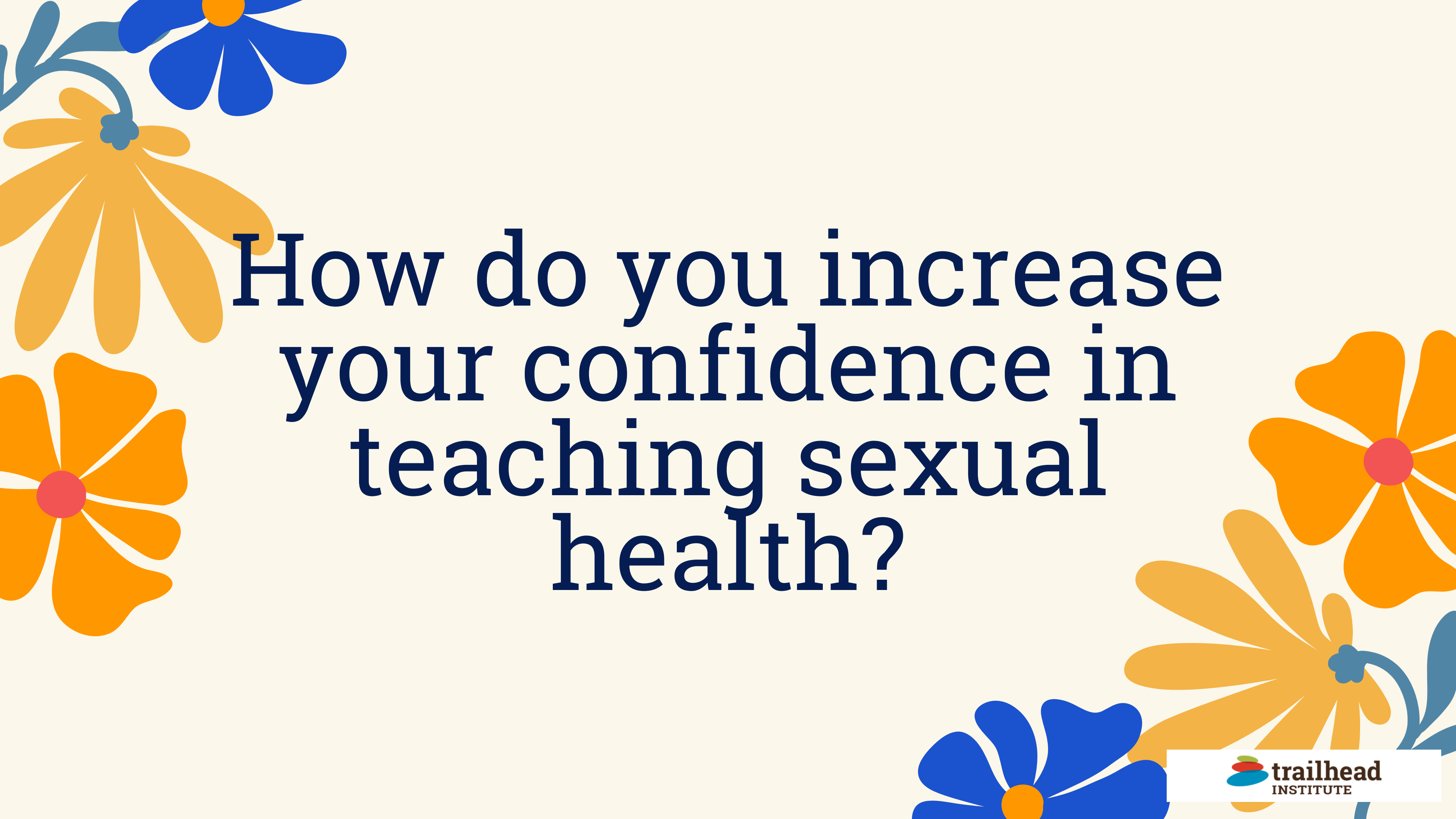
Decreases rates of unintended pregnancy and STI transmission rates

Increases communication between young people and their trusted adults

Increases students sense of belonging and decreases experiences of bullying

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What is your
confidence level in
teaching your
sexual health and
relationships unit?

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How do you increase
your confidence in
teaching sexual
health?

Teaching Sexual Health Requires:

- **Practice**

- Practice answering spontaneous questions
- Practice activities to increase comfort
- Practice inclusive language
- Review content and online resources for increased knowledge

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- Strategies in case youth or yourself get triggered

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- Resources for parents and families

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- **Relevant Resources**
 - Students need resources to explore on their own that are relevant to what they are navigating.
 - Resources for parents and families
- **Skill-building**
 - Students are not going to remember all of the content, but they will remember the core skills they practice within the classroom and utilize them as they grow into adulthood.

Small Group Activity

1. Each group will be assigned a strategy for building/increasing confidence in teaching sex education and a list of ideas.
2. Explore what each of these ideas could actually look like in your schools and teams.
3. Discuss any other ideas that are not already listed.

