



Peer Sexual Health Education

By Tyler Batson, 2007

Objective:

This was created to teach sexual health education in the Transmara district but can be adapted to suit most programs. The manner in which it is taught can vary each time since the needs of the students, as well as the personalities of those teaching will invariably change from one session to another. The time allotted to instruct may be one hour, two hours, or even a full day. This should be taken into consideration prior to teaching the material.

All those who are teaching this very serious and extremely important material should come to class as prepared as possible to handle the students' inquiries. The method of teaching may change, but from experience, this is the best way to get across the most basic information as far as sexual health is concerned.

Helpful Suggestions:

- If you don't know the answer to a question posed by one of the students, DO NOT guess. Simply say, "To be honest, I'm not sure. But I will try to find out for you. Good question." You could be giving the wrong information, counterintuitive to the educational process. We want students to pass on the information learned and not guess.
- Do not treat the questions as unusual or silly. Remember, this could be their first time hearing an adult talk about this information in this kind of forum. The questions and myth that many of these children have heard are, by our standards quite silly, but we do not want them to be embarrassed. This would discourage them from further inquiries. Repeat with regularity, "Very good question!" to continually encourage.
- Tell the students that you understand where they are coming from. That, you too, were once very curious about sex. Inform them that it's okay to feel this way. Remind them that they have a confidant teacher in front of them.
- Repeat throughout the lesson how important this information is. If you see a student who is not paying attention, remind them that this information is the difference between prevention and contraction, health and sickness.
- Remind students to take notes.
- Speak slowly and simply! Many of these students are still learning English. It is helpful to have a translator on hand for any time you're explaining something complex or if it looks like someone is confused.
- Speak with confidence and ease.
- Don't dwell on the negative. These students want to know there is hope! Inspire them!
- Write on the board if there is one available. Often the students will think the information you're saying is less important if you're not writing it down for them to copy.
- *Continually encourage them to SPREAD THE WORD! This is vital if we are going to get anywhere. This information comes rarely in this forum. Teach a philosophy of empowerment through education. They can be teachers too, and help stop the spread of disease!*

Secondary School Lesson Plan

1) Introduction (approx. 10 min.)

a) Introduce yourself!

- Where are you from? Why are you here? How long have you been here? What do you do back home? How old are you? The students should get to know you before you begin teaching them this very serious and personal material
- After the instructor(s) introduce themselves the students should as well, depending on the size of the group and the time allotted to teach that day. There may be a short game or song to develop a comfortable atmosphere and loosen up the kids for talking about a serious and often uncomfortable topic. This is your chance to be silly and set the tone for the class: open and accepting, but serious.

- Examples:

-Each student stands up and says their name, age, and their likes/dislikes. Engage them as they answer.

-Each student states their name and their expectations from the class, why they are there.

-Each student states name, age, and aspirations, ie careers, higher education, etc.

-Pass a small ball randomly from one student to another in a circle. Each student states name, and any of the above bits of information.

Create a song that informs the class about the person speaking.

Or create your own! Remember to be creative and comfortable. The more comfortable you are, the more comfortable the students will be. However, remember that this subject matter is sensitive and taboo in rural communities.

b) Introduce material!

- One of the best ways to do this is to ask the student what *they* know already. Remember, there are no wrong answers! You can choose to debunk myths at this point, or save that for later.
- Bring statistics about the area, Kenya as a country, Africa, and the rest of the world. Connect the numbers to the issues. But remember, these statistics are always changing. Some preliminary research is advised. This helps the students think of the HIV/AIDS, STIs and so on, as a very real issue. However, try not to overwhelm them with numbers and percentages as they may begin to lose interest. Try to have an impact.

If you have time...

Activity (approx. 30 min.)

Before you begin, tell the students you understand that some of them may be embarrassed to ask particular questions. Tell them, if they like, they can write the question down anonymously on a piece of paper and hand it to you to answer at the end of the class. It is helpful to have a hat or bag to mix these questions up in and select from later.

- 1) Explain the activity:
"I'm going to count you off into groups of ___ and then each group can form (indicate where each group is to go.)
- 2) *Activity*:
Give each group a piece of paper. Tell them that each one will be assigned a question that they will discuss which one or two students of their selection will later present to the class.

Questions:

"What do you think you know about HIV/AIDS (or STIs or drug abuse)?"

"What have you seen...?"

"What have you heard...?"

"How is _____ transmitted?"

"Is there hope or not for a cure? Why?"

etc...

- 3) *Monitor* the students' progress and work with them. Encourage them!
- 4) Finally, have the *students teach* the information.
Here is where you can debunk myths, ask them where they heard that information, why they think something, and if so why. Engage the whole class so that you, too, can learn more.

2) STI's most common in area (approx. 15 min.)

- Gonorrhea
- Syphilis

This section will include:

- What an STI is
- What it stands for, etc. Keep it simple.
- Symptoms
- On a weekly basis as they change
- Transmission
- How much bodily fluids? Which ones? Skin to skin transmission?
- Treatment and Prevention
- Is it chronic? Can it be cured? When? Where
- Remind them that there's hope and that knowledge is power. Prevention is key.

- Again, ask the students what they know as you go along. You want to include them in the discussion not just talk at them.
- Also, don't forget to remind them of the importance of the material, and to pay attention and take notes, speaking slowly and understandably, and allowing them enough time to copy down information from board.

