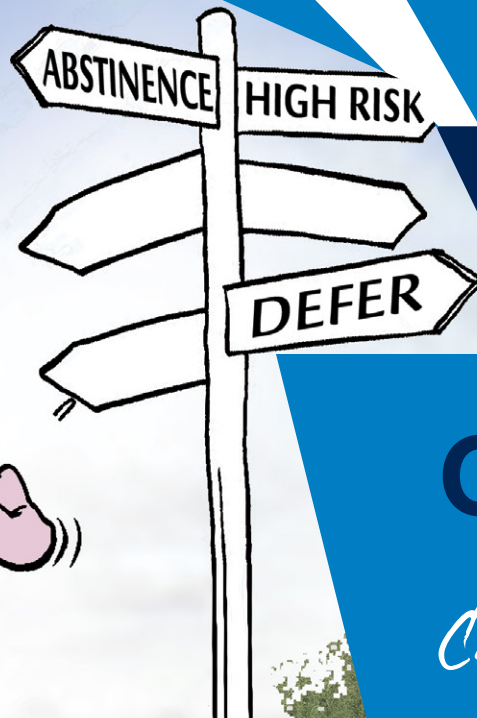


Approved
By
K.I.C.D



Ministry of Education



Check IT beat IT

Chunguzta, Pambana



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Government of
Azerbaijan

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What is HIV?

HIV attacks a person's immune system

HIV refers to Human Immune-deficiency Virus. It is a virus that can lead to Acquired Immuno deficiency Syndrome or AIDS. There is no cure for HIV and the body cannot get rid of the HIV, so once infection occurs, you have it for life. Even though you cannot cure it, you can control it with treatment called antiretroviral therapy (ART). In a person infected by HIV, the virus is found in the body fluids such as blood, semen, vaginal fluid, breast milk and other fluids containing blood. HIV can be passed on to another person through having sex or sharing needles used to inject drugs and other substances. If a woman with HIV is pregnant, her baby can get the virus from her while it is in the womb or during the delivery process or from breastfeeding.

Some traditional customs such as circumcision or body tattooing can also spread HIV, if they are performed with knives or blades that have not been sterilised. However, if male circumcision is done under proper medical supervision and with sterilised instruments, a man's risk of getting HIV infection through sexual contact is reduced. Other customs, such as wife inheritance, can also be risky and spread HIV if one of the partners is HIV positive. Saliva, tears, or sweat have not been shown to pass on HIV.

Your immune system is like an army that protects your body against germs and viruses that are like invaders that attack your body. There are many important parts of your immune system that help to fight off these invaders. The CD4 helper cells are the 'Captains'. They send a message to the army that there is an invader that needs to be stopped; the army needs to search for and destroy this invader! The T8 killer cells are the front soldiers, and they are sent in to kill the invaders. At the same time, the antibody factory of B cells is ordered to start producing antibodies.

These are the key to locking up the invaders, making them inactive and preventing them from progressing further in their attack. Once the antibodies start being produced, they are the signals that let us know there is an infection, and tell us what type of infection is present in the body.

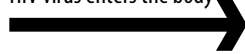
What are the stages of HIV?

Illustration of parts of the immune system

Human Immuno-deficiency Virus



HIV virus enters the body

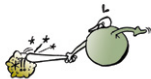


CD4 - helper cells sending the command to attack



Replaces Helper Sending commands

T8 killer cells of the body's immune system attack the HIV virus and other germs



Antibodies produced by B cells attack the HIV virus



Stage 1: 2-4 weeks after infection

During this period you might think that you have flu, or you might look and feel fine. However, the virus is multiplying in your body and large numbers of virus are being produced. The large numbers of virus in the body means you are very infectious and you can easily pass on the virus during this period if you have unprotected sex. Even if you take an HIV test it might be negative, because the immune system has not yet started to produce the antibodies to fight the virus therefore we don't have the signal to tell us that an infection is present. That is why, even if you get a negative result, it is better to test again after 3 months, to make sure the test is still negative.

Testing is a very important way to stop the spread of HIV. If you think you have been exposed to HIV, through sex or using dirty infected needles to inject drugs, and you have symptoms like a cold or flu, go to a clinic and get tested, and remember to test again after 3 months.

