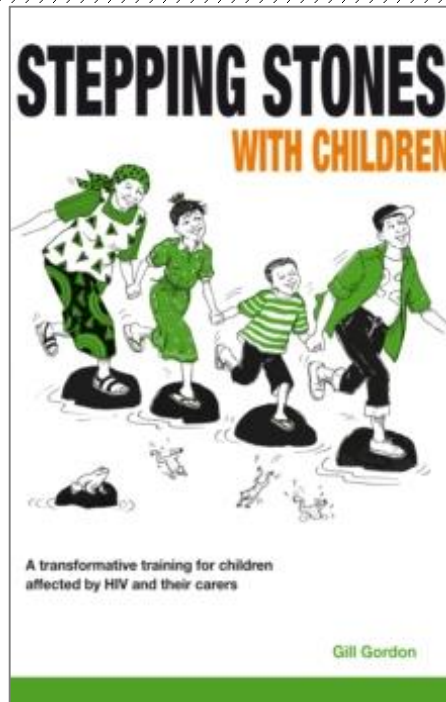


## Handouts for *Stepping Stones with Children*



This *Handout for Stepping Stones with Children* is to be used with the *Stepping Stones with Children* training manual published by Practical Action Publishing, 2016.

You can download this handout for free for use with this training manual from the [www.stepsstonesfeedback.org](http://www.stepsstonesfeedback.org) website.

On this website there are also many other resources to support you with this training manual and the original *Stepping Stones* training manual.

*Stepping Stones* and *Stepping Stones Plus* as well as *Stepping Stones with Children* are both programmes created and supported by Salamander Trust, [www.salamandertrust.net](http://www.salamandertrust.net)

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## MANAGING ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

### 1. Three types of drugs

Medicinal: they treat or prevent illness (for example, aspirin, ARV, Septrin);  
Performance-enhancing: they increase strength in sports or sex, keep us alert, or free our imagination (for example: coffee, steroids, cola, cannabis);  
Mood-changing: they make us feel different, such as more confident, more relaxed or more excited (for example: alcohol, cannabis, heroin).

### 2. Negative consequences of using mood-changing drugs

Drinking too much **alcohol** causes people to fall down, think unclearly, react slowly, and make poor decisions. Drunk people are more likely to have an accident, be violent, or have sex which they do not want. Over time, drinking too much alcohol causes liver problems, reduced fertility, high blood pressure, and increased risk of various cancers and heart attack.

**Cigarettes, pipe tobacco, and chewing tobacco** contain a drug called nicotine, which narrows blood vessels and causes high blood pressure and heart disease. Tobacco also contains tar, which increases lung infections and causes cancer of the lungs and throat. Smoking also harms people, including unborn babies, who don't smoke but who breathe in poisons in the smoke.

People who eat or smoke **cannabis** a lot can find it difficult to think and do well at school or work, and may have accidents. Some people get violent or develop serious mental health problems after using strong cannabis regularly. Growing, possessing, selling, or smoking cannabis is usually against the law; using it can result in prison or a large fine.

Sniffing substances such as **glue, paint, solvent, petrol, gas, or turpentine** causes problems with seeing, thinking, and remembering. It can lead to violent behaviour, loss of judgement and body control, and death. It is easy to become addicted to sniffing these substances.

It is easy to get addicted to **heroin and cocaine**, which are illegal drugs. Users' bodies need the drug so badly they will do anything to get money to buy more. This makes addicted people vulnerable, and leads to other criminal acts such as stealing. If injected using unsterilized needles, their use can spread illnesses such as HIV and hepatitis. Users can die from using supplies that are contaminated, or from accidentally taking too much.

Taking drugs can prevent users from taking ARVs regularly and lead to the ARVs not working well, or causing dangerous side effects.

Drinking a lot of alcohol, smoking cigarettes, or using drugs during pregnancy can cause children to be born with disabilities. Alcohol and drug use by children is more harmful than for adults because children's brains and bodies

are still developing. Giving children alcohol or other drugs is often against the law and is a form of abuse. Children need protection from the harmful effects of drugs on the behaviour of the adults they live with.

Benefits of not using mood- changing drugs:

- We are better able to make good decisions about sex and safety;
- We avoid suffering a 'hang-over' the next day;
- We are able to have good conversations and remember them the next day;
- People may prefer how we are when we are not intoxicated;
- We are able to perform better at school or work, and in sports;
- We feel and look better;
- We save money.

### **3. The Virtue of Self Discipline**

Self-discipline means being in control of ourselves, rather than letting other people or other things be in control of us. It is doing what we really want to do rather than being tossed around by our feelings. With self-discipline, we take charge of ourselves. We observe our thoughts and feelings and then decide how we are going to behave. It is our choice – no-one else's. We can set limits for ourselves, and create routines in our day, which help us reach our goals.

