

## **VI. Exercise: Values Clarification** Time: 40 Minutes

*Adapted from: Getting Where You Want to Be, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Mauritius; and Life Planning Education: A Youth Development Program, Advocates for Youth, Washington D.C. 1995*

Purpose: To encourage participants to express their deeply held beliefs, particularly as they relate to sexuality.

Materials: None

FACILITATOR SAYS: Now we will talk about values. By values we mean our deeply held beliefs, the personal truths upon which we base our life decisions. Culture, religion, peers, and the media shape values. Our values play an important role in the goals we set for ourselves, the decisions we make, and the way we behave in everyday life.

We may not remember choosing our values; our parents often pass them onto us. It is important that we look at our values because we pass them on to our children through words and through modelling behaviours.

### Instructions

*a. Announce to the group that the room is divided into three separate areas AGREE, DISAGREE, and UNCERTAIN.*

*b. Ask participants to listen as the facilitator reads one of the statements below. Then they should move to the appropriate section of the room depending on whether they agree, disagree or are unsure.*

*c. Ask members from each of the three groups to explain why they chose to stand where they are. FACILITATOR ASKS: By standing here, what are the underlying values that made you decide to come to this area?*

*d. Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers.*

*e. Stress confidentiality and respect for other's opinion without comment or debate.*

*f. After you have finished discussing one statement, continue with the process with another statement.*

-Parents should play a major source of sex information for their children.

-It is wrong to have sex when you are not married.

-A woman must be faithful but not necessarily a man.

-Parents should make all decisions for their children.

-If a 15-year-old becomes pregnant, she should be out of the house. If she is adult enough to have sex, she is adult enough to live on her own.

-If a 15-year-old boy gets a girl pregnant, he should be out of the house. If he is old enough to get a girl pregnant, he is old enough to be on his own.

-Teenagers should receive information about pregnancy and STI and HIV prevention.

-It is ok for older men to take younger girls out and offer them gifts in exchange for sex.

-If a man pays for a date, he has the right to expect sex.

### Discussion Points

a. Did anyone in the group influence how you felt---where you stood in the room?

Note to facilitator: talk about how peer pressure can interfere with a person's freedom to express her/his values.

b. Are there any traditional values that today seem to have negative consequences on young peoples' well being?

c. How have our society and our values changed since you were young? For example have there been changes in the way we value a girl's education, the age of marriage, norms around the age a person begins to have sex?

d. What traditional values do you think are still important today?

### Gender Alert

If there are differences in how people responded to gender related questions, the FACILITATOR should note the differences in value standards for boys and girls. Discuss this with the group.

### Learning Point

Our values help us make decisions that are true to what we believe in. Values can help youth resist peer pressure and messages about behaviour from the media. Youth rely on parents for the guidance in shaping values that will determine their behaviour in the future.

How we assess and learn to reduce sexual risk is closely linked to our values. For example, one may place a high value on more traditional cultural beliefs, such as believing it is taboo to talk about sex with youth, or that it is wrong for youth to engage in sex before marriage. This might prevent a parent from reaching out to offer guidance to children about sexuality. Consider the value of their life- the value of staying healthy so that they can get reach their goals.