Adaptation Guidance for the 6th Grade Nu-CULTURE Curriculum

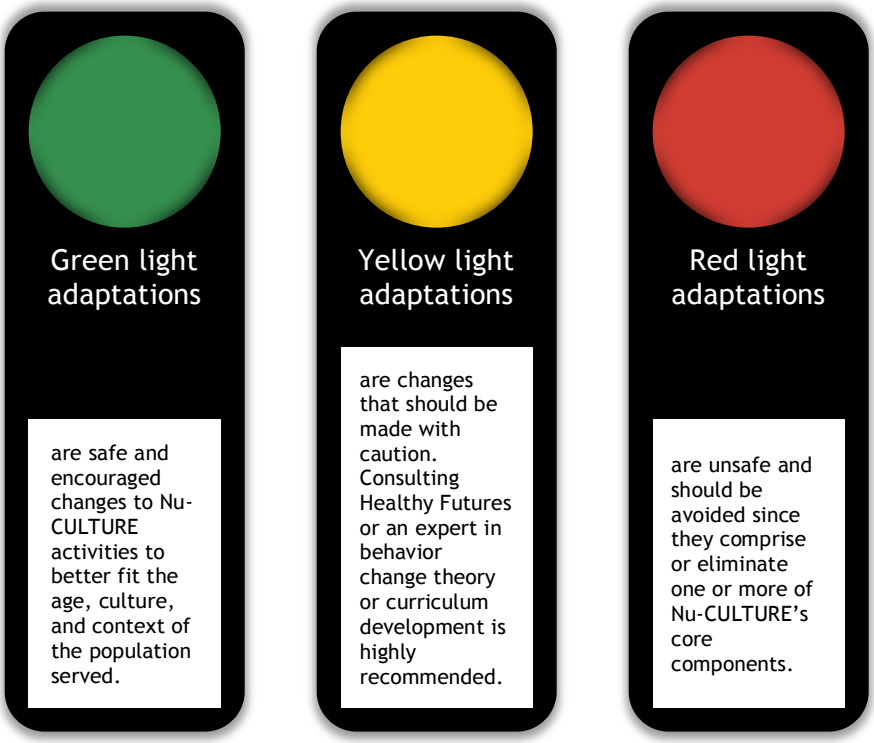
What is the purpose of the Nu-CULTURE Curricula Adaptation Guide?

Educators often make adaptations to curricula in order to have the activities resonate better with the youth they are serving. Please use the following guidance to inform any adaptations you make to the implementation of the Nu-CULTURE curricula.

This guidance was developed using the 2012 adaptation guidelines published by ETR Associates in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Division of Reproductive Health.[1]

Key Terms

Adaptations are changes to the Nu-CULTURE curricula in order to make it more suitable for the youth you serve and/or your organization's capacity.



[1] Firpo-Triplett R and Fuller TR. General Adaptation Guidance: A Guide to Adapting Evidence-Based Sexual Health Curricula. ETR Associates and CDC Division of Reproductive Health. Spring 2012.

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Core components are the key elements or defining characteristics of the Nu-CULTURE curricula. To maintain Nu-CULTURE's effectiveness, its core components must be kept intact when it is replicated or adapted. For a list of the Nu-CULTURE core components, please see the *Introduction*.

> **Core content components** are *what* is being taught, specifically the knowledge, attitudes, values, norms, skills, etc. that are addressed in the programs' learning activities and are most likely to change sexual behaviors.
>
> **Core pedagogical components** are *how* the content is taught, such as teaching methods, strategies and interactions that contribute to the program's effectiveness.
>
> **Core implementation components** are the *logistics* that are responsible for an experience conducive to learning, such as program setting, educator/youth ratio, sequence of sessions.

Fidelity is the faithfulness with which Nu-CULTURE is implemented; that is, how well Nu-CULTURE is implemented without comprising its core components which are essential for the program's effectiveness. For fidelity monitoring tools, please see *Appendix G. Fidelity Checklists*.

Risk factors increase the chance of teen pregnancy (e.g., early sexual debut).

Protective factor decrease the chance of teen pregnancy (e.g., parent-child communication).

