

INTRODUCTION

Course Purpose

***Live Safe, Play Safe* is a skills-based health education program that protects children’s health by enabling them to avoid HIV infection.**

***Live Safe, Play Safe* (LSPS) expands young people’s awareness about HIV/AIDS and builds their skills in:**

- ❖ Negotiation
- ❖ Assertiveness
- ❖ Coping with peer pressure
- ❖ Feeling compassion for those with HIV/AIDS

The course begins with basic, accurate information on the risks of unprotected intercourse and ways to avoid these risks.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the most effective way people develop new skills is learning by doing—taking part in active, enjoyable learning experiences. To make learning exciting, this course employs many interactive teaching methods, including physical activity, group work and role-playing.

These activities encourage participants to personalize the risk of HIV/AIDS infection and take prevention seriously. The curriculum delivers and reinforces messages about delaying and abstaining from sex. It also tackles issues related to using condoms. Addressing all prevention options is an essential element of effective life skills programs.

Because adolescence is a time when young people are acutely sensitive to peer pressure, the course gives special attention to building participants’ capacity to respond assertively. Through role-plays and group work, participants have many opportunities to

practice communication, negotiation and refusal skills.

WHY IS LSPS NECESSARY?

In the 20 years since its discovery, HIV/AIDS has become a worldwide epidemic. According to UNICEF, Africa now accounts for over 70 percent of new HIV infections and four fifths of AIDS-related deaths globally. A focus on youth is essential as more than half of the newly infected are young people between 15 and 24 years of age.

Biology, psychology and lack of information make young people especially vulnerable to HIV exposure. Recent surveys indicate that many young people have sex before age 15 risking exposure at very young ages.

Young women’s low socio-economic status, minimal education and economic dependence on men all contribute to their risk of infection. Girls are also vulnerable to exposure as a consequence of rape and sexual coercion. Statistics from UNICEF,

UNAIDS, and WHO indicate that of the 8.6 million young people living with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, nearly 70% are young women.

Young people are currently at the centre of the HIV/AIDS crisis, but they also offer a window of hope in finding solutions to the problem.

HOW DOES LSPS WORK?

If young people are to be part of the solution for the HIV/AIDS crisis, not only do they need knowledge about HIV/AIDS, they must also be equipped with the skills to put that knowledge into practice.

Life skills such as those related to decision making and problem solving, critical thinking, communication and interpersonal relations help young people handle risky sexual situations and choose safer alternatives. Likewise, practice negotiating condom use in a workshop setting develops young people's ability to talk about safer sex with a partner.

During the LSPS course, a coach or facilitator guides a group of 10-20 children between the ages of 10 and 18 through seven programme modules. Each module builds a different life skill related to preventing HIV infection.

HIV/AIDS prevention programmes that attend to knowledge, attitudes and skills-building are more effective in changing behaviour than approaches that focus on information alone. Skills-based programmes have been demonstrated to delay the age of first sexual intercourse, as well as to increase safer sex practices among sexually active youth (e.g., increasing

use of condoms, reducing number of sexual partners).

LSPS develops critical awareness, attitudes and skills necessary for young people to remain healthy, for example:

Knowledge refers to what participants understand and learn. Knowledge covered in LSPS includes knowing how HIV is transmitted, how sexually transmitted infections increase the risk of HIV and ways to prevent infection.

Attitudes refers to feelings, values and beliefs about the self, others, and life issues. Attitudes covered in LSPS include self-confidence, self-esteem and empathy for those affected by HIV/AIDS.

Skills refer to participants' ability to carry out specific behaviors. Skills covered in LSPS include responding assertively to peer pressure, planning for the future and the ability to use condoms properly.

WHO IS THIS MANUAL FOR?

This manual is for Right to Play Program Coordinators, as well as individuals and organizations that work to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS among youth. The contents are not proprietary, and *Right to Play* invites users to adapt the activities in whatever way will make them most useful.

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

LSPS is divided into seven modules. Each module begins with the session's objectives, provides supporting information and includes several activities to enable participants to explore the topic. Depending on the breadth of the topic, modules have one

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or more lessons. Each lesson concentrates on a specific issue. Skills-building activities accompany each lesson.

MODULES ARE SEQUENTIAL

Ideally, the modules should be presented sequentially. Each module builds on concepts developed in the previous one. The course begins by introducing participants to facts about HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (STI), then transitions into an examination of their values and beliefs. Later modules devote considerable attention to developing participants' social and communication skills.

Activities throughout the course study gender roles and consider how they contribute to rising infection rates among women and girls. Violence and sexual violence are important issues posing significant risks for many young people. Finally, a module on stigma challenges young people to confront their attitudes toward people living with HIV/AIDS and to commit themselves to acting compassionately.

