

Breaking Gender Barriers



ACTIVITY PACK 1:

Understanding Ourselves and Others



Understanding Ourselves and Others

April 2010

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This publication has been made possible by the generous support of the Nike Foundation. The contents are the responsibility of the Breaking Gender Barriers project and do not necessarily reflect the views of Nike Foundation.



Breaking Gender Barriers



In most communities in Kenya, boys are socialized to believe that domination of girls and women is part of being a man. Risk-taking and unregulated sexual prowess on the part of young men are often applauded by their peers and condoned by society while girls are taught to be submissive which exposes young people to the risk of HIV infection. Changing gender roles and norms initiated and embedded at young ages is not easy especially when they are perceived as favorable to one gender. Changing gender norms therefore requires intensive and open dialogue to encourage the society – both adults and young people to relook at the gender dynamics and stereotypes which dictate how boys and girls view each other both in the society and in the school system. Through the Nike project, PATH and Kenya Scouts Association are working to change the unhealthy gender norms of men and boys in order to enable young girls to achieve their full potential within the society. It is expected that through the various activities such as activity packs and magnet theatre, the Nike project is working to facilitate positive change in gender norms through promotion of gender equity among boys and girl scouts as well as building the capacity of KSA and key influential decision makers to advocate on gender issues.

The scouts' system of "learning by doing" ensures one on one contact with scout leaders or small patrol groups. Scout leaders are mentors who coach on leadership skills. This co-ed process helps to build mutual respect which is helping to dispel the myth of male superiority. Through the activities under this project, girls and boys undertake the same activities which are expected to improve the way boys relates to girls as well as build the girls's confidence in managing relationships.



Acknowledgments

Activity packs are among several behavior change interventions that are used by the Braking Gender Barriers project to provide information and build skills of young people. Activity packs are important tools for engaging scouts in in-depth and interactive discussions with scout leaders, their peers and parents or guardians around the issues of personal and family values, gender issues including gender based violence as well as life skills on how scouts can form healthy relationships. Activity packs allow for information and skills sharing as well as enabling the scouts to get critical information from trusted adults such as scout leaders, parents or guardians. The development and printing of the activity packs was made possible through the funding from the Nike Foundation.

In order for these activity packs to become a reality, a lot of team effort has been put by the staff from the Kenya Scouts Association and PATH. We acknowledge the inputs from community and scout leaders from Mombasa, Kilifi, Malindi, Kwale and Garsen for their generous sharing on societal norms and challenges regarding the upbringing of children. We acknowledge the insightful inputs from - Mr Miriti and Agnes Mwangi and from PATH Kenya Wangui Ng'ang'a, Masibo Wamalwa, Sandra Chege. Special thanks to staff from the PATH DC office Lisa Mueller who put in time in the development and editing of these activity packs. Special thanks to Rikka Trangsrud for guidance and to Dr Julie Pulerwitz and Monique Widyono for their insightful comments on the activity packs. To everyone in this team, we say "Asante sana"

Annie Thairu
Project Director
April 2010



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ACTIVITY 1: Gender and Sex...Which is Which?

Sex refers to biological differences between men and women which are universal and do not change. On the other hand, gender refers to social attributes that are learned or acquired during socialization. **Gender** refers to how societies define acceptable and customary roles, responsibilities and behavior of women, girls, men and boys. In some cultures, social norms discourage women from being assertive while at the same time, social norms around masculinity encourage men to be aggressive and risk takers. How men and women relate to each other is a manifestation of the gender-based power relations which arise from the roles men and women are expected to play as members of community. For example during initiation rites, girls and boys are socialized on their roles and behavior as men and women. The notion of male supremacy is reinforced as boys are instructed on how they must perceive and interact with girls and women.

Objectives

- Identify the differences between sex and gender
- List ways in which harmful gender norms and stereotypes influence us and our beliefs

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Marker pens
- Time
- One hour

Method

1. Draw two columns on the flip-chart paper. In the first column, write “man.” In the second column, write “woman.”
2. Ask the scouts to make a list of things associated with the idea of “being a man.” Record the ideas on the flip chart. Help the scouts to include both social and biological characteristics
3. Repeat the same activity in the “woman” column
4. Briefly review some of the characteristics that were listed in both columns with the scouts
5. Next, exchange the titles of the columns, putting “woman” in the place of “man” and vice versa. Ask the scouts: Can the characteristics mentioned for men be attributed to women? Can the characteristics for women be attributed to men? Allow for discussion
6. Explain that a quick way to remember the difference between sex and gender is that sex is biological but gender is social. This means that the term sex refers to innate or biological characteristics, whereas gender roles are learned gradually and can change over time
7. Use the questions below to facilitate a discussion:
 - What messages do boys get about “being a man” in your community?
 - What messages do girls get about “being a woman” in your community?
 - Where do these messages come from?
 - Which are the most dominant or powerful messages? Why?