Stage 2

During this time, the immune system begins to recognise the HIV and starts producing antibodies. Remember, antibodies are the signals that tell us there is an infection and they also tell us the type of infection. If you think you have been exposed to HIV and tested during this stage, you will most likely test positive because the immune system has developed antibodies to fight off most of the initial attack by HIV. The person usually looks and feels fine for a long time, but remember, once infected it is always possible for the person to pass the virus to someone else if they have unprotected sex.

Although there are no symptoms, the virus will continue to attack the immune system. HIV is smart – it attacks the CD4 cells (the 'Captains') so they can no longer keep sending orders to the rest of the immune system. As the CD4 cells are destroyed, fewer messages are sent to the army of T8 killer cells and B cells, and so the virus starts to build up in the body. As the numbers of virus increase, the immune system becomes weaker and weaker. A person may still feel well or only have minor symptoms, such as mild skin rashes, dry skin, cold sores or more regular colds. At the end of this stage, as HIV destroys more and more of the important parts of the immune system, the person will begin to feel unwell.

Stage 3

AIDS is the last phase of HIV infection. A person has AIDS when his/her immune system is destroyed and there are very few 'Captain' CD4 cells left but there is a lot of HIV in the body. At this stage the person is also very infectious. By this stage the person is very ill, as the damaged immune system is not able to fight off any infections. Cancer or infections such as TB, pneumonia and brain infections take advantage of the very weak immune system and attack the body. These are signs that a person has AIDS. During this time, the person is extremely likely to infect someone if they have unprotected sex, because of the high levels of virus in the body.

Sooner or later everyone who has HIV will need to start treatment by taking anti-retrovirals (ART) to prolong their lives.

Treatment

Anti-retroviral Therapy (ART) is a combination of medicines that are used to fight off HIV infection or AIDS. They do not cure HIV but reduce the amount of virus in the body and allow the immune system to recover and become stronger. They can help people at all stages of the disease, if taken in the right way, every day. ART is important in stopping the spread of HIV. The medicines are also important in stopping the disease from moving from one stage to the next stage in the infected person. If a pregnant woman is HIV positive, she can get treatment to stop the virus from spreading to the baby. That is why it is important for all pregnant women to get tested for HIV, so that if they test positive they can begin treatment as soon as possible before their child is born.

ART, like other medicines, has side effects. These vary from one person to the other. The side effects usually get better over some weeks. It is important that once someone starts on this medicine that they continue taking it for the rest of their lives, because if they stop they will become sick again and the medicines will not work effectively.

Being young and positive

Children who are born with HIV, or those who are diagnosed with HIV later in life, can be treated with medicines that allow them to live long and stay healthy, as long as they take their medicines regularly and eat nutritious food. They can have safe and positive relationships, get married and even have children, as long as they take their medicines correctly and protect themselves, their unborn child and their partner. It is important for everyone to get tested before getting married or before engaging in a relationship, and to get treatment as soon as possible if they test positive.

Disclosing your HIV status

As a young person living with HIV, one can be faced with some challenges. It is important to know what you should do about disclosing your HIV status and about being responsible for your own health and protection. Young people living with HIV are often fearful and worried about being bullied or rejected by friends or about people talking about them. Making a decision about when to disclose your HIV status and to whom can be difficult and different for others. Think about who you want to talk to and how you would explain what it means to be HIV positive. Think about how you can answer questions and explain the myths about HIV. Being able to talk about your status to a trusted friend, teacher, parent or health worker can make it easier to cope with your challenges, and can create a supportive and safe environment for you to manage living with HIV.

What's my risk?

High risk behaviour includes having sex with more than one partner, and sex without protection. These behaviours not only increase your chance of getting HIV, but also the chances of those with whom you have sex.

When a person takes drugs or alcohol they increase their risk of getting infected with HIV. We all know that our decisions and our behaviour can be unwise when we are under the influence of these substances. If you take drugs or alcohol, you cannot think clearly and you are more likely to engage in sex with people you do not know. Getting drunk or using drugs may place you in a dangerous situation where you risk sexual abuse or rape, because you cannot control what is happening around you.

It is easy to be tempted to have sex in exchange for someone older buying you cool stuff like airtime or clothes. Relationships with 'sponsors' are risky because it can be difficult to say "NO" or to protect yourself and remain in control of what is happening.