Practice Strategies:

How do you practice this unit?

Practice Strategies:

- **Practice with your team**

- Review questions that come up in sessions
- Brainstorm activities and test them on peer teachers
- Practice inclusive language and add facilitator notes in your slides and lessons
- Practice destigmatizing your language around sexual health
 - What messages did you receive growing up that show up when you teach this?
 - What personal values influence how you teach this? We are providing information and skills and values can be explored at home with trusted adults.
 - It is not our job to share our values and morals around sexual health with students.
- We all make mistakes, but fixing mistakes and practicing is possible!

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- **Co-teach**

- With team teacher if you have access to one and schedule allows for this
- Loop in school nurse, counselor, or district support
- Co-teaching is different from guest speaking!

Grounding Strategies

**How have you grounded yourself
during this unit?
How have you navigated triggers?**

Grounding Strategies

- **Think of a time that you felt triggered by your students...**
 - How did you feel?
 - What did you do?
 - What would you do differently next time?

Grounding Strategies

- **Strategies to support triggers and challenging behavior**
 - Co-teach or have other supportive adults in the room
 - Collaborative group agreements
 - Take breaks
 - Balance structure and fluidity of lesson plans (it is okay if your lesson does not go as planned and you need to pivot)
 - Provide various learning options: small group, individual, large group, visual/video etc.

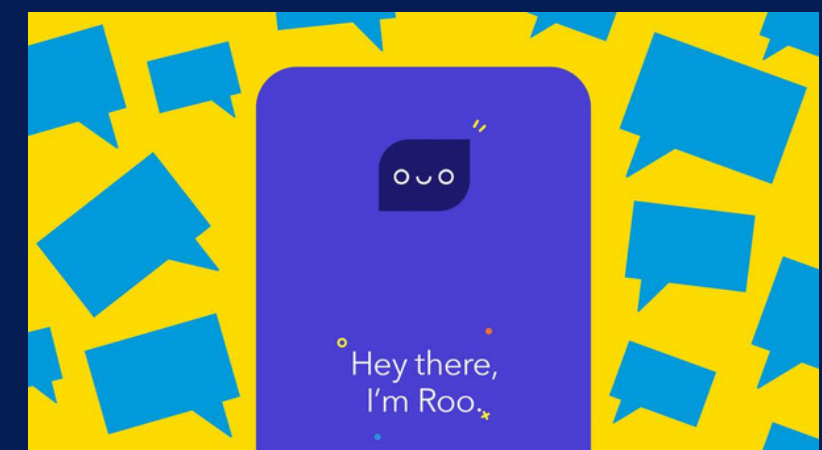
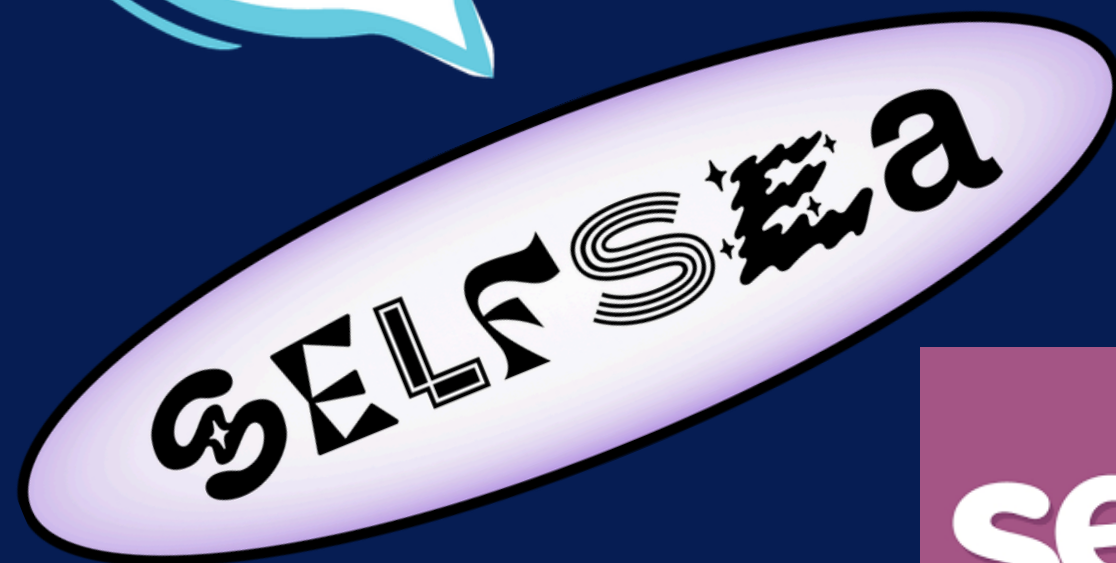
Relevant Resources:

What resources do you reference with students around sexual health and relationships?

What resources have you found helpful when talking to parents/guardians?

How do you share resources with students and families?