- What effects do these messages have on boys/girls as they grow up to be men/women?
- Whose interests are served by giving boys/girls these messages about “being a man / being a woman”?
- What do these messages leave out?
- How can boys be taught to be caring, nurturing, non-violent, healthy, and safe?

Conclusion

Throughout our lives, we receive messages from family, media, and society about how we should act as men, how we should act as women, and how we should relate to women and men depending on our sex. It is important to understand that although there are indeed some biological differences between men and women, most differences are constructed by society. Even so, these differences can have fundamental impacts on our daily lives and relationships. For example, a man is often expected to be strong, brave, sexually promiscuous, and dominant in his relationships with others, including with his intimate partners. At the same time, a woman is often expected to be submissive to men's authority. These gender norms can have consequences on the behavior of both women and men. As we become more aware of how some gender norms can negatively impact our lives and communities, we should think constructively about how to challenge negative norms and promote more positive gender roles and relations.

NOTE FOR FACILITATOR

Gender norms definition: Gender norms are societal messages that dictate appropriate or expected behavior for males and females. They play an important role in the spread of HIV infection particularly among young people who are beginning their involvement in intimate relationships. Detrimental gender norms include multiple sexual partners and male control over female partners. Norms that encourage gender inequity in relationships where males have power over females can lead to sexual coercion and physical violence—circumstances in which women find it impossible to practice HIV-protective behaviors.

As a scout leader, you can contribute to building a more gender-equitable society by teaching boys and girls to question culturally accepted customs and norms that favour one gender over the other. At the community level, you can work with communities to emphasize the role that men and boys can play against gender violence by working with men to assist them learn to be gender equity role models for boys at home.



ACTIVITY 2: Understanding Gender Stereotypes¹

Objectives

- To understand gender stereotypes about men and women, boys and girls.
- To explore how gender stereotypes affect the way that men and women, and boys and girls, interact with each other.

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Marker pens

Time

- One hour for school activity
- One week for observation

Method

1. Divide the scouts into two groups. Provide each group with two pieces of flip chart paper.
 - a. Instruct group one to write “10 bad things about men/boys” at the top of one of their sheets and “10 good things about men/boys” at the top of their other sheet.
 - b. Instruct group two to write “10 bad things about women/girls” at the top of one of their sheets and “10 good things about women/girls” at the top of their other sheet.
2. Ask the groups to develop lists according to the titles for each sheet of flip chart paper.
3. After each group has written their lists, bring the groups back together and have each group present their lists.
4. In block letters, print the word “STEREOTYPE” on a piece of flip chart paper. Ask the scouts to define the word.
5. After some discussion of the definition, tell the scouts that a stereotype is a “generic and oversimplified conception, opinion, or image.”
6. Use the following questions to facilitate discussion:
 - How easy or hard was it to identify 10 bad things? 10 good things?
 - Why do you think this is so?
 - Are any of the characteristics listed for men true for ALL men (choose an example or two to probe)? Are any of the characteristics listed for women true for ALL women (probe with example)?
 - Which of the characteristics listed about men and women are stereotypes?
 - Are stereotypes ever useful?
 - Why are stereotypes used so frequently?
 - How did it feel to see a list of stereotypes about your own sex?
 - What can you learn from this experience?

¹ Adapted from *Scouting for Solutions. Activity Pack 2: Gender and Power*. Nairobi: PATH; 2006.



Homework assignment

This is to help the scouts to continue thinking and reflecting on what they are learning about stereotyping the society:

With scouts back in their same two groups, give them the following instructions/exercise. The observations should take place over one week's time.

- Group one should observe the school environment, i.e., interactions among their friends, peers, and teachers. They should observe whether the stated stereotypes are common in their school environment. After one week, the group one scouts should make a report to the full group about their observations related to gender stereotypes at school.
- Group two should make observations in their homes about interactions between siblings, parents, and other relations. They should observe if stereotypes are common at home. After one week, the group two scouts should report back to the full group about their observations related to gender stereotypes at home.