COURSE MODULES

1. Program Launch
2. Facts About HIV/AIDS
3. Preventing HIV
4. Values & Vulnerability
5. Communicating Assertively
6. Choosing Compassion
7. Conclusion

The programme guide concludes with participants developing an action plan, describing how they will put the ideas they have discussed to work. The course concludes with participants signing a team contract which embodies *Right to Play's* philosophy "Look after yourself; Look after one another."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Live Safe, Play Safe was developed to provide those working on HIV/AIDS prevention with an effective tool for protecting young people from HIV infection. Produced with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), *Live Safe, Play Safe* was developed collaboratively by *Right to Play* and the CORE Initiative. The Johns Hopkins University/Center for Communication Programs (JHU/CCP), a CORE Initiative partner, was responsible for writing and field-testing this curriculum. Michelle Bashin was the primary author. *Right to Play* gratefully acknowledges the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) for funding initial development of this curriculum in 2002.

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PLANNING & FACILITATION

INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY

Community involvement can contribute to the acceptance and successful implementation of HIV/AIDS programs for young people. This is especially true in places where initial resistance is high. Programs that educate young people about sexual and reproductive health often face resistance because they challenge deeply held cultural beliefs about sex, parenting and the roles of men and women.

Many programs have overcome resistance by drawing on the support and active involvement of parents and caring adults. The involvement of parents and family members in reproductive health programs is beneficial to both children and parents, increasing their knowledge about HIV/AIDS. Parental involvement can ensure greater acceptance of the program in the community. Outreach to parents acknowledges the family's role in developing children's values.

Parent involvement activities can help win over parents, school administrators and teachers and convince them of the program's value. One way to gain parental support is to explore with them the consequences of *not* dealing with adolescent sexual health. Meet with parents. Stress the importance of preventive education *before* children become sexually active. Share the program and materials with them. Demonstrate openness to their participation and advice.

If your work will be with students, meet with the headmaster and teachers first so that they will

understand the program, help with its implementation and reinforce the content in class.

In Haiti, seeking the expert advice of "gatekeepers" or community leaders before implementing a project helped win their ownership and increased their sense that they had a stake in the project's success. Meeting with community leaders can strengthen the link between the program and the community. Prepare a presentation about Live Safe, Play Safe along with a fact sheet with basic HIV/AIDS information including the extent of the problem in their country, especially among young people.

Traditional and religious leaders or communities of faith are often responsive to calls for compassion and care for those living with HIV/AIDS. Appeal to them for support in addressing stigma and discrimination. Where controversy is likely, adopt a gradual approach and involve a range of community leaders early in the process.

ADAPTING THE COURSE

Because every community is different, it is essential that you adapt each and every session to make it appropriate to the local culture. This may mean translating it into the local language, changing the names or situations in role-plays, or revising the entire content of a session and possibly even discarding entire sessions altogether. Because sexual issues are taboo and highly charged in most cultures, it is important to work in close collaboration with local counterparts.

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They will be your guides to society and culture. Their counsel can save you from making cultural missteps.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PLANNING

Planning not only saves you time, but it enables you to feel more confident and adaptable to changing situations. It's better to be too prepared than not prepared enough!

Begin your planning with a review of the lesson plans for each session. These plans provide you with the important background information, activities, time estimates and discussion points. Active learning includes a mix of active activities, where participants are running or moving around, and reflection or discussion that does require much movement. Mixing active and passive activities will help keep participants engaged and minimizes the potential for behaviour problems resulting from boredom or restlessness.

Set aside time at the beginning of the course for participants to introduce themselves to one another, and to introduce the course objectives. It is critical to establish the *Ground Rules* together during the first session. These rules clearly state the standards of behaviour expected of all course participants—including the facilitator. When participants develop the ground rules themselves, they are more enthusiastic about respecting them.

Begin each session by presenting the day's objectives and agenda. At the end of the session, ask participants how well they think the objectives were met. Be sure to give time throughout the lesson for breaks. Periodic pauses refresh everyone and help to refocus Discussion.

At the end of the course (or session), ask participants to evaluate the experience. Their feedback will indicate how well things have worked and give you ideas for ways to make improvements. Please see "Evaluation and Assessment" at the end of the programme guide.

TRAINING MATERIALS

LSPS is designed to require a minimum of workshop supplies. Ideally, facilitators will have large sheets of paper or a blackboard to summarize the most important points. A few games also use balls. For group work pens or pencils and paper are useful. Have participants to bring a pen and paper with them to every session. To simplify planning, suggested training materials are listed at the beginning of each activity.

CHOOSING AGE APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES

When planning a session, facilitators should carefully consider which activities are most appropriate for their particular group. Each module includes activities for younger and older children. Some are more suitable for younger children (age 7-10). Others are best for early adolescents (age 11-15) and young adults. Suggested age groups are noted at the beginning of each activity.

Topic areas considered most appropriate for younger children are those addressing facts about HIV/AIDS, family values, peer-pressure, assertive communication and stigma. For younger children, discussions about preventing HIV/AIDS can emphasize abstinence and delaying sexual initiation. Skill building in resisting

peer pressure and sexual refusal skills is also appropriate. Younger children need plenty of activity. Draw on the games and icebreakers in Appendix 1 to keep lessons lively.