3) HIV/AIDS (approx. 25-30 min.)

This tends to be the section of the lesson with the most activity and participation. It is important not to recoil. Be confident in your responses and encouraging to their inquiries.

Very Important Question!!!

This is an excellent way to begin the lesson.

Prior to beginning this lesson, ask the students:

Q: "Can you tell a person has HIV or AIDS just by looking at them?"

Give the students time to think and answer before interjecting. Ask them why they think so.

A: "No! A perfectly healthy-looking person can have the virus."

After, acknowledge the students who participated and begin the lesson.

- Sign and Symptoms
 - Discuss opportunistic diseases, ie typhoid, diarrhea, TB, etc.
- Transmission
- Discuss bodily fluids, which carry the disease most, and the transmission routes for each.
- Prevention...

Activity! (approx. 30min)

This is another very interactive, student-directed activity.

Objective: The purpose is to make the students really think about the information being posed. Rather than just take notes and memorize the material, they are really contemplating it and attempting to relate it to their own lives.

- 1) Explain the activity using the same format as the activity mentioned earlier. "I'm going to count you off into groups of ____" and so on.
- 2) *Activity:* -Give each group a question, such as:
 - "If you had HIV/AIDS (or and STI or abused drugs) how would your life change?"
 - "... what would you not be able to do?"
 - "... what would you have to do?"
 - "... how might society treat you?"
 - Or create your own. The purpose is to get them to think!

3) *Monitor* the students progress to learn more for yourself and assist their learning.

4) *Student Teaching*:

- Each student group select one or two students to teach the information they gathered in response to their question to the rest of the class.
- This is extremely important! The purpose of teaching this material is to provide the students with the capability to teach this to their peers who may not have the good fortune learning this from you! Encourage the students – those at the front of the class and those watching. Notes are encouraged here as well.

4) Prevention Methods (~ 15 minutes)

1) “ABCs of sex”

- A – Abstain
- B – Be faithful
- C – Condoms

Remember that this is only a model. You may alter this slightly; however, emphasizing one prevention method over another is *highly* discouraged.

For Your Information!

If you are teaching where students are Christian, abstinence is still highly advocated while condom use is still quite a taboo. Be sensitive to this fact.

Correct condom use

-Step-by-step condom demonstration?

You may run into some teachers or class moderators that will say no to an actual condom demonstration. Don't let this discourage you. Remind the class how important it is to know.

- Write the steps on the board.
- Draw the condom on the board, omitting the actual penis or vagina.
- When explaining how to open the condom correctly, draw it on a piece of paper, with the jagged edge for tearing. Then tear the paper as though it was an actual condom packet.

Repeat the step with the class more than once! Remind them how simple it is and that it is a very good method of prevention but not the only method.

5) Personal Responsibility

Now would be a good time to segue into a brief discussion on *Personal Responsibility*.

Remind the students that the information is very serious; that although we've been discussing sexual health, it is essentially sexual responsibility. Sexual responsibility comes from personal responsibility.

"What is *Personal Responsibility*"? Describe.

- Responsibility to yourself
- Responsibility to your partners
- Responsibility to your community.

Tell them that you understand they want to grow up to be confident, empowered adults. Remind them that without personal responsibility – making the right decisions to extend your life and your impact on the world – empowerment, confidence, and pride in accomplishment are far out of reach.

6) Drug Abuse (approx. 20 min)

Because the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs is so dominant, students often think that its effects are blown out of proportion. For this reason it is helpful to do a bit more research on drug-related crimes, deaths, and a bit of medical background. Remind them that just because you can't see the damage being done doesn't mean its not occurring *internally*.

Effects of Drug Abuse:

- Permanent damage. Explain where to, possible diseases.
- Impairment of judgment. Clarify, give examples.
- Can cause slow death over time. Identify the difference between this and sudden death. Which would *you* prefer?

Connect the info:

Remind them that none of this contributes to an empowered, confident, or responsible adult and young adult.

Helpful Hint:

Tell a story! Or two!

Give the students actual experiences related to alcohol, cigarettes, or illicit drug abuse that you or someone you know has experienced first-hand.

They will be engaged, moved, and learn the lessons from someone they've come to respect and trust.

Make sure they pay attention! If they laugh or doze off, don't be afraid to call them out and use them as an example to the rest of the class as someone who should really pay attention. Drama is important here!

Don't worry if they don't take notes. They know the basic information, now all they need to do is to have a real understanding of it.

7) Questions/Comments (approx. 10 min.)

8) Wrap up (>5 min.)

Briefly remind them of the material they just learned.

Thank them for attending and remind them that they are now *empowered*. And to the *spread the word* so that we can all make a difference to such a serious illness.

Primary School Lesson Plan

- 1) Introduction (~ 10 minutes)
 - 2) Names
 - 3) Game? Song?
- 2) Healthy Relationships (~ 10 minutes)
 - 4) Communication
 - 5) Trust/Honesty
- 3) Anatomy (~ 15 minutes)
 - 6) Female Genitals
 - 7) Male Genitals
- 4) STDs (~ 10 minutes)
 - 8) What they are
 - 9) How they are passed
 - 10) Bacteria v. Virus
- 5) HIV/AIDS (~ 10 minutes)
 - 11) Transmission (fluids, routes, amounts)
 - 12) Prevention
- 6) Questions (~ 5 minutes)