



Power Within Activity Toolkit for Adolescents and Youth



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Acknowledgements

This Power Within activity toolkit builds on decades of CARE’s program design, implementation, and research with young people. It is intended to be used together with the 2024 Power Within Competency Framework for Adolescents and Youth. At CARE we recognize that in addition to the activities we have designed as part of our programming, countless teachers, volunteers, parents/guardians, and other designers have also crafted wonderful activities. This toolkit includes activities from our own programming as well as activities that others have published. In the cases we have included activities others have developed, full citations are included to give them full credit. We are incredibly grateful for all those whose creativity we have highlighted in this activity toolkit. Additionally, we are thankful to Carol Boender, who led CARE through a process to update the Power Within model and compile this toolkit.

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Background: Power Within

Power Within (PW) builds critical competencies for **adolescents and youth (10-24 years old)**, giving them internal resources to inform their decisions and transitions as they grow from children into young adults. A full introduction to the model, including in-depth information about each competency, the theory of change, and how the model relates to other core approaches, is in Power Within Competency Framework for Adolescents and Youth (CARE, 2024). It includes competencies that are sequenced and build upon each other; in other words, one competency supports the development of other competencies. However, learning is rarely linear and certainly more complex than can be captured in a model, and young people often develop competencies in a different order.

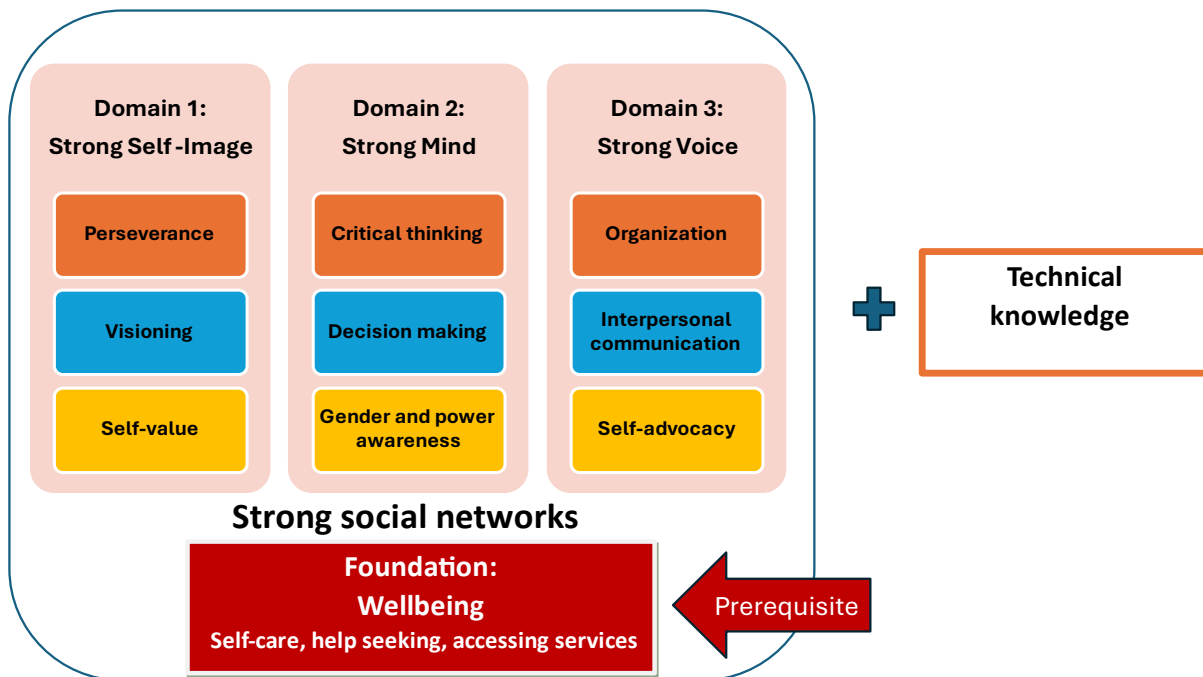


Figure 1: Power Within Competency Model

The model (*Figure 1*) contains **three competency domains with sequenced competencies and a fourth, foundational domain of well-being**. The competencies included are **transferable**, which means that they can be applied in many situations, and they can be practiced throughout program activities in most, if not all, of CARE’s direct work with this impact group. This is similar to a commonly used approach to teaching Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies in formal education, which integrates ‘soft’ skills into a subject area curriculum. **Technical knowledge** in the model refers to the knowledge that program participants gain in sectoral programs, such as financial management, literacy and numeracy, or facts about human reproduction. **Strong social networks** refer to expanding networks and social circles and their effects not only in strengthening development of competencies but also, and perhaps more importantly, fostering healthy patterns of social interaction, exposure to a wider range of people, and friendships.

How to use this activity toolkit

This toolkit can be used as a resource for those designing and implementing programs for adolescents and young adults aged 10-24. It offers a **menu of activities** for developing the competencies in CARE's competency model. The set of activities here may be borrowed and adapted to the needs of participant groups, the contexts in which they live, and the topical focus of a particular program. For example, planning activities for adolescents 10-14 years old, and planning activities for youth 20-24 years old will require different approaches and activities. This toolkit provides sample activities that may be *adapted* to fit the profiles of the young people who are participating in activities. It is not a curriculum or a program guide but may be used to assist the development or adaptation of those materials.

The activities included are written with assumptions about the program in which they will be used. These include 1) that the program has completed an assessment of the needs and fulfillment of rights of young people in the target group, and 2) that the program includes regular meetings of a group of participants in one or more of the following age groups: young adolescents aged 10-14, older adolescents aged 15-19, or young adults aged 20-24. They also assume that there is an adult acting as the group facilitator and that the person has been trained in group facilitation.

The adolescents and youth CARE works with are diverse, and program support will start at different points in their personal and social development. For example, girls and boys may begin a competency development process at very different points, particularly where girls have limited access to experiences outside the family or are at lower levels of education. Young people displaced by conflict or in other situations of chronic stress may be more advanced than their age peers in skills necessary for survival such as resilience but less advanced in other areas such as literacy or numeracy.

Because it is important to start where they are, not where the model is, the activities in this toolkit are written to be adaptable for different ages, groups, settings, and program goals:

- **Age:** Nearly all the activities can be modified to work with more than one age group, and directions for that modification are included in the instructions.
- **Environment:** Most activities can be shaped to work in a variety of environments, such as humanitarian settings, urban or rural locations, settings with restrictive social norms, and contexts with very low resources.



- **Literacy adaptations:** All the activities can be modified to suit young people who are out of school or with limited literacy. When an activity calls for participants to write something, those that have limited literacy should be encouraged to participate in a way they feel confident. This may be drawing pictures, writing individual words instead of full sentences, or sharing verbally instead of writing or drawing. In this toolkit, we have highlighted potential adaptations to make activities more inclusive for participants with limited literacy. These are marked with the symbol on the left.



- **Inclusion adaptations:** There are notes in some activities about adaptations for participants with disabilities, primarily mobility issues; these are marked with the symbol on the left.
- **Multi-sectoral:** The scenarios (or vignettes) provided in activities cover multiple program areas when possible, so that the facilitator can select those that work best with their program goals. It is hoped that programs in education, sexual and reproductive health, youth livelihood, girls' empowerment, agriculture, civic participation, and other areas will all be able to find scenarios that address topics

related to their aims. If not, the program can write additional scenarios following the examples provided.

- **Gender:** All activities can be conducted in mixed-gender groups; however, adaptations for single gender groups can be made, particularly where building trust and cohesion as a precursor requires it. Facilitators should gauge the needs of their participants accordingly. Additional considerations related to this are included in the ‘Safeguarding’ section.



- **Journaling:** The activities included in this toolkit are only part of the process for young people to build the Power Within competencies. Their continued thinking and work even after the group activities is important for their individual competency development. One strategy for young people to continue this critical thinking and planning is to keep a journal. At the end of each activity, there is a suggestion of how participants can continue their reflections through written reflection in a journal. This is optional and may be dependent on participants having access to a simple notebook. If procuring notebooks is not financially feasible, encouraging participants to save together papers from each activity session in a pile together or folder is equally acceptable. These journal prompts are marked with the symbol on the left.

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Table 1 contains an inventory of activities included in this toolkit. For each Power Within competency, this toolkit provides a variety of activities that may be chosen and adapted. It is recommended that facilitators begin with one or more ‘primary activities’. The ‘secondary activities’ are activities that were designed to build another competency, but also provide additional practice for the listed competency. As building these competencies takes practice over time, facilitators may find it helpful to plan more than one activity per competency.

Table 1: Primary and secondary activities by competency

Competency	Primary activities	Secondary activities
Strong Self-Image		
Self-value	This is me What I like about you My portrait	Positive self-talk
Visioning	Female role models Dreams for the future The road of life Our future together	Personal goals
Perseverance	Positive self-talk Story of Chornor Bah Plan B	Stress management
Strong Mind		
Gender and power awareness	Power Sex and gender Where do you stand?	Female role models Debate Media messages
Decision making	Pros and cons Personal choices Lowering your risk	
Critical thinking	Facts, opinions, and bias Debate Media messages	Power Where do you stand?
Strong Voice		
Self-advocacy	Saying no Talking to parents Assertiveness	
Interpersonal communication	Active listening Handling conflicts	Talking to parents Assertiveness
Organization	Personal goals Action planning Allies and champions	
Well-being		
	Mapping services Stress management	Allies and champions Lowering your risk



Safeguarding

The first principle of working with young people is to 'Do No Harm'. This principle should be applied to all participant groups, especially young and vulnerable individuals. Despite best intentions, programming implemented without a risk assessment, and risk mitigation plan has the potential to expose young people to threats to their safety or other kinds of harm. The best approach to safeguarding young people is to increase awareness and build a community of support. This can be done through implementing competency development alongside community engagement and sensitization activities to ensure that as young people begin to grow in and apply these competencies, community support for these young people grows as well. In addition, when choosing how to approach competency development, consider how, where, when, and with whom activities should be done to protect participants. For example:

Should activities be done in single-sex or mixed-sex groups? Organizing mixed gender activities in cultures where adolescent girls and boys are strictly segregated may stigmatize participants and result in punishment by their families or communities. Marital status may also be necessary to consider, as in some communities, unmarried girls' social interactions are carefully guarded, while in others, married girls and young women are more segregated from men and boys. Single-sex groups may also be more appropriate when focusing on more sensitive topics, to ensure participants feel they are in a safe space to explore these topics without embarrassment or judgement. If a group is single-sex or -gender, the facilitator should be the same sex and gender as the participants.

Can participants reach the activity space safely? For example, travel from their homes or schools to the activity site should not mean passing through risk zones, dangerous terrain, or areas where robbery, assault, sexual harassment, or sexual violence occur. If travel to the activity site must go through areas that present risk, mitigation considerations such as moving in groups, having adult(s) accompany young people as they travel, offering vehicle transportation, scheduling activities to avoid dangerous times of day, or other actions should be considered. In some communities, these steps may be necessary for women and girls to avoid being stigmatized for leaving the home alone. The risks and mitigation plans for participants with disabilities may also look different.

What are sensitive topics locally? Young people will gain the most from competency development activities if they are done in safe spaces, free from outside observers, where they feel free to speak openly and try new things. However, in low-resource settings, completely enclosed indoor spaces are hard to find, and activities should be modified to respond to that reality. What qualifies as a sensitive topic can be different from community to community, so it is important for any outsiders involved in the program to investigate how, for example, sexual and reproductive health, gender and power, female economic empowerment, or other subjects should be approached. In some settings, even encouraging adolescents to develop aspirations for their futures can be controversial. If these are concerns, modify the content in activities under the 'Gender and power awareness' or 'Visioning'



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competencies to ensure they do not put young people at risk of being stigmatized or experiencing backlash in the community or their households.

What community reactions can you expect when adolescents and young people talk about their rights or seek to exert influence in their communities? This can be dangerous in places with limited tolerance for free expression and should be very carefully thought out. Assess the specific risks and potential plans to mitigate them, for example, through seeking approval from gatekeepers in advance of a community change project or guiding the group's options to practice new competencies in a way that balances practicing new competencies with minimizing risk of backlash or harm. If the risks are severe and cannot be effectively mitigated through adaptation, do not undertake the activities.


For more complete information about safer programming, see CARE's *Safer Programming: Embedding Safeguarding and the Protection from Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse, and Child Abuse into our Programmes*.

Before the activity

1. **Read through the activity.** Many activities provide options for scenarios or methods to use. Select these in advance.
2. **Adapt the activity.** Every activity requires some adaptation.
 - Details, such as names, places, or cultural references that do not fit your context, should be changed. For example, if “Sonya” is not a name used in your program area, change it to a name that is used. If the materials are translated, you can make these adjustments during the translation process.
 - Adjustments for the age group, gender, literacy level, abilities, or circumstances of participants. Activities should be enjoyable, build on the strengths of the young people involved, and recognize their unique identities. Adjustments may also be needed to ensure active participation for all participants. For example, if there are a large group of participants, utilizing pair- or small-group discussion to give everyone a chance to share. Recommended adjustments are suggested in the ‘Best fit and adaptations’ section of the activity instructions.
 - Many activities allow for adaptation according to your program’s goals or sector. Often this can be done by using scenarios with content relevant to the program, such as money management, girls’ education, sexual and reproductive health, etc. You can also create new scenarios to better match your program.
3. **Plan the session in which the activity will be done.** In general, a full session consists of:
 1. An energizer, such as a quick game, song, call and response, etc. Energizers bring the group together, focus everyone’s attention, and make it fun.
 2. A review of the previous session’s activity and any tasks or reflections participants were asked to do in the “Closing” section. This should include having participants share directly with the group. For example, the facilitator can ask for volunteers to say who they talked to about their dreams for the future and how those people responded.
 3. The main activity or activities.
 4. A closing, which should include the ‘closing’ in the activity instructions, but can also include check-ins between accountability buddies (see the ‘Personal Goals’ activity) or other peer support.
 5. Unstructured time for informal interactions between participants. This can follow the structured part of the session, take place between two activities, or be built into the beginning of the session. This is especially important for young people who are out of school, parenting, married, or otherwise more isolated from peers. It will build solidarity in the group and is the best way to ensure that social networks created by your program will last beyond it. Girls and young women, in particular, may be criticized for being ‘idle’ for spending time with friends. Including socialization time in a session grants it legitimacy.
4. **Make any preparations noted** in the activity instructions and gather materials, if any.

Layout of Activities

My portrait

Competencies	The primary competency is listed first; if there is a secondary competency, it is in (parentheses)
Self-value	
Duration	Estimated time needed for the activity
20-30 minutes	
Materials	Suggested materials
Enough papers and drawing utensils for each participant.	
Preparation	Steps to take in advance of the activity
Review the activity.	
Adapted from or informed by	Source of the activity or components of the activity
CARE International in Zimbabwe (2017). <i>IGATE Adolescents' Tool Kit</i> .	
Objective	The purpose of the activity
Participants reflect on their strengths.	
Best fit and adaptations	The age groups the activity is best for and adaptations for certain groups or situations
Best for younger adolescents (ages 12-14).	
Instructions	
Say: "These things that we are good at right now, we are going to look at our strengths. What are you good at? What are your skills and abilities? What gives you a feeling of accomplishment?"	Bold type and quotation marks indicate what the facilitator should say to the group
Ask participants to turn to a person next to them a few minutes for this.	Parts without quotation marks are instructions to the facilitator
Next, pass out blank paper and drawing utensils.	
Say: "Draw a picture of yourself on the paper. It doesn't have to be a good drawing, so don't worry about how it looks. As you draw, remind yourself of your strengths."	
Give them about 10 minutes to draw a picture of themselves. Then, suggest that they add pictures to the self-portrait to represent the things they are good at.	
When they finish drawing	The discussion section lists questions the facilitator uses to lead a group conversation, letting participants respond
Discussion	
1. Why is it important to know what your strengths are? (because they help them rather than focusing on the negative)	Parentheses provide possible answers to the questions
2. After looking at the strengths of your classmates, did you remember any other strengths you have?	
Closing	
Say: "Take your portrait home with you. Keep it in a place that you can see it often. Reflect on yourself of your strengths. Share it with others if you'd like to."	The closing section suggests activities for participants to do outside the group
 Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to keep their drawing and note any reflections they have about what they are good at.	

Domain 1: Strong Self-Image

The 'Strong Self-Image' domain is primarily concerned with psychological empowerment, relating to a young person's positive self-concept and emotional resilience now and in the future.

Adolescents with a strong self-image believe they have value. Their confidence in their worth and abilities provides the foundation for developing aspirations, envisioning possibilities in their futures, and persevering through difficulties. These adolescents are aware that they have a right to independent thoughts and opinions. The three competencies included under this domain are:

Self-value

Self-value, or self-esteem, is the belief in one's inherent worth, regardless of circumstances. Adolescent girls in particular are undervalued in many societies, and girls and young women may have been taught that they are burdens, unworthy of education, or incapable of contributing to the broader good. At the same time, success they experience may be perceived as belonging to the family, with the expectation that they employ it to provide for others rather than prioritizing their own needs. As a competency, self-value requires adolescents to affirm themselves and their abilities beyond their earning potential and reproductive capacity. Self-value at a group level means validating each other as individuals and as members of an affinity group.

Visioning

Visioning means identifying aspirations for oneself that may or may not reflect what society and family expect. Many adolescents, especially girls, have been discouraged from thinking of themselves as having choices in the course of their lives and have only seen people like themselves fill a limited number of roles. Identifying a vision, dream, or goal requires practice imagining future possibilities and their alignment with interests and aptitudes. 'You can't be what you can't see.' Collectively, groups of young people practice visioning when they imagine the future they wish to create for their age cohort and what they would change to make their community better for all of them, such as a safe market for women vendors or an adolescent-friendly health center. Visioning feeds into organizing for change by defining the desired endpoint.

Perseverance

Perseverance means persisting through challenges. As a competency, perseverance requires generating the inner motivation to carry on when things become difficult and managing emotional responses to hardship, such as anxiety, with coping skills. Adolescents and youth need perseverance to adapt to changing circumstances and to try new ways of looking at and addressing a problem when something is harder than they expected. Building on self-value and aspirational thinking, perseverance supports mental and emotional resilience in adolescents and youth. At the collective level, it provides necessary stamina in social change movements or campaigns.

This is me

Competencies

Self-value

Duration

30-40 minutes

Materials

Optional: paper for participants to write down their qualities, contributions and successes

Preparation

Review the activity.

Adapted from or informed by

Government of Sierra Leone, Ministry of Health and Sanitation, National Secretariat for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy. *I Am Somebody: National Life Skills Manual for Children 9-13 Years Old* and *I Am Somebody: National Life Skills Manual for Children 14+ Years Old*.

Objective

Participants value themselves.

Best fit and adaptations

Best with younger adolescents (ages 10-14), but applicable to older ages (15-24) as well.

Instructions

Ask the group to divide into pairs. For some participants, talking with a friend is easier than talking with a stranger, although if you are with a new group, this is a great activity to meet new people.

Say: "Please tell your partner three qualities you like about yourself."

Ask for an example. If no one offers an example, use yourself as an example. "My name is Aisha, and I am a good listener." Be clear that you are not asking them to name things they like to do. You are not looking for "I like to play football," but qualities like patience, honesty, hard worker, good listener, etc. Give them about 10 minutes to do this. Remind them to be good listeners and to remember what has been said or write it down.

Say: "Please tell your partner one thing that you contribute to others and one success you have had in life so far. A contribution to others can be something that happens every day, like helping to take care of younger siblings, or something that happens once in a while, like repairing a friend's bicycle. A success is something that you have accomplished, like completing a year of school, taking a long journey, or painting a house."

Give them 10 minutes to do this. If participants need more examples, have a volunteer share their contribution or success.

Ask for someone to stand with their partner and tell one of the partner's qualities and how these qualities can be helpful in life. You may need to give examples. "Momitu is helpful – that is a good quality in a friend." If someone says, "I am good at football" or another activity rather than a quality, ask them what qualities you need to be good at football – teamwork, perseverance, etc. "So you persevere by practicing every week? That is a great quality to help you achieve things in life." Ask them to share either their partner's contribution to others or their success. Have the group help them celebrate their qualities, contributions or success with a round of applause.

Continue this process as time allows, trying to get all the participants to report on the qualities of their partners, how that can help them in life and a contribution or success. If participants wrote down their qualities, contribution, and successes, you can place these on the wall or a poster board.

Closing

Say: to the participants, “It is a pleasure it is to hear all the wonderful things about you. What an amazing group of young people you make! In the coming days, think more about what you are good at and what your best qualities are. Take note of all the contributions you make to others. You will have an opportunity to share these in our next session.”



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, remind them to write down their qualities, contributions, and successes. It is nice to revisit these from time to time.

What I like about you

Competencies

Self-value

Duration

20 minutes

Materials

Enough sheets of paper, writing utensils, and pins or tape for each person.

Preparation

Review the activity.

Adapted from or informed by

International Rescue Committee. *Social-Emotional Learning Intervention Lesson Plan Bank, Safe Healing and Learning Spaces Toolkit*. <https://shls.rescue.org/>.

Population Council. *Life Skills and Health Curriculum for the Adolescent Girls Empowerment Program (AGEP)*. https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/departments_sbsr-pgy/584/.

Objective

Participants build self-esteem.

Best fit and adaptations

This activity is good for adolescents and young adults aged 10-24. It works best with a group that has been meeting for a while and knows each other well.

Instructions

Give one sheet of paper, a pen, and something to attach the paper (tape, pin, paper clip, clothespin) to each participant.

Say: “Sometimes we forget to tell others what we like about them. Today we’re going to do that. We are going to tell each other our positive qualities, things that we appreciate about each other. There might be things that each of us needs to improve as well – but today, we focus on the positive.”

“Write your name on the upper corner of your papers and make a symbol that represents you in the center. You could trace your hand, draw a star, heart, or sun—anything that represents you. Next, help each other attach your papers to your backs.” Note that it may be more comfortable for others of the same gender to attach the paper to each others’ backs; for example, girls help girls, and boys help boys.”

Ask the participants to think about the different people in the room. What positive words would you use to describe each person? What do you appreciate about each person?

Say: “When I say, “Go!” you will move around the space and write one or two words describing the positive qualities of each person in the room (or draw symbols to represent those words). Be sure you do not miss anyone. Go!”



Inclusion adaptation: Any participant with mobility issues can remain where they are while other participants come to them.

When most seem to have finished, **say**, “Stop!” and have the participants help each other remove their papers from their backs.

Discussion

1. Were you surprised about what people wrote on your paper? Can anyone share what quality they were surprised to hear about themselves?

2. How does it feel to have others recognize the good in you?
3. What can you do in your daily life to spread this positivity? Why don't we tell each other these things more often? What do you think your mother, brother, sister, father, husband, wife, everyone else around you would feel if you told them something you appreciate about them?

Closing

Say: "In the coming days, notice what you appreciate about the people around you. Tell at least one person what you like about them. Then share with others in the group how it felt to do so."



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to keep the paper from the activity and capture how they felt when others recognized positive qualities about themselves.

My portrait

Competencies

Self-value

Duration

20-30 minutes

Materials

Enough papers and drawing utensils for each participant.

