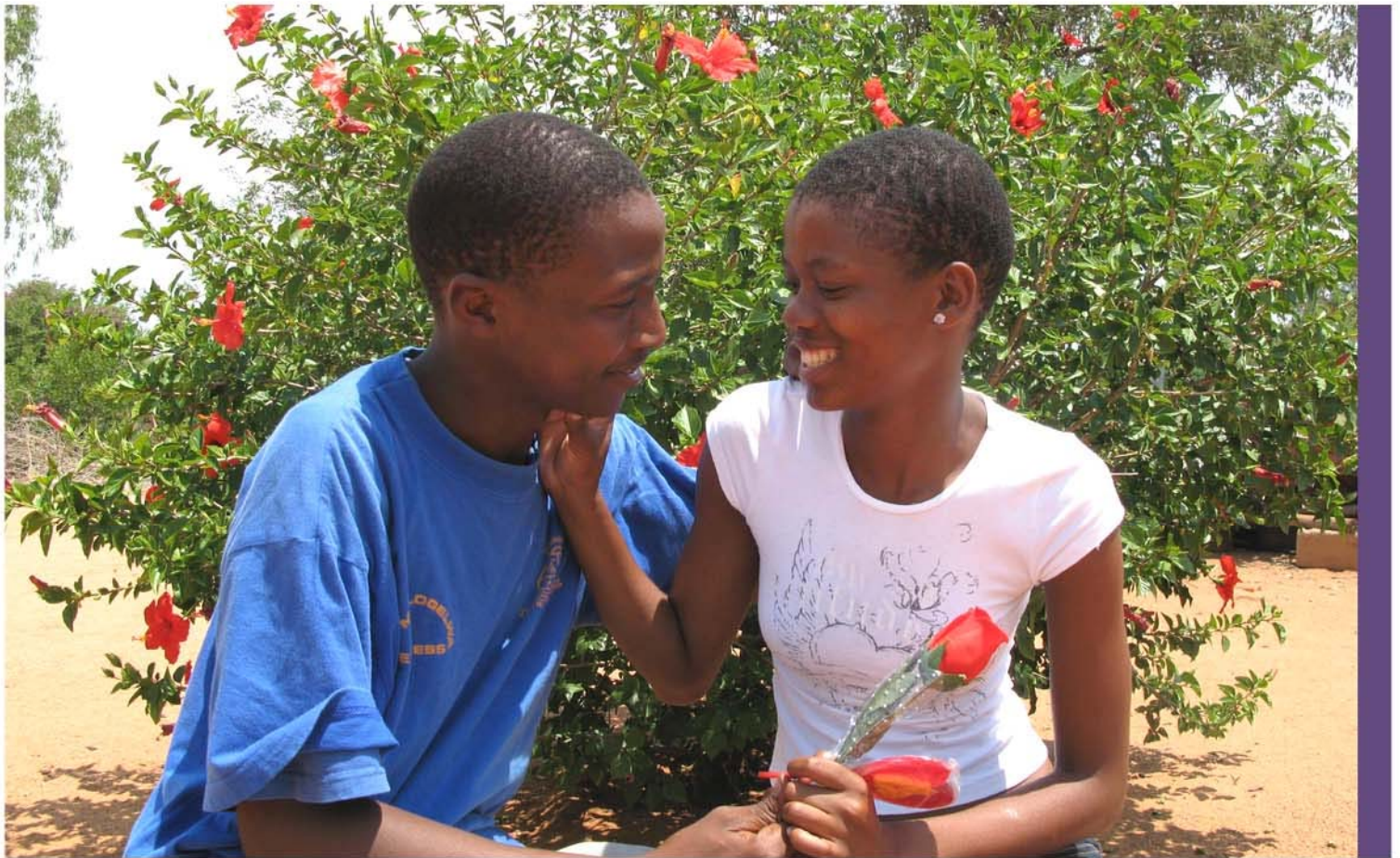


OUTREACH GUIDE 3

Assertiveness and peer pressure



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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



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A. INTRODUCTION TO ASSERTIVENESS

Learning to be assertive

- Young people are often taught to obey adults and do what they say.
- Young people may feel that it is not their place to speak out and express their opinion or feeling.
- The problem with this type of education is that young people may not be prepared to deal with pressures on them to have sex.
- They may even be sexually abused by adults who take advantage of their authority and submissiveness.

Passiveness can lead to abuse

- Young girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse because they may feel insecure and unsure of themselves.
- If young people feel insecure they are more likely to give in to peer pressure and adopt harmful behaviours.
- If young people learn to be more assertive, they will be able to resist peer pressure and sexual abuse.

Assess situations before reacting

- Young people do not only need to learn to be assertive, but they must also to assess situations so that they know how to recognize negative peer pressure and coercion by abusive adults.
- Encouraging assertiveness may contradict the values of some families where children are not encouraged to speak up for themselves or refuse a request from an adult.
- Young people need to be able to understand that in certain circumstances, being assertive can help them resist pressure to have sex, drink alcohol or be sexually abused by adults who abuse their authority.

EXERCISE 1 – Communicating assertively

OBJECTIVE

To better understand the different ways of responding to difficult situations.

BACKGROUND

There are three common ways that people react to difficult situations: being passive, being aggressive, and being assertive. Since there are different ways of reacting, young people have to choose what the most appropriate response should be in different situations.

MATERIALS

None

TIME

60 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1

Read the following story aloud or get one of the participants to read it aloud:

Gloria has been waiting for a combi for quite a long time and is concerned her mother will be worried if she comes home late. Finally one comes along that is going in her direction and that has three places. Just as she is about to climb in, three teenage boys push her aside and squeeze into the crowded combi telling her to wait for the next one because they are in a hurry.

STEP 2

Ask participants to say what they think Gloria should do about the situation.

