

NIKK

Jill Lewis

Gendering Prevention Practices

**A practical guide to working with gender in sexual
safety and HIV/AIDS awareness education**

**Informed by the
Living for Tomorrow project
on youth, gender and HIV/AIDS prevention**

Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	3
Introduction	4
Practical suggestions for running activities	7
1 Perceptions of gender	10
2 Ways of Understanding Gender	14
3 Key Aspects of Gender for HIV Prevention	18
4 Sex as a Gendered Activity	21
5 Gender and HIV	28
6 Embodying Change	33
7 A Sense of Working Together	43
8 Reviewing Gender Issues in Context	45
Additional Resources	47

Note on author

Jill Lewis was Project Co-ordinator and researcher at NIKK, the Nordic Institute for Women's Studies and Gender Research, Oslo, in charge of design, development and implementation of the **Living for Tomorrow** project. She has been actively involved in HIV prevention initiatives with young people since the mid 1980s, and with gender and feminist politics and research since early 1970's. She is Professor of Literature and Gender Studies in the School of Interdisciplinary Arts at Hampshire College, Amherst, MA in the United States and works also internationally as HIV/AIDS prevention consultant and educator.

Illustrations by Jaanus Samma, Tallinn

Acknowledgements

Stephen Clift, from the Centre for Health Education and Research, Canterbury Christ Church University College, Canterbury UK worked with me inspiringly on many aspects of the **Living for Tomorrow** project, and was collaborative consultant to the development of this manual. Several exercises were developed together and his help was invaluable in the final editing process. I am deeply grateful to Stephen for all our collaborative HIV and gender facilitation experiences over the last 10 years.

Key input and inspiration for its various parts of its content were drawn from workshops run for **Living for Tomorrow** by Chris Cowen and Eleanor Vale of The Loud Mouth Theatre for Health Education company from Birmingham, UK and by Peggy Shaw and Lois Weaver of the feminist *Split Britches* theatre company, New York.

Thanks to the following for feedback in collaborative processes where some of these exercises were learned, tested or developed: members of the NGO **Living for Tomorrow**, Tallinn, Estonia – and the teenagers involved in its inspiring ongoing workshops for HIV mobilisation; students from the **Living for Tomorrow** course (Spring 2001 and 2002) at Hampshire College, Amherst, US, for their energy and creative vision with these issues; Stephen Clift and David Stears for earlier collaborative work in the Health Education Authority Secondary Schools Sex and HIV/AIDS Education project, England; Eldrid Midttun and the Norwegian Refugee Council, for the gender/HIV workshops they enabled in Sierra Leone; the Marion and Jasper Whiting Foundation, Peggy Maisel, and Thenji Magawasa from the Centre for Gender Studies, University of Natal, Durban, and NIKK for the contexts they enabled for gender/HIV/AIDS exercises to be explored with people from different cultural backgrounds in South Africa; AnnaStina Henriksen, for creating contexts in Sweden to explore gender and HIV issues with educators and students; the Nansen Balkan Dialogue network that enabled exploration of gender/HIV issues with participants from the Balkan countries, and workshops in Sarajevo; CESI (Centre for Education and Counselling of Women), Zagreb for inviting the **Living for Tomorrow** work into their gender/sexual health seminars in Croatia. The work of Maria de Bruyn, Nadine France, Gill Gordon and Alice Welbourn gave inspiration to the manual's production.

The development of the manual was supported in its early stage by Hampshire College and in its final writing and publication by generous support from NIKK. Special thanks to Fride Eeg-Henriksen for NIKK's backing of this last concrete outcome from the **Living for Tomorrow** project. We welcomed collaboration with the Norwegian Refugee Council to print extra copies of the manual for use in their work with teacher training for education for refugee children.

Many thanks to Jaanus Samma, active in Living from Tomorrow from its early days, for his willing collaboration on the manual's illustrations.

Thank you to Eve, Jean Claude, Margaret, Ellie, Peggy, Serena, Myrna, Shirley, Jenny, Sarah, Stephen, Charles, Sara, Eva, Bente Marie, Eldrid, Sirle, Martyn, Jake and Rebecca for support in autumn 2002.

Introduction

“Without any study and knowledge of institutional inequities based on gender and risk factors, we will not be able to produce adequate strategies to face HIV and other STDs... In a nutshell the strategy to control, stop, and reduce the HIV epidemic needs to incorporate a clear gender perspective” (Sept.1999); “We must summon the courage to talk frankly and constructively about sexuality. We must recognise the pressures on our children to have sex that is neither safe nor loving. We must provide them with information, communication skills and, yes, condoms. To change fundamentally how girls and boys relate to each other and how men treat girls and women in painstaking work. But surely our children’s lives are worth the effort.” (July 2001). Pascoal Mocumbi, Prime Minister of Mozambique.

This manual offers some simple learning activities that can help HIV/AIDS educators or trainers develop young people’s **critical gender awareness**, which is so crucial for effectively promoting safer sexual behaviour. The manual is based out of the work that the **Living for Tomorrow** project explored in Estonia. The project focused on the central and crucial role of gender issues in HIV/AIDS education and prevention. It explored the dilemmas and challenges in implementing gender/focused HIV prevention education in contexts where people have barely begun to explore critically the realities and consequences of the gender system they inhabit.

Why this manual?

Recent studies show that raised awareness about HIV and how it is transmitted still does not lead frequently enough to safer sexual behaviours. This marks a crisis in HIV prevention strategies, as HIV/AIDS epidemics continue to spread, to a considerable extent through heterosexual sex. ([HIV/AIDS: Awareness and Behaviour, United Nations, NY, 2002](#))

Some key insights from the **Living for Tomorrow** project inform this manual:

- Most HIV awareness education still lacks a deeper engagement with the gender issues that shape sexual behaviours between men and women.
- If we do not look critically at how the gender system within a culture informs and affects sexual behaviours, and if we do not engage people in understanding the implications of the ‘unquestioned gender system’, we are excluding from HIV prevention education key understandings about what perpetuates heterosexual risk behaviours.
- Norms of heterosexual relations within cultures invested with expectations of gender inequality (assumed by both women and men) feed stigmatisation of and discrimination against men who have sex with men. These foster ignorance, fear and risk behaviours.
- Exploring norms and traditions that shape how people experience and understand gender and relations between men and women makes sexual health education and HIV/AIDS prevention more interesting and more relevant to individual men and women, their lives and relationships.

What the manual offers

This manual offers simple group activities that can help to stimulate discussion of the taken-for-granted expectations about relations between men and women that are the familiar cultural back cloth against which sexual relationships take shape.

Discussing the gender system in any culture involves:

- Exploring what beliefs, attitudes and expectations are popularly held about men and women
- Examining taken-for-granted ways of understanding gender, and personal experiences of the gender system throughout childhood, adolescence and adulthood
- Looking at how society organizes the differences between men and women – in its traditions, culture, laws, economy, history etc.
- Thinking about how the emotional involvement and physical sexual behaviours of men and women are gendered activities
- Becoming more aware of how gendered sexual relations frequently embody inequalities and differences of expectations that put sexual safety and health at risk in different ways
- Developing a ‘critical literacy’ about the gender system, that can help activate reflective gender politics within sexual health education and HIV/AIDS prevention

A key element in developing gender-focused work in HIV prevention is a focus on *how the gender system is understood in daily life and as a result of academic theory and research.*

For this reason, it is important that exercises, in which participants explore how the gender system looks from their own experience, are framed by theoretical understandings useful for analysing gender. To help in this process, the manual provides some key thoughts on perspectives on the gender system that are crucial for envisaging change in sexual behaviours between men and women.

It is also important to say that ‘gender’ is a topic some people often think that they can naturally and easily pick up and address and then move on - having ‘done’ gender. But gender is a complicated issue. We are embedded in gender beliefs, having grown up digesting them all our lives – even as we try to critically question and understand how the gender system works. We embody assumptions about gender in our own daily behaviour and in how we interpret men and women around us.

The HIV/AIDS epidemics are revealing how gender systems that embody ideas and practices of inequality and power imbalance between men and women work to the disadvantage of sexual health in all societies, and in the lives of our family, our friends and in our own lives. It is gender research, feminist theory and gender equality politics that aim to interrogate the histories, processes, causes and possible resolutions of gender inequality. These are rich and deep fields of study and analysis that, in most societies now and internationally, are seeking to deepen and help frame new understandings of how the gender systems work. Their aim is to begin to envisage how things might work differently to enhance more equal, caring and collaborative relations

between men and women. So it is important that work on gender in the context of sexual health education and HIV/AIDS prevention connects with insights from gender research that has been carried out both internationally and locally.

The understanding of wider frameworks of gender analysis is very important. Discussion of many angles of gender-related HIV/AIDS issues is also crucial. But these need to be linked in individuals to a very immediate personal questioning of the dilemmas the gender system poses. People need to have a way in to their own explorations of gender for safer sexual behaviours to take root in their personal visualizations of change.

This manual aims to open the first doors beyond which deeper studies in gender analysis and new ways of thinking can be further explored. It provides examples of some of the workshop exercises used during the **Living for Tomorrow** project in Estonia and in workshops in countries as diverse as Sierra Leone, USA, Sweden, South Africa, England and Bosnia. They met with high levels of interest and productive, engaged debate with both men and women, ranging from teachers to students, policemen to refugees, nurses to soldiers, in very different contexts.

Working with gender questions is a huge challenge. It cannot be underestimated how difficult it is for all of us to open our minds to rethink beliefs that in our hearts and imagination we embody in all kinds of fixed, traditional ways, as we have grown up as gendered human beings. Most of us experience strong unwillingness to disturb some aspect of traditional gender notions in conscious dialogue with others, and also have our own particular inner resistances to – or anxieties about - dislocating our ideas about what men/women “are” or “should be”.

The challenge in gender education is to find what kinds of activities and discussions encourage flexibility and open-minded reflection; in contrast to approaches that confirm inflexibility and rigidity in thinking. Educational processes that encourage movement in critical thinking are the ones that can best inform personal agency and new consensus for social changes that this era of HIV/AIDS so urgently needs.

