In Hong Kong, premarital, unprotected sex is common among early school leavers. Although sex education can to some extent provide information about safe sex and teach the skills needed, the stigma associated with sex in a wider social context prevents this group from practising it. Chinese culture has historically denigrated premarital or extramarital sex, with women’s virginity and sexual fidelity being highly prized. Based on the belief that the stigmatisation of sex has resulted from social and cultural values and the filtering of public policy into the daily lives of young people (e.g. a lack of sex education outside school systems), a number of cognitive and behavioural strategies have been developed for adolescents as a means of coping with the stress and social pressure they face in this regard. These strategies aim to help individuals draw a boundary between others’ expectation and personal preference. By encouraging young people to articulate and express love in ways other than through sex, and by empowering them by, for example, improving their existential and contingency control, they will be able to overcome the stigmatisation associated with sex, and this, in turn, will be effective in promoting safe sex.