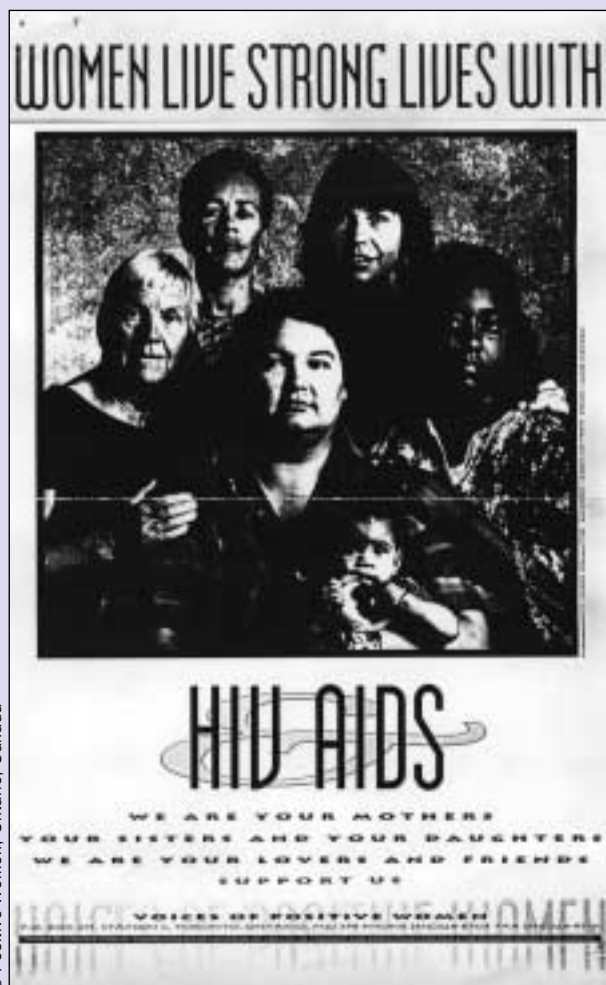


PART 3

Working together

- 34 Understanding ourselves
- 34 **ACTIVITY 3.1**
How do others see me?
- 35 **ACTIVITY 3.2**
How do I see myself?
- 36 Accepting differences
- 37 **ACTIVITY 3.3**
Differences between people
- 38 **ACTIVITY 3.4**
How do other people feel?
- 39 The group leader
- 40 **ACTIVITY 3.5**
A group exercise to get everyone talking
- 48 Assertiveness
- 49 Techniques for successful group work
- 51 **ACTIVITY 3.6**
No thanks!



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Understanding ourselves

Knowing the strengths and limitations of group members can make it easier for the group to function, and can help you to choose activities or topics that are most appropriate for your particular group.

ACTIVITY

3.1

HOW DO OTHERS SEE ME?

AIM For each group member to get a clearer picture of personal qualities within the group and for group members to recognise some of their own qualities which they may not have valued or even considered before.

- ❶ Each group member marks three columns on a piece of paper, with the headings '*People*', '*Strengths*', '*Weaknesses*'.
- ❷ Under '*People*', each person writes a list of people who know them and have some view of them.
- ❸ Then everyone fills in the other two columns by naming what each person would say were their strengths and weaknesses.

For example:

<i>PEOPLE</i>	<i>STRENGTHS</i>	<i>WEAKNESSES</i>
<i>Mum</i>	<i>They think I am: Helpful</i>	<i>They think I am: Untidy</i>
<i>Brenda (best friend)</i>	<i>Good listener</i>	<i>Often late</i>
<i>Joni (husband)</i>	<i>Cheerful</i>	<i>Disorganised</i>
<i>Marcia (daughter)</i>	<i>Caring</i>	<i>Bossy</i>
<i>Wilson (neighbour)</i>	<i>Generous</i>	<i>Shouts too much</i>

ACTIVITY
3.2

HOW DO I SEE MYSELF?

AIM To explore the differences between how others see us and how we see ourselves.

- 1 Everyone makes a list of four people who know them well (e.g. mother, father, wife, colleague).
- 2 Each person writes a few phrases or sentences about how each person on their own list would describe them. *'What words would they use to describe me?', 'What are their expectations of me?'*
- 3 Then each person writes a short description of themselves called *'Me, by me'*.
- 4 In the large group, pool everyone's ideas under each heading used (e.g. mother, father, child, friend).
- 5 Discuss any common features, for instance, *'How are we seen by our fathers?'*
- 6 If they wish, people can also read out their *'Me, by me'* descriptions. Consider the differences between the views of each person. *'How easy or difficult is it to know how others see us? How do we know? Do people tell us directly?'*



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Accepting differences

Everyone in your group will have some things in common – they are all affected by HIV or AIDS. However, it is important to remember that everyone is different, and to learn to respect the differences within your group and beyond.