Practical Suggestions for Running Activities

The teacher who walks in the shadow of the temple, among his followers,
gives not his wisdom but rather of his faith and his lovingness...
If he is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom,
but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind

Kahlil Gibran: *The Prophet*

- * Work with a group, ideally of around 20 participants (no more than 30 if possible). It is possible to work in larger groups if you have to, since many sessions involve small group work within the larger group. The exercises can be done with adults or young people.
- * Plan to undertake as many of the activities as possible, since they allow participants to approach gender from different angles and to grasp wider and more personal aspects of the issues involved. Never plan the timing for workshops that involve active involvement too tightly. They often take longer than you imagine. At the same time, plan the timing of specific activities in detail, so you are ‘holding them together’ well, as people’s energy risks expanding them too much!
- * Most activities involve facilitating discussion among participants, and often need reflective input from the facilitator on why these gender discussions are important and how they connect to sexual health. Facilitators need to think through key issues in gender theory (see Section III) before the sessions begin. It is important at the end of each exercise to process it with the group – to identify and summarise what has emerged or been learned from it.
- * Workshop sessions are never just a matter of content. Facilitators are taking people through a process that participants may go on to provide for others. Facilitators need to work creatively within the limits of material resources available, and make their methods of working explicit to all involved.
- * Many exercises involve work in small groups, with feedback into the reassembled full group. If all groups are addressing the same issue, after the first group has fed back their ideas, ask the next group to add anything new or different that came up in their discussion. Then the third group should do the same, and so on round all groups. If each group is given something different to discuss, however, then the feedback is different and not repetitive from each group. Another strategy is to have each small group write their ideas on flip chart paper, and then other groups can circulate around and see what other groups wrote – and respond as they go round.
- * Structure the sessions clearly then trust to the group process as participants engage with the activities. The spirit within which the work is undertaken is as important as the activities themselves. Interest, involvement, listening, generosity and collaboration are all key ingredients to the work, and the facilitator’s role is to help generate all of these.
- * Opening up the depth and complexities of gender issues involves helping people learn together, let go assumptions, and not take the gender system for granted. A spirit of curiosity and interrogation is important.

* These workshop activities aim to set questions and insights in motion. It is very important, however, to connect personal or more general discussions on gender, sexual health and HIV/AIDS to local research initiatives and resources. This will help to bring specific issues into focus in a local and culturally relevant way.

* Discussions about gender carry a number of risks. They can become ‘too abstract’, ‘too moral’, ‘too heated’ or ‘too superficial’ in drawing on common stereotypes. The challenge is to deepen a vision about why gender issues matter and to explore strategies for action that can make a difference.

* Facilitators should feel free to modify any exercise to meet local issues and interests or to meet what are specific needs of that particular group.

The activities in this manual can help people do the following:

- Care in new ways about gender issues, and feel cared for as they explore them
- Think about their own gendered behaviours and expectations
- Reflect on ways men and women see themselves and each other, and the invisible ‘gender rules’ they might feel policed by in the context of lived realities and complicated experiences
- Have space for feedback, silences, difficulties and contradictions and allow changes in thinking to surface without – or beyond - defensiveness
- Experience a sense of respect in the room – so differences of view can be expressed and listened to by both women and men.
- Develop awareness of both the damaging consequences of current gender systems, as well as collaborative possibilities for change involving mutual care and safety
- Understand that to encourage behaviour changes educational methods need to *engage with gender issues, *be participatory, *encourage active involvement, *give interesting images of responsibility, *be fun and *energise a sense of possibility that change can happen
- Appreciate the importance of developing critical literacy about gender concerns - in gender issues we all are collaborative learners all the time – each of us is part of the problem, part of building new understanding, and part of possible solutions
- Experience their own agency and ways of creating conditions that mobilise people’s energy in addressing issues of sexual safety and risk

Gender awareness education is not just about getting facts across to individuals. It is not something that can be accomplished through a single workshop. It involves an ongoing process of engaging people in thinking about how to move forward with new gender awareness, and setting agendas for collaborative work between men and women. It involves immediate ‘thinking out loud’ about personal attitudes and perceptions – as well as wider critical discussion of norms and ways of understanding gender. It is not just a young people’s issue – but involves re-thinking on the part of teachers and political and community leaders of all ages.

The Importance of Thoughtful Preparation and Tactics

* The positioning of chairs is very important. They are best in a circle, where everyone is in the front row, facing into each other. Keep the seating 'tidy' as this helps to produce a sense of calmness, order and focus.

* Introduce each workshop so there is a good start to the activity with all participants very clear about objectives and procedures. Similarly, bring each activity to a clear conclusion – with time for reflection on the issues or ideas that have surfaced in discussion.

* Be well prepared for the efficient running of each session. Have a clear time frame in mind for each activity and how it fits into the time plan for the day.

* Urge people not to carry on conversations in undertones during full group sessions, and ask people to stop if they start doing this. The focus on listening is important to the atmosphere and collaboration within the group. Mobile phones should all be turned off.

* Establish collectively agreed-on GROUND RULES. To save time, you can suggest an initial list (checking everyone agrees at each point), and then ask the group to add any others they think are important. A core list of ground rules can include:

- Confidentiality
- Listening (only one person talking at a time)
- Avoiding interrupting others
- No pressure to take part
- Respect for what others are saying
- Careful not to judge or ridicule anyone – so people get to say what they think
- All trying to take part actively in discussion
- Not doing things that hurt or harm others
- Accepting that each of us has a right to change our minds
- Realising that all questions are worth asking

* Icebreakers where everyone has a chance to speak are important. They pull in shy participants, and create a feeling of inclusiveness

* Using same-sex groups can be a good idea for small group work

* Let people know where they can go for follow-up support

* To get people thinking actively, it can be good to give them follow-up assignments, e.g. to interview someone about how they understand certain gender issues or HIV/AIDS

1. Perceptions of Gender

Rather than importing ready-made analyses of gender, it is better to enable people to identify for themselves the ‘markers’ of gender differences and gender beliefs in their society and culture. Discussions therefore will tap into the landscape of gender meanings that participants themselves perceive, use and experience.

Exercise 1.1 Producing a ‘gender map’

Aims: To begin a discussion of how the gender system positions men and women
Materials: Paper and pen for each group; a flip chart and coloured pens
Time: 1 hour total: 20 minutes in groups, 15 minutes feedback, 15 minutes discussion

Organise participants into groups of 3 or 4 – with men in different groups from women.

Ask for one person to volunteer to take notes in each group

Then ask the groups to discuss the following questions. Give these out one at a time, with 10 minutes for groups to respond to each question among themselves.

(a) What are the main problems, difficulties, pressures or challenges facing young men in our society today? In their communities, families and personal lives?

(b) What are the main problems, difficulties, pressures or challenges faced by young women in our society today? In their communities, families and personal lives?

Ask each group to feed back their responses first to (a). List on a flip chart all the issues boys/men face. Ask the men’s groups to list their responses first, then add to these what the women have listed. There will probably be some duplication in the lists produced by each group, so as the feedback continues, ask groups to add any new ideas to the combined list.

Then ask each group to feed back their responses to (b), beginning with the women’s responses first and list on separate flip chart pages all the issues girls/women face.

Pin all the lists up, so they are in full view of the group. These lists provide a kind of ‘gender map’ generated from within experiences and perspectives of participants, and the rest of this exercise involves discussing in the larger group responses people have to this ‘map.’

Open general discussion of responses to this map in the full group

These questions can help guide the discussion:

What do you think about the vulnerabilities and pressures men face? What do the men feel when they see the list?

Is there anything on the ‘men’s difficulties’ flip chart that women in the group find surprising?

What do you think about the vulnerabilities and pressures women face? What do the women feel when they see the list?

Is there anything on the 'women's difficulties' flip chart that men in the group find surprising?

What risks do both men and women confront, in our society today? Do men and women face any different issues? How are they different? Does the situation in society put men at risk / in risk-taking activities differently from women?

Do the difficulties /challenges occur in public, social life – or in personal, family life? For men? For women?

What or who protects or supports men in face of these problems? And women?

Are the risks and problems women face more related to sexual concerns than those men face? Why might that be?

Follow up from the exercise:

Facilitator should have the gender map typed up, and hand it out to everyone later, asking them to discuss the issues raised by the exercise with a friend, partner, members of their family or someone at work.

Exercise 1.2 Identifying valued characteristics of men and women

Aim: To open discussion about social expectations and norms about men and women

Materials: Prepared question sheet. Good supply of pens, flip chart and marker

Time: 30 minutes total: 15 minutes for handout, 15 minutes for discussion

Prepare copies of the following list of unfinished statements. Hand everyone a copy, and ask them to take a couple of minutes completing the statements:

A 'real man' is a man who...

He's not supposed to...

But the cost of being a 'real man' is that he can't...

A real woman' is a woman who...

She's not supposed to...

But the cost of being a 'real woman' is that she can't...

Collect the responses in.

Now ask the group to call out responses to the following questions, and write them on a flip chart on 2 pages: MEN and WOMEN.

- * **What characteristics are most valued *in men* in our society?**
- * **What characteristics are most valued *in women* in our society?**

**Do people agree with what is on each list? Has anyone any comments about the lists?
What happens if men or women display characteristics from the other list? (Take some interesting, potentially amusing examples)**

End the session by having 2 volunteers read out some of the statements completed at the beginning.

Exercise 1.3 Mime-game

- Aim:** To create involvement in the group with humour, while focusing on how gender values become embodied in normative assumptions
- Materials:** Pieces of paper, which you have prepared with single words, as below
- Time:** 40 minutes total: 5 minutes explaining, 20 minutes miming, 15 minutes reading back lists and discussing

Prepare in advance pieces of paper, with **one** of the following words, **numbered**, on each:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Husband | 2. Wife |
| 3. Man | 4. Woman |
| 5. Cook | 6. Police officer |
| 7. Father | 8. Mother |
| 9. Boy | 10. Girl |
| 11. Pimp | 12. Prostitute |

Now explain these rules to the group.

* We need volunteers to help with a simple MIME game (acting out the meaning of words with NO USE OF LANGUAGE – only body movements). It involves miming single words – it could be for example: GIRAFFE or TEACHER. We also need someone to act as a recorder for the exercise.

* Mix the words so they are not in order. Each volunteer will come to the front of the group, choose one card with a word they should mime. They should mime the word for 1 – 2 minutes only, and the group must shout out as many words they can think of that the person could be miming. If someone shouts out the correct word... it is VERY IMPORTANT that the volunteer doesn't stop or show that they have said it, but keeps miming for the full time. (Explain this repeatedly, because people's instinct is to let the group know when the right word is said).

* It will be a competition to see which mime gets the most words. They can be nouns or adjectives or verbs. ANY word participants associate with the mime.

