



**A youth without a vision,
is a youth without a mission**



Your Life! Your Choice! Your Decision!

This fact sheet aims to provide young people (10 to 24 years) with information on their sexual and reproductive health and rights, so that they can make the right decisions and choices for themselves.

As a young person you have rights but before exercising these rights you should also know that they come with responsibilities – to yourself and fellow partner.

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Make informed Decisions!

What is Decision Making?

Decision making is the process made by an individual to choose/select a course of action among several possibilities based on his or her judgement.



Decision versus Result

It is important to note that there is a difference between a decision and the result. Just because you make a good decision does not mean that the result will be good, however it will minimise the possibility of getting an unfavorable result. The best protection you have against an undesired result is a good decision. Often the results are not in our total control.

Some areas where young people make decisions are:

- How to Dress / Appearance
- Who to make friends with
- Whether or not to engage in sexual activity
- Whether or not to have unprotected sex
- What Career to pursue
- Whether or not smoke, drink alcohol or abuse substances

Hints for Good Decision Making

- Seek guidance and get the right information. You can talk to youth friendly health workers, Peer Educators, parents and knowledgeable community members
- Focus on achieving your personal goals
- Resist negative peer pressure
- Take total control of your life

Know that you are the one who needs to live with the result of your decision, good or bad.

Good decisions can face adverse challenges and threats: however it is important to stick to your good decisions!



Talking Abstinence

It's okay to wait!

Today, a number of young people are waiting to have sex – for different reasons! They are making decisions about their own sexuality and they know how to take care of themselves.

Some of the reasons young people are deciding to wait are:

- I am not ready yet. A lot of young people wish they had not done it afterwards.
- I am not ready to deal with birth control.
- I am not ready to have a baby
- My relationship is not ready
- I do not want to get a sexually transmitted disease or infection
- I am not willing to risk HIV
- I want to wait until I am older and have achieved my goals
- I want to wait until I am married
- It's my decision to wait

Despite what you hear or are told... not everyone is doing it.

If you make the decision to abstain, good for you, because abstinence is the only 100% effective way to avoid Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), Teenage Pregnancy, HIV and AIDS. Waiting gives you time to have fun, share feelings and build trust.

Be SAFE. Make the right choice

As a young person you can feel a lot of pressure to have sex. Friends may tell you they are doing it, you may see it on TV and in movies. You may feel **pressured** by a particular person or feel that it is expected of you by now to have a boyfriend/girlfriend.



**Think about it.
Wait until you are sure.**

If you are sexually active, practice safe sex Always use a condom consistently and correctly.

Safe sex means sexual contact that that does NOT involve any exchange of blood, semen or vaginal fluids.

- Safe sex also means that sexual contact occurs in a caring and respectful way
- Safe sex is ALWAYS consensual and without pressure,

**it's OK to say NO to sex.
Stand your ground.**

- Age mixing between young and older partners increases a young person's risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections including HIV

**No
Vision
No
Mission**




**Your Life!
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Your Decision!**



Don't Dare

For more information on SRH/HIV,GBV visit zw.tuneme.org and facebook page "@tunemezw"

Saying NO

Always be honest about how you feel to your partner. Know why you are saying no, that way you will be able to stand your ground.



Be clear about not wanting to have **sex**

Talk to your Partner

-Pick a time and place that feels safe.

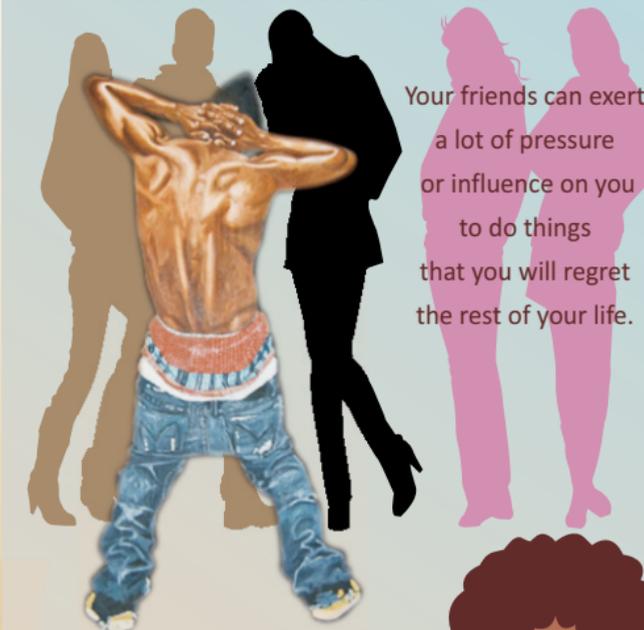
-You can talk over the phone or in a public place such as a restaurant.

