

ADOLESCENT BOYS AND YOUNG MEN

SEXUALITY

AND RELATIONSHIPS

Guidance for adolescents
and young men around
healthy sexual development

Rutgers

For sexual and
reproductive health
and rights

Adolescent Boys and Young Men - Sexuality and Relationships

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and rights

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EXPLAIN

**BOYS THAT GOOD LOOKS MAY
BE AN ADVANTAGE BUT THAT
OTHERS (BOYS AND GIRLS) OFTEN
CONSIDER BEHAVIOR AS MORE
IMPORTANT IN SOCIAL INTERACTION**

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We want to acknowledge two important documents that guided the writing of this manual. The first is the Dutch language manual for professionals working with boys and sexuality, *Jongens en seks – Begeleiding van jongens bij een gezonde seksuele ontwikkeling*, produced in 2011 by Rutgers Netherlands. The second document is the research paper *Adolescent boys and young men: Engaging them as supporters of gender equality and health and understanding their vulnerabilities*, published in 2015 by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Promundo-US. We would also like to acknowledge the valuable experiences of the MenCare+ programme, which were very useful in writing this manual. MenCare+ was a 3-year (2013-2015), 4-country collaboration between Rutgers, Promundo-US and partner organizations in Brazil, Indonesia, Rwanda and South Africa. The aim of MenCare+ was to engage men (aged 15–35) as caregiving partners in promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights, mother and child health, gender equality, and in reducing domestic violence (see annex).

INTRODUCTION

This manual offers support to professionals in discussing sexuality and relationships with adolescent boys and young men, aged 12–25 years. While the manual focuses specifically on this group, it includes a certain amount of comparison to adolescent girls and young women of the same age.

This manual is a handy guide for teachers, educators and youth workers; in short, for anyone who wants to understand the specific needs and vulnerabilities affecting adolescent boys and young men and support them on their journey towards healthy, safe and pleasurable sexual and relational development. The use of this manual by professionals would be of benefit to adolescent girls and young women as well as boys and young men.

*We have to change together, because if you only change
one half of the equation, won't you get half the results?*

A 14-year old boy from India

Providing information about adolescent boys and young men and their broader sexual and relational development, the manual includes practical tips that can be applied by professionals working with them. The manual is based on the comprehensive sexuality education framework, keeping in mind the core values of human rights. It reflects the diverse circumstances and realities of young people around the world. Our goal throughout the manual is to describe the sexual and relational development of adolescent boys and young men. We have integrated the gender transformative approach throughout – challenging the harmful, restrictive sexual and gender norms that maintain power inequities between different genders. We want to empower the professional working with adolescent boys and young men with tools to facilitate a transformation of these norms into positive notions of masculinity, in order to encourage a healthy, safe and pleasurable sexual and relational life.

Adolescent boys and young men require a different approach to sexuality and relationships than adolescent girls and young women. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, boys go through a different process of development during puberty. On average boys are two years behind during their pubertal development in comparison to girls of the same age. Secondly, research has shown that boys sometimes have different questions, needs and experiences, and deal with different problems than girls concerning their sexuality and relationships. This is due to a mix of biological, social and psychological factors. Social and individual factors – such as family, culture and religion – affect knowledge, values and behaviour concerning puberty and sexual development in a variety of ways. These may be manifested in numerous different ways, such as in rites of passage from child to adulthood or social norms guiding dating and sexual behaviour.

It is also important to keep in mind that boys differ among themselves; there is no such thing as 'the boy', or 'the young man'. Factors like education; ethnicity; and social, economic, cultural

and religious background have a significant impact on upbringing and development.

However, putting too much emphasis on the differences between boys and girls can lead to a polarizing and simplistic debate about which sex faces greater health risks or suffers more. We encourage the professional working with adolescent boys and young men to also emphasize the similarities between the sexes.

Adolescent boys and young men do not readily ask for support or help. Thus, it is important to create a safe space where they are able to have open conversations about topics concerning sexuality, gender and relationships. There is not yet enough space for adolescent boys and young men to discuss these issues during sexuality and relational education. The themes that boys want to talk about are often avoided by professionals due to controversy about the topics in certain societies, but also because some topics are difficult to discuss and some questions are difficult to answer.

This manual comprises three modules. The first module presents facts and figures concerning adolescent boys and young men and their sexual development. The second module provides specific advice and tips to assist with facilitation of sexuality education for adolescent boys and young men. The third module is organized according to 10 themes that are often topics of interest and discussion for adolescent boys and young men. These sections explore the themes in detail, provide information for the professional, offer practical tips for addressing the topic and suggest the kind of questions that the professional can expect from the target group. Finally, the glossary provides definitions of the terminology used throughout the manual.

We invite you to take on the challenge and open the conversation about sexuality and relationships with adolescent boys and young men.

For more information about sexuality, sexual and relational development visit our website:
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MODULE

1

FACTS AND FIGURES

This module provides facts about adolescent boys and young men and a description of their sexual development and the roles they play. It provides an overview of gender-specific potentials and risks around sexuality and relationships, based on research results and the experience of programme implementation.

To understand the specific vulnerabilities affecting adolescent boys and young men around the world, it is important to make certain comparisons between the sexes. However, putting too much emphasis on the differences between boys and girls can lead to a polarizing and unproductive debate about a hierarchy of suffering and health risks. Gender norms affect the sexual development and reproductive health of all. They reinforce the vulnerability of girls, young women and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, and promote risk-taking sexual behaviours among adolescent boys and young men, which also result in sexual and reproductive health (SRH) vulnerabilities. Thus, we want to encourage professionals to look at the differences but also emphasize the similarities between sexes when working with this age group. In this manual, we call for attention to be paid to the needs and realities of adolescent boys and young men. This is not to shift the attention to boys instead of girls, rather it is a crucial and strategic step to engage adolescent boys and young men in healthy, safe and pleasurable sexual and relational life. This is beneficial for young men themselves, as well as being highly beneficial for adolescent girls, young women and LGBT people as well.

CULTURE, RELIGION AND SEXUALITY

It is essential to realize that religious and other cultural norms and values influence individual sexual development. Manifested in messages from parents, other relatives, peers, school, media, church, government and other people or institutions, adolescent boys and young men receive information about how to behave and express themselves with regard to sexuality.

Culture can be described as a set of norms, values, opinions, attitudes and skills that shape individual behaviour, founding a common base for living together in a community. Culture is learned from others, through education, imitation and other forms of social learning. Culture is dynamic and can change over time, whereas religious values, norms and rules mostly remain unchanged from the start of a religious movement. Religion is always embedded in a culture, building a bond between the members of a religious community. As religion is a formal expression of a set of sociocultural beliefs, including a set of norms and values regarding sexual expression and behaviour, the relationship between religion and sexuality is distinguished from other cultural dimensions of sexual health. However, both culture and religion help people to make sense of and give direction in different aspects of life, including gender and sexuality. As cultural and religious beliefs can provide direction for individual choices, people experience these as supportive in decision-making. Religion and culture can affect individual sexual health in different ways, which can be either positive or negative, depending on the perspective. For example, premarital sex can be unacceptable from a religious point of view, whereas it does not harm the individual values of the unmarried couple involved. Although many religious teachings do not permit these sexual relationships, norms in a given community can be more permissive about premarital sex.

Cultural and religious belief can collide when members of a religious community are influenced by other beliefs and behaviours within their culture. For example, young, religious people living within a

culture that also includes non-religious groups, might be challenged to disregard the abstinence promoted by their religious establishment. As they are exposed to other beliefs about pre-marital sex in their society – at school, youth clubs or on the Internet – and learn about international sexual rights, they may reconsider their belief in abstinence of sexual contact until marriage.

When reading this manual, it is important to bear in mind that while the physical changes and responses to sexual interaction might be comparable worldwide, the norms, values and beliefs regarding puberty, relationships, gender roles and sexual expression may vary considerably between cultures. Within one community – or even a family – ideas may vary from person to person. Therefore it is important to realize that sexual behaviour and expression are shaped by social constructs. Culture, gender and sexuality are intertwined; culture and other expressions of community define gender, and gender is one of the factors shaping sexuality.

FACTS ABOUT ADOLESCENT BOYS AND YOUNG MEN

Adolescent boys are more likely to start exploring their sexuality at an earlier age than girls do. This difference is temporary because in the longer run girls catch up with sexual intercourse experience, due to the fact that a majority of girls gain sexual experience with men who are older and more sexually active. In all age groups, males have more experience with masturbation than females. Cultural plays an important role in the sexual behaviour of both boys and girls.

SEXUAL RISK BEHAVIOUR

In many countries adolescent males (aged 15–19) are more likely to engage in risky, non-marital sexual behaviour. This varies across countries. People under the age of 25 carry the largest global burden of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Young women and girls are disproportionately affected by the preventable SRH-related consequences of risky sexual behaviour. This is driven by gender-inequitable norms. These norms contribute to the vulnerabilities of women and girls and put them in a position that makes them less likely to negotiate safe sex.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SEEKING BEHAVIOUR AND CONTRACEPTION USE

Young people around the world still face multiple barriers in accessing SRH services and contraception. These barriers exist in different forms for men and women. The research results of the three-year ASK programme (Access, Service and Knowledge) implemented among young people (aged 10–24 years) in seven countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Pakistan, Senegal and Uganda) give an overview of these barriers. Young men (aged 15–19 years) in Pakistan said that they would prefer to seek SRH services on the Internet because their confidentiality would be maintained and there is no risk of embarrassment. Young people in Indonesia identify different barriers to accessing SRH services. One of these barriers is the opening hours of public health clinics, which are the same as school hours. The outcomes in Kenya clearly show that age determines which young people seek education on SRH, whereas sex determines whether or not they look for family planning services.

Male condom use is increasing among young people worldwide, although the numbers vary from one country to another. For example, in Zimbabwe, the use of condoms by boys has been as high as 58%, compared with 37% by girls; in Honduras, condom use has been as high as 72% by adolescent boys, compared with 54% by girls (UNFPA, Promundo-US 2015). In Indonesia there is limited access to information about SRH. Young men are less likely to utilize SRH services due to embarrassment.

This is an example of how the use of condoms varies widely, and that it is difficult to collect data if young men are not getting in touch with SRH services.

VIOLENCE

Violence is a very common part of life for many men and boys. Studies show that mortality rates for adolescent boys have worsened in some settings and remained the same in others. Since 2000, the mortality rate among adolescents in the Americas has been static. Despite this, the statistics are still shocking: since 2000, 1 out of every 3 deaths among young men (aged 15–19) is due to interpersonal violence. Adolescent boys and young men around the world are more likely than adolescent girls and young women to experience violence at an early age due to bullying, physical fighting, school violence and in some cases gang violence. In parts of the world where there is war and conflict, adolescent boys and young men are exposed to and take part in a significantly higher rate of violence, and death rates for this group are disproportionately high (UNFPA 2015).

“The meaning of masculinity has changed over the years.

Macho behavior is less valued in many societies.

Boys must meet certain expectations but they barely get support for meeting these expectations. It is expected of them that they are sexually competent, they don't make mistakes, they don't exceed limits, they pick up signals and act responsibly.”

Source: Jongens en Seks, Rutgers.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Cultural beliefs about gender and masculinity play a significant role in how sexual violence towards adolescent boys and young men is looked at. Research on sexual violence against adolescent boys and young men shows that they are also common victims of sexual violence, alongside women and girls. When falling victim to sexual violence, adolescent boys and young men find it difficult to access services and protection. The existing stereotypical definitions of masculinity make it hard for them to speak out against abuse and sexual exploitation. Data from Together for Girls demonstrate that 1 in 7 boys experience sexual violence as a child.

GENDER DIVERSITY

Stereotypical definitions of gender normative behaviour are present throughout society. For example, some health systems are hetero-normative and therefore fail to address the sexual and reproductive needs of young men and women of different gender identities and sexual orientations. Discrimination impacts LGBT groups in many harmful ways, which include the inability to access health services, risk of experiencing violence, social exclusion and isolation, and police brutality. However, despite social norms, millions of young people are determined to 'be themselves' and believe in gender equality and diversity.

SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT OF ADOLESCENT BOYS AND YOUNG MEN

The paragraphs below describe the general sexual and reproductive development of adolescent boys and young men. Although the biological changes will be similar all over the world, the respon-

ses of boys – and their communities – to these differ, as influenced by varying cultural and societal norms and values.

ADOLESCENT BOYS AGED 10–12

Around the age of 10, boys start to have more interest in adult sexuality due to changes in their hormones. They fantasize more about sexuality, about naked women or men, and start to actively seek sexualized images on the television, Internet or smartphones. Their appearance, personal identity and body image become more important. Boys can feel insecure about their body or feel ashamed about their appearance. There are significant differences in physical and psychosocial development between boys and girls during this phase. For boys the physical changes start later than for girls. Some boys will make their first steps on the path of love and start experimenting with sex.

ADOLESCENT BOYS AGED 12–15

Changing body

For boys, puberty starts between the ages of 12 and 15. Many physical changes happen during this time. The testicles and penis grow, and boys start to grow pubic and armpit hair. This is followed by a growth spurt. Their voice becomes deeper and hair growth continues. The average age of first ejaculation is 14. From that moment, boys are biologically sexually mature.

Love

Boys start to feel sexually attracted to their peers. They have a serious crush on someone for the first time and relationships develop. Boys start experimenting with kissing, French kissing and caring. Some boys have their first sexual experience (foreplay or sexual intercourse). This is also the time when boys explore their sexual preference.

Insecurity

This is the time when boys develop a sexual identity. They start seeing themselves as individuals who are capable of having sex with another person. Feelings of attraction, rejection and being stood up have a big influence on their self-esteem. Many boys deal with feelings of insecurity and dissatisfaction about their body, appearance and sexuality.

