

Key components and teaching methods of life skills-based HIV education

Life skills-based education for sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention in schools (extracted from The World Health Organization’s Information Series on School Health Document 9: Skills for Health: Skills-based health education including life skills: An important component of a Child-Friendly/Health-Promoting School)

A. Key components

COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS	DECISION-MAKING AND CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS	COPING AND SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communication Skills: <i>Students can observe and practise ways to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - effectively express a desire to not have sex - influence others to abstain from sex or practise safe sex using condoms if they cannot be influenced to abstain - demonstrate support for the prevention of discrimination related to HIV/AIDS ● Advocacy Skills: <i>Students can observe and practise ways to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - present arguments for access to sexual and reproductive health information, services, and counselling for young people ● Negotiaton/Refusal Skills: <i>Students can observe and practise ways to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - refuse sexual intercourse or negotiate the use of condoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Decision-making Skills: <i>Students can observe and practise ways to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - seek and find reliable sources of information about human anatomy; puberty; conception and pregnancy; STIs, HIV/AIDS, and local prevalence rates; and available methods of contraception - analyse a variety of potential situations for sexual interaction and determine a variety of actions they may take and the consequences of such actions ● Critical Thinking Skills: <i>Students can observe and practise ways to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - analyse myths and misconceptions about HIV/AIDS, contraceptives, gender roles, and body image that are perpetuated by the media - analyse social-cultural influences regarding sexual behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Skills for Managing Stress: <i>Students can observe and practise ways to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - seek services for help with reproductive and sexual health issues, e.g., contraception, condoms to prevent HIV or unplanned pregnancy, sexual abuse, exploitation, discrimination, (gender-based) violence, or other emotional trauma ● Skills for Increasing Personal Confidence and Abilities to Assume Control, Take Responsibility, Make a Difference, or Bring About Change: <i>Students can observe and practise ways to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assert personal values when encountering peer and other pressures

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<p>● Interpersonal Skills: <i>Students can observe and practise ways to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - show interest and listen actively to others - be caring and compassionate, including when interacting with someone who is infected with HIV 		

B. Participatory teaching methods for building skills and influencing attitudes

TEACHING METHOD	DESCRIPTION	BENEFITS	PROCESS
CLASS DISCUSSION (In Small or Large Groups)	The class examines a problem or topic of interest with the goal of better understanding an issue or skill, reaching the best solution, or developing new ideas and directions for the group.	Provides opportunities for students to learn from one another and practise turning to one another in solving problems. Enables students to deepen their understanding of the topic and personalise their connection to it. Helps develop skills in listening, assertiveness, and empathy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide how to arrange seating for discussion • Identify the goal of the discussion and communicate it clearly • Pose meaningful, open-ended questions • Keep track of discussion progress
BRAIN-STORMING	Students actively generate a broad variety of ideas about a particular topic or question in a given, often brief period of time. Quantity of ideas is the main objective of brainstorming. Evaluating or debating the ideas occurs later.	Allows students to generate ideas quickly and spontaneously. Helps students use their imagination and break loose from fixed patterns of response. Good discussion starter because the class can creatively generate ideas. It is essential to evaluate the pros and cons of each idea or rank ideas according to certain criteria.	Designate a leader and a recorder <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State the issue or problem and ask for ideas • Students may suggest any idea that comes to mind • Do not discuss the ideas when they are first suggested • Record ideas in a place where everyone can see them • After brainstorming, review the ideas and add, delete, categorise
ROLE PLAY	Role play is an informal dramatisation in which people act out a suggested situation.	Provides an excellent strategy for practising skills; experiencing how one might handle a potential situation in real life; increasing empathy for others and their point of view; and increasing insight into one's own feelings.	Describe the situation to be role played <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select role players • Give instructions to role players • Start the role play • Discuss what happened
SMALL GROUP/ BUZZ GROUP	For small group work, a large class is divided into smaller groups of six or less and given a short time to accomplish a task,	Useful when groups are large and time is limited. Maximises student input. Lets students get to know one another better and increases the likelihood that they will	State the purpose of discussion and the amount of time available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form small groups • Position seating so that members can hear

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	carry out an action, or discuss a specific topic, problem, or question.	consider how another person thinks. Helps students hear and learn from their peers.	<p>each other easily</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask group to appoint recorder • At the end have recorders describe the group's Discussion
GAMES AND SIMULATIONS	Students play games as activities that can be used for teaching content, critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making and for review and reinforcement. Simulations are activities structured to feel like the real experience.	Games and simulations promote fun, active learning, and rich discussion in the classroom as participants work hard to prove their points or earn points. They require the combined use of knowledge, attitudes, and skills and allow students to test out assumptions and abilities in a relatively safe environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind students that the activity is meant to be enjoyable and that it does not matter who wins <p>Simulations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work best when they are brief and discussed immediately • Students should be asked to imagine themselves in a situation or should play a structured game or activity to experience a feeling that might occur in another setting
SITUATION ANALYSIS AND CASE STUDIES	Situation analysis activities allow students to think about, analyse, and discuss situations they might encounter. Case studies are real-life stories that describe in detail what happened to a community, family, school, or individual.	Situation analysis allows students to explore problems and dilemmas and safely test solutions; it provides opportunities to work together, share ideas, and learn that people sometimes see things differently. Case studies are power-ful catalysts for thought and discussion. Students consider the forces that converge to make an individual or group act in one way or another, and then evaluate the consequences. By engaging in this thinking process, students can improve their own decision-making skills. Case studies can be tied to specific activities to help students practice healthy	<p>Guiding questions are useful to spur thinking and discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator must be adept at teasing out the key points and step back and pose some 'bigger' overarching questions • Situation analyses and case studies need adequate time for processing and creative thinking • Teacher must act as the facilitator and coach rather than the sole source of 'answers' and knowledge

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		responses before they find themselves confronted with a health risk.	
DEBATE	In a debate, a particular problem or issue is presented to the class, and students must take a position on resolving the problem or issue. The class can debate as a whole or in small groups.	Provides opportunity to address a particular issue in-depth and creatively. Health issues lend themselves well: students can debate, for instance, whether smoking should be banned in public places in a community. Allows students to defend a position that may mean a lot to them. Offers a chance to practice higher thinking skills.	<p>Allow students to take positions of their choosing. If too many students take the same position, ask for volunteers to take the opposing point of view.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with time to research their topic. • Do not allow students to dominate at the expense of other speakers. • Make certain that students show respect for the opinions and thoughts of other debaters. • Maintain control in the classroom and keep the debate on topic.
STORY TELLING	The instructor or students tell or read a story to a group. Pictures, comics and photonovels, filmstrips, and slides can supplement. Students are encouraged to think about and discuss important (health-related) points or methods raised by the story after it is told.	Can help students think about local problems and develop critical thinking skills. Students can engage their creative skills in helping to write stories, or a group can work interactively to tell stories. Story telling lends itself to drawing analogies or making comparisons, helping people to discover healthy solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the story simple and clear. Make one or two main points. • Be sure the story (and pictures, if included) relate to the lives of the students. • Make the story dramatic enough to be interesting. Try to include situations of happiness, sadness, excitement, courage, serious thought, decisions, and problem-solving behaviours.