### **4. The Story of Nina**

*Nina is 13 years old. She cared for her sick mother until she died and is now caring for her sick father. She also has HIV. She thinks to herself, 'I am so lonely. I am different from everybody. I just want to get drunk and forget. I can take care of myself, I don't need anyone else.'*

*A group of boys are at the bar. They notice Nina buying two bottles of beer to take home. One of them says loudly, 'There's the walking dead coming to get drunk again'. The others laugh. But Joshua, a friend of Nina's, interrupts, saying, 'Oh be quiet! You get drunk for no reason at all. Nina is a brave girl who is looking after her dad. You should admire her, not tease her.'*

*A man goes over to Nina saying, 'Let me pay for those beers; you look as if you need cheering up! Let's go to my place where we can relax, and you can forget how hard life is for a while. You're too pretty to look so sad.' Nina smiles. She likes the idea of drinking and forgetting, and the man says she's pretty, which makes her feel warm inside. Joshua and his girlfriend Florence have heard what the man said, and feel worried for their friend. Florence goes over to Nina and puts her arm through Nina's, saying, 'It's beautiful by the sea now, why don't we three go for a stroll along the beach and see the sunset? You don't have to talk, we don't mind. We just like being with you.'*

*Nina sees that Florence is being sincere, and together they leave and go to the beach. She cries and they hug and comfort her and she feels a bit better. They agree that the next day, Joshua and Florence will come round to Nina's house and play draughts with her dad, eat fried chicken, and help Nina clean the house.*



**You could discuss Nina's story by asking questions such as:**

- Why did Nina want to get drunk?
- What might have happened if she had got drunk with the man?
- How can we use our virtues to support one another when we have problems, like Nina, with drink or drugs?

**Tips on supporting someone to take control of their drug use**

Support is not about judging the person, saying, 'Don't take drugs!' It involves:

- making the person feel loved;
- supporting them to understand the reasons for drug-taking, and thinking about how to address these reasons;
- encouraging them to talk about how they feel and accepting them;
- suggesting other activities to increase happiness without causing harm.

**5. The Story of Daliso**

*Daliso is an 8-year-old boy who is very good at sport. He often plays with older boys, who like to have him on their team. One day after a match, some of the older boys begin to smoke cannabis and drink beer. They offer him some. He feels nervous; he thinks he should say no, but he feels proud that the older boys are including him. It makes him feel grown up. He smokes some cannabis, but it makes him cough and everyone laughs at him. But the boys give him a cheer every time he takes a big gulp of beer. To begin with, he feels more confident and finds things funny, but then he begins to feel ill. He makes an excuse to leave. On the way home he is sick on his shoes. He is worried about what will happen if his caregiver finds out.*

**You could discuss Daliso's story by asking questions such as:**

- Why did Daliso feel he shouldn't smoke the cannabis and drink the beer?
- Why did he do it anyway?
- How did he feel while he was taking the drugs?
- How did he feel afterwards?
- What do we learn from this story?

**6. Tips for being in control of alcohol and drug use**

Watch out for people putting drugs or strong drink into your drink. Some people think that this is funny but it can be very dangerous.

**To avoid using substances at all:**

- practise saying 'no'; be ready to use your courage and self-respect to protect yourself;
- say that your religion does not allow you to drink;
- say you have something really important to do the next day;
- say you don't like the taste or the effect the drug has on you;
- say it's not good for your brain or health;
- say it's against the law to drink at your age.

**Tips for drinking less (these tips can be adapted for other drug use):**

- Decide how much you are going to drink and try to keep to it.
- Keep a note of how much you drink, when you drink, and who you were with. Can you see what makes you drink too much and why?
- Drink fewer strong drinks and mix them with soft drinks.
- Have a soft drink between every alcoholic drink, to fill your stomach up.
- Drink slowly, and don't let people fill up your glass; put a mat over it.
- Drink soft drinks on a day when you would normally drink alcohol.
- Relax and have fun in places where people do not drink or use drugs.

**Steps we need to take to overcome a drink or drug problem:**

1. Accept that we have a problem and decide that we want to stop.
2. Decide to do something today, not tomorrow.
3. Tell at least one other person what we are doing. Ask for their support.
4. Stop – or use less, and then stop.
5. If we start again, don't blame ourselves. Try to stop again right away.
6. Try to increase the support we have. Meet with friends who are also trying not to get drunk, or have decided not to use drugs. If a group of friends decide to stop together, we can give each other strength. Go to services that support people to address their dependency on alcohol or drugs.