Relevant Resources:



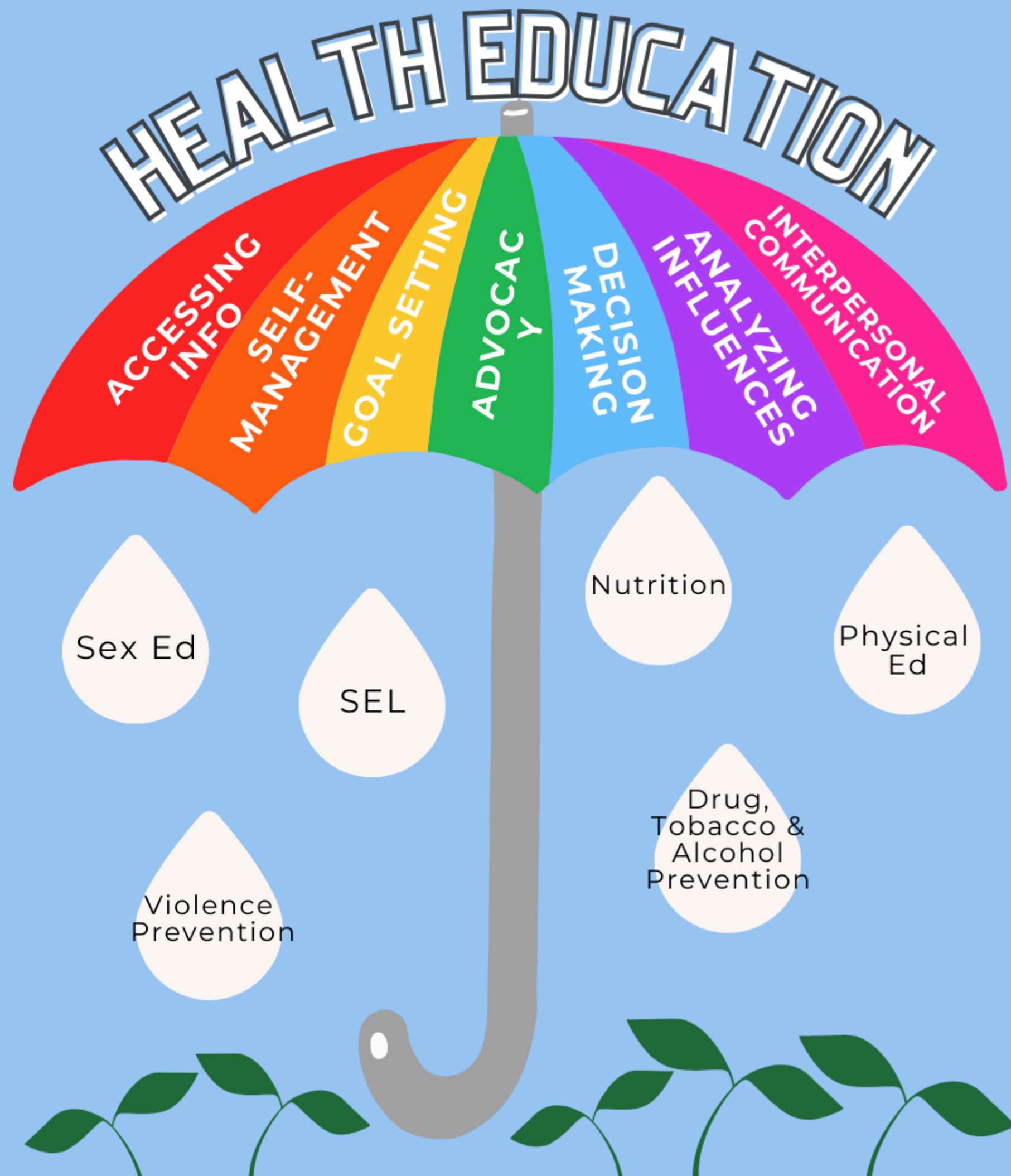
Skills-Based Strategies

How do you already practice skill-building during your sexual health and relationship unit?