STEP 3

Read out loud (or write on a blackboard or flip chart paper if available) the following possible actions Gloria could take:

- Just ignore the boys and patiently wait for the next combi.
- Insult the boys loudly and keep them from closing the combi door.
- Tell the boys that they are very rude and that they should give her a seat.

STEP 4

Explain to participants that there are three types of reactions to such situations: one is to be “passive” and not do anything, one is to be “aggressive” and let your anger show and one is to be “assertive” and state what you want and how you feel. Ask participants to match the types of reactions to the three reactions Gloria might take.

- Just ignore the boys and patiently wait for the next combi. (passive)
- Insult the boys loudly and keep them from closing the combi door. (aggressive)
- Tell the boys that they are very rude and that they should give her a seat. (assertive)

STEP 5

Have the participants describe what the advantages and disadvantages are of each of the reactions. (If there are enough people divide them into three groups and have each group discuss one of the reactions and report back their conclusions to the others).

STEP 6

Compare the conclusions of the participants with the following:

- **Passive reaction:** Not expressing your own needs and feelings means they will likely be ignored. Being passive increases the chances of being abused. There are times being passive is recommended if an assessment is made that

not being passive might make things worse or violent.

- **Aggressive reaction:** Threatening, insulting or humiliating others in a loud voice may be satisfying, but it may cause others to respond aggressively themselves and make things worse. It may feel good to let out anger but no one wins a shouting match.
- **Assertive reaction:** Asking for what you want and saying how you feel in a firm but not angry way lets people know that you will not be taken advantage of. It is the best way to get what you want since you make it known what you want without irritating others.

STEP 7

Stimulate a discussion by asking the questions listed below. (If there are enough participants, have them divide up into groups and discuss one or two questions and report back to the others.)

- *What is your experience with acting passively?*
- *What is your experience with acting aggressively?*
- *What is your experience with acting assertively?*
- *In what situations would you act passively?*
- *In what situations would you act assertively?*
- *How do people usually act to aggressive reactions?*
- *Describe any situations where people reacted badly to speaking assertively.*

STEP 8

Summarize the discussion.

EXERCISE 2 – Assessing assertiveness

OBJECTIVE

To have each participant evaluate to what degree they are assertive.

BACKGROUND

The better a person understands their own behaviour and reactions in different situations, the more they will be able to control it. This exercise has participants consider common situations and evaluate how they would react to it.

MATERIALS

None

TIME

30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1

Read aloud or write on a blackboard or flip chart paper the following list of behaviours and ask participants to count the number of examples from the list that match their own behaviour.

- *If I disagree with a friend, I say so even if it means that they aren't going to like it.*
- *I ask for help if I am hurt or confused.*
- *I tell people that I don't like drinking alcohol even if it is not a popular idea.*
- *I let people know if they have disappointed me.*
- *If a friend has borrowed something from me and is taking time to return it, I remind them.*
- *I say no if classmates want to copy my homework or test answers.*
- *If a teacher is unfairly treating me, I politely say how I feel.*
- *If a relative is asking me to do too many tasks not leaving me enough time to study I tell them.*
- *I ask my friends for a favour when I need one.*
- *When someone asks me to do something unreasonable, I refuse.*
- *I express my views on important things even if others disagree.*
- *When I don't understand something, I ask a question.*
- *When I don't want to be kissed, I say no firmly and clearly.*
- *If someone is making rude comments about sex, I tell them I am offended and to stop.*
- *When people hurt my feelings I let them know how I feel.*

STEP 2

Tell participants to judge their own assertiveness by adding up the number behaviours from the list which match their own. Tell the participant if they have chosen less than five of the behaviours on the list to match their own behaviour, they are not very assertive. If they have chosen five to 10 behaviours on the list, they are moderately assertive. If they have chosen over 10 they are very assertive.

STEP 3

Ask participants the following questions to stimulate a discussion:

- *If there are any behaviours on the list you disagree with, explain why?*
- *What would be other examples of assertive behaviour?*
- *What are the advantages of being assertive?*
- *What disadvantages might there be to being assertive?*



Being passive or not responding firmly and clearly when asked for sex can cause problems for girls who are taken advantage of by men.

EXERCISE 3 – Power and powerlessness

OBJECTIVE

To better understand the difference between power and powerlessness.

BACKGROUND

People are often abused physically or sexually because one person uses power and strength to intimidate the other person who feels powerless and weak. This exercise has participants explore different stories illustrating power and powerlessness.

MATERIALS

None

TIME

30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1

Ask participants to divide up into pairs. If there are boys and girls have them pair off together as much as possible. Explain that each pair will be asked to illustrate, in a dramatic scene, different situations. Give the example of one person who is shouting angrily and the other person is sulking in silence.

STEP 2

Assign each pair one of the following dramatic scenes and ask them to act out the two roles for 15 seconds in front of the others. Offer explanations to those who might not be familiar with what the words mean. Point out that the first word describes a powerful person and the second word describes a powerless person.

- *Attacking/fearful*
- *Nagging/withdrawing*
- *Accusing/guilty*
- *Warning/fearful*

- *Exploding/silent but angry*
- *Revengeful/surprised*
- *Insulting/hurt feelings*
- *Sarcastic/feeling sad*
- *Violent/defensive*
- *Drunk/avoiding*

STEP 3

Now ask each pair to present the same scene but to change the roles so that the powerful person plays the part of the powerless one.

STEP 4

Stimulate a discussion by asking the following questions:

- *How did it feel to be the powerful person?*
- *How did it feel to be the powerless person?*
- *How did it feel to change from one role to the other?*
- *Why do you think more boys played the powerful person at first?*
- *Why do you think we did this exercise?*

STEP 5

Summarize the discussion.

EXERCISE 4 – Characteristics of being passive, aggressive or assertive

OBJECTIVE

To see the differences between behaviour that is passive, aggressive or assertive.