Preparation

Review the activity.

Adapted from or informed by

CARE International in Zimbabwe (2017). *IGATE Adolescent Development Model Manual and Tool Kit*.

Objective

Participants reflect on their strengths.

Best fit and adaptations

Best for younger adolescents (aged 10-14).

Instructions

Say: “Each of us has strengths and weaknesses. We tend to focus on the negative bits about ourselves, those things that we are less good at. Right now, we are going to look at our strengths. What are you good at? What are your skills and abilities? What gives you a feeling of accomplishment?”

Ask participants to turn to a person next to them and share their thoughts with each other. Give them a few minutes for this.

Next, pass out blank paper and drawing utensils.

Say: “Draw a picture of yourself on the paper. It doesn’t have to be a good drawing, so don’t worry about how it looks. As you draw, remind yourself of your strengths.”

Give them about 10 minutes to draw a picture of themselves. Then, suggest that they add pictures to the self-portrait to represent the things they are good at.

When they finish drawing, let them share the portraits with each other.

Discussion

1. Why is it important to know what your strengths are? (because then you can build on them rather than focusing on the negative)
2. After looking at the strengths of your classmates, did you remember any other strengths you have?

Closing

Say: “Take your portrait home with you. Keep it in a place that you can see regularly to remind yourself of your strengths. Share it with others if you’d like to.”



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to keep their drawing and note any reflections they have about what they are good at.

Female role models

Competencies

Visioning (Gender and power awareness)

Duration

30 minutes

Materials

None.

Preparation

Find an example of a woman from the participants' community or country who experienced success in achieving a dream for her career or a woman who is otherwise accomplished in an area and can be a good role model. To support the belief that women are as capable as men, it is important that the person be a woman. See the activity instructions for what to do next.

Adapted from or informed by

CARE International in Zimbabwe (2017). *IGATE Adolescent Development Model Manual and Tool Kit*.

Population Council. *Life Skills and Health Curriculum for the Adolescent Girls Empowerment Program (AGEP)*. https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/departments_sbsr-pgy/584/.

Objective

Participants, especially girls and young women, are exposed to women who overcame gender barriers.

Best fit and adaptations

This activity works with younger adolescents (aged 10-14), older adolescents (aged 15-19) and young adults (aged 20-24). If your program works in a particular sector, you can focus on women who work in that sector. For example, if the program goal is for adolescents to develop successful businesses, you can look for women that have developed their own successful businesses. If your program goal is related to health, you can look for a woman that chairs a community health board, heads a clinic, or became a doctor. If your program goal is related to education, you can look for a woman head teacher or a woman who works for the Ministry of Education. In many communities, there are fewer women in leadership positions. By using a female role model, this activity hopes to guide young people's visions and aspirations, as well as challenge their thoughts about who can be a leader to also include women.

Instructions

Find an example of a woman from the participants' community or country who experienced success in achieving a dream for her career or a woman who is otherwise accomplished in an area and can be a good role model. It is best if the woman has a similar background to the participants and if she entered a profession or activity that is typically done by men. You might find a woman with this kind of story by asking other people, or you might find her story through media on the Internet or in the newspaper. If you cannot speak to her directly, gather information about her from media sources. Write down her story, where she came from, what challenges she faced, and how she achieved her dream.

Tell the story about the role model to the group participants and lead a discussion with the questions below. If you cannot find a good example of a role model, you can adapt the following story from Zimbabwe:

Mayamiko had four brothers and no sisters. She was performing better than all of her brothers at school. Her brothers felt very uncomfortable about her performance. They told her that she was only a girl and that the best that could happen to her was to get married and become a housewife. Mayamiko had a goal and a dream of becoming a pilot. When she told people in her village what she wanted to do, they laughed at her and said, "Women can't fly airplanes!" Her father was very supportive of her vision. Her mother, on the other hand, was not so supportive. She was heard saying, "Who will marry a flying wife?" "What husband would allow his wife to fly planes all over the world and live with a maid to cook for him? Mayamiko, think again." Mayamiko kept her dream. She remained focused.

After years of studying and hard work, she went to university. At the university she chose to study aviation. This is a subject that does not have a lot of women students. In the end, Mayamiko became the first woman pilot in the country. Everyone was proud of her success. She is now a very good pilot and serves as a role model for both boys and girls.

Discussion

1. What made [the woman's name] accomplish her goal despite the obstacles she faced along the way?
2. List the obstacles that she came across during her studies.
3. What is a role model? (someone who is an example of what is possible)
4. Why is [the woman's name] seen as a role model in our community or country?
5. Do you know of any other role models in your community whom you may want to talk to or listen to telling their success stories? These can be men, women, or any gender.
6. What is the message of this story for your life?

Note the people who participants say they would like to talk to. If there are no local individuals, give the group a task: To look around in their community for people doing the kind of work or activity that they would like to do. After the individuals are identified, ensure they are appropriate role models and then invite them to come and speak to the group about their lives and how they became successful. Be sure that some of them are women.

Closing

Say: "Role models can be a great inspiration for you. Keep looking for people doing the kind of work or activity that you would like to do. I will investigate the people you have named or that you find in the community and invite them to come and speak to us."



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to write down their goals and who they can look up to for guidance or inspiration. Encouraging them to capture questions they would ask their role model, or steps to take inspired by their role model. These may help them as they pursue their goals.

Dreams for the future

Competencies

Visioning

Duration

30 minutes

Materials

Optional: Poster paper or a chalk board, sheets of paper for drawing, glue, writing utensils

Preparation

Optional: Draw a large tree on poster paper

Adapted from or informed by

CARE USA. *Facilitator's Manual for Girls' Collectives: CARE's Tipping Point Phase 2, Bangladesh.* https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Tipping-Point-Girls-Manual_Bangladesh.pdf.

Objective

To encourage participants to identify their hopes for the future.

Best fit and adaptations

Especially good for younger adolescents (aged 10-14), though it is appropriate for youth (aged 15-24) as well. Displaced or conflict-affected participants may only be focused on present goals of safety, family reunification, returning home, or other outcomes that they have no control over. This activity may not be appropriate for them, unless they are in longstanding situations that are stable enough that someone can plan for the future. If you do choose to use it with such a group, be ready to provide psychological first aid and referrals to services as needed.

Some adolescents may never have been asked to think about their futures and what they want for their futures, especially girls out of school. For these adolescents, this activity may be best to do after the group has been exposed to role models (see the Female Role Models activity).

Note: Ensure that participants understand that any kind of dream is acceptable – do not suggest that only professional occupations are worthwhile dreams. Contributing to your community through volunteer roles or to your family by raising healthy children are dreams worth pursuing, too.

Instructions

Say: “All people have some dreams or hopes about the future. They encourage us to work to get closer to our dreams and fulfil them in the long run. In this activity, you are free to think of anything. You can think of what seems normal or expected or you can think of what seems impossible.”

Ask the participants to sit quietly and, if they feel comfortable doing so, to close their eyes.

Say: “Imagine it is five or ten years from now, when you have grown up. How old are you? Where do you live? Who do you live with? Imagine you are very, very happy in this life. What is your main activity in life? Do you work outside the home? Doing what? Where do you go and what do you do every day that brings you joy? What do you do that makes you feel proud, that makes you think, ‘I worked hard to get here’? This is your dream of a future in which you are happy and fulfilled.”

Let the group sit quietly thinking for around three to five minutes. Then ask them to open their eyes, if they were closed. Ask them to make a pair with someone near them and share their one of their dreams with each other. If you are using paper and writing utensils, pass them out while they share in pairs.

Optional: Tell the group to draw their vision on paper. When they have finished, they can tape the drawing to the branches of the tree drawn on the poster paper or chalk board.

Discussion

Ask for two or three volunteers to share their dream with the whole group. As they do so, ask them:

1. What will be required to achieve your dream? Will you need education? Will you need to leave the village/neighborhood/city, etc.? Do you need to develop a skill?
2. Who could help you reach your dream? Are there family members, friends, teachers, faith leaders, NGOs, or anyone else who can help?
3. What challenges do you see in fulfilling your dream? What qualities do you need to overcome those challenges, and who can help you along the way? Can those of us here help you?

Optional: If there is time remaining, encourage participants to form small groups to share their dreams, and discuss the questions together.

Closing

Say: “It may have been easy for you to identify your dream, or it may have been hard. It is good to name your hopes for the future to be able to find helpers and take the steps necessary to get there. That way, you can plan to handle challenges and keep moving forward. Over the next few days, think more about your dream. If there is anyone in the community doing the things that you would like to do in the future, talk to them and ask how they achieved that dream.”



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to write down their dream(s), as well as some of the actions they will need to take to achieve their dream(s). Encourage them to continue thinking through the discussion questions (above) as they articulate their dream(s).

The road of life

Competencies

Visioning

Duration

30-40 minutes

Materials

Enough paper and drawing utensils (pens, markers, pencils, crayons, etc.) for everyone

Preparation

Review the activity instructions.

Adapted from or informed by

Population Council. *Life Skills and Health Curriculum for the Adolescent Girls Empowerment Program (AGEP)*. https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/departments_sbsr-pgy/584/.

Objective

Participants think about their life course and what they need to reach life goals.

Best fit and adaptations

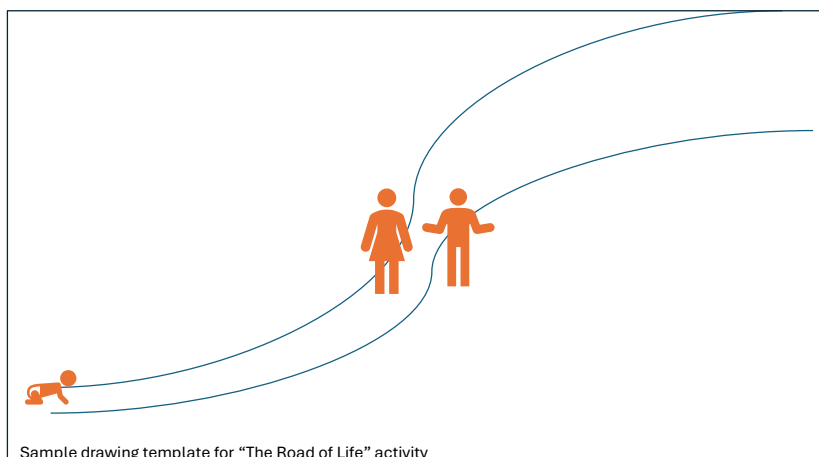
Particularly good with younger adolescents (aged 10-14), but it can work with ages 15-24 as well. Shorten the timeframe into the future as needed for groups with especially little control over their circumstances (displaced young people, girls forced into marriage, etc.), so that they can focus on one or two things in the near future that are within their influence.

Instructions

Say: “In this exercise we will do a drawing to help us think about our lives so far, and where we will go in the future. We will draw some of the things or people which have helped us and those which can help us to achieve our goals. We are going to start by looking at our own lives so far. We are going to think of our lives as a road that we travel along. Sometimes the road is bumpy; sometimes it is smooth.”

Give each of the participants a sheet of paper and drawing utensils. Get them to spread out on tables or on the floor so they have plenty of room for drawing.

Explain: “First, draw yourself in the middle of the paper. Then draw a winding road from a bottom corner of the paper that winds up to the drawing of yourself, and then draw the road continuing from there to a top corner.” An example of what this can look like is below:



Draw your own road on a chalkboard or paper for all participants to see a demonstration of the activity.

Say: “This is the road of your life. In the bottom corner, where the road starts, this is where you were born. Draw a picture of yourself as a tiny baby in the bottom corner.”

“Thinking about the road you have travelled between being born (in the corner of the page) and now (in the middle of the page), what are three significant things that have happened in your life so far (good or bad things which have happened)? Draw them.” Encourage participants to only draw things they feel comfortable capturing or sharing. For those with periods of insecurity or trauma in their past, they may select not to include those details. Facilitators should be ready to provide psychological first aid and referrals to services as needed.

Draw your own life events on your road for participants to see.

Say: “Many of you have faced big challenges in your lives, but you have continued along your roads. What are some things that have helped you along your road so far? (for example, people, places, something within yourself) Draw the things and people that helped you on the first part of your road.

“Now we are going to think about the future. Ask the following questions: Where is your road taking you? Where do you want to get to? Think of yourself in one-, three-, five-, or ten-years’ time, where will you be?”

“Draw yourself at the end of the road as you would like to be in the future. Who are you? Who is with you? What are you doing?”

“Now draw three things on the second part of the road that you believe will help you realize that future. Who do you need support from? What do you need to achieve along the way? How will you know if you are on track to that future one year from now? Three years from now? Five years from now?”

Walk through the space giving guidance as the participants finish their drawings. Answer any questions that they ask. If you feel comfortable doing so, tell them about the key moments on your path or a time when you fell off the path and had to get back on it.

Ask participants to form small groups of three or four people and share their drawings with each other, explaining the path they have been on and the path they hope to be on in the future.

Closing

Say: Ask participants to take the drawings home and explain the drawing to their parents or other trusted adults or friends, highlighting where they want to go in the future and what they need to get there.



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to keep this picture in their journal. Suggest they continue to consider the questions asked earlier about how they will achieve their future. Who do you need support from? What do you need to achieve along the way? How will you know if you are on track to that future one year from now? Three years from now? Five years from now? Over time their end goal may change, or they may think of new strategies to achieving this goal; encourage them to continue to keep updating their notes kept in their journal along the way.

Our future together

Competencies

Visioning

Duration

40- 60 minutes

Materials

Optional: Sheets of paper (one for each participant), tape, and markers

Preparation

Optional: Write the beginning of sentences at the top of sheets of paper, with a different sentence for each paper if you can come up with enough of them. Examples can include:

Why can't.....

If only....

Wouldn't it be great if....

Who says we can't.....

If I could change one thing, I'd.....

I am really hoping.....

Together we can....

A strong future means....

Adapted from or informed by

World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. *Be the Change: A Community Action Programme for WAGGGS Members Aged 14+*. <https://duz92c7qaoni3.cloudfront.net/documents/BeTheChange.pdf>.

Objective

Participants practice identifying a common vision for their community.

Best fit and adaptations

This activity works with young people aged 10-24. Note that younger adolescents (aged 10-14) are likely to focus attention on physical aspects of the community, such as facilities. Older ages, especially young adults (aged 20-24), might focus on less material things such as discrimination, mutual aid, jobs, or community leadership.

Instructions

Say: "We are all a part of this community (or school, neighborhood, mosque, etc.). There are great things about our community and not so great things about it."

Ask two or three participants to say what they really like about the community (lots of friends, good football field, festivals, supportive neighbors, not too big or small, etc.). Then ask two or three others to say what they do not like about the community (too crowded, school too far away, no places to meet friends, lack of good jobs, hard to find water, etc.). If someone says 'too poor' or something similar, ask them to be more specific – "Do you mean we don't have things you would like us to have? What are those things?"

With each example of what is not liked, rephrase it into a positive statement of what a solution could be. For example, "no places to meet friends" becomes, "Wouldn't it be great if we had a safe space to meet as friends?" "Leaders don't listen to us" becomes, "You are really hoping that our leaders will consider the needs of youth."

Tell the participants they are going to think about their community as they do the next part of the activity.

Use one of the following methods:

1. Distribute the sheets of paper that you prepared, tape, and markers or pens. Have the participants stand while you tape one sheet of paper to each person's back. Alternatively, have another participant of the same gender tape a paper on a partner's back, and vice versa (e.g. girls tape paper on girls' backs, and boys tape paper on other boys' backs).
2. Say: Now, walk around the room and write whatever you think the rest of the sentence should be on other people's backs. Alternatively, you can draw simple pictures of the change you want to see.
3. Adaptation: If you do not have paper, then tell each person one of the beginning phrases, such as 'Why can't....,' 'Wouldn't it be great if....,' etc. Instruct the participants to walk around and, when they meet someone, to tell each other their beginning phrase and listen to the other person's response.



Inclusion Adaptation: Any participant with mobility issues can remain where they are while other participants come to them.

When participants have met most of the others, instruct them to sit down again. If you used papers, have them help each other remove them and look at the one that was on their back.

Discussion

1. What answers did you get?
2. Were you surprised at any of the answers? Do you disagree with any of them? Why?
3. Were some answers more common than others? In the discussion, do you hear any themes emerging? What are they? (If they have trouble answering, make some suggestions based on what you heard.)
4. Which of these ideas to make our community better would you be willing to work together for? What steps could you take?

Say: "This is how people can come together to build a vision of a changed world. Unless we have a vision for the future we will not be motivated to strive towards that vision."

If it applies, you can also say: "On another day, we will create a plan to achieve one of these visions." Also, if you used sheets of paper, collect them and review them after the session to better understand the visions of participants.

Closing

Say: "In the next few days, look around the community and reflect on what else you would change. Talk to each other more about your ideas and share them with other peers, trusted adults or elders. Think about what steps you can take to make the change."



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to continue their notes about how they can, individually or with others, build a strong community. Who can help them? What are the steps to take to achieve the goal? It may be helpful to break down the steps into stages, to make them more achievable.

Positive self-talk

Competencies

Perseverance (Self-value)

Duration

30-40 minutes

Materials

Optional: Cards and pencils/pens.

Preparation

Think of examples of negative self-talk and positive self-talk in case participants need help with this.

Adapted from or informed by

CARE International in Zimbabwe (2017). *IGATE Adolescent Development Model Manual and Tool Kit*.

Objective

Participants help each other build self-confidence by changing negative statements to positive ones.

Best fit and adaptations

Good for all ages (10-24). For youth with limited literacy, the activity can be done by taking ideas of negative self-talk from participants directly, without writing them down first.

Tell all participants that they don't need to share their own personal examples of negative self-talk if they don't want to. They can imagine the negative self-talk of someone else.

Instructions

Say: "Today we are talking about self-talk. Self-talk is the way you talk to yourself, your inner voice. You might not be aware that you are doing it, but you most certainly are. Our minds take the things that we hear and things that we think and replay them for us throughout the day. Some self-talk is positive, and some is negative. Positive self-talk makes a person feel good about themselves and their lives. These are thoughts like, 'I can do it.' 'I am a good person.' Or even, 'That is not great, but it could be worse.' Negative self-talk makes a person feel bad about themselves and their lives, thoughts like 'I am not good enough' or 'I will never get over this.'"

"Scientists have proven that positive thinking makes people happier, healthier, and more successful. If we can become more aware of the self-talk in our minds, we can replace any negative self-talk with positive self-talk. To do this, the first step is to practice listening to our inner voices, to sit quietly and pay attention to our thoughts."

Have participants sit quietly for 3-5 minutes with their eyes closed. Encourage them to ignore any sounds around them and instead to listen to their inner voices. Ask them to notice any positive or negative self-talk in their minds.

Say: "The second step is to replace negative self-talk with positive self-talk."

1. Have participants open their eyes and think about things people say to themselves that make them feel bad about themselves—negative self-talk. For example: "I'm not smart," or "Nobody likes me." Have each participant write one example on a card. Tell them not to write their names on the cards and that no one will know who wrote which card. Collect the cards and shuffle them.



Literacy adaptation: If there are participants who have limited literacy, have them work in partners or small groups where there is someone comfortable writing in each group. Alternatively, the facilitator can ask for suggestions and write the cards for the whole group.

2. Divide the participants into teams of 4-5 people. Ask each team to form a tight circle and sit down.

3. Place the same number of cards as there are participants in a pile in the circle. Because the cards have been shuffled, each group will receive a random pile rather than the cards written by members of the group.
4. A volunteer will choose one card from the pile and read the card out loud to the group. The group must provide suggestions to change what is written on the card into a positive statement. For example, if the card said, "I'm not smart" it could be changed to "I am smart," "I know a lot about sports" or "I am very good at cooking."



Literacy adaptation: If no groups have strong readers, the facilitator can tell each group a list of statements and have each group discuss verbally.

5. The group can spend 2 or 3 minutes discussing each card. After 3 minutes, the next person in the circle will choose a new card.
6. Once all the cards are finished, this part of the group activity ends.

Discussion

1. How did it feel to sit and listen to your inner voice? Did anyone notice any positive or negative self-talk?
2. How did it feel to change the negative self-talk examples into positive self-talk? Was it difficult?
3. Why is negative self-talk dangerous? (It can make us feel like we are worthless, like there is no point in going on. It is not healthy.)
4. What else can we do to stop negative self-talk? (Encourage each other to believe that we are good, strong, smart, etc., being good friends. Remind ourselves of all the things that make us great. Practice self-kindness.)

Closing

Tell participants to practice listening to their inner voice before the next session to notice any negative self-talk and to replace it with a positive thought about themselves. If they see a friend feeling negatively about themselves, remind them of all the positive things about them.



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to keep a list of any negative self-talk that comes in their mind and practice updating it with positive self-talk. Additionally, as they think of positive self-talk over the coming days and weeks, encourage them to keep track of it in their journals. Re-reading these thoughts during moments of doubt is one strategy to redirecting thoughts in a positive way.

Story of Chernor Bah

Competencies

Perseverance

Duration

40-60 minutes

Materials

Optional: A chalkboard or whiteboard and writing utensils.

Preparation

Read through the story.

Adapted from or informed by

Government of Sierra Leone, Ministry of Health and Sanitation, National Secretariat for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy. *I Am Somebody: National Life Skills Manual for Children 9-13 Years Old* and *I Am Somebody: National Life Skills Manual for Children 14+ Years Old*.

Objective

Participants hear an example of perseverance/ resilience.

Best fit and adaptations

This activity is best for young people affected by conflict, particularly adolescents (aged 10-19). If participants are out of school without the chance to continue education, you may remove the sentences that are in brackets [like this] or add a discussion about ways to continue learning outside of school.

The small group discussions ask participants to share personal information with each other. It is best to do this with groups that have been meeting for some time and that are comfortable with each other. As always, participants should be encouraged to only share what they are comfortable with.

Instructions

Say: "I'm going to tell you the story of someone named Chernor Bah. He was a boy who was displaced by conflict. This is Chernor's story in his own words. 'My name is Chernor Bah. I was born in Freetown [a city in Sierra Leone within a country in Africa].'

'When I was six years old the war started. We saw people killed in front of our eyes. We saw sexual violence. I was a small boy, and I was afraid for my life. After our house was burned down, we lived in a displaced persons' camp, and then we went to Guinea [a different country] as refugees. We just had to survive one day at a time. Everybody says survival brings responsibility. For me, it gives me a better sense of the meaning of life. It drives me to fight for a world where kids don't have to go through the things that my friends and I went through.'

'When I was 15, I came back to Sierra Leone. My friends and I went to the Minister of Children's Affairs and said, 'We want to have a children's parliament. We want to be part of the peace process in Sierra Leone.' Luckily, they said, 'Yes, what do you need? Bring all the kids together!' So the ministry brought together 50 kids from around the country, and we made a plan. We said, 'We want to be involved in shaping the future of our country.'

'I was elected the first president of the group, called Children's Forum Network (CFN), which is still active today – more than 20 years later! It is still giving children a voice in this country. We were involved in the peace process. We (the youth) ran a radio station with 250 young reporters, so children could have a voice. We went around the country to find out what had happened to children of war.'