You can be in love and not have sex
-Express your goals! Where do you want to be in a year? In three years? In five years?, etc.
Your choices today, will affect your future.

NO!



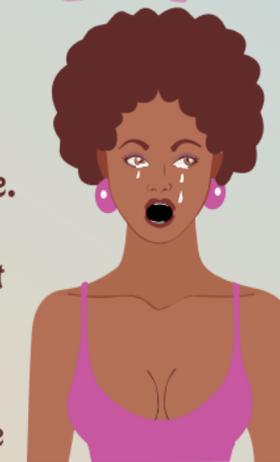
Peer Pressure Can Be Misleading



Your friends can exert a lot of pressure or influence on you to do things that you will regret the rest of your life.

Take control of your life. Empower yourself and your partner to adopt safer and healthier behaviors

Avoid drug and alcohol abuse



STIs

Regardless of what age, race, religion or your sex, if you are sexually active you are putting yourself at risk of contracting an STI or HIV.



What are Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)?

STIs are infections that you can get if you have sexual contact with an infected person. They are spread through vaginal, anal, and or oral sex. Most common STIs are herpes, genital warts, chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis, vaginitis, hepatitis B and HIV.

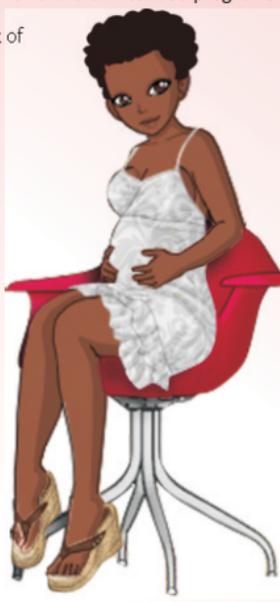
Avoid Sugar dadies, sugar mummies and blessers

Protect Yourself

Use a condom EVERY time you have sex.



Facts:
-You cannot always see the signs of an STI. Even if your partner tells you they do not have an STI, they could have one without knowing it
-You can be tested at a clinic for an STI
-Most STIs can be treated. Getting treatment early will reduce the negative consequences of infection
-If untreated, certain STIs can make you sick or unable to have children
-Some but not all STIs can be cured
-Birth control does not protect you from STIs
-Condoms provide dual protection from both STIs and unintended pregnancies
-Multiple sex partners can increase your risk of getting an STI



Stop Stigma and Discrimination

- **HIV-related stigma** is discrediting or disapproving an individual based on known or suspected HIV status. It includes attaching a negative label and de-valuing a person based on their status
- Stigma is an attitude
- **HIV related discrimination** occurs when a distinction is made against a person on the basis of known or suspected HIV status resulting in that person being unfairly treated
- Discrimination is an action or behavior

Social Impact of Stigma and Discrimination

-Low self esteem
-Makes people afraid to find out the HIV status or seek information to reduce risk of exposure to HIV
-Discourages those living with HIV to disclose their HIV status
-Leads to depression and isolation.

-Causes people to feel ashamed and distressed



Stop Stigma & Discrimination

You can stop stigma and discrimination by:

-Being careful of the words that you choose to use regarding someone's HIV status
-Encouraging people to talk openly and listen to them in a supportive manner
-Discouraging and not taking part in gossip about people living with HIV and AIDS.
-Providing a safe environment where people living with HIV and AIDS can disclose their status safely
- Treating people living with HIV with respect

Blowing out another person's candle will not make yours glow any brighter. STOP STIGMA!!!

Be positive about being positive

Positive living is a conscious decision and subsequent steps taken by an HIV positive person to adopt a healthy lifestyle and also protect the health of those close to them.

How to live positively



•Accepting one's HIV status
•Adherence to treatment
•Seeking early treatment for STIs and other medical conditions
•Joining a support group of people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA)

•Disclosure of HIV status
•Avoiding reinfection

Information in this pamphlet is adopted from materials developed by the following organisations:
· Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council
· Young People's Network on Sexual and Reproductive Health HIV and AIDS
· National AIDS Council
· Zimbabwe Youth Council
· SAYWHAT