BACKGROUND

The more people understand what it means to be passive, aggressive or assertive, the more they will be able to control their behaviour and see the advantages of finding a balance between the problems of being too passive or too aggressive and the advantages of being assertive.

MATERIALS

None

TIME

30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1

Ask participants to make a list of feelings and results from “passive” behaviour. Give them the example of “helplessness”.

STEP 2

Compare the list given by the participants with the following list:

- Resentment
- Disappointment
- Unfair treatment
- Don't get what want
- Loneliness
- Violated rights

STEP 3

Ask participants to make a list of feelings and results from “aggressive” behaviour. Give them the example of: “anger.”

STEP 4

Compare the list given by the participants with the following list:

- Frustration
- Guilt
- Domination
- Physical violence
- Resentment, situation worsens
- Bitterness

STEP 5

Ask participants to make a list of feelings and results from “assertive” behaviour. Give them the example of: “self-confident.”

STEP 6

Compare the list given by the participants with the following list:

- Less hostility
- Feel good about self
- In control
- Respected by others
- Rights more likely respected
- Abused less

STEP 7

Another way of doing the same exercise is to write the words “Passive,” “Aggressive” and “Assertive” in large letters on cards and attach them to a wall or place them on a

floor. Write all the other words also on cards then ask the participants one by one to place them under one of the three words and give their reasons why.

STEP 8

Summarize the lesson learnt from the exercise. Some points to consider:

- Being too passive doesn't allow you to get what you want or need.
- Being too aggressive can make things worse and annoy others.
- Being assertive lets people know what your needs are without annoying them.



Heated arguments, especially after drinking alcohol, usually don't help a situation. Being assertive and letting the other person know what you want and how you feel, firmly but calmly, works best.

EXERCISE 5 – Recognizing assertiveness

OBJECTIVE

To be able to recognize passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour.

BACKGROUND

Being able to judge what behaviour is passive, aggressive or assertive is important in deciding how to behave. By considering common situations illustrating the different types of behaviour, participants can better understand their own reactions and behaviours.

MATERIALS

None

TIME

30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1

Read the following definitions:

Passive behaviour: *Not expressing your own needs and feelings and likely being ignored.*

Aggressive behaviour: *Threatening, insulting or humiliating others in a loud voice.*

Assertive behaviour: *Asking for what you want and saying how you feel in a firm but not angry way, and letting people know that you will not be taken advantage of.*

STEP 2

Read aloud one at a time (or write on a black board or flip chart paper) the following behaviours without the word in brackets. Ask participants to say whether the behaviour should be considered “passive,” “aggressive” or “assertive.”

- Saying you are not comfortable being touched in an intimate way (assertive)
- Letting someone touch you even though it makes you feel very uncomfortable (passive)
- Being angry with parents and going to a festival against their wishes (aggressive)
- Telling someone they have to do something or you’ll beat them (aggressive)
- Running off to cry alone (passive)
- Telling someone they are stupid and crazy (aggressive)
- Suggesting to others that a situation was your fault even if it wasn’t (passive)
- Speaking calmly but firmly about what you think your rights are (assertive)
- Asking what others think about a situation when presenting your views (assertive)
- Shouting louder than others who disagree (aggressive)
- Hanging your head in silence (passive)
- Saying “no thank you” forcefully and moving away from a person (assertive)

STEP 3

Stimulate a discussion by asking the following questions:

- Which behaviours would you recommend and why?
- Which behaviours would you not recommend and why?
- What are the advantages of “assertive behaviours”?

STEP 4

Summarize the discussion and offer the following conclusion:

An assertive reaction like asking for what you want and saying how you feel in a firm but not angry way lets people know that you will not be taken advantage of. It is the best way to get what you want since you make it known what you want without irritating others.

EXERCISE 6 – Choosing reactions

OBJECTIVE

To consider different behaviour situations to find out whether “passive,” aggressive” or “assertive” behaviour is commonly practiced.

BACKGROUND

There are usually different ways that a person can respond to different situations. Some of them are to the person’s advantage and some are to their disadvantage.

MATERIALS

None

TIME

30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1

Read the behaviour situation and the three examples of ways that people can respond to them. Have each participant write down which one they would choose. (If there are no pens and papers, have each person raise their hand to signal their choice of “a,” “b,” or “c” after reading them all three options.

1. *Your best friend often goes to shebeens to meet people of the opposite sex and invites you to come along. Choose one:*
 - a. *Go along even though you don’t feel like it.*
 - b. *Tell your friend to make something of their life besides getting drunk.*
 - c. *Talk to your friend and explain that you would prefer to do something else together.*
2. *A person of the opposite sex is interested in you and brings you a nice gift. Choose one:*
 - a. *Take the gift even though you fear being obligated.*
 - b. *Throw the gift back in their face and tell them to leave you alone.*
 - c. *Explain that you are uncomfortable about receiving gifts and suggest you get to know each other first.*
3. *You want to continue studies but your mother says she has no money. An older man is interested in paying your studies in exchange for sex. Choose one:*

- a. *Give up on your idea of studying.*
 - b. *Argue with your mother and threaten to take the man's money.*
 - c. *Talk to your mother about the importance of education and how bad you would feel being forced to have sex to be able to study.*
4. *Your best friend tries to get you to go out with another friend who you don't like. Choose one:*
- a. *Go out with the person so as not to displease your friend.*
 - b. *Tell your friend you don't want to be friends anymore with a person with such bad judgment of people.*
 - c. *Explain to your friend why you don't want to see the person.*
5. *You need money and someone suggests that you try to resell stolen things. Choose one:*
- a. *Agree to do it but always find excuses why you can't.*
 - b. *Tell the person they should be sent to jail for such a stupid idea.*
 - c. *Thank the person for trying to help but say you want to look for more honest ways of getting money.*

STEP 2

Ask participants to add up the numbers of times they answered "a," "b," or "c."