- * The recorder must write down **all** the words shouted out – under the number given to each.
- * Repeat this until all the words have been mimed.
- * When all the miming, shouting-out and writing down is finished, take each word at a time, read it out, then read out the field of associations that have surfaced from the group in relation to the mime chosen to communicate it. Then take its ‘pair’ word, and read out the words the group process associated with it. E.g. WORD 1 – first read out list of shouted words – then tell the group it was ‘husband’ being mimed etc.
- * Finally – discuss in full group the contrast between the associated images that were suggested for the ‘male’ words and the ‘female’ words. The following questions will help to structure the discussion:

What do people notice? What common associations come to mind for ‘men’ and for ‘women’? What gender stereotypes are reflected in the responses to this exercise? How often do we invoke and interpret gender through reductive stereotypes we carry in us?

Exercise 1.4. Thinking back

- Aim:** To engage people in thinking more personally about the gender map, in their own lives, to start listen to each other’s perspectives and think about how gender affects individuals’ positions sexually.
- Materials:** Pen and paper for groups. Prepared handout with questions below. Flip chart and marker. Tape.
- Time:** 15 minutes in groups, 25 minutes feedback and discussion

Have people in small, single sex groups, brainstorming responses to the following questions one by one, Have one person in each group leading the activity and someone else writing down responses. The questions could be prepared on handouts, or written up in large print on flip charts on the walls.

- **What do you remember about boys when you were at school?**
- **What do you remember about girls when you were at school?**
- **What do you think young women most need to know about sex?**
- **What do you think young men most need to know about sex?**
- **What do you think young women most want to know about sex?**
- **What do you think young men most want to know about sex?**
- **What were some of your greatest dreams or hopes about sex as a teenager?**
- **What were some of your greatest fears about sex when you were a teenager?**

Have the responses to each question read back to the full group, listing them on the flip chart. Take all responses to one question at a time, with open discussion about what has been written to each in turn. Were men’s responses similar or different to women’s?

2. Ways of Understanding Gender

Each of us has learned and digested what is ‘means’ to be a man or a woman – right from our early years. It is one thing to look around and see the external social signs of gender meanings. It is another, equally important, to reflect on how our personal imaginings of gender, that have left traces in us from experiences and memories of growing up, affect our assumptions about gender.

Warm up

Ask participants to stand in a circle. Go round the group twice with each person finishing these sentences:

I would like to be (*name a well-known WOMAN*) because she...

I would like to be (*name a well-known MAN*) because he...

Exercise 2.1 A time I really knew I was a man or a woman

Aim: To anchor for participants a personal sense of experiencing the gender system
Materials: Pen and paper for everyone. Enough space from each to sit writing on their own.
Time: 45 minutes total: about 15 minutes writing, 30 minutes reading and any reflections

Explaining the activity

Give the following explanation to the group:

Usually we go about daily life doing lots of things without thinking “I am a man” or “I am a woman” as we go. But sometimes there are moments when our experience can be vividly shaped by the very fact that each of us is either a man or a woman. The situation would have been a totally different experience, if we had been the other sex.

Think of a time when you were very aware that you were a boy / girl, or man / woman – when the situation made it very visible to you that being male or female determined your experience of what was happening. Take some time to think back in your life and find such an experience.

We will have 15 minutes while everyone very simply writes down the story of what happened. Please do this quietly for you and then we will have the chance to discuss what emerges. Don’t try to explain or analyse, just tell the story, e.g. “I was 13 years old, walking home from my grandmother’s when...” etc.

Call everyone back into circle after 15 minutes, and ask for volunteers who would like to read their stories. After first volunteers, go systematically round the circle, giving each person a chance to read out loud or pass. Go round twice, in case someone changes their mind, and does want to read after all.

After everyone who wishes to have read their stories, ask the group to reflect on the themes or issues that have emerged.

This exercise brings to light a range of different ways that personal experience is marked by the gender system – right across our lives. It often brings out very strong memories of the social pressures experienced by men or women to ‘perform’ the traditionally expected gender norms or roles. It can bring out stories of shock or violence or fear or vulnerability – from men as well as women. It is important to thank everyone who reads.

Exercise 2.2 Assumptions about difference

Aim: To make visible ‘popular’ assumptions about male and female bodies and sex
Materials: Pen and paper for each group
Time: 30 minutes total: 10 minutes discussing in groups, 20 minutes feedback and discussion

Have everyone go into groups of 3 or 4 - some single-sex, some mixed.

Ask each group to discuss and make a list of their thoughts in response to this question:

Apart from *physical* differences, what do you consider to be the main differences between men and women? (So this is NOT about the BODY – but other perceptions of difference)

Groups should feed back into main group – and the group should be asked to respond to each group’s list.

Have an open discussion. The following questions may help to focus the debate:

Are these fixed truths about men and women? Do these ideas of difference relate to you and people you know? Were they the same 100 years ago? Are these differences learned or biologically fixed behaviours? How do you know what you claim is ‘natural’ or true? Why do we claim there is so much difference between men and women?

The presence of probable differences of perception and interpretation in the group will highlight how informal assumptions and popular beliefs are often based on unconsciously accumulated hearsay and stereotypes rather than objective truths. Often we opt for very limiting traditions for interpreting the male and female body. To script safer sexual behaviours it is important to be open to imagining male and female bodies able to enact different behaviours.

Exercise 2.3 Images of equality

Aim: To make explicit in the group the different messages young people receive about gender
Materials: Pen and paper for each small group
Time: 45 minutes total: 10 minutes in small groups, 35 in feedback and discussion

First – ask the full group for some responses to these two questions:

**Are men and women equal in our country today?
What are main areas of equality and inequality?**

Then divide people into 5 groups, each to discuss **one** of the following, for 10 minutes:

Are there different expectations for men and women in the following areas of social life?

- **Education and training**
- **Employment**
- **Family responsibilities**
- **Socially acceptable behaviour**
- **Sexual behaviour**

In full group again, quickly gather feedback comments, and pose the questions to the full group after each:

- **What affect on women or men do you think these different expectations have?**
- **Are they based on biology or social customs? Do they feel ‘right’ to you?**
- **What consequences do these expectations have on young people growing into men or women?**

Exercise 2.4 Images of change

Aim: To provoke thinking about how the gender system changes across time
Materials: Flip chart and pen, or board and chalk
Time: 30 minutes

Ask for full group responses to the following and write them under headings on a flip chart.

In grandparents' time	In parents' time	You now	Young people today

- **Was life ‘as a women’ or ‘as a man’ different for your grandparents from how it is for you? Can you give some examples? For women? For men?**
- **Is life ‘as a women’ or ‘as a man’ different for teenagers today, than it was for you or your parents as teenagers?**
- **Have sexual customs and behaviours changed since your grand parents’ time? And for young people now? Do you think sexual relations were different then? Why?**

So are gender systems fixed or changing? What affects changes? (Technology? Laws? Economics? Ideas of human rights? Globalisation?). In most societies gender systems have changed radically over second half of 20th century.

Exercise 2.5 Group Activity

Aim: To increase everyone's participation, interactive movement and humour
Materials: Chairs in a circle
Time: 10 – 15 minutes

NB. This is an excellent exercise to do after lunch to get energy flowing!

Make a circle of chairs with people sitting in them, then pick one person, and remove their seat, while they stand in the middle. There is now one seat too few for the group. The person in the middle says:

Everyone who has ... change seats

E.g. 'who has earrings'; 'who has two brothers or sisters'; 'who likes chocolate'; 'who is scared of the dark'; 'who has white on their shoes' etc

Each time one person doesn't manage to find a seat, and must stand in the middle and lead the action.

Then direct the game that things said should be gender related (e.g. 'All men who wash their own clothes'; 'all women who expect men to share child care'; 'all men who like strong women', 'who sometimes find other men attractive' etc.)

Take care that people are not embarrassed too much here.

This activity, as well as being fun and adrenaline stimulating, highlights a huge experience of diversity among men and women in any group.

3. Key Aspects of Gender Analysis for HIV Prevention

The material presented in this section needs a 'lecture' format. It is useful for all participants to have a printout of the information given below. This will help everyone to reflect on the issues raised after the session. Here are notes for the facilitator to think about – and then summarise in his/her own words for the group.

It is important to present to educators and young people alike the framework for understanding gender that these exercises are opening up. Otherwise, the discussions of stereotypes and 'differences between men and women' can just reinforce ideas that differences between males and females are natural and fixed.

Key aspects of this 'gender theory' are centrally important to grasp because they are at the heart of effective possibilities of gender-focused behaviour change for HIV prevention.

Rethinking gender

Gender refers to the understandings, explanation, assumptions, behaviours and actions that organise DIFFERENCE between men and women. Someone's biological sex – identifies male and female bodies. **The gender system promotes assumptions that 'men do this' and 'women do that' in a society.**

The **gender system** is:

- ❖ **SOCIAL** It is not universal. It belongs to a particular society, with its particular structures, traditions and history. Gender is organised differently – with different meanings and possibilities associated with men and women – in different societies.
- ❖ **CULTURAL** The beliefs about how men or women are may appear to us, as we grow up, to be 'given' and natural. But they are in fact cultural - they circulate in stories, attitudes, assumptions and ideas that we learn and reproduce without critical reflection. As we grow up each of us builds up ideas of what look like obvious, given differences. We learn to imagine others and ourselves according to these beliefs and stories in the culture.
- ❖ **HISTORICAL** Being a 'woman' or 'man' was different for our great grandparents, our grandparents, and our parents ... and will be different for our children. The social organisation of gender (jobs, laws, pay, education, human rights, political responsibility, freedoms to travel or own property etc) *changes* – and so women and men live themselves differently according to the terms of the time they live in.

Gender systems have changed, and are always CHANGING

**** This means gender systems CAN BE CHANGED ****

Each of us absorbs the beliefs and attitudes of our culture and we actively participate in creating others and ourselves as 'men' or women' in daily life – according to these assumptions, norms and beliefs around us.

As we imagine and construct ourselves in the gender system we encounter others according to these beliefs about what is expected of men or women. So we are all part of the process of reproducing the norms of the gender system.

But we are also able to think and act, to question and change it. If we can see harmful consequences of the gender system we live in, we have an urgency to transform it. The HIV/AIDS epidemics emphasize this dramatically

Gender and sexual behaviours

SEX / sexual behaviours / sexual relations happen within familiar social and cultural ways of understanding gender differences. Heterosexual sexual relationships are BASED on understandings of gender difference within a culture. Homosexual sexual relations are framed and affected by the beliefs about gender and heterosexuality in a society.

