

The Spark*ED Collaborative is pleased to share this Professional Development Tool with the wider sex education field. It is designed to be used as a diagnostic tool to identify a sex educator’s continued learning opportunities and areas for growth. This tool was originally created to support our staff in providing high quality education and training for teens, parents, families, and professionals. To ensure our educators and trainers are leaders in the fields of reproductive health and sexuality education, we regularly assess knowledge and skills, and provide opportunities to support their professional development and continued learning.

- This tool was developed for use by sex education professionals to identify an Educator’s strengths and opportunities for professional development. The skills outlined in the document reflect essential competencies we believe our sex educators should develop and embody when delivering sex education.
- The assessment is divided into 7 competency areas, with a specific series of indicators (skills) under each of the following competency areas:
 - A. Lesson Planning
 - B. Creating a Positive Learning Environment
 - C. Facilitation
 - D. Trauma-Informed Facilitation
 - E. Cultural Humility & Responsiveness
 - F. LGBTQ+ Inclusive and Affirming Facilitation
- This instrument can be used for both new and seasoned educators. We suggest new educators take the assessment within their first month of employment, and that all Educators use the assessment at least once a year as a method of tracking progress and prioritizing professional development opportunities.
- The indicators have been weighted to reflect the natural progression of skill development we expect to see (as indicated below). We expect an educator to focus on mastering high priority/Red skill development before focusing on strengthening Orange or Yellow highlighted skills.

Indicator Priority

Essential (Red)	Essential and expected of all Educators. Educators should develop these skills first.
Highly Expected (Orange)	Expected from more experienced Educators
Expected (Yellow)	Expected from the most experienced Educators

Glossary of Terms	
Dominant culture	The group whose members hold more power relative to other members in society. Dominant cultures may or may not hold a quantifiable majority of the population. Dominant culture language, values, and ways of behaving are imposed on a subordinate culture or cultures through economic or political power.
Enduring Understanding (Learning Goal)	Understanding by Design framework component, similar to goals. What is the big picture you want students to understand and be able to use years from now, after they have forgotten the details?
Essential Questions (Learning Objectives)	Understanding by Design framework component, similar to objectives. What questions should students be able to answer after completing the lesson?
Marginalized population	Those excluded from mainstream social, economic, educational, and/or cultural life. Marginalized populations experience discrimination and exclusion based on unequal power relationships across economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions.
Microaggressions	A statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against a member of a marginalized group such as racial, ethnic, gender, or sexual orientation minorities.
Power Packed Introduction	Who I am, where I'm from, why I'm here, why I care, and why you should care. <i>Five Finger Intro Worksheet</i>
Privilege	Social advantages, benefits, or prestige and respect that an individual has by virtue of belonging to certain societal identity groups. Within Western societies, these privileged identities have historically occupied positions of dominance over others.
<u><i>Program Strength & Connectedness Model</i></u>	A model that supports high warmth, high structure, and high expectations in the classroom. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1b5IT_Eof1sRjaZddNDHaHDAWX1kaqqN/view?usp=sharing
Safe Environment	An environment that is inclusive, inviting, and trauma-informed, and one in which structures are in place to prevent and address bullying and micro-aggressions.
Scaffolding	Instructional techniques used to move students progressively along a continuum towards understanding a topic.
Systems of Oppression	A combination of prejudice and institutional power that creates a system that regularly and severely discriminates against some groups and benefits other groups.
<u><i>Understanding by Design</i></u>	Backwards design lesson Planning framework:

A	Lesson Planning Indicators	Rate Your Level of Expertise				Comments
		None	Some	Strong	Mastery	
A1	Read a pre-existing lesson plan and understand its goals and objectives (or <i>Enduring Understanding</i> and <i>Essential Questions</i>).					
A2	Read curricula and understand the linkages between activities and desired outcomes.					
A3	Assess the participants' learning needs before adapting or creating a lesson.					
A4	Adapt lessons to be inclusive of all participants (for example: ability, community, socio-economic status, culture, LGBTQ+, trauma-informed, etc.).					
A5	Utilize reliable resources to inform and/or adapt the content of the lesson.					
A6	Seek and incorporate feedback from colleagues when adapting or creating a lesson, prior to and after delivery.					
A7	Apply a <i>backwards design</i> process when developing lesson plan goals, objectives, and assessments.					
A8	Sequence lesson activities to teach foundational concepts and skills before more complex ones (aka <i>scaffolding</i>).					
A9	Design and/or select warm-up/icebreaker activities to support the participants' unique experiences.					

A10	Design and/or select activities using a variety of learning methods and tools.					
A11	Incorporate activities and materials that support participants ability to apply skills to their lives outside of the learning environment.					
A12	Write clear and understandable lesson plans that are easy to replicate.					

B	Creating a Positive Learning Environment	Rate Your Level of Expertise				Comments
		None	Some	Strong	Mastery	
B1	Coordinate/collaborate with the teacher/group leader to set expectations, discuss learning needs, and become aware of local context (classroom, school, community).					
B2	Create a <i>safe</i> , welcoming, and respectful learning environment.					
B3	Apply the “ <i>Program Strength and Connectedness Model</i> ” to facilitation (high warmth, high structure, high expectation).					
B4	Establish clear group norms and expectations.					
B5	Hold the group accountable for upholding group norms and expectations.					
B6	Avoid the use of negative tactics such as deception, intimidation, fear, shaming, and guilt.					
B7	Create an environment where participants share in decision making.					
B8	Notice and respond to patterns of participation (Example: who is talking, quiet, interrupting, being interrupted, taking leadership, or has their ideas validated or ignored).					
B9	Respond to distracting learner behaviors, including dominating, interrupting, side-tracking, side conversations, etc.					



B10	Respond to distracting observer (teacher/other adults) behaviors, including dominating, interrupting, side-tracking, side conversations, etc.					
B11	Navigate conflict and disagreement among group members.					
B12	Respond to challenges and engage resistance from group members without becoming defensive.					
B13	Name and discuss group dynamics with participants and use them as teachable moments to facilitate deeper learning.					
B14	Respond appropriately to participant disclosures and other potentially traumatizing behaviors while maintaining focus on the group needs.					

C	Facilitation Skills (If you don't facilitate virtually, ignore that part of the indicator(s))	Rate Your Level of Expertise				Comments
		None	Some	Strong	Mastery	
C1	Use/arrange the physical or virtual environment to meet participant needs.					
C2	Effectively use virtual meeting platform(s) and troubleshoot problems (including closed captioning, break-out rooms, and annotation tools).					
C3	Use a <i>Power Packed Introduction</i> , which includes: a brief description of my job, role I'm playing with the group today, brief story that demonstrates my passion for the work, and something I believe about the participants.					
C4	Use strong facilitation platform skills (examples: voice projection, speaking clearly, body stance, eye contact, use of hands and gestures, virtual tools, etc.)					
C5	Prepare to deliver pre-existing lessons and activities (examples: practice delivering lessons and activities, preparing materials, anticipating questions or issues, etc.).					
C6	Deliver a pre-existing lesson plan in my own style while still maintaining fidelity to the <i>Enduring Understanding</i> (Learning Goals) and <i>Essential Questions</i> (Learning Objectives).					
C7	Help participants recognize assumptions.					
C8	Help participants differentiate between facts and interpretations.					

C9	Use a variety of participant engagement techniques (examples: minimize lecturing and maximize posing questions, silence, humor, movement, modifying activities, etc.).					
C10	Assess participants' understanding of the content and adjusting to meet participant needs and learning objectives (examples: adjusting for fewer/more participants than expected, current events, classroom dynamics).					
C11	Manage time effectively, including moving discussions and activities along, and being flexible to adjust to needs as they arise.					
C12	Use a variety of facilitation techniques to reinforce learning, including clarifying, summarizing, open-ended questions, and paraphrasing.					
C13	Use appropriate boundaries with participants and rarely but strategically disclose personal information					
C14	Answer challenging sex ed related questions, including values-based questions.					
C15	Routinely seek out and incorporate feedback to improve facilitation.					