Friends

Boys are in search role models to identify with. They are looking for social norms about what is appropriate or not. They are very sensitive to reactions from their surroundings and want to be part of a group. The influence of peers increases. They will hang out with same sex peers more often, identify with each other and are curious towards the opposite sex. The contact between boys and girls becomes more personal and flirting behaviour increases. The Internet, social media and mobile phones play a big role in this interaction. Boys gain more experiences online and explore their boundaries and possibilities.

YOUNG MEN AGED 16–18

Independence

Between the ages of 16 and 18, adolescent boys become physically mature. They start rebelling towards their parents, while developing their own autonomy and independence. It becomes clearer to them which gender they identify with, although they will not always openly express this.

First time

This is the phase where adolescent boys start experimenting with sexual contact. They learn to make independent choices. The average age that boys have their first experience with sexual intercourse varies around the world. The average age for adolescent boys in the Netherlands is 17 years. Adolescent boys no longer only look at physical attraction in choosing a partner.

Talking about sex

Young men start to discover how they can better communicate with their intimate partners. They learn to negotiate and compromise. They become more aware of their own desires and boundaries and learn to express these towards their partners. Young men are confronted with more sexual risks at this age and they learn to make their own decisions concerning these risks.

SEXUAL ROLES OF ADOLESCENT BOYS AND YOUNG MEN**It's a boy!**

From the moment a baby is born it already matters if it is a boy or a girl. The community of the baby reacts differently to a boy than to a girl. For parents and family members it matters if a child is a boy or a girl. They will talk differently, cuddle differently, offer different toys, have different expectations, see different character traits and stimulate certain behaviour more for boys than for girls, and vice versa.

Traditional roles

Although these may vary due to cultural and societal differences, some elements of traditional male gender roles seem to be similar all over the world. A 'real' boy is strong, flexible, innovative, active, technically competent, able to control his feelings and competitive. This is the norm that is set for boys. Traditionally it is expected from a boy that he is sexually competent, takes initiative and that he delivers sexual performance. This expectation is amplified by the media, peers and the social environment.

Double expectations

In many societies, boys are expected to treat girls as their equal. But there is a double expectation for boys. On the one hand, boys are expected to be concerned, empathetic and careful, sense the boundaries and desires of their partners, and to be able to talk about this. On the other hand, they are also expected to act cool, conquer girls and deliver sexual performance.

Contradictory sex roles

Contradictory sex roles can lead to stress for many adolescent boys and young men. This especially occurs when the opinion of peers about sex and appearance contradict with their own. Among peers, boys feel the most pressure. They should absolutely not behave in a manner perceived to be ladylike or childish. This stress is especially high for adolescent boys growing up in a male dominated culture. Also, due to the rapid pace of empowerment and independence of girls and women in many places, boys and men often feel threatened and uncertain about their own identity and roles, and may respond in a defensive and/or violent manner.

MODULE

2

DO'S AND DON'TS

IN WORKING WITH ADOLESCENT BOYS
AND YOUNG MEN

How can you enter into conversation with adolescent boys and young men about relationships and sex? What are the things you need to consider? What are the benefits for adolescent boys and young men when they are relieved from peer pressure to behave in a certain way? How can you guide them through their sexual and relational development in such a way that it benefits them for the rest of their lives? These are some of the challenges for facilitators working with adolescent boys and young men.

Puberty and adolescence are a period of great change for boys on their way to manhood, and their lives change in many ways. This is the time when they become sexually active, start exploring their sexual identity and experience their first relationships. Their upbringing, early life experiences, peers, the media, school, culture and religion have a big influence. Not all of them experience the same sexual development. There are big differences between individuals, their needs, experiences, sexual choices and sexual behaviour.

GOALS FOR SEXUAL AND RELATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The benefits for adolescent boys and young men of working with a professional to explore sexual and relational development include:

- **Knowledge.** They gain more knowledge about sex; about their own physical changes compared to that of girls; about sex with themselves compared to sex with someone else; about virginity, circumcision, the first time, STIs and contraceptives. They also gain knowledge about peer pressure, cybersex, sexual diversity and sexual coercion.
- **Awareness.** They become more aware of their own sexual desires and boundaries – and how to fulfil and guard them – and of the desires and wishes of others. They become more aware of stereotypical gender images, misunderstandings and myths.
- **Insight.** They gain more insight into their own sexual preferences, sexual experience, intimacy and relationships. They also gain insight into the distinction between sexuality and intimacy.
- **Transformation.** They learn how to change or transform restrictive gender and sexual norms into positive ways of being a man, based on respect, equality and non-violence.
- **Communication skills.** They are better able to talk about intimacy, desires and boundaries concerning their sexuality and relationships. They are sensitive to verbal and non-verbal communication about themselves and others.
- **Media awareness.** They become more aware of the influence that the media and Internet have on their behaviour and that of others. They are able to see the difference between manipulated reality in the media and that of real life.
- **Responsibility.** They learn the difference between responsible and irresponsible behaviour, learn to make their own choices and to enjoy sexuality, intimacy and relationships, based on mutual respect and equality.

CONDITIONS FOR DISCUSSING SEXUALITY

Making a connection from the start

It is essential for the facilitator to make a good connection with adolescent boys and young men. This has to be established from the moment of first contact. Starting with the boys own experiences is essential. The facilitators should enable the boys to tell their stories and experi-

ences, to let them be heard in the group. This is very important to assess their needs for sexuality education. It is also important for the facilitator to take them seriously, and to ask the right questions that really connect with the experiences they share. Also, humour can facilitate the connection and sense of safety between the facilitator and participants, as long as it is not used to ridicule anyone.

Ensuring a sense of safety and trust

A sense of safety and trust are essential for learning and achieving successful exchange between the facilitator and participants. It is the facilitators' responsibility to create a safe space for participants. Clarity about the topic, how to interact with each other, and what the ground rules are for the sessions are important to guarantee a sense of safety within the group. Once the ground rules and standards have been agreed, it is important for the facilitator to monitor compliance and act if participants do not comply.

The way sexual and relational themes are introduced determines the sense of trust and safety for adolescent boys and young men. The facilitator must make clear to them that these are themes that everybody, young and old, has questions about, and that it is okay to have these questions. For many adolescent boys and young men it may seem as if their peers have a lot of experience because they show off when talking about sex, and this encourages the belief that they are 'sexperts'.

Insecurity and doubt form part of the pubertal phase that adolescent boys go through. Many changes in appearance, feelings and experience happen during this phase. Adolescent boys start experimenting with certain behaviours, but are not able to see the consequences. They often hide their insecurities by acting cool or showing off.

Taking adolescent boys and young men seriously

It is important to take seriously what adolescent boys and young men say and do. Individuals each develop in their own way. This creates vulnerability and needs to be supported, even though they will not always express this need themselves.

The behaviour of adolescent boys can be misleading for facilitators and it can disrupt the session. It is important for facilitators to bear in mind that every behaviour has a function. Adolescent boys often explore how far they can go when interacting with one another. Testing the boundaries and experiencing what happens when stepping over the line has a function. The fear of rejection when in interactions with one another and in intimate sexual contact is very present. Experiencing that boundaries do not automatically mean rejection, is something that adolescent boys have to learn; getting 'no' for an answer in a relationship does not always have to mean complete rejection.

BOYS GROUP OR MIXED GROUP?

BOYS GROUPS

Advantages

- Boys feel more at ease in a boys' group than in a mixed group. This is partly because they feel they have to act cool in front of girls. They think that girls know a lot more and that girls can express themselves better.

- Adolescent boys may show off among each other, but they are comfortable to address each other on that behaviour.
- Adolescent boys realize that they are not the only ones that have questions, desires, feelings, limits or doubts about their own body, relationships and sexuality.
- Adolescent boys that have a negative attitude will be corrected by others. This also counts for boys who exaggerate or act tough. Peers are often more capable of seeing through this behaviour and address one another more effectively than for example a teacher or youth worker.

Disadvantages

- In groups with only adolescent boys or young men there is a risk of encouraging macho behaviour among one another, leading to competitiveness and the telling of exaggerated stories. Not participating in this behaviour or being different may lead to loss of status within the group. Adolescent boys and young men handle this differently from one another. Some take it very seriously and others laugh about it. They all know that a big part of the story is made up; despite this they participate anyway. A facilitator can choose to encourage non-macho behaviour by giving more attention to the participants that do not behave this way.
- The absence of girls from a group can have disadvantages when a girls' perspective is needed. Many boys do not know enough about the experiences, desires and expectations of adolescent girls and young women.

MIXED GROUPS

Advantages

- Boys and girls learn to communicate with each other about sexuality and relationships.
- Boys learn from girls and girls learn from boys. Sometimes the facilitator can show the group that two boys can differ more from each other than a girl and a boy. This can empower understanding between the two sexes.

Disadvantages

- Gender stereotypical behaviour can be encouraged. Boys keep lingering in the behaviour of trying to impress girls with exaggerated stories.
- Boys do not reflect on their own experiences, desires and insecurities as much as girls do. The boys might feel overwhelmed by the girls' statements, and feel unsafe or unheard, if they are not able to express themselves in a similar way.

FEMALE OR MALE FACILITATOR?

MALE

A male facilitator can be someone that adolescent boys and young men identify with, the group may see him as a role model. The group may experience more recognition when the male facilitator shares his own experiences. A male facilitator can better relate to the perceptions of the group and address their behaviour more easily. However, it is not automatic that a group of adolescent boys and young men will make a connection with a male facilitator. Other factors include age, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation.

FEMALE

For a group of adolescent boys and young men it may not be possible to find the same connection with a female facilitator. However, a major advantage of having a female facilitator is that she is able to provide girls' and women's perspectives on puberty, sexuality, reproductive issues and relationships. She can share experiences and expectations that girls and women have. Adolescent boys and young men are often curious to know this.

Workshops or trainings facilitated by both male and female facilitators can also serve as positive models of men and women working together based on mutual respect, equality and complementary qualities.

AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION

Adolescent boys and young men do not know everything

Adolescent boys and young men have a contradictory attitude when talking about sex. On the one hand, they have a great need to receive reliable information, and on the other, they have the attitude that they know everything already.

Bad behaviour often masks insecurity

Indifference may hide insecurities. Hiding these insecurities is a coping mechanism. Participants are anxious to be perceived as 'real men'. Boorish behaviour may explain a lack of communication skills.

Unpacking questions

To find out what the real questions and needs are of adolescent boys and young men, the facilitator sometimes needs to unpack answers and questions from participants. Behind a question about condoms may lie the need to discuss sexual experiences.

Addressing myths

Myths concerning sexuality can be tenacious and may be the cause of risk-taking sexual behaviour. Facilitators should discuss myths, address their falsehood and provide correct information. They can actively involve the group by doing true or false exercises and asking for clarification of their answers. For the facilitator, this is a way to find out the current questions, challenges, misconceptions and other issues in the group.

Examples of myths:

- Girls always bleed when they lose their virginity.
- A doctor is able to see if a girl has lost her virginity.
- It is difficult for a guy who is turned on to stop himself from having sex.
- Sex is only good when you both (simultaneously) reach an orgasm.
- A big penis guarantees pleasurable sex for both guys and girls.
- You do not feel anything when wearing a condom.
- Homosexual men are gross.
- Girls cannot get pregnant when they have their periods.
- All girls can reach an orgasm by having sexual intercourse.
- All girls have a G-spot and when this is stimulated they will have an intense orgasm.

- You cannot get an STI by having oral sex.
- Girls who take the pill or carry a condom are looking for sex.
- A girl will become infertile and fat because of the pill.

Not all boys are the same

During sexual education for adolescent boys and young men it is important to bear in mind that boys can also differ a lot compared to one another. Factors like education, age, socioeconomic and cultural background, religion and ethnicity play an important role.

Learning style

On average adolescent boys and young men like to learn by trial and error. Facilitators should keep this in mind when preparing the training, workshop or class for them.

Peer behaviour

In a group setting with only boys, participants often feel the need to establish a hierarchy: who is the strongest, the most outspoken, the most experienced etc. With conflicts or disagreements, boys have a tendency to avoid taking responsibility and to push that on to someone else. They are sometimes less empathetic, but at the same time they easily forget a quarrel. Practice shows that where you are able to create a safe space of confidentiality and sharing without fear for being judged, the atmosphere changes, hierarchy and competition disappear.

Male role models

Professionals working in the field of welfare and education are predominantly women. This leads to boys being educated by women more often. This may lead to misunderstanding of their behaviour, less appreciation or even rejection of how they behave. Boys often lack male role models to identify with.

Experiences of a male facilitator

Sharing personal experiences may have a positive effect on boys. It can bridge the gap between facilitators and participants. It is advised that male facilitators think about what they would or would not like to share with boys, what the benefits are, and the goals of sharing certain personal information. It is also possible to share fictive personal information. This helps facilitators to guard their personal space, but enables a conversation that they want to have.

MODULE

3

TOPICS OF INTEREST

FOR ADOLESCENT BOYS AND YOUNG MEN



BOYS

BOYS AND CHANGES DURING PUBERTY AND ADOLESCENCE

During adolescence, boys experience many body changes. These changes come with various emotional reactions, including uncertainty about these developments. Facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experiences between boys and young men can help them to understand, interpret and accept these changes. It can also assist them in making the best of an often confusing stage in their young lives. It is important to emphasize that each boy will experience a unique personal, physical and mental development. Thus each person's body, including genitalia, will be different.