Discussion after homework:

- a. From their observations, what negative ideas are reinforced by gender stereotypes?
- b. What positive ideas are reinforced by the gender-bias examples?

NOTE FOR FACILITATOR

Stereotyped ideas about female and male qualities can be damaging because they limit the potential of boys and girls to develop the full range of their capabilities—for example, stereotyping restricts girls from choosing roles that were traditionally “male” such as science-based careers.

Conclusion

Throughout their lives, young men and women are learning and practicing roles, trying to understand what it means to be a man or woman. Although ideas about gender vary among communities, there are some culturally dominant definitions of masculinity and femininity. These messages about how a boy/girl should behave “like a man”/“like a woman” are taught and reinforced in both subtle and explicit ways at home, in schools, among peer groups, through the media, etc.

As we have seen, the problem with these stereotypes is that they suggest that men and women are much more different than they really are. Many of the differences constructed by society are not part of our nature or biological make-up. We do not have to try to become like the stereotypes that society constructs for us simply because we are male or female. We should be free to choose to be good people—whether male or female—according to our individual and family values.



ACTIVITY 3: Act Like a Man / Act Like a Woman²

Objectives

- To identify the differences between the rules of behavior for boys and girls
- To understand how these rules affect the lives of boys and girls
- To explore how culture can be manipulated to keep the girls and women down

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Marker pens
- Masking tape

Time

- One hour

Method

1. Ask the scouts if they have ever been told to “Act like a man!” or “Act like a woman!”
2. Write “Act like a man” at the top of a sheet of flip chart paper. Write “Act like a woman” at the top of a second sheet.
3. Explain to the scouts that you would like them to examine these two phrases closely. Ask them to share some experiences when they have experienced hearing this phrase being used. You can ask: Why do you think they said this? How did it make you feel?
4. Explain to the scouts that by looking at these two phrases, we can begin to see how society creates different rules for how boys and girls are supposed to behave.
5. Explain to the scouts that these rules are sometimes called “gender norms,” because they describe what is “normal” for boys and girls/men and women to think and feel, and how to behave.
6. Explain to the scouts that these norms define certain “boxes,” which define acting like a man and acting like a woman
7. Ask the scouts to describe what “Act like a man” means. They can list how a man is to behave, what feelings/emotions he is supposed to portray, and how he should act. Write the descriptions on the flip chart paper
8. Ask the scouts to describe what “Act like a woman” means. They should list how a woman is to behave, what feelings/emotions she is supposed to portray, and how she should act. Write these descriptions on the “Act like a woman” flip chart paper.
9. Use the questions below to facilitate a discussion:
 - Which of these messages can be potentially harmful to boys?
 - Which of these messages can be potentially harmful to girls?
 - How does “living in a box” affect girls as they grow up to be adults?
 - How does “living in a box” affect boys as they grow up to be adults?
 - What happens to men or women who try not to follow the gender rules (i.e., they try living outside the box)? What do people say about them? How are they treated?

² Adapted from “Men as Partners A Program for Supplementing the Training of Life Skills Educators.” AVSC International and Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa (PPASA); 1999.



10. On another piece of flip chart paper, write the words “Transformed man/woman.”
11. Ask the scouts to list characteristics of men who are “living outside the box.” Write these down on the left side of the flip chart paper
12. Next, ask them to describe characteristics of women who are “living outside the box.” Write these down on the right side of the flip chart paper.
13. Explain that “gender-equitable” men and women, and “gender-equitable” relationships promote a view of men and women as equals, with the same ability to influence and control decisions and behaviors that will affect their lives. They are often considered to be “living outside the box.”
14. Use the characteristics lists to show the scouts that, in the end, the characteristics of gender-equitable women and men are actually similar.
15. Use the following questions to facilitate discussion:
 - What influences your perceptions about the roles of men and women (probe to see if it is family, friends, media, etc.)? How do they influence you?
 - How can you challenge some of the non-equitable ways that boys and men are expected to act?
 - How can you challenge some of the non-equitable ways that girls and women are expected to act?

Conclusion

When a young man is told to “act like a man,” it usually means to avoid showing emotion, be strong, and be a successful provider. Boys are taught that they have certain privileges vis-à-vis girls. Unfortunately, boys also learn to engage in risk-taking behaviors like engaging in unprotected sex with many sexual partners, or abusing substances (drugs and/or alcohol). Boys are also taught to use violence as a way to prove their manhood and power. On the other hand, when a young girl is told to “act like a woman,” it usually means to be submissive, not to complain, and to act sexy but never too smart.