'Those stories are the ones that have driven my passion and everything I do. People want justice. They want education, no matter how hopeless the situation.'

'My most important inspiration has always been my mom. We were poor and she was a single parent. After school we had to sell things to make money and bring it home. [My mom always made it very clear to me that the way out was education – that education was the hope, the path.] So even when we were displaced, there was no time to feel sorry for yourself. My mom said you have to believe in tomorrow [and what prepares you for tomorrow is education].'

'My message to you is to look on the positive side and to try to find that hope. Oftentimes it's very hard to see it, to believe, to imagine a different world. It's hard, and I know, I've been in that situation. But there is hope.'

"Chernor went on to go to the University of Sierra Leone. He went on to get a master's degree. Now he works for girls' rights in Sierra Leone."

Discussion

1. What do you think of Chernor's story?
2. What qualities does Chernor have? (Make sure that perseverance, resilience, or a related quality comes up.)
3. What is perseverance (or resilience)? (Perseverance is continuing despite hardships, not giving up, even for years. Resilience is bouncing back when setbacks happen, when things get hard.)
4. Who can share an example of perseverance or resilience from their own life? When did you continue through hardships? (Take two or three examples or offer some from your own life.)

Have participants break into small groups of three to four people. Ask them to discuss the following:

- When have you had to persevere through challenges? These could be large matters, but they do not have to be; they can include smaller matters like regular studying to pass an exam or working for a long time to save money.
- Who helped you persevere?
- What else helped you persevere? Where did you find encouragement to keep going?
- Have you become more resilient because of your experiences?

Optional: Write the definitions of perseverance and resilience on the board.

Closing

Say: "In the coming days, look for examples of others persevering. How have your parents persevered? Your grandparents or others in your family? If you feel comfortable, ask someone about how they got through a difficult time in their life."



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to write a letter to a future version of themselves that is going through a challenge. What advice would they give their future self so they can persevere through the challenge? What tips can they share about perseverance and resilience?

Plan B

Competencies

Perseverance

Duration

45 minutes

Materials

Piece of fabric that can be used as a blindfold.

Optional: Large pieces of paper or poster board and pens, markers, or pencils. Printed scenarios.

Preparation

If you are meeting outside, select a place with even ground that is safe and dry.

Adapted from or informed by

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Objective

Participants understand the concept of a 'Plan B' and practice generating such plans.

Best fit and adaptations

This activity works with all age groups. Younger adolescents (aged 10-14) may need more time and examples to feel confident doing the small group activity.

Instructions

Ask for a volunteer who would feel comfortable wearing a blindfold. They will walk from one side of the space to the other with a blindfold on. Tell them to do so slowly and carefully. After they have put the blindfold on, quietly place a large object in their path for them to bump into. This could be a table, chair, another large object, or even another participant. When they have bumped into it, give them a moment to figure out a way around it without removing the blindfold.

When they have reached the other side of the space, ask them:

1. What happened in this situation that you did not expect? (There was something in the way)
2. So, your first plan, Plan A – to walk straight across the space – did not work. What did you do next, for your Plan B? (Adjusted, moved to the side, found a way around it, adapted, changed direction)

Thank the volunteer.

Say: "We all have dreams of how we'd like to live our lives. And we set goals to keep us on the way towards achieving them. But sometimes, even though we work hard, things do not go as planned. Maybe we wanted to pass our exams so that we could study computers, but we didn't pass. Maybe we started a business and we're not making any money. Maybe we wanted to leave a bad situation for something better, but it's turning out to be harder than we thought. It is easy to feel low, depressed, or sad at those times. We might want to give up and quit trying."

Ask: "What if our volunteer had given up once they ran into the object in the middle of the space? Where would they be now?" (Standing there, stuck, going nowhere)

Say: "Most of us, at some point in our lives, will have to change our plans from a Plan A to a Plan B. Did you know that most successful businesses were actually someone's Plan B or Plan C? A project or plan is more likely to fail before it succeeds. The important thing is to adapt, to turn in a new direction, and to keep going."

Have the participants divide into small groups of three or four people.

Say: “I’m going to give each group a short story. I want you to imagine that the person in your story is a good friend, and you are going to give the best advice you can to them about how to make a ‘Plan B’. Imagine your friend on a path from their starting point, where they wanted to go, the obstacle they faced, and the path they made after following your very good advice.”

If you are using paper and writing utensils, pass them out group by group and explain that they should draw their friend’s path, obstacle, and new path. If you have printed the scenarios, pass them out to the groups with the paper and pens.



Literacy adaptation: If participants have limited literacy skills, the facilitator should move from group to group, reading the story out loud to each group.

Choose the scenarios that best fit your participants and your program or create new ones that are realistic for your community.

With younger adolescents (aged 10-14), first talk through one scenario in the large group and what you might draw to represent a Plan B.

1. Somchai saved money for ten months so he could pay transportation to join his brother in the capital city. But then there was a flood, and the money washed away.
2. Tab Savy had a goal to finish secondary school and enroll in a nursing course. But he didn’t pass the final exams.
3. Grace was running a successful business selling cold water to people on buses that passed through her town. Then the rainy season started, and people were not buying as much water from her.
4. Reina’s drama troupe had been practicing for months to perform at a festival in another town. But days before the festival, her mother-in-law said women shouldn’t be showing themselves off, and Reina wasn’t allowed to go.
5. Nandar wanted to learn welding and was looking for an apprenticeship. She thought she had one, but then the welder chose someone else to be his apprentice.

Have participants share their own stories of making Plan B’s and choose one to draw.

When participants have finished, take a few minutes to share the drawings in the large group, with one person from each small group explaining their drawing.

Closing

Say: “Over the next days, ask your parents, elders, or others close to you about a success in their life, any kind of success. Then ask how they achieved it, whether they failed before they succeeded, or how they adapted their plans along the way.”



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to think about additional options, or Plan Bs, for their goals. Sometimes this may mean having multiple plans to choose from. In these lists, encourage them to consider what they need to make each plan successful, and what are the ‘signs’ they should switch from one plan to another? This will help them consider many options.

Domain 2: Strong Mind

The Strong Mind domain relates to cognitive empowerment and capabilities for higher level thinking.

Adolescents with a strong mind are aware of how they fit into their communities and societies, including the impact of gender barriers and other forms of exclusion; stereotypes based on class, ethnicity, or ability; and power inequities. They know how to make the decisions that are right for them and exercise agency within options defined by their context, expanding those options when safe to do so. They think critically about new information and understand other people's motivations and biases.

Gender and power awareness

Gender and power awareness means understanding how gender shapes women's and men's roles, norms, expected behaviors, and our assumptions about others. It also encompasses a broader conception of diversities in society across economic class, ability, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality and the formal and informal hierarchies of power associated with them. Awareness of the relationship between social group and power helps adolescents challenge gender, ethnic, and other stereotypes and, especially for girls and more marginalized young people, navigate social and interpersonal dynamics to get their needs met and achieve their goals. Understanding that these dynamics are socially constructed and therefore changeable is key to working towards more equitable communities.

Decision making

Decision making is the process of choosing a course of action. Cognitively, it involves considering risks and rewards of various options for solving a problem or choosing an aim to work toward. Good decision making relies on sound judgment of your situation, how it might change or develop, how other people are likely to behave, and potential consequences of your actions to yourself and others. For adolescents in particular, decision making is a key part of risk reduction. A degree of risk taking is a sign of normal, healthy adolescent development because it allows the exploration of new experiences necessary for a person to understand themselves and the world. Adolescents need to be equipped for risk assessment and, when the risk cannot be avoided, for making choices that reduce risk for themselves and others. Decision making strategies are also essential for major life decisions, such as career choices and when, whom, and if to marry. Although adolescents and youth may not be allowed to make such decisions for themselves, competency in weighing the potential outcomes of different pathways better equips them to influence parents and guardians.

Critical thinking

Critical thinking is the ability to evaluate information, judge its value, and interpret it with regard to your existing knowledge. It also helps you understand alternative perspectives and factors that influence social norms, attitudes, and the behaviors of others. This competency is applied in a wide variety of ways in daily life and enables independent thought. As the influence of the internet and social media continues to expand throughout the world, adolescents and young adults need to be able to recognize potential bias in information, assess the likelihood of sources being trustworthy, and consider the implications of a new piece of knowledge. Together with gender and power awareness and decision-making skills, critical thinking supports youth, especially girls and young women, to understand other people's motivations and interact safely online and offline. Individually and collectively, critical thinking is also a key part of developing arguments for needed changes in a community, school, or other system.

Power

Competencies

Gender and power awareness (Critical thinking)

Duration

Part I: 20 minutes

Part II: 30 minutes

Materials

Optional: Sweets or another treat such as a slice of fruit, enough for each participant to have one.

Optional: Chalkboard or white board and writing utensils.

Preparation

Review the activity and decide whether or not to include Part I for young adults. Think in advance about what groups in your context should be mentioned.

Adapted from or informed by

CARE USA. *Facilitator's Manual for Adolescent Boys: CARE's Tipping Point Phase 2, Nepal*. https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/FM_Adolescent_Boys_with-citation.pdf.

Training Module for Adolescent Girls: Addressing Child Marriage, Sexual Harassment, and Violence;

Population Council. *It's All One: Activities for a Unified Approach to Sexuality, Gender, HIV, and Human Rights Education*. https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/departments_sbsr-pgy/744/

Objective

Participants critically analyze differences in power and who has it.

Best fit and adaptations

Part I is best with adolescents (aged 10-19). It is less important for young adults (aged 20-24) and may be removed or included.

Instructions

Part I

Divide the participants into two groups: one called Blue, and one called Green. Ask the participants who are wearing clothes of any shade of blue to come to one side of the space. The participants with any shade of green go to the other side of the space. Randomly assign the participants who have neither or both colors in their clothing to the groups so that both groups have approximately equal numbers of members.

Ask:

- “Besides the colors they are wearing, what differences do you see in the two groups we have created?” (Nothing in particular.)
- “Does one group seem special or better?” (No.)

Say: “Actually, participants in the blue group are superior in intelligence, beauty, strength, and personality and are more deserving of respect and an easier life than the participants in the green group. And so, the participants in the green group are expected to do many tasks to make life better for the participants in the blue group. For example, participants in the green group may not be able to attend school for as long because they need to be home doing work for the participants in the blue group. The blue group has many more hours of leisure (free) time than the green group.”

Optional: Take out a bag of sweets or other treats. Start passing them out to people in the blue group. When each person has one, turn to the green group and say, “Oh, you know what? I have to keep the rest of these in case those in the blue group are still hungry after they eat.”

Ask the participants in the green group:

- “How do you feel about being told you are less deserving of respect based on the color of your clothes?”
- “Is it fair to assign respect and life quality based on the color of your clothes?”
- Optional: “Do you think you deserve to have a sweet as well? Why?”

Ask the participants in the blue group:

- “How do you feel about being told you are more deserving of respect based on the color of your clothes? Is it fair?”
- “How did it feel when you saw green group participants being treated differently than you?”
- Optional: “Do you want to share your sweets with them? Why or why not?”

Optional: Allow the participants to share the sweets if they wish. Then pass out the remaining sweets so everyone has one.

Reaffirm that everyone present is equal! Everyone may sit down.

Part II

Introduce the word “power.” Ask participants to explain in one word what they understand by this term. Write down or remember all responses and summarize the ideas for the group. (Power is the ability to influence or control events and people.)

Say: “There are many groups of people in our society, and some of them have more power than others.”

Optional: If you have a board, write the word “power” on the top, then divide it in half with one side labelled ‘more power’ and the other side labelled ‘less power.’ Fill in the following categories as you go through them.

Ask: “Who is more powerful, rich people or poor people?
Who is more powerful, bosses or workers?”

Continue to go through the below categories that make sense for your context. If there are specific ethnic, religious, or other groups with different power in your context, you can name them. After a few, ask participants if they have suggestions for groups to add.

- Rich people / Poor people
- Boss / Worker
- Men / Women
- Politician or government official / Community member
- Heterosexual / Homosexual
- Citizen / Non-citizen
- People without disabilities / People with disabilities
- Majority ethnic groups / Minority ethnic groups
- Majority religious groups / Minority religious groups
- Teacher / Student
- Older / Younger
- Fathers / Mothers
- Brothers / Sisters
- Urban / rural

Say: “Power is not negative or positive in itself. It helps or harms depending upon the way it is used or misused. If power is used positively, everyone benefits. If power is used negatively, it violates the rights of the people against whom it is used.”

“Can anyone give an example of how power can be used positively?” (Men working to protect women from physical harm; wealthy people giving to poor people; older child teaching a younger child; a leader listening to people’s concerns and addressing them; people from majority groups working to include those from minority groups or standing up for their rights, etc.)

“Can anyone give an example of how power can be used negatively?” (Corruption by political leaders; a man hitting a woman; the abuse of children; heterosexual people making fun of homosexual people; a boss who demands long hours from workers without paying; the exclusion of people with disabilities from setting public priorities, etc.)

“I want you to think about an ideal world, a world where everything happens as it should. In this world, imagine any two people, one more powerful and the other less powerful. Perhaps they work together, are in the same class, or are neighbors. In the ideal world, do you think they should have the same responsibilities towards each other? Should the one with less power have some responsibility to help or take care of the one with more power? Should the one with more power have some responsibility to help or take care of the one with less power?”

Ask the participants to break into groups of four or five. Tell them to choose one of the pairs from the list of groups with different levels of power, and to discuss how, in an ideal society, the two groups would treat each other.

Give them around ten minutes for discussion. When they are finished, ask if any of the groups would like to share their conclusions.

Closing

Say: “In the coming days, notice how people around you interact with each other, and how their behaviors are affected by differences in power. Ask yourself, what might you be able to do in your own daily life to promote greater equality between people?”



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to reflect on strengths or powers they have, and how they can use that to help others who do not have the same power. What can they do when they see someone who does not have power being treated poorly?

Sex and gender

Competencies

Gender and power awareness

Duration

60-75 minutes

Materials

Large sheets of paper and pens/pencils/markers, or a chalkboard/whiteboard. If this is not possible, have a notebook where you can take notes from the discussion to refer to in the session.

Preparation

Prepare the drawings of a man and a woman. Think of some of the common expectations of how men and women behave or gender norms in the local community. If possible, write the questions for small group discussions on a board or sheet of paper so that you are ready.

Adapted from or informed by

International Center for Research on Women and CARE. *Inner Spaces Outer Faces Initiative Toolkit: Tools for learning and action on gender and sexuality.* https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/MH-2008-ISOFI-Toolkit_2008.pdf.

CARE USA. *Facilitator's Manual for Girls' Collectives: CARE's Tipping Point Phase 2, Bangladesh.* https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Tipping-Point-Girls-Manual_Bangladesh.pdf.

Objective

Participants will understand the difference between sex and gender and that gender is socially defined and therefore able to change.

Best fit and adaptations

This activity is good for all age groups, although it may raise sensitive topics and they must be handled appropriately. Depending on the age of participants or if participants reside in very conservative communities, it is okay to avoid naming private body parts, but other biological traits must be included for both men and women: pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, mustache, chest hair, Adam's apple, etc.

Instructions

Hang up two large sheets of paper or divide a chalkboard into two parts. On one, draw an outline of a woman. On the other, draw an outline of a man.

Ask participants to think about the first words that come to mind when they hear the word "man." Write down responses from the group inside the drawing of a man. This is an example of the kind of list that participants might come up with:

MAN

Father

Police

Money maker

Moustache

Power

Strength

Freedom

Businessman

Penis

Testicles

Selfish

Dominant

Loud
Protector
Drinks alcohol
Decision-maker
Violence
Unfaithful
Husband
Beard

Repeat the process with the drawing of a woman: Ask participants to think about the first words that come to mind when they hear the word “woman.” Write down responses from the group inside the drawing of a man. This is an example of the kind of list that participants might come up with:

WOMAN

Gentle
Passive
Kind-hearted
Menstruation
Pregnancy
Childbirth
Housekeeper
Passive
Obedient
Vagina
Doesn't drink heavily or smoke
Cooking
Talkative
Shopping
Mother
Wife
Breasts
Gossip
Beautiful
Jealous
Uterus

Make sure that, at a minimum, some words describing biological traits (such as “penis” or “beard” for man and “breast” or “menstruation” for woman) come up on the list. Biological words are bolded in the list above. You can ask, “What about different body parts?” Also make sure that some words are about the roles of men and women. You can ask, “What about the work that men and women do?”

Discussion

When the lists are complete, ask participants if any of the roles and traits can be reversed. For example:

1. Can any of the “man” words also describe women? Can any of the “woman” words also describe men? What are the things that women or men can do exclusively?
2. For example, can a woman be a police officer? Powerful? Strong? Earn money? Unfaithful? Can women drink? Can a woman have a penis? Are girls born with the ability to cook?
3. Can the “woman” words also describe some men? Can a man cook? Be gentle? Submissive? Beautiful? Have breasts? Gossip? Menstruate? Give birth? Can a man be obedient? If men are capable of cooking and shopping, why don't more men do the cooking and shopping for their households? Why do some men who have jobs as cooks not do the cooking for their families?

During the discussion, circle the words that cannot be changed—the biological traits—in one color pen, or mark them in another way. Circle the words that could describe a man or a woman—the cultural and social traits, emotions, behaviors, and roles—in another color pen, or mark them in a way different

from the biological words. If you do not have different colors of pens/markers, one option is to put an *asterisk* next to the biological traits.

Say: “Now we have two groups of words. How would you describe the difference between these two groups, other than that one group could apply to women or men and the other group could not?” (One is biological and the other is cultural or social.)

If no one says it, add, “These lists illustrate the difference between sex and gender.”

Say: “Sex refers to the biological characteristics that define humans as female or male. Gender refers to the economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female. Both women and men can carry out multiple roles, but gender stereotypes, norms and values shape how we think about what women and men are supposed to be like and what they are capable of doing.”

Give one or two examples of common gender values, norms and stereotypes in the community, such as: girls should be obedient and should not have strong opinions; boys are expected to be brave and not cry. Girls are poor at or unsuited for subjects like mathematics and science, and boys are more competent at and better suited for these subjects. Women are better housekeepers and men are better leaders. Women are too emotional to make big decisions, while men can make tough decisions and are suited for public life. You can also ask participants for suggestions.

Say: “All of these are social expectations which have little to do with the biological differences between men and women. Traditional gender norms tend to limit the opportunities for people to reach their potential. Generally, gender undervalues women and girls in society, but both men and women would benefit from a new way of thinking that does not limit what people can and cannot do. For example, most men and boys would not want to be ridiculed for crying, and they might enjoy doing jobs that only women do.”

Ask the participants in break into small groups of 3-4 people. If participants are more than one gender, you can separate them into same-gender groups or mix them, depending on the local culture.

Present the below questions on the board or a large piece of paper.

Say: “In your small groups, discuss the following:

- What are some examples of expectations of men and women in your community? That is, are women and men supposed to behave differently? Are there things that men and boys can do that women and girls cannot? Are there things that women and girls can do that men and boys cannot?
- Which of those things are because men and women have different biology? Which ones are not because of biology, but because of the culture or society?
- How do different gender expectations and norms affect young people’s opportunities? Remember that sex is about biology and gender is about culture and society. Are there ways that gender expectations hold you or your peers back?”

Give the groups at least 15 minutes for their discussions. Then ask them to select a speaker to share their answers to the questions with the large group. If someone confuses sex and gender, gently ask the larger group if they agree and then ensure that the misunderstanding is corrected. When all the groups have shared, congratulate the participants on their thoughtful contributions.



Literacy adaptation: If groups have limited literacy, instead of asking each group to answer all three questions, the facilitator can assign one question to each group. Remembering one question, instead of three, is easier when you do not have a paper to read and remind you of the questions. If this strategy is used, adapt the second question to instead say, “What norms or expectations of men and women in your community are because they have different biology? Which ones are not because of biology, but because of the culture or society?”

Closing

Say: “The good news is that gender expectations (and stereotypes) can change to become more fair for everyone. In the coming days, notice the biological roles and social roles you and others around you play in your daily lives. Practice “seeing” gender in the world. If possible, talk to an elder about how the role of girls has changed since they were young and think about how much gender norms can change over time.”



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to keep notes about gender norms/traditions and biological/sex characteristics they see in their homes and community. If they see gender expectations limiting the options available for people, encourage them to brainstorm strategies for opening up people’s options.

Where do you stand?

Competencies

Gender and power awareness (Critical thinking)

Duration

20-60 minutes, depending on how many statements are used

Materials

Signs that say:

1. “Agree”, OR a picture of thumbs up, OR a large checkmark
2. “Disagree”, OR a picture of thumbs down, OR a large X
3. “Don’t know”, OR a picture of thumbs to the side, OR a large question mark (?)

Preparation

Hang the three signs or place them on the ground so that each one is in a different area of the space. Review and select the statements that you will use, or write new statements according to your context, participants, and program.

Adapted from or informed by

Breakthrough and UNICEF. *Training Toolkit: Life Skills Curriculum for Empowering Adolescent Boys and Girls and Training Module for Adolescent Girls: Addressing Child Marriage, Sexual Harassment, and Violence*. <https://inbreakthrough.org/tool-kits/>.

CARE USA. *Facilitator’s Manual for Structured Allyship for Girl-Led Activism: CARE’s Tipping Point Phase 2, Bangladesh and Nepal*. https://caretippingpoint.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/FM_Boys_Parents_Activists_with-citation.pdf

International Center for Research on Women and CARE. *Inner Spaces Outer Faces Initiative Toolkit: Tools for learning and action on gender and sexuality*. https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/MH-2008-ISOFI-Toolkit_2008.pdf.

Government of Sierra Leone, Ministry of Health and Sanitation, National Secretariat for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy. *I Am Somebody: National Life Skills Manual for Children 9-13 Years Old* and *I Am Somebody: National Life Skills Manual for Children 14+ Years Old*.

CARE International (2018). *A Guide for the Formation and Training of Youth Savings and Loans Associations (YSLAs)*. <https://care.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/YSLA-Training-manual-April-2018-revised.pdf>.

Objective

For participants to reflect on their personal attitudes and values around various topics including gender and sexuality.

Best fit and adaptations

Example statements are grouped by age group and topic. You can also write statements on other topics according to the instructions.

In contexts where young people are not routinely encouraged to express their own opinions, participants might start very slowly or prefer to answer, “Don’t know” to every statement. You may need to allow more time in the session and be more deliberate about appreciating each participant’s point of view.

Instructions

Note: The statements below are examples. You can choose a few or add more depending on how much time is available or insert others that are more appropriate to your context or your program.

Statements should reflect values, opinions, and ideas about what is good or bad, or what is most important. That is, it should be the kinds of things that people can disagree on. This activity is a way for people to clarify what they believe and what they value, and to practice thinking in different ways. When someone expresses an opinion that values people differently based on their gender, or that reflects beliefs that may not serve them well in their lives, ask those with a different viewpoint to respond to the person, and to do so respectfully. Do not suggest that their opinions are right or wrong. Your job is to help them think about why they have those opinions and facilitate respectful discussion of differences.

Point out the three signs that you have placed around the space. Read out one of the following statements and ask participants to respond by moving closest to the sign that corresponds with their opinion. Explain to everyone that there are no right or wrong answers. Move through the questions slowly.