Explain the following:

- If you answered mostly "a" it means that you respond to situations in a passive way. You do not assert your own rights and needs. You put others before yourself and give in to what they want easily. You remain silent when something bothers you. (passive behaviour)
- If you answered mostly "b" it means that you respond to situations in an aggressive way. You stand up for your rights without thinking of the other person. You hurt others and you often do not talk about your feelings. Irritating others can turn result in them turning against you. (aggressive behaviour)
- If you answered mostly "c" it means that you respond to situations in an assertive way. You stand up for your rights without putting others down. You respect yourself as well as the other person. You are confident but not too pushy. You talk about your feelings. You are able to communicate well. (assertive behaviour)

STEP 3

Stimulate a discussion by asking the following questions:

- *What do you think of the way the different reactions are described?*
- *What similar situations have you been confronted with in the past?*
- *How did you react to those situations and what was the response of others?*



Don't be afraid to be firm about doing something you don't feel right about like taking alcohol. It is important to be polite but firm.

EXERCISE 7 – Features of passive, aggressive or assertive behaviour

OBJECTIVE

To define passive, aggressive and assertive behaviours.

BACKGROUND

People often have emotional reactions to situations when there is tension. A common feature of young women in particular is to be silent and go along so as not to cause trouble. Young men can react to the fear they feel from the tension by being angry and tough. Understanding what the different features of passive, aggressive, and assertive behaviour helps to use your emotions and reactions to your advantage.

MATERIALS

None

TIME

30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1

Read each of the following characteristics of behaviours and ask participants to give an example from their own lives of behaviour to illustrate each. If there is a large

group, break it up into three separate groups and give each group a topic to discuss (passive, aggressive and assertive). Report back their findings.

Passive behaviours

- Hoping to get what you want without actually having to say it, or leaving it to others to guess what you want.
- Letting others decide for you.
- Taking no action to assert your own rights
- Putting others first at your own expense.
- Giving in to what others want.
- Remaining silent when something bothers you.
- Apologizing a lot.
- Acting submissive by talking quietly, laughing nervously, looking at the ground.

Aggressive behaviour

- Expressing your feelings, opinions and desires in a way that threatens or punishes the other person.
- Standing up for your rights with no thought for the other person.
- Putting yourself first at the expense of others.
- Overpowering others with authority or physical force.
- Reaching your own goals at all costs
- Dominating by shouting, demanding, not listening to others, blaming others and threatening or fighting.

Assertive behaviour

- Telling someone exactly what you want in a way that is respectful and polite.
- Pointing out your own rights without demanding them in an angry way.
- Listening to other points of view and talking about differences.
- Expressing both positive and negative feelings.
- Being confident but not pushy.
- Staying balanced by saying how you feel as well as being respectful of others.

STEP 2

Stimulate a discussion by asking the following questions:

- *How did you feel when you reacted in a passive way?*
- *What happened after acting in a passive way?*
- *How did you feel when you reacted in an aggressive way?*
- *What happened after acting in an aggressive way?*
- *How did you feel when you reacted in an assertive way?*
- *What happened after acting in an assertive way?*

STEP 3

Summarize with the following points:

- Men and women often react to tension in different ways.
- Women can be silent and go along so as not to cause trouble.
- Men can react to fear by being angry and touch.
- Understanding how you react to tension can help avoid problems.

B. INTRODUCTION TO PEER PRESSURE

Prepare for pressure for sex

- Pressure to have sex may come from many directions.
- There is a need to develop skills for resisting pressure for sex.
- There is a need to learn to identify and control pressure for sex.
- Pressures on girls are different from pressures on boys.
- Parents may want children to behave differently than they do.
- Peer pressure can be a bad influence leading to naughty behaviour.
- Peer pressure can be a good influence increasing confidence for resisting pressure for sex.
- Pressure to have sex can have an influence on having sex.
- It is better to understand pressure to have sex to resist having sex.

Reasons to resist pressure for sex

- What may look and sound good now may lead to problems later.
- Know how you feel and resist the temptation to go along with others
- Know the right thing to do but lack the will to do it.
- Making decisions without thinking are often the wrong decisions.
- Wanting to belong is not a reason to go against what is good for you.

Peer pressure to have sex

- Peer pressure is when young people are influenced by other young people.
- Peer pressure is so strong because young people want to fit in.
- Young people care about what others their own age think about them.



Men and boys will often try anything to convince a girl to have sex with them and even force them if they refuse. Young women have to be careful how they respond to those pressures.

EXERCISE 8 – Role playing pressure to have sex

OBJECTIVE

To recognize subtle and overt pressures to have sex.

BACKGROUND

Men and boys put a lot of pressure on girls to have sex with them. Sometimes it is very obvious like physically forcing the girl to have sex or threatening them. In other cases the pressure is less obvious like offering a lift in a car or a small present. Girls need to learn to recognize and deal with pressures for sex. Boys need to learn to respect girls and accept their right to refuse to have sex.

MATERIALS

None

TIME

30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1

Role playing is when people pretend to be the people in a situation. They make up the conversation and act out what happens between them. Usually girls play the parts of girls and boys play boys but it is possible for participants to play the parts of the opposite sex. In fact, it is interesting to see boys play the parts of girls and girls to play the parts of boys and men. Ask participants to act out the following stories one at a time. After each one hold a short discussion by asking the following questions:

- *What do you think of the way the girl behaved?*
- *What do you think of the way the boy or man behaved?*
- *What do you think will happen next?*
- *What should the girl or the boy have done differently?*

Story 1

A girl and a boy who are both 15 years old had been sneaking out to meet each other at night. They had friends who had already had sex and were both curious about it. The girl was feeling a lot of pressure not to have sex from her parents. The boy was encouraged by his friends to have sex. Out alone at night one evening the two discuss whether they should have sex or not.

