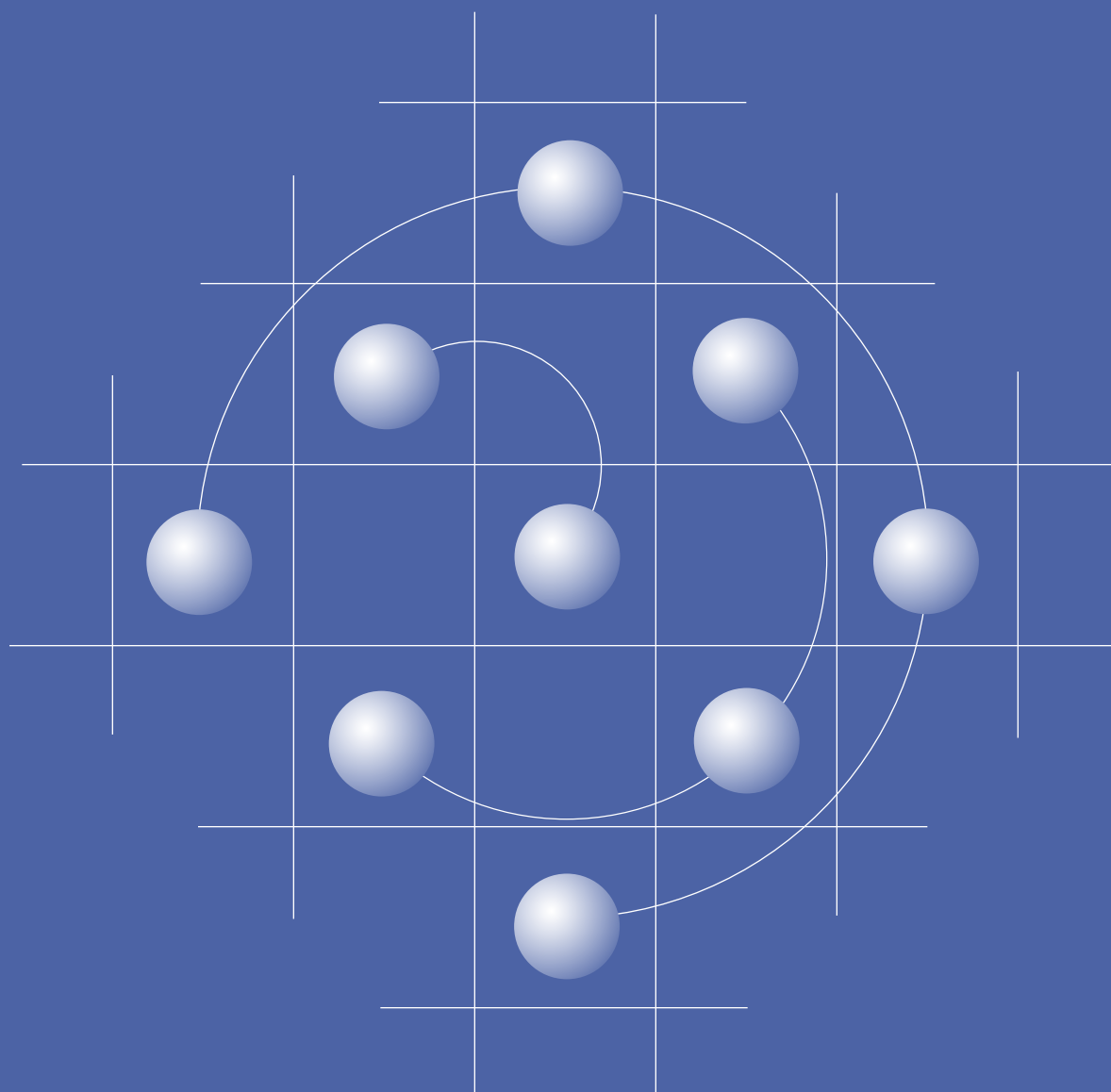


# A Sample Peer Education Session on HIV/AIDS





## A Sample Peer Education Session on HIV/AIDS

### Session introduction

#### **Audience**

This basic introduction to HIV/AIDS is aimed at young people between 14 and 20 years old.