Inclusion adaptation: To make the activity inclusive for those with limited mobility, the facilitator may 1) allow that person to help facilitate the activity by asking the questions, 2) help the participant move to each response space, and/or 3) allow the participant to remain where they are and incorporate their responses into the discussions about 'why'. If option 3 is selected, the facilitator may want to give the respondent their own answer cards to raise.

After you read a statement and the participants have "taken a stand" by going to the different areas, ask one or two people in each area why they made their choices. Allow some time for debate between people. People can change their position if they are convinced by others.

Example statements for ages 10-14 or older on gender

- In a family, it is more important for the boys to go to school than the girls.
- A man who cries is not strong.
- Girls and young women should not go to school when they are menstruating.
- In a family, making money should be the man's job.
- Having a son is better than having a daughter.
- In a family, if the mother and father disagree, the father gets to make the final decision.
- Married or pregnant girls should be allowed to continue schooling.
- Starting menstruation means you are ready to marry.
- If a girl gets sexually harassed, she is the one to blame.
- Girl children should have all the same rights as boy children.
- Girls who wait too long to marry become unattractive as wives.
- Boys are natural leaders and smarter than girls.

Example statements for ages 10-14 or older on other social values

- Adolescents who have talents, such as acting or singing, are better than those without special abilities.
- It is never okay to pay a bribe, even if it is small.
- It is okay to make fun of someone if others are doing so.
- It is better to try and fail than cheat and get good grades.
- You can earn a decent salary without finishing school.
- If I had to choose between getting an education or getting a car, I would choose a car.
- Wealth shows the world that you are important, you matter.

Example statements for 14-24 on gender and sexuality

- Since the woman gets pregnant, it should be her responsibility to use contraception.
- Any time a husband wants sex with his wife, she should submit.
- You should only have sex with someone you truly love.
- Girls and women enjoy sex as much as boys and men.
- Any sexually active girl, no matter how young she is, should be able to get contraceptives.

- A girl who dresses in sexy clothing is asking to be raped.
- It's natural for men to need more than one woman for sex.
- Waiting to have sexual intercourse until you are married is a good idea.
- I would be outraged if my wife/husband/partner wanted to use a condom.
- Abortion should be legal to make it safe.
- There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten.
- A man should have the final word about decisions in his home.
- Bride price or dowry makes it seem like women are men's property.
- It is okay for an older man to marry a girl under age 18 if he takes good care of her.

Example statements for all ages on money

- Money brings security.
- Young people buy things to fit in with their friends.
- Wanting to be rich is a worthwhile goal.
- A woman should not earn more money than her husband.
- People buy more stuff than they really need.
- Borrowing money is not a good idea.
- Money does not bring happiness.
- Money changes people.
- The more money you have, the more you want.
- People who are rich should help those who are less well-off.
- Money can solve all problems.
- Women/girls are better at managing money.

Discussion

1. Why do you think we did this activity? (To better understand ourselves and to consider other points of view)
2. Was it hard to express disagreement with another person's viewpoints? Why or why not?
3. Were there times when you were influenced by others' opinions?
4. Were you surprised by other people's opinions?
5. What did you learn through this exercise?

Closing

Say: "Thank you for your honesty and willingness to open your minds to different ways of thinking. Understanding ourselves and what we believe is an ongoing process. It is normal to re-evaluate our attitudes as we grow and mature, and as we gather new knowledge and experiences. In the coming days, share with others some of the viewpoints that came out today and listen to their own opinions."



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to select a statement, like the ones that we used in today's activity, and to draw two columns. In one column, they should write why they agree with the statement. In the other column, they should write why they disagree with the statement. The practices of 1) articulating why you believe is important, as is 2) understanding the thinking processes for the side that you do not agree with, are important as young people navigate decisions in their lives.

Pros and cons

Competencies

Decision making

Duration

30-40 minutes

Materials

Board and writing utensil. If not available, gather around 40 small stones, bottle caps, beans, or another kind of item, and find a place on the ground where you can draw.

Preparation

Review the “Selecting a topic” section and know what topic you will use to teach the method. Several examples are given, but you can apply the method to any decision with more than one acceptable option.

Adapted from or informed by

CARE International (2018). *A Guide for the Formation and Training of Youth Savings and Loans Associations (YSLAs)*. <https://care.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/YSLA-Training-manual-April-2018-revised.pdf>.

CARE USA. *Facilitator's Manual for Girls' Collectives: CARE's Tipping Point Phase 2, Bangladesh*. <https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Tipping-Point-Girls-Manual-Bangladesh.pdf>.

Microfinance Opportunities, Population Council, and MicroSave Consulting, Ltd. *Young Women: Your Future, Your Money Workbook, Ages 15-19*. https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/departments_sbsr-pgy/577/

Objective

Participants will know a method of decision making for when there is more than one acceptable choice

Best fit and adaptations

This activity is very flexible and can be adapted for any age group and any sector. However, the examples involving work outside the home for money are only appropriate for adolescents and young adults who have reached the legal age to work in their contexts. In addition, for very young adolescents (ages 12 and younger), start with only one option and go through the process more than once. There are additional notes in the instructions for participants with limited literacy.

Instructions

Say: “Some choices in life are simple. Do you jump into a large body of water when you don’t know how to swim, or do you stay safe on dry land? Of course, you choose to stay on land. Other choices are between options that are all or mostly good. When that is the case, you can set up your thinking so that you compare the positive and negative parts of each option. Weighing the pros and cons helps you make a wise decision, the decision that is right for you.”

Draw the following table on the board or a large piece of paper. Use your choice of words for ‘pros’ and ‘cons’: advantages/disadvantages, positives/negatives, pluses/minuses, etc.



Literacy adaptation: If participants have limited literacy, draw two boxes for each option, one with a happy face and the other with a sad face. If you do not have a board or paper, draw the boxes with faces on the ground.

Pros and cons table

Option 1		Option 2	
Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons

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Selecting a topic

Depending on your program and the participants, select a decision-making topic with at least two good options. The options should all be acceptable, safe choices for people like your participants within your setting. Do not, for example, conduct this activity on the topic of whether or not to consume illegal drugs.

There are several examples and ideas below that might fit your program, but choose something that is relevant for your participants and has options that are truly available to them (for example, do not include wage employment if there are no jobs available to the participants). Also, some of the examples assume that participants are already familiar with concepts such as savings, menstrual hygiene, wage employment, etc., or that they understand certain facts about the options available.

For any topic, you will lead the group in naming all the options someone in their community could choose. Then, select two or three of the options and enter them in the pros and cons table.



Literacy adaptation: If you are using the simplified boxes with happy and sad faces, either draw a symbol for each of the options or number the boxes and remind the group frequently which box is for which option.

Next, you lead the group through listing the pros and cons of Option 1, then the pros and cons of Option 2, by taking their ideas. Do additional options if there is enough time or if participants need more practice.



Literacy adaptation: If you are using the simplified boxes with happy and sad faces, make a mark or place a stone (or bean or other item) for each pro and con in the corresponding box. If something is a very strong pro or con, you can put an asterisk next to it or add extra marks or stones.

When those steps are complete for each of the options, ask the group to look at the list or add up the stones in each box. Point out that the option with the most positives and the least negatives is not necessarily the best option, because some pros and some cons are more important than others.

Discussion

1. What do you think is the best option after our analysis? Why?
2. Is your choice completely clear, or do you need to gather more information before choosing?
3. Do you think that your choice is the best choice for everyone, or do you think different people might come to a different conclusion?

Closing

Say: “Looking at pros and cons is a great way to organize your thoughts about a decision you need to make. It is a method you can use for almost any kind of decision. I encourage you to share this method with at least one other person in your life who faces a choice.”



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to practice making pro/con lists for decisions they have to make. These may include simple decisions or more complex decisions; what is important is to practice the critical thinking process.

Example 1: Comparing savings mechanisms available in the community

Ask the participants to list ways in which people save money in their community, especially young women and men. These might include savings with banks, microfinance institutions, savings and loan groups, savings in cash, and savings in kind (in assets such as silver, livestock, land).

Some of the characteristics to consider when choosing a savings product are:

- Access
- Convenience and ease of use
- Opening deposit requirements
- Safety
- Interest earned on savings

The following table compares saving money individually versus saving in a group.

Saving individually		Saving in a group	
Advantages	Disadvantages	Advantages	Disadvantages
Savings always available to you	Higher risk of theft when stored in home	Group peer pressure encourages people to save	Loss of savings if members do not repay loans
Your contributions are private	May be tempted to spend the money	Savings held by the association are safer from theft	Division of losses among members
Growing your savings does not depend on others	Others may pressure you to help them with the money	Limits individual misuse of money	Savings may not be available when wanted
	May take longer to reach a goal	Savings earn interest and increase in value	Conflicts between members are possible

Example 2: Forms of employment available to participants

Ask participants what kinds of employment are available in their community based on how one is paid. This might just be wage employment and self-employment, but in some communities, there may be other forms, such as contract work or franchising. If participants start naming various jobs (such as vendor, factory worker, sewer, etc.), point out which are wage employment and which are self-employment.

Some things to consider when choosing what kind of employment is best for you:

- Control of the conditions and how the work is done
- Experience, training, or qualifications
- Flexibility in your schedule
- Need for regular income

The following table compares wage employment and self-employment.

Self-employment		Wage employment	
Positives	Negatives	Positives	Negatives
Can set your own schedule	Have to work many hours	Income is predictable	Cannot set your own schedule
May not need a qualification	Income varies but expenses are constant	May require a certain level of training or education	You do not control the work conditions
You are your own boss	May need money to start a business	Work with others and may make friends	Must be timely arriving for work
You do work that you choose	You are responsible for everything	Less stressful because you leave the work at the end of the day	Little decision making power

Example 3: Comparing different types of menstrual pads

Ask participants what kinds of menstrual hygiene products are available in their community. These might include manufactured pads or tampons bought at the shop, pieces of cloth, reusable cloth pads, or natural materials like leaves or straw. Ask them if they have ever thought about what kind would be best for them.

Some of the things to consider when selecting a menstrual hygiene management method:

- Cost
- Cleanliness
- Ease of use when outside the home
- Comfort
- Disposal

The following table compares store-bought single use pads with reusable cloth pads.

Store-bought single use pads		Reusable cloth pads	
Pluses	Minuses	Pluses	Minuses
Very hygienic	Expensive because they are only used once	Inexpensive over time because they are used over and over	Requires good washing to stay clean
Stays in place with underwear	Requires good waste management system in the community	Can be made yourself out of scraps	May be embarrassing to hang them to dry in public
Good for short times when you need a new pad but do not have another pad already washed and dried; easily accessible in areas without adequate clean water for washing reusable pads.	Not available everywhere	Making them can be a source of income	May not always stay in place

Other ideas:

Choosing an educational path – Options for post-secondary education or alternative learning programs after leaving formal education

What kind of small enterprise to establish – Comparing options of what to buy and sell

Agricultural planting – Considering what crop to plant in the next season

When to marry – Reflecting on how long to delay marriage or whether to marry

Key messages in activism – Selecting a focus area or message for a public campaign

Personal choices

Competencies

Decision making

Duration

Part I: 40 minutes

Part II: 30-45 minutes

Materials

Chalkboard, whiteboard, or another place to write. If this is not available, allow extra time for the group to learn the five questions by memory.

Preparation

Review the stories and modify one as needed to make it reflect the local community. Alternatively, create your own story that presents a young person facing a difficult choice that will have consequences and test their values.

Adapted from or informed by

Government of Sierra Leone, Ministry of Health and Sanitation, National Secretariat for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy. *I Am Somebody: National Life Skills Manual for Children 9-13 Years Old* and *I Am Somebody: National Life Skills Manual for Children 14+ Years Old*.

CARE International in Zimbabwe (2017). *IGATE Adolescent Development Model Manual and Tool Kit*.

Objective

To build participants' skills in good decision making

Best fit and adaptations

Story A is best for younger adolescents (aged 10-14).

Story B can work with any age group but may be better for older adolescents (aged 15-19) and young adults (aged 20-24) who are mature enough to understand that not everything is all good or all bad.

Story C is appropriate for settings in which girls and young women engage in transactional sex. Each facilitator may select the story/stories most appropriate for their context and the goals of the project activities.

If any participants have limited literacy, see the suggested modifications in the instructions.

Instructions

Ask participants the following questions:

1. What is a decision? (A decision is a choice that we make between two or more possible courses of action.)
2. When was the last time you made a decision? (We make decisions every day, although mostly small decisions.)
3. Why is it important to make wise decisions? (To avoid harming others, to stay safe, to live in line with our values.)

Say: "How are good decisions made? There are steps you can take to go through a decision-making process and come to the best course of action."

Part I

"To make a good decision, ask yourself these questions."

Write these on the board. To make it more active, count the questions off on your fingers and have the group practice counting from one to five while repeating the questions.



Literacy adaptation: If participants have limited literacy, spend more time repeating the five questions with the group until they can recall them.

1. What are my options? Think of possible courses of action to take in the situation.
2. What could happen? Think about the possible consequences or outcomes of each course of action, the good and the bad. Think about the ways in which your decision may affect other people. Think about what is risky and what is safe.
3. What do I need to know? Get more information about the situation, your options, or the consequences. It could be important to know what other people in your life think. It might be important to understand why other people in the situation are acting the way they are. Or, it could help to talk to someone who knows more about the problem or possible solutions than you do.
4. What is important to me? Think about your personal and family values and which courses of action are consistent with these values. Think about your goals for now and for the future.
5. What do I do? Choose the decision that seems best based on your knowledge, values, and goals.



Literacy adaptation: For participants with limited literacy, it may be helpful to help participants remember the key words for each question: options, happen, know, important, and do. By remembering their key word, they may have an easier time remembering the full question. Another strategy can be to create an ‘acrostic’ or sentence using the first letter of each word you want to remember. For example,

Original word	First letter of that word	Funny or easy sentence using words that start with the first letter
Options	O	One
Happen	H	Happy
Know	K	Kitten
Important	I	Is
Do	D	Dancing

It may be easier for someone to remember the sentence “One Happy Kitten Is Dancing” than it is to remember Options, Happen, Know, Important, and Do. If they can remember One Happy Kitten Is Dancing, hopefully it will trigger their memory about the key words and then questions to ask when making a choice; below is the way of working backward from the easy sentence.

Funny or easy sentence using words that start with the first letter	First letter of that word	Original word	Questions to Remember
One	O	Options	What are my options?
Happy	H	Happen	What could happen?
Kitten	K	Know	What do I need to know?
Is	I	Important	What is important to me?
Dancing	D	Do	What do I do?

For all participants, read one or more of the following scenarios to the group, or another scenario you come up with that the participants will be able to relate to (to imagine themselves in). Modify the story’s details if needed to make it better reflect the participants’ community. After reading it, lead a group discussion through the decision-making questions above. Possible answers are provided here for each story, but these are not the only correct answers.

Story A: Joseph has joined a group of children who weave baskets and mats. They sell at a market and sometimes on the street. One of the other boys in the group, Kunte, comes over to Joseph. He tells Joseph he knows how to make even more money. He wants Joseph to distract a customer while Kunte picks his pocket (steals from him). He tells Joseph not to tell the other children.

What are my options? Joseph could distract the customer while Kunte steals from him. Or he could tell Kunte no, he is not going to do it. Is there a third option?

What could happen?

If he says yes to Kunte:

- a. Joseph gets caught and is sent to a children's home
- b. Joseph is thrown out of the weaving group and loses income from weaving
- c. The weaving group is banned from the market
- c. His family punishes him or is ashamed of him

If he says no to Kunte:

- a. Kunte bullies him and tells other children he is afraid
- b. Kunte may not want to be his friend anymore

What do I need to know? Joseph might want to know if Kunte will still be his friend if he says no. He might ask the group leader what happens if someone is caught stealing.

What is important to me? How does Joseph feel about stealing? Is it wrong or is it okay sometimes?

What do I do? What should Joseph do?

Story B: Flora is 12 years old and lives with her uncle and aunt and their children. Her uncle is a taxi driver, and her aunt is not too happy that Flora lives with them. One day, Flora's uncle asked Flora to buy kerosene (petrol, fuel, gas) for the family. Her uncle said it was important because they would run out today, and the family needed some light tonight. But then, her uncle forgot to leave money for Flora to buy the kerosene. Flora did not know what to do. She knew where her auntie kept some money in a money box. But her auntie was not at home and would not be home until late in the afternoon. Flora could use money from the box to buy the kerosene.

What are my options? Flora could take money from her aunt's box and go buy the kerosene, or she could wait until her aunt gets home. Is there a third option?

What could happen?

If Flora takes money and buys the kerosene:

- a. Her auntie becomes angry with her.
- b. Her auntie decides Flora cannot live with them anymore.
- c. The family has light that evening for the household activities and children doing homework.

If Flora waits for her auntie to get home:

- a. The family does not have light that evening.
- b. Her uncle becomes angry with her.
- c.

What do I need to know? Flora might ask around and see if there's a vendor who could sell her kerosene in the late afternoon or early evening, after her auntie gets home. She could ask other family members if they think her auntie would make her leave the home if she takes the money. She could ask a neighbor if they can lend some kerosene for that night so that Flora can ask her auntie for the money and buy it tomorrow.

What is important to me? What does Flora think is the right thing to do in this situation? Is it wrong to take money from someone when you know the money will be replaced?

What do I do? What should Flora do?

Story C: Lida is 19 years old, and her parents have died. So, she has to take care of her three sisters and two brothers. She is in secondary school and wants to sit for the exams, but she doesn't have money for the fees. She needs all the money she has to take care of her sisters and brothers. There is an older man who runs the supermarket in town, and he tells Lida that he wants her to be his girlfriend. He says he will pay for her exam fees and for her family's needs. She doesn't like him at all.

What are my options? Lida can go with the older man as his girlfriend and let him pay for her school exams

and family needs. Or, she can say no. Is there a third option?

What could happen?

If Lida goes with the man:

- a. She could sit for her exams and maybe continue her education.
- b. She could take care of her brothers and sisters.
- c. She could get HIV or another infection from the man.
- d. She could become pregnant and have to take care of another person.

If Lida does not go with the man:

- a. She will not risk her health.
- b. She may not be able to take her exams and will leave school.
- c. She could look for other ways to pay her school fees or get help for her brothers and sisters.

What do I need to know? If Lida cannot take her exams now, will she be able to later? Lida might search for an NGO, faith community, social workers, or child protection committees who could help her pay her fees and take care of her family. She could also find out if there are any savings groups or financial services that lend money to people like her. She could ask the PTA or SMC if they offer scholarships for students who do not have money for exam fees. She might ask neighbors about the older man and see if he has many other girlfriends and if he is trustworthy.

What is important to me? Lida should be proud of taking care of her brothers and sisters and continuing in school. She is clearly a hard worker and takes responsibility seriously. Will she lose respect for herself (feel bad about herself) if she goes with the older man? Will it set an example for her younger siblings?

What do I do? What should Lida do?

Part II

Pass out pieces of paper and writing utensils. Ask the participants to write down a serious decision that they or their friends are currently facing. The decision can be about anything – school, a job, a family situation, a romance, or anything else. Instruct them to choose a decision where the consequences really matter. Assure them that what they write will remain confidential.

Collect the papers in a basket or hat. Read them quickly to yourself silently and choose five or six that are tough decisions. Write them on the board or read them to the group. If what is written can be used to identify the writer, change it accordingly to maintain confidentiality or select another option.

Divide participants into groups of around four. Assign each group one of the situations from the list on the board. Ask them to go through the five questions and make a decision together. Allow at least 15 minutes.



Literacy adaptation: If any participants have limited literacy, instead of collecting stories on paper, form the small groups and instruct them to share decisions they or their friends are facing with each other and choose one to focus on. Encourage participants to only share what they are comfortable with, and their peers should not share what others have mentioned outside that small group, unless someone is in danger; in this case, they should tell their teacher, facilitator, or another trusted adult.

When they are finished, invite a representative from each group to share their discussion with the whole group, going through each of the five questions. After each has presented, close with a brief full group discussion using the questions below.

Discussion

1. Do certain consequences warn you right away to choose something else? If so, what are they? (risk to someone's health or life, a risk of going to jail, a risk of losing your integrity, hurting someone you care about)
2. What negative consequences relate to a person's feelings or values? (guilt about choosing something against your values, your parents, religion, traditions, culture, or friends; feeling used or exploited, being taken advantage of; sadness over losing important relationships)

3. If you were facing a tough situation and were not sure what decision to make, who could you ask for help? (friend who has gone through a similar decision, older siblings or cousins, teacher, school counsellor, religious leader, parent or other trusted adult).
 - Note: facilitators should offer a list of safe community-based resources where participants can seek help, if they do not have support at home. This may include teachers, community health workers, police, a religious leader, etc.

Closing

Say: “In the coming days, practice using the five questions when you make a decision. Share with others in the group how well they work for you and whether you would add or remove steps.”



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to write down the 5 questions to ask when making a decision. They can practice selecting a decision they are facing, and going through the five question thought process to help come up with a decision. This may be the same issue(s) selected in the “Pros and cons” list from the last activity.

Lowering your risk

Competencies

Decision making (Well-being)

Duration

45-60 minutes

Materials

Optional: Printed copies of the stories selected in advance.

Preparation

Review the stories here and adapt the one or ones appropriate for your participants, your setting, and your program. If none are a good fit, write a new story about a young person making a decision about something that is somewhat risky but not very risky, not illegal, and not dangerous.

Adapted from or informed by

CARE USA. *Facilitator's Manual for Girls' Collectives: CARE's Tipping Point Phase 2, Bangladesh.* https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Tipping-Point-Girls-Manual_Bangladesh.pdf.

Government of Sierra Leone, Ministry of Health and Sanitation, National Secretariat for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy. *I Am Somebody: National Life Skills Manual for Children 9-13 Years Old* and *I Am Somebody: National Life Skills Manual for Children 14+ Years Old*.

Objective

Participants will understand the concept of risk and how to reduce their risks.

Best fit and adaptations

Story A may be best for younger adolescents (aged 10-14). The other stories can work with other age groups (aged 15-24) and are written to accommodate a variety of program types.

Instructions

Ask for a volunteer to act out a short scene without speaking. Whisper the situation in their ear so the others cannot hear it: A person is driving a motorbike and has an accident. Ask the rest of the group to guess what happened in the scene.

When they have guessed correctly, ask participants the following questions:

1. What happened to this person? (They were driving a motorbike and had an accident.)
2. Why did they get hurt? (Maybe they hit a rock; maybe they are a bad driver; maybe someone got in their way.)
3. Do people always get hurt when they ride a motorbike? (No, not always.)
4. What is risk? (Make sure that answers include that risk is the possibility that something bad will happen.)
5. Why do people keep riding motorbikes if they are risky? (Because they need to get places.)
6. Can taking a risk be healthy sometimes? Can you think of examples? (Raising your hand in class when your answer might be wrong; trying something new, like a sport or theatre; applying for a job that you might not get; telling someone that you care about them; posting your art in a public place for others to see; asking for help; volunteering to act out a scene of someone on a motorbike having an accident.)