Skills-Based Health Ed + Sexual Health

SKILLS

CORE CONCEPTS

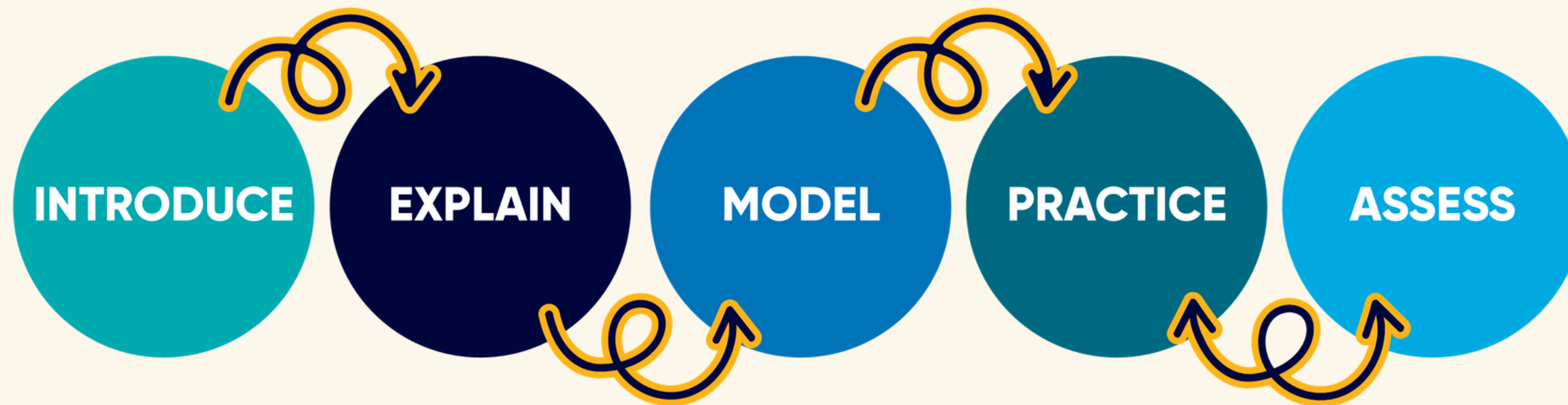


Skills-Based Health Ed + Sexual Health

Skills-Based Health Education:

“A planned, sequential, comprehensive and relevant set of learning experiences implemented through socio-ecological and socio-cultural perspectives and participatory methods to support the development of skills, attitudes, and functional knowledge needed to maintain, enhance, or promote health and well-being of self and others across multiple dimensions of wellness.”

- SHAPE America



Skills-Based Health Ed + Sexual Health

Content-Based

A high school unit is “Consent and Healthy Relationships” and student learning objectives are understanding what consent is and is not, what consent laws are in CO, and how substances can inhibit consent.

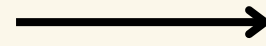
Skills-Based

A high school unit is “Consent and Healthy Relationships” and student focus on two identified skills, interpersonal communication and analyzing influences. Learning objectives are to understand core concepts of consent, demonstrate giving and receiving verbal consent and how to respect when consent is not given. Students will also explore and discuss how culture and society supports and challenges consent and healthy relationships.

Skills-Based Health Ed + Sexual Health

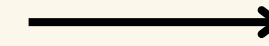
Introduce:

- Core knowledge around consent
- Introduce skills students will explore during lesson. Ex. interpersonal communication and analyzing influences.



Explain:

- Explain what each skill looks like within consent
- Explain how students will practice these skills



Model:

- Model each skill, either through scenarios, scripts or video/audio examples.