Discussion points

- In puberty the sexual and reproductive organs start to mature. The body is physically ready for reproduction (i.e. making babies);
- Boys start to relate differently to the people they know and the world at large. A need to become independent from their parents might cause internal conflict with the dependency that boys still feel for their father, mother and/or other caregivers;
- Understanding that one's body is one's own;
- Physical development of boys in puberty:
 - A later start than that of girls;
 - Growth of facial and body hair;
 - Breaking of the voice finally resulting in a lower voice;
 - Anatomy and functioning of the penis and testicles;
 - First (and often nocturnal) ejaculation;
 - Sexual desire, arousal and masturbation;
 - More perspiration, greasy hair and pimples;
- Emotional development in puberty:
 - Insecurity regarding their own development in comparison with that of others;
 - Comparing themselves with other boys;
 - Desire to belong to a group (of friends);
 - Falling in love (with a girl or boy), lust and sexual desire;
- How to cope with physical and emotional changes during puberty and adolescence;
- Where to seek support for concerns regarding these changes;
- How to cope with being in love and/or sexually attracted to other adolescent or adult men;
- Dramatic development of gender roles at puberty;
- Different masculinities, including male gender stereotypes.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

Feeling insecure

The growth of the testicles is regarded as the first sign of puberty for boys. During puberty, boys often feel insecure about their changing bodies. They often compare themselves to other boys, for example by discreetly observing others. They often hero-worship male celebrities, reflecting a desire to be like them and be popular among or, at least, accepted by their peers. It is very important to make boys understand that everyone experiences their own individual development – physical and mental – at their own unique pace. Early, late, fast, slow, small or

big: these are all subjective concepts. Nobody is 'normal', nor 'perfect'.

When a boy discovers he is emotionally and/or sexually attracted to the same sex this might cause stress or other feelings of discomfort if he grows up in a community – or peer group – in which homosexuality is ridiculed or rejected. In many cultures, homosexuality, lesbianism or other varieties of sexual behaviour are not tolerated and/or are forbidden by law. Also, it is often believed that LGBT people are not 'real men' or 'real women'; they are often considered to be 'sinners' or physically and mentally sick. In some religious or cultural communities, it is believed that sexual arousal, preferences or orientations are individual choices rather than feelings and can be cured by medication or violence.

Penis size

In particular, boys may worry about the length of their penis. Facilitators should tell them that the penis stops growing when they are approximately 17 or 18 years of age. Worldwide, the average size of an erect penis is about 14 cm. However, penis size is definitely not an indicator of 'manliness' nor does it guarantee your qualities as a lover. The length of an erect penis has worldwide and through history been proportionally associated with 'manhood', fertility, sexual ability or sex drive, and there are many misconceptions about this. Large sums of money are made selling pills, creams, devices, masturbation training and surgeries that promise a larger penis size. However, there is no scientific proof to support their effectiveness. Rather, some of these 'erection boosters' may cause disappointment or even physical harm to the man and/or his penis.

Worldwide the age of first nocturnal emission (or wet dream) is very difficult to estimate accurately. Often it is reported to happen between 13 and 15 years of age.

Macho behaviour

Tough behaviour or boasting about sexual and other experiences are often ways for boys to cover their insecurity, to impress others or to invite responses of appreciation. For many boys, this is a harmless strategy to cope with the changes in puberty and adolescence and to develop their own adult identity.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

- Explain to boys that good looks may be an advantage, but that others (boys and girls) often consider behaviour to be more important in social interactions. Make sure that they are comfortable with themselves by asking them or other boys in the group about some positive qualities.
- Invite them to identify positive role models and discuss their looks, qualities and background. Many role models might have had challenges in their past that boys can learn from.
- Challenge boys to share images of their ideal girls or women. This is a good and participatory way to discover that people have different preferences.
- Emphasize the importance of having a good friend (teacher, neighbour or sports coach) whom they can trust and to whom they can talk when in doubt or trouble.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Is there such a thing as normal physical and sexual development? Or is it different for each individual?
- I grow slower (or faster) than other boys. Is something wrong with me?
- When should I start shaving?
- What does a 'good looking man' look like?
- I do not enjoy playing nor watching sports like my friends. Does that mean I am not going to be a real man?
- What is the average penis size?
- Does my fertility depend on the size of my penis?
- Are girls attracted to a larger penis more than a small one?
- How can I extend my erection?
- How much sperm is normally released in one ejaculation?
- Should I shave my pubic hair? Is that preferred by girls?
- Does a wet dream mean that I do not have enough sex?
- Does masturbation cause health problems if you do it too often?
- I think about sex every hour. Does that make me a sex addict?
- When I look at pornography, I see men ejaculating much more semen than I do. Does this mean I am not a real man or I am unhealthy?
- I fell in love with another boy; does this mean I am no longer a real man?
- Can boys be sexually attracted to other boys? And what should they do then?

GIRLS



INFORMATION ABOUT GIRLS AND WOMEN

In general, boys lack knowledge about girls' bodies and the changes they go through during puberty and adolescence. Also, boys and young men know little about the sexual development of girls and female sexuality. Providing them with information on these themes will help boys to better communicate and relate to girls.

Discussion points

- Girls start relating differently to the people they know – and the world at large during puberty;
- For most girls their physical development in puberty starts earlier than that of boys;
- In many communities worldwide, girls' desires to explore life, including sexuality, might conflict with the gender behaviour as encouraged and tolerated by their families, communities and society at large;
- Anatomy and functioning of breasts, vulva, vagina and clitoris;
- Physical development of girls in puberty:
- Growing hair in armpits and around the vulva;
- Start of menstruation;
- Sexual desire, arousal and masturbation;
- More perspiration, greasy hair and pimples;
- Menstruation:
- The menstrual cycle, including the most fertile days of the month;
- Tampons, sanitary napkins and hygiene during menstruation;
- Emotional development in puberty:
- Insecurity regarding their own development in comparison with those of others;
- Comparing themselves with other girls;
- Desire to belong to a group (of friends);
- Falling in love (with a boy or a girl), lust and sexual desire;
- Differences and similarities between boys and girls:
- Different femininities;
- Female gender stereotypes;
- Unequal treatment of girls and boys in families;
- The hymen – facts and misconceptions about virginity;
- Pregnancy – from fertilization to delivery;
- What to do if a pregnancy is unplanned or unwanted.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

Sexual development of girls

The growth of their breasts is considered the first sign of puberty for girls. For most of them this happens between the ages of 9 and 14. A third of girls develop hair around the vagina and in their armpits first. After having their first growth spurt, many girls experience their first menstruation (menarche). Girls experience menarche at different ages. The timing is influenced by female physiology, as well as genetic and environmental factors, especially nutritional factors. The world-wide average age of menarche is very difficult to estimate accurately, and it varies significantly by geographical region, ethnicity and other factors. Various estimates have placed average and

median age between 13 and 15 years. From their first menstruation onwards girls can become pregnant. Until approximately the age of 16, menstruation might be irregular. Girls and women who are pregnant do not menstruate. From the age of 50 women will menstruate less frequent and irregularly until menstruation stops completely. From that moment, a woman cannot become pregnant anymore.

The hymen

The hymen is a membrane that surrounds or partly covers the vaginal opening. It can have different forms – smooth or ragged, thick or thin. Only rarely does it cover the vaginal opening entirely, which results in a serious medical complaint, as menstrual blood cannot escape from the vagina. A minor surgical procedure will help. Most girls do not bleed when they first have sex with a man, although some do. Whether or not a girl bleeds during first-time sex, indicates nothing about whether she is a virgin. It may indicate that she is not feeling excited and her vagina is not getting wet while having penetrative sex.

In many cultures and religions, it is important that a woman remains a virgin until marriage. The ultimate proof of her virginity is believed to be bleeding during the first night with her husband. These cultural beliefs about the hymen can be interpreted as a way of controlling women's bodies and sexuality. There is no such thing as virginity for men. In many cultures, while women are expected to abstain from sex before marriage, the opposite kind of behaviour is valued in men: manhood is proved by having sex with many girls and women.

Boys and girls

For boys, puberty starts on average between 6 to 12 months later than for girls. This might be one of the causes for misunderstandings between boys and girls. Whereas boys in general are still playful around the age of 12, girls experience their body slowly developing into that of a grown woman. At that age, boys might have different expectations of their contacts or relationships with girls and experience them differently, although this can happen later as well. As boys grow, they might not be aware that due to cultural norms they are more powerful than girls. Girls, often more aware of these differences in power, are hesitant in communicating their boundaries to boys. From around the age of 17, the physical and sexual development of boys parallels that of girls.

Communication

Many factors influence the difference in communication patterns between boys and girls, including culture, gender, socioeconomic group and religion. Our experiences while growing up – including parenting, education, exposure to other modelled behaviour and abuse – also play a role in the way we learn to communicate. In general, boys and men communicate more objectively, with a stronger focus on the content of the information and factual problem solving. Girls and women tend to communicate in a more subjective manner; they express feelings more easily and the focus is on mutual understanding and their relationship with others. For example, a boy shows up half an hour late at his girlfriend's house. She is upset about it. He tells her that he is sorry, and for him the problem is solved. His girlfriend, however, needs recognition for her hurt feelings. Also, in many communities, girls are brought up to be submissive to men, which may make it harder for them to speak out about their desires and boundaries. These are, however, generalizations, and upbringing, education, community values and many other socio-psychological factors contribute to diversity in communication patterns and skills.

Signals

Confusion between boys and girls can also be caused by power dynamics and different ideas about gender roles and stereotypes. For example, as a boy tries to kiss a girl, she might look away because she feels ambivalent about whether or not to kiss. Although she might feel like kissing, she could be unwilling to create the impression that she is 'easy to get'. Consequently, the boy could become confused, as he does not know what she wants. Alternatively, a girl might want to have sex with a boy, but he is reluctant to do so. She may reject him, considering him to be not a real man.

In many cultures, girls are raised to be submissive and are not expected to take the initiative in sexuality. Often they learn to wait in expressing their desires, or are sometimes told they should not show their sexual arousal at all. This is not the case everywhere, and many girls and women have different experiences. Often boys experience ambiguity in communication with girls as their verbal and non-verbal communication do not match or even contradict. As the girl in the example above refuses the kiss while smiling – as girls often do to show they still like the boy or to cover their discomfort, not knowing what to do – the boy might become even more confused about her boundaries.

Not only do boys often report not understanding the no-signals of girls, they might also be unaware of the impact that their behaviour has on girls. For example, even if a boy has no intention to seduce a girl into a sexual contact, girls may perceive this as such, as a result of power dynamics, the differences in communication style and gender expectations.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

- Boys may not want to talk about these 'girlish' issues. However, to motivate them to do so it can be helpful to illustrate the benefits for them – and their girlfriends – when in a relationship.
- Talk about the idealized, sometimes manipulated and gender-stereotyped images of girls and women in society, notably in the media and on the Internet. This is often referred to as objectification, meaning that humans are portrayed as merely body parts in the media.


Explain that this far from respectful to girls and women, it makes an object of them, which has nothing to do with human beings with rights. It also makes them vulnerable. To stimulate a discussion, compare this to the way boys and men are often portrayed stereotypically: never showing emotions, being strong and tough, always ready for sex, which is also far from reality.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- How long and how often does a girl have a period?
- Can a girl become pregnant when she has unsafe sex during menstruation?
- Is it possible and healthy to have sex when a girl has her period?
- How much blood does a girl lose when she is having her period?
- At what age do periods stop?
- Do girls get their periods when they take contraceptives?
- Do girls have the same sex drive as boys?
- Do girls masturbate as often as boys do?
- How do girls masturbate?
- How does a girl notice that she has an orgasm?
- Why is it that girls never seem to chat up boys?
- How do you notice that a girl fancies you?
- What is the best way to chat up a girl?
- Is it true that a girl ultimately gives in to having sex after you have been touching her breasts and kissed her for a while?
- Can girls have orgasms by intercourse only?
- Does the first intercourse always hurt for girls? And does she bleed then?
- What is the best sex position to make a girl have an orgasm?
- Why is it that girls can suddenly stop kissing, while boys are ready to have sex at the same moment?
- Can boys with a small penis sexually satisfy girls?
- What do girls like when it comes to sex?
- How long does it take for a girl or woman to notice that she is pregnant?
- How long does a pregnancy last?
- What can a girl do to prevent pregnancy?
- From what age can girls become pregnant, and until what age is that possible?
- What can a girl (or couple) do when a pregnancy is unplanned?

NOTES

[illegible]

A group of young Black people are posed in a hallway. In the foreground, a young woman wears a pink headwrap and a black long-sleeved shirt. Next to her, a young man wears a blue and white striped shirt and a pink headwrap. Behind them, another young man wears a red baseball cap, and a young woman wears a grey baseball cap. The word "INFLUENCE" is overlaid in large, white, dotted, outlined letters across the center of the image. The background shows a hallway with a red arrow sign and a green exit sign.

INFLUENCE

INFLUENCE OF FRIENDS AND PEER PRESSURE

During puberty peers become more important to adolescents. The influence of peers can be both positive and negative. Adolescent boys and young men in particular are under strong pressure to engage in risk-taking behaviour. For facilitators, referring to peers – either known or unknown – improves communication with adolescents about sexuality and relationships.

Discussion points

- Stereotypical gender behaviour – what is considered ‘typical male’ or macho behaviour and what is not;
- Social dynamics and roles in peer groups;
- Power differences within male groups – causes, pros and cons, positive vs negative use of power;
- Peer and other kinds of social pressure (relatives, tribe, church, school, media);
- Complying with or deviating from group norms and values – pros and cons;
- How to respond to unpleasant peer pressure;
- How to build mutually respectful relationships – knowledge, attitudes and skills regarding: expressing mutual respect; being sensitive to other people’s feelings, dignity and rights; shared expectations of a friendship; honesty; and communication;
- The benefits and challenges of male friendships.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

The importance of peers

From the start of puberty, adolescent peers play an increasingly important role. These contacts could have several benefits for adolescent boys as they provide the opportunity to:

- Try out different kinds of social skills, such as discussing personal or other sensitive topics or practicing assertive behaviour;
- Discover one’s own identity;
- Learn how to engage with the opposite sex;
- Express or handle different emotions and deal with those of others;
- Experiment with different social roles within a group;
- Develop a set of personal norms and values;
- Prepare for integration within the world of adults.