Say: "Some things feel risky because we might get embarrassed, we might not be good at something, people might reject us. But some risks are healthy because we can learn new things, make new friends, and grow more confident."

"Other things are very risky (such as drinking alcohol, having unsafe sex, using substances to get high – you can mention whatever is common in your setting). Those are things we should stay away from."

“Part of getting older and smarter is making good judgments about what things are too risky, what things feel risky but are actually good for us, and what things are acceptable risks.”

“What is riskier: driving a motorbike without a helmet or driving a motorbike with a helmet?”

“Wearing a helmet is less risky because it protects your head if you have an accident. Wearing a helmet is an example of risk reduction, of lowering your risk. Your chances of being hurt in an accident are lower when you wear a helmet. Are there other ways our motorbike driver could have lowered the risk of a bad accident?” (They could drive slowly, avoid pitted roads, keep the headlight on, use the horn, practice driving on a safe road.)

Have the participants form groups of four to six people. Select a scenario for each group or give all groups the same scenario, depending on what is most appropriate for the participants and your program. Have the groups discuss the stories and the questions that follow.



Literacy adaptation: If participants have limited literacy or you are not able to print the stories, read the stories and questions aloud to each group.

Story A (safety awareness): There is a new boy at school that Fatima thinks is cute, but she doesn't really know him. One day, when class is over and she starts to walk home, the boy says something funny that makes her laugh. Then he says he wants to show her something. He points in between two houses and says it is right over there. It is getting dark out and Fatima can't see into the dark space very well. She has to decide if she's going to follow the boy or not, and if she does follow him, how she can lower the possibility that something bad will happen.

1. Are there risks in this situation? What are they? (the boy could rob her; he could assault her; she might trip in the dark; someone might see them and think they were doing inappropriate things)
2. How might Fatima lower her risk in the situation? (bring a friend with her; suggest that he show her in the morning when there is more light; find a torch; ask him to tell her what it is)

Story B (money management): Xoli earns some money helping at a local shop. Xoli's friend asks him if he can borrow some, just until the end of the week. Then he will pay Xoli back. Xoli was going to give the money to his mother to buy medicine for his little brother, but he thinks that there is already enough medicine to last until the end the week, and the shop owner said Xoli can work for him again tomorrow. Xoli has to decide if he will loan the money to his friend, and if he does, how he might lower the possibility that something bad happens.

1. Are there risks in this situation? What are they? (The friend might not pay back the money on time; Xoli might be wrong about how much medicine is left; the shop owner might change his mind.)
2. How might Xoli lower his risk in the situation? (Ask the friend to give him collateral – something that Xoli could easily sell if the loan is not paid back on time; only loan the friend what is left after buying the medicine; ask the shop owner for advance payment on tomorrow's work.)

Story C (sexual and reproductive health): Dolgion has been seeing her boyfriend for about a year. They've never had sex, but her boyfriend asked her to tell him if she wanted to. And lately Dolgion is feeling like she wants to. She talked to her sister about it, who said to think carefully because having sex can change a lot of things. Dolgion's not sure she understands what all those things are. Dolgion has to decide if she is going to have sex with her boyfriend, and if she does, how she might lower the possibility that something bad happens.

1. Are there risks in this situation? What are they? (She could get pregnant; she could get HIV or another infection; people might say bad things about her.)

2. How might Dolgion lower her risk in the situation? (Talk to a counsellor or another trusted adult; insist her boyfriend wear a condom; begin a contraceptive method beforehand; ask her boyfriend not to tell his friends.)

Story D (girls' education activism): Erlangga is part of a group collective that works to make it easier for girls to stay in school through the secondary level. He had a lot of friends leave school in the transition from upper primary to secondary because the high school was far away, and girls didn't feel safe on public transportation. His group wants to pressure the bus drivers to stop letting their passengers harass girls. Erlangga and his group have to decide if they are going to conduct this campaign, and if they do, how they might lower the possibility that something bad happens.

1. Are there risks in this situation? What are they? (Bus drivers might be angry that students are telling them how to behave in public; girls in the group might be targeted for more harassment; family members might try to stop them.)
2. How might Erlangga and his collective lower their risk in the situation? (Gather adult allies for approaching the bus drivers; work with the drivers' union to raise the issue; sit down with families and explain why they feel this is an important issue; have the boys lead any confrontation instead of the girls.)

Discussion

Ask the groups to briefly share the risk reduction strategies they came up with for the stories they were given.

Closing

Tell participants to pay attention over the next several days to the big and the little risks they and people around them take every day. Ask them to notice whether or not people are taking steps to lower their risks and what those steps are.



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, suggest they identify a challenge they face, and practice identifying risks in the options they have available, and brainstorm ways to mitigate the risk. These can be small challenges or large.

Facts, opinions, and bias

Competencies

Critical thinking

Duration

Part I: 25 minutes

Part II: 45 minutes

Part III: 40 minutes

Materials

Optional: Chalkboard, whiteboard, etc.; printed out scenarios from the activity description.

Preparation

Be familiar with the different parts of the activity and select which parts you will do. Also review the scenarios to choose the best ones for your group or create your own scenarios. Print out the scenarios you will use if you are able.

Adapted from or informed by

Population Council. *Life Skills and Health Curriculum for the Adolescent Girls Empowerment Program (AGEP)*. https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/departments_sbsr-pgy/584/.

World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. *Surf Smart 2.0: Generation Digital*. <https://www.waggggs.org/en/resources/surf-smart-20/>.

Objective

Participants can recognize facts, opinions, and bias.

Best fit and adaptations

Part I is most appropriate for younger adolescents (ages 10-14), but it can be used with older groups (aged 15-24) as well and will facilitate understanding the concept of bias that is introduced in Part III.

Parts II and III deal with higher level thinking and are best for older adolescents and young adults (ages 15-24). However, some younger groups, particularly those that spend a lot of time online and are therefore exposed to a variety of information sources, may benefit from them as well.

The parts can be used in separate sessions or one extended activity session.

Instructions

Part I

Say: “Today we are talking about facts and opinions.”

Ask participants the following questions.

- What is a fact? (Facts are what is known to be true.)
- What is an opinion? (Opinions are people’s beliefs, thoughts, and perspectives. Opinions cannot be proven true or false.)
- What are some examples of facts? (If you throw something in the air it falls down, the sky is blue sometimes, there are many kinds of animals, we have school on Mondays, the name of our country is _____, my hair is curly)
- What are some examples of opinions? (Red is a beautiful color, school is fun, goats are the best livestock, math is hard, I don’t like rainy days, she is the best at climbing trees.)

Have participants make a queue across the space, all facing the person in front of them. If there are too many people to fit, break them into two or three parallel lines.

Say: “I’m going to read a statement. If you believe it is a fact, take one step to the right. If you believe it is an opinion, take one step to the left.”



Inclusion adaptation: If there are participants with disabilities that limit their mobility, you can have them all point to the right or left instead of taking a step, or find another modification that works for everyone.

Read each statement, give time for participants to move, and then give the correct answer.

- The sun is hot (fact)
- 5 is a larger number than 3 (fact)
- Cabbage (or a local food) is yummy (opinion)
- Sunday is the day before Monday (fact)
- My favorite season is during school holidays (opinion)
- Roses (or a local flower) smell nicer than any other flower (opinion)
- The ocean has a lot of water (fact)
- I believe that elephants should be protected (opinion)
- Trees grow from the ground (fact)
- Taking care of young children is a lot of work (opinion)
- Water is wet (fact)

Say: “Why is it important to tell the difference between facts and opinions?”

“It is important because sometimes opinions can be used to mislead us, to make us believe things that are not true. We might agree or disagree with someone’s opinion, but we need to recognize it as an opinion to avoid being tricked (manipulated) by other people, advertising, news, or online. For example, when a salesperson says, ‘This is the best soap! No other soap can clean like this one!’, we should know that is an opinion so that we can decide if we agree before we give them our money.”

“It can be difficult sometimes to tell the difference between facts and opinions, but taking a closer look at the language used can help. There are words that tell you that a statement is likely to be an opinion. For example...”

Read each word and then ask participants for an example statement with the word. Examples are also provided here.

Words often used in opinions:
Believe (I believe that kittens are adorable)
Think (We think we are the best team)
Feel (This feels like a good choice)
Best, worst (That boy is the worst behaved)
Favorite (My favorite color is blue)
Should/should not (Girls should not be teachers)

Check that all the participants feel confident in telling the difference between facts and opinions and provide more practice for them as needed.

Part II

Say: “There are facts and there are opinions. But how do you tell if something that sounds like a fact is indeed true? What should you believe? Who should you believe?”

“First, let’s talk about what is being said. When someone presents a statement as a fact, ask yourself if it matches with other information you have about the topic. That gives you an idea of whether it is believable – if it seems like it could be true.”

Optional: Write ‘Is it believable?’ on the board.

Say: “For example, let’s imagine that you speak to your cousin on the phone. You haven’t seen each other for a whole year. He tells you that he has grown more than one meter taller than he was a year ago. Is that believable?” (No. It is not possible for someone to grow that quickly.)

“If someone tells you something that you do not find believable, remember that it isn’t necessarily a lie. Sometimes people have incorrect information, and they may not mean to mislead you. Your cousin might have misspoke or remembered the information wrong.”

“What do you do if you have no knowledge of the topic? How can you tell if something is believable?”

Let participants give ideas. Be sure they include asking others who may know more about the topic.

Say: “Next is who is making the statement. Does anyone know what credible means?” (Credible means trustworthy, when you can trust a person, news source, or other source of information.)

Tell this story (if a wolf and/or sheep is not a familiar animal to your participants, choose a different herd animal and dangerous animal that they know):

“One day, a shepherd boy was bored as he sat on the hillside watching the village’s sheep. To amuse himself, he took a big breath and yelled, ‘Wolf! Wolf! The wolf is chasing the sheep!’ The villagers came running up the hill to help the boy drive the wolf away. But when they arrived at the top of the hill, they found no wolf. The boy laughed at seeing their angry faces. ‘Don’t cry “wolf”, shepherd boy,’ said the villagers, ‘when there’s no wolf!’ They went grumbling back down the hill.”

“Later, the boy did it again, shouting ‘Wolf! Wolf! The wolf is chasing the sheep!’ Again, he watched the villagers run up the hill to help him drive the wolf away. They were even more angry this time. But the boy just grinned and watched them go grumbling down the hill once more.”

“Later, the boy saw a REAL wolf prowling about his flock. Alarmed, he jumped to his feet and cried out, ‘Wolf! Wolf!’ What do you think happened this time?”

“Well, the villagers thought he was trying to fool them again, and so they didn’t come. At sunset, the shepherd boy did not return to the village with their sheep. The villagers went up the hill to find the boy and found him weeping. ‘There really was a wolf here! The flock has scattered! I cried out, “Wolf!” Why didn’t you come?’”

“The reason no one came to help was because the boy was not a credible source. He showed everyone that he was happy to tell lies if it entertained him. Why would anyone trust him again? Nobody believes a liar, even when he is telling the truth.”

Optional: Write ‘Is the source credible?’ on the board.

“The easiest way to know if a source is credible is to know if they have told the truth or not before. What do you do if you do not know the person, or the news source, such as a website or an author, is one you have not seen before?”

Let the participants give their ideas. Be sure they include asking other people who know the person or news source.

Say: “Let’s review. There are two questions to ask yourself when you are judging a statement or a claim that someone makes. These are:

1. Is it believable?
2. Is the source credible?"

Have participants form groups of 3-5.

Say: "Now we're going to practice using these questions. I'll give you a story, and in your group, discuss the following:

- Is what the person or source is claiming believable? Why or why not?
- Is the source of the information or the person credible? Why or why not?
- What actions could you take to help you judge if the person or source is correct or not?"

"There are no right or wrong answers here!"

Select from the scenarios below, or design your own to fit your participants, the context, and your program. Provide the scenarios printed on paper or read them to the groups. You can give each group the same scenario or different ones.

- Nandar has a stall at the market but is thinking of changing from retail sale of goods to wholesale, as a transporter of goods from the border to her town. A man she knows tells her that he can get candy in bulk at a very good price, a price less than half of the lowest price per box that Nandar has ever heard of for that kind of candy. The man says he just needs Nandar to pay to rent the truck to carry the goods, and then they will make a lot of money together.
- Emil is a co-worker of yours. A few months ago, you told him that your radio had broken, and he said he knew everything about radios and would fix it. You brought it to him, and after a few minutes, he said that the radio was too damaged and could not be repaired. Last year, you had fallen in love with someone, and Emil said he was a great musician and would write you a song that you could sing to your new love. He told you for many weeks that he was working on it, but he never did give you a song. Now your grandmother has a medical condition and medicine from the hospital. Emil says he knows more than the doctors, and he recommends a different kind of medicine.
- Graciana is applying to attend a technical training college (or school). She has worked very hard in her studies and wants to continue. She also knows she must have money for tuition before the end of the next month. Her neighbor used to work at the college and has kindly offered to help Graciana complete her application. But the neighbor says that there is no rush because applications are not due until two months from now. Graciana is thinking how strange it is that one has to pay the tuition before applying and being accepted.
- Laurent's wife is pregnant with their first child. He is doing everything he can to help her stay healthy – going to prenatal care with her, buying iron supplements, and serving her first at mealtimes to make sure that she gets the best quality food. The other day he read online, in a social media post from a site he didn't recognize, that pregnant women should not eat eggs. But Laurent knows from his nutrition class that eggs are a good source of protein, and he also knows that pregnant women need to eat a lot of protein.
- Ming loves international football, especially when the World Cup happens. He often sees a weekly newspaper at the store that has headlines like 'Aliens Abduct the Prime Minister' and 'Dinosaur Egg Found, Scientists to Hatch It.' Today it says, 'World Cup Canceled Due to Pandemic.' Ming is upset because he remembers how many big events like the World Cup were canceled due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), but he thought the pandemic was not as bad now.

After groups have finished, invite them to share their discussions. If groups had different scenarios, they (or you) will need to read their scenarios to the whole group first. What did they decide about believability, credibility, and truth in their scenario? What recommendations do they have to the main character in their story?

Part III

Say: "Now let's talk about bias. What is bias?" (Bias is favor towards or against someone or something,

sometimes unfairly, or a positive or negative attitude towards something.)

“Who here has a favorite sports team? (Let them raise their hands or name teams.) So, each one of you is biased towards that team. You like that team more than you like other teams. Do you think your bias for your team affects the way you talk about their games?”

“Imagine there is a big football match between two teams, the Tigers and the Elephants, and everyone is following it. The final score is 3-2, with the Tigers winning. The next day, headlines appear in two different newspapers. I’ll read them and you tell me which team won, and then which team each newspaper likes most.”

- ‘Tigers Deal a Crushing Victory Over the Elephants’ Poor Showing’ (bias for The Tigers/ against The Elephants)
- ‘Tigers Disappoint Viewers with a Slim Win Against a Fierce Opponent’ (bias for The Elephants/ against The Tigers)

“Both headlines give the news that the Tigers beat the Elephants. Neither headline is incorrect or a lie. But there is an opinion hiding in there, too, a different opinion for each newspaper, the opinion that one team is better than the other. That makes the headlines biased. Just like with opinions, you can get a clue that there is bias by looking at the words used. Strong words or words that suggest strong feelings are signs of bias. In our headlines, the words ‘crushing,’ ‘disappoint,’ ‘poor,’ and ‘fierce’ all suggest bias.”

“Bias is like having a fact in your cooking pot and then sprinkling in an opinion like a flavor or spice. You can make the same dish twice and flavor it differently each time, right? The dish you are making is the same dish either way, but it has a different flavor. The flavor is the opinion that gets mixed into a fact.”

“Why is it important to notice bias?” (If you do not see bias when it is there, you can misjudge the information or the situation, or your own opinions can be influenced.)

Optional: Write ‘Is there bias?’ on the board.

Say: “Now we’re going to practice seeing bias. I’ll give you a story, and in your group, discuss the bias in the two statements being made. Answer these questions:

- What is the bias (the hidden opinion) in each example? Is it for something or against something?
- How can you tell that it is biased?
- Can you think of possible reasons why the person or news source might have that bias?”

“There are no right or wrong answers here!”

Select from the scenarios below, or design your own to fit your participants, the context, and your program. Provide the scenarios printed on paper or read them to the groups. You can give each group the same scenario or different ones.

- Last season, Bushra planted melons and did very well with them at market. She is deciding whether to plant them again this season. She reads two different agricultural bulletins. One says, “A heavy beetle infestation threatens to completely destroy melon crops.” The other says, “The Ministry of Agriculture is well prepared to protect melon growers from a possible beetle increase.”
- Sara pays attention to important issues in her community. Tonight, a neighbor comes to her home to tell her that, “The community council decided to build a new expensive and complicated system of boreholes that’s going to give us filthy water and poverty from sky-high costs.” Then Sara sees another neighbor who says, “They announced that they are going to

replace our rundown, worthless gravity-fed water system with professionally drilled wells that go right to the pure, fresh water under the ground.”

- Khadijah has been looking for a job that she can do on the weekends. A new factory has just finished being constructed, and she hopes that she can get work there. She goes to the neighborhood notice board to find out what jobs might be available. One poster there reads, “Positions now open with high flexibility in hours worked, with fantastic benefits and very friendly management!” Another poster says, “There are jobs at the new factory for anyone who will accept low pay and long hours with managers who watch your every move!”
- Your aunt and uncle opened a new restaurant. They want to know what people are saying about it online so that they can improve their service. But they don’t use the internet very much and don’t know how to find news sites on area businesses. You offer to do it for them. You read the following announcements: “A beautiful new restaurant serving all kinds of delicious noodle dishes at very reasonable prices!” “There’s a new restaurant where you can have overpriced regular noodles.”

After groups have finished, invite them to share their discussions. If groups had different scenarios, they (or you) will need to read their scenarios to the whole group first.

Closing (modify to fit the parts of the activity the group completed)

Say: “Over the coming days, practice identifying facts, opinions, and biases. As you do so, think about how your awareness of whether something is a fact or an opinion or whether it is biased changes the way you understand it. Share your observations during the next group session, with a friend or peer, or with a family member.”



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to note statements they hear, and to assess if it is a fact or an opinion, and if there is any bias in the statement. They should also think about where they can check the accuracy of facts.

Debate

Competencies

Critical thinking (Gender and power awareness)

Duration

30-60 minutes

Materials

None

Preparation

Review the activity and think through how many rounds of debate you will have time for. Based on that and the number of participants you expect, decide on the size of teams and whether some should be judges. Also, choose the statements that the teams will debate, one per round. Options include:

- Example statements in the activity description.
- There are several appropriate statements in the Where do you stand? activity.
- Create your own statements that reflect issues in the local community, decisions that young people in your program need to make, or questions related to your program area.

Adapted from or informed by

International Center for Research on Women and CARE. *Inner Spaces Outer Faces Initiative Toolkit: Tools for learning and action on gender and sexuality.* https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/MH-2008-ISOFI-Toolkit_2008.pdf.

Objective

Participants think critically about both sides of an issue.

Best fit and adaptations

This activity is suitable with modifications for every age group; however, it should be done with a group that has been meeting for some time so that participants know each other. It is easily modified to fit any topic or program area through the choice of debate statements.

This activity should be done in a location that is private. If you must do it in an open space or a room where others may overhear, ensure that outsiders understand that participants are adopting arguments that they may not believe themselves.

Instructions

Say: “Today we are going to debate certain issues. A debate is when two sides argue and try to convince each other, or an observer, that their position is the right one. Please remember that we are here to learn and grow together and it is not necessary for everyone to agree on everything. However, everyone in this group deserves respect. We will not judge, interrupt, or make fun of others.”

“Also, you do not get to choose which side of an argument you are on. Everyone will be assigned to a team and have to argue their team’s position. That means that participants may not truly believe what they are saying, and when you leave here today, do not leave thinking that you know what others think about the issues. Why would I ask you to argue something you do not believe? It is because we are developing critical thinking skills, and we are practicing seeing all sides of an issue.”

Divide participants into teams of 4-5 people making sure there is an even number of teams. Also consider that each round of debate will take about 20 minutes, so if you have 20 participants in teams of five, it will take 40 minutes (This gives us 4 teams to participate in the debate.). If you have 30 participants in teams of five, it will take 60 minutes (This gives us 6 teams to participate in the debate.). Alternatively, you can have some participants be judges of the winners.

Assign one statement to two teams. One team will be against the statement and the other will agree

with the statement. Ask all teams to take a 10 minutes maximum to discuss how they will defend their position during the debate with the opposing team.

Have the first set of debating teams sit facing each other, and ask them to debate the statement in turn, giving each team around five minutes to state their argument. They may then have “rebuttal” time, two to three minutes to say what was wrong about the other team’s argument. (This results in approximately 10 minutes allowed for each debate + 10 minutes for planning = 20 minutes per debate.)

Before the next set of teams begins, ask the other participants or judges who observed the debate what their thoughts are. Were they convinced by either side? Then move on to the next set of teams.

Example statements

- It is natural that women do all the housework.
- Money is more important than love.
- A girl should get married young before she is harassed or does something wrong.
- Our community already does enough to help educate young people.
- Women should have as many children as possible.
- Wage employment is better than self-employment.
- Saving money in a bank is better than saving at home.
- Health care services in our community are easy for young people to use.
- It is unreasonable to expect schools to build separate toilets and washing facilities for menstruating girls.
- The local council should reserve seats for women.

Discussion

After the debate is finished, bring everyone back together and facilitate a group discussion on the outcomes of the debate and the participants’ reactions to some of the issues that were brought up.

1. How did you feel arguing a point that you did not necessarily believe in?
2. How did you feel about the issues that were debated? Did your opinions shift at all?
3. Are you now able to see two or more sides of the issue? If so, what helped you to be able to see multiple sides?

Closing

Say: “In the coming days, practice seeing both or all sides of issues that come up. Consider if there are different points of view and try to understand those who disagree with you. In the next session, share the experience with others in the group.”



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to practice selecting a topic and developing both the agree/disagree statements for that topic. To take this exercise one step further, encourage them to seek out facts to support their argument, and identify common biases or harmful norms the ‘opponent’ may commonly use, as well as their response(s). Thinking through both sides of a topic is a good practice.

Media messages

Competencies

Critical thinking (Gender and power awareness)

Duration

40 minutes

Materials

Magazines or newspapers with advertisements; scissors; large paper; glue or tape. See “Preparation” if these items are hard to find.

Optional: A chalkboard or whiteboard and writing utensils.

Preparation

Gather enough magazines and newspapers with advertisements for the whole group or ask students to bring in magazines and newspapers that may be cut up.

Alternatives, if printed media is hard to find:

- Ask participants in advance to notice ads on billboards, TV, online, or radio that feature men or women. Draw a simple picture of them or copy the words if possible.
- Take photos of ads on billboards and signs and print several copies.
- Find ads on the internet to take screenshots and print.
- If some printed media is available but not enough for each participants to create their own collages, have them do it in small groups instead.

Adapted from or informed by

Population Council. *It's All One: Activities for a Unified Approach to Sexuality, Gender, HIV, and Human Rights Education*. https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/departments_sbsr-pgy/744/

Family Health International and Kenya Girl Guides Association. *Discovering the Potential of Girl Guides: A Life Skills Curriculum for Guide Leaders*.

