

Session Seven:

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HIV/AIDS

“The generation that is coming up has lived its entire life in the shadow of HIV, and that’s frankly one of the concerns that we have. Because of a certain comfort level that this generation has with HIV, in part because of the advances in treatment and those young people being able to see that they can live with HIV, there is an increased complacency among young people.”

Kelly McCann

The Four Attributes of HIV

Fragility: Given its simplicity (it has only nine genes) and dependence on the human host (it can’t live outside our bodies) the virus is extremely fragile. It cannot survive on its own and can only be transmitted in ways that give it direct access to cells, especially immune cells.

High production and turnover rate: In a typical HIV-infected person, about 10 billion HIV viruses may be produced and destroyed each day.

High mutation rate: A high number of mutations (changes) occur in the process of HIV replication. The high production rate increases the chances of mutation. Such mutations can sometimes confer resistance to antiretroviral drugs (ARVs). In fact it is the high mutation rate that makes it necessary to use three antiretroviral drugs at once (because it is less likely that any particular mutation will confer resistance to all three drugs at the same time).

Latent reservoir: HIV “hides” within the DNA of a small proportion of infected cells in something of a dormant state for long periods of time. Thus, drugs and the immune system, cannot typically get at all the virus, and currently cannot “cure” HIV.

So what does this all mean?

Basically, because the virus is fragile, it is not possible to spread it through breathing, kissing, sharing food, etc. The right conditions are necessary to pass the virus from one body to another. Due to its high production rate, the chances of mutation are drastically increased. The mutations make it difficult to combat. Lastly, the latent reservoir, allows it to ‘hide’ and that makes it difficult to cure.



Activity One

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

1. What is HIV?

2. What is AIDS?

3. How does HIV attack the human body?

4. When does HIV become AIDS?

5. How is HIV/AIDS spread?

6. How can you ensure you do not become infected with HIV/AIDS? If you are already infected, how can you ensure you do not infect others?

7. As a nation, what can we do to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS?



Activity Two

RISK ASSESMENT

1. Have you ever had unprotected sex?

2. Do you know your current HIV Status?

3. Did you know the HIV status of your sexual partner?

Scoring:

Yes to #1 implies existence of HIV risk in your life

No to #2 and Yes to #1 implies a high risk of HIV infection

Yes to #1, No to #2 and No to #3 indicates a very high risk of HIV infection



Activity Three

1. Based on Chris' story, can you explain why he would not tell anyone he had HIV/AIDS?

2. Is there any way to tell, just by looking at someone, if they have HIV/AIDS?

3. Is it worth the risk to have pre-marital sex? Why or why not?



Activity Four

GETTING THE HELP YOU NEED

1. Where should you go to be tested?

2. Who would help you if you learned you are HIV positive?
Where could you get professional counseling and treatment?

3. Did you know that a woman who is HIV positive can give birth to an HIV negative child?
Ask your facilitator about PMTCT.

4. Do you know what ARVs are? Where would you get them if you were very poor?

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Session Eight:



Abstinence and Faithfulness

“Complete abstinence is easier than perfect moderation.”

Saint Augustine

Abstinence is the only 100% way of preventing HIV infection. You may have already engaged in premarital sex and want to try “secondary abstinence” but need strategies to help you. Here are some ideas:

Be clear about why you want to wait.

- Make a list of your reasons. Talk them over with someone who supports you (perhaps someone who is also abstaining).
- Check your list from time to time to remind yourself or post it on a wall in your room (if it is not too embarrassing).
- Be assertive about your decision to abstain. Stick to your reasons for abstaining.
- Avoid close company with people or peers who do not see the value for abstaining.
- Develop personal values to support your decision to abstain.

Have a plan.

- Know what situations might make it hard to stick with your choice.
- Decide ahead of time what you will do to avoid or deal with difficult situations, such as leaving when you are being pressured to have sex.
- Instead of having a sexual relationship with someone you are interested in romantically, think of other ways to express your feelings.