As we become more aware of how some gender stereotypes can negatively impact our lives and communities, we can think constructively about how to challenge them and promote more positive gender roles and relations in our lives and communities. We are therefore free to create our own gender boxes and ideas about gender (gender norms) and how to choose to live our lives as scouts.



ACTIVITY 4: Gender Division of Labor and Leisure³

Objective

- To assist the scouts to identify and analyze their personal contribution as well as that of other members of their household in the division of chores as well as leisure.

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Prepared flip chart: Home activity table as seen in Handout 1
- Marker pens
- Handout 1

Time

- Two weeks

NOTE FOR FACILITATOR

This activity calls for a series of observations of activities. It should be preceded by a preparatory session of approximately 30 minutes followed by a reflection session for one hour. Prepare the home activity table and key on a flip chart before the preparatory session.

Method, part 1 preparatory

1. Ask the scouts to list (at least) 10 activities that are carried out at home by family members. Record them on flip chart paper. The list should include both work/chores and leisure/fun activities.
2. Provide each scout with Handout 1. If handouts are not available, ask scouts to copy the home activity table from the prepared flip chart to their notebooks.
3. Tell each scout to then fill in the first column of their table with activities that are carried out in their homes.
4. Tell the scouts that their assignment is to observe who performs the activities indicated on their list, over a period of two weeks, using the key shown on the prepared flip chart paper.
5. Remind the scouts that they will be indicating whether the members of their household are participating in both work and leisure activities.
6. Tell the scouts they should observe and mark their observations in their notebook or on their handout and be ready to discuss/share with the group at the scouts meeting following the two-week observation period.

³ Adapted from *Scouting for Solutions. Activity Pack 2: Gender and Power*. Nairobi: PATH; 2006.9.



HANDOUT 1: HOME ACTIVITY TABLE

	ACTIVITY	1	2	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
WORK ACTIVITIES														
LEISURE ACTIVITIES														

KEY

F Father	CB Cousin brother	V Visitor
M Mother	CS Cousin sister	OM Other male
OS Older sister	A Auntie	OF Other female
YS Younger sister	U Uncle	S Self
OB Older brother	HG House girl	
YB Younger brother	HB House boy	



Method, part 2 reflection

1. After two weeks of observation, meet with the scouts and help them to collectively summarize their findings on a flip chart using a similar format to the workbook table. However, this summary table should capture information from all the scouts.
2. Use the following questions to facilitate a discussion:
 - What type of chores did boys mostly do?
 - What type of chores did girls mostly do?
 - What do you think are the factors that contribute to the assignment of tasks between boys and girls? Why? Do you agree with all these reasons?
 - Who among men and women had more leisure/fun activities? Why do you think that is? Do you agree with the reasons?
 - Who among men and women had more work-related activities? Why? Do you agree with the reasons?

Conclusion

Through carefully considering the division of labor and leisure in our homes by gender, we are able to identify and analyze our own contributions, as well as the contributions of our family members. We see that there are many different types of work both at home and outside the home, such as in an office.

As we continue to become more aware of how gender norms impact the division of chores and leisure activities in our homes and communities, we can start to challenge these roles. Our greater awareness should also help us learn to appreciate and assist family or community members who have more responsibilities.



ACTIVITY 5: Understanding Sexuality⁴

Objectives

- To broadly understand the concept of sexuality.