Socializing within peer groups

During adolescence young people connect with subgroups of peers that share common values and norms. This gives them a sense of belonging to a group. Peers can have both positive and negative influences on the individual behaviour of adolescents. For example, when rebellious behaviour is set as a group norm, young men are likely to develop behaviour that is less socially acceptable. When it comes to relationships and sexuality, the norms and values of the peer group might impact on individual opinion, choices and behaviours. For example, dating a specific type of girl might reinforce a boy’s position within his peer group. Also, fear of social rejection by their peers might make many adolescents conform uncritically to group norms and behaviour. Many adolescents are sensitive to group norms and stereotypical gender expectations regarding

masculinity. Many groups hold traditional attitudes regarding sex roles that encourage macho behaviour in boys. These attitudes might have a negative impact on healthy sexual behaviour, such as refusal of condom use, consensual sex and mutual respect.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

- All adolescents are searching for their own identity during puberty. Doing what they want, without asking what others think, can boost their self-esteem. This can prove their independence, not only to others but also to themselves. It may also raise their status among their peers. Being independent is what most adolescents want.
- Tell adolescents that they are individually responsible for their own behaviour and that everyone can decide for him- or herself what or what not to do. If friends do not accept the individual choice that you have made, you may question the value of that friendship.
- In some cultures, however, individual responsibility is transferred to the whole family. In these circumstances the family – or community – is accountable for the behaviour of individuals. This makes it hard for adolescents to make decisions for themselves as they make their decisions with the reputation of their family in the back of their minds.
- Reassure adolescents that friends do not need to resemble each other in everything. Good friends accept each other's differences.
- Adolescents need to understand that if their friends engage in unlawful or other behaviour or activities that they do not approve of, then it is better not to be part of the group. Each of the members of a group can be held responsible for its acts, even if they stay on the side-lines. In the case of sexual harassment that is committed in a group setting, all members of the group are guilty, except for those who tried to prevent their friend(s) from these abusive acts.
- Breaking up with friends is hard to do but not impossible. Tell adolescents that when a friend or group of friends terminates a friendship with them, they should try not to regard this as a rejection of them as a person. If friends think or behave differently than them it does not mean that they should change themselves in order to maintain the friendship or make new friends. All of us feel best with friends who do things that we feel comfortable with.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- What should I do when my friends suggest doing something that I do not like? Will they break up our friendship when I refuse to do it?
 - Do I have to like everything that my friends do if I want to stay part of their group?
 - What is a good group of friends like?
 - Can you still be friends if you have different opinions about relationships and sexuality?
 - I do not want my friends to talk about my girlfriend so often. What can I do to say this in such way that they do not ridicule me?
 - What if the group decides to do something which I do not want to take responsibility for?
 - What if my family wants me to act in a way I feel uncomfortable with?
 - All my friends have a girlfriend but I am still single. They think I must be gay. How should I respond?
 - Are my friends and I all punishable if one of us does something unlawful?
-

NOTES

[illegible]



LOVE

BOYS, LOVE, RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX

Adolescent boys and young men have many questions when it comes down to falling in love, getting into relationships and first sexual interactions. It is important when answering these questions, to bear in mind that we live in a culture where we are constantly exposed to strong messages about how men and women are expected to behave. In many countries, culture and religion also influence the way that sexuality is perceived. Norms and practices about courtship and dating vary enormously around the world.

Working with boys and young men requires an approach that offers the opportunity to free themselves from restrictive norms around gender and sexuality. This will benefit them and their relationships with friends, girls and women. It is important to engage in conversation with boys and young men about what is happening in their lives and to listen to their questions.

Discussion points

- As long as sexual activity is undertaken with mutual and meaningful consent and is not harmful, there is no one true or better way to enjoy it;
- Flirting, dating and love affairs;
- Feelings, behaviour, desires, boundaries, make- and breakup;
- Skills on how to start and sustain consensual and pleasurable relationships;
- Differences and similarities between infatuation, falling and being in love, sexual attraction and friendship;
- Sexual diversity;
- Heartbreak and getting dumped;
- Concepts of respect, mutuality and enjoyment as they apply to sexual relationships; Same-sex relationships and same-sex marriage;
- Identifying body parts that play a role in sexual pleasure;
- The first sexual contact with another person:
- Expectations, feelings and insecurities;
- The right moment/circumstances for you;
- Facts and myths regarding virginity (see also Section 2);
- Virginity, the hymen and the meaning of this for boys, girls and their families, and – if relevant – the community;
- Different varieties of sexual activity, including kissing; caressing; masturbation; oral, anal and vaginal intercourse;
- Exploring their own and each other's sexual desires and boundaries and how to communicate these:
- Masturbation is an important way in which people learn about their bodies and sexuality;
- Most people seek pleasure through masturbation throughout their lives, including periods when they have a sexual partner or are married;
- As masturbation is a very private act and regarded as a taboo or sin in many cultures, people do not usually talk about it and boys can feel guilty about it;
- Masturbation is safe sexual behaviour. It is neither physically nor mentally harmful;
- Diversity in ideas about being faithful;
- Reasons that people want to have sex and reasons why some have sex when they do not

want to;

- Social norms regarding diverse forms of sexual expression and how such standards have changed and are changing;
- Ways to promote and protect a positive and responsible sense of sexuality;
- Feelings, motivations and experiences about sexual decision-making;
- Attitudes about sexual diversity;
- Each of us can decide how fully we agree with local norms related to sexuality. If we disagree with certain norms and expectations, we can think about whether we will comply with them or whether we can live according to our own beliefs.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

Relationships and dating

During puberty boys and girls discover and explore their sexuality in many different ways, alone or with others. This is the time in which they have their first experiences with dating, falling in love and relationships. It is important for boys to have a space in which they can openly talk about their experiences and insecurities around sexuality, dating and feelings. Facilitation of dialogues on how to make and maintain contact with friends or someone they are attracted to will help boys to explore their own preferences and boundaries and those of others. By discussing dos and don'ts in flirting, as well as starting, maintaining or ending a relationship, boys learn about healthy, equal and consensual relationships. Ideally, time should be taken to practice the communication and other skills needed to start and foster relationships. Overall, the diversity of ideas, needs and boundaries should be explored.

Boys and young men want to learn how to interpret intimacy and sexuality, develop self-esteem and norms, explore possibilities and boundaries, and develop and shape their own sexual identity. In many societies, unbending societal gender standards set expectations of how adolescent boys and young men should be. In such societies, a large portion of young men feel pressured to go along to these standards. This leads to uneven, stereotypical ideas of what is 'manly', and has numerous impacts on the sexual and reproductive health and rights of both women and men.

In many parts of the world, people may start new relationships throughout life. They may also end relationships. Sometimes a relationship can be harmful to one or both people's well-being. People are not obligated to remain in a relationship, although culture and or religion may strongly pressure people to stay together. It is a human right to choose whether or not to have a loving and/or sexual relationship with someone. In some cultures, families arrange the marriage of their children. In some cases, this works well and couples live happily together. In other cases, it does not work well and a couple may decide to divorce.

Perceptions of sexuality

Sexuality is a dimension of life experienced through thoughts, feelings and practices. It can be expressed by oneself or others, and can involve someone of the opposite sex, the same sex or both. Sexuality can be a source of pleasure and meaning in life. People – regardless of their sexual identity, gender or physical ability – can express and experience their sexuality through a variety of sexual behaviours. One sexual practice is not better (or worse) than another – as long as the

partners respect each other, no one is harmed and both partners fully consent.

As with other activities, people have sex for many different reasons. They may have more than one reason at any time, such as 'winning' or 'keeping' someone's love, proving their masculinity or femininity, gaining gifts or money, or avoiding an argument or potential violence, etc. Likewise, a person may have any of a number of common and acceptable reasons for not having sex.

Whether experienced alone or with others, sex can enhance happiness, well-being, health and quality of life. It can also foster intimacy and trust between partners. At different times, most of us will experience various emotions related to sexuality, such as happiness, confusion, excitement and many others. Such emotions may be intense or, at other times, mild. The development of comfort and confidence regarding one's sexuality is also influenced by individual, family and social factors and experiences.

In searching for their own sexual identity, boys and young men are affected by structural factors and gender stereotypical upbringing, which take place when interacting with their family members, friends, peers, communities, the media and other actors in society. These stereotypical gender norms and perceptions concerning sexuality influence their behaviour in seeking and maintaining relationships. There is a double standard that comes with the gendered perception of human sexuality: boys and young men are encouraged to explore and express their sexual desires, whereas girls and young women are discouraged from doing so. Traditionally, the behaviour of boys and young men towards sexuality has been tolerated in a different way to that of women who are sexually active.

In gender transformative and comprehensive sexuality education, boys should be asked to reflect on and discuss whether they actually behave this way or feel pressured to behave this way. Boys, like girls, should be given the opportunity to reflect on what they want, feel and like – independently from their peers. From this, a process of change or even transformation can follow, whereby boys free themselves from harmful norms on sexuality. Such an approach is more effective if accompanied by campaigns in the community portraying diverse images of manhood and respected and empowered women.

Boys and young men often interpret behaviour and signals from girls as being sexually motivated and based on similar desires to their own. Thus they tend to overestimate the sexual interest of girls and young women. In contrast, girls and young women generally underestimate the sexual interest of the opposite sex. This often happens with flirting: boys more readily interpret flirting as being sexually motivated compared to girls. Girls often interpret flirting as fun and pleasurable contact that confirms their attractiveness. According to boys and young men, signs of sexual interest are: wearing revealing clothing, hanging out in a particular place, drinking alcohol and giving compliments. Many boys and young men are visually oriented: when they see something that stimulates them sexually, it often results in sexual desire.

Sexual arousal

The quality of sex for young men and women does not always depend on getting an orgasm. Intimacy, trust, attention, romance, arousing one another, and respect are equally important. The pressure that adolescent boys and young men feel to execute their power over girls and young women, and over other males, inhibits them from letting go of harmful masculinities. When working with boys and young men it is important to be aware of these social pressures that influence their ideas on how to behave sexually. Letting boys express their feelings, including doubts, fears and other emotions that might be considered 'unmanly' is a good entry point for a facilitator to stimulate discussion about the pleasurable side of sex – which is often avoided when talking about sexuality.

Conditions for pleasurable sex

Many of us grow up hearing only about the risks and dangers of expressing ourselves sexually – seeing sex as a sin and 'no go area' – or grow up not speaking about sex at all. This makes it more difficult to grasp what the conditions are for pleasurable sex. It is true that the risks we hear about are real, it is also true that having sex – with or without a partner – can be very pleasurable. Pleasurable and safe sex is a positive and energetic addition to our lives. Sexual pleasure is a matter of mutual interest and consent. Together with both parties feeling comfortable, this forms the basis of a positive sexual relationship.

Virginity

Worldwide many people still believe that girls bleed during their first intercourse. It is thought that this is caused by tearing of the hymen, a thin membrane partially covering or surrounding the opening of the vagina. However, only rarely does this membrane cover the whole entrance of the vagina. Many girls or young women do not bleed when they first have sex with a boy or young man, although some do. Whether or not a girl bleeds during first-time sex, indicates nothing about whether she is a virgin.

Non-consensual sex

For some people, having sex can trigger memories about bad experiences in the past: of non-consensual sex and abuse. The prevalence of forced sex is much higher among girls and women, but it also happens among boys. Stigma, a sense of guilt and fear of accusation make it hard to openly talk about these traumatic experiences. If such trauma is not addressed it may affect people's sense of sexual being and their sexual relationships. Support and counselling should be made available for those that need it.


TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

- Address the positive aspects of sexuality, but keep in mind that many adolescents do not want or are culturally not allowed to have intercourse. It is also possible that a young person may feel they are not ready to have sex. Be clear that a safe and comfortable sexual relationship requires a certain maturity and power to negotiate for oneself. Emphasize the importance of mutual respect and consent.
 - Many boys consider it important to 'perform well in bed'. Educators should emphasize that sex is not a competition. Safe and consensual sex should be a joy for both partners, one of many ways to express feelings, love and care for each other.
-

- Communication about each other's desires, boundaries, thoughts, doubts and other relevant emotions is very helpful in developing and sustaining a pleasurable sexual relationship. Boys should be challenged to discuss or even practice different communication skills. Explore ways to ensure mutual consent.
- Communicating about sex is difficult for many people, experienced or not. Boys can easily practice and discover how to talk to their partner by doing roleplays about: the first time, whether or not to have sex, and pleasurable and safe sex.
- Sometimes boys are very much focused on their own physical arousal during their first sexual encounters. With time and experience they can assess and control their own arousal, with more mutual pleasure as a result.
- Different research on the experience of sexuality demonstrates that boys and men ask themselves if they're doing a good job. Women and girls ask "Am I not going too fast?" Ask boys if they recognize this and what their explanation is for this difference.
- Use respectful terms and avoid hurtful language, particularly in regard to same-sex attraction, sexually active girls, and young people who do not conform to conventional gender norms.
- Remain neutral and avoid imposing values on the adolescents you work with.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Does a girl always want sex when she behaves sexually and defiantly?
- How can I start dating?
- Do girls also masturbate?
- Is a girl still a virgin if she masturbates?
- How does a girl show that she doesn't want something?
- How does a girl show that she is interested in a boy?
- Can girls also seduce boys?
- How do you seduce a girl?
- Do girls want sex as much as boys do?
- Do girls always bleed the first time they have sex?
- Does it always hurt the first time girls have sex?
- What can you do if a girl feels pain during the first intercourse?
- When can a girl get pregnant?
- What is the hymen?
- What is required to make mutual consent meaningful and real?
- Why do girls act as if they want sex but stop right after kissing?
- What should I do to become a good lover?
- What is the right technique to make a girl have an orgasm?
- Does penis size matter for girls? What is their preferred length or shape?
- Are guys with bigger penises better lovers than those who have smaller penises?
- What should you do when another boy flirts with you, or is in love with or sexually interested in you?
- Is there something wrong with me if I am less in the mood for sex than my girlfriend?
- What is normal in terms of the frequency of having sex? (Note: There is no norm. Answers differ from one individual to another. It is important to emphasize consent, mutual respect and pleasure).
- Is it true that women can rape men?