#### **Setting**

The setting could be anywhere that is suitable for organizing a well-planned educational activity, such as in a school, a youth club, or a summer camp.

#### **Objectives**

To create awareness of HIV/AIDS, to equip young people with information and skills to protect themselves from infection, and to build positive attitudes towards those affected by HIV/AIDS.

#### **Time**

3.5 hours

#### **Preparation of the peer educators**

The peer educators should be trained in interactive methodologies, be capable of managing an audience of young people in a sensitive and appropriate fashion, and have some expertise in the health issues with which the session deals.

Before peer educators present a session, they should agree upon and create a written agenda that outlines what to cover and what activities the session will include. They should also decide who will lead or co-facilitate each of the activities and assign an understudy for each section, in case a facilitator is unable to attend.

The session should be rehearsed before the event, preferably a week ahead of time. People sometimes think they are better prepared to conduct a session than they really are, and this only becomes apparent when they rehearse.

#### **Activities**

- Questionnaire (10 minutes)
- Introduction (5 minutes)
- Icebreaker (10 minutes)

- Ground rules (15 minutes)
- What does safer sex mean to you? (20 minutes)
- Guest speaker or video (30 minutes)
- Break (20 minutes)
- HIV/AIDS: Basic facts and questions (30 minutes)
- Role play (25 minutes)
- Condom demonstration (25 minutes)
- Final questions (10 minutes)
- Wrap-up (10 minutes)

## **Materials**

Flip chart, markers, paper or index cards, condoms, *Handout 3. HIV/AIDS Quiz*, and *Handout 20. Ten Facts about HIV/AIDS*

## **Before you begin**

- Prepare and make copies of the pre-workshop and post-workshop questionnaire (see Annex 1).
- Write the questions for *What Does Safer Sex Mean to You?* (see page 130) on paper or index cards.
- Make copies of the handouts.

## **Description of activities**

### **Pre-workshop questionnaire (10 minutes)**

Hand out the pre-workshop questionnaires as the participants walk into the room. Ask each person to fill it out without any help from his or her friends. Participants should be given about 10 minutes to complete the questionnaires, after which the peer educators collect them. If possible, the educators should try to scan through them quickly to see what the participants already know about the subject, which will help them determine what information they need to focus on. The same questionnaire may be used at the end of the session to help evaluate whether the session was successful.

### **Introduction (5 minutes)**

It is good to begin with an introduction to the peer education session, to the participants, and to the facilitators. Two examples of introductory activities, both relating to a presentation about HIV/AIDS, are provided on page 129.

## Why we are here

For this exercise, the peer educators stand in a line, say their names, and say why they want to teach others about HIV/AIDS. After introducing himself or herself, the last educator says: *'What we are trying to say is that we all, each and every one of us in this room, have to deal with the reality that HIV and AIDS exist in the world and have an impact, directly or indirectly, on our lives. Therefore, in a sense, we are all "people living with AIDS". You do not have to be infected to be affected.'*

## Introduction – Hello, my name is ... and I am a person living with AIDS

This exercise is a great way to get attention and make a bold statement about why the peer educators are at the workshop and how AIDS affects everyone. Some educators prefer not to use it, however, because audiences do not always understand that the educators are not actually saying they each have AIDS. Others like to use this exercise and feel it is worth the risk. The peer educators form a line in front of the audience. The first person at one end of the line starts by saying, *'Hello, my name is [name] and I am a person living with AIDS.'* This continues down the line until every educator has spoken. After the last educator gives his or her name, he or she says, *'Sometimes this part of our presentation can be very deceptive. People have walked away thinking that we are all HIV-positive. This is not what we are trying to say. What we mean is that we all, each and every one of us in this room, have to deal with the reality that AIDS exists in this world and has an impact, directly or indirectly, on our lives. Therefore, in a sense, we are all "people living with AIDS". You do not have to be infected to be affected.'*

## Icebreaker (10 minutes)

There are many icebreakers that can be used, including games and exercises such as *Pass the Beat* and *How Careful Are We with Our Health?* See Section 2 (pages 32 and 40) for a detailed description of these games.

