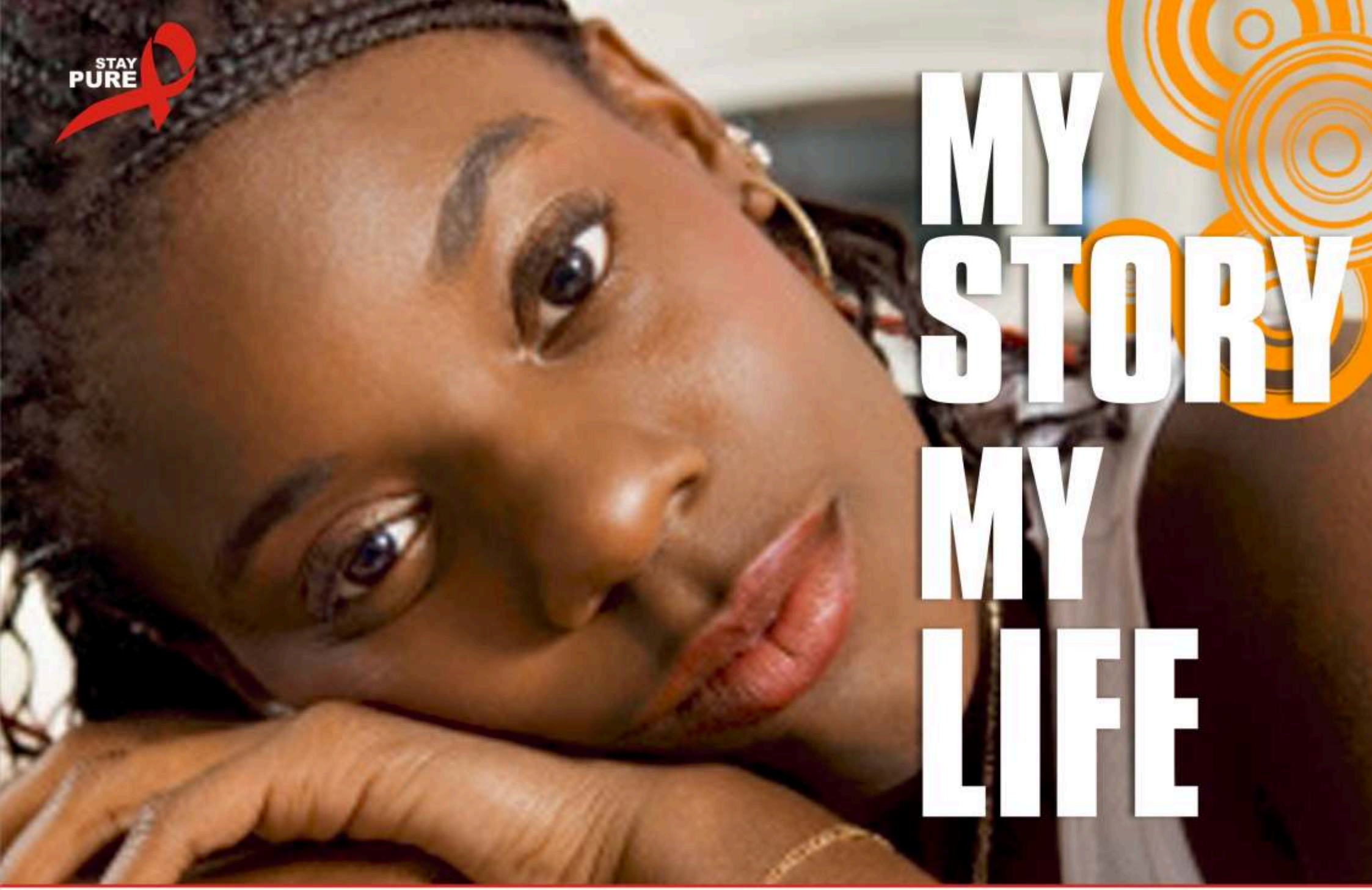

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C-CHANGE
COMMUNICATION FOR CHANGE

INFORMATION BOOKLET AND DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

This is an information booklet and discussion guide for young people.
This storybook is designed in a way that allows in–school youths to identify with the characters and also to absorb lessons that will improve their life skills. Youth Peer Educators will use this storybook as support materials to the Peer Education Manual and other handouts.

