

Section Four:

Participatory Learning Activities for HIV Prevention

- Introduction
- Tips for Dealing with Difficult Situations in the Classroom
- Sample Icebreakers
- CHECKLIST: Things To Consider Before Designing A Workshop and Conducting the Activities Contained in This Manual
- Participatory Learning Activities for HIV Prevention
 - I. Participatory Learning Activities for Adults to Reduce their Risk for HIV Infection
 - II. Strengthening Teachers' Skills to Advocate and Build Support for Effective HIV Prevention in Schools
 - III. Eleven Developmentally Appropriate Skill-Building Activities for Young People

Introduction to Participatory Learning Activities

" Health education requires a global approach. It's not just a question of transmitting knowledge but, more importantly, of influencing or changing attitudes and behaviours when we are confronted with the kinds of risky situations we all face in our daily lives. It is a question of enabling young girls and boys to be responsible for their own health."

- M. Fouilhoux, Promoting School Health
Seminar, EI, 6-7 September, 1999, Zimbabwe

Teachers and trade union leaders have a unique opportunity to lead efforts to respond to and combat the current AIDS epidemic. While education systems are not the only channel for HIV/AIDS education and prevention, educators can play a critical role in disseminating accurate information and equipping young people with the skills they need to reduce their risk for acquiring HIV.

In order for teachers to assume an effective leadership role in the fight against HIV, however, they need adequate resources, training and skills. In this chapter, there are fourteen learning activities that can be used to prepare and empower teachers as advocates for change.

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF THESE LEARNING ACTIVITIES?

The three objectives for these learning activities are as follows:

- Enable participants to gain skills and knowledge that will help them and other teachers/adults reduce their risk for HIV infection and related discrimination (*Section One*)
- Enable participants to advocate and build support for effective HIV prevention programmes in and out of the classroom (*Section Two*)
- Enable participants to use interactive skills-based teaching methods (e.g., brainstorming, role plays, small group discussions) that have been proven effective in HIV/AIDS education programmes (*Sections Two and Three*)

Additional input from teachers and other community members is critical to assuring that the exercises are culturally relevant and can be effectively implemented. This input can further develop and shape the content of the activities to meet the needs of educators who will be using them.

HOW ARE THESE ACTIVITIES ORGANISED?

The activities are divided into three sections.

- I. **Participatory Learning Activities for Adults to Reduce Their Risk for HIV Infection.** As role models and leaders in HIV prevention efforts, educators need the information and skills to promote their own health. This section covers personal life skills that will help prepare educators to work with students and others in the community and reduce their own risk for HIV infection.

- II. **Strengthening Teachers' Skills to Advocate and Build Support for Effective HIV Prevention in Schools.** The objectives of the activities in this section are to develop teachers' advocacy and communication skills to build support for effective HIV education programmes while also increasing their familiarity with skills-based health education teaching methods, including role-plays, brainstorming and small-group work (see Chapter Eleven of this manual for an overview of skills-based health education)

- III. **Eleven Developmentally Appropriate Skills-Building Activities for Young People.** Section Three contains samples of developmentally appropriate, participatory skills-building activities that teachers can use with students and other youth. They can be adapted and refined based on local needs and culture.

DIFFICULT SITUATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

When teaching about HIV/AIDS, teachers will be dealing with some sensitive topics. As a result, students may react in different ways. Some may be embarrassed or shy; others may make jokes to try to ease some of the tension. It is important for teachers to be prepared to deal with potentially difficult situations in the classroom. This handout provides some suggestions for teachers on how to respond to these situations in an effective way.

I. ESTABLISHING GROUND RULES

“Ground Rules” or “Class Rules” are set up with students at the very start of the school year. They help students understand from the start what behaviour is expected from them throughout the year. Teachers should encourage students to develop their own rules, to create a sense of ownership. These rules are then posted in a prominent place so they can be referred to during related situations.