<https://healtheducationresources.unesco.org/library/documents/discovering-potential-girl-guides-schools-life-skills-curriculum-guide-leaders>.

Welcoming Schools, Human Rights Campaign Foundation. *Media Sleuths: Examining Gender Roles in Advertising*. <https://welcomingschools.org/resources/lessons?sort=alpha>.

Objective

Participants will recognize the role the media plays in creating stereotypes and impossible ideals.

Best fit and adaptations

This activity is best in media-rich contexts and where young people spend time on the internet. It is appropriate for all ages.

The activity can be modified to analyze media messages about different topics, for example, about money through ads with luxury goods or about health and nutrition through ads with packaged foods or fitness products. In this modification, participants would only make one collage and then analyze what they suggest about wealth and happiness, or about food and health, for example.

Instructions

Distribute the magazines or newspapers, or the photos/drawings, along with scissors, paper, and glue or tape:

Say: “Today we will make collages — artwork made from pictures that you cut out of magazines and newspapers (or from your drawings or photos) and glue or tape onto a sheet of paper. You will create two collages. One will show images of females and the other images of males.”

Allow 10–15 minutes for participants to finish both collages.

If you have a board, draw two large overlapping circles and label one “male,” the other one “female,” and the overlapping section “both.”

Say: “Starting with the collage of images of males, name the characteristics of the men you see in the advertisements.”

Write the characteristics in the “male” circle, or simply summarize the observations from participants. Do the same for the collages of images of females.



Literacy adaptation: For participants with limited literacy skills, they can skip writing the summary statements and instead share verbally.

Review the characteristics and note which apply to both males and females. (List these in the overlapping part of the two circles.)

Discussion

1. What do you notice about this diagram? What idea do the ads promote about how women should look or behave? About how men should look and behave? (for example, that men are dominant and should be physically strong; that women are submissive and should be light-skinned and thin)
2. Are women shown in powerful positions? Are men shown in powerful positions?
3. What do these images suggest about the products advertised? (for example, this cleaning product will make you a better wife; lightening your skin will make you more beautiful and successful; taking this supplement to grow muscle will make all the women want to be with you)
4. How do these images compare with reality? (few people look like this) Is there anything you would change in these images to make them more realistic?
5. How are young people influenced by images portrayed in the media? Have you ever felt bad about yourself after looking at a magazine or watching a television commercial?
6. How can you change your use of media so that you are not negatively affected by such images?

Closing

Say: “In the coming days, notice ads you see in the community, in printed media or television or online. Think about the message they are sending. If you see an ad that tells you that you are not good enough in some way, remind yourself that advertisers do that to sell a product. It is not true. You are already good, in all the right ways.”



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to identify any media messaging that has bias or negative gender images. When they find this, suggest they create an alternate advertisement that would be better suited for both men and women. They can also practice writing a letter to the advertiser or company suggesting a positive change in their ads to be more inclusive.

Domain 3: Strong Voice

The 'Strong Voice' domain primarily represents relational and social empowerment. The concept of 'voice' captures dimensions of visibility, participation, assertiveness, and influence that can extend from individual personal relationships to collective movement building. It is therefore included as a suite of competencies rather than a single competency itself.

Adolescents with a strong voice communicate what they need and express their thoughts. Combined with a strong self-image and a strong mind, these adolescents develop healthy patterns of communication with those around them, resolving conflicts respectfully. As they grow, they increasingly participate in shaping their communities, organizing peers and adults as needed.

Self-advocacy

Self-advocacy means expressing what you need from others and negotiating to get those needs met. Adolescents, especially girls, have limited control over their day-to-day lives, where they can go, how they spend their time, and whom they interact with. Learning to identify needs and wants and how to communicate them to others who influence the conditions of an adolescent's life, such as family members, teachers, siblings, partners, etc., is essential for personal safety and positive outcomes. At the collective level, this competency appears in displays of solidarity, such as a girl's friends accompanying her to persuade her parents to let her continue schooling, or bringing in allies and peers in other ways to support a young person's expressions of needs, rights, and bodily autonomy.

Interpersonal communication

Interpersonal communication includes self-expression and listening. Self-expression refers to sharing your thoughts, feelings, and opinions in verbal, nonverbal, or creative ways. Listening is more than waiting for your turn to speak; it is processing the information being shared and the feelings behind it, if any. The exchange of viewpoints and ideas and for reaching agreement between two individuals or between and among groups is an essential element of human society, and communication is integral to the practice and development of other competencies. Young people need strong communication skills for healthy relationships, employability and entrepreneurship, organizing for change, violence prevention, accessing services, and mental health.

Organization

Organization means building on skills of advocacy and communication to bring people together with a common vision and to undertake actions to change what needs changing. It includes social movements, such as for gender equality, climate justice, or land rights, but also refers to the informal gathering of allies for specific aims such as convincing a family to delay a girl's wedding or a schoolmaster to waive fees for a student who cannot afford them. As a competency, organizing for action requires influencing and inspiring others, forming plans—whether short- or long-term—and recognizing affinities across differences. It also involves the development of plans, steps from one point to another until the goal is reached. Organization draws on many of the other competencies in the model, at a minimum, visioning to identify desired goals, decision making and critical thinking for designing strategies, and perseverance for summoning endurance and revising plans when barriers are encountered.

Saying no (Boundaries)

Competencies

Self-advocacy

Duration

Part I: 15 minutes

Part II: 15 minutes

Part III: 30 minutes

Materials

Optional: A chalkboard or whiteboard and writing utensils.

Preparation

Review the scenarios and choose which you will use, or write your own scenarios that fit your participants and program.

Adapted from or informed by

CARE International in Zimbabwe (2017). *IGATE Adolescent Development Model Manual and Tool Kit*.

CARE USA. *Facilitator's Manual for Adolescent Boys: CARE's Tipping Point Phase 2, Nepal*. https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/FM_Adolescent_Boys_with-citation.pdf.

Objective

Participants will practice different ways of saying “no”.

Best fit and adaptations

Scenarios are suggested for younger adolescents (aged 10-14) and older adolescents and young adults (aged 15-24), although they may work with other ages as well. You can select or design scenarios that fit your program.

Part II should be reviewed in advance to determine if the optional portion of it can be appropriate in your setting. If it is not appropriate, complete the rest of Part II without that section. The dialogue in Part II also makes reference to Spiderman, which can be removed if participants are not familiar with the character.

Instructions

Part I

Say: “The objective of this game is to reach the leader, but you can only move when the leader says ‘yes.’ As soon as the leader says ‘no,’ you have to immediately stop.”

1. Ask for a volunteer to start as the leader.
2. Mark a start line on the ground about 10 meters from the leader.
3. Have the rest of the participants line up behind the start line.
4. Explain that the participants must all focus on listening.
5. Explain that the goal of the game is to be the first participant to reach the leader.
6. The leader will play the game by saying “Yes” and “No”. When the leader says “Yes”, the participants can run towards the leader. When the leader says “No”, the participants must stop exactly where they are. Those are the only words the leader will say.
7. If a participant is still moving after “No,” they must return to the start line.
8. Once someone reaches the leader, you can restart the game with a new leader. Play three or four rounds like this.

Have participants sit down.



Inclusion adaptation: For participants with limited mobility, consider having them be the leader. Alternatively, you can alter the game and have those with limited mobility be the ones who say “yes” and “no” from the sidelines, alternating amongst themselves.

Part II

Say: “It’s easy to say ‘no’ when you are playing a game and having fun. But sometimes it is hard to say ‘no.’ Sometimes it is hard to say, ‘stop doing that.’ But everyone at some time uses those words to protect themselves, to be treated fairly, or just to express what they want or need.”

“Can you recall a time when you wanted to say ‘no’ or ‘stop’ but you had a hard time doing it? Why was it difficult to say ‘no’ or ‘stop’? Think about times in friendships, romantic relationships, work or business relationships, in school or with community members, and even with strangers.” (Be sure that “I didn’t want them to stop liking me/ I didn’t want to make them mad” comes up in the answers offered.)

“Other times you’re not sure what you really want, what you really need, or what would be best for you when someone wants something from you. There’s a little voice inside you saying that something doesn’t feel right. (Optional: Have you heard about Spiderman’s ‘Spidey sense’? When he just feels that something bad is happening? You don’t have to be a superhero to have a Spidey sense.) Sometimes it is called a ‘sixth sense.’ It’s that little bit of doubt or nervousness that you can’t quite say why you’re feeling it, but it’s there. That (Spidey or sixth) sense tells you not to agree to do what the other person wants until you figure out why it’s there. Until then, you’re better off saying ‘no’ or ‘stop.’”

“One thing that can make you feel that (Spidey or sixth) sense of something wrong is when someone crosses a personal boundary. Personal boundaries are like imaginary lines around us. We only notice them when someone crosses them, like when someone you don’t know very well stands too close. It’s a little uncomfortable, right?”

Optional: If acceptable in your setting, have two participants of the same sex stand up facing each other about three meters apart.

1. Ask: “How does this feel? Are you comfortable?”
2. Have them take a step towards each other.
3. Ask again: “How does this feel?”
4. Say: “Tell me if you start to feel uncomfortable, like you are standing too close together.”
5. Have them take additional steps towards each other until one or both says they are uncomfortable.
6. Say: “There. You have crossed each other’s personal boundary. Did you feel the (Spidey or sixth) sense? That feeling is telling you, “This isn’t quite right.”

The volunteers may sit down.

Say: “Boundaries aren’t just about physical space, though. They are also about how someone treats you, how they talk to you, how they talk about you, and how they treat your belongings. Personal boundaries are the limits and rules we set for ourselves within relationships. They are different for different kinds of relationships. Your boundaries with a teammate are probably different from those with a teacher, or a boyfriend or girlfriend, or a doctor, or a vendor at the market. A person with healthy boundaries can say ‘no’ to others when those boundaries get crossed.”

Part III

Say: “It can make it easier to say ‘no’ if you have different ways of doing it. Here are four ways:”

Optional: Write the ways on the board as you present them.

1. Simply say no, as many times as needed. Sometimes saying no without giving an explanation why is the best way to do it. You can say it politely: “Thank you, but no thank you.” If someone continues to ask, you will need to be firmer: “No!” You do not have to change your mind if someone keeps asking. Your answer is still no. “No” is a complete sentence.
2. Give a reason why doing it is a bad idea. The reason could be true – you likely have a good reason for saying no. Explain your answer. However, if the truth is not convincing, you can give another reason. You can say there’s not enough time, it will make someone else angry, you will get in trouble, it is about to rain – any excuse that fits the situation will do.
3. Make a joke or deflect attention. Say something funny or silly to lighten the pressure someone is putting on you. It doesn’t have to be a good joke, simply something to deflect attention from the situation.
4. Find others to say no with. Gather friends and allies to support you in saying no, especially if it’s a situation that affects others as well.

Choose from the scenarios below those that best fit your participants and your program. Alternatively, you can create your own scenarios. For each, read the scenario and then ask a participant to say ‘no’ using one of the methods. Have another participant say no using a different method, and so on, until all four methods are used. If you did not write the methods on the board, then you may need to remind participants which have not yet been used.

Scenarios for all ages, including young adolescents (aged 10-14)

- Your friend wants to trade football uniforms because theirs has a stain.
- Your brother keeps asking you to do his chores for him, but you need time to study.
- You and Hasan are in the same class. You like Hasan very much. One day he insists on taking a picture of you, but you don’t know what he might do with it if you say yes. If you say no, he might not like you very much.
- Your friend wants you to play with your classmate’s wheelchair without their permission. It feels wrong to you.
- Your older sister had some money stolen. Now she says you must give her some of your money to replace it.

Scenarios for older adolescents (aged 15-19) and young adults (aged 20-24)

- Your girlfriend/boyfriend wants to touch you in a way you don’t feel comfortable with.
- The leader of your savings group wants to borrow funds but not record it in the book because they will “pay it back before anyone notices”.
- You are a member of the community board of the local health clinic. A friend who is also a member wants you to join her in arguing that the clinic needs a new manager. You disagree with her position.
- Your teacher wants you to stay after class, and after all the other students leave, but doesn’t tell you why. You are worried he wants something inappropriate.
- A customer insists you sell to him on credit, saying he will “pay you next week”. This customer has been known not to pay back his debts to other vendors at the market.
- A wholesale merchant is trying to charge you and other young people more than others.

Closing

Say: “Saying ‘no’ isn’t easy. One consideration is to think about what might happen as a result of you saying “no”. Remember the activities we did earlier about lowering your risk? When you say ‘no’ and others do not like your answer, you should consider how to mitigate any risks that arise out of their dislike. Can others support you in your decision to say ‘no’ so that you are not alone? Can you propose an alternate option that is agreeable to everyone?”

“Over the next several days, practice saying ‘no’ appropriately and safely. Then share with others in the group what your most successful strategies were. If comfortable, share how it felt to say ‘no’ and to have been listened to or not.”



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to identify situations where they may want or need to respond to someone else by saying “no”. What strategy or strategies can they use? By thinking through these strategies in advance, they may feel more comfortable when the situation arises in everyday life.

Talking to parents

Competencies

Self-advocacy (Interpersonal communication)

Duration

50-60 minutes

Materials

Optional: Writing board and utensils. Printed scenarios.

Preparation

Review the activity and choose the scenarios that are most appropriate for your participants, context, and program.

Note: This activity mentions active listening, so consider doing the Active listening activity (under Interpersonal communication) first.

Adapted from or informed by

Population Council. *Life Skills and Health Curriculum for the Adolescent Girls Empowerment Program (AGEP)*. https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/departments_sbsr-pgy/584/.

Breakthrough and UNICEF. *Training Toolkit: Life Skills Curriculum for Empowering Adolescent Boys and Girls and Training Module for Adolescent Girls: Addressing Child Marriage, Sexual Harassment, and Violence*. <https://inbreakthrough.org/tool-kits/>.

Government of Sierra Leone, Ministry of Health and Sanitation, National Secretariat for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy. *I Am Somebody: National Life Skills Manual for Children 9-13 Years Old* and *I Am Somebody: National Life Skills Manual for Children 14+ Years Old*.

Objective

Participants practice ways to talk to their parents productively.

Best fit and adaptations

This activity focuses on parents, but the skill is relevant for communicating with any guardian or gatekeeper figure. Adjust the language if your participants live with other types of authority figures, such as domestic workers who live with employers or married girls and young women who live with mothers-in-law. The suggested scenarios are presented by age group; however, this is not a strict guideline, and some of them may work well with other ages.

Instructions

Say: “Have you ever had a disagreement with your parents, aunties or uncles, or other elders who live with you? Of course you have, everyone has disagreements! Can someone share the topic of the disagreement?”

Let several volunteers give examples.

Say: “Sometimes it is hard communicating with your parents. This is true no matter how old you are. We and our parents have grown up at very different times. Things have changed a lot since they were young. And they have many more years of experience with life than we do. So, they have different ways of looking at things than we do.”

“How do we talk with our parents, especially when we need to ask them for their support in a matter?”

Optional: write these five steps on a large piece of paper or the chalkboard so participants can read them.

Say: “There are specific steps that you can use to improve communication with your parents. Let’s

review them.”

1. Be prepared: Know what you are asking for and think through the consequences of your request.
2. Pick the right time: Raise the topic when the situation at home is relaxed. Try to negotiate with parents when they are not excessively busy, overworked, or appear to have other major concerns on their mind. If this is difficult, aim for a time when they seem most content and relaxed, such as during, or after dinner.
3. Introduce your topic calmly: Present your topic calmly and with facts and reasons why you think it’s a good idea.
4. Listen and repeat what you hear: Listen to what your parents or guardians have to say. Consider their point of view and whether they might be right. Remember that parents generally have your best interest at heart. Use active listening and then repeat their main point, including their reasoning. For example, say: “I understand that you want me to come home right after practice because you’re concerned about my safety.” This ensures that you understand their position and they know you are listening.
5. Repeat it again with respect: Repeat your request or opinion, addressing your parent’s concerns. For example, “I know you are worried about me, but I will have Febiana to walk home with. We will be safe when we pass by the bar where men are drinking because we are together.”



Literacy adaptation: For participants with limited literacy, it may be helpful to help participants remember the key words for each question: options, happen, know, important, and do. By remembering they key word, they may have an easier time remembering the full question. Another strategy can be to create an ‘acrostic’ or sentence using the first letter of each word you want to remember. For example,

Original word	First letter of that word	Funny or easy sentence using words that start with the first letter
Prepared	P	Purple
Time	T	Trucks
Calmly	C	Carry
Listen	L	Little
Repeat	R	Rhinoceroses

It may be easier for someone to remember the sentence “Purple Trucks Carry Little Rhinoceroses” than it is to remember Prepared, Time, Calmly, Listen, Repeat. If they can remember Purple Trucks Carry Little Rhinoceroses, hopefully it will trigger their memory about the key words and then questions to ask when making a choice; below is the way of working backward from the easy sentence.

Funny or easy sentence using words that start with the first letter	First letter of that word	Original word	Questions to Remember
Purple	P	Prepared	Be Prepared
Trucks	T	Time	Pick the right time
Carry	C	Calmly	Introduce your topic calmly
Little	L	Listen	Listen and repeat what you hear
Rhinoceroses	R	Repeat	Repeat it again with respect

Ask someone to repeat the five steps.

Say: “Imagine you are worried about passing your exams and need more time to study. You want to

talk to your mother about sharing more of the chores with your brother.”

Ask for volunteers to come to the front and act out the scene. One is the student and the other is the mother. Coach them on preparing what they want to say, choosing the best time, presenting their topic and why it is important, listening and repeating the mother’s concerns, and then saying the request again. Make sure they do all five steps.

Say: “There is one more skill you can have ready for the most difficult conversations. This is to ask your parent about their experience with the topic. For example, ask them about when they fell in love, how they learned about sex, risks they took in business, or times when their parents were very unhappy about a decision they made. Asking about their own experiences shows them that you respect their wisdom, and it can show you what you have in common. Ask them about these things before you make your request.”

“Here is a situation that might benefit from using this skill: Jupriansyah is 20 years old and in love with a woman from a different religion (or caste, tribe, party, ethnicity, etc.). He is not sure his parents will agree, but he wants them to support his decision to marry her.”

Ask for two more volunteers to come to the front and act out the scene. Guide them during the scene as needed. Have them insert questions to the parent about when they fell in love before they raise their request.

Break participants into pairs. By handing them a printout or reading to them, give each pair one of the following scenarios and have them discuss with each other:

- What concerns the parent might have in the situation
- What the young person in the scenario can say to their parent
- How the conversation might go if they use the steps for talking to parents

Give the pairs 15-20 minutes for their discussion.

Younger adolescents (ages 10-14)

- Aviva wants to attend a rally in support of improved toilets at the secondary school. Her grandmother believes rallies are too political of an activity for a girl. How can she approach her grandmother to ask for permission?
- Mohammed has a small amount of money and plans to use part of it to attend a school dance and the rest to buy reading glasses for a friend with vision problems. Instead, his father gets the money from his pillow and gives it to a visiting uncle as transportation money to return to his hometown. How can he tell his father that next time he should discuss it with him before giving the money to someone else?
- Milkah is 15 years old. Her father wants her to marry a man from the next village so they can share land. Milkah does not agree, and she wants to tell her family why.
- Arie wants to ask her guardian to help her go back to school. She learned about a special class for those who left school to catch up on their learning. It would mean less time at home to work there and traveling back and forth from a nearby town. How can she raise the issue with her guardian?
- Aliyah is part of a youth group that performs dramas. Next week is the first time since she joined that the group will travel to another town to perform. She needs to have her parents’ permission in order to go.

Older adolescents and young adults (ages 15-24)

- Haider has a motorbike which he uses to transport customers every day after school. He is saving to move to the district capital. He thinks his parents will oppose his plans to leave their rural home. They need him at home to help with expenses.

- Nsofu has a bank account and deposits small amounts of money whenever she has it. She hopes to save enough to use as capital to start a new business. Nsofu’s mother knows about the money in the bank and wants to use it for the family to buy a new gas kerosene oven. How can Nsofu talk to her mother about her plans to use the money for something else?
- Sonya wants to ask her aunt to go with her to the local health clinic to get birth control pills. She thinks her aunt knows that she is having sex but is not sure she will be supportive.
- Donalia wants to start a business selling bicycle parts. She has most of the money she needs to get started (capital money) and wants to ask her uncle if he can help. He has a shop selling construction materials, and maybe he could let her use a corner.
- Tunde’s father left when he was small. He does day labor to help his mother take care of his younger siblings. Now Tunde wants to train as a welder. When he is a welder, he will make much more money than he makes now. But training will take at least a year, and while he is training, he will only be able to work small jobs the weekends.

Discussion

Ask for pairs to volunteer to share the key points of their conversation on what concerns the parent might have and how the young person can talk to their parent. As they do so, have them explain each step for talking to parents:

1. Be prepared
2. Pick the right time
3. Introduce your topic calmly
4. Listen and repeat
5. Say it again with respect

You can also invite other participants to comment on what the pairs are sharing.

Closing

Say: “Using these steps can help you communicate with adults and elders so that they can better understand your point of view. Often, parents do not know your interests or needs unless you tell them. In the coming days, think of something you’d like to discuss with your parents, and practice the steps.”



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, suggest that the next time they have a difficult topic to discuss with a parent or guardian, they try writing them a letter, using the five steps suggested in this activity.

Assertiveness

Competencies

Self-advocacy (Interpersonal communication)

Duration

Part I: 30-40 minutes

Part II: 30-45 minutes

Materials

Optional: Three large pieces of paper that say “passive,” “aggressive,” and “assertive.”

Preparation

Optional: Hang three large pieces of paper on three walls of the room, one that says “passive,” one that says “aggressive,” and one that says “assertive.”

Adapted from or informed by

Family Health International and Kenya Girl Guides Association. *Discovering the Potential of Girl Guides: A Life Skills Curriculum for Guide Leaders*.

<https://healtheducationresources.unesco.org/library/documents/discovering-potential-girl-guides-schools-life-skills-curriculum-guide-leaders>.

CARE International in Zimbabwe (2017). *IGATE Adolescent Development Model Manual and Tool Kit*.

Government of Sierra Leone, Ministry of Health and Sanitation, National Secretariat for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy. *I Am Somebody: National Life Skills Manual for Children 9-13 Years Old* and *I Am Somebody: National Life Skills Manual for Children 14+ Years Old*.

CARE International in Zimbabwe. *Patsy Collins Trust Fund Initiative Guidance and Counselling Supplementary Teaching Manual Book 2: Forms 3 and 4*.

Objective

Participants know how to strongly communicate their needs and wants.

Best fit and adaptations

This activity is suitable for all age groups. Choose the topics for roleplays based on participants' characteristics and your program.

Instructions

Part I

Say: “We are starting today with a story.”

“Millicent has been standing in the line/queue at the post office for 20 minutes. She is getting anxious because she knows her mother is waiting for her to take some medicine home for her aunt. There are only three people ahead of her, and she is sure she will be served within the next five minutes. Two other people enter the post office and recognize the person standing in front of Millicent. They walk over to this person, begin talking, and move into the queue in front of Millicent.”