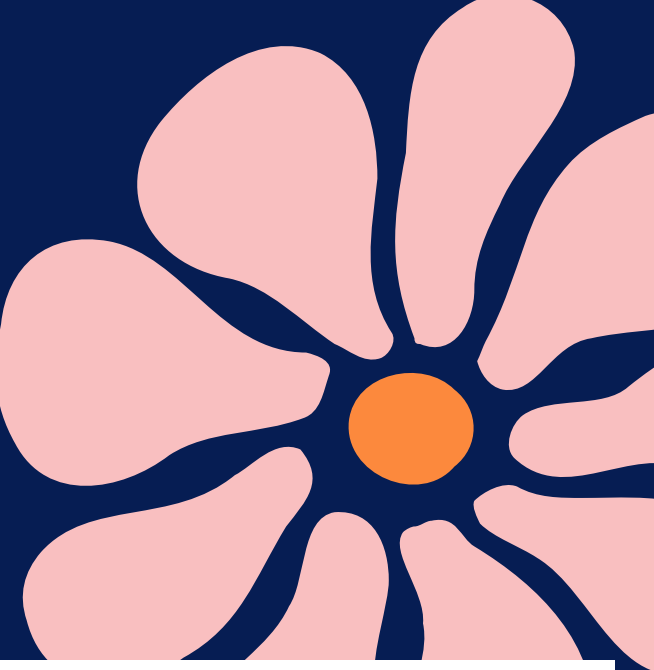
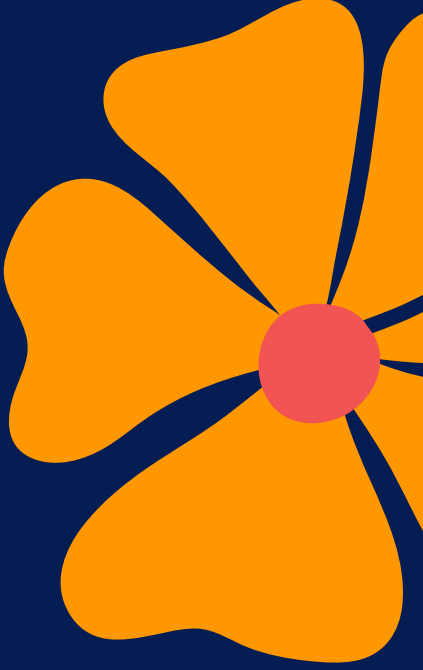
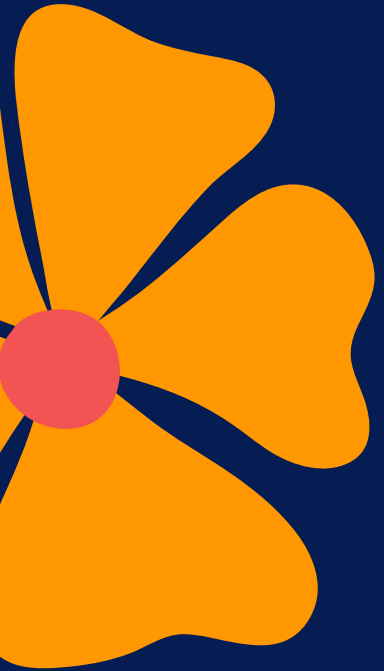
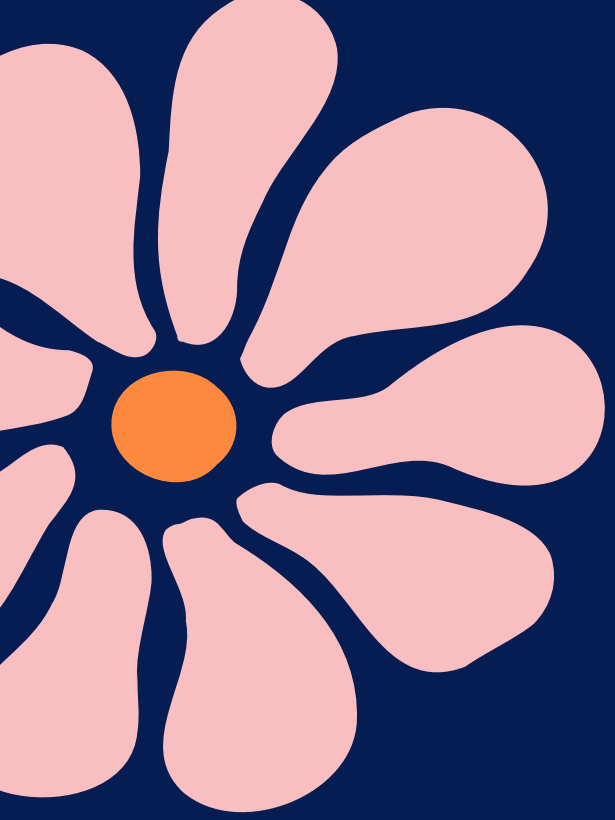
Practice:

- Have students practice each skill
 - Scenarios, role-play, discussion prompts



Assess:

- Assess learning through project-based activity.
 - This could be an activity done in live time or one students work on outside of class.



“Skills lead to long-term behavior change and create greater student agency”

Consent and Healthy Relationships

Puberty

Birth Control

Sexually Transmitted Infections

Media Literacy

Interpersonal Violence

Small Group Discussion

Each group will pick a content area

1. Discuss how this content typically looks in your classroom.
2. What skills-based approaches already exist in your current lessons?
3. Think of one to two skills that fit easily into this content area
4. What would practicing these skills within this content area look like for your students?