DIVERSITY

SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSITY

Many boys experience strong feelings and prejudice when sexual and gender diversity (SGD) is being discussed. Teachers, health workers and other professionals might also have difficulty talking about these topics because they do not feel comfortable or might be unaware of personal biases. SGD and the skills required to discuss this freely are an important element of working with boys (and girls) on sexuality. By questioning dominant notions of manhood and their consequences for girls, women, boys and sexual and gender minorities, more equitable sexual and gender norms can be co-created. Facilitators need to know what SGD is and have prerequisite skills to discuss it.

Discussion points

- Gender, gender identity and gender roles;
- The difference between sex and gender;
- Sexual orientation – homosexuality, bisexuality, being transgender etc. – is a feeling and not something that is learned or a 'disease';
- Fear of being gay, bisexual, transgender or being perceived as such;
- Meeting lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender (LGBT) people;
- Not all boys who have sex with boys are homosexual;
- Gay, bisexual or transgender boys do not like every boy or girl, just as heterosexual boys do not like every girl;
- Discrimination and other negative feedback around being LGBT and the fact that it is difficult for LGBT people to enjoy their relationships as a result;
- The choice to hide sexual diversity;
- Religion and sexual diversity.

"When I learned about gender and equality I figured I could change something myself. I went home, talked about it with my family and now I share chores with my sister."

Haile, 15 years, Ethiopia

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

Gender

In every society, gender norms and gender roles influence people's lives, including their sexual lives. Gender roles are learned. They are not innate or 'natural'. In fact, almost everything that males can do, females can also do – and vice versa. Within any culture or society, people have varying attitudes about gender roles and gender equality. Beliefs about gender also vary from one culture or society to another. Gender roles change over time, and in many settings people – especially young people – are embracing greater gender equality. The achievement of gender equality is a key goal around the world.

Gender identity

At birth, newborns are identified as male or female, based on their sex organs. In many settings, people indicate a baby's sex through the use of specific names, jewellery, clothing and so forth. Almost all children behave in ways that do not match the stereotypes associated with their gender. For example, many girls enjoy sports or have dreams about leading their country – and still feel like girls. Many boys enjoy developing close interpersonal relationships, expressing themselves through art, or feeling free from pressures to achieve and be brave – but still feel like boys.

Gender norms and roles solidify during childhood and adolescence

Expected gender roles are apparent in many aspects of family life. For example, family members model gender norms in their own roles and behaviours. Depending on the culture and family, male and female roles might be similar or distinct. Males and females typically have different responsibilities and roles regarding infant and child care. Thus, as infants, children begin to observe and absorb gender norms. Some families treat boys and girls equally, but many do not. People, including parents, often reinforce expectations about gender through language. As young people approach adolescence, they feel more pressure to conform to culturally determined gender roles. Despite cultural variation, many adolescents share similar experiences. Boys often suffer pressure to prove their heterosexuality and manhood, for example to be brave and assertive, prepare to become breadwinners, suppress certain emotions, avoid seeking healthcare and engage in physical violence. Girls also suffer pressures to comply with norms of femininity, for example, to be caregivers, to be docile and submissive to males, to accept having their rights limited and be careful not to hurt people's feelings. Rigid gender roles affect how people treat each other. Gender roles are changing around the world, as millions of young people believe in greater gender equality and diversity, but the pace of change varies from one place to another.

Gender and religion

Religions hold a wide range of perspectives about gender and sexuality. These perspectives may change over time. Attitudes also vary within any religion. Many people find that they do not always agree with their religious leaders on issues related to gender and sexuality. Nevertheless, religious perspectives influence the beliefs and behaviour of many people. Religion or religious leaders may influence gender and sexual norms in various ways and to different degrees, often depending on the interpretation of religious texts. Often women are denied the opportunity to participate equally with men in religious life.

Some religious leaders support equal rights for all people, regardless of their sexual identity, and support the provision of information about, and access to, contraception, condom use and abortion. Others oppose this. Some religions or religious leaders reinforce the 'double standard' of sexuality by blessing both female virginity and faithfulness within marriage, while condoning men having multiple wives. However, others do not. Religious laws sometimes conflict with civil law and universal human sexual and reproductive rights. However, people around the world, including many religious leaders, are working to promote values of human rights and gender equality within their communities.

Gender norms and roles change over time

Societies and cultures are constantly evolving. The conditions of human beings change, sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse. Around the world, millions of people are working actively in their families, schools and communities to change gender norms. Girls' roles are changing in most parts of the world, rapidly in some places, as they are gaining access to their rights. Boys' roles are also evolving, but more slowly.

Sexual and gender diversity

SGD refers to the broad variation in identities, expressions, behaviours and desires we see in sexual orientation and gender identity worldwide. People may experience feelings of love, attraction and sexual desire for the opposite sex, the same sex or both. This variation has always been true throughout history. It is true in all societies, whether or not the society accepts same-sex attraction. In every society, individuals' feelings about sexual diversity vary.

The term 'heterosexual' is used to describe people who desire people of the opposite sex.

The term 'homosexual' is used to describe people who desire people of the same sex. In some settings, these terms are preferred, in other settings other terms are used.

Like everyone else, transgender people – people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth – may be attracted to people of the same sex, the opposite sex or both. People may or may not identify as heterosexual, homosexual (gay or lesbian) or bisexual (attracted to people of both the same and the opposite sex). People who are heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual or transgender may be found in every kind of family, community, religion and profession.

Also, people may be labelled with a sexual identity that they do not claim for themselves. Some people do not want to be labelled or categorized in terms of their sexuality or sexual identity, regardless of their desires. What determines whether a person experiences desire for the same sex, the opposite sex or both is not well understood. These desires cannot be changed by religion, therapy or medical intervention. A person's desires, behaviour or identity may shift over time and from situation to situation.

Not everyone is attracted to the opposite sex; not everyone feels comfortable with the gender role they live in. These 'sexual minorities', who do not conform to predominant heterosexual and gender norms, are often faced with marginalization, stigmatization, discrimination, violence and even criminalization. This affects their well-being and their health, and limits their access to sexual health services, information and support, and is a violation of their human rights. Anyone who works with adolescent boys and young men on sexuality and gender should be able to non-judgementally discuss SGD in order to provide affirmative and inclusive education, health-care or other services. Attitudes towards homosexual and transgender individuals are changing rapidly in some settings.

Age of falling in love

The age at which people discover their sexual and gender identity is different for everyone.

Some boys already know at an early age whether they identify as a boy or girl, others discover later. Around 12–18 years of age adolescents develop sexual feelings. Some adolescents fall in love with someone of the same sex, but this does not imply that they automatically act on these feelings. Many adolescents, including heterosexuals, are in love 'from a distance', sometimes falling in love with someone who is older or with a pop idol or film star. Other adolescents

experiment with sex at this stage and might find out that they have homosexual feelings or feel that they are in the 'wrong body'. Gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or questioning boys might hide their sexual feelings for fear of stigma and discrimination. As a matter of human rights, people may enter into relationships that they choose and that are consensual.

Prejudice and discrimination


Discrimination against a person based on his or her sexual identity, desire or consensual behaviour is a violation of human rights. Prejudice can lead to stigma and discrimination. Negative attitudes from youth towards LGBT people are often a result of fear of being seen as, for example, homosexual. Being heterosexual is the norm, and is connected to 'real manhood' in many cultures. Any man who differs from this male norm is seen as of less value and gets easily stigmatized, ridiculed or even discriminated against. Heteronormativity is used as a measure for social inclusion and exclusion. Anything out of the 'normal' is seen as a threat to 'male identity'. Fear of social exclusion often leads to LGBT people conforming to the hetero norm (e.g. boys conforming to the heterosexual male identity). These socially constructed norms not only make it difficult to disclose sexual and/or gender identity, but also result in boys being afraid to show real emotions and have intimate and physical friendships with other boys. For example, physical touch is often only 'allowed' through sports. Besides making it difficult for boys to express their feelings, sexual and gender norms are also linked to adverse health outcomes and risk behaviours – for boys and girls. For instance, someone who has risked HIV infection by having unprotected sex with another man, will not disclose this if they fear that health staff will be judgemental.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

- It is good for teachers, social and health workers to first go through a gender transformative process themselves. Do you have biases yourself? Are you comfortable to talk about sexual and gender identity and sex in a broader sense? If not, are you the right person to discuss these sensitive issues, or should you leave it to someone who does feel comfortable and equipped?
- If you do feel comfortable to talk about sexuality and differences, it is important to know that creating a safe space in which diversity can be discussed without prejudice and discrimination is crucial. If boys do not feel safe in a group, it is not likely that you will get genuine discussions in which diversity can be explored without judgement.
- Before starting any session, it is important to set ground rules in a participatory manner. Boys should agree these rules, based on human rights principles like equality, respect and responsibility. Establishing trust and some clear boundaries in a group is important before sensitive issues can be discussed.
- Avoid gender stereotypes and talk in a neutral manner. If some boys express homophobic or other feelings, do not put them down, and share that everyone is entitled to their own feelings and opinions, but that discrimination is unacceptable. Remind them of the ground rules they set themselves and that everyone should feel safe in the group.
- Through participatory exercises and empathy, boys can 'experience' what it is like to be discriminated against or excluded, and reflect on their own behaviour.
- Challenge stereotypes: Do all people of a certain group behave the same?
- Expose boys to people from the LGBT community to challenge stereotypes and bias.
- Let boys reflect on what is 'typical' socially expected female and male behaviour in order to challenge norms and create space for diversity.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- When do I know whether or not I am gay?
- Sometimes I like looking at a guy, does that make me gay?
- If I think a boy is beautiful, does that make me gay?
- My religion is against homosexuality, what can I do if I have homosexual feelings?
- What is LGBT all about?
- Do gay boys want sex with all boys?
- What is transgender?
- I know someone who identifies as LGBT, what can I do to help him/her?
- Will I become gay if I have not had a girlfriend for a long time?
- How do gay people have sex?
- Is homosexuality common in all countries?
- Can homosexuality be cured?

A young man and woman are shown in a close, intimate pose, nearly kissing. The woman, on the left, has long brown hair and is wearing a pink t-shirt with a Hello Kitty graphic. The man, on the right, has dark hair and a beard, wearing a dark button-down shirt. The word "RESPECT" is superimposed in the center in a large, white, pixelated font with a black outline.

RESPECT

SHIFTING FROM VIOLENCE TO RESPECTING BOUNDARIES

In the public sphere, we see violence of men against other men and sexual violence against girls and women. Within the private sphere it is mostly men using violence against women, whether it is sexual, physical, economic, verbal or psychological violence. In this section, we will examine why it is that young men are disproportionately involved in any form of violence. We will further look at sexual violence and what can be done to better respect the boundaries of others and yourself.

Discussion points

- Why young men are disproportionately involved in perpetrating violence;
- The link between power and gender;
- Sources of power;
- Different kinds of violence;
- Use of power and power abuse (including how to recognize power differences);
- Sexual harassment, consensual and non-consensual sex, including sexual assault and rape;
- Boys as victims of sexual harassment and rape;
- Consequences of sexual violence for victims and perpetrators;
- Recognizing situations in which there is an unequal power balance and thus an increased risk of crossing sexual boundaries;
- Communication about your desires, boundaries and those of others;
- Responses to crossing of boundaries (and communication skills in situations where boundaries are crossed);
- Help and support for those having experienced sexual harassment of violence.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

Forced sex, sexual violence and rape

People sometimes have sex because they are coerced or forced to do so against their wishes. Such abuse is commonly referred to as rape, sexual violence, sexual coercion or sexual assault. It is a violation of human rights. It is always wrong, and the victim is never guilty. Anyone can be coerced into an unwanted sexual activity. Most commonly, however, girls and women are the victims of coercion. People may be sexually coerced in different ways: by emotional manipulation, deception, physical force or threats, intimidation or economic inducements, to name a few. Selling sex may be consensual or not. Sometimes sex can be voluntary but not wanted, such as when a person fears that refusing sex will lead to serious consequences such as violence, losing a relationship or losing a job.

Forced sex and rape can happen anywhere, including at home or within families and intimate relationships, as well as in settings normally considered safe, such as schools and religious institutions. Touching someone's body without his or her consent can also be a form of coercion. If someone touches you in a way that makes you uncomfortable, you have the right to tell that person to stop.

The line between voluntary, wanted sex and forced sex is sometimes hard to distinguish. It is

more like a continuum. Regardless of the circumstances under which it occurs, sexual coercion may have serious consequences. For example, it may lead to emotional problems, such as feelings of insecurity and severe depression, or physical injury, including transmission of HIV and other STIs, or unintended pregnancy. Sexual coercion is always a violation of human rights, no matter where, when or how it happens.

Culture and violence

In many cultures, violence against girls and women is tolerated. It is important to realize that every culture has positive and harmful aspects. It is also important to see culture as something defined by people that is never static and always changing. Stopping violence against women is not always easy as it is deeply entrenched in the culture. Human rights organizations advocate hard for a culture with no gender-based violence.