Assumptions about what men or women ARE, about the 'normal/essential' differences between men and women, and about how women and men 'should act' – all shape what men and women DO, how we behave, what we expect, what we want, what we look for, what we agree to – and what we DO in 'having sex' together

Sexual practices differ according to social and cultural influences (e.g. traditional beliefs, laws, the stories that circulate, media images available, religious frameworks), relationship contexts (e.g. family backgrounds, age differences, expectations of marriage or gendered behaviours), psychological factors (personal histories, insecurities, attitudes to power, confidence) and time (customs of the era, knowledge in circulation, norms in different centuries in different cultures)

So sexual behaviour is not 'fixed and determined' by the biology of the body. It is shaped and normalised by culture.

Sexual relations take place between people shaped by the gender system. This means that sexual behaviour is not 'universal' or 'natural'. Like the gender system that shapes it, sex is:

- ❖ **SOCIAL** It is not universal. It belongs to that particular society, with its particular structures, traditions and history. Sex happens differently – with different meanings and possibilities associated with men and women – in different societies. Globalisation and commercial media are now bringing Western images of sex to many parts of the world.
- ❖ **CULTURAL** All cultures hold beliefs about ways men or women are expected to be sexual 'naturally'. But in fact sexual behaviour is learned through stories, (and silences, taboos), attitudes, assumptions, and the media - much of which we digest without critical reflection. Each of us builds up ideas of what look like obvious, 'given' differences in how men and women should 'be sexual'. We learn to imagine others and ourselves according to the beliefs and stories in our culture. Cross-cultural analysis, however, shows all kinds of differences in what people do sexually and how they think about sex for men and for women, in different cultures.

- ❖ **HISTORICAL** Sexual relations were imagined and lived differently by our great grandparents, our grandparents and our parents, from how things are for us today. This is because the social and cultural organisation of gender has changed. Economic realities have changed some power relations. Science and technology have produced new forms of contraception that are more and more available. Increased mobility, the wider commercialisation of sex, and the Internet all have changed notions and practices of sex. Political commitment to equality, democracy and human rights change the understandings of sexual rights. So women and men imagine and enter into sexual relationships and sexual behaviours influenced by the terms we encounter in society around us. These are very different in most places from 100 years ago. Attitudes to domestic sexual violence have changed. Homosexuality is more widely accepted in many places. Knowledge of different sexual practices is more widespread, more discussed.

Sexual behaviour is therefore clearly organised differently – with different meanings and possibilities associated with men and women – in different societies – and at different periods of time.

Patterns of Sexual behaviour have changed, and are always CHANGING
**** This means sexual behaviour CAN BE CHANGED****

Each of us drinks in the beliefs and attitudes of our culture. We actively participate in creating others and ourselves as 'men' or 'women' in daily life – according to the assumptions, norms and beliefs about **GENDER** and **GENDERED SEX** that we encounter around us.

So we are part of the process of reproducing the norms of the gender system and traditions of gendered sexual behaviour.

But we can also critically explore, examine, think and act to question how and why these behaviours are the way they are. And we can actively work to change them - if they lead to negative outcomes.

To imagine and enact safer sexual relations, we need to have a way of thinking that understands sex is a gendered activity. We need to see how neither the gender system nor sexual practices are 'natural' or 'fixed' – but are shaped by the imaginings and changing customs of a culture – and are open to change through our interventions.

4. Sex as a Gendered Activity

We all carry in us ideas we have absorbed about men and sex, or women and sex. We all carry in us ideas about expected sexual behaviours – many shaped or censored by our culture and the images it has offered to us. But being a sexually active man or a sexually active woman is radically affected by the gender system that shapes acceptable forms of masculinity or femininity.

If the sexual behaviours of men and of women lend themselves to risky, harmful and health-sabotaging activities, then the gendered expectations that inform those sexual behaviours have to be questioned and understood as a problem, in order to be able to change them.

Exercise 4.1 Looking at gender scripts

- Aim:** To energise individual reflection on personal opinions, and generate group participation, while highlighting differences in perceptions of gender and sexual roles
- Materials:** None
- Time:** 25 minutes: 10 in pairs, 15 in feedback and comments

All sitting in a circle, ask people to turn to each other in pairs, to discuss their opinions about the following:

- **What makes a man a good husband?**
- **What makes a woman a good wife?**
- **What makes a man a good lover?**
- **What makes a woman a good lover?**

Open into full group discussion, and ask for feedback on each question. The range of emotions, disagreements – and humour – generated will help get adrenaline flowing.

Are there different expectations of performance in marriage for men and women? What do these differences illustrate? Are there different expectations of sexual performance for men and women? How do expectations position man and women differently regarding sex?

Exercise 4.2 Gendered sexual partners?

This exercise is appropriate only where written media are a significant part of daily culture.

- Aim:** To make explicit the ‘loaded’ images of gender difference around us in our culture
- Materials:** 2 Flip chart pages, scissors and glue for each group. Masking tape or pins to fix flip sheet collages to walls for display. Newspapers and magazines – each group will need one or two if possible. Purchase some from local kiosks, but ask everyone to bring one too.
- Time:** 50 minutes total: 5 minutes explaining, 15 minutes cutting and sticking, 15 minutes group displaying and examining collages on wall; 15 minutes full group observations

Here are notes for the facilitator to think about – and summarise in own words for the group:

Bring to the group a diverse selection of publications available that day in kiosks, newsagents etc. and ask everyone to bring in a magazine or/and newspapers. They should try to include a range of women's magazines, men's magazines (even provocative ones) – aimed at different ages, interests, as well as daily news media.

Divide the group into smaller groups of 4 or 5. Each group should have a couple of magazines/newspapers. Ask them to go through the publications and tear out images of men and images of women. Then, using tape or glue, make a collage of 'images of men' on one flip chart page, and 'images of women' on another.

After 15 – 20 minutes, ask them to finish up – then have all the sheets of 'images of men' fixed along one wall, and the 'images of women' on another.

In new smaller groups of 3, ask them to go around and examine the collages. In each group one person pretends to come from another planet, where there is no gender system (just one kind of creature/being – neither male nor female). The other 2 must explain to this visitor, **based only on the images they see**, what a man and a women IS, with ideas taken only from images on the walls.

After 10 minutes, return to full group. Use the following questions to get feedback from group:

- **What did the 'visitors' learn about men? About women? What seem to be their characteristics? Typical gestures? Activities? How do they hold their bodies?**
- **What do men look like? What do they 'do'? How do they behave? What interests them?**
- **What do women look like? What do they 'do'? How do they behave? What interests them?**
- **In comparing these images of men and women... who seems to have power? Who seems to have agency? Who is assertive? Who seems to be more likely to take decisions? Who is confident/vulnerable – and in what ways? Who is strong/weak – and in what ways?**
- **Do these media images look like YOU and the men and women you see every day?**

Finally, ask participants to select some specific images of men and of women, and discuss how each might approach sex with the opposite sex.

Exercise 4.3 Of bodies and sex

- Aim:** To open discussion on often unarticulated beliefs about male and female anatomy and sex
- Materials:** None
- Time:** 20 minutes: 10 in groups, 10 in feedback

Ask everyone to go into groups of 4, some single sex, some mixed. Ask them to consider the following questions, and note down their ideas for feedback to the whole group:

Does having a male or female body affect sexual needs and desires?

Does having a male or female body affect sexual behaviours?

After 15 minutes, each group should feed back to the whole – and see what agreement/disagreements there are in the group as a whole.

This exercise shows that there are many different ideas in circulation about the sexual physical implications of the gendered sexual body. Most are not actually based on definite, unbiased scientific knowledge, but popular, cultural assumptions people take for granted without thinking them through.

Exercise 4.4 Sexual expectations

- Aims:** To stimulate discussion of held ideas about sex between men and women
- Materials:** 6 flip chart pages prepared with headings in columns as below + 6 sets of cards, each prepared with set of statements from one group below.
- Time:** 30 minutes

Prepare, on each of 6 flipchart pages, 3 columns, and 5 blank rows below, in the following way:

TRUE	Divided opinions	FALSE

Prepare six sets of small cards, one for each group below, with one statement on each card.

SET 1

- Sexual relationships between men and women are not equal.**
- Men enjoy sex more than women do.**
- The best sex involves sexual intercourse.**
- Men need to have penetrative sex**
- Men tend to want sexual intercourse more than women do**

SET 2

- In sexual relationships men are the active partners and women are passive.**
- In relationships love and closeness are more important than sexual pleasure.**
- Men find it more difficult to talk about sex than women do**
- Women want pleasure from sex just as much as men do**
- Men are more interested in their sexual performance than being emotionally close**

SET 3

Men and women want different things from sexual relationships
It is more acceptable for a man to be sexually experienced than it is for a woman
Young women talk about sex and love in different ways from young men
Young men have just as many anxieties about sex as young women do
Relationships between men and women are more equal now than 20 years ago

SET 4

Young women are often pressured to have sex by men when they don't want to
Young women are more worried about the consequences of sex than young men are
Young women take sex more seriously than young men
Men tend to control what happens in sex more than women do
Sex tends to stop when a man has had an orgasm, even if the woman has not

SET 5

It is normal for men to have many sexual partners, because they need sex more
Women generally know more about sex than men do.
Women are keener to please their partner sexually, than to seek their own pleasure
Women are more interested in the love relationship, men more in the physical sex
Many men don't feel confident about using condoms

SET 6

Pornography is now a familiar part of a normal sexual culture
Women often go into intimate relations with men without a clear sexual agenda
Condoms can make sex more pleasurable
It is as important to men as to women to strengthen the relationship
Men are more concerned about unwanted pregnancy and sexual infections than women

Divide people into groups of about 6. Each group should have its own prepared flipchart paper chart, and one set of cards

The group must decide where to place each statement. Do they think the statement is true or false? If as a group they cannot agree, then the card can be placed in the middle under 'divided opinions'. The reasons for placing the statement where it ends up should be clearly articulated as they decide. Any disagreements with majority position should be listened to carefully.

After 15 minutes, all come back into a full circle. A person from each group should read aloud each statement and explain why they placed it where they did on the chart.

Finally, ask the group if they see any ways the responses to these statements relate to any earlier workshop discussions of gender differences and inequalities, of perceptions of vulnerability and power.