If you refuse to have sex with someone who but the person then uses violence, this is rape. Rape is when you have said "NO" and the person forces you to have sex without your permission. It can happen to boys as well as girls. If you are raped, you should call a close friend or relative whom you can trust. They can help you to immediately report what has happened to the police and to go to a local emergency clinic.

The clinic can give you treatment that helps prevent you from getting HIV, in case the attacker is HIV positive. This special treatment is only effective if you start it within 72 hours of the rape. The clinic can also give you treatment to prevent other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). You should go back to the clinic within 2 weeks to check for signs of any infection and to get treatment if needed. You must remember to go again to the clinic after 3 months and 6 months for HIV testing, to make sure that you do not have HIV. This is because HIV can hide in the body before it shows up in a test

I am living with HIV. What is my risk?

As young people go through puberty and are becoming young adults, they go through many emotional and physical changes. This is a time when many young people are choosing to have their first relationship. A person living with HIV is at risk of getting infected again, with a different type of HIV virus, if they have sexual contact or share needles with another HIV positive person. This is because HIV is not just one type of virus. There are many types of HIV virus. If you are taking medicines to treat your HIV infection, they may not work on the other types of HIV. Just as importantly, it is your responsibility to make sure you do not pass on the type of HIV virus you have to another HIV positive person, or to a person who does not have the infection. Abstinence is the surest way to protect yourself and others from infection.

The hidden lover and the sexual network

Sometimes relationships can involve more than two people, which means two or more partners are involved. The reason why HIV continues to spread is because of these 'many sexual relationships' that are all happening at the same time.

Many people do not think they could get HIV because they only have one partner. However, it is possible that their partner is also going with another partner who is hidden from them. This hidden partner is, in turn, connected to two or three other partners, and in that way a network of relationships called a 'sexual network' is created. All the people in this network are connected, just like a computer network. If one of the people in the sexual network has a STI or HIV, all the people in this network are at risk of getting the infection. The more partners involved, the bigger the network and the higher the risk of STI or HIV infection (look at the numbers game on page 10).

The main partner in these relationships could be a wife or girlfriend or boyfriend or husband. The 'other' partners may be someone they have sex with for a couple of months or for many years. The problem is that none of the people in the network know about each other, because they are hidden from each other.

The second problem is that the person who has STI or HIV does not often know that they are infected, therefore do not take any precautions. Remember, they look and feel well. HIV can be in their body for a long time before it shows up. They can pass on



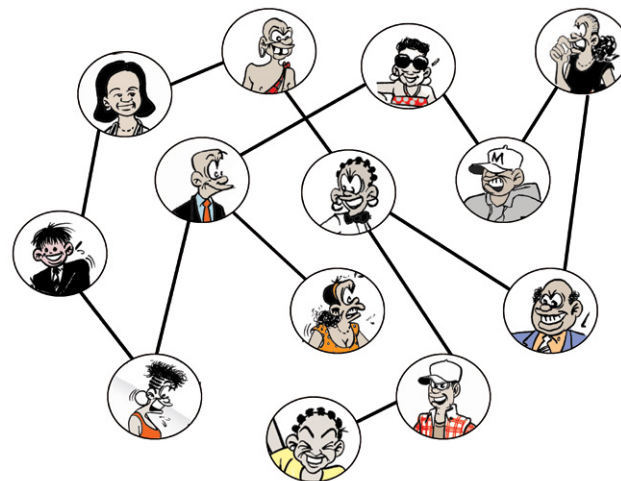
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the virus without knowing it. Young girls are particularly at risk of getting HIV because their genital area is very sensitive. It can tear easily and get infected with the virus if they engage in sexual activity without protection.

People have 'other' sex partners for many reasons. Some have other partners in exchange for 'cool' stuff, status, out of boredom, for 'good sex', or to boost self-esteem. Some young girls will exchange sexual favours to have expensive clothes, go to nice restaurants and they are usually referred to as 'arm candy'. Young people have relations with 'sponsors' who are older men or women who also have other partners. Remember, sometimes these older people are only a few years older, for instance, they can be *matatu* drivers who give girls a ride in the front seat of the *matatu*. In other cases, when there is no food at home, girls and boys exchange sex for food and clothes.

The numbers game

Sexual networks are risky because the longer a sexual relationship continues over time, the less careful people are likely to be about protecting themselves. If HIV gets to just one person in the network, it can be passed in no time from one person to another. It can pass particularly fast during the first six weeks after a person has been infected, when there are large numbers of the virus in the body.