Story 2

The girl was crying as she told the story to her best friend. She had a boyfriend who she loved very much and dreamed of marrying one day. He was always putting pressure on her to have sex and she always refused. He had just told her that she either had to have sex with him or he was going to find another girlfriend who would. The best friend had already had sex and was encouraging her friend to put off having sex.

Story 3

The boy has brought presents for the girl. He has told her he loves her. He feels that he has been very patient waiting for her to have sex with him. They are finally alone at his parents' house with no one else there and he is getting angry because he wants sex and starts to force himself on the girl. She politely resists, but he thinks she is just pretending to but really wants to have sex.

Story 4

The older neighbour was being very nice to the teenage girl. She felt a little uncomfortable when he told her that she had become a very beautiful and sexy woman. He told the girl that his wife was away and he had a nice gift for her in his house if she came with him. She had conflicting feelings. She was brought up to obey her elders and she was curious about the gift and about sex. At the same time, she was in an abstinence club and had pledged to not have sex until marriage.

STEP 2

Stimulate a discussion about the lessons learnt from the role plays by asking the following questions:

- *What can girls do to resist pressure to have sex?*
- *Why should boys respect girls and not pressure them to have sex?*
- *What examples can you give of situations similar to the ones described in the stories?*

STEP 3

Summarize the lessons learnt in the exercise with the following points:

- Girls face pressures to have sex from many places.
- Girls need skills to be able to recognize the pressures and the confidence to resist them.
- Boys need to respect girls and accept that they have the right to refuse sex.



Boys may think that the girl owes him sex if she accepts his gifts but she doesn't owe him anything. It is best to refuse gifts and offers of sex firmly and clearly to make sure there is no confusion.

EXERCISE 9 – Reasons why people have sex

OBJECTIVE

To better understand reasons why people decide to have sex.

BACKGROUND

There are many reasons why people end up having sex. The reasons vary from being in love to wanting to have babies after marriage.

MATERIALS

None

TIME

30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1

Explain that there are many different kinds of pressure to have sex and young people need to understand them to resist them. Read the following descriptions of the different reasons and pressures to have sex. Some of them are positive.

- Emotional: Feel a strong love
- Social: Perception that it is the cool thing to do
- Material: To receive money or gifts for sex
- Mental: Made decision to use sex to keep a partner
- Spiritual: God created sex for married people to make children
- Physical: Natural pressure in bodies to have sex, especially among boys

STEP 2

Ask participants to consider each of the reasons or pressures to have sex and discuss each with the questions listed below. If there are enough participants, divide them into groups and assign a topic to each group to discuss.

Emotional: Feel a strong love

- *How do people know they are really in love?*
- *Why do boys pretend to be in love when they are not?*
- *How do people feel when the person they love breaks up with them after having sex?*

Social: Perception that it is the cool thing to do

- *Why do some people think it is cool have sex?*
- *Why do some people feel more grown up when they have sex?*
- *What is the influence of sexy clothes and sexy films and pictures on wanting to have sex?*

Material: To receive money or gifts for sex

- *Why do girls accept money or gifts for sex?*
- *What are the disadvantages of accepting money and gifts for sex?*
- *Why do boys think girls "owe" them sex if they accept gifts but don't give them sex?*

Mental: Made decision to use sex to keep a partner

- *What is wrong with having sex with someone just to keep them happy?*
- *What is wrong with boys promising to marry a girl to have sex with her but not really meaning it?*
- *Why do people decide to have sex to feel like an adult?*

Spiritual: God created sex for married people to make children

- *Why is sex the most beautiful expression of love between two people who are married?*
- *What is the difference between having sex with a stranger and making love with the person you want to spend the rest of your life with?*

Physical: Natural pressure in bodies to have sex especially among boys

- *What is wrong with boys forcing themselves on girls because they are feeling strong pressures to have sex?*
- *Why don't boys always respect girls who tell them they don't want to have sex?*



Deciding whether or not to have sex is one of the biggest decisions young people face. It is best to get to know the person very well first and wait until marriage before having sex.

EXERCISE 10 – Mixed social pressures on sex

OBJECTIVE

To help better understand contradictions regarding social pressures to have and not have sex.

BACKGROUND

Young people are understandably often confused about their sexual behavioural choices. On one hand they live in a society that is very overtly sexual. They maybe constantly solicited to have sex, they see married adults around them getting drunk and having casual sex with strangers. They see their peers very interested in having sex for the benefits. They also are exposed to strong moralistic pressure to avoid having sex until marriage and remaining faithful afterwards.

MATERIALS

None

TIME

30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1

Explain the following terms:

Double standard is when a behaviour is considered acceptable for one group but unacceptable for another. For example, men may think it is acceptable for them to be unfaithful to their wives but don't think it is acceptable for their wives to be unfaithful to them.

Hypocritical means pretending to have virtues or moral values one does not have. For example someone might say they are faithful to their wife and don't believe in sex before marriage, but then have sex with an unmarried young person.

STEP 2

Have the participants discuss each of the following examples of double standards. (If there are many participants, they can be divided up into groups and be given one or two each to discuss and report back to others.)

Double standard 1:

- *Boys are encouraged to become a man by having sex.*
- *Girls are encouraged to remain virgins until marriage.*

Double standard 2:

- *Some parents expect their teenaged children to abstain from sex.*
- *Some parents can engage in casual sex with strangers.*

Double standard 3:

- *Some parents get drunk and become sexually violent.*
- *Some parents restrict their teenage children from having sex.*

Double standard 4:

- *A father may be very protective of their teenage daughters.*
- *The same father may give money and gifts to teenage girls for sex.*

Double standard 5:

- *A male teacher may be shy about teaching sex education to students.*
- *The same male teacher may not be shy about pressuring a female student to have sex for good grades.*

Double standard 6:

- *A young man can have sex with five different girlfriends.*
- *The same young man considers a girl with more than one sexual partner a prostitute.*

STEP 3

Stimulate a discussion on double standards by asking the following questions:

- *Why do double standards exist?*
- *Why are double standards unfair?*
- *What is the problem with double standards?*
- *What can be done about reducing double standards?*
- *How can young people reconcile pressures not to have sex in a society that is very sexually active?*

STEP 4

Summarize the discussion and mention the following points:

- Double standards tend to be unfair to women and girls
- Double standards keep sexual realities hidden
- Double standards prevent open and frank discussion of sex
- Double standards can contribute to sexual risk behaviour

EXERCISE 11 – What kinds of pressures exist to have sex

OBJECTIVE

To help better understand the different kinds of pressures to have sex.