Get support.

- Hang out with friends who know about and respect your decisions.
- Avoid people who might pressure you.
- If pressured, tell someone in authority.

Practice Abstaining.

Try out the responses below:

Statement: “If you have sex, you will be more popular, beautiful or manly.”

Response: “That’s not true. Deciding not to have sex won’t make me less of a woman (or man). It’s my own choice; no one else can make that decision for me.”

Statement: “If you do not have sex, people will think you are homosexual.”

Response: “That’s crazy. Lots of people want to wait to have sex.”

Statement: “Everyone in the movies and on television is having sex. Why can’t we?”

Response: “Sure, the movies show how fun sex is, But they don’t show the consequences. They don’t show the girl who had to drop out of school because she was pregnant or the boy who got an STI.”

Statement: “You should have sex for the first time just to get it over with.”

Response: “Why should I want to just get it over with? I want sex to be special, with someone I really care about.”

Statement: “There is no good reason to wait to have sex. You should do it now.”

Response: “There are a lot of good reasons to wait. I don’t want to worry about getting pregnant or getting HIV or some other infection. I’m just not ready to have sex now.”



Activity One

UNDERSTANDING ABSTINENCE AND VIRGINITY

1. Define “primary abstinence”:

2. Define “primary virginity”:

3. Define “secondary virginity”:

4. Define “secondary abstinence”:

5. What are the benefits of abstinence?

6. What is the downside of abstinence? Is there really any?

7. Do you think it is too late abstain when you have already had sex? Why or why not?



Activity Two

FAITHFULNESS

1. What does it mean to be faithful to someone?

2. What are the benefits of being faithful?

3. Do you remember the different aspects of sex? There is the emotional, the physical, the mental and the spiritual. Complete the following chart to show the consequences of being unfaithful: (an example is given)

Physical	Emotional	Psychological	Social
STI	Lose the love of the person in your life	Lose the sense of well-being, being labeled prostitute, losing respect	You cannot concentrate

4. Complete the chart to show the consequences of being faithful:

Physical	Emotional	Psychological	Social
Healthy	Happy	At peace	Respect, trust
			Acceptance, approval



Activity Three

LOOKING FOR THE FAITHFUL

1. Find a doctor and ask him/her if he is faithful to his job. Why or why not?

2. Find a religious leader and ask him/her if he/she is faithful to his/her calling. Why or why not?

3. What would happen if a policeman was unfaithful to his/her job?

4. What would happen if the legs of a table were unfaithful to its job?

5. Why should you be faithful to your spouse?

Session Nine:

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**Attitudes, Myths and
Misconceptions about Sex**

“I therefore claim to show, not how men respond to myths, but how myths operate in men’s minds without their being aware of the fact.”

Claude Levi-Strauss

Myth: You can’t get pregnant during unprotected sex if the man pulls out before he ejaculates.

Fact: Even though your boyfriend doesn’t ejaculate, sperm can still be present in his pre-cum (the clear, sticky drops that are released when he’s aroused). It only takes one sperm to get you pregnant, and the fluid can also contain sexually transmitted infections. Some men aren’t aware that they are ejaculating until it’s too late. It’s easy to get carried away in the heat of the moment.

Myth: You can’t get pregnant during your period.

Fact: There’s a chance that you can become pregnant during a period, particularly towards the end of your menstrual cycle. Unprotected sex also increases the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Myth: You can’t get pregnant while having sex standing up, or in the shower or bath.

Fact: If you have unprotected sex, you can get pregnant, no matter how or where you do it.

Myth: Condoms are 100% safe.

Fact: You have to use them 100% of the time and 100% correctly. They are sensitive to heat, pressure, oily substances, rough substances, friction, etc.

Myth: Peeing after sex washes out sperm and prevents pregnancy.

Fact: Urine exits the bladder through the urethra, which is located above the vaginal opening. Any sperm in the vagina won’t even get wet when you wee.