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Marker pens
- Handout 2

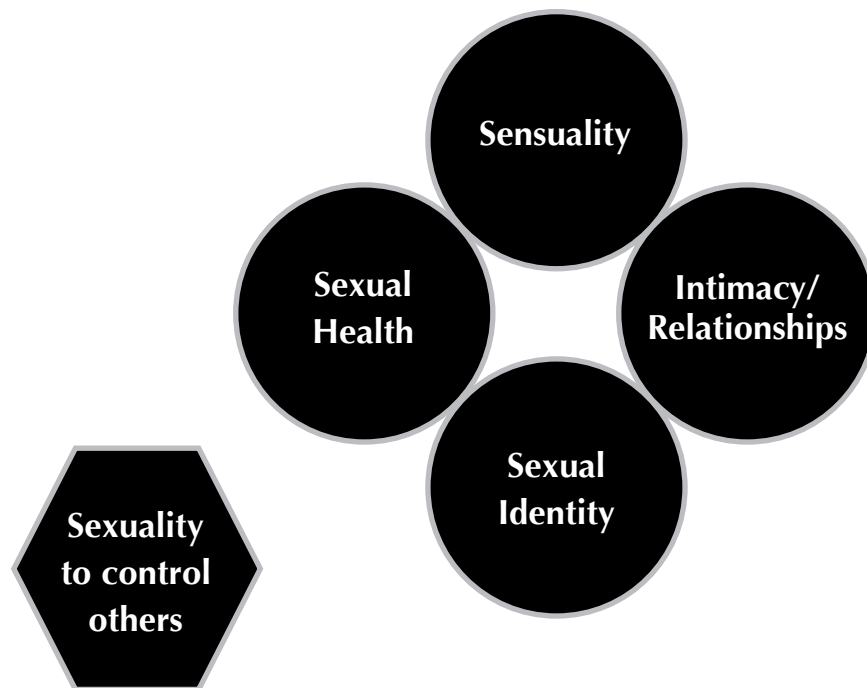
Time

- One hour

Method

1. Write the words “SEX” and SEXUALITY” in separate columns on a sheet of flip chart paper.
2. Ask the scout what the term “sex” means. Record the responses on the “SEX” column of the flip chart paper.
3. Ask the scouts to define the terms “sex” and “sexual intercourse.”
4. Tell them that “sex” refers to one’s biological characteristics (breasts, vagina, penis, testes) as a boy/girl. Sex is also synonym for sexual intercourse, which includes penile-vaginal sexual intercourse as well as other types of sexual intercourse.
5. Ask the scouts what the term “sexuality” means. Record these responses on the flip chart paper under the “SEXUALITY” column.
6. Explain to the scouts that sexuality is an important component of human life.
7. Explain to the scouts that while nearly all living creatures use the sexual act for reproduction, only human beings attach values, customs, and meanings to sexuality that go beyond procreation. Sexuality includes all feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of being male or female. Sexuality also includes being attracted to someone, being in love, and being in a relationship that includes intimacy and physical sexual activity.
8. A person’s sexuality is shaped by his/her values, attitudes, behaviors, physical appearance, beliefs, personality, likes and dislikes, and spiritual self—all the ways that he/she has been socialized.
9. Explain to the scouts that people associate the term “sexuality” to mean “sex” or “sexual intercourse,” but it means much more than that.
10. Distribute Handout 2, “The Five Aspects of Sexuality.”
11. Explain to the scouts that one way of defining the five aspects is to draw five circles that all touch each other. Each circle represents a part of sexuality. When all the circles are placed together, they suggest the total definition of sexuality.
12. Draw this relationship on a flipchart as you describe the five aspects (shown below).
13. As you define each concept, ask the scouts to give examples to demonstrate their understanding of each.

⁴ Adapted from “Men as Partners A Program for Supplementing the Training of Life Skills Educators.” AVSC International and Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa (PPASA); 1999.



14. Use the questions below to facilitate a discussion around sexuality:

- Is it easy to talk about sexuality? Why or why not?
- Which aspects of sexuality are very different between males and females? Do men and women experience sexuality the same way? Do men and women view relationships the same way? Do men and women have the same sexual needs?
- Where is “sexual intercourse” included in the definition of sexuality? Does the term play a large or small role in the definition of sexuality?
- What are some similarities in how women and men experience sexuality?
- What are some of the differences in how women and men experience sexuality?
- Why do you think these differences exist?

Conclusion

Sexuality is an important component of human life. While the sexual act for reproduction is similar for nearly all living creatures, only humans attribute values, customs, and meanings to sexuality that go beyond procreation. Sexuality includes how we feel about our bodies, how we give and receive pleasure, and how we express romantic feelings, among other things.

Unfortunately, in many cultures, men receive messages about their sexuality that may be negative: i.e. men’s sexuality is impulsive and uncontrollable, men should share their sexual conquests with their male peers, and men should hide any sexual faults. Meanwhile, women may be receiving equally harmful messages about their sexuality that tell them they should be passive and controllable. These contrasting messages often have negative implications for how men and women relate to one another in intimate and sexual relationships. It is therefore important that both men and women have opportunities to comfortably talk about sexuality and develop skills to communicate about sexuality with their partners.



HANDOUT 2: THE FIVE ASPECTS OF SEXUALITY

1. Sensuality

Sensuality describes how our bodies derive pleasure. Any of our five senses—touch, sight, hearing, smell, and taste—when enjoyed, can be sensual. Our body image is part of our sensuality. Whether we feel attractive and proud of our bodies influences many aspects of our lives. Fantasy is also part of sensuality. Our brain gives us the capacity to fantasize about sexual behaviors and experiences without having to act upon them.