BACKGROUND

There are many different influences that act on young people and encourage them to have sex. Some are from their friends or people like them. Some of the pressure comes from society and some of it comes from the way sex is seen in the media (radio, television and advertisements). It can be more difficult to resist having sex if all these influences seem to be encouraging people to have sex.

MATERIALS

None

TIME

30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1

Explain that there are four main types of pressure to have sex: Individual pressure, peer pressure, social pressure, media pressure.

STEP 2

Read or have someone read the description of the types of pressure to have sex and ask the questions listed below each description to stimulate a discussion. (If there are many participants, have them break up into groups of 10 and give each one a discussion topic. Have them report the points of their discussion back to the others.)

Individual pressure:

A man or woman tries to convince someone of the opposite sex to have sex with them by buying them alcohol, offering them gifts or money, telling them they love them or threatening or forcing them.

Discussion questions:

- *What is the most common type of individual pressure to have sex?*
- *What is the best way to respond to individual pressure to have sex if you don't want to have sex?*
- *How do people usually react when pressure to have sex is resisted?*
- *What can be done if the pressure to have sex persists?*

Peer pressure:

A group of people who are the same age, live in the same place and have the same interests, are called peers. This group of people may share the same style of dressing and like the same kind of music. They may also think sex is cool and some may give the impression they are sexually active when they are not.

Discussion questions:

- *Why do so many people think it is cool to have sex?*
- *Why do some people pretend they are sexually active when they are not?*
- *What is the best way to resist pressure from other people your age to have sex?*
- *Why do some people resist peer pressure to have sex but finally give in and have sex?*

Social pressure:

In a community there may be many situations where interest in sex is expressed. It could be in a bar or shebeen. It could be in a market or school or it could be just walking down the street.

Discussion questions:

- *Why is there so much pressure to have sex in places where alcohol is taken or bought?*
- *What influences are there in schools to have sex?*
- *What other influences are there to have sex?*
- *What can be done to resist the general influences to have sex?*

Media pressure:

Radio, television and billboard advertisements often show images of sexy young people. Television dramas will feature unmarried men and women having sex. Advertisements will attract attention by showing young girls in sexy clothes. There are usually more examples in the mass media of people having casual sex than those who are trying to be abstinent and faithful.

Discussion questions:

- *What examples of sex have you seen on television or in advertisements?*
- *What is the effect of sexy images on television or in advertisements on people?*
- *Why do some people want to imitate behaviour they see on television and advertisements?*
- *What can be done to reduce the influence of sexy images on television and in advertisements on people?*



The temptation of exchanging sex for gifts and money may be strong but must be resisted especially if the couple doesn't know each other well. The other person may have other partners they are keeping hidden.

EXERCISE 12 – Responding to persuasion

OBJECTIVE

To practice responding to pressures to have sex.

BACKGROUND

There are different approaches that people will use to persuade others to have sex with them. There are different ways of replying that make it clear that there is no interest in having sex. In some cases, a person might want to remain friends with the person asking for sex and may want to reply in a way that allows them to remain friends.

MATERIALS

None

TIME

30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1

Ask participants to make a list of reasons someone might give when trying to persuade another person to have sex with them.

STEP 2

Have participants compare the list they have made with the following list:

- *You're just afraid.*
- *Everyone's doing it.*
- *There's no problem.*
- *You know I love you.*
- *Don't worry.*

- *Do it or goodbye.*
- *You owe it to me.*
- *I will find someone else if you don't.*
- *You can trust me.*
- *It feels so good.*
- *It will make you feel grown up.*
- *We're getting married anyway.*
- *You're old enough now.*

STEP 3

Ask the participants to come up with a list of replies that can be made to refuse sex.

STEP 4

Have participants compare the list they have made with the following list:

- *No, I really mean no.*
- *No, thank you.*
- *No, I have to go now.*
- *I am not ready yet.*
- *Maybe we can talk about it later.*
- *If you really loved me you wouldn't pressure me.*
- *It's not a good time for me.*
- *I am not feeling well now.*
- *I am confused and need time to think.*
- *Let's do something else instead.*
- *It doesn't feel right for me.*
- *Let's wait until we are both ready.*
- *I just can't right now, maybe later.*

STEP 5

Stimulate a discussion by asking the following questions:

- *Why do people pressure other people to have sex?*
- *What is their reaction likely to be if they are turned down?*
- *What can be done to show you care about a person but just don't want to have sex with them?*
- *What is the influence of alcohol on the ability to resist pressure to have sex?*

STEP 6

Summarize the points made in the discussion.



Boys should respect girls who want to have boyfriends but are not ready to have sex with them. Girls have to be careful to make it clear about how they feel about not having sex.

EXERCISE 13 – Role playing on pressure to have sex

OBJECTIVE

To practice responding to pressures to have sex.

BACKGROUND

A person will often say anything to persuade another person to have sex with them. It may be difficult for the person who doesn't want to have sex to say no, especially if they like the person asking. Practicing saying no firmly without offending can be helpful.

MATERIALS

None

TIME

30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1

Read aloud the stories below or have the participants read them to themselves. Select two participants to pretend to be the characters and ask them to invent conversations between the two people. Get different people to play the roles in each story. Boys can play the part of girls and girls the part of boys to see how the other sex feels.

