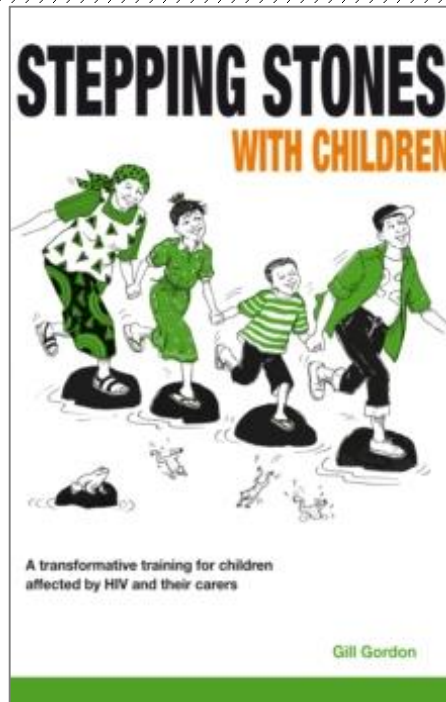


## Handouts for *Stepping Stones with Children*



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.

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## RELATIONSHIPS, LOVE AND SEX

### 1. Different kinds of love

Read the letter to Uncle Nelson with a child, sibling or friend and discuss how you would reply to it. Make up a letter asking for help with questions that *you* have about different kinds of love.

#### Jacob's letter to Uncle Nelson, an advisor to children

*Dear Uncle Nelson*

*My friend Rebecca and I have been going around together since primary school. We are now 13 years old. I really love her. We can talk about anything, relax together, and be ourselves. We are interested in each other's problems, and we laugh and cry together. We enjoy challenging each other at schoolwork, and at the weekend we sing in the school choir.*



*Now I have met this girl called Rosie, and I think I have fallen in love with her. I think about her all the time. I want to be with her, hear her voice, kiss and cuddle her and yet sometimes I can't think of one word to say when we are together. She has left school and works as a hairdresser. I often do not have time to see Rebecca now. I know that she feels sad, but I have to be around at home in case Rosie comes by. Is it possible to love two people? Is there more than one kind of love, and, if so, which one is best?*

*Questions:*

- What would you say to Jacob?
- Are there different kinds of love?
- What words do you have in your language for love that involves sexual feelings?
- How do we know that we love someone, or that they love us, in a sexual way?
- How do we behave towards someone we love in a sexual way, and how do we expect a person who loves us [in a sexual way] to behave?
- What are the most important qualities and behaviour that you expect from a boyfriend or girlfriend?

## 2. Combinations of love and sex

**Love without sex:** It's normal to love our family members and our friends, and to hug and touch them, without having sexual feelings. Boys and girls can love each other as friends without having or expressing sexual feelings. People can also love someone they are sexually attracted to, without having sexual intercourse with them. They find other ways to show their love.

Delaying or postponing sex does not harm our sexual organs, or prevent us from making love well when we are ready.

**Sex without love:** Sometimes people say 'I love you' when they only mean 'I want to have sex with you'. People may also have sex with someone without loving them because they are forced to, or because it is expected, or because they want to please the person, or in exchange for money or for favours.

**Love and sex:** People may love the person they have sex with. Having sex is an expression of their love, and more enjoyable because they both people love and care for each other.

*Activity:* You could make up some stories together about love without sex, sex without love and love and sex.

## 3. Early Marriage

### Consequences of early marriage and the law

Early marriage of girls before the age of 16 years can lead to unsafe early pregnancy, leaving school and being dependent on their husbands, with reduced opportunities to do paid work.

Where early marriage is to an older man, consequences include: higher risk of STIs, including HIV; very unequal power relations between husband and wife; and a higher rate of divorce.

In many countries, the law says that males and females have equal rights to consent freely to marriage and that the marriage of children under the age of 16 or 18 is sexual abuse. What does statutory law and customary law say about the age of marriage for boys and girls and consent in your country? Are these laws enforced?

Many countries have signed up to rights agreements, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention against all forms of Discrimination against Women. These promise to uphold the right of children to own their bodies, to make decisions that affect their lives, and to be educated.

#### Strategies to prevent early marriage:

- Educate the community on rights and the benefits of later marriage, including through advocacy by community leaders, law enforcers, and health committees.
- Keep an eye out for girls at risk of early marriage, and take action.
- Teach girls to be assertive and seek support if their families try to marry them early.
- Create community dramas to show the benefits of later marriage.
- Plan actions, which address the reasons for early marriage, and support girls who are already married early.

### **Love between people of the same gender**

Our sexual identity depends on who we are attracted to. In most societies, males are expected to be attracted to females, and females are expected to be attracted to males. People who feel like this are known as *heterosexuals*.

Some males are only attracted to males, and some females are only attracted to females. Their sexual identity is *homosexual*. But a larger number of people may be attracted to people of either sex during their lives. We are not so fixed in our feelings as many believe. Many societies disapprove of homosexuals, and in some countries they are seen as criminals. This is against their human rights, and results in great suffering for them and their families.

#### **The story of Ernest**

I've always felt different from other boys. I like playing football with my friends, but now that we are older I get bored when they keep talking about girls and how sweet they are. I like being with girls but I don't get sexy feelings about them at all. Now I've realized that I am falling in love with a boy that I meet at school. I think about him so much, and want to touch him and get close to him. I'm worried that I might be what they call 'gay'. I don't know who to talk to about it, because in our society gay people are not accepted.

Homosexuality is not a new thing. Throughout history some people in all societies have been sexually attracted to people of the same sex. In some places they have been accepted, and even given special roles in the community, but often they have been discriminated against.

Nowadays some politicians and religious leaders may tell us that that being homosexual is wrong. But more and more people and countries are accepting that some people are born with a homosexual identity; this is not immoral, or dangerous, or frightening, and people with homosexual identity can contribute to society and have loving relationships just like everyone else. We all have the right to enjoy loving relationships without stigma and discrimination, feelings of shame, and violence, and prison. Forcing people to hide their love makes it hard for them to enjoy long-term loving relationships, to practise safer sex, and or to get medical services to ensure their sexual health.