The topics and content of this booklet are drawn from studies conducted with young people in Kogi and Cross River States of Nigeria - as they are indeed true stories. The study assessed youth knowledge, attitudes, perceptions and behavior around HIV and AIDS. We focus here on issues that affect young people and their ability to abstain or delay pre-marital sex to reduce their risks of HIV infection.

We hope this booklet guides young people on how to manage peer influences and to use personal life skills to minimize their risk to STIs and HIV.

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Zaina Damila

This is my story …

My name is Zaina. I am 16 years old and I live with Uncle Ido. My parents died recently. So, now I live with Uncle Ido, his wife Nana and their two children. I have a friend Mimi; she is 15 years. I like Mimi because she always seems happy and tries to find the funny things in any situation. But Mimi does not like school and studying. She often comes late for classes and also returns late after break times. Often times, she would give me snacks she bought during break. I always enjoy her company.

At first, life in Uncle Ido's house was good; he and his wife were kind to me. I was also doing well in school and one of my favorite subjects was Biology. One of the most interesting topics in Biology class was the reproductive system; the pictures showed how the body develops and the changes that occur.

One day, at break time, Mimi asked me to follow her to buy snacks at a store which was a little distance from the school. At the store, we met Okon whom Mimi introduced as her boyfriend. He is a student from a neighbouring school. Okon bought pepper soup and soft drinks, which Mimi and I enjoyed. Meeting Okon at the store during long breaks became an everyday activity.

Several days later, Okon came to the store with his friend Mustafa. The four of us met regularly and each time, they would buy us something from the store. Mustafa was 17 years old and handsome. I liked him because he made me laugh. One

day, he bought me a wrist watch, which I hid from my uncle and his wife. Mustafa and I saw each other regularly at the store; sometimes we would meet there after school.

On his birthday, Mustafa invited friends to a party at his home. I lied to my uncle and told him I was going to Mimi's house to do my homework, but instead we went to Mustafa's house for his party.

During the party, Mustafa served alcohol and I drank some. Being my first time of drinking alcohol it took little time for me to get tipsy. I told Mustafa that I was not feeling well. He asked me to come to his room and lie down until I felt better. When we got there, he locked the door and we had sex. It was my first time and I was afraid. but I wanted to do it and I wanted it to be with him as my boyfriend.

After the party, Mimi and I walked home. I was afraid of what I had done and I began to cry. I cried all the way home. I slept for a long time and lied again to my uncle that I was not feeling well. His wife, Auntie Nana gave me some medicine and asked me to sleep and get more rest. On Monday, back at school, I was surprised that

Mimi was glad that I had now had my first sexual experience. She believed that early sexual experience meant one will have minimal problems when one gets married. She said that everyone does it, and it is fun. She also said it becomes more fun the more you do it. Finally, she told me that I had become a big girl and would be respected by other girls when they find out that I was going out with Mustafa – the handsome boy from a rich family.

Towards the end of the term my friend disappeared from school. I went to her house and they said she had gone back to her village.

The news of Mimi worried me. I wondered why she left without telling me. Okon was as surprised as me to hear that Mimi had been diagnosed with HIV. I began to worry that maybe I could get HIV too or become pregnant, but I did not believe a girl could contract HIV or get pregnant the first time she had sex. However, I continued to think about all the risky behaviour I have been involved in.

I suddenly realized that I had missed my period! I was now so worried. I went to a neighbour who was a nurse at the General hospital to talk to her but I did not know how to start my story so I said I had fever and felt dizzy. I also said I had vomited a few times. The nurse took one look at me and said, "Zaina you are pregnant!"

I denied it but the nurse said, "I work in the clinic with pregnant women every day and I know the signs. You are pregnant." Then I admitted that I had missed my period.