Gender-based violence

Stopping violence against women requires the addressing of its root causes, which are embedded in patriarchal norms and harmful practices. Violence against women is part of gender-based violence, which covers a broader range of violence, including violence against men, boys, sexual minorities and those with gender-nonconforming identities. These are often rooted in the same gender inequalities and harmful gender norms that drive violence against women. The term 'gender-based violence' recognizes the gendered nature of the violence, opening up to gender-transformative approaches, and therein transforming masculinities by working with men and boys.

Norms on manhood

Why are men more prone to using violence than women? It is a widespread belief that violence is natural and normal behaviour for men. It is important to realise that this is not true. Biology maybe be involved, but boys are not born violent. Violence is a learned behaviour. It is linked to norms of masculinity, linked to rigidity, boldness and not showing emotions, except for aggression and violence. Expression of emotions like sadness or fear are not acceptable for boys and men in many cultures. In many places, boys are brought up by fathers, siblings or other male caregivers who are violent, who encourage them to play with guns, to play violent games and watch violent movies.

Changing masculinities

The meaning of being a man is changing in many parts of the world. Macho behaviour is less valued, but what the new forms of masculinity look like is far from clear. For some boys and young men, these changing gender norms create confusion, fear and insecurity. This may lead to stress about their own identity, even more so when they are confronted with educated and vocal girls and young women. Often boys expect these girls to be sexually competent. This idea might make boys feel under pressure to perform optimally when having sex. Boys may think that they fail when making mistakes while having sex, for example when they do not automatically know or meet a girls' intimate sexual desires. Many boys and men do not like to show their uncertainty and insecurity, and as a result they compensate by over-powering and controlling women. As gender norms are not only changing for girls and women but also for boys and men, it is important to engage both sexes in these processes of change; boys and girls, men and women should realize that they can contribute to this individually. In this way, it is possible to create more awareness and understanding for each other and to ensure that changes can result in better, healthier and happier situations.

ons for everyone involved, whether male or female.

Double sexual standards

Gender and sexual norms dictate much about how individuals should behave in a given society. These norms often differ very much for boys and men compared to girls and women. In many places, these norms encourage men to be sexually active, having many girlfriends or extra-marital affairs, whereas for women quite the opposite is true. For women, being sexually active or even flirting can lead to accusations of immorality, with severe consequences in some settings, such as honour killing. In many instances, female victims of sexual harassment and rape are accused of having provoked the abuse by the way they dress or behave. In some cultures, only a woman who is a virgin until marriage deserves respect, while for men it is expected and accepted that they will have sexual experiences before marriage. These double sexual standards are influenced by culture and religion. These strongly affect women's sexual health and rights and place men in a dominant position, which many men are unhappy with.

What is force?

This can have a broad meaning. It refers to any situation where the victim feels that they are unable to refuse or are not in control of an act, for instance, because of physical or relational dominance, emotional pressure, physical or sexual violence, or economic dependency. This can also include the sending of pornographic images without consent or sexually oriented text messages.

Miscommunication and lack of knowledge

Besides peer pressure, macho and stereotypical gender behaviour, miscommunication can be an important factor in gender-based violence. Boys and men often do not sense the power difference in a situation or do not interpret a girls' reaction as a sign of crossing her boundaries. Since girls are raised to be obedient to older men in many cultures, they often lack the skills to say "no" in the way that boys do. For example, girls may giggle or smile when someone does something they do not like. As they may be raised not to argue with or upset others, girls have not learned to speak out about their feelings and boundaries. A lack of knowledge and skills can contribute to the deliberate ignoring of power differences between boys and girls, and in certain circumstances can contribute to the overpowering of a girl or woman. It should be explained to boys and girls that power differences can be linked to knowledge, physical power, age, money, position or function etc.

Intergenerational circle of violence

The literature shows that many perpetrators of violence may have witnessed and/or experienced violence themselves during childhood. This is known as an intergenerational circle of violence. Once boys are exposed to violence, it easily repeats itself as they become older. These boys and young men are often less socially skilled, have difficulties with intimacy, are less empathetic and may be lonely. Moreover, when this experience is combined with rigid and destructive gender norms and perceptions, they are even more likely to become violent or to sexually abuse women.

"Before I came here I used to always lose my girlfriends and I did not understand why. Now I have learned to question who I am. I understand that I can't make decisions for others, I have to respect them. I've also changed my view on spanking. I used to use a rod. Now I know it only makes things worse. I know it is better to talk to each other."

Thomazile, 23 years, MenCare+, South Africa.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

- Be careful that you do not automatically put boys in the 'perpetrator box'. Explain that often boys do not even realise the power they have in certain circumstances. As a result, girls (and other boys) do not easily refuse or say 'no'. This is not only because boys are often physically stronger than girls. Differences in power are also very much based on norms and values, and on differences in age, knowledge and sexual experience. Let boys discuss other sources of power. Think of education level, money, weapons and the threat of physical violence.
- Due to differences in experience of sexual contact, it is difficult for boys and young men to imagine being forced to have sex against their will. When you mention that boys can also be the victim of sexual violence, often a remark will follow, such as: "It would be great to be forced to have sex by a girl". They do not realise that in such a case no force would be involved because the boy would agree. This is something completely different from being forced to have sex by someone you do not know, you do not like, you do not get excited by, or you do not expect it from. This also happens to boys and probably more often than we know, as sexual abuse of boys is highly stigmatized in many cultures.
- If boys respond according to male stereotypical behaviour or attitudes, or if they stereotype girls, ask them to explain where they learned this from. What makes them think or act that way? Avoid immediately correcting them, letting them question themselves. Do not get into a competition. Ask them how they feel if other boys use sexual stereotypes about their sisters, mothers or girlfriends. Put some questions to them, such as: "Will a boy be respected in the same way as a girl if he marries as a virgin?" By questioning you stimulate thinking, awareness and discussion, and you delay giving your own opinion.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- What can I do when I get involved in a violent situation (either as perpetrator or victim)?
- Will I be seen as weak if I run away from fighting?
- Who can I really trust among my friends?
- How do I know if a girl (or boy) really likes me?
- Why can't a girl simply say no when she doesn't want flirting, kissing or sex?
- I get excited if a girl flirts with me. It is then normal that I want to have sex with her?
- Is it true that boys also get raped?
- What can I do when my friends laugh at me because I haven't had sex yet?
- What can I do about friends who pressure me to show that I can get a girl to kiss me?
- What if friends suggest having sex with a few girls (e.g. at a party) but I do not want to?
- What if my friends tell me I must be gay because I have not had sexual intercourse with a girl yet?
- How can I be sure that if a girl has had sex with me voluntarily, she will not change her mind and accuse me of rape the next day?

NOTES

A photograph of several students in a computer lab. They are wearing white shirts and are seated at desks with computers. The student in the foreground is pointing at a computer screen. The word 'INTERNET' is overlaid in a large, stylized, pixelated font across the middle of the image.

INTERNET

INTERNET USE, SOCIAL MEDIA AND SEXUALIZED IMAGES

The media – including the Internet, television, books, music videos and movies – create images that impact our behaviour, feeling and assumptions about sexuality, including our idea of what the perfect man and women should be. These images can promote positive and accurate notions about sexuality; however, often media images reflect narrow and misleading notions about sexuality. In terms of sex, no single way to look or behave is correct, as long as consent and safety are assured. Many boys and young men derive their knowledge about sexuality from the media. This provides an opportunity for teachers, youth workers and other professionals working with youth to discuss the portrayal of sexual relationships in different ways throughout the media.

Discussion points

- Boys and young men's curiosity towards viewing sexualized images;
- The general stereotypification of men and women in media and, more specifically, pornography;
- The dominant, stereotypical image of human sexuality in the media, limiting sexuality to "sexual acts" from a dominantly heterosexual, male perspective and for the benefit of men;
- Legal aspects and social acceptance of pornography;
- Diversity in attitudes towards pornography and other dominant images of sexuality among boys and between the sexes;
- The effect of social media and sexualized images on girls, boys, adolescents and adults;
- How to use social media positively;
- Social media and violence;
- Cyber bullying, sexting, online harassment and stalking.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

The Internet and mobile devices

During the last decade, we have seen a critical development in the use of the Internet. According to We are Social, a global social agency delivering creative ideas, 42% of the world's population had access to the Internet in January 2015, in comparison with 35% in January 2014. The expectation is that midway through 2016 half of the world population will have access to the Internet. Mobile devices have become the most frequently used means of accessing the Internet. These devices have come to play a significant role in people's lives. Having access to the Internet with a mobile device breaches a big communication gap and the opportunities they offer continue to evolve at a staggering pace. Mobile devices offer us the opportunity of being in constant contact with our family, friends and the world around us. For boys and girls, the Internet has become a place where they learn about the world around them and socialize with one another. Using social media and mobile technologies can be a potential entry point to promoting education and instruction around sexuality and well-being in urban places. The feeling of constant connection among young people also has its disadvantages. It has enabled young people to engage in harmful practices online, this includes peer brutality, such as homophobic harassment. Digital bullying, online provocation and stalking are now common social problems among young people in industrialized nations. Looking at the staggering pace at which access to and use of the Internet is growing worldwide, it is important to address this behaviour to promote safer online spaces for young people.

Online information on sexuality

Boys are interested in sexuality and will look for information online. Often this results in the viewing of sexualized images. Sexualized images have a different meaning for adolescent boys and young men than they do for adolescent girls and young women. These images often show a world of boundlessness, lust, power and excitement that are contrary to the daily reality. The lack of open, honest sexuality education that includes discussions and depictions of sexual pleasure is probably one of the reasons that many young people seek out sexualized images.

Sexism on line

When working with boys and young men it is important to address the power dynamics between men and women, including the sexual objectification of women and the way (hetero or homosexual) relationships are portrayed in the media. Often, these are too generalized and do not correspond with the way men, women, hetero-, homo-, bi-sexual or transgender people experience these. Because of the excessive amount of sexualized images that boys are exposed to on a daily basis, it is not possible to tell boys that looking at these images is wrong. Opening the conversation and talking about the influence that these images have on boys and young men provides a platform to discuss how they interpret the images. As a professional, this is an entry point to addressing violent conceptions of sexualized images.

Social media

For young people, the use of social media and mobile phones plays an integral role in how they meet and interact with friends. Life on social media and real life are intertwined with each other, which makes it difficult to grasp how young people interact with one another. This form of communication is part of a new generation that is growing up in a world where social media and reality are closer than ever before. For professionals working with youth, it is important not to condemn the way that youth interact with one another. Rather ask questions like:

- How do you speak to one another online?
- What platforms do you use?
- What do you discuss on social media?

This kind of discussion gives the professional an insight into perceptions that youth have, and it provides the opportunity to assess whether participants are engaging in unacceptable behaviour that needs to be addressed. Professionals must be aware that social media is about sharing, which can have a negative impact. The sharing of explicit pictures and text can have severe consequences for young people. This may lead to problems such as cyberbullying. Due to stereotypical gender norms that boys are continuously exposed to, they are at risk of becoming victims themselves, or of behaving unacceptably on social media. Exerting pressure, blackmailing, stalking and harassment are some examples of this unacceptable behaviour.

Online relationships

Because of the integrated role that the Internet plays in the life of young people, many different relationships are developing online – some of which will never result in a physical encounter. The boundaries of the 'standard relationship' have become blurry. Having an online or virtual relationship could create confusion for partners as they meet in real life. For some, the fact that they

have grown close and developed a relationship online is a trigger to start intimate contact the first time they meet. Whereas for others, the first date is an opportunity to get to know each other better and to decide whether or not to continue the contact.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

- Talk about the sex objectification and gender stereotypes portrayed by the media. Ask boys what is realistic and unrealistic about the images they are exposed to on the Internet.
- Prohibiting the use of the Internet is not an option. Rather, open the conversation and ask questions about what boys do when they are online. Let them talk about their online experiences.
- The Internet may seem like a relatively safe and anonymous platform. The truth is that the Internet has a worldwide reach and there is a constant risk of unconscious invasion of privacy. Talk to boys about their desires and boundaries when they are on the Internet.
- Highlight the positive aspects of the Internet. Boys are able to practice communication skills with others and choose what tone suits them best – humorous, serious, concerned or interrogative – when interacting with other people online. Boys are also able to learn from others about the way they communicate on the Internet.
- Keep in mind that most sexualized images and pornography are based on male fantasies. These images portray an ideal situation where there is no room for rejection, mistakes, awkward moments or other disturbances that can happen during sexual interaction.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- How do I talk to a girl on the Internet, or via social media?
- What is punishable on the Internet?
- How far can I go online?
- How do I know if I can trust someone on the Internet?
- When is it safe to exchange pictures over the Internet?
- What are good sites or apps to meet new people?
- How can I check whether or not someone is real or fake while chatting?
- How can I suggest a date if I like someone that I chat with but have never met?
- Can you start kissing on the first date in real life when in a 'virtual relationship' with that person?
- Is it bad if I watch pornography?
- When can you tell someone is addicted to pornography?
- What can I learn about sex from watching pornography?
- How could I become an actor in porno movies?
- What if the sex between me and my partner is not like that in porn movies? Does this mean we have a poor sex life?
- Is it normal to watch pornography when you are in a relationship?
- Is it normal to watch pornography with your partner?
- How come sexual intercourse in porn movies (including the male ability to penetrate without ejaculation) takes so long?
- Do all women and men want to do the sex acts portrayed in porn?