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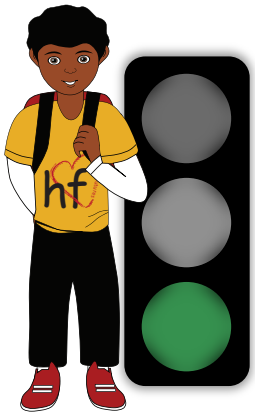

Green Light Adaptations[1]

Green Light Adaptation	*Explanation*	*Examples of Appropriate Adaptations*
Updating and/or **customizing statistics**, resources to access health services, and other information specific to your community.	Health statistics, technology, and services change quickly. Using the most up-to-date, relevant information will help your students make the most informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health.	**Activity 6.7.3** • Including the latest statistics on sexual abuse and cyber assault. • Including resources available in your community.
Customizing Nu-CULTURE role play scenarios (e.g., using wording more reflective of the youth culture).	As long as the skill being practiced and the topics being addressed stay the same (e.g., emotional needs, abstaining from risky behavior, etc.), changing the wording, names, and setting of a role play so it's more relevant to the youth you serve can help them participate more fully and personalize the session.	**Activities 6.3.4, 6.5.5, 6.6.2, 6.7.2** • Using local terminology • Using Latino names in a predominately Latino community. • Changing setting to a local hangout.
Making **Nu-CULTURE activities more interactive**, appealing to different learning styles.	As long as the information remains medically accurate and includes everything that would be covered in a session, interactive activities are a good opportunity for youth to practice what they are learning. Also, because individuals learn in different ways – seeing, hearing, and doing – including a variety of teaching methods will maximize and reinforce learning for all participants.	**Session 6.2** • Adding or substituting an information-gathering field trip to a local health center to learn about puberty.

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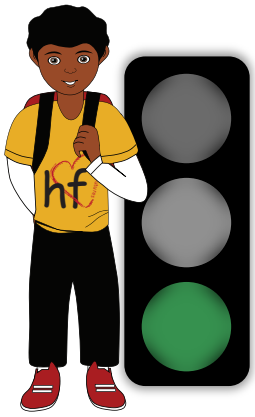

Green Light Adaptations[1]

Green Light Adaptation	*Explanation*	*Examples of Appropriate Adaptations*
Tailoring aspects of Nu-CULTURE instructional approaches or activities to youth culture, developmental stage, gender, sexual orientation.[2]	Students can be distracted or turned off by words and images that don't feel familiar or inclusive of them, which can interfere with learning. Customizing an activity so it is more relevant to youth or more inclusive can help them participate more fully, but it is important that the purpose of the activity remains the same.	**Activities 6.3.4, 6.5.3, 6.5.5, 6.6.2, 6.7.2** • Using non-gender specific names like Pat, Lee, or Dylan so the activity is inclusive of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students. **Activity 6.2.4** • Changing puberty, anatomy, and reproduction talk to a game to appeal to a younger audience. **Activity 6.6.2** • Add contemporary words/slang like "hooking up" to descriptions of sex.

[2] Kirby D, Laris B, Rolleri L. Sex and HIV Education Programs for Youth: Their Impact and Important Characteristics. Washington DC: Healthy Teen Network. 2006.

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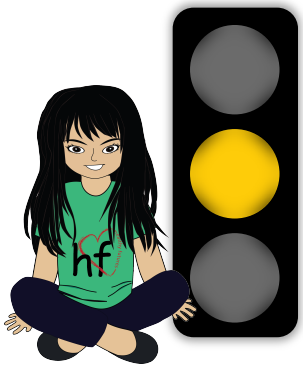

Yellow Light Adaptations[1]

Yellow Light Adaptation	*Explanation*	*Examples of Appropriate Adaptations*
Changing the order of Nu-CULTURE sessions or **sequence** of activities.	The Nu-CULTURE sessions and activities are presented in a particular, logical order, with each session building on previous ones. Changing the order of sessions or sequence of activities could decrease youths' ability to understand and master the information and skills being covered. It is important that youth receive basic information, perceive that they are at risk, and develop supporting attitudes, norms, and motivations **before** learning new skills.	Teaching decision-making skills early in a program to groups that may need more practice time. • Implementing **Activity 6.6.3 Decision-Making Scale: Abstinence in an earlier lesson.** Switching the order of a risk perception activity and a basic information activity. • Implementing **Activity 6.7.3 Sexual Abuse and Cyber Assault in an earlier lesson.**
Adding activities to Nu-CULTURE sessions to **reinforce** learning.	Nu-CULTURE provides a variety of activities that help to convey, reinforce, and personalize learning. Adding activities to reinforce messages may be possible. Although it can be helpful to include additional activities to meet the specific needs of your community, activities should reinforce positive behaviors. Adding too many activities could make Nu-CULTURE too long and create implementation problems.	Adding a short follow up activity in which youth briefly name one thing they learned. Adding a review quiz after a long break. • Using relevant topics from **Activity 6.8.3 to do a review game after a school vacation.** After **Activity 6.6.5** when students practice refusal skills, asking each student to jot down one thing they will do differently next time they are resisting pressure to have sex.