The nurse said I must come to the clinic for a test. She said the test will confirm whether or not I was really pregnant. I worried even more and I was afraid. The nurse asked me to come with her the next morning to the clinic.

At the clinic, she took my blood and sent it off the lab. After two hours she got the result and told me I was pregnant! I felt like the walls in the room were coming down on me. I was not prepared for this. I am too young for this. I have made a very big mistake. I started to cry.

My thoughts went to my uncle. He would kill me. My teachers will kick me out of school. My future is dim. I felt like my life was over. What was I to do? Abortion? Yes, abortion. I didn't know when it dropped out of my lips. I cried even more and told Nurse Eliza about Mustafa and what he did to me.

Nurse Eliza said, "We must find Mustafa and ask him to take an HIV test. You must talk with your uncle and disclose all this to him and his wife". After a long talk she agreed to come with me to inform my uncle and Aunty Nana. I just knew he would kill me or possibly send me out of his house. I was finished!

For days I was unable to find Mustafa, but I found Okon who informed me that Mustafa was admitted to the General hospital for pneumonia. It was the same hospital that Nurse Eliza worked in. Two days later, Nurse Eliza came to tell me that Mustafa has HIV. The news turned my world around. It was then that I knew my life had ended.

But Nurse Eliza assured me that all hope was not lost. She said that with proper medicine and a good diet, one could have HIV and live a long and normal life. She also said that going for HIV counselling and testing would help me learn how to take care of myself and help put my mind at ease. I made up my mind to go again for a confirmatory test but first, I must face my guardians. How?

Questions & Talking points

1. Question:
What did you learn from Zaina's experience?

Talking Points for Peer Educators

- It is always good to make your own decisions and be firm in them.
- Friends can influence your behaviour, so choose your friends wisely and carefully.
- Drinking alcohol or using drugs can make you do things you will regret later.
- Boys can rape girls; especially when girls are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- It is important to truthfully tell parents and guardians where you are going, even if they may disapprove.
- Boys will pretend to be good; or buy you things to win your trust.
- It is bad to have sex at an early age. Many young people are not ready for the consequences of sex which can include pregnancy, and infectious diseases such as HIV.

2. Question:
What type of friend is Mimi?

Talking points for Peer Educators:

Mimi is a bad influence and a bad friend.
Bad friends are people who would deceive you to do things that will put you in trouble.
Advice from bad friends can ruin your life and end your dreams.

3. Question:
What is risky behavior?

Talking points for Peer Educators:

Risky behaviours are things people do that can put them in trouble such as:

- Taking alcohol
- Drug use (like marijuana and cocaine)
- Keeping bad friends
- Loitering in and around school premises
- Going to drinking joints
- Being alone with the opposite sex in a lonely place
- Lying to your parents
- Going to parties without permission from parents or guardians
- Accepting gifts/rides and other favours from someone you do not know or trust

4. Question:
What problems do young girls who go to joints and parties with boys have?

Talking points for Peer Educators:

- Would learn to drink alcohol
- Could be drugged
- Can be raped by boys

5. Question:
Why is alcohol dangerous for young people?

Talking points for Peer Educators:

- Alcohol makes young people lose self control
- Alcohol makes young people practise risky behaviour
- Alcohol makes young people not focus on their studies
- Alcohol makes young to spend their parents' money carelessly
- Alcohol makes young people act in ways that are inappropriate (like engage in early sex).

6. Question:
What problem will a girl have if she gets raped?

Talking points for Peer Educators:

- She can become pregnant.
- She can get a sexually transmitted infection (STI).
- She can be infected with HIV.

7. Question:
What is the problem of early pregnancy?

Talking points for Peer Educators:

- She may be abandoned by the parents or guardians.
- She may drop out of school and may not achieve her dreams.
- She may have serious health problem due to pregnancy as her body is not yet developed to carry a baby.
- She may be involved in abortion procedure and may develop health problem or die as a result of an abortion.
- She may abandon her baby as she is not ready or matured enough to take care of the baby.

