



**FACILITATOR'S GUIDE**

# Do you always have to say yes to sex with your partner?

## Key facts and discussions



### What do you think Mwila should do?

#### FACILITATOR'S NOTES

This is the opening and main question for discussion. This would be a good time to reassure the group that there are no wrong answers. Throughout the session, continue to encourage everyone to share their viewpoints, if they want to, for an open and honest debate.

While no answers are wrong, it's a good idea to draw a distinction between what is fact and what is opinion throughout the session. This list of key facts might help you with this:

## Key facts

Do you always have to have sex with your boyfriend or girlfriend? Can you just assume that if you've had sex with someone before you can have sex with them again? If your boyfriend or girlfriend doesn't want to have sex does that mean something is wrong in your relationship?

We know these things can be hard to talk about, but here are a few facts to help you think through some of these issues.

**Taking part in any kind of sexual activity** with someone else should involve **giving and getting agreement**. This is also known as **sexual consent**.

Consent requires **a clear and enthusiastic yes**. If someone seems unsure, stays silent, doesn't respond, or says "maybe," that isn't consent.

You should **always ask for consent and give consent every time you have sex**.

You **always have a right to say no** to any form of sex or sexual activity – it doesn't matter who the other person is, what your relationship is, what you've done with them or others in the past. It is the same whether you're having sex for the first time with someone, or if you're in a long-term relationship.

**Consent is an ongoing process** – you might agree to sex earlier on and then change your mind – you might agree to one type of sexual activity but not to another – everyone has the right to do this.

Giving your consent and getting your partner's consent may feel a bit awkward but ultimately **sex is about communication** and can and should be a positive and pleasurable experience when it's based on mutual consent.



You should **not assume that your partner will want to have sex** just because you've had sex in the past. Similarly, if you feel pressured to have sex or feel too afraid to say no – that's not OK, and may be a sign of an unhealthy relationship.

Sex is only one aspect of a good relationship and **having sex is not proof of love** or guarantee fidelity. If your partner doesn't want to have sex remember that they are saying no to sex, not to you.

## Ideas for discussion

Here are some questions to think about yourself or discuss in your group.

- **What do you think Mwila is thinking and feeling? What do you think Sepiso is thinking and feeling?**

### FACILITATOR'S NOTES

The group may bring up issues such as rejection, suspicion of infidelity, fear of a break-up, and just not being in the mood for sex. It's important to emphasise that this kind of situation is very common in relationships and doesn't imply anything major is going on. There is a wide range of thoughts and feelings that people in this situation may have.

- **Can you suggest positive ways they could communicate their thoughts and feelings to each other?**

### FACILITATOR'S NOTES

This is a follow-up to the first two questions and should help group participants think through some positive communications techniques they could use. This may include giving the other person space to speak, asking questions that show you've been listening to their viewpoint, being as open, honest and clear as you can about how you feel and not using language that implies blame.

- **What are some ways that someone might communicate that they don't want to have sex? Do they always have to say no?**

#### FACILITATOR'S NOTES

Groups may bring up saying things like “not right now” or “I’m not sure”. They may also discuss the fact that staying silent does not mean consent and the importance of body-language like turning away, curling up or not respond positively to being touched for example. The important thing to emphasise here is that there are lots of ways to say no without necessarily using the word “no”.

- **If someone says no to having sex with you is it OK to keep asking or try to change their minds?**

#### FACILITATOR'S NOTES

People may have different views on this but it's important to let the group know that pressuring someone to have sex is never okay, and everyone deserves to have their boundaries respected. Using persistent pressure, guilt or other forms of manipulation to try to persuade someone to have sex with you is not OK.

## Facilitator tips

Remember that these videos cover topics that could bring up trauma for some young people taking part in the discussion. Let everyone know that they do not have to take part or answer any questions they feel uncomfortable with. Have a plan for how you will respond if a young person discloses abuse or trauma.

Come prepared! Before the discussion read through the information here to make sure you understand the issues and know the facts. Find out where young people can access HIV and sexual health services in their area so you can share this information with them.

## Useful resources

### **Sexual consent**

<https://www.avert.org/sex-stis/consent>

### **Healthy relationships**

<https://www.avert.org/sex-stis/relationships>

### **6 things you need to know about sexual consent**

<https://www.avert.org/news/6-things-you-need-know-about-sexual-consent>

This guide is part of the Young Voices package of resources on sex and relationships. For more details please visit:  
[www.avert.org/hubs/young-voices-africa](http://www.avert.org/hubs/young-voices-africa)