“What should Millicent do?”

“Choice 1– Continue to stand without getting angry or addressing the others.”

“Choice 2 – Shout at the others and try to make them go to the end of the queue.”

“Choice 3 – Explain to the others that the queue is taking new customers at the end of the line and suggest that they move there.”

Let several participants give their opinions and the reasons why they think Millicent should behave that way.

Say: “Choice 1 – standing silently without saying anything – is a reaction that we can call passive” (or “too quiet” if there is not a good translation in your language).

“Being passive is when:”

“A person does not stand up for their rights or what they need.”

“A person gives in to what other people want, even when they don’t think it is right.”

“A person keeps quiet when something bothers them or they are not getting what they need.”

“Choice 2 – shouting at others to try to make them do what you want – is an example of aggressive behavior.”

“Being aggressive is when:”

“A person stands up for their rights but doesn’t care about other people’s rights.”

“A person makes demands.”

“A person is pushy or insists.”

“A person doesn’t take time to hear what others have to say or how they feel.”

“Choice 3 – reminding others of what is fair and being clear about your rights and needs – is an assertive action” (or “firm” if there is not a good translation in your language).

“Being assertive is when:”

“You stand up for your rights without putting other people down.”

“You respect yourself and other people.”

“You are confident, but not pushy.”

“You talk directly about your feelings and needs.”

Next, have everyone stand up. If you have hung papers on the walls, point them out. Explain you are going to read some behaviors, and they should move to the sign that they think describes the behavior. If you have not hung papers, then tell them that the area to their right is for “passive;” the area to their left is for “aggressive;” and the space in the middle is for “assertive.”

Read each phrase and give time for participants to move. When all have chosen, tell them the correct answer. Allow time to discuss differences in understanding for each of these examples as needed.



Inclusion adaptation: For participants with limited mobility, instead of having them move to different parts of the space, instead suggest they point to the space they would choose, or give them three small pieces of paper with the options written on them, and let them hold up their selection instead of physically moving.

Standing up for yourself calmly. (assertive)

Putting other people down, insulting them. (aggressive)

Not saying your needs or wants. (passive)

Ignoring other people’s needs. (aggressive)

Telling someone what you need. (assertive)

Saying ‘no’ when you want to. (assertive)

Shouting ‘you’re wrong!’ (aggressive)

Avoiding disagreements or upsetting someone above all else. (passive)

Staying silent instead of bringing up something that is important to you. (passive)

Speaking directly and making eye contact respectfully. (assertive)

Part II

Tell the participants that they will now practice being passive, aggressive, and assertive.

Ask for volunteers to do role plays, two people at a time. Choose the scenarios that best fit your participants and your program. After you introduce each story, have the pair of volunteers act out an aggressive response, then a passive response, and then an assertive response. Coach the participants if needed.

1. Two friends: One lent money to the other about two months ago and reminded them several times to return the money. They see each other in town one day.
2. Two coworkers: One borrows the other's tools at the woodshop without asking first.
3. The older sister tells the younger one that she must stay home from football practice to do chores.
4. A sister and brother: The sister needs more time to study, and her brother leaves his clothes on the floor for her to tidy up so he can meet his friends.
5. A boss and an employee: An employee shows up late frequently. Today she is late again and comes in without mentioning it or apologizing.
6. A husband and wife: The husband is supposed to leave money for his wife to buy contraceptives, but he always gives the money late.
7. Two members of a savings group: It is the second month that a member has missed their contribution, and he doesn't seem to understand why it's a problem.

Discussion

1. Was it easier to communicate passively, aggressively, or assertively?
2. Which way worked best? Why?
3. Did assertive communication help you set boundaries? Why or why not?

Say: "Being assertive does not mean you are not nervous or afraid to say what you need to say. Courage is not the absence of fear – Courage is not letting fear stop you."

Closing

Say: "When you are at home, make a list (writing it down or a list in one's mind) of things about which you could be more assertive. The next time there is an opportunity, try being assertive instead of passive or aggressive. Let us know in the next session how it went."



Optional: If participants are using a journal, they can make this list in their journal.

Active listening

Competencies

Interpersonal communication

Duration

30 minutes

Materials

None

Preparation

Review the activity and choose the topics for speakers.

Adapted from or informed by

Population Council. *It's All One: Activities for a Unified Approach to Sexuality, Gender, HIV, and Human Rights Education*. https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/departments_sbsr-pgy/744/

Government of Sierra Leone, Ministry of Health and Sanitation, National Secretariat for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy. *I Am Somebody: National Life Skills Manual for Children 9-13 Years Old* and *I Am Somebody: National Life Skills Manual for Children 14+ Years Old*.

CARE USA. *Facilitator's Manual for Girls' Collectives: CARE's Tipping Point Phase 2, Bangladesh*. https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Tipping-Point-Girls-Manual_Bangladesh.pdf.

Objective

Participants practice active listening skills.

Best fit and adaptations

This activity is appropriate for all age groups.

When participants form groups of three people, it is an opportunity for them to practice speaking about any technical knowledge the program has been teaching. It can also be an opportunity to practice general skills addressed in this toolkit. You can choose from the list of suggestions in the description or create your own topics.

Instructions

Ask for a volunteer. Have the volunteer face you and tell you about themselves for about 3 minutes. While they talk, you will act out bad listening skills:

- Cross your arms
- Look away
- Tap your foot
- Yawn
- Look at your mobile phone or make a call to someone else
- Interrupt
- Start talking about something else
- Frown
- Roll your eyes

Suggestion: whisper to the volunteer that while they are talking about themselves, you will be acting out bad listening skills; this will reassure them that your actions are not intended to be disrespectful, but it is a skit/act.

Thank the volunteer and invite them to sit down.

Say: “Was I a good listener? No? What was I doing that makes you think that?”

Ask for another volunteer to speak for about 3 minutes. This time, act out good listening skills:

- Look in the eyes of the other person (if culturally appropriate to do so)
- Ask questions that showed interest
- Not interrupting
- With a relaxed body
- Nod to show understanding
- Be patient
-

Thank the volunteer and invite them to sit down.

Say: “Was I a good listener that time? Yes? What was I doing that makes you think that?”

Ask the first volunteer: “How did you feel talking to me when I was not listening?” Ask the second volunteer: “How did it feel talking to me when I was listening actively?”

Say: “Many times, when someone is talking to us, our minds are focused on what we are going to say back to them rather than giving all our attention. Active listening means listening to understand the other person fully, rather than listening to respond.”

Have participants form groups of three to practice active listening. In each group, one person will speak for two minutes.

Say: “When it is your turn to speak, you will speak about the following topic:” (choose one appropriate for your participants and your program – it’s okay if the participants have to make up what they say; for example, the person asked to speak on why someone should vote for them does not have to actually be running in an election)

- Your business plan
- Your last visit to the health center
- A goal you have set for yourself
- A conflict you are having with someone
- Your hopes for the next year of education
- The best time to marry
- What you would change about your community if you could
- When in life one should start using contraceptives
- A problem many people have with contraceptive use
- A skill you would like to get better at
- Why the person should give you a loan
- Why the person should give you a job
- Qualities you would like in a husband or wife
- Why the person should vote for you for the youth council
- The reason you need a day off of work next week

Say: “The second person will practice active listening, and the third will observe and give feedback to the listener. After two minutes, you will rotate roles. Then we will have a third round. In this way, each of you takes a turn in each role.”

Time the rounds. Each round gives the speaker two minutes to talk, followed by 60 seconds (1 minute) of feedback from the observer to the listener. There are three rounds in total.

Discussion

1. How does it feel when you are the speaker and the person is not listening well? Do you feel like you want to stop talking? Other reactions to feeling that you are not being listened to?
2. Was it easier to express your thoughts when the person was actively listening?
3. Do you think active listening is important for good communication? Why or why not?

Closing

Say: “Over the coming days, practice active listening whenever someone is talking to you. Focus your mind on what they are saying and not on what you are going to say back to them. See if you feel like it helps you and the other person truly communicate, and share your results with others in the group.”



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to write down tips for being an active listener, and how they feel when others actively listen to them.

Handling conflicts

Competencies

Interpersonal communication

Duration

60 minutes

Materials

Optional: Writing board and utensils. Printed scenarios.

Preparation

Note: This activity mentions active listening, so you may wish to complete the 'Active Listening' activity first.

Adapted from or informed by

Population Council. *Life Skills and Health Curriculum for the Adolescent Girls Empowerment Program (AGEP)*. https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/departments_sbsr-pgy/584/.

Save the Children. *Conflict Management and Peace Building in Everyday Life*. <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/resourcekit-web.pdf/>.

Objective

Participants know rules for and practice good conflict resolution.

Best fit and adaptations

The activity instructions suggest which scenarios are best for younger adolescents (ages 10-14) or older adolescents and youth (15-24).

With young people affected by violence, be especially sensitive to their reactions to discussing conflict, and ensure that all participants treat each other with respect when they create role plays. With all groups, choose the topics and scenarios that are most appropriate for your context and program.

Instructions

Say: "Conflict is natural and happens in almost every relationship between two people. Since conflict is unavoidable, we must learn to manage it. Conflict is a sign of a need for change and an opportunity for growth, new understanding, and improved communication. It is normal for people to disagree, but it is important to address conflict with the people involved and resolve these disagreements in a constructive and healthy way."

"Conflict also happens between groups of people. You may have been (for conflict-affected young people, 'may be') affected by conflict between two or more groups because of war, political battles, election violence, or other large social problems. Even when you are not involved, these situations can create tension in a community. Knowing how to respectfully and peacefully handle a small conflict that arises between yourself and a community member can be important. At the same time, you should seek the support of a trusted adult or elder in any situation that might put your safety at risk."

"There are rules to follow to peacefully resolve conflict."

Optional: Write the rules on the board.

Conflict resolution rules

1. Attack the problem, not the person
2. Actively listen with an open mind
3. Treat the other person's feelings with respect
4. Take responsibility for your own actions



Literacy adaptation: For participants with limited literacy, it may be helpful to help participants remember the key words for each conflict resolution rule: problem, active, respect, and responsibility. By remembering they key word, they may have an easier time remembering the full question. Another strategy can be to create an ‘acrostic’ or sentence using the first letter of each word you want to remember. For example,

Original word	First letter of that word	Funny or easy sentence using words that start with the first letter
Problem	P	Physical
Active	A	Ants
Respect	R	Run
Responsibility	R	Races

It may be easier for someone to remember the sentence “Physical Ants Run Races” than it is to remember problem, active, respect, and responsibility. If they can remember Physical Ants Run Races, hopefully it will trigger their memory about the key words and then questions to ask when making a choice; below is the way of working backward from the easy sentence.

Funny or easy sentence using words that start with the first letter	First letter of that word	Original word	Questions to Remember
Physical	P	Problem	Attach the problem, not the person
Ants	A	Active	Actively listen with an open mind
Run	R	Respect	Treat the other person’s feelings with respect
Races	R	Responsibility	Take responsibility for your own actions

Discuss

1. What do you think it means to attack the problem, not the person? (talk about what is happening with the other person rather than telling them they are wrong, or something is wrong with them)
2. What does it mean to actively listen with an open mind? (to fully listen rather than preparing the next thing you want to say, to consider the other person’s point of view)
3. What does it mean to treat the other person’s feelings with respect? (to recognize their feelings – you do not have to agree with them to respect their feelings)
4. What does it mean to take responsibility for your own actions? (to admit when you have done wrong, try to fix your mistakes)
5. When should you bring in a trusted adult to support you when handling a conflict?

Say: “Good communication during a conflict can help the situation. However, there are behaviors that can quickly shut down any hope of resolving the conflict. These are bad behaviors like name-calling, cursing, insulting, and accusations. These are called ‘communication blockers’ because once you do them, the other person is likely to react strongly and stop hearing your words.”

“What are some other communication blockers?” (Interrupting, ignoring, sarcasm, insulting, threatening, stereotyping, judging, blaming, stating opinions as fact, expecting someone to read your mind, hitting, punching, slapping, screaming, etc.)

List participants’ answers on the board or repeat them aloud, and discuss.

Break participants into groups of three to four people. By handing them a printout or reading to them, give each group one of the following scenarios and tell them to prepare a short skit/play about how the characters resolved the conflict following the conflict resolution rules. Also select one or two groups to create a skit/play in which the characters do not follow the conflict resolution rules and use communication blockers.

Give groups around 15 minutes to design their roleplays.

Note: If participants have known each other for a while and they feel comfortable doing so, you can have them identify conflicts in their own lives to create the roleplays. If you choose to do it this way, be sure that participants are not using conflicts that led to violence and that participants are not sharing confidential information that could be used to identify other members of the group or specific community members.

Relationship conflicts: Younger adolescents (aged 10-14)

1. It is a school holiday. Mandakh has been taking care of her youngest siblings all morning. Now her mother has asked her to go and do the clothes washing. Her brother, Yangir, who is almost the same age, has spent an hour playing football with his friends. When he comes to the house, Mandakh tells him he should wash the clothes so that she can meet her friends. Mandakh feels that her brother always has more free time than her. Yangir wants to keep playing football and enjoying the holiday. He also feels that he contributed to the household work in the early morning when he went to catch fish.
2. Sifiso and Zola are siblings who work together in the afternoons collecting rags (or cans, plastics, etc.). The elder brother, Sifiso, usually takes the earnings from the younger sister, Zola, and at the end of the day gives all their earnings to their parents. One day Sifiso spends \$1 on notebooks. When they get home they are punished (or beaten) by their parents for spending some of the money. Zola is angry with Sifiso because he is the one that bought the notebooks but she was also punished (or beaten). Zola does not know that Sifiso bought the books for her after noticing her school notebooks were full.
3. Myrna is 15 years old and in love with her boyfriend, Sunil, who is 16 years old. They both want to get married. Sunil says that he will not wait until they are 18 years old. Myrna feels very strongly that they should wait, and she is getting frustrated with Sunil's insisting.

Relationship conflicts: Older adolescents and young adults (aged 15-24)

1. Margaret stopped seeing her boyfriend, George. Now he is telling other boys at school that they had sex, even though it is not true. George is angry that Margaret does not want to be with him anymore. How should they talk to each other?
2. Raymundo notices that his friend Joseph is wearing the same jacket that was stolen from him last week. Joseph tells him that another friend let him borrow the jacket. Raymundo is not sure that is true. Joseph feels ashamed and does not want to admit that he knows who took the jacket. How should Raymundo talk to Joseph?
3. Bushra is 18 and has a nice relationship with Idir. They met in school. Bushra wants to marry Idir in two years after she finishes her nursing program, but Idir wants to marry now. Bushra is afraid she will become pregnant and not be able to continue her studies.

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Schooling conflicts: all ages

1. When Carlos' family moved to their new village, Carlos missed many months of school and later dropped out because he was needed to help set-up the new household. Now that his family is settled, he wants to go back to school, while his parents want him to continue helping the family.

2. Maria loves going to school and tries her hardest. Every time her teacher asks for a volunteer, he selects the same two boy students. Maria wants the same opportunities as the boys in her class.

Community conflicts: Younger adolescents (ages 10-14)

1. Mariam and Bilal are playing football. Mariam kicks harder than she means to and the ball crashes into the neighbor's water pump – then the handle falls off. How should Miriam talk to the neighbor?
2. Usha lives in a rural area and must walk a long way, more than one hour, to attend the upper primary school. Before walking to school, she must collect water and prepare breakfast for her younger siblings. She wakes up at 5 am each day. If she reaches school even five minutes late, the teacher scolds her (and hits her with a stick). She doesn't think this treatment by the teacher is fair.

Community conflicts: Older adolescents and young adults (ages 15-24)

1. Beti works in the vegetable market. Some of the other working adolescents are part of a gang. They are threatening Beti, telling her to go and find work in another market, that if she tries to work in this market, she will be beaten up.
2. Fachmi is riding his bicycle and accidentally hits a puddle. The dirty water sprays onto the shoes in a vendor's display. The man is angry, saying Fachmi now needs to buy all the shoes. Fachmi doesn't have money for that.

Money conflicts: All ages

1. Corrinne helps her grandmother on Saturday mornings at her hotel near the market. She wants to keep the money she earns for herself. But her mother-in-law insists that Corrinne give her all the money to help with household expenses.
2. Fatima gets money each week from her parents for her bus fare and lunches at school, and saves what is left over with her savings group. When her parents learn that Fatima had a little to save at the end of each week, they get angry. They threaten to reduce her allowance, but Fatima wants to keep a little money as her own to save.
3. Emily recently worked for a neighbor for five days. However, when she went to collect her earnings, the neighbor said she had only worked for four days. Emily wants to resolve the situation and still collect her earnings.

Discussion

Have groups volunteer to present their prepared skits/plays. After each presentation, discuss:

1. What was the nature of the conflict?
2. Did they follow the conflict resolution rules?
3. Did you see any communication blockers?
4. Are there any other ways that the characters could have resolved the conflict?

Closing

Say: "Practice using the conflict resolution rules in the coming days. Avoid the communication blockers! While not all conflicts can be resolved in one conversation, using the rules builds trust between people, and that trust will help prevent future conflicts."



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to use it to practice their responses to conflicts. If they have something that is bothering them and they want to resolve, suggest they practice writing out their strategy, following the four key rules of conflict resolution.

Personal goals

Competencies

Organization (Visioning)

Duration

45 minutes

Materials

Optional: Notebooks for participants to record goals

Preparation

Note: This activity is good to do following the Road of Life activity (under Visioning), but it can be done without it.

Adapted from or informed by

CARE USA. *Facilitator's Manual for Girls' Collectives: CARE's Tipping Point Phase 2, Bangladesh*. https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Tipping-Point-Girls-Manual_Bangladesh.pdf.

Objective

Participants identify personal goals for the near future.

Best fit and adaptations

This activity can be focused on any sphere of a young person's life to align it with program goals and participant ages. For example, a money management program can focus on savings goals. A reproductive health program can focus on goals in receiving care or using contraceptives. An agriculture program can focus on seed saving or marketing goals through improved numeracy skills. An education program can focus on course completion.

Younger adolescents (aged 10-14) should focus on a goal within one year. Older adolescents and young adults should also set a goal for within a year, but you can add additional rounds of goal setting with longer timeframes. Older adolescents (aged 15-19) can set goals for 1-3 years' time. Young adults (aged 20-24) can plan further into the future, from 3-5 years' time.

Instructions

Say: "Today we are going to set some goals for ourselves. I'm going to tell you the story of Asatu. While I read it, note Asatu's many goals." (Note: The story of Asatu can be modified to align with the participants' ages or experiences.)

"Twenty-year-old Asatu lives in a village of a rural district. She will get married in three months and will go with her husband to live in the capital city. She wants to give some presents to her mother before she leaves. Though she is sad to leave her family, the enchanting moments of buzzing urban life of the city are attracting her. She knows a bit of carpentry as it was her family's source of earnings. She would like to improve her carpentry skills so that she can start a furniture business after she marries. Once she earns money from her business, she and her husband will be able to rent a house in the city. Asatu's family members hope that she becomes a mother soon; Asatu also wants to become a mother in the future, but she wants to get the business going first."

Discussion

1. What are Asatu's goals? (Give her mother a gift; improve carpentry skills; start a business; rent a house; become a mother.)
2. Which of her goals can be met in a short time? (Give her mother a gift.)
3. Which goals will take somewhat longer? (Improve carpentry skills; start a business.)
4. Which goal takes a long time to achieve? (Rent a house.)
5. Which goal is something that Asatu wants to save for much later? (Become a mother.)

Say: “Most of us have an idea or a vision of who we want to become many years in the future. Those are long-term goals. Today we are going to focus on short-term or medium-term goals, things that are achievable in one to three years.”

“Form pairs and share with a person next to you one goal you have for the next year. What is the reason for that goal? What will achieving it get you? For example, a savings goal is usually set because there is something we want to be able to pay for. A physical fitness goal is sometimes linked to a competition or improved health benefits. A livelihood goal is often chosen as a way of increasing earnings. An education goal is usually part of an overall course of learning.”

Give the pairs at least five minutes to discuss, longer if needed. Then bring the attention back to you and ask for volunteers to share their goals and reasons for them with the whole group.

Optional: If participants have notebooks or are keeping a journal, have them write down their goals.

Say: “Next, let’s put together a timeline for the goal. Is there a specific time by which you want to reach this goal? For example, exams are set on a certain date. Or maybe there is something that would have to be finished before the rainy season. If there is no specific timeline, choose one that works for you that is within the next year.”

Optional: Older groups may repeat the above with goals for within three years.

“There is one more factor to consider: How are you going to achieve this goal? Will you need to spend more time learning or training? Do you need to give up some activities or spending to reach the goal? Do you need to coordinate with others, or do you need the help of others to reach it?”

“Now, identify someone to be your accountability or commitment friend. An accountability friend is a person who monitors your progress towards a goal, and you monitor theirs. You set times to check in with each other, say, once a month, to ask how it’s going, whether you have taken the actions you need to, and if you need more support. Pair up with someone else here today to become accountability friends.”

Give them time to form pairs. Make sure that everyone has a buddy. If someone is left out, offer to be their buddy or allow groups of three.

Say: “Share your goal, the reason why it matters to you, and how you will achieve it with your buddy.”

Note: As a facilitator, you can be part of the support team. One way to do this is to encourage the accountability friends to check-in with each other during an activity session three to four weeks from now. If this is possible, mark it on your schedule.

Closing

Say: “You may want to share your goal with others in your life – parents, friends, siblings, religious leaders, or anyone that may be able to support you. It helps to have a team of support. We will check in with our accountability buddies again in a few weeks.”



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, suggest they write down their goals, the timelines, and any details they need to be successful in achieving their goals. This may include capturing progress as well as challenges. Goals and their strategies may need to be adapted over time, so encourage participants to update their goals if and when needed.

Action planning

Competencies

Organization

Duration

45-60 minutes

Materials

A chalkboard, whiteboard, a large piece of paper, or a notebook; writing utensils.

Preparation

Note: This activity is good to do following the “Our future together” activity (under Visioning).

The activity assumes that the group has a community project in mind, a vision, or an issue they want to address through collective action. It can also be done as a learning exercise with a hypothetical project that will not be implemented. In this case, be clear with participants that the action plan you are creating is an example for practicing the process.

Adapted from or informed by

World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. *Be the Change: A Community Action Programme for WAGGGS Members Aged 14+*. <https://duz92c7qaoni3.cloudfront.net/documents/BeTheChange.pdf>.

Objective

Participants identify and prioritize activities towards a common vision.

Best fit and adaptations

This activity works with any age group. When conducting this activity with participants ages 10-14, there is a smaller set of questions to use that are age appropriate (see the notes in the instructions).

Instructions

Note: If you are following on from “Our future together” activity, make sure that the participants have agreed on which vision they would like to address. If there is any doubt, take a vote using the most common visions or issues that were raised.

Say: “When a group of people have a common vision, it is much more likely to come true. But people have to work together to make it happen. Today we are going to set objectives for our project.”