8. Question:
How can HIV cause AIDS?

Talking points for Peer Educators:

Human blood is made up of red and white blood cells. The white blood cells fight the virus that makes us sick. If we have lots of white blood cells, we don't get sick so easily. When HIV enters the blood, it destroys the white blood cells and stops the cells from fighting diseases. People who have HIV in their blood are called HIV- positives or people living with HIV (PLHIV). People living with HIV can take special drugs to make their immune system stronger so that they can live longer. But when the white blood cells are destroyed by HIV, different diseases would make people who are HIV-positive become very, very sick. When people become very sick due to these opportunistic infections, we call it AIDS.

There is no cure for AIDS.

9. Question:
How can someone get HIV?

Talking points for Peer Educators:

You only can get HIV from mixing of body fluid (the blood or semen) of someone who is HIV positive
There are 3 main ways that HIV can get into your body:

1. You can get HIV through having sex with someone who is HIV positive. Male semen and female fluid/secretion contains HIV and can be exchanged during sex.
2. You can get HIV if the blood of an HIV positive person mixes with your blood through open cuts, sores or blood transfusion.
3. When women who are HIV positive have babies, the virus is sometimes passed on to the baby.

So remember to be careful not to touch other people's blood in case it is infected with HIV.

10. Question:
What can young people do to protect themselves from getting HIV/AIDS?

Talking points for Peer Educators:

- Abstinence.
- Being faithful to one partner (mutual fidelity).
- Consistent and correct use of condoms.
- Non-sharing of sharp instruments - avoid sharing sharp objects with others.
- Safe blood - remind the hospital personnel to screen blood before any transfusion.
- CT & PMTCT : Counselling, Testing and Prevention of Mother To Child Transfusion services helps in HIV prevention.

Go and tell someone you can trust if you are worried or abused by anyone.

11. Question:
What are the ways HIV cannot spread?

Talking points for Peer Educators:

- By sharing bath or toilet
- By hugging someone
- By sharing food
- By using the same plates, knives, cups or spoons

12. Question:
How can one know if one has HIV?

Talking points for Peer Educators:

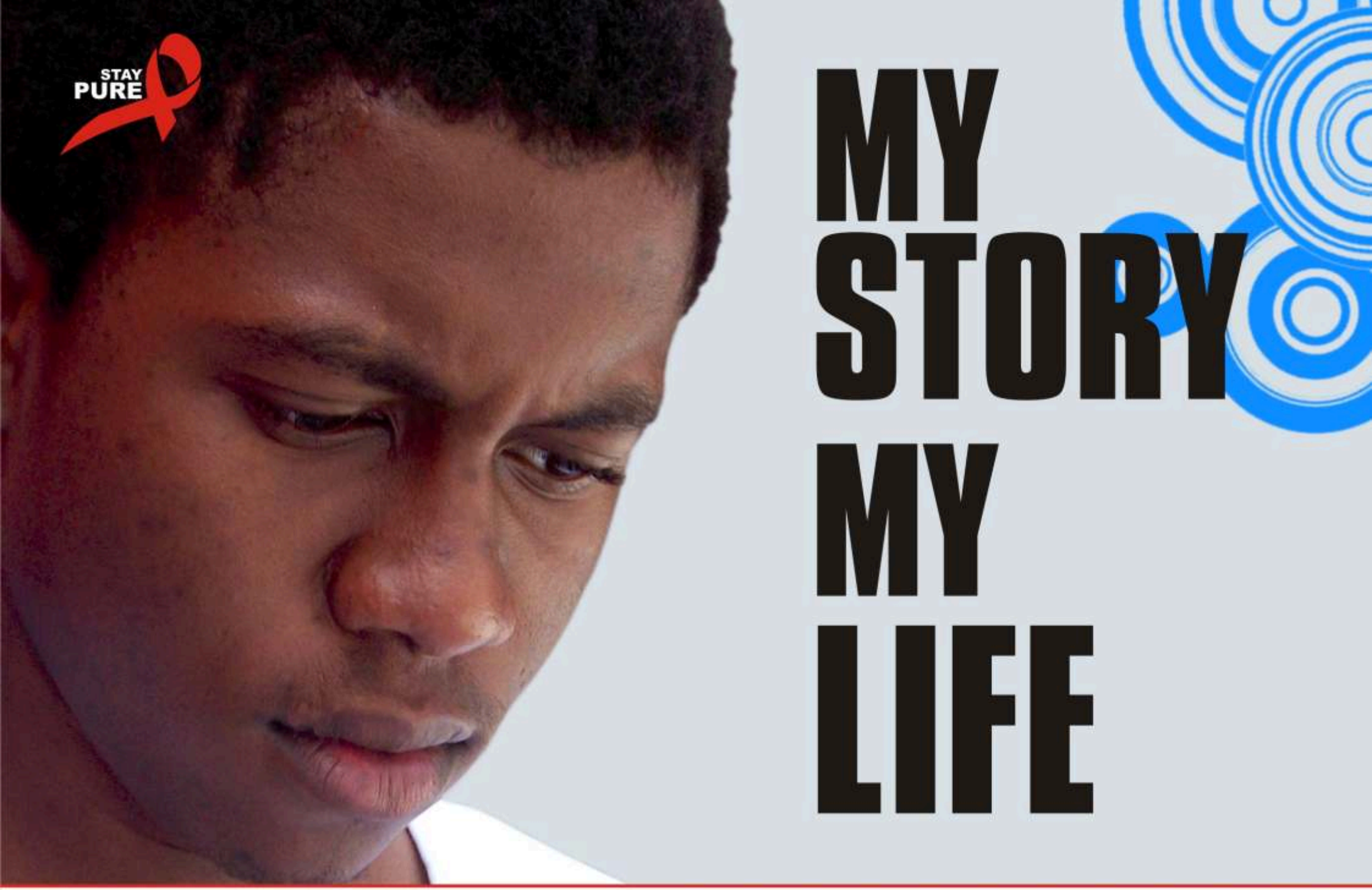
- A person living with HIV looks very healthy.
- No one can tell if a person is HIV positive by just looking at the person.
- The only way to know if one is positive is to go for a HIV test.