Consent and Healthy Relationships

Puberty

Birth Control

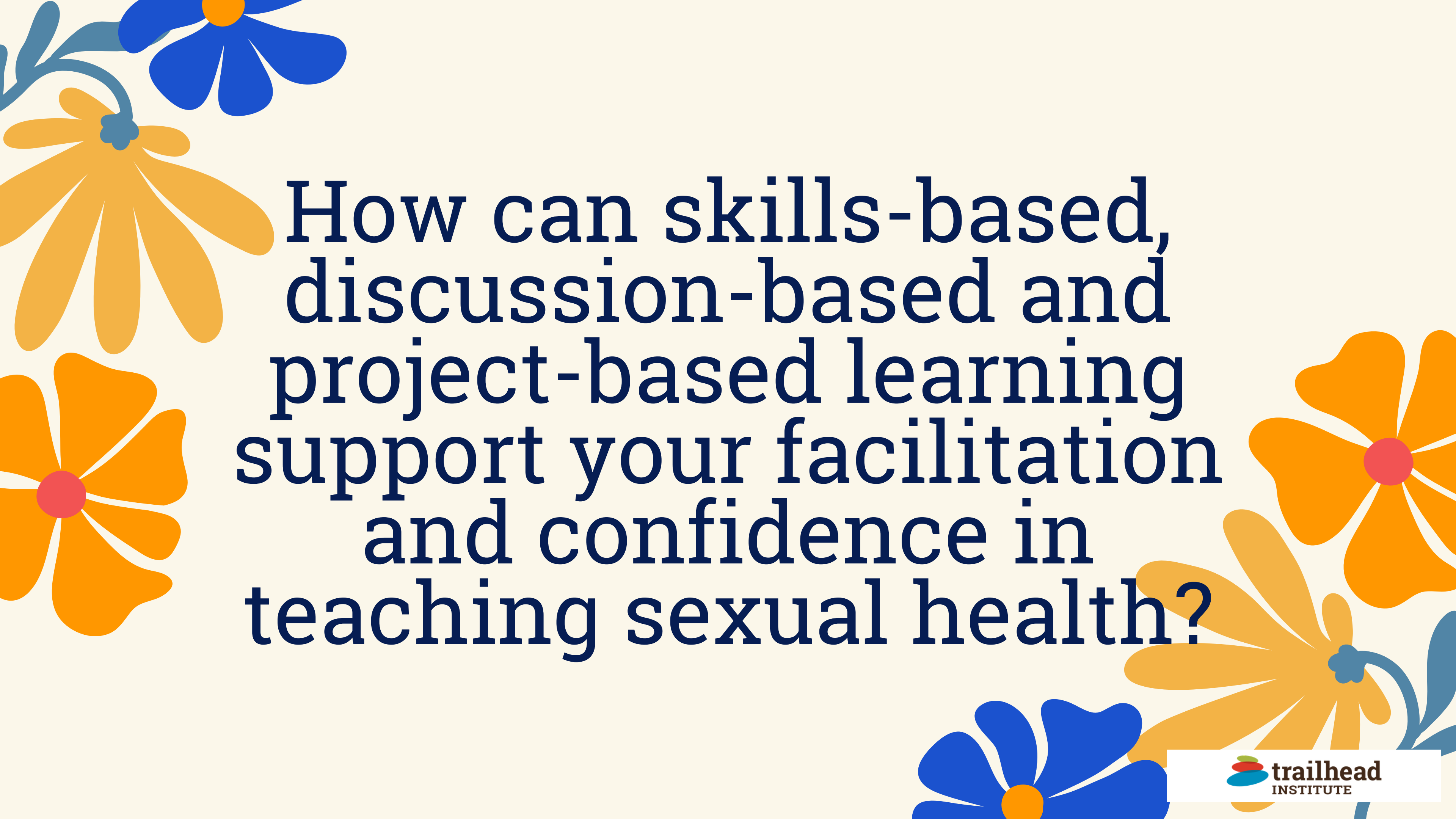
Sexually Transmitted Infections

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Interpersonal Violence

Small Group Debrief

1. What content area did you pick?
2. Discuss how this content typically looks in your classroom.
3. What skills-based approaches already exist in your current lessons?
4. What skills did you decide to focus on in this content?
5. What would practicing these skills within this content area look like for your students?

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How can skills-based,
discussion-based and
project-based learning
support your facilitation
and confidence in
teaching sexual health?

Learning Through Projects Brainstorm

Small group discussion

1. What projects do you already do in your classrooms?
2. What works well about your projects? What needs work/support with your projects?
3. How do you see students engage in your classroom projects?
4. Add ideas to sticky notes and post on graffiti sheet
 - a. Add them to this QR Code if you would like to share with everyone!

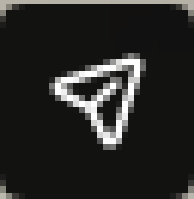
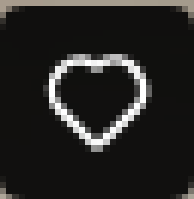


<https://tinyurl.com/SexualHealthProjects>

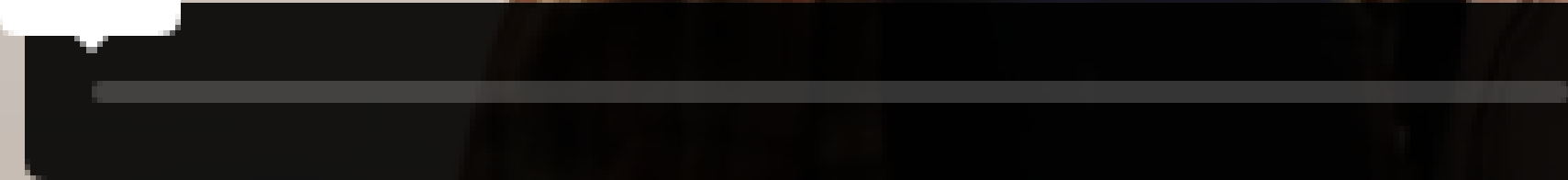
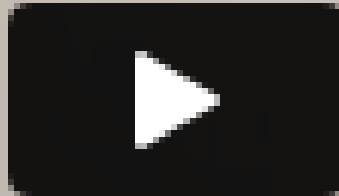


