

# LOVING WITH RESPECT

A guide for men who care



Be Faithful  
Respect persons with HIV use condoms consistently  
*respect between women & men*

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We hope that you will find this leaflet beneficial to you.



# Introduction

We all care about the women in our lives, our girlfriends, wives or partners, as well as our mothers and daughters. It can be hard sometimes to know how to behave to make sure that they know how much we care. This brochure will help you look at how your actions can show your love and care towards the important woman in your life.

In our society, it is often very hard for a man to talk about what he needs and how he feels. Men are expected to:

- Be strong and brave all the time.
- Make decisions.
- Be the sole or main breadwinners.
- Know things and not seek for help.

Although this is how society says men should be, it is possible that having to be strong all the time can be very difficult and may stop men from having happy relationships. Both men and women have a shared responsibility in developing a happy relationship.

# YOUR PAST

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The ideas that we have about being a good husband, partner or boyfriend, or even about being a good father or being a man, all have a lot to do with the following things:

- how we were raised
- what we see other men doing
- the things that have happened to us in our lives

If we want to change how we manage our relationships as adults, it is a good idea to look at our past.

## **Here are some things to think about:**

- When you were growing up, who were the most influential men in your life? What did you like or dislike about them?
- What was your relationship like with your own father? Do you want to have the same relationship with your children?
- Who have been the important women in your life? What have those relationships been like?

How have your experiences influenced your understanding of being a man? Our relationships with other people teach us both good and bad things. But in the end, we make the final decisions on how we behave. It is possible to keep only the good things we have learnt and to learn more good things.

# SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIPS

What makes a relationship successful is being open and understanding. To be a loving partner, read the following tips:

## Have more trust and acceptance

- Talk openly to your wife or girlfriend, including when you have problems
- Accept your partner's difficulties. Show your understanding by doing things and not just by words.
- Be more tolerant and patient.

## Make time to share with each other

- Arrange special moments to be together so that you can communicate better
- Compliment her on positive things
- Show concern so that she knows you care for her.
- If you're married, share the household matters with your wife. This could be how you teach your children or how you spend your money.
- When feeling happy, share the laughter with your wife. When in pain, or hardship, share with her.

Being trusting and tolerant with each other is the way to a happy relationship.

### A good relationship is based on:

- ✓ Trust
- ✓ Honesty
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Commitment (making promises and keeping them)
- ✓ Togetherness
- ✓ Caring
- ✓ Openness

### A good relationship is not:

- × Jealous
- × Demanding
- × Possessive (wanting all the attention)
- × Dishonest
- × Manipulative (trying to make her do something she does not want to do)
- × Selfish
- × Controlling

# wrong ideas about relationships

Sometimes the TV, newspapers and magazines give us wrong ideas about relationships. Sometimes our experiences and the people that we admire show us wrong ways to behave. These are some of the things that we may think are true. But they are not:

- **We may think that love and sex are the same thing.**

This is not true. We often confuse the feeling of sexual attraction with love. Love is more than just wanting to have sex with someone, it is about wanting to share your life.

- **When a partner gets jealous, it means that he or she really loves you.**

This is not true. Jealousy is not a sign of love. It is a sign of insecurity. It is often a sign that the jealous person believes they own their partner. In real love, we are secure enough to trust our partners.

- **People can prove that they are in love with someone by having sex with them.**

This is not true. Love is not just about having sex.



## wrong ideas about relationships

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- **A guy should usually pay on dates (when he goes out with his girlfriend) and then the girl will owe him something.**

This is not true. It is okay for both people to share the costs, or even for the girl to pay if she has more money. A girl or woman does not owe you sex because you paid for the date. It is important to remember that you are paying because you like the person, not because you hope to get something back later.

- **A woman who disagrees with your ideas is not a good partner**

This is not true. Every person sees things differently and it is important to understand why someone doesn't agree. Sometimes disagreements help us make wiser decisions by making sure we look at all sides of an issue.

- **A woman should never say no to sex**

This is not true. Women are not sex objects and have every right to refuse sex at any given time. The desire to have sex is influenced by a number of things which include one's emotional and physical state. Encouraging your partner to share her feelings openly will help both of you have a satisfying sex life.

# wrong ideas about relationships

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- **A woman who discusses sex is loose**

This is not true. A woman who is able to talk about sex is confident and wants the best for both of you. Sex is meant to be enjoyed by both partners.

- **It is acceptable for a man to beat up his wife or not give her money and food as long as he has a good reason for doing so**

This is definitely not true! No reason is good enough to beat your partner. A responsible man does not punish his partner when there are problems, but rather finds ways of resolving issues in a peaceful way.

- **It is part of men's "biology" to have more than one sexual partner**

No, there is no "biology" that forces men to go for a specific number of partners. As human beings we learn nearly everything including love and sexuality from our social environment. Men and women are able to concentrate their sexual drive on one partner. If a man says it is "natural" for him to have more partners at the same time, this shows what he learned from others. In our current environment of a severe HIV epidemic our biological survival depends on protecting ourselves and having fewer partners. Ideally have one faithful partner.

# SEXUAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Every human being, whether man or woman has the right to be treated fairly and equally. But we must remember that with rights also come responsibilities. HIV is a big problem in our country. Many people get infected with HIV through sex. As human beings we have the right to sexual enjoyment. With this right comes the responsibility to avoid getting sexually transmitted infections or passing them on to others. The following are other sexual rights and responsibilities that we have.