13. Question:
How can a young person "say no" to sex?

Talking points for Peer Educators:
Young people need some essential life skills to be able to respond to difficult situations. Below are examples of such essential life skills.

a. Decision-making skill: Stick to your choice of not engaging in early sex.
b. Communication skill: Use simple language to say what you mean to say.
c. Assertive skill: Say what you want to say without being aggressive. Talk it out and discuss your feelings.
d. Negotiation skill: Give reasons for saying no. Suggest an alternative if you like.

A peer educator (PE) in your school can help you build the skills.



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C-CHANGE
COMMUNICATION FOR CHANGE

MY STORY LIFE

STAY PURE

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We hope this booklet guides young people on how to manage peer influences and to use personal life skills to minimize their risk to STIs and HIV.

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THE STORY OF ILIYASU ABDULRASHEED

My name is Iliyasu Abdulrasheed. I am 15 years old, and an SS 111 student of Local Government Science Secondary School, Enyidudu in Adavi LGA, Kogi state. My father works at the Local Government Education Authority and my mother is a market trader. I am the youngest of 5 children. I hope to be a Laboratory Technologist when I graduate from the university. My best subjects are Chemistry and Biology. My favourite sport is football and I love playing with my friends. My best friend is Momoh Saka, the son of the LGEA accountant. We have been in the same class from Form 1.

Momoh gets weekly allowance from his father and this attracts other boys to our group. One day during class break, Momoh and I went to the most popular shop near the school premises. He usually buys things and lets me get some snacks for myself. The shop attracts students our age and other kids from neighbouring schools. Some of them who

STAY PURE

recognize me are happy to see me and come to our table to greet me. They buy and share food items and fruit juices and sometimes they share with me as well. We would sing funny and naughty songs, like boys would do in our community. We also shared jokes and stories of events in the community and schools. It was really fun being with them.

At times when Momoh and I would visit this particular shop and are having a really good time with friends, we would not return to school but would go home directly from there.

