

Addressing Gender and Rights in Your Sex/HIV Education Curriculum: A Starter Checklist



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Introduction

Attitudes and roles regarding gender are an important determinant of sexual health outcomes (including age at first sex, number of sexual partners, frequency of adolescent intercourse, use of condoms and contraceptives, and HIV infection). Fostering young people's critical reflection about gender role socialization has been proven to change attitudes and to lead to healthier sexual behavior. *This checklist can help you assess how effectively your curriculum is addressing these issues and help you identify changes that can strengthen your curriculum.*

This checklist covers a number of issues—for example, such topics as female genital mutilation/cutting, sexual orientation, masturbation, sexual abuse, and female sexual pleasure—that are sensitive in some settings. These topics are included because they are linked to sexual behavior, sexual agency, and/or sexual health outcomes. These issues also have human rights dimensions. If, however, you believe that a sexuality or HIV/AIDS program in your setting must avoid such topics, you may wish to skip the questions that you judge to be too sensitive.

At the end of the form is a one-page appendix that defines specific checklist items.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CURRICULUM

Ia	Name of Curriculum
	Organization/Authors
	Publication Date

Ib	For what audience was the curriculum developed?			
	Age range/Grade level:			
	Special population? (explain):			
	Sex (circle one):	Co-ed (boys & girls)	Girls Only	Boys Only
	If co-ed, does curriculum have activities for single-sex groups?	Yes	No	Not Applicable
	Setting (circle all that apply):	School	Community	Other
	Has curriculum been rigorously evaluated?	Yes	No	Do not Know

Ic	Overall Content Focus	Check primary focus	Duration	
	Comprehensive sexuality education		Total number of hours	
	HIV		Duration of each session	
	Life skills		Frequency of sessions	
	Girls' empowerment		Number of sessions	
	Other (specify)			

Id	Stated primary goals/objectives (related to gender equality/norms)			
		Check all that apply		Check all that apply
	Increase condom use and/or contraceptive use		Promote gender equality and/or girls' empowerment	
	Reduce unwanted and early pregnancy		Provide accurate information/ Increase knowledge	
	Reduce STIs and HIV/AIDS		Other (specify):	
Promote life skills and goals				

II. SPECIFIC CONTENT AREAS

IIa	Does the curriculum define gender and gender roles?				
		0= Not Addressed	1= Superficial/ Ineffective/ Culturally inappropriate	2= Adequate	3= Thorough/ Effective/ Culturally appropriate
	Defining gender (see appendix for definition)				
	Differential gender roles (see appendix for definition) in family				
	Differential roles in community and society				
	Do the activities guide the learners to <i>think critically</i> about gender roles?				

IIb	Does the curriculum address the following human rights topics?			
	Defining human rights			
	International human rights agreements (especially those related to women, children, minorities, sexuality, and reproduction)			
	National law (and customary law, if relevant) protecting human rights			
	Local/international advocacy to protect rights of women, children, and minorities			
	Personal reflection and values clarification about human rights (alternative norms etc.) (see appendix for definition)			
	Other:			

IIc	How does the curriculum address issues of sexuality with regard to gender norms?			
	Double standard regarding sexual behavior			
	Reasons for having sex (among girls as compared to boys)			
	Influence of media and popular culture on attitudes about gender and sexuality			

II d	Contraception and protection from infection			
	How gender norms affect attitudes toward condom use			
	How gender norms affect communication about contraceptive and condom use			

IIe	Pleasure			
	Anatomy of pleasure (clitoris, masturbation etc.)			
	Cultural factors inhibiting female pleasure			

II f	Does the curriculum address the ways that gender norms affect the health of girls and young women?					
		Check the relevant issues in your setting	Rate how the curriculum addresses the issues you checked:			
			0= Topic not addressed	1= Topic addressed with little/no attention paid to gender	2= Topic addressed with adequate attention paid to gender	3= Topic addressed with thorough attention paid to gender
	Coerced or unwanted sex					
	Gender-based violence					
	Sexual harassment					
	Unwanted or early pregnancy and/or childbearing					
	Risk of STI/HIV					
	Female genital mutilation/cutting					
	Obstetric fistula					
	Reduced access to sexual and reproductive health information/ services (e.g. contraception, abortion, prenatal care)					
	Reduced enjoyment of sex					
	Eating disorders/depression					
	Malnutrition					
	Other (specify):					
	Do the activities help learners to <i>think critically</i> about the above issues?					

II g	Does the curriculum address the ways that gender norms affect the health of boys and young men?				
	√	0	1	2	3
	Unwanted sex				
	Risk of STI/HIV				
	Depression, risk of suicide				
	Risk of violence				
	Risk of drug use				
	Other (specify):				
	Do the activities help learners to <i>think critically</i> about the above issues?				

IIIh Does the curriculum address the ways that gender norms affect the social and economic status/well-being of girls and young women?					
	Check the relevant issues in your setting	Rate how the curriculum addresses the issues that you checked:			
		0= Topic not addressed	1= Topic addressed with little/no attention paid to gender	2= Topic addressed with adequate attention paid to gender	3= Topic addressed with thorough attention paid to gender
Early marriage/childbearing					
Forced marriage/childbearing					
Limited access to schooling					
Limited access to public spaces					
Limited control of cash/property					
Limited job opportunities					
Limited leadership opportunities					
Limited inheritance rights					
Limited power in male-female relationships					
Sex-selective abortion/female infanticide					
Low self-esteem					
Other (specify):					
Do the activities help learners to <i>think critically</i> about the above issues?					