Examples of Ground Rules:

- We value and respect each others’ opinions
- We treat each other in a positive way and are considerate of each other’s feelings
- We do not discuss personal matters discussed in class with people outside the classroom
- We do not interrupt each other
- We have a right to “pass” if we do not want to answer a question
- We do not put-down or criticise other people in class
- If you do not want to ask a question in front of everyone, you can ask it anonymously to the teacher (e.g., through a question drop box)

II. POSSIBLE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS AND WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO OR SAY*

**Adapted in part from Healthy Foundations. The Center for Family Life Education, Planned Parenthood of Greater Northern NJ, 1992.*

POSSIBLE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS	WHAT COULD A TEACHER DO OR SAY?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers feel unprepared to answer specific questions because they do not have sufficient information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It’s okay not to know the answer. You might say, “I don’t know the answer to that, but I’ll try to find out and let you know” OR “Let’s see if we can find the answer together.”

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers feel uncomfortable talking about certain sensitive issues with mixed genders. • Students make jokes about other students and/or the teacher. • A student mentions to a teacher that he heard she is HIV+. • During a role play or group discussion, a student becomes upset or anxious. • Students remain silent out of embarrassment • Students try to shock or amuse other students or the teacher by describing sexually explicit behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's okay to feel embarrassed or uncomfortable. Don't try to pretend you are not when you are. You might say, "It isn't easy for me to answer that question, but I'll try" OR "This is difficult for me to talk about, but it is too important not to talk about it." • Start the class by saying it is often embarrassing to talk about these issues, and that when people are uncomfortable they may laugh or make jokes to cover up their nervousness. • You may choose to ignore a situation by saying 'okay' and going on with the discussion. • Be assertive in responding to a breach of the group rules. You may tell the student that you do not wish to discuss information about your personal life in class, and that no one in the class should feel that they need to talk about things they don't want to discuss. • If the students' anxiety is obvious to everyone in the class, you might remind students that no one should feel that they have to participate in something that makes them feel uncomfortable, and then ask another student to take his/her place. After class, you may want to approach the student privately to see if he/she wants to talk or learn about services that may help him/her. • Use teaching methods that encourage participation, such as role plays and/or brainstorming. You may want to call on a student whose attentiveness, facial expression, eye contact or other non-verbal signal communicates interest. • Remind students to be considerate of others in the room and their feelings. It might be important to separate males from females during certain exercises. • Don't be overly critical of students' comments, even if they may seem inappropriate. This may discourage other students from being open and honest.
---	--

Ice Breakers

Sometimes when bringing a group of people together for a workshop who may not know each other, it is helpful to start off with an icebreaker. An icebreaker is a brief, interactive way to help participants get to know each other and feel more comfortable with one another before discussing sensitive topics. Four sample icebreakers are described below to get you started. These can be adapted to fit your particular group, or you can come up with your own icebreakers to achieve a similar purpose.

Concentric Circles

Purpose: This is an icebreaker that will help participants learn about others in the group.

Time: Needs to be determined by facilitator depending on the purpose of the icebreaker.

Instructions: Ask one half of the group to form a small circle facing outwards while the other half of the group forms a circle around them, facing inwards. Each person should be facing one other person. There should be exactly the same number of people in the inner circle as in the outer circle. Call out a question (e.g., “What is one thing you hope to learn about preventing HIV? What is one thing about yourself you would like to share? What is one thing you have accomplished that you are proud of?”) and those people in the inner circle have 20 seconds (or a minute, or five minutes, depending on the purpose of the exercise) to respond to the question. Then those in the outer circle have the same amount of time to give their response to the same question.

Before the next question, have the outer circle rotate counter-clockwise so that everyone has a new partner. Then call out another question and continue the activity.

Variations: Rotation continues in the same direction, OR the inner circle can rotate in one direction to switch partners, then the next time, the outer circle rotates in opposite direction, OR the inner and outer circles can simultaneously rotate in opposite directions (which creates a situation where a person will only speak with every *other* person in the other circle).

Processing the Activity:

- Ask participants to volunteer to share their reactions and describe what they learned about their colleagues.

Who are You?

Purpose: This is an icebreaker designed to help participants learn each others' names and to allow them to get to know something about each other before they begin a workshop.

Time: Approximately 20 minutes for 20-30 people.