## Ground rules (15 minutes)

It is essential for the group to decide upon some ground rules, so that everyone participating in the session is comfortable. Have the group brainstorm on what they consider important rules, and make sure that the list includes:

- **Confidentiality.** People need to respect each participant's personal information, only sharing general information outside the session, without using a participant's name.

- **Respect.** You must respect everyone in the group. This means there are no attacks on people, and everyone must be sensitive to other people's points of view. Use 'I' statements. It is much more effective to say, 'Well, for me personally, I feel that ...', than to say, 'No, you're wrong, the right thing is ...'
- **Attentiveness.** Listen to what other people are saying. You will not only learn something but also make the people who are speaking feel more comfortable.
- **Openness.** To get the most out of the session, people should be encouraged to speak about their own experiences and not to speak for others. Take risks – do not be afraid to speak openly as long as you are not aggressive, abusive, or insensitive.

### **What does safer sex mean to you? (20 minutes)**

Divide participants into groups of about six to eight people. Each group is given a question to discuss and answer. If the audience is small, there may be fewer groups formed, and the faster groups can be given a second question to brainstorm.

The peer educators spread themselves among these groups as facilitators, ideally with two or more per group, to encourage the group and help them think of more answers by giving ideas and 'clues'.

Five questions to ask in a workshop dealing with HIV/AIDS could be:

- Why do some people have sex?
- What are the reasons to wait or abstain from sex?
- What are some alternatives to sexual intercourse?
- Why do some sexually active people not use condoms for protection?
- How can we encourage someone (e.g., a partner) to act in a safer manner?

### **Guest speaker or video (30 minutes)**

If time allows, a guest speaker – a person living with HIV – should be invited to share his or her experience. It is best if the peer educators know the speaker well and know that she or he is a good public speaker and is well prepared. This part of the presentation is usually most effective when the speaker talks about personal experiences to which the audience might be able to relate. An emotionally engaging video about the HIV/AIDS epidemic is another way to get people motivated if a person living with HIV is not available.

### **Break (20 minutes)**

### **HIV/AIDS: Basic facts and questions (30 minutes)**

A quiz can be used as an entry point to discuss the basic facts and questions about HIV/AIDS. Handout 3 provides a sample quiz, and Handout 20 gives key information on HIV/AIDS. For additional information, consult the resource list in Annex 4.

### **Role play (25 minutes)**

Throughout the session, participants may raise particularly important issues or points, such as how to say 'no' in certain situations and how to help peers better protect their health. Peer educators may use these issues as the topic of the role play. They may choose to include one or more members of the audience in the role play, or have only peer educators participate. See Section 1, page 21 and Section 2, page 48 for additional information on role plays.

### **Condom demonstration (25 minutes)**

In any HIV/AIDS educational session for young people who may be sexually active, it is strongly recommended to include activities about how to use condoms properly and how to say 'no' to unprotected sex. See the exercises and the detailed description on performing a condom demonstration in Section 2, page 75.

### **Final questions (10 minutes)**

At the end of the session, the audience is invited to share their reactions to what they have experienced during the session. They may have responses to the role plays or questions that they felt were unanswered during the session. Although they should be encouraged to ask questions and give comments at any point, this is their chance to ask any questions they may still have. The peer educators also have the opportunity to review issues that may have arisen out of the role plays – for example, some of the choices made by the role-play characters might merit discussion.

If an HIV-positive speaker is present, the participants have the opportunity to ask him or her questions that may have come to them during the presentation.

### **Wrap-up (10 minutes)**

In a wrap-up session, thank all participants and support staff for their contribution. Participants should complete a post-training questionnaire (see Annex 1).

After the session ends, the peer educators might want to wait for a few minutes so that people can approach them with comments or questions. Sometimes someone will have a personal issue to discuss or will need help in finding out where to obtain further information. She or he might be more comfortable approaching an educator individually rather than during the session.