## SEXUAL RIGHTS

- To choose when, with whom and how to have sex.
- To enjoy sex .
- To protect yourself from the risk of disease.
- To avoid a pregnancy that you do not want.
- To have good sexual health including STI treatment, HIV testing and counselling and family planning information.
- To get information on sexuality and sexual health including STI treatment, HIV testing and counselling and family planning information.

## SEXUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- To respect a person's right to say no to sex.
- to protect yourself from getting infected with sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV.
- To protect your partner from sexually transmitted infections.
- To apply to yourself the same standard of faithfulness that you expect from your wife or girl-friend.
- To seek and use information on family planning.
- To use information obtained to protect your health.

# SEXUAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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- **Did you know that protecting your pregnant partner from HIV is protecting your baby?**
- Remember the child that your partner is carrying is your child too. It is therefore important to make sure that all preparations for this child are jointly made by you and your partner. This includes going to the antenatal clinic with your partner and getting tested together. If your partner is found HIV positive she will need your support in going through the prevention of mother to child transmission programme. If you are not faithful to your pregnant or breastfeeding partner and get infected with HIV, you are likely to pass on HIV to your partner and your baby.
- Taking care of children does not only mean providing material support but also being a good role model to your children. If you work away from home, consider taking your family with you. A lot of risky sexual relationships have been found in places, where men work without their wives and families. Having your family with you, will help you maintaining a good family spirit.

# JABU'S STORY

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Jabu was on his way home. He had not seen his wife in several months. It was hard for a man to work in the mines. He lived with other men all of the time. When he wanted a woman, he would pay for sex, until Thembi moved in to live with him. Two months ago, Thembi had deserted Jabu and this is why he first was very happy to be coming home to his wife.

Jabu was however scared. He had found out from a friend that Thembi was sick. He also found out that Zama, one of the men in the compound, had died last week. Zama was once Thembi's boyfriend. Zama had started to lose a lot of weight and became weak. He finally had to go home to his village, where his mother took care of him until he died. He could not work anymore.

Jabu had not seen Thembi for a few weeks. His friends said that she had disappeared.

The last time Jabu had seen her, she had a rash. Now he also had the same rash on the side of his face and back.

## Questions to ask yourself:

- What, if anything, should Jabu tell his wife before he has sex with her? Why or why not?
- When he has sex with her, should he wear a condom? How will he tell his wife that he wants them to use a condom?
- Does Jabu have a right to have sex with his wife if she does not want to?
- Does he have the right to risk infecting her with HIV?

# Jabu's Story

## **Why is having more than one sexual partner at the same time very risky?**

- Having more than one sexual partner at the same time can mean that you become part of a sexual network. In a sexual network, although you only have two partners, you are also exposed to the infections of your partner's partners. Jabu, Thembi and Jabu's wife as well as any other sexual partners Thembi may have are in the same sexual network.
- This means that although you do not have sex with your partner's other partner; you are exposed to their infections. So if one of the people in the sexual network gets HIV, it is likely to spread to all the others if they are not using condoms every time.
- People think that they don't have to use condoms if they are having sex with the same people all the time, even if it is more than one person. This is not true. The people you are having sex with can also be having sex with other people. If one of you gets HIV, you can all get it.



## Jabu's Story

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**Should you find yourself in Jabu's position and want to talk to your partner about using a condom, here are some things you can do:**

1. It's important to do this before you have had unprotected sex. Although both of you may be excited about the reunion, find time to have this important discussion.
2. Consider saying something like: "I have missed you so much and I am happy to be back home. Before we can have sex together, there is something I want to talk to you about. I am not doing this to hurt you, but because I respect you and you have a right to know."
3. You should be prepared that your partner will react very emotionally. She might cry or shout. Prepare yourself to react with patience and as quietly as possible.
4. Depending on whether your partner gives you a chance to proceed, suggest that you would like to use condoms or not have sex until both of you are tested for HIV.
5. Remember to have the condoms readily available.

# Remember:

Your partner may also be worried about HIV and feel relieved that you are too. Openly talking about HIV with your partner does not always mean one of you has been unfaithful but is responsible behaviour and shows you care.

## **Having a loving and open relationship**

Many of the ideas in this brochure are new and different. If you follow some of the ideas, you will learn to have a loving and open relationship. Then you will be able to make your life better by sharing some of your problems and responsibilities.

Remember that marriage and relationships are a partnership. As a couple you should work together to improve your relationship.



## Make a commitment

Now that you have completed this booklet you could make commitment to be a man who cares. Take a pen and complete this page with words that describe how you want to be.

I choose to

I choose to

I choose to

I choose to

I choose to

I choose to

I choose to

I choose to

I choose to

I choose to

### **Do you need more information?**

If you would like to know more, visit your nearest health facility or call the National AIDS Council Office (NAC) nearest to you.

NAC Head Office:	04-971171	Mashonaland East:	079-22008
Harare:	04-708070	Mashonaland Central:	011878935
Bulawayo:	09-884077	Matebeleland North:	09-882943
Manicaland:	020-64324	Matebeleland South:	084-22631
Midlands:	054-220084	Masvingo:	039-262097
Mashonaland West:	067-22741		