STEP 2

After the dramatization, ask the other participants to comment on what they have seen. Some questions that can be used to stimulate discussion are included after each story.

Story 1

A boy is buying alcoholic drinks for the girl and both are getting drunk. The boy wants to have sex with the girl and is trying different ways to convince her. The girl likes the boy but doesn't want to have sex with him. Despite being drunk she thinks of many reasons to tell him why she doesn't want to have sex.

- *What do you think of the way the boy behaved?*
- *What do you think of the way the girl behaved?*
- *What do you think will happen next with the two people?*
- *How did alcohol affect her decision making?*

Story 2

A boy has bought a girl some candy and some cell phone time. She appreciates the gifts but doesn't want to have sex with him. He figures that she owes him sex because he bought her the gifts and she accepted them. The girl is firm about not having sex.

- *What do you think of the way the boy behaved?*
- *What do you think of the way the girl behaved?*
- *What could the girl have done differently?*
- *Why do some boys expect sex in exchange for gifts?*

Story 3

A young man and a young woman have dated for several months and intend to get married but have never had sex. The young man thinks that they have waited long enough and should have sex since they intend to marry. The young woman thinks there is nothing more beautiful than sex in marriage and wants to wait.

- *What do you think of the way the boy behaved?*
- *What do you think of the way the girl behaved?*
- *What do you think will happen next with the couple?*
- *Why is it important to wait until marriage to have sex?*

Story 4

A girl is at her boyfriend's house in the evening and no one else is there. He wants to have sex and starts trying to take off her shirt. She resists and tries to avoid having sex by suggesting that they have sex later but not now. He insists and she thinks of a way to escape.

- *What do you think of the way the boy behaved?*
- *What do you think of the way the girl behaved?*
- *What could the girl have done to avoid the situation?*
- *How realistic her strategy to avoid having sex?*

Story 5

Two friends discuss going to drink alcohol instead of going to school. One friend tries to convince the other to come and says that a lot of other friends are joining in the drinking and suggests that the reluctant friend is afraid for nothing. The reluctant

friend wants to be accepted by the others but does not want to be caught and punished by the school.

- *What do you think of the way the first friend behaved?*
- *What do you think of the way the reluctant friend behaved?*
- *Why do friends pressure friends to do things they don't want to?*
- *Why is drinking alcohol a problem?*

Story 6

A couple has been together for six months and both are in love. The boy really wants to have sex and the girl isn't ready yet, but she is afraid not having sex will cause the relationship to end. They argue until they both get angry with each other.

- *What do you think of the way the boy behaved?*
- *What do you think of the way the girl behaved?*
- *What can be done to keep a love relationship going without sex?*
- *How realistic is it to have a love relationship without sex?*

STEP 3

Summarize the points made in the discussion. Some examples:

- *Pressure to have sex can be very strong.*
- *Strong resistance is needed to avoid unwanted sex.*
- *Boys should respect girls when they say no to sex.*
- *Avoid alcohol and being alone with someone to avoid sex.*



Drinking alcohol can increase the desire to have sex and reduce the ability to resist it. It is best to not drink at all or avoid getting drunk and out of control.

EXERCISE 14 – Matching responses to pressure for sex

OBJECTIVE

To increase confidence for thinking up ways to respond to requests for sex.

BACKGROUND

Sometimes those who don't want to have sex are shy and not clear and firm about refusing sex. Those who want sex may take an unclear answer as a "yes" and force themselves on the other person. The more a person is prepared to respond to pressure to have sex, the less likely there will be misunderstandings or tensions.

MATERIALS

None

TIME

30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1

Read or have someone read the following list of possible answers to pressure lines or requests for sex listed below. (It is also possible to write them on sheets of paper or cards and hand them out to participants.)

RESPONSES TO PRESSURE LINES

- *"If you loved me, you wouldn't be asking me to give up something I've been saving."*
- *"I want to see a wedding ring first."*
- *"If you respected me you wouldn't pressure me."*
- *"I don't want to get pregnant."*

- *“Other people want sex but I don’t.”*
- *“I am not ready to have sex.”*
- *“If I am the only one you love we can wait until marriage.”*
- *“I want to get to know you better before we have sex.”*
- *“It is my right to refuse sex if I want to.”*
- *“I am afraid people will think I am too easy if I have sex with you.”*
- *“Why rush into it? We will have our whole lives to have sex together after marriage.”*
- *“I understand that you want to have sex but try to understand that I am not ready.”*
- *“You are not respecting me by asking me to do that.”*
- *“No means no.”*
- *“I don’t want to risk my future by having sex now.”*
- *“The best way not to get pregnant or HIV is not to have sex.”*
- *“It is my body. I choose what I do with it.”*
- *“I am leaving now. I don’t want to have sex with you.”*
- *“Maybe we can have sex later. I am not ready yet.”*
- *“I like you but not in a sexual way.”*
- *“Let’s show our love for each other in different ways than having sex.”*
- *“I’m not in the mood. Maybe later.”*

STEP 2

Ask participants to add to the list of possible answers to requests for sex listed above.

STEP 3

Choose three participants to be judges. Tell them that they will be asked to choose the responses suggested by participants to requests for sex which works best.

STEP 4

Read the following list of pressure lines or requests for sex one at a time. (They can be written on sheets of paper or cards as well.) Have three participants suggest replies. After a response is given to each pressure line and the judges vote, change participants who suggest replies to give everyone a chance.