D	Trauma-Informed Skills	Rate Your Level of Expertise				Comments
		None	Some	Strong	Mastery	
D1	Recognize a participant’s trauma response in the learning environment, including physical, verbal, and behavioral signs of trauma (fight, flight, freeze, appease).					
D2	Utilize strategies such as empathy to support participants when they express a trauma response.					
D3	Recognize the topics or situations that might trigger a stress response while facilitating.					
D4	Have a plan in place to respond to stressful situations in the learning environment in ways that apply trauma-informed practices.					
D5	Create a learning environment that promotes participants’ safety, agency, dignity, and belonging.					
D6	Ability to tend to own needs, the participant’s needs, and the group’s needs when a participant exhibits a trauma-response.					

E	Cultural Humility & Responsiveness Skills	Rate Your Level of Expertise				Comments
		None	Some	Strong	Mastery	
E1	Demonstrate respect for all youth across both <i>dominant</i> and <i>marginalized</i> populations, and recognize that all participants bring valuable contributions and viewpoints.					
E2	Recognize my own privilege and how I benefit from that privilege.					
E3	Recognize how a participant’s culture, identity, and experience with <i>systems of oppression</i> and privilege can impact their experience with and understanding of sex ed topics.					
E4	Recognize my responsibility as the facilitator to create a <i>supportive learning environment</i> where participants can express and learn from each other’s values and beliefs.					
E5	Incorporate climate setting activities, warm ups, and ice breakers into a lesson that recognizes and celebrates participants’ multiple cultural experiences and backgrounds.					
E6	Able to adapt sex ed lessons to include historical trauma and oppression may impact a learner’s access and relationship to the health care system.					
E7	Recognize how an individual’s cultural identity and experiences could impact their responses to emotionally charged situations.					
E8	Recognize and effectively interrupt and address <i>microaggressions</i> .					

E9	Address the impact vs. intention of <i>microaggressions</i> and prioritize the needs of the individuals who are most impacted by them.					
E10	When I commit a microaggression, I am able to effectively recover by calming myself, taking responsibility for my words or actions, and addressing the impact.					

F	LGBTQ+ Inclusive and Affirming Skills	Rate Your Level of Expertise				Comments
		None	Some	Strong	Mastery	
F1	Demonstrate respect and support for all youth across both <i>dominant</i> and <i>marginalized</i> populations, including all sexual orientations and gender identities.					
F2	During facilitation, clearly explain common LGBTQ+ sexual and gender vocabulary and terminology.					
F3	Adapt my language related to common sexual and gender identities as it evolves.					
F4	Recognize <i>microaggressions</i> , prejudice, stereotypes, and exclusionary group dynamics, including homophobic, sexist, and racist comments in the learning environment.					
F5	Address the impact vs. intention of <i>microaggressions</i> , and prioritize the needs of the individual(s) who are most impacted (example: checking in with the impacted individual(s) in the moment or after class).					
F6	When I commit a <i>microaggression</i> , I am able to effectively recover by calming myself, taking responsibility for my words or actions, and addressing the impact.					
F7	Respectfully correct misinformation, offensive language, and outdated language by educating learners.					

F8	Leverage learning opportunities to involve participants in shifting away from harmful cultural norms (example: addressing harmful comments/ <i>microaggressions</i>).					
F9	Design activities that are inclusive of LGBTQ+ participants' multiple intersecting backgrounds and identities.					
F10	Understand how my own identities and life experiences may impact personal feelings, boundaries, and ability to facilitate the content.					
F11	Able to execute a self-care plan if personal boundaries are overstepped (including addressing it during facilitation).					