RIGHTS



SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

Sex can be something beautiful, powerful and enjoyable, as long as both partners are ready to experience it, are consensual, find it pleasurable and protect themselves and each other. Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) is the concept of human rights applied to sexuality and reproduction. This is more than just sex, sexual transmitted infections, HIV and unplanned pregnancy. It also has to do with intimacy, sexuality concerns, maternal health, termination of pregnancy, and diseases such as cancer of the prostate or uterus. SRHR is a wide concept that not only increases knowledge, it also helps to develop positive attitudes, increases confidence and self-esteem, and helps to teach the importance of respecting others regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

Discussion points

- In a sexual relationship, both partners are responsible for safe sex;
- Safe sex is a requirement for pleasant sex and avoids many worries about STIs and pregnancy;
- Safe sex is a matter of responsible behaviour and not a lack of trust;
- It is as much a boy's as a girl's responsibility to avoid pregnancy;
- The concerns boys have with sex, masturbation, penis size, erection problems, etc.;
- Condoms do not have a negative influence on male potency;
- Universal declaration of sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- Harmful cultural practices among boys and girls, and SRHR.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

Sexual and reproductive rights

Some ethical principles about how people should treat one another and are widely viewed as universal. These principles are called human rights. This means they apply to everyone, regardless of sex, age, marital status, sexual identity or behaviour, gender identity, race, ethnicity, religious or political beliefs, social or economic status, where one lives, physical or mental ability, or state of health.

When human rights relate to people's sexuality or reproduction we call them 'sexual rights' or 'reproductive rights'. The following rights, for example, can be linked to human sexuality and reproduction:

- Being treated with respect and dignity;
- Having the freedom of thought and expression;
- Having the right to education;
- Having the right to health, including access to health information and services.

These and other basic human rights have been agreed upon by the global community of states, through the United Nations. They are formalized in international agreements and formally ratified by most governments. The rights of children under 18 years of age have been established in several international agreements, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These also include sexual and reproductive rights, for example:

- Children have the right to develop a positive sense of their own bodies and sexuality, free of abuse and inappropriate touching;
- Young people have the right to obtain information to protect their health, including their sexual and reproductive health.

Every single person has a responsibility to respect the rights of every other person. However, although everyone should be able to enjoy all human rights, they cannot always do so. In the real world, people – male and female – face many barriers to exercising their sexual and reproductive rights. For example, people experience sexual violence in many environments; some people's sexual partners refuse to wear a condom; and many people suffer stigma, shame and fear of violence because their sexual identity or behaviour does not fit in with local social norms. Also, in some settings, many or most boys and girls are forced to have their genitals cut.

Part of the responsibility for protecting, respecting and fulfilling human rights rests on governments. In reality, however, countries vary in the degree to which they fulfil these responsibilities. For example, some governments have passed laws that restrict the rights of certain people, for example by criminalizing same-sex sexual activity or premarital sex.

Culture, religion and young people's SRHR

Where sex before marriage is forbidden by religion or culture, information and access to services is limited. In many cultures, the use of contraceptives by young people is therefore problematic. However, sex still happens among young and unmarried people in such cultures; unwanted pregnancies occur; termination of pregnancies happen in often unsafe conditions, resulting in maternal death or complications; and STIs are widespread among young people. That is why many stakeholders, youth, SRHR activists and organizations want to ensure that all young people get the right information, education and skills, and have access to youth-friendly SRH services, whether they are married or not.

Sexuality and masculinity norms

Adolescent boys and young men are at the age for exploring their sexuality; however, this is also the time when they are taking the most sexual health-related risks. Including adolescent boys and young men in enhancing SRHR brings advantages both to them and to adolescent girls and young women. Hazardous sexual behaviour puts numerous young people at danger of preventable health impacts, to which adolescent girls and young women are disproportionately vulnerable because of cultural and social standards and practices. When working with boys and young men it is important to address gender norms that put pressure on boys and young men to take on unhealthy versions of masculinity. This can lead to boys engaging in risky sexual behaviour and not seek out SRH services.

Wet dreams

At around the age of 10–13 years, boys go through puberty, in which hormonal changes drive physical changes. This is the time when most boys also have their first nocturnal emission or 'wet dream'. This is a natural part of a boy's life but also brings confusion for many. In many societies, boys are not encouraged to talk about these pubertal changes. Discouraging boys from talking about their bodies and sexual health at an early age may lead to lifelong difficulties for

men in talking about sex and sexual health.

Rites of passage

For thousands of years, cultures around the world have relied on the wisdom of intentional rites of passage to awaken the mature masculine spirit within young boys. It is believed that by overcoming various ordeals, initiates gain the inner resources and external skills that the community depends on for its continued vitality. In South Africa, in the Eastern Cape, ceremonies take place to celebrate the transition from boyhood to manhood, called Ulwaluko. This transition changes the status of the individual in relation to the group and broader society. As such, it can play a very meaningful role in the communities and the lives of young men. However, these practices can also create social pressure and social exclusion when a boy or young man does not take part in one of the rituals or ceremonies when it is expected of him. Some rituals can be harmful and some can be innocent. In some cases, young men spend time in isolation without the traditionally specified care by the older men of the community. It is important to keep in mind that rituals and ceremonies may bring benefits, but also risks that can have a huge impact on a boy or young man's life.

Contraceptives

The use of condoms among adolescent boys and young men has increased worldwide, although it varies widely from one country to another. The use of condoms is more likely to be reported by boys than girls due to the comparably lower decision-making power of girls to negotiate safe sex. Research also shows that the use of condoms decreases when there is a fixed relationship.

Talking about safe sex and the use of contraceptives with each other is not always easy for young men and women. Adolescent boys and young men often lack knowledge about different contraceptives, and SRH services are sometimes difficult to access for men, as they are perceived as a women's domain.

Unplanned pregnancy

Many young men do not know their options after having unprotected sexual intercourse. Thus, it is important to discuss what options and responsibilities young men have after unprotected sex, or in the case of unwanted pregnancy. Often this is seen as the responsibility of women, and young men completely deny their role. Young men have many concerns when it comes to this topic but do not get offered the space to openly talk about their concerns. Some of these areas of concern include:

- The consequences of unprotected sex;
- The morning-after pill and where to get it;
- The risks of an STI and where to go for tests;
- The consequences of making a girl or woman pregnant;
- The man's role;
- Becoming a father;
- Involvement in discussing termination of pregnancy.

In general boys and young men are more concerned about using a condom to avoid HIV or other STIs than they are about avoiding pregnancy. Other barriers for young men attaining contraceptives are:

- Lack of awareness, information and education on various types of contraceptives;
- Lack of skills to communicate with girlfriends, health providers and teachers;
- Various myths about contraceptives affecting virility, fertility and pleasure;
- Accessibility of SRH services;
- Lack of awareness about SRHR;
- Negative attitudes of healthcare providers.

The role of gender is crucial when discussing the importance of both parties being equally responsible for contraception. The 'macho' mentality that persists in many cultures contributes to boys and young men thinking that it is the woman's role to prevent pregnancy and to deliver babies, and the man's role to reproduce – thus contributing to his image of being a real man.

Potentially damaging reasoning of some boys and young men

- That won't happen to me; My partner can trust me: I'll pull out before ejaculating and I don't have a STI;
- Putting on a condom stops me from being sexually aroused;
- As the girl is the one who can get pregnant, she should take care of the pill;
- As most contraceptives are women's stuff, I do not have to learn about these;
- Having sexual intercourse with a condom is like eating a candy with the wrapper;
- I am very clean and shower directly after having sex, so I will avoid getting an STI;
- I do not notice anything on my penis, so I do not have an STI;
- Having sex with virgins prevents me from getting HIV or other STIs.

"We learned how to change the cultural beliefs of our parents and grandparents and make a new generation. We learned to be good fathers, to transition from youth to future fathers.

Before, we feared to talk about sex and sexuality.

We can now discuss with our girlfriends, and when we discuss, we can prevent unwanted pregnancy."

Boris, 22 years, MenCare+ Rwanda

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

- Have a positive approach when talking about safe sex. For example: "A big advantage of safe sex is that you and your partner can enjoy the sex without worrying about pregnancy or STIs".
- Address the good intentions that boys have, and discuss what sometimes makes it difficult to put these into practice. A positive role model can help with this.
- Spend sufficient time practicing communication skills. Ask: "How and when do you talk about contraceptives with your partner?" Use roleplay.
- It always helps to give a demonstration of the use of contraceptives using a model of the vagina or penis. There are different ways to make this fun and safe.
- Expand the knowledge that boys have about contraceptives by showing them different kinds and explaining how they work. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the contraceptives and the choices they make in the use of them.
- Let boys think for themselves how they can assist their partner to help with proper and regular use of contraceptives.
- Let boys think of a counter argument for every reason they have not to use a condom.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- When can I stop using condoms?
- How do I know if a girl is using contraceptives?
- Can I tell if I have an STI? How can I see if my partner has an STI?
- Can you get an STI from oral sex? And how about HIV?
- Are girls more at risk of contracting an STI than boys?
- Is it good for a girl to start taking the pill right before we have sex?
- What is the ideal penis size?
- Is it bad if I masturbate often?
- How does the morning-after pill work?
- If my girlfriend had a termination of pregnancy, can I feel that during sex?
- How long does sperm stay alive inside a vagina? And outside?
- What should I do when a girl gets pregnant?
- Am I allowed to talk about termination of pregnancy?
- Does showering after sex wash away HIV or other STIs?
- What about the temperature method?
- If I pull out before ejaculation, can a girl still get pregnant?
- Can a girl become pregnant when she is menstruating?

SUBSTANCE



SUBSTANCE USE AND SEX

The use of substances can increase the risk of unprotected sex and thus unplanned pregnancies and STIs, including HIV. Some substances, such as alcohol – the most frequently consumed drug – have a disinhibiting effect, which could increase the sex drive of boys and young men, as well as contribute to risk taking behaviour. The use of contraceptives could be taken less seriously and the desires of others may not be taken into account. Peer pressure, macho behaviour and violence frequently take place when substances are used.

Discussion points

- The influence of alcohol and drugs on sexual experience and sexual behaviour;
- Damaging consequences for the user and their partner;
- Preparing for safe sex;
- Peer pressure;
- Substance use and violence;
- Acceptable behaviour under the influence of substances.

“Before, I was one of those who often went out and drank, even in the middle of the day. I only thought of myself, not about the kids at home. Now I just go to bars for a couple of hours, and only if my wife is at home. Because I have a family to look after.”

A MenCare+ participant from South Africa

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

Substance use and the law

In the majority of countries worldwide, the legal drinking age is 18. Most other substances are prohibited by law, although some countries have a tolerance policy for certain substances (linked to a legal age of 18 years or higher in some countries). With alcohol being the most socially accepted substance worldwide, a significant proportion of boys start experimenting with it before the legal age. Boys that are smaller, weigh less and are still growing have a significantly lower tolerance for alcohol. Volumes of alcohol that would not be a problem for an adult, can lead to significant risks for boys.

Culture, religion and alcohol

The use of alcohol is widely accepted in many societies, however various religious groups restrict the consumption of alcohol. Drinking alcohol is a rule-governed activity in all cultures, with guidelines and regulations as to who may drink, when, how, how much and in which circumstances. These norms and standards reflect the values, concerns and manners of different cultures. In some societies, alcohol is associated with violent and antisocial behaviour, whereas in other societies drinking behaviour is mostly peaceful and harmonious. Some alcohol-related issues are associated with specific cultural factors, relating to beliefs, norms and expectations about drinking. However, most alcohol-related problems are directly related to excessive consumption.

Risk-taking behaviour

The use of alcohol and other substances increases risk-taking behaviour among young men. In many societies, the expectation among men is that drinking is part of your masculinity and the more alcohol you can handle the stronger you are presumed to be. This goes hand in hand with peer pressure within these groups of men. The consumption of alcohol often leads to macho behaviour and violence towards both women and other men.

The effect of substance use differs for everyone, although it is more likely to have a positive effect if substances are not used in combination. When adolescent boys and young men start using substances for the first time, they are not good at assessing the effects of the substance on themselves or their partners.

Certain substances work as a stimulant on sexuality (more sexual arousal, longer lasting sex stamina, better erection) or have a sedative effect on sexuality (no orgasm, decrease in sexual arousal). Prolonged use of substances may lead to impotence. The use of substances can also have an effect on fertility and increase the chances of a miscarriage or abnormality for the newborn.

Common risky sexual behaviour

Becoming overconfident.

Substance use can increase confidence, but risks creating overconfidence. Once sober again, it may appear that poor decisions were made due to a lack of consideration of the consequences.

Struggling to get a condom on.

Under the influence of substances, it is often difficult to put on a condom. There is also a greater chance of the condom slipping off because the penis is not stiff enough or the erection does not happen. People using substances may forget to practice safe sex, or rather consent to unprotected sex. In retrospect, many people regret unsafe sex.

Less awareness of boundaries.

People are less aware of personal and sexual boundaries when under the influence of substances. They are easily persuaded or are vulnerable to forced sex when under the influence.

Substance use can be addictive.

Some people can no longer have satisfying sex without the use of substances. They are accustomed to 'performing' better in bed, having longer orgasms and are more confident under the influence. 'Sober' sex becomes boring and sometimes they become dependent on the substance to feel excited.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

- Boys and young men often do not see the consequences of their behaviour, especially when substance use is involved. Let boys talk about what the use of substances and sex mean to them and what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Ask them about their own negative experiences with peers that were under the influence of substances.
- Encourage boys to talk about peer pressure around the use of substances and sex. Most boys are insecure about sexuality. Boys brag a lot about sexual achievements among their peers. The use of substances can boost confidence and help boys to engage in contact with someone they like. This boost in confidence can also lead to over confidence that creates unrealistic beliefs. Let boys share their experiences.
- Have boys give their own tips on how to avoid losing control when using substances. Let them reflect on their role as a friend that may have exercised peer pressure.

Three tips to keep the use of substances fun

Some people use substances to help them connect with others or to get more sex. How do you keep it fun for both parties without overstepping boundaries?