PRESSURE LINES

- *“Everybody is doing it.”*
- *“If you love me, you will have sex with me?”*
- *“Don’t you trust me?”*
- *“Other girls are having sex, why don’t you want to?”*
- *“You don’t think I have a disease do you?”*
- *“If you won’t have sex with me someone else will.”*
- *“You know I want to marry you.”*
- *“I thought you were serious about me.”*
- *“It’s safe. I have a condom.”*
- *“Sex is the best way to celebrate love.”*
- *“You are the only one I want to give myself to.”*

- *“Sex feels real good.”*
- *“No sex then no relationship.”*
- *“You are so sexy and beautiful.”*
- *“You owe me sex.”*
- *“If you don’t give me sex, I will take it.”*
- *“I thought this relationship was going somewhere.”*
- *“You will feel grown up if you have sex.”*
- *“You make me hot. I have difficulty controlling myself.”*
- *“I can’t wait. I love you too much.”*
- *“You are a woman not a child.”*
- *“You know that I love you.”*
- *“I promise I will marry you.”*
- *“I know you want to. You are just afraid.”*
- *“Nothing will go wrong. Don’t worry.”*
- *“Why not just this once?”*

STEP 5

Ask participants to add to the list of pressure lines and continue the exercise by asking for responses.

STEP 6

Ask all participants to choose the person who gave the best responses to pressure lines.

STEP 7

Review the lessons learnt:

- Sometimes those who don’t want to have sex are shy and not clear and firm about refusing sex.
- Those who want sex may take an unclear answer as a “yes” and force themselves on the other person.
- The more prepared a person is to respond to pressure to have sex, the less likely that there will be misunderstandings or tensions.



Giving in to pressure for sex from a boy who says he loves a girl can be a painful experience for her if he gets what he wants, and then doesn’t want to see the girl again.

EXERCISE 15 – Considering whether to have sex or not

OBJECTIVE

To consider the advantages and disadvantages of having sex.

BACKGROUND

Pressure to have sex can come from many places. It is important to think about the decision to have sex or not, and not just let it happen. By considering the advantages and disadvantages of having sex, people are better prepared to make decisions about when to have sex, whether they have already had sex or never have.

MATERIALS

None

TIME

30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1

Tell participants that it can be a difficult decision to have sex or not, especially when facing strong pressures to have sex.

STEP 2

Ask participants to make a list of reasons why people decide to have sex. Give the following examples:

- In love
- Feel sexual urges
- Get money or gifts

STEP 3

Ask participants to compare their list with the following list:

- *Stop pressure from friends or partner*
- *Avoid loneliness*
- *Feel like an adult*
- *Keep a relationship from ending*
- *Become a parent*
- *Satisfy curiosity*
- *Get affection*
- *Getting married*
- *Receive and give pleasure*

STEP 4

Ask participants to select three reasons from the list above, or from their own list, that they consider to be the best ones and give the reasons why.

STEP 5

Ask participants to make a list of reasons why people decide not to have sex. Give the following examples:

- *Don't know the partner well*
- *Want to avoid getting pregnant*
- *Follow religious beliefs*

STEP 6

Ask participants to compare their list with the following list:

- *Respect parents wishes*
- *Not ready for sex*
- *Keeping from complicating a relationship*
- *Reach future goals*
- *Find the right partner*
- *Avoid feeling guilty*
- *Wait for marriage*
- *Avoid rejection by partner after having sex*

STEP 7

Ask participants to select three reasons, from the list above or from their own list, that they consider to be the best ones and give the reasons why.

STEP 8

Stimulate a discussion by asking the following questions:

- *What are the advantages of considering the reasons why to have sex and why not to have sex?*
- *What are the disadvantages of not considering whether or not to have sex?*
- *Why do some people rush into having sex without thinking about it?*
- *What can happen if a person rushes into a sexual relationship without thinking about it?*

STEP 9

Summarize the discussion and mention the following points:

- It is easier to say no to sex if you have never had sex.
- Boys and men will often say or promise anything when they want sex.
- Rushing into sex especially after drinking alcohol can lead to problems later.

EXERCISE 16 – Stories about sexual pressure

OBJECTIVE

To better understand the pressures to have sex and how to deal with them.

BACKGROUND

It is not always easy to say no to sex. The more a person is prepared for making the decision to have sex or not, the more likely they will make the right decision and avoid rushing into sexual relations and having problems afterwards.

MATERIALS

None

TIME

30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1

Read the following story or have a participant read it:

Story 1

A 16 year old boy and girl have known each other for six months and love each other. The boy wants them to have sex but the girl is not ready. She likes to kiss and touch but doesn't want to go further. They have talked about it and the boy says he understands.

The girl's best friend tells her that she had sex for the first time with her boy friend and she liked it very much. The friend told her that having sex brought them closer together and they are talking about getting married one day.

That night the boy and girl go to a party and drink beer. They are both feeling a little drunk when the boy asks the girl to go with him to a quiet place. They start kissing and touching and the boy says "I love you and want to make you feel wonderful. Let's make love."

STEP 2

Ask the participants the following questions to start a discussion about the story:

- *How does the boy feel about the girl?*
- *How does the girl feel about the boy?*
- *What do you think will happen next?*
- *What are the influences on them to have sex?*
- *What are the influences on them not to have sex?*

STEP 3

Read the following story or have a participant read it:

Story 2

A girl who has never had sex has a best friend who has had sex. In fact, the girl has sex with three or four different older boyfriends who all give her money or gifts. She shows her friend her new cell phone and clothes that she got with the help of her boyfriends.

The parents of the girl who has never had sex are very poor and have not been able to give her many things. When she sees how nice her friend's hair looks and the nice shoes she is wearing, she starts to wonder if it is the best decision to wait until marriage to have sex.

The girl who has never had sex decides to go along with her friend to a dance. She borrows clothes and makeup from her friend and feels very sexy and beautiful. She drinks alcohol for the first time and is feeling very happy when she meets a man who works in a bank. The man tells her she is beautiful and he would love to have sex with her.

STEP 4

Ask the participants the following questions to start a discussion about the story:

- *What do you think will happen next?*
- *What would be the advantages of the girl having sex with the banker?*
- *What would be the disadvantages?*
- *What would be the influences on the girl to have sex?*
- *What do you think of the girl who has four boyfriends?*

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