Exercise 4.5 Problem solving 'carousel'

Aims: To listen with empathy to different ways men and women experience sexual insecurity
Materials: Pen and paper
Time: 1 hour: 15 minutes in small groups, 45 minutes in carousel

Ask the group to split up into small groups of 3. All single sex – men only, or women only. They should discuss the following question in their small group, based on their own or friends' memories:

What are some of the anxieties or fears about sex that young men/women might face before or as they became sexually active?

Women's groups should discuss young women's anxieties, and men's groups should discuss young men's anxieties. Each group should write 3 replies on separate pieces of paper, writing MAN or WOMAN at top of the card, to show whose concern it is.

Now the group should reposition chairs into a double circle, the inside chairs facing out, paired with the outside chairs facing in.

Ask the men to sit in the inner circle and women on the outside. If there are uneven numbers of men and women, this doesn't matter. Just separate the sexes as much as possible, then anyone can fill up the empty seats.

They now go into paired discussion. One partner in each pair reads out the problem on the card as if their own. For example 'I am a man. My problem is that I feel nervous about women's bodies'

The other partner then has to help them deal with the problem. Whatever they think of the problem (first response may be laughter or judgement) the aim is to **help** their partner deal with the anxiety or fear

After 5 minutes, they swap roles – with a new problem being expressed for help from the other partner.

After 5 minutes, get the outer circle only to move 3 seats to the right and the paired process of listening to a problem and helping, advising begins again – 5 minutes each.

Move one circle or the other round a few seats and start again as often as you have time.

What people learn from this is:

- Listening to the problems of others (in particular the other sex)
- Learning to help non-judgmentally to very personal concerns
- Realising that different people give advice differently
- Realising how hard it is sometimes to communicate well about these issues
- Thinking about the many vulnerabilities men and women face regarding sexual behaviour – and how little information and real help might be available to young people

Exercise 4.6 Creating sexual situations

Aim: To visualise the diverse terms of sexual encounters between men and women

Materials: Paper and pens for each of 7 groups

Time: 30 minutes: 5 explaining, 5 minutes making lists, 20 minutes feedback

Ask participants to make 7 groups, and call them A – G

Ask **Group A** to make a list of 4 men. Give each one characteristics such as:

What is his name? How old is he? What does he do in life? Is he single, married? Have children? What does he like in life? What kind of a person is he?

Ask **Group B** to make a list of 4 women. Give each one characteristics such as:

What is her name? How old is she? What does she do in life? Is she single, married? Have children? What does she like in life? What kind of a person is she?

Ask **Group C** to make 2 lists.

First one (for 4 different men): 4 different ways a man might feel about himself

Second one: (for 4 different men): 4 ways a man might think about a woman

Ask **Group D** to make 2 lists:

First one (for 4 different women): 4 ways a woman might feel about herself

Second one: (for 4 different women): 4 ways a woman might think about a man

Ask **Group E** to imagine 4 possible situations in which people could be about to have sex. Make list, describing these 4 situations:

Where are they? When? What has been happening? (area, place, inside outside, standing/sitting/lying, any light/ near others?)

Ask **Group F** to imagine a man and a woman getting intimate physically. Ask them to imagine 4 possible scenarios for sexual approach, and for each different scenario make a list of:

What exactly is he doing and what exactly is she doing (acts, gesture, movement, act...)

Ask **Group G** to imagine 2 people in an intimate situation that looks like something sexual might happen. Ask them to imagine 4 possible scenarios of a couple together like this, writing down for each:

What does he want to happen next? What does she want to happen next?

The facilitator then tells the group that a sexual situation is made up of:

- The people involved
- How they feel about themselves
- How they feel about the other person
- Where they are and what is going on around them
- What they are actually doing together
- What each wants to happen next

To create some imaginary sexual situations, ask each group to read out one item from their list.

A specific man, a specific woman (or in one instance another man), their feelings about him/herself and the other person; the situation they find themselves in; the activity /sexual movements they are in the middle of; what each wants to happen next.

For each sexual situation that emerges, ask for responses from the whole group to the following questions:

What positive or good things might happen next?

What negative or bad things might happen next?

How could the man involved reduce the likelihood of negative outcomes?

How could the woman involved reduce the likelihood of negative outcomes?

This activity releases humour at the unexpected combinations, opens awareness about the diversity of frameworks any couple encounter embodies, and can highlight issues of gender and power.

5. Gender and HIV

It is known that globally the majority of HIV infections happen through heterosexual intercourse. **The male act of unprotected penetration of a partner's body, with sperm ejaculated and the penis making contact with the partner's sexual juices or blood carries very high risk of passing on the HIV virus.** Sexual transmission between men and women is the cause of the vast majority of sexual infections, though many men are infected through sex with men. Sexual partners of infected unsafe drug-injectors are also at risk from sexual transmission. .

The gender system, in different ways, often blocks boys and men, as well as girls and women, from having access to clear and full information about their own bodies and bodies of the opposite sex. It is crucial that in sexual health education and HIV/AIDS prevention, the language is not left abstract ("body fluids" is an example of language use that is too non-specific). Clarity about the realities of the body, for each sex and about the other sex, is a crucial basis for anchoring an understanding of risk and safety.

Resources mentioned in the bibliography at the end of the manual can provide you with very good information and knowledge for this work.

Exercise 5.1 Warm Up

Everyone standing in a circle, the following exercise should move right round the circle twice. Change direction after the first round.

Put a hand on shoulder of person next to your right, and looking them in the eyes, complete this statement:

I want you to be careful of boys because...

They then turn to person next to them and repeat completion of sentence, and so on

When one round completed, change direction and repeat exercise, this time saying:

I want you to be careful of girls because...

The direct, focused contact (hand, gaze) – is important part of the exercise

Exercise 5.2 Visualising realities

Aims: To clarify how men acquire HIV and generate explicit discussion of the sexual body

Materials: None

Time: 25 minutes: 10 in pairs, 15 minutes feedback and comment

Ask the group to get into pairs, and discuss the following question. Explain that they should attempt to describe the process as fully as possible:

How can a man get infected by the HIV virus?

After 5 – 10 minutes, request feedback into main group and write up the ideas that emerge on flip chart paper.

Then open discussion using these, or other appropriate questions:

- **How clear was the sexual information discussed about sexual infection of men?**
- **Did some people only mention sexual contact involving blood?**
- **Where is HIV in a woman's body and how can it be transferred into a man?**
- **In what way would any form of force or violence during sex increase the risk of infection? Why is anal sex a particularly risky heterosexual activity?**
- **What does this exercise tell us about safer sex information that is generally available?**

There are often silences about men's bodies that sexual norms encourage us to glide over. To women, men's bodies can seem very unknown and daunting – and no-one talks clearly about them. There are frequently cultural taboos or habits that discourage men from talking to boys or other men in explicit detail about the workings and vulnerabilities of their bodies. So both men and women are often quite ignorant or inhibited talking about men's bodies. Safer sex education needs to have a framework of ease in talking about men's bodies, for it to happen effectively.

Exercise 5.3 Men's bodies, women's bodies, sex acts and safety

- Aims:** To break silences and make talking about sex easier, and to think about how language maps men's and women's sexual bodies with loaded meanings
- Materials:** Pen and paper for groups. Flipchart and markers
- Time:** 30 minutes total: 10 minutes in small groups, 20 minutes feedback and comment

Divide the large group into same-sex groups of 5 or 6.

Ask groups to make lists of all the names given to **male sexual parts** and to **female sexual parts**. It will be a competition to see who can think of the most words.

After 10 minutes, back in the large group, start with the group with the smallest number of words and write them on flipchart in 2 lists:

Male sexual Body parts

Female sexual Body parts

Get other groups, with more words still on their lists, to add any not already given.

Discuss with the group:

- **Are there more words in one list than another? Why might this be?**
- **Do names for men's bodies have different associations compared to those for women's bodies?**
- **Which words suggest: power? Vulnerability? Passivity? Action?**
- **Do any words suggest aggression? Violence? Weakness? Strength? Risk-taking? Protection? How might these names affect the way men think of their own bodies? The way women think about men's bodies? The way women think about their own bodies? How men think of women's bodies?**

End with a discussion about what has been learned from this exercise.

Exercise 5.4 Gender traditions as the risky ground of HIV infection

Aims: To activate reflections on how sexual behaviours taken for granted often in relations between men and women embody damaging gendered norms and HIV risk*.

Materials: Printed handouts of following questionnaire, enough for all participants.

Time: 20 minutes in groups, 30 minutes feedback and reflection on HIV implications

* See bibliography for further excellent resources you can obtain dealing with these issues.

Give everyone a copy of the following questionnaire. Ask participants to form groups of 4 or 5.

Each group should be assigned one numbered part of the questionnaire. Ask them to read through the questions together and then select one or two of the questions to discuss. The group should also prepare feedback to the full group on the main issues raised in their discussion.

Back in full circle, after 20 minutes discussion, each group should feedback:

- **What questions were discussed?**
- **What issues were raised?**

Conclude the session by asking people to reflect on what might be the implications for sexual health education and HIV/AIDS prevention.

Follow-up: participants can be asked to take the full list of questions home, and discuss some of them with people in their family, friends, community organisations in the coming days.

Gender traditions as the risky ground of HIV infection and AIDS
Discussion questionnaire

Gender differences in our culture: questions of rights and power

Do men and women have equal rights in determining sexual behaviour?

Do men and women have equal power to share decisions about sexual behaviour?

Can or do men and women collaborate equally in taking initiatives for sexual relations and acts?

Can men and women equally take part in negotiations about safer sexual behaviour?

Is it hard for women and men to communicate about sexual issues? What would make discussion of sexual safety more open and possible between men and women?

Do you think there are equal rights for men and women to have protection against sexual violence and exploitation?

Gender, body practices / body vulnerability

Are there practices men do to their own bodies that make them vulnerable to sexual infection?

Are there practices women do their own bodies that make them vulnerable to sexual infection?

Are there practices men do to women's bodies that make women's bodies vulnerable to sexual infection?

Are there practices women do men's bodies that make men's bodies vulnerable to sexual infection?

Given these practices, how are women placed to help stop the spread of HIV?

How are men placed to stop it?

What collaborative strategies can men and women build together to make sexual traditions and behaviours safer?

Beliefs and traditions involving gender and sexuality

Are there traditional beliefs about men's or women's bodies that promote risk and vulnerability to infection? Where and from whom do boys learn about sex – both physical information and behaviour information? And girls?