It is at this shop (which we call joint) that we hear about parties planned for the weekend and we would make a list of the girls we would like to invite to attend. At one of the parties we attended, our friends mixed alcohol with soft drinks especially for our party guests. As time went on, we would have beer and gin. Later on, some of us started smoking marijuana, all in an effort to appear tough, bold, cool and grown-up. I indulged as much as anyone and joined in encouraging our female friends to join in the hopes of having sex with anyone willing to accept our offer.

Although Maka was my girlfriend, I still indulged in trying to coerce other girls to have sex with me.

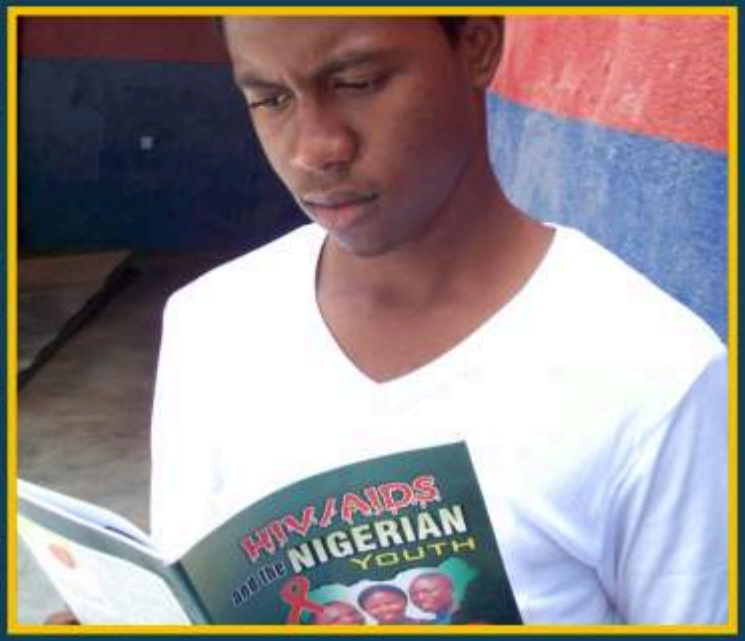
These were exciting times for my friends and I. It distracted me so much that I hardly spent time to assist my parents at home or attend to school work. Instead, I preferred time with friends and Maka. Life was good. I was enjoying every bit of my association with this group of friends until I did quite poorly in my SS 11 final examination. Everyone at school, especially my teachers could not believe how poorly I did in my examination. My parents were confused and upset as they could not understand the sudden change in my school grades.

The situation became worse when a friend mentioned my name among those that raped Rebecca - a school mate who is now pregnant - but Rebecca exonerated me, stating that I was not among the boys who raped her. As a result of her statement, I was not expelled from school like the others whom she named as her rapists. But it became clear to my parents and teachers what type of friends I have been hanging out with.

My parents met with my teachers and it was agreed that I should repeat SS 11. I was not happy that my classmates were in SS 111

while I was in the same SS 11 with my juniors. The shame of being left behind by my classmates worsened my situation as I could neither concentrate nor believe in myself anymore.

A new leaf turned in my life when I was selected to be trained as a peer educator with a group called Salawudeen Abubakar. I learnt about HIV and AIDS and how it is transmitted. I also learnt about how alcohol and drugs affect young people and their decisions. I learned that the best way to prevent HIV and AIDS is to avoid places, things and persons that could make you do stupid things. Then and there, I decided that I must be more careful in choosing my friends. I also made up my mind to talk to some of my current friends; to share the new information. I knew the decision was important. If I am to be a good peer educator, I must start with my friends and people that I care about. I also learned that to be a good peer educator, I must also set good examples.



Questions & Talking points

1. Question:
What did you learn from Iliyasu's experience?

Talking Points for Peer Educators:

- We should be careful to choose our friends.
- Bad friends can make one to practice risky behaviour.
- Use of alcohol and drugs can change the way you think and behave.
- Young people must inform adults and parents before they go to parties.
- It is not healthy to have sex at early age. Young people need to wait until they are adults or in marriages to have sex.
- If a boy has sex, the girl can get pregnant when he is not ready to take care of the baby and the mother.
- Young people can get HIV if they have unprotected sex.