Consent

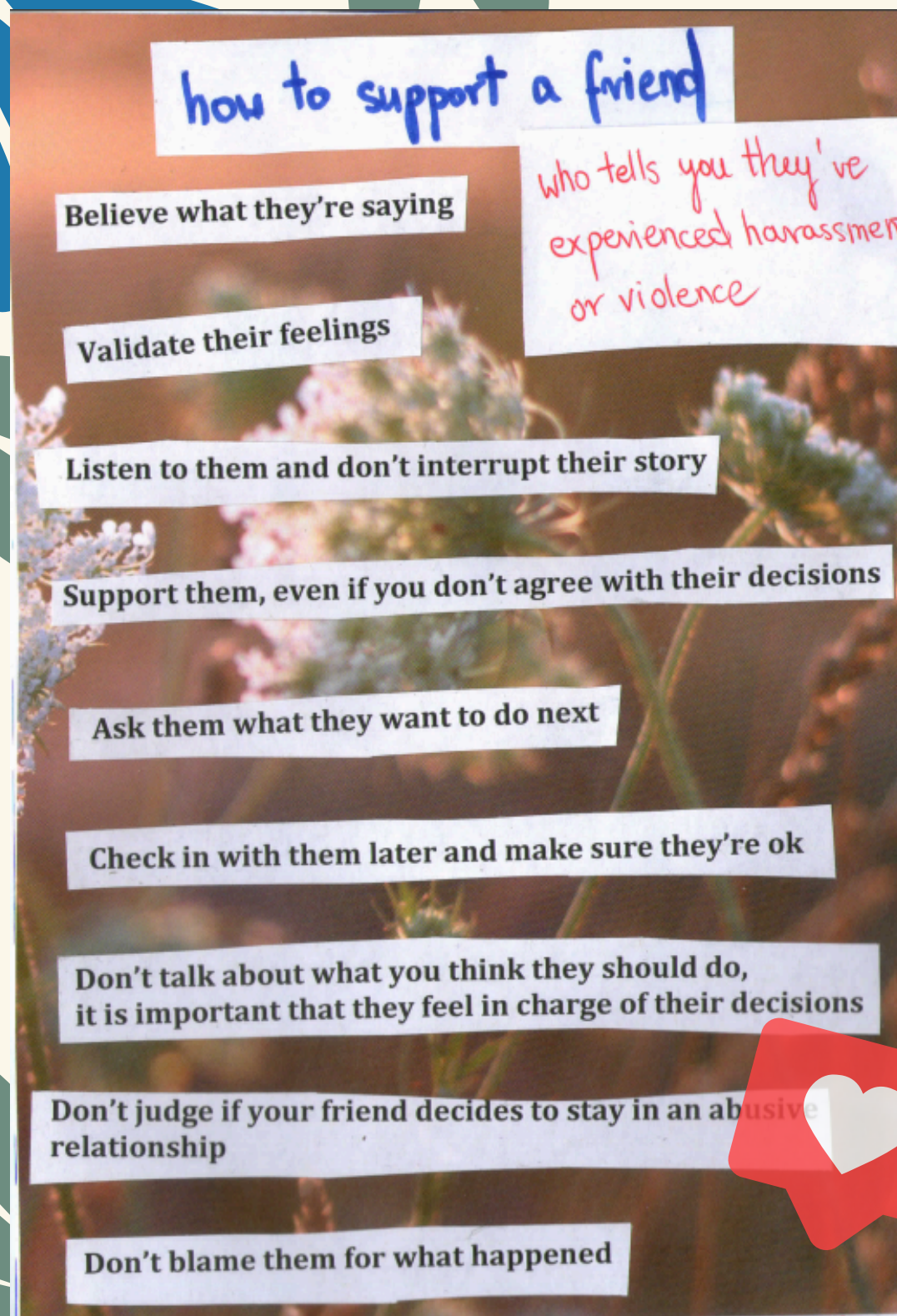
Teen Talk



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vimeo



Zine making

Record a podcast episode on a specific topic

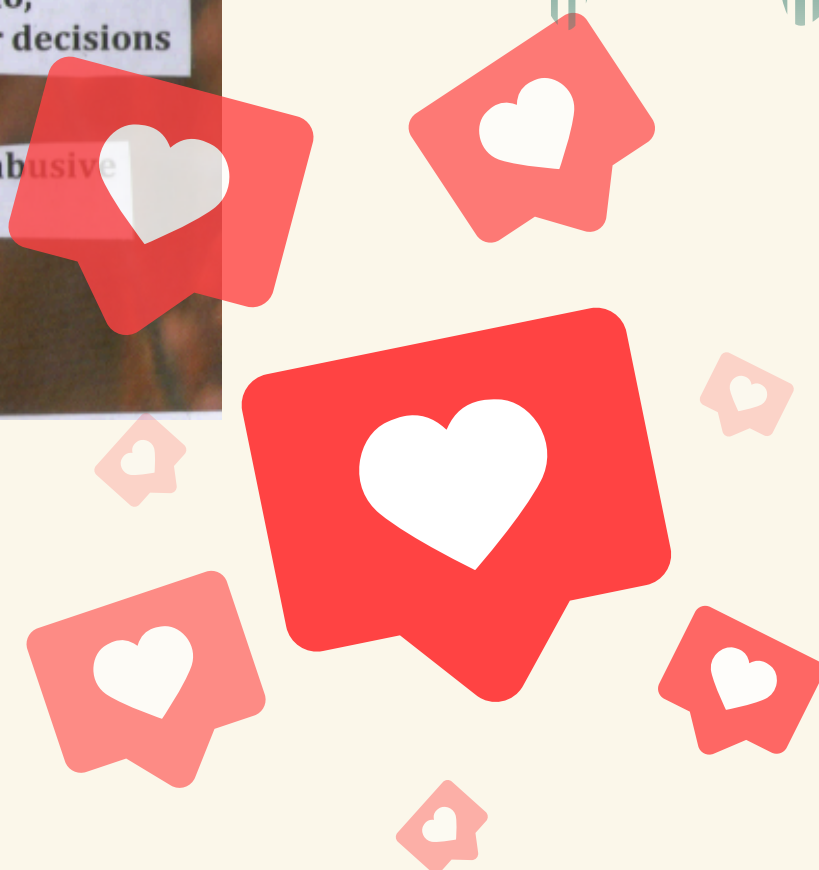


Peer led micro learning



Review music lyrics and report on what messages are present, what feels accurate, inaccurate, harmful etc. and how to counter messages we hear in music and media.

Create a social media campaign





One action/commitment
I am going to make to
increase confidence and