2. Intimacy/relationships

Intimacy and relationships refer to our ability to love, trust, and care for others. We learn about intimacy from relationships around us, particularly from those within our families.

Emotional risk taking is part of intimacy. In order to experience true intimacy with others, a person must open up and share feelings and personal information. We take a risk of having our feelings hurt when we do this, but true intimacy is not possible otherwise.

3. Sexual identity

Each person has his or her own personal sexual identity. It includes four elements:

- Biological sex: based on our physical status of being either male or female.
- Gender identity: based on how we feel about being male or female.
- Gender roles: society's expectations based on our biological sex.
- Sexual orientation: the biological sex that we are romantically attracted to.

4. Sexual health

Sexual health involves our behavior related to producing children, enjoying sexual activities and maintaining our sexual and reproductive organs. Issues such as sexual intercourse, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are all part of our sexual health.

5. Sexuality to control others

In the diagram, this aspect is “disconnected” from the other aspects of sexuality. That is because this element is not a healthy one. It involves the use of sex to violate someone's rights or get something from another person. Rape is a clear example of sex being used to control somebody else. Sexual abuse and forced prostitution are others.



ACTIVITY 6: Messages about Sexuality⁵

Objectives

- To reflect on the different messages that boys and girls receive about sex and sexuality and how these messages influence personal values and behaviors.

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Marker pens
- Handout 3: Skit Ideas

Time

- One hour

Method

1. Divide the scouts into groups by their patrols. Each patrol will work on this exercise together.
2. Explain to the scouts that each patrol will be assigned an institution or population. They are to consider the messages about sexuality that each institution or population sends to both men and women.
3. Assign the institutions or populations as follows:
 - a. Patrol One: Peers
 - b. Patrol Two: Media, including radio/television, music, programs, and advertisements
 - c. Patrol Three: Parents and families
 - d. Patrol Four: Religious institutions
4. Explain to the scouts that they are to develop a two-minute skit that shows how their assigned institution or population sends messages about sexuality. Allow at least ten minutes for preparation. (Handout 3 on skit ideas may be distributed to them, if the scout leader sees that the scouts are having a difficult time coming up with ideas for the skits.)
5. Ask each patrol to take a turn making presentations back to the full group. After each presentation, observe and probe for messages not shown in the handout. All the messages conveyed in the skit should be noted and discussed with the full group.
6. After all the skits have been completed, use the following questions to facilitate discussion:
 - How did it feel to watch the skits?
 - How are messages about sexuality the same for women and men?
 - How are messages about sexuality different for women and men? Why do you think these messages are different?
 - How are these messages different for young people and adults?
 - What messages about sexuality can be harmful? How?
 - What messages about sexuality can be beneficial? How?
 - Are certain messages more influential than others? Which? Why?

⁵ Adapted from *Engaging Boys and Men in Gender Transformation: The Group Education Manual*. The ACQUIRE Project/EngenderHealth and Promundo; 2008.



Conclusion

We are continually exposed to messages about sexuality from a young age. These messages come from diverse sources and often differ in content depending on their source. Often, family and religious institutions will have certain views about sexuality that may differ from those communicated by peers and the media. Messages about sexuality, regardless from which source, communicate different attitudes and expectations depending on the targeted audience. Often, these messages communicate traditional gender norms and stereotypes regarding sexuality. It is important that we critically assess the messages we receive based on our own values and that we seek out factual information from reliable sources.



HANDOUT 3: SKIT IDEAS

Peers:

- Show a group of boys/girls talking with each other about sex issues.
- Show the type of advice a boy/girl gives another boy/girl about sex.

The media, including radio/television, music, programs, and advertisements:

- Create a commercial that sends a message about sex.
- Sing a song that sends a message about sex.
- Show a scene from television that sends a message about sex.
- Preview television programming for the evening, depicting brief scenes with sexual messages from the shows.
- Show two people talking about sex from a television show or in a piece of music.
- Put on a skit in which a person makes all the decisions about sex based on what celebrities or characters from television shows would do.

Parents and family:

- Role play different messages about sex that parents communicate to their sons and daughters.

Religious institutions:

- Role play a sermon about sex from a religious leader.
- Role play a discussion about sex between a religious leader and a follower of that faith.
- Role play a television interview with a leader of a faith-based organization that believes people should not have sex until marriage.