“We agree that we would like a community in which.....” (complete using the vision previously identified, for example, ‘children with disabilities feel more welcome,’ ‘women are not discriminated against in lending,’ ‘schools have menstrual hygiene facilities so girls do not miss class,’ etc.). “Let’s all say our vision statement together: ‘We want a community in which.....’”

Optional: Write the vision statement on the board.

Say: “No two projects are the same, but most of them require planning, taking action, evaluating the results, and then planning again. Few projects achieve their aims in the first cycle. And that’s okay.”

“Let’s do a brainstorm (generate ideas) about what activities will help us reach our community vision.”

Optional: You can break into smaller groups for this, having someone in each group take notes. Or you can keep everyone together for the discussion and take notes on the board, a large piece of paper, or a notebook. If you break into smaller groups, have each group share the list of activities they came up with afterwards.

List all the activities suggested and summarize them for the participants, loosely grouping similar activities together. If participants worked in small groups, do this by going through each group and writing their ideas on the board.

Discussion

1. Which activities make the biggest contribution to the objective? (You may want to circle these or put an *asterisk* next to them.)
2. Which activities are realistic? (Unrealistic activities can be marked as 'saved for later.')
3. Which activities will be fun to do? (You can put a happy face next to them.)
4. Which activities would require a lot of support or resources? Who needs to give support? What resources are needed? (List these next to the activity.)

Explore the activity ideas until you have a shortlist of the most popular ideas. Write these in the front of the space or repeat them.

Groups with younger adolescents (aged 10-14) can skip questions 5, 6 and 7 and move to question 8. Older adolescents and young adults (aged 15-24) can continue with questions 5-8.

(Older adolescents and young adults)

5. If you add up the impact or the results of all these activities, will they contribute to our vision? Is anything missing?
6. If you add up the work involved in delivering these activities, will we be able to manage it? What help might we need?
7. Is it important to do the activities in a certain order? Will they build on each other? (If so, have participants suggest what order.)

(All ages)

8. How can we move forward to implement these activities? (Form a committee, investigate resources, speak to relevant people in the community, etc.)

Closing

There are several ways to close this activity.

1. Congratulate the participants on their action plan and ask them to speak to someone in the community that has undertaken a community project. This might be a union of workers, a disaster risk reduction project, community sanitation projects, a school garden, or any number of things. Tell the participants to ask the person with experience what challenges they faced and how they overcame them. Alternatively, you can identify someone to come to the next session and speak with participants.
2. The group could elect a couple of representatives to further draft the plan of action, including when each activity will be done, what resources are needed, and who is responsible. If possible, it is good to display or post this somewhere public, where many members of the group can access and see it regularly.
3. If only a few participants are excited about implementing the action plan, ask them to stay longer or meet at another time to further develop it.
4. If the activity was done as practice rather than making a plan to be carried out, read the following account of a girl's community project:

Luisa's project to start a local food market in her town looked promising, but she struggled to spread the word and get people involved, so she had to go through the project planning and action stages a few times. "One of my objectives was to recruit 20 local food growers, a mixture of small farms and families growing more vegetables than they needed, to sell their food at the first market. I held a meeting in the community center, but only a handful of people turned up. I realized I needed to find better ways of getting in touch with people, so I started asking friends and family if they knew people on local farms or who had allotments, and I put a message on Facebook and on a notice board next to the community health clinic. I got 12 sellers this way. They agreed to go

ahead with the first market anyway, as I thought by seeing the market in action other people might be interested in getting involved.” Luisa now has an average of 30 local food producers who sell their produce in the town community center once a month.



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to keep notes on the action plans they develop, particularly noting successes, and ideas for how to address challenges.

Allies and champions

Competencies

Organization (Well-being)

Duration

40-60 minutes

Materials

None

Preparation

Think in advance who you know in the community that supports adolescents and young adults.

Adapted from or informed by

World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. *Be the Change: A Community Action Programme for WAGGGS Members Aged 14+*. <https://duz92c7qaoni3.cloudfront.net/documents/BeTheChange.pdf>.

Population Council. *Life Skills and Health Curriculum for the Adolescent Girls Empowerment Program (AGEP)*. https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/departments_sbsr-pgy/584/.

Objective

Participants identify supportive adults in their lives and communities

Best fit and adaptations

This activity is good for younger adolescents (ages 10-14) and older adolescents (15-19) when it is focused on personal allies. When focused on community champions, it is good for these ages (10-19) as well as young adults (20-24), particularly if the group is working on community change projects. However, young adults also need personal allies in their lives, especially when they are isolated from peers and services, such as married young women or very rural youth.

Instructions

Say: “Young people can’t do everything themselves. In fact, no one can. Sometimes we need help. Today we are talking about two kinds of helpers: personal allies and community champions. A personal ally is someone you trust to have your best interests in mind, a person you go to for support when you face challenges that require help from an adult or a community member with more power than you. They might be a family member or a friend. There are also adults that you might not call a friend but that you could go to for help. They might be health care workers, teachers, faith leaders, community leaders, protection committee members or simply your neighbors. They are people that:

- Will support you;
- You can talk to about anything;
- You feel comfortable around;
- Listen to you; and
- Would help keep you safe.”

“Think for a minute about who you know who has been or would be an ally for you in the following situations:” (Use the situations most applicable to your participants based on their gender and contexts, or create a situation based on common problems.)

- Your parents are arranging your marriage, but you don’t want to marry right now.
- You are assaulted by someone in your class and don’t know if you should report it.
- A man by the market taunts you and says inappropriate things every time you must pass by.
- The camp leader or landlord in your section keeps pressing you to give him money or sex.
- You feel quite ill but don’t know which health service to go to.
- Someone in your family is abusing you and threatening you not to tell.

- Your uncle keeps stealing from your savings.
- You need an identification card to apply for a scholarship but know the official will want a bribe.
- Your teacher is not giving you fair grades (marks) because you didn't purchase books from him.

Say: “Has everyone thought of at least one person? Everyone should have at least one in mind because I am an ally for you.”

“Now let’s talk about community champions. A community champion is someone from your community that speaks out for young people like you. They tell others how important it is to support young people, their issues, and their projects. They go to regular community meetings and events and remember young people’s needs. They might raise issues like youth-friendly marketplaces, making schools more accessible for everyone, preventing child marriage, or empowering youth to participate in shaping the community through groups like youth councils.” (Mention the issues most important to the participants based on their ages, interests, challenges, advantages and disadvantages.)

“Certainly there are community members already actively supporting youth like you and others that want to support young people but maybe don’t know how.”

Break participants into groups of three or four people.

Say: “Brainstorm (come up with ideas about) who in the community you would consider a champion for young people like you or on a specific issue that is important to you. Think about people in different roles. Also think of people who might want to be more active in supporting you or people that you would consider going to for help with a project because they can mentor you in certain skills or provide certain knowledge. If you cannot think of a person, imagine what kind of person you would hope to find.”

“You might choose a champion for different reasons.”

- “You need advice from someone with knowledge and experience in the area you are working on.”
- “You need a mentor who has run community projects before and can support you through each step.”
- “You are worried about how the community will react to your idea, so you recruit someone who is popular and influential in the community to speak out for your project.”
- “You want an adult you trust to help you stay on track and support with simple logistics like driving people to meetings, helping with computer tasks, etc.”

Give the groups around ten-fifteen minutes to discuss. Then ask each group to share who in the community or what kind of person they would like to have as a champion of their community project. If the group is working together on a project, decide together whom to approach to ask to be a champion to the project.

Closing

Agree in the group on how to contact the potential champion(s). Who will contact them? What will they say? Should the facilitator accompany them?



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to keep a list of potential allies and champions next to each goal they have individually or as a group. They can also consider how they can be an ally or champion to those younger than themselves, or those who have fewer opportunities or resources than they do.

Domain 4: Well-being

The well-being domain is different than the other domains in that well-being is a foundation and prerequisite of young people's psychological, physical, emotional, cognitive, and functional skills rather than competencies. The well-being domain also differs because it encompasses the enabling environment for healthy, holistic development. Communities, families, and governments have a duty to young people to provide basic needs, services, and protection.

The young person's role is to be proactive in caring for themselves, others, and pursuing fulfillment of their needs and rights. Adolescents and young adults who are aware of the importance of individual and collective well-being monitor their physical and mental health. They reach out to networks of support and allies when they recognize problems. They seek services as needed and know where and how to access them to pursue the fulfillment of their rights to health care, protection, legal status, age- appropriate livelihoods, and education.

Mapping services

Area

Well-being

Duration

Part I: This is an activity for the leader or facilitator to complete and requires some research.

Part II: 30-40 minutes

Part III: Varies depending on travel to the location and service provider.

Materials

Your prepared list of services.

Optional: Chalkboard, whiteboard, etc.

Preparation

Part I of this activity is a task for the leader (facilitator) to complete themselves – complete the Services Mapping Form before doing the other parts of the activity with participants.

Adapted from or informed by

Population Council. *Life Skills and Health Curriculum for the Adolescent Girls Empowerment Program (AGEP)*. https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/departments_sbsr-pgy/584/.

Objective

Participants are familiar with social, health, educational, legal, livelihoods, financial, and protection services where they live and how to access them.

Best fit and adaptations

This activity fits any age group of participants, because the leader will gather information for services available to participants according to their ages, life stages, and circumstances. It can be focused on services most related to the program goals, but key services such as health care and protection services should always be included in at least the mapping exercise, if not also by visiting them with participants.

Instructions

There are three parts to this activity. The first part is your preparation and is done without the participants. The second part is done with the group. The third part is visiting one or more services in the community with the participants.

Why is this activity important? Knowledge of resources and services available to young people is essential to support their holistic development. Giving young people a demonstration of how a visit to a service provider is conducted gives them some familiarity with the process and the individuals there, so that presenting themselves for help when they need it might be easier for them, especially if they are not youth-friendly services. Many times, the primary barrier to adolescents and young adults accessing benefits that they are entitled to is knowledge of the registration process or discomfort entering public offices and navigating paperwork.

Part I: Services mapping form

Complete the below form before leading the other parts of the activity with participants. Do not assume that services do not exist without investigating; take the time needed to ask people what is available. Some services are likely to be delivered through government departments or programs. Others might be coordinated through NGOs or community-based organizations (CBOs). In some places, not all social services have offices. Instead, they work through people in the community, some of whom may be volunteers. For example, gender-based violence response services might be delivered through a committee of community members. Child protection might be accessed through volunteer child protection officers.

Fill in information for each service by listing the facility, government department, or organization and where it is located. If there is no office location, list the individuals responsible for delivering or coordinating the service. Finally, for those services that involve registration, application, or other processes, describe the requirements to be eligible and an overview of the process.

Be sure to include the services that your participants are likely to benefit from. For example, legal services may be essential knowledge for migrant and displaced groups or adolescents facing discrimination; married young people should be familiar with the process of registering a marriage.

Services mapping form

	How does a participant access it? Name the facility, individual, office, phone number, or process. Is there a specific person or designated office available who is a child or youth representative; for example, is there a child/adolescent/youth friendly health clinic that has special mechanisms in place to serve young people?
Health care	
Basic health care facilities	
Is there a youth-friendly location?	
Regular outreach services	
Reproductive and sexual health services	
Psychosocial (mental health) services	
Nutritional support – where is it offered?	
Health insurance – How to enroll?	
Protection – Note any helpline numbers as well, such as Childline	
Domestic violence response services	
Sexual violence response services	
Child protection services	
Social protection or safety net programs such as cash transfers, mothers' support, disability support, etc.	
Police domestic violence response	
Legal	
Birth registration	
Marriage registration	
Identity documents – How to get them?	
Case management services	
Education	
School enrollment and transition support	

Alternative education (nonformal or remedial/ catch up programs)	
Technical and vocational training	
Scholarships or other material support	
Age-appropriate livelihoods	
Market and/or business registration	
Cooperatives	
Extension services (agricultural, veterinarian, fisheries, etc.)	
Employment assistance	
Financial	
Banks	
Micro-lending services	
Savings and loan groups	

Part II: Participant input

There are two reasons for this part of the activity, first, to see what services the participants are already aware of. The second reason is to model peer-to-peer sharing of knowledge and mutual support in accessing services.

Say: “Today we are going to talk about the services available in your community. What do we mean by services?”

Let participants make suggestions or give examples.

Say: “Community services are the resources available to you when it comes to your health, safety, and well-being. Let’s start with health services. What health services do you know of that are available to you? Is there an adolescent/youth-friendly location or time at the health facility? Are there sexual and reproductive health services or HIV testing? Are there mental health (or psychosocial) services for people your age? What about food and nutrition support (such as iron and folate supplements)?”

Make notes of what participants are saying, on the board or in a notebook.

Say: “What about protection services? Who do you go to if you experience violence? Is there a shelter or another safe place for survivors of violence? What about a phone number to call to receive help?”

“What about education services? Are there scholarship programs? We know where the main schools are, but does anyone know of alternative education programs? Or vocational/technical training?”

“Legal services are things like birth registration or marriage registration. Does anyone know where you can do that? How about identity documents? Do you know of any other legal services?”

“Are there services to support people’s livelihoods? Such as agricultural extension? Does anyone know

how to register a business or get a spot at the market? Are there groups of producers in cooperatives? Is there a place to get help finding work?"

"Finally, financial services. How can you get a loan? Are there banks where young people like you can open accounts? Are there any savings and loan groups in the community?"

"Are we missing anything on our list? Maybe in an area I have not talked about?"

Describe other services that participants have not mentioned but that you have on the Services Mapping Form. Emphasize the importance of turning to the services available in the community whenever participants, members of their families, or friends need assistance. Explain that it is also okay to ask trusted adults to help you decide which service you need or simply to accompany you.

Discussion

Quickly review the services on your list and any that participants have added.

1. Which of these services have you used before? Only share the information if you feel comfortable doing so. How was the experience? Were the services friendly to youth?
2. Which of these services do you think you might use in the future?
3. Which of them do you feel you would like more information on?

Part III: Visits

This part should take place after you have arranged a visit (or visits) to the services that participants would like to know more about. The ideal visit would be the following:

- It is arranged with a service provider.
- The service provider is there to welcome participants, explain how it works, and answer questions.
- A "tour" is given that shows where someone would enter, who they would check in with (if anyone), and where different tasks can be completed (such as departments in a clinic, desks in a registrar's office, etc.). It should also discuss if there are costs, and if so, how much, to any services; this may be most relevant for healthcare costs.
- The service is within walking distance of the group's regular meeting place. If it is too far to walk, it will require extra planning to organize shared transportation or use public transportation.
- The services provided are not sensitive in the community, and/or you have permission from parents and guardians of adolescents to take participants there.

However, if the visit cannot be arranged with someone who works there, even visiting the outside of a service location will help young people feel more familiar with it.

Another option, if a visit is not possible or a service does not take place at a particular location, is to invite a service provider to come to a regular group meeting. In this case, all the same information should be provided about how to use the service, and participants should be encouraged to ask questions.

Optional: An additional step to take to help participants become familiar with services is to have them work together to draw a map of the community with service locations noted, including the homes of representatives of services without locations. Such a map can also be used to mark the homes of group participants so that they can better support each other outside of meeting sessions. This activity requires a large piece of paper with tape and different color markers, pens, or pencils, or a large chalk board.

Note: Some young people may face discrimination in accessing services due to their citizenship, gender, ethnicity, religion, poverty, or another trait. They likely need more support to enter places that they may not be welcome. Be sensitive to those situations and prepared to help adolescents and youth individually if possible.

Discussion after the visit

1. What did you learn from the visit?
2. Was anything about it surprising to you?
3. Do you think you will feel comfortable asking for help from this service provider? Why or why not?
4. How can you support each other to use the service?



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to make notes of all the resources noted during the discussion so they have the information for themselves, family, or friends in the future.

Stress management

Area Well-being (Perseverance)
Duration 45 minutes
Materials A rubber band (elastic). Alternatively, you can use a balloon or a piece of cloth. Optional: Chalkboard, whiteboard, etc.
Preparation Be familiar with the activity. Adjust the language about mental health services to be specific for what is available in your context.
Adapted from or informed by CARE. <i>Waxbar Carrurtaada (Educate Your Children) II: Girls' Empowerment Forum Leadership Training Manual</i> . Population Council. <i>Life Skills and Health Curriculum for the Adolescent Girls Empowerment Program (AGEP)</i> . https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/departments_sbsr-pgy/584/ . Government of Sierra Leone, Ministry of Health and Sanitation, National Secretariat for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy. <i>I Am Somebody: National Life Skills Manual for Children 9-13 Years Old</i> and <i>I Am Somebody: National Life Skills Manual for Children 14+ Years Old</i> .

Objective Participants know several ways to manage stress.
Best fit and adaptations This activity is good for all ages: younger adolescents (ages 10-14), older adolescents (15-19), and young adults (20-24).
Instructions <p>Hold the rubber band (elastic) up in front of the group. Start stretching it out (be careful that you point it away from people in case it slips!).</p> <p>Ask the following as you stretch it. (If you are using a balloon, blow it up slowly and change the questions as needed. If you are using a cloth, stretch it apart until it looks like it will tear. Change the questions as needed.) Say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “What is this?” (A rubber band or elastic.)• “What is it used for?” (It has many uses but it is especially for holding things together.)• “What happens to it as I stretch it?” (It gets thinner or weaker.)• “What would happen if I kept stretching it?” (It would eventually break.) <p>Say: “When we push something beyond its ability, we put it under stress. People also feel stress.”</p> <p>“What does the word ‘stress’ mean?”</p> <p>Let participants make suggestions of what causes stress, feelings that come with stress, and physical signs that you are feeling stress.</p> <p>Say: “Stress also means the body’s reaction to difficult or demanding situations. It is usually experienced as tension, anxiety, or pressure. It can also cause fear or anger. When we are going</p>

through challenging times, we might feel stressed constantly. We all experience stress, but we don't all experience it in exactly the same way."

Have participants form pairs. Ask them to take a few minutes to talk in their pairs about how they feel when they are stressed, or if they would rather, talk about how they know when someone close to them is feeling a lot of stress. Some examples for them to discuss are:

- How do they feel physically? (Tight muscles, stomach pains, tiredness, headaches, fast heartbeat, shaking hands, etc.)
- How do their behaviors change? (Teeth grinding, use of alcohol or drugs, being angry with others, crying, etc.)
- How does their thinking change? (Negative self-talk, difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness, constant worry, hopelessness about the future, etc.)

After five or ten minutes, when it seems most pairs have finished, ask them to continue in pairs discussing what helps them manage stress: Say:

- What activities help them feel better or more relaxed?
- Are there thinking patterns that help them lower their stress?
- Who in their lives has played a part in lowering their level of stress?

When the pairs have finished, ask for volunteers to share their stress management methods. List them on the board or in a notebook.

Explain the following stress management methods, drawing them from the participants' suggestions when possible.

1. **Deep breathing:** Slow, deep breathing helps relax us. You can do this anytime you feel stressed. Breathe in slowly while counting to five on your fingers. (Demonstrate this by starting with a closed hand and raising a finger with each second that passes. Do it slowly.) Then breathe out while counting to five. (Demonstrate this by lowering each finger for a duration of five seconds.) Then pause for a count of five. Then, begin again, breathing in slowly and counting on your fingers to five. (Have the participants practice this together a few times.) Do you feel more relaxed?
2. **Take a mind nap (or visualize a relaxing place):** Close your eyes and imagine yourself in the most relaxing place you can think of. Maybe with someone you love, in your bed resting, floating on calm waters, or in a beautiful forest, mountains, desert, or plains. Notice all the details in that place – what are the smells in the air? What sound do you hear? Is there any wind? Is it warm or cool there? How does it feel where your body touches the ground or whatever you are sitting on? (Have the participants do this while you encourage them to notice details.) Mind naps (visualizations) become easier the more you do them, so practice when you are *not* feeling stress so that you can use them when you *are* experiencing stress.
3. **Focus on the good:** When you are under stress, it is easy to only see the negative things around you. Take a moment every day to name five things that you are grateful for. Examples include people in your life, things you value about yourself, your favorite food, and the education you have completed. (Have participants form pairs and spend a few minutes sharing five things that they are thankful for with each other.)
4. **Connect with others:** Seek out the company of people you trust. If you need to talk about the challenges you are facing or the feelings you are having, go to someone who you feel comfortable talking to, a personal ally like a relative, friend, religious leader, or teacher. Tell them what is going on.
5. **Have fun:** Meet your friends to play a sport, tell stories, wander the market, gather water together so that you can socialize, or any other activity that you enjoy. Tell jokes! Be silly! It's good for you. If you cannot leave home or work to meet anyone, then remember funny events

that happened or a story from the radio, a book, or TV that made you laugh. Play with young children. Dance, sing, play music, or make art.

6. Cry: It's okay to cry, no matter how old you are. There are healthy tears and unhealthy tears. Healthy tears can release pressures you feel. After a good cry, you should feel somewhat calmer. However, if you are crying every day or cannot stop crying, it's a sign that you might be depressed and need to seek help from mental health services or other services. (Refer to services available in your context, whether these are mental health, physical health, religious, social work, or other services.)
7. Writing a letter: Sometimes it is not talk about our stress directly. Instead, it may be easier to write about our stress. You can write a letter to someone to ask for their help, or to express your stress about a certain situation. You can write a letter to your future or past self with advice on how to manage stress. Whether you share your written letter with someone else, or keep it to yourself, the act of writing can help you redirect the stress.
8. Other methods named by participants. (Highlight any other positive stress management methods that participants named but that did not fit into one of the above. Note that any methods that involve harm to others, such as fighting, are not positive stress management methods, and the team should think about alternatives such as running, singing loudly, boxing using a stuffed bag, etc.)

Say: "Part of taking care of yourself is monitoring your stress level and practicing stress management. The more you practice, the better you will get at it. We call this resilience, the ability to handle stress. Resilience is like the ability of the rubber band (elastic) to stretch. For people, the ability to stretch to adapt to new challenges is resilience."

"Part of being a good friend and family member is helping those around you take care of themselves. That means noticing when someone seems overwhelmed with stress and taking action to help them manage stress. Invite them to tell you what is going on and how they feel; get them to play or dance with you; or make them laugh. If they seem depressed for several days, get help from mental health services, other services, family members, or another trusted person." (Refer to services available in your context, whether these are mental health, physical health, religious, social work, or other services.)

Closing

Say: "Over the coming days, practice at least two of the stress management methods we talked about today. These are: deep breathing, mind naps, focusing on the good, connecting with others, having fun, having a cry, or one of the other methods."



Optional: If participants are keeping a journal, encourage them to practice #3 and #5: on a daily basis, writing down five things they are grateful for, and try writing letters about topics that bring them stress.

Resources

Breakthrough and UNICEF. *Training Toolkit: Life Skills Curriculum for Empowering Adolescent Boys and Girls and Training Module for Adolescent Girls: Addressing Child Marriage, Sexual Harassment, and Violence*. <https://inbreakthrough.org/tool-kits/>

CARE. *Waxbar Carrurtaada (Educate Your Children) II: Girls' Empowerment Forum Leadership Training Manual*.

CARE. *Safer Programming: Embedding Safeguarding and the Protection from Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse, and Child Abuse into Programmes*. [Safer Programming-Embedding Safeguarding into Programmes V1 \(careemergencytoolkit.org\)](#)

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