Activities with older children and adolescents address these topics as well as more overtly sexual issues, including sexually transmitted infections, practicing safer sex and negotiating condom use. Older children are more able to consider the future than younger ones can. Goal setting and future planning are therefore more developmentally appropriate for this group.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR TRAINING GIRLS AND BOYS

Most of the activities are appropriate for mixed groups of boys and girls. Facilitators should consider, however, certain session when they should be separated. Consider the make-up of your particular group, their age and maturity.

Boys and girls both benefit from open discussion about peer-pressure, problem solving and communication. During initial discussions about sexuality (HIV transmission, sexually transmitted infection, and putting on a condom), single sex groups may be more comfortable and informative.

Separating girls and boys may reduce embarrassment and allow participants, especially girls, to ask more questions. If the facilitator is male, it may be helpful to have a female co-facilitate these sessions. Over the course of training, everyone will become more comfortable and you can increase opportunities for discussion in mixed groups.

SOURCES OF BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Internet is an exceptionally rich and up to date source of information on HIV/AIDS. An especially useful site for country-specific information is www.unaids.org. For a detailed list of HIV/AIDS communication tools and links to numerous excellent websites, go to www.coreinitiative.org.

WHAT IS FACILITATION?

In French, *facile* means “easy.” The job of the facilitator is to make things easier for learners by offering direction, insight, and suggestions; in short, to create a process that helps a group of participants learn.

In the traditional model of “teaching,” the teacher deposits knowledge into students’ heads. What the teacher does is most important. Students are expected to accept what the teacher says uncritically. In an interactive approach, the facilitator poses a problem and the participants try to find solutions. The focus is on the learner, not the teacher and many responses are acceptable. Facilitation is at the heart of experiential learning or learning by doing, as expressed in this adage:

I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand.

Being a facilitator also means making sure that everyone is included. The facilitator can help participants accept their differences and appreciate their similarities. It is the facilitator’s responsibility to ensure that everyone is heard and that a few people do not dominate discussion. Likewise, the facilitator should draw out quiet children, asking them to share their

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ideas and express their points of view. Exchanging ideas is most interesting when everyone is included.

ASKING EFFECTIVE QUESTIONS

One of the most important facilitation skills is asking questions—drawing information out of participants instead of always giving it to them. Any group of young people already has their own experience of life and impressions about HIV/AIDS. Your challenge is to help participants explore their values and beliefs, leading them to consider their thoughts more deeply.

Consider these alternatives for asking questions more effectively:

- Paraphrase to check for meaning after a participant makes a statement. Example: “Are you saying...?”
- Use open-ended questions (rather than ones that can be answered “yes” or “no”) to invite longer, more thoughtful responses. Example: “What have you heard about HIV/AIDS?”
- Use probing questions to follow-up a statement. Example: “You said condoms are bad. Tell me what makes you feel that way?”
- Use yes/no questions only when you want a brief reply. Example: “Can mosquitoes spread HIV?”
- Avoid giving the answers. Example: “What brought you here today? Did your friends invite you, or your parents told you to come?”
- Ask one question at a time. Example: “How do you feel about the views expressed so far about sexual abstinence?” rather than,

“How do you feel about sexual abstinence, and why?” Some participants will become confused if they hear more than one question at a time.

- Give positive and constructive feedback. Example: “That’s a good point...”
- Keep people from wandering off topic. When this happens, say: “Wait—how does that relate to what we were talking about?” or “Interesting point, but let’s get back to the question we were trying to answer . . .”
- Try to link common ideas and identify patterns. Check out these patterns with participants by saying, “I’m hearing this is important to many of you. Can you tell me more about it?”

POINTERS FOR FACILITATORS

The following recommendations may help facilitators become even better trainers:

- **Be eager.** A degree of anxiety mixed with excitement is normal. Young people will look to you for support. You’ll need to earn their trust, and you’ll have to establish your personal limits and expectations.
- **Be authentic.** Young people know instinctively if you are being real. If you are authentic, they will consider you credible and trustworthy. Being real means you are entitled to make mistakes and not know all the answers.
- **Listen actively.** LSPS facilitators must pay attention to what participants are saying, take them seriously, and also hear the

questions that are *not* being asked. Being an active listener sometimes means tolerating the long silences that are necessary while people figure things out.

- **Avoid personal agendas.** If the group perceives you as having a big agenda in mind for them, you will be lumped with all the other adults who want them to believe or behave, or make their decisions for them. Your job description is “help to” not “to do.”
- **Be consistent.** Your steady commitment supports the long-term success of the group. In a world where they have little power and someone else is making the rules, young people need stable, fair, and reliable adults. By consistently being affirming, supportive, and fair with all participants, you become worthy of trust and a reciprocal commitment from them.
- **Remember that what you are doing is as important as what you are saying.** Proper body language will help you earn participants’ trust and respect. Face your audience, adopt an open posture (shoulders back, arms uncrossed), project your voice, maintain good eye contact, and be relaxed.
- **Be satisfied with small successes.** Behavior change happens very slowly. It takes people time to feel confident and competent enough to try a new behavior. LSPS facilitators who recognize this, preferably from personal experience, will have the empathy and patience to wait.