IIIi Does the curriculum address the ways gender norms affect the well-being of boys and young men?					
	√	0	1	2	3
Vulnerability to bullying					
Early parenthood					
Pressures to “prove one’s masculinity” (e.g., to be sexually active, to earn money, act <i>macho</i>)					
Low self-esteem					
Other (specify):					
Do the activities help learners to <i>think critically</i> about the above issues?					

IIj	How does the curriculum address issues of race, class, and sexual minorities?	0=	1=	2=	3=
		Not addressed	Superficial/ ineffective/ culturally inappropriate	Adequate	Thorough effective/ culturally appropriate
	Is sexual orientation addressed as a common question young people have about themselves?				
	Does the curriculum foster reflection about stigma and discrimination?				
	Are examples of diverse youth integrated across the curriculum?				

IIk	How is abstinence addressed?				
		As a personal choice			
	As a choice that a person can make only in situations where he or she feels free to refuse unwanted sex				

IIl	Does the curriculum consider gender when addressing physical violence?				
		Male-to-male violence			
	Male and community responsibility for reducing gender-based violence				

IIm	Direct sexual coercion					
		Sexual abuse and rape				
		Date rape				
		Threat of violence				
		Do the activities guide the learners to <i>think critically</i> about issues of sexual coercion?				

II n	Indirect sexual coercion					
		Sex in exchange for gifts, cash, etc.				
		(Other) voluntary but unwanted sex				
		Social norms of male entitlement to sex				
		Social pressures (e.g. peers, parents, etc.)				

IIo	Are there harmful practices in your local context? What are they and how are they addressed?					
		Female genital mutilation/cutting				
		"Dry sex" (obtained by use of herbs, rocks, etc.)				
		Early marriage (before age 18)				
		Harmful modern practices (e.g., extensive and/or risky cosmetic surgery)				
		Other (specify):				
		Do the activities enable the learners to <i>challenge</i> these practices?				

IIp	Does the curriculum address other social factors that affect sexual health and well-being?				
		0= Not addressed	1= Superficial/ ineffective/ culturally inappropriate	2= Adequate	3= Thorough effective/ culturally appropriate
	Does the curriculum explore how <i>race and ethnicity</i> affect sexual health and well-being . . .				
	For girls and young women?				
	For boys and young men?				
	Does the curriculum explore how <i>poverty</i> (including social class or caste) affects sexual health and well-being . . .				
	For girls and young women?				
	For boys and young men?				

III. GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRICULUM

IIIa		0= Little/None	1= Some/limited	2= Quite a bit	3= Unusually extensive
		How strong is the overall emphasis on gender issues <i>throughout</i> the curriculum?			
	How effectively does the curriculum use diverse/ interactive teaching methods and images that encourage reflection, discussion, and debate?				
	How strong is the overall emphasis on critical thinking skills?				

IIIb	General comments about treatment of gender:
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IIIc	General comments about treatment of critical thinking:
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Appendix: Definition/Clarification of Checklist Items and Instructions

Section I: *General Information About the Curriculum*

Most of the questions in this section are fairly straightforward. Question I(c), which asks about the “duration” of the course is optional, but may require some calculation to convert into hours.

Section II: *Specific Content Areas*

This section, which uses a numbered rating scale, asks you to assess how effectively the curriculum promotes understanding, awareness, and reflection about the following topics:

II (a): “Defining gender”—A definition of gender might, for example, describe gender as a system of male and female roles and norms prescribed by society, in contrast to biologically defined roles.

II(a) Differential roles in family, community, or society—This item asks you to consider whether the curriculum points out gender-differentiated roles at these different levels.

II (b): “Personal reflection and values clarification...”—This item refers to activities within the curriculum that encourage learners to question their own attitudes, and to examine whether values accepted as the norm may be harmful or unfair.

II (c): “Gender norms” refer to socially enforced rules about what behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes are considered appropriate for males and females. “Double standard” refers to the ways that the culture (or individuals) may tolerate or encourage male heterosexual desire and activity, while simultaneously discouraging or frowning upon female sexual desire and activity.

II (d): “Gender norms affecting condom use”—This item refers to the fact that females are often in a position of lesser power than a male partner when it comes to negotiating condom use.

II (e): “Cultural factors inhibiting female pleasure”—This item refers to attitudes and practices that regulate female sexuality or assume that females are not supposed to enjoy sex.

II (f-i): Answer the questions in these boxes in two steps: First, check off the issues that you consider relevant in your setting. Then, rate only those you have checked off on the scale.

II (j-o): These questions about the curriculum are self-explanatory.

Section III: *General Assessment of the Curriculum*

Fill out this section *after* you have answered the previous sections. Taking the time to write general comments helps summarize and synthesize your impressions of the curriculum. It can also highlight and remind you of the specific areas that need improvement.



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