Do inheritance issues or family traditions affect sexual behaviours in any way where risk of HIV infection is increased?

Are there traditions or customs, or popular beliefs that give men rights over women's bodies? Or give women rights over men's bodies?

Are there traditions that inhibit women from participating equally in sexual decision-making – including safety practices? And men?

Are there traditions where, for example, certain sexual relations MUST take place?

Sex, 'freedoms', constraints, gender and power

Are the aims and expectations of sexual relations and behaviours considered different for men and women? If so, in what way? And do any differences affect the spread of HIV?

Is it assumed that 'real men' have a lot of sexual relations, sexual partners? What would be the best strategies to make men's sexual behaviours safe, so they do not get HIV and do not spread it?

Is there a double standard – where men marry and are meant to be faithful – while in reality many men have other partners or buy sexual services from others? If many men do this, what must happen to stop HIV spreading through these behaviours?

What happens if wives and mothers have other partners outside marriage or buy sexual services from others? Does this happen? Are the consequences the same for men and women? What would have to happen to stop HIV spreading through these behaviours?

Are there things women do to please men and be 'proper' women in the eyes of others (that women dislike or do not necessarily feel good about)?

Are there things men do to please women and be 'proper' men in the eyes of others (that women dislike or do not necessarily feel good about)?

Sex and money, sex and exchange of goods or privileges

How can women's economic and social subordination to, or dependence on men impact on sexual behaviours?

Does a man's capacity to earn more than women affect his sexual relations with women? His wife? Other women?

What happens if he cannot find work, so cannot earn? What ways might this impact on sexual relations in our culture?

Do women fear men will go elsewhere, if they question men's unsafe sexual behaviours, if they do not comply to men's sexual demands (even if risky) and expectations?

How could men be encouraged to keep sexual health and HIV in mind when they pay for sex?

Do older men in your culture use their experience or age or money or goods to get younger women or girls have sex with them? What do you feel about this (as a man, as a woman)?

Does women's economic vulnerability, greater poverty – and their need to provide for children, and help the household or family cope, mean they are cornered into exchanging sexual services for survival?

6. Embodying change

The central challenge of HIV/AIDS education is to maximise possibilities for people to connect 'knowledge' and 'awareness' to actual behaviour change. Active engagement with the different levels of gender issues is crucial to making that lived connection.

The ability to visualise ways of involving the BODY in what you are doing is also crucial. Abstract knowledge about HIV/AIDS does not lead easily to the behaviour changes that are needed if the epidemics are to be slowed.

These exercises give participants a chance to visualise change- and experience themselves as engaged in processes of changing themselves or situations.

The processes of involvement through which people encounter gender issues in relation to HIV/AIDS can strengthen their agency and to collaborate in questioning existing traditions and imagining new options for behaviour; These are key processes also for the adoption of safer sexual behaviours.

It is crucial in working with gender issues to try to create terms of collaboration between men and women, and avoid potential antagonisms. . The focus should always be to encourage men and women:

- **To listen to each others perspectives from differently gendered experience**
- **To reflect constructively on real tensions and power differentials in the gender system**
- **To build new kinds of dialogues that can create collaborative solutions.**

Exercise 6.1 Expanding the repertoire

Aims: To encourage participants to vary their physical sensation of themselves and experience symbolically their capacity to change

Materials: None

Time: 10 minutes

Make as much space as possible in the room and ask everyone to stand in a circle.

Ask everyone to think of the SMALLEST sound they could make. Go round the circle swiftly, hearing one small noise after another.

Ask everyone to think of a very LARGE sound. Go round the circle swiftly, hearing one large noise after another.

Ask everyone to go into a position where they make themselves physically as small as possible. Holding those positions, have everyone make their small noises.

Back in standing circle, go round the circle with each person, one after another, making a very large expansive gesture – which makes him or her ‘bigger’, while making their ‘large’ noise.

In this very simple activity, the men are experiencing smallness and quietness and the women experiencing taking up space and assertion. So there ripples through the group – often with humour – a momentary sense of transgressing, and seeing the others transgress, the gender codes of masculinity and femininity.

Finally go round the circle twice, again quite quickly, asking each person to say and finish these sentences, first:

It would be wonderful if men....

And then, second round:

It would be wonderful if women...

The imaging of activities where men are reflecting in public on men, as well as women, and women are reflecting in public on women, as well as men, allows for criticisms of each sex and praise for each sex to be spoken by both men and women.

Exercise 6.2 Changing habitual rhythms

Aims: Experiencing focus on and changing of bodily rhythms of self and others
Materials: None
Time: 20 minutes

This is a simple movement exercise – heightening attentiveness to the body, and expanding creatively to its rhythms.

With everyone in a circle, show everyone how to take his or her pulse, and listen to the rhythm of his or her own heart beat. Everyone should beat out, with the fingers on one hand against the palm of the other, the rhythm they feel.

Then, starting from silence in the group, one after another, participants should each start by producing the beat they take from their pulse, and then make a different rhythm around it, adding or pausing beats.

This exercise involves people listening to different beats from each other, and can give an image of being attentive how different men and women develop different modes of response.

Exercise 6.3 What do you do to protect yourself?

Aim: To encourage personal reflection on own practices and learn from those of others
Materials: None
Time: 20 minutes

Ask people to take a few minutes in silence to think of their personal response to these questions:

When you go out for a party, celebration or festival...

What risks (any kind of risks) might you face?

What precautions do you or might you make to avoid them?

Have the men in the group feed back first and make a list on flip chart. Then have the women feedback their thoughts – and make a second list.

Open discussion about which list is longer, what they have in common, what men emphasize more, and women? What good ideas surfaced? What issues does this raise concerning safety?

Exercise 6.4 Visualising change

Aims: To experience communication processes, connect energy between people, and reflect on relational dynamics of power and embodiment of change
Materials: Items from participants own bags (or paper/pen to draw object from home)
Time: 1 hour

Each person should take a personal item from his or her bag or pocket. If people have nothing with them they could be given a piece of paper, and asked to draw a personal item on it. It could be money, a piece of clothing, a comb, a pencil, a packet of cigarettes, etc.)

Everyone should take a few minutes to think of a story connected to love or sex, which involves in some imaginative way, the object they have in their hand (the story can be based in experience or be entirely fictional e.g. When I was 16, I went one day...).

Now people walk around the room, meet up in a pair with someone else – and tell the story in connection with the object. Each person listens to the other person's story.

Then they swap objects and move on to find a new partner taking with them both the object AND the story. In the new pair, each repeats the story of the object as if it was their own story. They then move on one more time, and repeat the exchange of stories and objects, swapping the object and story once they have been told.

Everyone gathers back in a circle... and it goes round the circle with everyone telling the story of the object they now have in their hand. There can be great humour or protests here – because the originator of the story will hear the story changed by its movement between people.

From the stories told, the group should identify 2 or 3 that had any aspect of power or gender inequality in it. These stories can be 'staged', in the middle of the circle, in a living statue image – by the person who produced the story. They can ask other members of the group to represent

the characters and place them physically in a frozen, 'statue' scene that embodies the power dynamics of the story. The person who originated the story is then asked to go up to the staged scene, and by adjusting the physical positions and attitudes of the characters they can change the body language of one or more people in the 'scene', in order to alter the power dynamics.

The group is asked to comment on what they have seen and now see. This should be done with at least 4 or 5 of the 'stories'

Exercise 6.5 Communicating about condoms

Aims: To encounter the challenges of communicating clearly about condom use, and clarify own knowledge of correct condom use.

Materials: Flip chart and marker

Time: 30 minutes total: 10 minutes in pairs, 20 minutes in full group, 20 minutes preparing and presenting posters

This exercise is about facilitating clear and detailed visualisation, to appreciate the limits of the usual way we communicate about condoms – and provide fuller information about correct condom use.

For this exercise, the group is going to educate the facilitator about condom use... as if he/she were a young person or 13 or 14 who hasn't heard about condoms, and needs to know everything to understand what they are, where they can get them, etc. and what they need to remember in order to use condoms correctly.

Staying seated in the circle, each person should talk to a partner for a few minutes about the key information that needs to be communicated. After the groups have had chance to discuss the issues, the facilitator stands by the flipchart and lists the information as it is spoken by members of the group.

Keep asking – “But what else do I need to know before I get to this point?” or stating “That isn't really clear to me – can you explain more?” as often as is appropriate. You want the group to explicitly talk you through all the stages necessary for informed and proper condom use.

You can use questions like these to provoke detailed information from the group:

- **But what exactly is a condom, how does it work, what is its point?**
- **What does it look like, feel like?**
- **Where do you get them (locally to where people live)?**
- **Are there different kinds? What do the packets look like?**
- **What do you ask for?**
- **What do they cost? Are they available free?**
- **How do I know they are a good make?**
- **When do you use them? What does it feel like to use them?**
- **What myths might I hear about condoms?**
- **What is important to know to use them correctly?**
- **How do you actually use them correctly?**
- **What must you take particular care to do or not do?**
- **Why is it important to understand about lubrication and condom use?**
- **What happens to condoms at end of sex?**

At the end of the 'lesson', people should go into pairs and design a living statue poster to encourage condom use. They must decide who the poster is aimed at and then invent a picture and condom use slogan. Each pair can then take it in turns to pose as the picture, while someone reads out loud the slogan.

The next 3 pages are key briefing sheets for this exercise but should be copied for everyone to take home and circulate and discuss with friends.

CONDOM USE

Key crucial thoughts for easier & 'correct' condom use

- ❖ **Condoms rarely break if they are used properly**
- ❖ **The aim of using a condom is so that there is no contact between the sexual fluids that come from a man's penis and the sexual fluids or 'lining' inside his partner's body (vagina or anus).**
- ❖ **USING A CONDOM avoids transmission of sexually transmitted diseases / illnesses BOTH from the man to the woman, or woman to woman or man to man. USING A CONDOM avoids unwanted pregnancy. If used correctly it stops HIV passing from an infected person (who may have no idea they are infected, and have no symptoms at all of the infection for years) to an uninfected person... and also can stop someone already infected being re-infected with more virus.**
- ❖ ***Without a condom, STDs and HIV can be passed from an infected woman's body to a man's body, or from an infected man's body to a woman's body, or from an infected man's body to a man's body. Without a condom, through the act of penetrative sex, the man's body can pick up the virus from an infected partner during sexual (genital/private parts) fluid contact, or the woman's body can pick up the virus from an infected partner during sexual (genital/private parts) fluid contact.***
- ❖ **Condom use is ALWAYS crucial because HIV and some other STDs have no symptoms – so are invisible: infected people often look healthy and the majority of them are unaware they are already infected.**
- ❖ ***YOU CAN LOOK AND FEEL WELL AND YET, IF YOU HAVE BEEN INFECTED WITH HIV (BY SEXUAL FLUID CONTACT OR BLOOD CONTACT WITH AN INFECTED PERSON SOME TIME EARLIER), STILL YOU CAN INFECT SOMEONE ELSE – OR THEY, IF THEY HAVE ACQUIRED HIV INTO THEIR BODY EARLIER, CAN INFECT YOU***
- ❖ **Condoms – used properly – PREVENT this infection**

HOW TO USE A CONDOM *PROPERLY*

(THERE IS NOT MUCH POINT USING THEM WRONG IF YOU WANT PROTECTION!)