A person may have two or three partners, but if those people have two to three partners as well, and they in turn also have two to three partners, this creates a network. If HIV comes to visit just one person in the network, we have 169 problems in no time!

The jolly juice brain

Hey, we all like a good party, but HIV likes a good jolly juice or bhang party. When we drink too much alcohol, we act differently compared to when we are not drinking. When we have been drinking a lot, we are more likely to make decisions that put our lives at risk, like having sex without protection, getting into fights, or trying drugs.

People who drink too much are likely to have more sexual partners. They have a greater chance of deciding to have sex with a stranger, and tend to be less careful about protecting

themselves. They have a greater chance of being exposed to HIV. People who inject drugs are also at risk of getting or passing on HIV if they share injection needles.

Getting drunk or abusing substances may place us at a much higher risk for sexual abuse or rape. Our normal abilities to protect ourselves are clouded, our judgement in assessing a situation and reacting quickly to danger signals is slowed down by the alcohol.



The sponsor surprise can be very bitter

Many young men and women today engage in sexual relationships with older men and women that place them at risk of HIV. The older partners are not necessarily old fat cats. They can be only five to ten years older than their partners. They can be rich or poor. The gifts they give in exchange for sex can vary from cool stuff like cell phones, cash, credit cards and popular fashion labels, to simple gifts such as snacks or cosmetics. Young people who have sexual relationships with older men or women have a greater chance of being at risk of HIV infection, because the older partners often have other sexual partners and may also be practising risky behaviours such as unprotected sex.

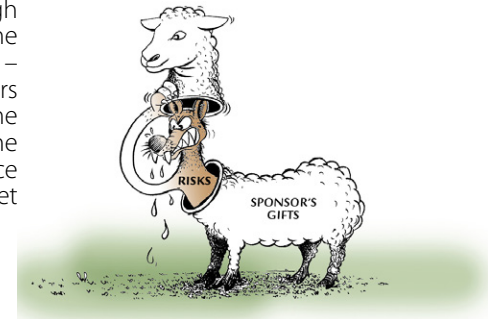
Young people engaging in these relationships experience peer pressure to use their sexuality to gain the gifts and favours they get in exchange for sex. They do this to achieve their desires and goals of having enough money and being seen by others as successful or popular. Sometimes, friends or families may pressurise younger people into having sex with older partners.

There are many reasons why sex happens between older and younger people. Young people often do not see that their behaviour puts them at risk of HIV infection. Young people who have sex with older partners use their sexuality to maintain control over their partners. They choose the number and types of partners with whom they become involved. Often they are more afraid of being 'found out' in their relationships with older people, than they are of STIs or HIV. Young women may be more concerned about pregnancy than about getting HIV.

Older men and some older women prefer younger sexual partners (*ndogo, ndogo*), believing that they are less likely to have HIV. These older men and women do not realise the risk that they expose themselves to. For the older person, prestige, status, and improved self-esteem of being with a younger lover may make them want to become involved in a relationship with a younger person.

Don't believe it if a 'sponsor' gives you gifts and tells you not to worry about having sexual relations with them, because they are not having sex with any other people. Avoid the 'sponsor surprise'!

We cannot say it loudly enough – check out the numbers game! – the more partners there are in the sexual network, the greater the chance that you can get HIV.



Remember! Sponsors can leave you with more than gifts.