Instructions: Ask participants to stand or sit in a circle. Explain that participants will introduce themselves and their the people next to them using a word that starts with the same letter as their first name and describes them. The first person introduces him/herself ("Hi, I'm Magnificent Madoda"). The next person introduces "Magnificent Madoda" and then presents him/herself: ("and I'm Lovely Lindi"). The next person introduces "Magnificent Madoda" and "Lovely Lindi" and then presents him/herself: ("and I'm Nice Nongaba"). This continues until everyone has been presented. The last person will have to remember all of the names and descriptive words. After he/she does this, ask if anyone else in the group wants to try to remember them all.

Variations: Instead of having each person introduce themselves as well as those before them, simplify the activity. Have each person introduce themselves with a descriptive word and then say something they like about themselves (e.g., I'm radiant Rose and I like my cooking).

Processing the Activity:

- Ask participants for their reactions and what they learned from the activity.
- Let participants know that this icebreaker introduces the importance of listening skills in a way that is fun and allows everyone an opportunity to become acquainted.

Fruit Salad

Purpose: This is an icebreaker that will energise the group.

Time: 15-20 minutes for 20-30 people

Instructions: Stand in the middle of the sitting circle. Everyone but you needs to have an established place to sit. For example, if participants are sitting on mats, agree how many should be sharing each mat before the game begins.

Ask the participants to choose three different fruit names. Then go around the circle, naming each participant with one of these fruits. For example, the first person could be a mango, the next a banana, the third an orange, and the fourth another mango. Go around the whole circle until everyone, including yourself, has one of the three fruit names.

Next, explain that you are going to call out one of the fruit names. Everyone with that name has to jump up and find somewhere else to sit. You are also going to find a place to sit. The person who doesn't find a new place will be left in the middle and will have to call out the next fruit.

Add that if someone calls out "fruit salad," then everyone has to jump up and find another place to sit.

Processing the Activity:

- Ask participants if they enjoyed the opportunity to get to know each other and have fun.

Muddling Messages

Purpose: This is an icebreaker designed to make people laugh and help participants appreciate in a humorous way how easy it is to misunderstand what someone has said.

Time: 15-20 minutes for 20-30 participants

Instructions: Think of a phrase to whisper beforehand, such as "many people around here like eating bananas" or "the sun at this time of year is very hot" or anything you want. Then ask the group to sit in a circle or a line.

Whisper the phrase quietly to the person next to you and ask her/him to whisper it quietly to the next person. This should be repeated until the phrase has been whispered around the whole circle. Each person should only whisper what he or she hears and is not allowed to ask for the phrase to be repeated.

Processing the Activity:

- Ask the last person in the circle or line what they heard, then tell the whole group what the original phrase was.
- Ask participants what they learned from doing this activity.
- Ask for other comments or observations about how misinformation about HIV/AIDS can occur.

CHECK LIST

Things To Consider Before Designing A Workshop and Conducting the Activities Contained in This Manual

Before You Begin:

- Read the activities that you plan to use carefully and completely. This will provide you with a clear understanding of the purpose, methods, materials and time you will need as well as the specific skill the activity is intended to address.
- Consider the needs of your audience. Think about the usefulness of the activities to the participants you plan to invite to a workshop. Are they relevant and appropriate to their local situations? Will they be able to implement what they learn?
- Consider possible options and ways that participants can apply the skills and methods contained in the activities to their real life situations and settings.
- If appropriate, collaborate with participants to identify ways to adapt the activities to make them more useful and relevant.
- Remember to build in enough time during the workshop for participants to practice each activity, including the adaptations you may have developed.
- Practice should include opportunities for constructive peer feedback to help participants gain confidence and master methods and skills.
- If time allows, encourage participants to demonstrate the methods and skill learned to the whole group once they have practised.
- Build in enough time during the workshop for participants to report back their conclusions and recommendations regarding each activity to the whole group.
- If possible, build in sufficient time at the end of the workshop for participants to develop basic action plans and to identify where and how they will implement what they have learned (classroom, trade union meeting, community gathering, etc.)