- Decide how far you want to go. Even though you have used a substance, you are the one who remains responsible for your own behaviour and determines how far you want to go.
- Stick to your commitment to safe sex. Make sure you have a condom with you. Make agreements with each other in advance about safe sex and your limits when you are still sober.
- Keep enjoying sober sex. Even though it may be fine to have sex under the influence, make sure you can continue to enjoy sober sex.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- How can I learn to control myself when I have had alcohol?
- How can I make sure I do not regret my behaviour?
- What should I do when I see my drunk friend bother a girl?
- What are the consequences of using substances when I have sex?
- How much can I drink for the first time?
- How can I make sure that I have protected sex despite my substance use?
- What should I take to increase my sexual achievements?
- What can I do to keep a longer erection?
- Does the use of Viagra make me produce more sperm and have more intense orgasms?
- What can I give my girlfriend to make her horny so that she wants to have sex with me?
- Is there any substance that can make my penis grow?
- Are orgasms more intense when intoxicated or high on drugs?



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CAREGIVING AND FATHERHOOD

In many parts of the world, caring for children and other family members is traditionally the domain of women, while men's role was and often still is located in the public arena. Men are seen as the bread winners, and are little involved in the daily care of the household and the upbringing of children. Times are changing, however, and nowadays many women have their own job and many more men are actively involved in the upbringing of their children. There is growing evidence that engaged fatherhood not only has a positive effect on the father's relationship with and health of their partner, it is also beneficial for the development of their children and for the men themselves. Health and the sense of well-being improve. Caregiving, however, does not start when becoming a father. It starts much earlier, with taking care of yourself and others when you are young.

Talking points

- What care and caregiving mean;
- Why it is often seen as a women's activity;
- Perceptions around fatherhood: what being a good father means;
- Life stories about participants' fathers. Note that sharing can provoke strong emotions due to painful experiences that have never been talked about;
- What kind of father you would like to be;
- Having children: what is nice about it, and what is challenging;
- Teenage fathers: who they are, what we know about them.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

What is caregiving?

Caregiving has many different meanings. It can include provision of paid services to someone, responsibility, cooperation, protection, affection, love and empathy. It allows you to feel in contact with yourself and with others, which often gives you a sense of meaningfulness, feeling connected and happiness. Care and caring relationships are in many cultures seen as a female realm. As times are changing, boys and men are nowadays also getting the opportunity to explore what care means for themselves and in relation to others – beyond taking financial responsibility or being the protector of the family.

Boys become disconnected from care

In many societies, boys and men are socialized in such a way that they learn to take risks, to be proactive and to overcome pain. They are also more exposed to a variety of violent situations. Boys learn to fight from an early age, to not show fear or emotions except aggression. Self-care is replaced by self-destructive lifestyles. As they become teenagers, they get involved in behaviour that is risky for their health, such as drinking too much or smoking or having unprotected sex. High numbers of young men get involved in violence against other men and against women. It is mostly men who go to war or use weapons. Due to external factors, men are exposed to all kinds of violent risks and are much less connected to care.

Girls, women and care

On the other hand, traditionally girls and women are socialized in such a way that they are more connected to caring for others. This starts early, with children observing the behaviour patterns of their parents. It is also more accepted for girls to show their emotions and feeling of pain. Although many women have paid jobs these days, it does not mean that men take an equal share of domestic work, which creates a double burden for women. It will be hard to fully achieve gender equality as long unequal divisions between care and work continue.

Becoming human

Care is a skill that every human being can learn, given the opportunity. Early learning is important, as are positive role models. We know from research that boys who grow up with caring fathers are more caring themselves, for instance. A caring person can be strong, autonomous and courageous, and at the same time deeply caring and connected with others. For boys and men, becoming more caring may bring an opportunity to become a more complete human being. The same applies for girls and women. To become strong, autonomous and courageous, as well as being caring, offers the chance to become a more fulfilled and complete person.

Becoming a father

All men have a father, and 4 out of 5 men become fathers themselves. Becoming a father can be a life-changing event, offering men the opportunity to get deeply connected with their child, themselves and the mother of the child. The latter does not always happen, as many parents are not in a relationship with each other. Women more than men are prepared for parenting, not just because of biology but due to the culture they are brought up in. Becoming a father provides the opportunity to break with traditional gender roles and begin a new journey. Research shows that engaged fatherhood has benefits for the relationship, the health of both men and women, and for the child as well. Sons growing up with caring fathers are inclined to increased caregiving themselves, and daughters opt for a more equal partner once grown up. In cases where violence was part of the family structure for generations, caring parenthood can transform the so called intergenerational cycle of violence into a new cycle of care.

Teenage fathers

Adolescent fathers were mostly ignored for a long time, and were sometimes even stigmatized. The focus was and often still is on teenage mothers. Young men are often considered to be indifferent and irresponsible about getting a girl or young woman pregnant. This thinking is rooted in traditional attitudes: men = sex, women = reproduction. In reality, many young men would like to have a relationship with their child, even if their relationship with the mother is not working. Young men might lack skills and they may need some encouragement, but the child will be better off for having two caring, loving, responsible parents, even if they are not living together.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

- Caring for others starts with self-care. Encourage boys and young men to undertake something for themselves that makes them feel relaxed, good or happy.
- Encourage them to take on caring roles and see what happens for them.
- Ask boys and young men to think about people they see as role models, it could be a teacher, sports coach, father of a friend, religious leader, soccer player or musician. Let them think about why they perceive these people as positive role models.
- Fatherhood seems far away, but challenge boys and young men to think about what kind of father they would like to be.
- Remind boys and young men that they can always make their own choices. Having painful memories of their own upbringing, does not mean that they will have to walk the same path with their own children and partner in the future. Ask boys and young men about the positive aspects of their own upbringing that they want to pass on to their children.
- Use drawing exercises with boys and young men to let them visualize how they would like to be seen by others and what kind of father they would like to be for their child.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- What will other guys think when I am caring for my little sister?
- If I am less career minded what will others think?
- Is it okay to care for my kids once I have a job?
- Do people think that I am gay when I show more affection to my kids?
- What do my friends think when I assist my sister in the household instead of playing football with them? Am I a bad father if I leave my partner?

NOTES

SOLUTION



MEN ARE PART OF THE SOLUTION:

INTERVENTIONS TO ENGAGE MEN IN SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS 2013-2015

MenCare+ is a 3-year, 4-country collaboration between Rutgers and Promundo-US, and partner organisations in Brazil, Indonesia, Rwanda and South Africa, to engaging men (aged 15-35), as caregiving partners in promoting SRHR, MCH, gender equality, and in reducing domestic violence, funded by the Dutch Government – SRHR Fund.

MenCare+ partner organizations work with young men and women, fathers and their partners, health sector workers, counsellors and other stakeholders to promote gender equality; sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR); maternal, newborn and child health; and the prevention of gender-based violence. MenCare+ offers an opportunity for men to discuss and learn about new, positive perspectives on manhood.

Fathers are one of the key target groups of MenCare+, as becoming a father offers a unique 'entry point' to learning how to improve intimate relationships and sexual health, and enhance attachment to their children. As a result, not only can women's rights and health advance but intimate partner violence can be reduced and children secure better prospects. Research shows that men's own health and quality of life are also enhanced. Everybody wins!

MenCare+ partners have used various strategies and interventions to engage boys and men in social change and as caring partners and fathers. A number of these interventions were developed by MenCare+ partners and adapted to country context.

See: www.rutgers.international/programmes/mencare

*"When I meet this group, I feel happiness!
The bond I have with my children grows when I get the opportunity
to focus on them. We talk more now. I teach them things. Before,
I was one of those who often went out and drank, even in the middle of the day.
I only thought of myself, not about the kids at home."*

Mcebisi Elliot, 37, Cape Town, South Africa

ABBREVIATIONS

GBV	gender based violence
LGBT	lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender
SGD	sexual and gender diversity
SRH	sexual and reproductive health
SRHR	sexual and reproductive health and rights
STI	sexually transmitted infection

GLOSSARY

Adolescent boys. This refers to boys aged 12–18 years.

Community leaders. This refers to people who have the formal and/or informal power to change the opinions and habits of the community. These could include: teachers; religious leaders (imams, priests, pastors); councillors; mayors; village chiefs; and village health workers.

Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE). CSE covers a broad range of issues relating to both the physical and biological aspects of sexuality, and the emotional and social aspects. It provides young people with age-appropriate, culturally relevant and scientifically accurate information. It includes structured opportunities for young people to explore their attitudes and values, and to practice the decision-making and other life skills they need to make informed choices about their sexual lives. CSE is based on gender equality and addresses, among others, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), termination of pregnancy, sexual citizenship, pleasure, violence, female genital mutilation, diversity and relationships. CSE programmes have been found to improve academic performance, delay and reduce frequency of sexual intercourse, reduce number of sexual partners, increase the use of condoms and other forms of contraception, and reduce negative health consequences.

Consent. This refers to gaining informed agreement for a particular course of action.

Cycle of Violence. The Cycle of Violence, is a five stage framework that can be used to understand the cyclical behaviour of victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.

Gender. This refers to the social and cultural differences between men and women. Much of what is considered male and female is socially determined and not inborn. This varies from one society to another. All societies and communities have different expectations of how men and women should act, talk and feel, and also of what they should do in life.

Gender-based violence. The term ‘gender-based violence’ is used to distinguish common violence from violence that targets individuals or groups of individuals on the basis of their gender. Gender-based violence has been defined by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) as violence that is directed at a person on the basis of gender or sex. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, the threat of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty.

Gender equality. This refers to equal chances or opportunities for men and women to access and control social, economic and political resources within families, communities and society at large, including protection under the law (World Health Organization).

Gender norms. Social expectations of appropriate roles and behaviour for men (and boys) and women (and girls) – as well as the social reproduction of these norms in institutions and cultural practices – are directly related to much of men’s and women’s behaviour.

Gender roles. This refers to the roles, beliefs and expectations that people typically associate with being male or female. These roles are socially constructed. In other words, we learn these roles from the example and expectations of our parents, family, cultural groups and social context. How men and women are expected to behave and be varies in different cultures and communities, however, gender roles are very specifically defined, and are different for males and females. More often than not, these differences result in inequalities or power differences between men and women.

Gender stereotypes. In the last century, people have started to free themselves of gender expectations so that they can choose for themselves who they want to be. In society at large, however, stereotypes still exist about what are typical traits for men and women.

Gender-transformative approach. Gender-transformative approaches seek to reshape gender relations to be more gender equitable, largely through approaches that free both women and men from the impact of destructive gender and sexual norms.

Intergenerational circle of violence. The transmission of violence from one generation to the next.

Masculinity. This refers to the socially constructed roles and relationships, and attitudes, beliefs and behaviours associated with being male. Different cultures, tribes, social classes, ages and other sub-groupings have different 'masculinities'; however, many characteristics of masculinity are consistent across groups.

Menarche. This refers to the first menstrual cycle or first menstrual bleeding that occurs during the maturation of girls.

Nocturnal emission. This refers to spontaneous orgasm that occurs during sleep, which includes ejaculation. Also known as a 'wet dream'.

Peers. This refers to people of the same age, status or ability.

Positive masculinity. If masculinity is socially constructed, then this offers the possibility of reconstruction. If boys and men accept systems of domination because they believe it is the path to power and mastery, then we can learn to embrace even more empowering and rewarding masculinities. The construction and promotion of 'positive masculinities' creates opportunities for men to change, and to become role models for personal and social change. Reproductive health. This refers to "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being (not merely the absence of disease or infirmity) in all matters related to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes" (Fourth World Conference on Women, Platform for Action, paragraph 94; International Conference on Population Development, Programme of Action, paragraph 7.2).

Reproductive rights. This includes the basic rights of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so. It also includes their right to make decisions concerning reproduction free

of discrimination, coercion and violence, as expressed in human rights documents (Fourth World Conference on Women, Platform for Action, paragraph 95).

Sex. This refers to the physical and biological differences between men and women, including the different sex organs, hormones, etc. It can also refer to sexual contact, such as intimacy, touching and fondling, petting, oral sex and all other options that go to make up the richness of sexuality, including sexual intercourse.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). This encompasses the right of all individuals to make decisions concerning their sexual activity and reproduction free from discrimination, coercion and violence. Specifically, access to SRHR ensures individuals are able to choose whether, when and with whom to engage in sexual activity; to choose whether and when to have children; and to access the information and means to do so. SRHR includes the right of all people to:

- Seek, receive and impart information related to sexuality;
- Receive sexuality education;
- Have respect for bodily integrity;
- Choose their partner;
- Decide to be sexually active or not;
- Have consensual sexual relations;
- Have consensual marriage;
- Decide whether or not, and when, to have children;
- Pursue a satisfying, safe and pleasurable sexual life.

Sexual identity. This refers to how you perceive yourself as a sexual being, how you think and feel about aspects of your sexuality and what you think is right or wrong for you (your values).

Sexuality. This is a fundamental aspect of human nature, a positive force and a source of energy, creativity, motivation and interaction. Sexuality is associated with the ability to have children, and with love and pleasure. Sexuality is a complex term. According to the World Health Organization, sexuality is a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality can be experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. The meaning of sexuality varies between and within cultures, from person to person and between the different developmental stages of people.

Sexualized images. This refers to images that are sexually explicit. This includes pornographic images and sexually explicit images in the media.

Sexual rights. “Sexual rights protect all people's rights to fulfil and express their sexuality and enjoy sexual health, with due regard for the rights of others and within a framework of protection against discrimination.” (World Health Organization 2010)

Sexual violence. This refers to any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting. It includes rape, defined as the physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration of the vulva or anus with a penis, other body part or object (World Health Organization).

Substance. This refers to an intoxicating, stimulating or narcotic chemical or drug. This includes legal and illegal substances.

Termination of pregnancy. This refers to a medical procedure to end pregnancy.

Violence. This refers to the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation (World Health Organization).

Violence against women. This refers to any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring in public or in private life (United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women 1993).

Young men. This refers to men in the age group 18–25 years.

Young people. This refers to boys and girls aged 10–24 years.

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