Love words

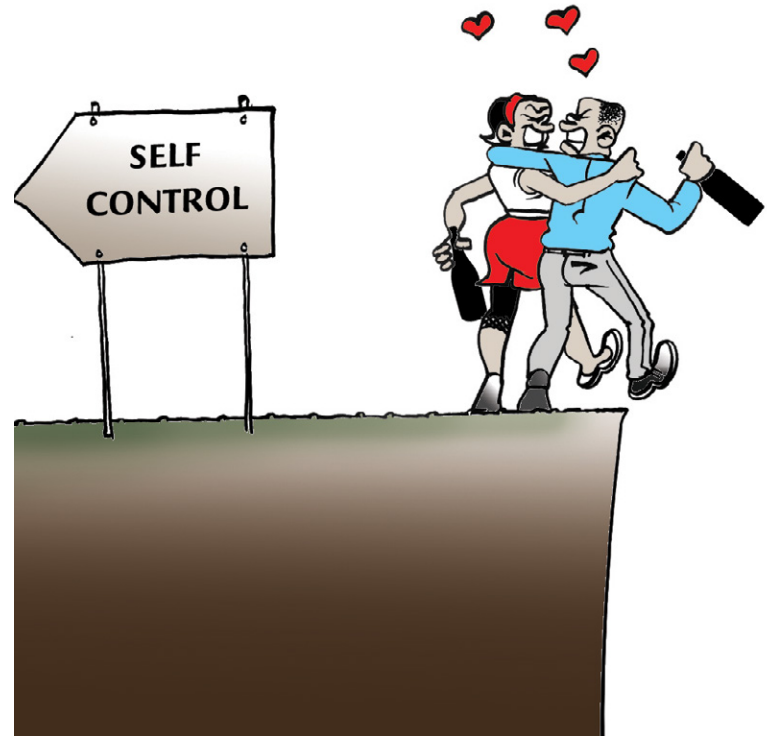
Words are risky because often what we say and what we mean are two different things. Some people are forced or persuaded into sex, even if they may not feel ready to do it. Sometimes people may say that they love you and that if you loved them you would have sex with them. This places pressure on you because you may be afraid that if you say “no, let’s wait a while” you may lose the relationship. But even when you say yes, this may also result in the relationship coming to an end.

Think about your relationship and try having open and honest discussions about your relationship and sex.

Whether you trust each other to wait until you are older, whether you are engaging in risky behaviour (drugs, alcohol or sexual relationships with other partners) that can expose you to HIV or other STIs, we can’t say it loud enough:

Check out the number game!

Because a hidden lover can bring you HIV from another source.



Be wise – check the TRUE meaning of words.

Protecting yourself

BE STARS: See, Think, Act, Remain Safe

SEE: Recognise the danger situations

- Older men promising you things or wanting to give you a good time
- Matatu drivers offering you free rides or rides in the front seat with them
- Girls/boys who pretend to be friends, saying they are trying to help you out and who offer you 'tei' or 'nayku' or bhang/'gode'/'shamba' or free stuff in exchange for going with other men
- Older boys or girls who tease you and call you 'mshamba' or 'baby' because you are not sexually experienced, and who encourage you to try to have sexual relationships.

These are all danger situations that you learn to recognise with knowledge and being more confident, and that can help you to start thinking about making healthy choices for yourself

THINK: About the choices you are making

You think about these things because you know yourself and your parents and your community. You know you are good enough and you respect who you are. You know the facts about HIV, STIs and early pregnancies. So, think about whether you want to do something risky before you take the next step. Think about how to say "NO" ahead of time, so you don't have to come up with replies on the spot.

ACT: Take action to get out of the situation

- Remove yourself from the situation before it gets too risky and you have no control.
- Have a good network of friends whom you trust and can help you, and always call them if you need to.

REMAIN SAFE: Make a decision to avoid the situation in future

- Find positive alternative ways to spend your time, like volunteering or joining a sports team.
- Hang out with friends who play sport or music or drama.
- Stay away from drugs and alcohol.
- Find a trusted adult you can talk to about your fears, your challenges and your doubts.
- Know where to go in case you need help or advice, or when you are in trouble. This could be a youth-friendly health clinic, a mentor, a counsellor, a teacher or a parent, sibling or good friend.

Remember, it's your body, your choice, your life!

My body, my choice, my life!



You have a right to feel comfortable, to be treated with respect, and to stay healthy and safe in your relationships

Activities for the teacher to use

What's my risk' games



Myths



Facts

The Myths and Facts leaflet can be used here and game played where the kids can decide what is a myth and what is a fact.

Activity 1: Am I at risk?

1. Choose one group member in advance, and give them some secret instructions: when they shake hands during the activity, they must tickle the palm of the other person's hand.
2. Gather all the pupils/students in a circle and tell them that we are going to shake hands with everyone in the circle. They should shake hands normally. However, if, while shaking hands, they feel someone tickling their palm, they must pass this tickling handshake on to the next person.
3. If they do not feel a tickling handshake, they should continue shaking hands in the normal way.
4. Stop the exercise after one minute.
5. Check how many pupils/students got tickled. Ask them to stand on one side. Inform them that all those who were tickled have the virus. Explain that only one person started the tickle. Ask the group to count how many got infected during the one minute.
6. Ask those who were tickled how they felt, and ask those who did not get tickled how they feel too. Tell the group that this was only a game. Shaking hands cannot spread HIV, but the activity shows that HIV spreads very quickly.

