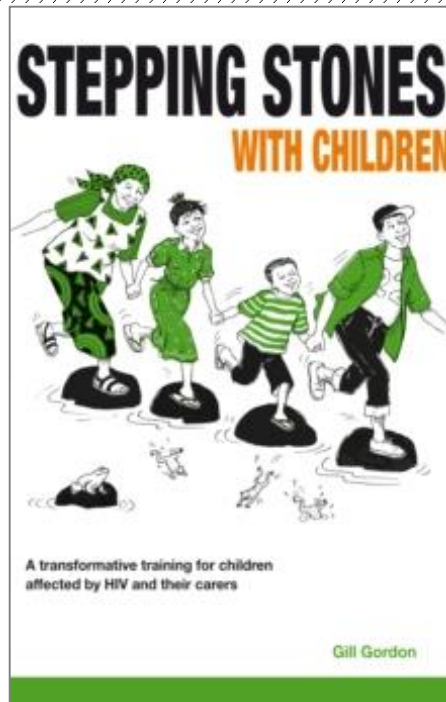


Handouts for *Stepping Stones with Children*



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 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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SEXUAL FEELINGS AND SEXUAL SAFETY

1. Managing sexual feelings

Sexual feelings are a natural part of growing up. They cannot damage your body. They start at different times for different people. Sexual feelings do not mean that you need to have sex. They come from the lower part of our brains, so we may take less notice of our thinking, upper brains when we are feeling sexy. This is more so for children, because their upper brains are not yet fully developed.

We can manage our sexual feelings because we are in charge of our bodies. We can:

- seek advice and support (from friends, health workers, our religion);
- think about the benefits of delaying sex to achieve our future dreams;
- consider the problems that having sex can cause ourselves and others;
- distract our minds or tire our bodies (pray, sing, play sports, dig);
- avoid encouraging our sexual feelings (avoid porn movies, sexy books, and being alone with someone we are attracted to);
- avoid alcohol, cannabis, and other drugs, as they reduce our self-control;
- release our sexual feelings in a safe way.

It is never right for adults to have sex with children, even if the child has sexual feelings for the adult

2. Masturbation

Masturbation is touching our own genitals for sexual pleasure. Most males and females masturbate at some time in their lives. Masturbation is a natural and safe way of coping with sexual feelings. It has no risks for us or for others. We cannot share any diseases by masturbating, or get pregnant or make someone pregnant, because there is no exchange of fluids.

Masturbation can teach people how their bodies work, and what gives them pleasure. When they decide to have sex, they can use this learning to help each other to enjoy sex. Sometimes boys masturbate in a friendship group, and compete or play games. This may be part of learning about puberty and support.

Masturbation does not:

- cause harm to our private parts, or any other part of our bodies;
- cause harm to our minds;
- make us less attracted to others;
- waste semen or vaginal fluids; our bodies are always producing more;
- stop us from marrying;
- mean we are no longer a virgin;
- cause infertility.

How to masturbate safely

- Find a private place and time.
- Wash your hands. Rub yourself gently. Stop if you feel any discomfort, which could be caused by infection. Do not masturbate again until the infection is gone.
- Males: it is safest to use your hands. Do not insert things into your penis, or insert your penis into anything.
- Females: it is safest to use your fingers. If do you use an object, make sure that it is very clean, and cannot cut, bruise, or break inside you.
- People may share sex toys; wash them in hot soapy water or bleach.

3. Safe, mostly safe, and unsafe sexual activities for passing on HIV

For HIV to be shared during sexual activities it needs:

- enough quantity and quality: if someone has HIV and is not taking ARVs correctly, they can pass it through their blood and semen or vaginal fluid;
- to have a route of transmission: HIV can pass through a cut or break in the skin, and through wet skin found in the vagina and its lips, inside the foreskin and tip of the penis, and in the anus. Our mouths also contain wet skin, but it is unusual for HIV to be passed through oral sex because saliva contains enzymes which inhibit HIV. HIV is passed on more easily if there are sores or infections in the mouth.

The safety of sexual activities is the same whether they are engaged in by people of different sexes or the same sexes. For example, anal sex using a condom is mostly safe for everyone.

Safe activities include: holding hands; hugging; putting arms round each other; saying nice things to each other; stroking hair, face or other parts of the body; closed-mouth kissing or massage; caressing; cuddling; dancing; moving against each other with clothes on; stroking nipples, buttocks and other hotspots.

Mostly safe activities include: open-mouth kissing; masturbating each other; sexual intercourse (vaginal, anal, or oral) using a condom; oral sex without a condom.

Unsafe activities are vaginal or anal sex without a condom.

Note:

- for activities to be safe or mostly safe, partners must be careful that semen, vaginal fluid, or blood from one does not get onto the wet skin of the other. This might happen via hands or by touching genitals.
- to prevent safe activities turning into unsafe ones, it is good to be prepared by having a condom ready in case the desire for intercourse is overwhelming.