**In this time of HIV and AIDS – a moment of risky pleasure can lead to death.
With HIV you don't get a second chance.**

TALK ABOUT USING CONDOMS, AGREE *IN ADVANCE*, before going too far, that you will use one.

BE FAMILIAR WITH THEM. Women should have got condoms and looked at them and handled them on their own: men should practice with putting them on – in the shower, or first thing in the morning, in bed alone... – so feel really comfortable with putting them on. **KNOW WHAT THEY ARE LIKE**

Lack of ease with condoms leads to nervousness or shyness – and nervousness or embarrassment lead to mistakes. You are going to use a condom *absolutely every time* you have penetrative sex.

Know WHERE TO BUY them (Cost? Anywhere you can get them free?)

WHAT ARE THEY LIKE (can you recognise packets; are there different makes? Kinds? Colour & size of packet? How many in packet etc). You need to feel confident about acquiring condoms, or this alone will sabotage your regular use of them.

IT IS CRUCIAL TO HAVE MORE THAN ONE CONDOM WITH YOU

Check the 'use by' date on the condoms, and press the packet lightly to check the packing is intact. The condoms should not have been lying in the sun for ages, nor have been kept for a long time in tight pockets under friction.

DON'T HAVE *ANY* CONTACT BETWEEN THE PENIS AND VAGINA OR ANUS WITHOUT A CONDOM. IT IS VITAL THAT NO SEXUAL FLUIDS (of either partner's body) MAKE CONTACT (including before and after penetration and including pre-ejaculation fluids/sexual juices)

Take great care opening the packet – not to tear or puncture them (with teeth or nails or scissors etc).

SQUEEZE AIR out of tip of condom (this leaves room for the semen without putting pressure on the condom, or causing semen to make the condom slip)

Unroll the condom onto the erect (hardened) penis – all the way down to base of the penis.

Condoms only unroll one way. If you make mistake and start to put on wrong way – *DON'T turn the condom over and continue...* because semen/ sperm/ any STD present is already on tip of the condom that touched penis – so it would be pushed into partner's body. Throw that condom away and use a new one (You remembered to bring more than one with you?)

LUBRICATION IS VERY IMPORTANT. Force risks bleeding, heightening the risk of HIV transmission. The condom-covered penis should slide easily in the partner's body. If there is dryness, go more slowly. A condom rubbing on dryness can risk breaking – but also it can hurt and make the body more vulnerable. So if her vagina feels dryer and tighter as sex continues, stop, apply lubricant, then go on. Have the lubrication gel ready right from the start. Keep with your condoms a tube or sachet of water-based lubricant gel (*absolutely not anything oil-based* – oil makes the latex rot really fast). You can usually get it in pharmacies or clinics. Or just use water if nothing else possible. Nothing should be inserted into the vagina to provoke dryness. If the man wants the sensation of tightness of dryness – this risks making the condom break, and break inside a woman's body where the tightness can risk causing bleeding. If tightness is a sought after sensation - you need to find a way to have this sensation of tightness with the penis **OUTSIDE** (not inside) the partner's body. It is crucial to use a condom and lubrication every time for anal sex too.

IF YOU FEEL THE CONDOM MIGHT BE SLIPPING – check it with your hand. It is very important it does NOT slip off during sex. Say to partner in advance –“lets be careful and check if we need to that the condom isn't slipping..” Talk to each other if you feel uncomfortable about anything – and agree in advance that this is a good idea

IF YOU FEEL THE CONDOM BREAK, STOP INTERCOURSE / SEX AT ONCE, REMOVE THE TORN CONDOM AND PUT ON ANOTHER. Don't make risk greater by continuing without a condom.

An advantage of using a condom is that the condom helps the man go on longer so the penetrative sexual intimacy can last longer and the woman has more time for her pleasure

After a man has 'come' / ejaculated, his penis will become softer and smaller very soon. It is VERY important that after sex, while the penis is still hard, he holds the end rim of the condom and takes his penis out while holding the condom in place on his penis. Make sure there is no contact at all between sexual fluids of partners at this stage.

Wrap the condom up in piece of paper and throw it away safely where children cannot get hold of it – bury it, or place in latrine (but don't flush in flushing toilet) or burn it.

DO NOT USE CONDOMS MORE THAN ONE TIME. Always use a new condom for each occasion of genital contact / penetrative sex.

If either of you has, or has had, other STDs (sexually transmitted diseases), you need to be aware that your body is more vulnerable to transmission of HIV

There is no reliable data on people who have ONLY had oral sex (and never genital contact sex). Oral sex risks transmission of HIV is there is any bleeding on either partner's genitals or mouth. Many AIDS organisations say unprotected oral sex is risky, many say probably not as high risk as penetrative sex. If you want to be 100% sure, you can use a condom (on man's penis) or cut a condom (or use cling film, thin plastic) to cover a woman's genital area.

*** THE HIGHEST RISK ACTIVITY FOR HIV TRANSMISSION IS PENETRATIVE SEX WITHOUT A CONDOM**

Take best care of yourself and anyone you decide to get physically intimate with. The more knowledgeable and comfortable you are with condom use (all the above), the easier it will be to make sure you use them always.

If you are not going to, or feel you can't, use condoms – just don't have penetrative sex. Create the sexual intimacy and pleasure in other ways. If your partner doesn't feel he / she can use condoms, just don't have penetrative sex. Create the sexual intimacy and pleasure in other ways.

If you get infected – it's your life, and the life of your parents, your family, your partner, your wife/husband and YOUR children who will bear the outcomes

Having sex is not just a private situation, but also in wider contexts of love in family, community. Help everyone you know become more aware of correct condom use information. People need to know all this whatever their personal strategies for practicing safer sex. They need to be prepared for situations where they may suddenly find themselves not acting according to beliefs they thought they would adhere to – monogamy, fidelity, only for marriage etc. Even if they never need use a condom, they can make others aware of the *importance of correct condom use* in the HIV/AIDS era.

Using condoms properly takes thought, care, knowledge & willingness to build confidence with your partner – whoever he or she is (long term, SPOUSE or casual, dependent).

If you don't have a condom, don't have penetrative sex. Do other things for pleasure – where sexual fluids do not come into contact. The only 100% "safe" sex is no sex, abstinence. But if you are having sex, it can be 97% safe by using a condom *every time and absolutely correctly each time.*

Exercise 6.6 Collaborating in change

- Aim:** To move from the general to specific one to one communication, and express desire for collaborative vision
- Materials:** None
- Time:** 15 minutes

First, everyone stands in a circle, and talks a minute in pairs with person beside them, saying to each other, finishing these sentences:

I want you to practise safer sex as a man/woman because...

I want you yourself to stay safe because ...

In the whole group again ask for volunteers to say out loud to the group some of the things just offered to each other.

Then, going round the circle, one by one, ask each person to say one important thing they would like to tell someone they know about HIV and AIDS
Each person could say to the group (say their actual name/ who they are – friend, mother, child, neighbour, husband etc.):

I'm going to tell _____ about _____

Exercise 6.7 Tunnel of Conscience

- Aim:** To expand empathy between men and women for the emotional complexities of unwanted consequences of sex
- Materials:** None
- Time:** Total: 35 minutes. 10 organising, 5 minutes each exercise + 5 reflections.

Ask 12 people to stand in a line, in 6 pairs, facing each other, about 2 metres/2 yards apart.

Ask for two volunteers. One will stand representing a character at the end of the tunnel, about to be told new information. The other will 'walk the tunnel' – twice, beginning each time at the opposite end of the 'tunnel' – en route to tell the waiting person the news he/she carries.

The 'walking' volunteer is then given a role to imagine. He/she will walk slowly down this 'tunnel of conscience', to go to meet an assigned person at the other end. During the first walk, he/she will zigzag going to face, in turn, each person along the line receiving input from each of them. Each time there should be eye contact and a pause to digest the thought or advice.

The first walk through the tunnel, each person will say out loud one thought that they think might be going through his/her mind, walking to meet that person waiting at the end. Then, returning to the start, he/she will walk again, again stopping face to face, with eye contact, with each person, zigzagging from one row to the other. This time, each person will give one piece of advice on what to say to the person waiting.

At the end of this second walk, the walking volunteer should simply face the waiting person, and tell them simply the new information he/she brings. The two volunteers stand silently facing each other for a few minutes.

With everyone sitting down back in a circle again, the walking and waiting volunteers are asked if they would like to say anything about how it felt doing the exercise.

Here are suggestions for the role-plays the exercise could involve. Add your own scenarios that relate to issues experienced in your own contexts.

Get new volunteers and new members of the tunnel for each scenario.

Volunteer WALKING	Volunteer WAITING
(Female) She is a teenage girl who has just had it confirmed that she is pregnant by her 37 year old teacher	Her mother and father at home
He is a 35 year old man, who has just found out he has tested positive for HIV	His 27 year old wife, who is 4 months pregnant with their first baby
He is 29 years old, and has just found out he has AIDS. No one in his family knows he is gay. This conversation will reveal both.	His father, who is widowed.
She is a 20 year old woman, married for 2 years, who has just tested positive for HIV	Her husband, who was tested at work recently and is not HIV+

7. A Sense of Working together

To work with gender issues, we need to develop a deeper and engaged understanding of the complex ways gender ‘works’ in our culture and society and in each of us as individuals.

In sexual safety education and HIV/AIDS prevention, “To Know is Not Enough” The processes of learning need to link the knowledge we have about risks and safety in sex to a **sense of active involvement**. Facilitating processes of reflection and action needs to be a central part of sexual safety education and HIV/AIDS prevention learning.