prioritize skills-based
learning in my sexual
health unit is...

Resources



<https://tinyurl.com/CSESkillsBasedResources>

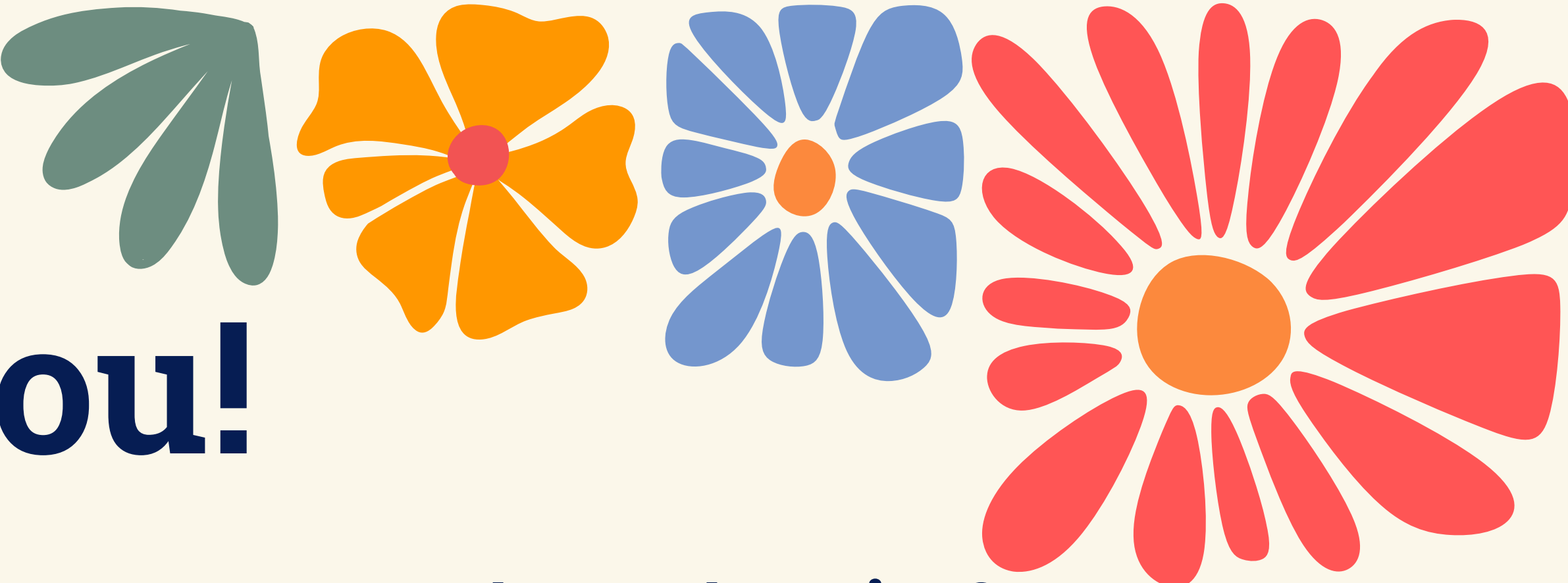
Questions?

Colorado Health and PE Summit Feedback Form

Thank you for engaging in our session today!
Please leave feedback!

<https://tinyurl.com/COSummitFB>





Thank you!

**Interested in continued support around sex education?
Would your school benefit from additional sex ed training?**

Connect with me!

Ocean Candler: ocandler@trailhead.institute