Activity One

TRUE OR FALSE

During your session, your facilitator told you which statements were true and which ones were false. Can you remember which is which?

Statements about Sex and Love	TRUE	FALSE
If you don't have sex with your boyfriend or girlfriend, it means you don't love them enough.		
HIV/AIDS has declined in Uganda and so it is much safer to have sex now.		
Having sex cures backache.		
Abstinence is being preached by the western world in order to wipe out Africa by discouraging us from producing more children.		
Sex is a natural urge that you cannot control.		
If you don't have sex for a long time, sperms collect in the brain and this can lead to madness.		
Abstinence is 100% safe.		
If a girl does not have sex at an early age, her vagina will harden.		
When you have sex with someone, you create a deep physical, emotional, mental and spiritual bond. Therefore, you should think carefully about who will share in this intimate relationship.		
If you don't have sex before marriage, you will not know how to satisfy your spouse in marriage.		
You earn more respect from your spouse when they discover you are a virgin at marriage.		

Statements about Sex and Love	TRUE	FALSE
Delayed sex can lead to impotence and barrenness.		
If you insist on abstinence, all the good men and women will be taken by those who are willing to have sex before marriage.		
Sex is called “making love” because that is the only way you can show love for your partner.		
Abstinence is for ‘fallas ‘.		



Activity Two

CIRCUMCISION

1. What do you know about medical male circumcision?

2. Can you still be infected with HIV if you are circumcised? Why or why not?

3. Is there a risk of infection from being circumcised? Why or why not?

4. Ask someone in your community if they know what medical male circumcision is and then write down their response to share with your fellow participants. Also include your opinion of female circumcision.

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Session Ten:



Drugs, Alcohol and the Influence of Media

Drugs are a waste of time. They destroy your memory and your self-respect and everything that goes along with your self esteem.

Kurt Cobain

Alcohol, Drugs & HIV

There are some important things you should consider before you drink alcohol or use illegal drugs.

- People with alcohol use disorders are more likely than the general population to contract HIV.
- Alcohol and drug use are associated with high-risk sexual behaviours. Sex and injection drug use are two major modes of HIV transmission.
- In persons already infected, the combination of heavy drinking and HIV has been associated with increased medical and psychiatric complications, delays in seeking treatment, difficulties with HIV medication compliance, and poorer HIV treatment outcomes.
- Researchers used simian immunodeficiency virus (SIV) infection of rhesus monkeys to examine the combined effects of chronic, binge alcohol consumption on the primary stage of SIV/HIV infection. Binge drinking appears to increase the host's susceptibility to SIV/HIV infection.
- Common recreational drugs, such as cocaine or crystal methamphetamine (also known as "meth" or "speed" or "crank" and "Tina"), can leave your body dehydrated and exhausted, as well as lead to skin irritation. All of these things can make it easier for you to get infections.
- Certain HIV medications can boost the level of recreational drugs in your system in unexpected and dangerous ways. For example, amphetamines (such as crystal meth) can be present at 3 to 22 times their normal levels in the bloodstream when mixed with an HIV drug called ritonavir (Norvir). That's because ritonavir hampers the body's ability to break down these other drugs.
- When injecting drugs, infected blood can be drawn up into a syringe and then get injected along with the drug by the next user of the syringe. This is the easiest way to transmit HIV during drug use because infected blood goes directly into someone's bloodstream.

Quick Facts about alcohol use and sexual assault:

- Men often drink to feel less inhibited, more powerful, aroused and aggressive. Peer pressure also tends to encourage rowdy and aggressive behaviour.
- Alcohol impairs judgment. Men are more likely to assume that a woman who drinks is a willing sex partner; they are more likely to interpret her behaviour, dress or body language as evidence she wants to have sex.
- Alcohol lowers inhibitions. It makes it easier to force sex on an unwilling partner and to ignore "No's".