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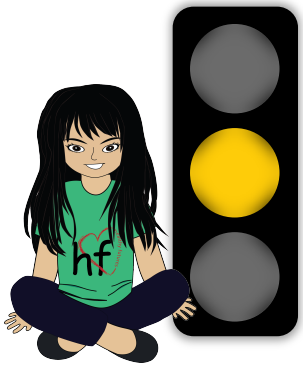

Yellow Light Adaptations[1]

Yellow Light Adaptation	*Explanation*	*Examples of Appropriate Adaptations*
Adding activities to Nu-CULTURE sessions to address additional **risk and protective factors**.	Every community is different and there might be a particular risk or protective factor that is important for your population that is not addressed in Nu-CULTURE.	Adding activities that address additional determinants such as "appropriate uses of technology" in a community with youth who are experiencing high levels of sexting or "power in relationships" in a community with youth who are experiencing a high level of dating violence.
Replacing or supplementing Nu-CULTURE videos with other videos. **Replacing or supplementing Nu-CULTURE activities** with videos.	If a video does not seem appropriate, relevant, or current for your students or the circumstances do not permit viewing, another video or interactive activity may be substituted or added. Care must be taken that the new video or activity is culturally appropriate and addresses the same skills/topics as the original.	**Activities 6.2.4, 6.5.3, 6.7.3** • Replacing videos with newer, more culturally relevant versions. • Including a follow up discussion that updates outdated content or asks students to make suggestions about how a video could be updated. **Session 6.6** • Using a video about perception of risk associated with sexual activity that's consistent with the original activity.

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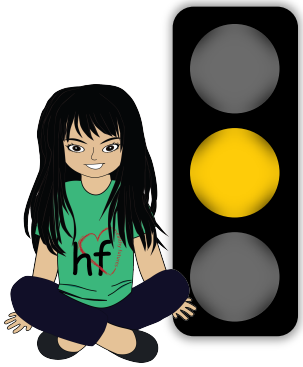

Yellow Light Adaptations[1]

Yellow Light Adaptation	*Explanation*	*Examples of Appropriate Adaptations*
Implementing Nu-CULTURE with a **different population** (i.e., ethnic or cultural group).	Nu-CULTURE was developed for a diverse population of White, Hispanic, Asian, and Black youth in Northeastern Massachusetts. Nu-CULTURE can be adapted for use with only one of these groups or other cultural groups, but care must be taken that each activity is reviewed and potentially adapted to be appropriate for the new population.	Adapting activities for a predominantly Native American population. Turning a case scenario set in an urban environment into one set in a rural environment.
Implementing Nu-CULTURE in a **different setting** (i.e., clinical setting, community organization)	Nu-CULTURE was developed for implementation in the middle school classroom setting. Each session is designed to be completed in 50 minutes with approximately 30 students. It can be adapted for other settings and size groups. Take care that each activity is reviewed and potentially adapted to be appropriate for the new setting and group size.	Combining sessions to fit a longer period in a community setting. Substituting **Activity 6.3.2 small group (3-5 students) gender reflection** with a similar activity designed to meet the same objectives with a larger group **of 10 or more** youth.

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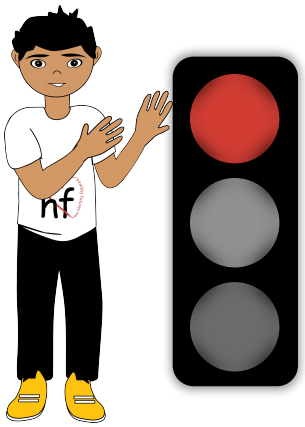

Red Light Adaptations[1]

Red Light Adaptation	*Explanation*	*Examples of Appropriate Adaptations*
Shortening the Nu-CULTURE program.	Each risk and protective factor addressed in Nu-CULTURE is addressed by multiple activities. Reducing the number of activities may have a negative effect on behavioral outcomes.	Shortening the Nu-CULTURE program to less than 8 days or the sessions to less than 50 minutes would not give youth sufficient time to absorb the information and practice new skills.
Reducing or eliminating Nu-CULTURE activities that allow youth to **personalize risk**.	Nu-CULTURE has activities that help youth personally understand the risks they face. Personalization of topics are key components of the health behavior change theories on which Nu-CULTURE is based. Reducing or eliminating these activities would undermine one of the main ways Nu-CULTURE achieves positive outcomes.	Removing **Activities 6.1.6 & 6.1.7** which allows youth to explore decision-making and consequences for risky decisions.
Reducing or eliminating opportunities for **skill practice**.	Knowledge alone is not enough to change behavior. Behavior change requires repeated practice, often with the support and feedback of the educator.	**Removing role play Activities 6.3.4, 6.4.4 and 6.6.5** designed to give youth an opportunity to practice skills.
Contradicting, competing with, or diluting **Nu-CULTURE goals.**	Nu-CULTURE is designed to address specific health goals. If you add additional goals, they may start to compete with, or in some cases, contradict, Nu-CULTURE's goals.	Adding a goal to reduce gang violence to the Nu-CULTURE program designed to delay sexual activity and reduce teen pregnancy. While reducing gang violence is a significant goal on its own, it is not a modest addition to Nu-CULTURE.