Activity 2: The numbers game

1. Take a flip chart and place it at the front of the room (or use a blackboard).
2. Select one participant and ask him/her to come to the front of the room and draw a circle and write his/her name in the circle.
3. Ask the participant to select two other participants who are his 'partners'.
4. Ask these 'partners' to come to the front. Each one should draw a line from the first participant's circle and then draw their own circle and write their name in it.
5. Ask these two participants to each nominate a further two participants as their 'partners'. If they want, they can select a participant who has already drawn a circle.
6. Keep going until all the participants have chosen two 'partners'.
7. Choose one participant at random and mark their circle in red, to show that this person was recently infected with HIV. Then use the red marker to make lines and show how HIV will spread through the network.

Following this:

1. Collect the group in a circle and tell them the story of Ruth and Danny (for children above 14 years). Ruth was 16 years old when her parents decided to get her married. She lived in Kibera and her husband was working in a garage in the nearby city of Nairobi. Her husband Danny was the first man she had sex with. Will Ruth get HIV?
2. Ask the group what information they need to know in order to answer this question. [The answer should be that they need to know about Danny's sexual history or whether he has been sharing needles while using drugs.] Why do they need this information? [The answer should be: to find out whether he has been exposed to the virus.]

Activity 3: The story of Danny

1. Danny had one girlfriend, Mary, before he got married. Once, he had fun with his friends drinking and had unprotected sex with a sex worker. Stick a card, with the name Danny written on it, on the wall. On different coloured card, write 'girlfriend Mary' and 'sex worker' and stick these below Danny's name.
 2. What are Danny's chances of infection? Ask the group what information they need to know to answer this question. [Answer should be: they need to know the sexual history of his two partners.]
 3. The story of Danny continues: Ruth had one boyfriend before she became friendly with Danny. The sex worker has three clients each day.
 4. Stick cards of different colours on the wall – one for 'Ruth's boyfriend' and three other cards for 'clients of the sex worker'.
 5. The story of Danny continues: This boyfriend of Ruth's had one girlfriend and one boyfriend. Each client of the sex worker has been with one girlfriend and another sex worker.
- Again, stick cards on the wall to represent these people.
6. The story of Danny continues: The girlfriend and boyfriend (of Ruth's boyfriend) had each had two previous boyfriends. The girlfriends of each client had at least one other boyfriend each, while the other sex workers all had at least one other client or boyfriend. Represent these with cards on the wall.
 7. Select one person in the last level of cards to 'have HIV'. Ask the group to trace through the network of cards to see whether Ruth will get HIV.
 8. You can have other variations on this activity to show how transmission takes place.
 9. Make sure the group understands how HIV transmission can multiply. Remind them that when you have unprotected sex with someone, it is like having unprotected sex with all of their sexual partners.

Variation

Make a sponge cut-out of a man and a woman. Have several additional cut-outs of men and women. Begin by putting ink on one of the cut-outs, say a man. Place it next to a woman cut-out and see the ink transfer on to the sponge. Repeat it in different combinations.

Review

- What did the group learn from this exercise?
- What should Danny do to make sure Ruth, his wife, does not get HIV?
- What can Ruth do?
- Is Ruth at risk because she is only 16? [Answer: The mucous membrane in the vagina is very delicate at this age and can tear easily. Sometimes if the vagina is dry, it can tear easily, making it easier for the HIV virus to infect her.]

Linking learning with life

How many of your friends have multiple partners? Do they know what risk they are at if they are having unprotected sex? How can you convince them to do the right thing? Can you plan an activity that will help a group of young people know what risk they are exposed to? Can you, if you are a boy, talk to a group of young boys about what you have learned today? What have you decided to change in your behaviour because of the activity?

The 'Check It, Beat It'

Booklet aims to ensure that young people have the right information about practices that can harm them. It is a straightforward booklet with direct language (rather than using euphemisms) to ensure the messages get through. The booklet encourages young people to “check it” out or understand the risk of HIV and STI infection in relation to multiple concurrent partners, transactional sex (sex for money), intergeneration sex (sugar daddies) and alcohol use.