Exercise 7.1 Taking stock

Aims: To create context for personal reflection on effects of these sessions
Materials: None
Time: 30 minutes

To mix everyone up, have him or her make a circle where they are standing in a circle in alphabetical order according to the first letter of their first name. Then sit in that order in circle. Pair people off in pairs, A/B, A/B etc. In pairs, ask people to discuss together:

- **What was most interesting for you in discussions over the last days?**
- **What was most challenging or difficult?**
- **What is the most important thing you feel you are taking away from these sessions?**

In the full group again, ask for feedback to each of these questions.

Exercise 7.2 Personal reflections

Aims: To encourage personal connection to wider issues raised
Materials: Flip chart
Time: 30 minutes

Ask everyone to sit in a circle, and think for a few minutes about his or her personal responses to the following issues.:

- **One new thing you have thought about concerning sexual health and gender**
- **One safer sex strategy you feel you want to act on for your own sexual safety**
- **One person you might talk to about the issues of gender and sexual safety**
- **One thing you feel about the time working together**

Then move round the circle, gathering the responses to each question, taking one at a time and write them up on flip chart.

Exercise 7.3 Linking energies

Aim: To allow for expression of outreach and collaboration in HIV prevention processes as well as personal stakes involved
Materials: Flip chart
Time: 20 minutes

Write the following unfinished sentence on the flip chart where everyone can see it:

If we are to take these gender issues further, I want you, as a man/ woman to help me by...

Ask each person to focus on a person of the opposite sex across them in the circle. One after another, making eye contact with that person, ask them to complete the sentence, saying it directly to that person.

Then, going round in a circle, invite each person to tell the group, one after another, their own images of taking the ideas further:

To take these gender issues further in my life / work, I myself want to try and focus on ...

Exercise 7.4 Moving things on

Aims: To focus energy in small group exchanges and listen to each other's concrete ideas and visions of future plans. Also to end by attentiveness to importance, within the gender politics of the HIV epidemic, of men becoming more welcome and involved in HIV prevention practices.
Materials: None
Time: 30 minutes

In small single sex groups, ask participants to discuss with each other some ideas for the future

Write the following questions on flip chart:

- **What can be done to encourage more men to get involved in working with the gender issues framing HIV/AIDS? Are there any ideas of concrete strategies to encourage this?**
- **After these workshops and the new focus on gender and HIV:**

What would you most like to do to take these issues further?

Who do you want to get involved? Where could it happen?

Who would you collaborate with? What resources are you going to need?

8. Reviewing Gender Issues in Context

These are final reflections to share with the whole group. They highlight and reaffirm the importance of activating a critical gender politics within all safer sex education and HIV/AIDS prevention work. It is very important that the immediacy of the exercises are framed by critical reflections drawing out implications of the issues being explored.

Recalling HIV/AIDS in the world around us

- Some 6 million people became infected with HIV every year now. UNAIDS reports speak of inadequate response, apathy and education that often does not bring the desired behaviour changes.
- The majority of HIV infections are passed on by unprotected penetrative sex between men and women
- The fastest rising HIV infection rate is among young people aged between 15 –24. It is now estimated that over 60% new infections are in this age group.
- Nearly all sexual transmission of HIV involves men performing penetrative sex

We need to invent better ways to help young (and older) people understand and question the way gender 'works' to make sex unsafe. It appears that what is taken for granted as 'normal' sex, taking the gender system for granted, leads to risk behaviours between men and women.

Behaviours based on traditional beliefs about gender difference, when the gender system is infused with gender inequality, not only promote the spread of HIV sexually, but also undermine democracy and human rights in a society

To change the risk and damage behaviours, we have to open up critical questions about what it is in the gender system of our – and other – cultures that somehow legitimises, normalises, makes kind of inevitable the probability of these risk behaviours. How are our lives embedded in damaging gender norms, and how can we change this?

The Vital Politics of Gender

What we do is shaped by what we imagine and what we think

- ❖ To change what we do, we need to be able to explore, question and change what we think.
- ❖ To change what we think, we need to see and understand what it is we think to start with – sometimes without even consciously realizing it, until we start to look at it asking questions.
- ❖ To change risk and damaging behaviours, we need to see how they are happening, how we embody them, from what thinking and real life contexts they emerge, and what they lead to in the real world around us.
- ❖ To create a gender system that supports constructive and collaborative relations between men and women, we need to see and understand how the present gender systems hurt people and damage lives – especially in context of HIV/AIDS.
- ❖ To make sex safer we need to know the realities of the bodies, the risks of traditional and modern behaviours, as well as the possibilities for new answers and courage for new innovative sexual strategies.
- ❖ For new possibilities of behaviour, we need clear information, innovative communication and collaboration skills, good ways of listening, new confidence building – and an approach that emphasizes willingness to help each other change. But we also need to invent new stories, new visions, have new kinds of discussions opening up new ways of interacting.
- ❖ The challenge of the HIV/AIDS era is: can we invent together a way to do this *in practice*– and communicate well its implications to others? To be effective, HIV/AIDS prevention needs to involve daily personal engagement with gender issues and with the wider social politics of gender. It involves active learning, and collaborating, caring involvement of both men and women, of all ages.

Additional Resources

Useful resources on gender and HIV prevention and where to get them.

The Living for Tomorrow project

The **Living for Tomorrow** project was a 3-year action/research HIV/AIDS era initiative that worked to centre gender issues at the heart of the building of a youth HIV/AIDS awareness and mobilisation. It was initiative funded by NIKK, The Nordic Institute for Women's Studies and Gender Research, Oslo, Norway. The following reports and a gender/HIV/AIDS bibliography can be found at the NIKK website: <http://www.nikk.uio.no/>

Challenging Gender Issues. Report on young people's attitudes to men, women and sex, by Jill Lewis and Stephen Clift.

This analyses and discusses findings from a small-scale research project on teenagers' ways of thinking about gender in their society, how they perceive sexual relations / behaviours to be 'gendered' and perceptions of gender and risk behaviours.

Mobilising Gender Issues by Jill Lewis. This is an overview of the **Living for Tomorrow** project - what concerns it had to consider, and what issues it had to navigate. It discusses the wider challenges faced in developing a focus on gender issues, describes its vision, planning, building, designing and different actions it undertook to achieve its ends. It presents the outcomes and discusses some of the learning processes the project brought into focus.

You can contact NIKK direct at: NIKK, P.O.Box 1156 Blindern, NO-0317 Oslo, Norway. E-mail: nikk@nikk.uio.no Fax: +47 22 85 89 21
The **NGO Living for Tomorrow** can be contacted through The AIDS Prevention Centre, Narva Mnt 48, Tallinn 10150, Estonia e-mail: ack@aids.ee Tel: + 372 6273500

The following resources are really helpful to build good, clear information about sexuality and HIV, alert awareness of gender issues and innovative, concrete educational strategies:

Gender or Sex: Who Cares? Skills-building Resource Pack on Gender and Reproductive health for Adolescents and Youth Workers. With a Special Emphasis on Violence, HIV/STDs, Unwanted pregnancy and Unsafe Abortion. Maria de Bruyn (Ipas) and Nadine France (HDN). This is an excellent resource for gender and HIV prevention work. <http://www.ipas.org/pdf/GenderTOT.pdf>
Order from: Ipas, 300 market St., Suite 200, Chapel Hill, NC 27516, USA ipas@ipas.org
(<http://www.ipas.org>) or Health and Development Networks, PO Box 7517, Malahide, Co. Dublin, Ireland info@hdnet.org (<http://www.hdnet.org>)

HIV/AIDS and Gender – an awareness raising folder. Norwegian Working Group on HIV/AIDS and Gender, AIDSNETT, Oslo, 2001. This outlines different important ways the intersections of gender inequality and the norms of traditional gender systems can exacerbate, with dire social consequences, the spread of HIV/AIDS. Contact: liv.bremer@npaid.org (Norwegian People's Aid) <http://npaid.no>

Resource Packet on Gender and AIDS, UNAIDS and Sociometrics, 170 State Street, Suite 260, Los Altos, California 94022, USA www.socio.com

Choices. A Guide for Young People, by Gill Gordon, Macmillan Education Ltd, London and Oxford

Sex – A Guide for the Young, Educational Media Film and Video Ltd., 235 Imperial Drive, Rayners Lane, Harrow, Middlesex HA2 7HE, UK. 18 minute animated video (in English). This is a Danish video recommended here to be viewed as a cross-cultural discussion point to reflect on the limits and assumptions about bodies and sexual health awareness education in each particular context. The video, made for children and youth, is very explicit and clear, while being discreet and humorous – but provokes interesting reflection on the sexual taboos and silences in any culture – Western included.

Stepping Stones. A training package on HIV/AIDS, communication and relationship skills. Alice Welbourn. Strategies for Hope, Action Aid, London, UK
Copies available from: TALC, PO Box 49, St. Albans, Herts AL1 5TX, UK Fax +44 1727 846852. Tel +44 1727 853869 <http://www.stratshope.org>

Turning the Tide: Gender Dimensions of the HIV/AIDS Pandemic, UNIFEM, United Nations Development Fund for Women Fax: +1 212 907 6705 unifem@undp.org www.unifem.undp.org

Confronting AIDS Together. Participatory Methods in addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic (with learning from experience in East and central Africa) by Anne Skjelmerud and Christopher Tusubira. DIS/ Centre for Partnership in Development, PO 23 Vinderen, 0319 Oslo, Norway.

You, Your Life, Your Dreams, Catharine Watson and Ellen Brazier, Family Care International.
Email: fcipubs@familycareintl.com. (Good for adolescents)

The following are very useful short publications, full text available directly from the website of AVERT: <http://www.avert.org>

- **AIDS & HIV Infection: A General Guide**
- **Changing Times. Information about Puberty for Boys and Girls**
- **Sex and Sexual Relationships. Some Information for Young People**
- **HIV and AIDS: Information for Young People**
- **Information about Contraception for Young People**

Useful web sites for information and further readings (often with texts accessible direct from web):

IPAS <http://www.ipas.org/new/GenderLivingEG.htm>

UNAIDS United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS <http://www.unaids.org>

WHO World Health Organisation <http://who.int/home-page/>

UNDP HIV/AIDS publications: <http://www.undp.org/dpa/publications/hiv.html>

Nordic Institute for Women's Studies and Gender Research (NIKK) <http://www.nikk.uio.no> See under: **Living for Tomorrow**