2. Question:
What type of friend is Momoh?

Talking Points for Peer Educators:

Momoh is a bad influence and a bad friend. Bad friends are people who would deceive you to do things that will put you in trouble. Advice from bad friends can ruin your life and end your dreams.

3. Question:
Risky behaviours are things people do that can put them in trouble. Can you mention some of the risky behaviours you know?

Talking Points for Peer Educators:

- Taking alcohol/drugs
- Keeping bad friends

- Loitering in and around school premises
- Going to drinking joints
- Lying to your parents
- Going to parties without permission from parents or guardians
- Accepting gifts/rides and other favours from someone you do not know or trust
- Forcing a girl to have sex

4. Question:
What behaviours will you change for yourself and for your friends?

Talking Points for Peer Educators:

- Concentrate on your studies and pass your examinations.
- Talk to your friends about how to be good friends.
- Learn to have healthy relationships with girls without forcing or focusing on sex.

5. Question:
Why is alcohol and drug use not healthy for young people?

Talking Points for Peer Educators:

- Alcohol and drug use at a young age is not healthy
- It makes young people not to fully develop their minds and bodies
- Alcohol and drugs makes young people lose self-control and sense of shame
- Alcohol makes young people practice risky behaviour

6. Question:
What are the problems of early sex?

Talking Points for Peer Educators:

- A boy can impregnate a girl at early age.
- Male semen and female fluid/secretion contains HIV and can be exchanged during sex

7. Question:
What is AIDS?

Talking Points for Peer Educators:
AIDS means Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

8. Question:
What is HIV?

Talking Points for Peer Educators:

HIV means Human Immuno-deficiency Virus.
It is the virus that causes AIDS.

9. Question:
How can HIV cause AIDS?

Talking Points for Peer Educators:

Human blood is made up of red and white blood cells. The white blood cells fight the virus that makes us sick. If we have lots of white blood cells, we don't get sick so easily. When HIV enters the blood, it destroys the white blood cells and stops the cells from fighting diseases. People who have HIV in their blood are called HIV-positives or People Living with HIV (PLHIV). People living with HIV can take special drugs to make their immune system stronger so that they can live longer. But when the white blood cells are destroyed by HIV, different diseases would make people who are HIV positive become very, very sick. When people become very sick due these diseases as a result of HIV attack, we call it AIDS. There is no cure for AIDS.

10. Question:
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There are 3 main ways that HIV can get into your body

1. You can get HIV through having sex with someone who is HIV positive. Male and

female semen contains HIV and can be exchanged during sex.

2. You can get HIV if the blood of an HIV-positive person mixes with your blood through open cuts, sore or blood transfusion.
3. When women who are HIV-positive have babies, the virus is sometimes passed on to the baby.

So remember to be careful not to touch other people's blood in case it is infected with HIV.

11. Question:

What can young people do to protect themselves from getting HIV?

Talking Points for Peer Educators:

- Don't have sex until you are old enough
- Don't allow anyone to change your good decision of not involving in early sex by threatening or pressurizing you, giving you money and gifts, or assisting you to pass an examination.
- Avoid being alone in the house with an opposite sex who you know would want to have sex with you.
- If you know you will receive blood transfusion, remind the hospital personell to screen the blood first.
- When anyone is bleeding, be careful not to let the blood touch sores or open cuts on your body.
- Say no to anyone who wants to touch your private part.

Go and tell someone you can trust if you are disturbed or abused by anyone.

12. Question:
What are the ways HIV cannot Spread?

Talking Points for Peer Educators:

- By sharing bath or toilet
- By hugging someone
- By sharing food
- By using the same plates, knives, cups or spoons

13. Question:
How can one know if a person has HIV?

Talking Points for Peer Educators:

A person living with HIV looks very healthy. No one can tell if a person is HIV positive by just looking at the person. The only way to know if one is positive is to go for a HIV test.

14. Question:
How can a young person "say no" to sex?

Talking Points for Peer Educators:

Young people need some essential life skills to be able to respond to difficult situations. Below are examples of such essential life skills.

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