Different needs and concerns within the group may sometimes cause disagreement or argument. If possible, try to see differences as something to celebrate and to learn from. The activities suggested below can help groups to explore the differences between people and also feelings about those differences.



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ACTIVITY

3.3

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PEOPLE

AIM To recognise each group member's differences.

This activity is best led by a facilitator or group leader. It may raise some sensitive issues, which the group should be willing to discuss. Sometimes groups may try to avoid more contentious issues such as race, sexuality or class. It is up to the group leader to point out this and to facilitate a discussion about this in a safe way.

- 1 Ask each group member to choose one way of describing themselves which is important to them (e.g. woman, Catholic, father, person with HIV, volunteer, black person, 40-year-old, farmer, grandparent).
- 2 Ask participants to talk in pairs about how they are viewed in that role by friends, family, colleagues, peers and other community members.
- 3 In the main group discuss the individual's life experience. Religion, culture, gender, sexuality, race, age and education often influence how we are expected to behave. Does everyone agree with and accept these expectations?
- 4 In a circle ask everyone to spend three minutes looking at the others in the group.
- 5 Ask the group to describe some of the differences between people in the group (for example, age, sex, colour of hair, eyes or skin, dress, hairstyle, sexuality, race, education, language spoken, height, weight, health status). List the differences on a sheet of paper or board.
- 6 Ask each person in turn to say how they would describe themselves in terms of each difference (e.g. for age they might say '33 years', '44 years', 'that's private', '29 years', 'old enough', and so on).
- 7 Then discuss:
 - How did it feel to define yourself in each way?
 - Did you feel included or excluded?
 - Did anyone feel that they did not fit exactly into one category?
 - Was anyone alone in one category? How did this feel – good or bad?



© PROSA

ACTIVITY

3.4

HOW DO OTHER PEOPLE FEEL?

AIM To explore the ways in which prejudice and discrimination affect our options in everyday life.

The group leader will need to prepare this activity beforehand:

- Write down some 'roles' that people in your community play on separate pieces of card, for example: 50-year-old blind woman; sex worker; gay man with HIV; 35-year-old drug user; middle-class white heterosexual man; factory worker; married woman; 17-year-old girl with HIV.
- On a sheet of paper, write a list of activities, such as: run for a bus; tell someone what you do for a living; travel for work; buy a plot of land; be open about your sexuality; take your partner to meet your family; make long term plans for you and your family; get medical help when you need it; walk the streets late at night; have job security; have children; read a newspaper.

- 1 Explain to the group that this is an exercise to look at how different people feel in everyday situations.
- 2 Ask everyone to stand in a line, side-by-side, at one end of the room and not too close together.
- 3 Give each person one of the role cards, and ask them to look at the role but not to tell anyone else what their card says.
- 4 Ask everyone to imagine that they are the person described on their card, and to think for a minute about what their life is like as this person.
- 5 Then explain that you are going to read out a list of activities, asking '*Can you do this?*' for each. Ask everyone to take one step forward if they (in their role) can answer yes. If the answer is no, the person stays where they are.
- 6 Read out each statement in turn. When all the statements have been read out, everyone is likely to be standing at different distances from the starting point.
- 7 Starting with the person who has moved farthest, ask each group member to reveal their role and make one statement about their experience of the exercise.
- 8 Sit down again and discuss:
 - What were the restrictions imposed on people by their roles?
 - What factors influenced whether they stepped forward or not?
 - Did assumptions or lack of knowledge of the role influence the decisions they made?
 - What have they learnt about the effect of prejudice and discrimination on people they may be working with in the group?

HINTS & TIPS

Group leaders

Share only your own experience within the group; do not give away other people's confidences or personal business.

Encourage group members to listen carefully to each other so that they really understand what people are saying and feeling.

Encourage people to ask questions, either privately or in the group. No question is 'stupid' or not worth asking.

Encourage everyone to join in, but remember that some people may not be used to speaking out or giving their opinions, whether by tradition or because they are shy. Avoid pressuring anyone to take part in an activity or share personal information if they do not want to.

Try to put your own views to one side while listening to other people. When people feel judged or disapproved of they are likely to withdraw, or to become more closed to new ideas.

Do not feel that you must have answers to every question.

Build trust and respect in the group by encouraging everyone to respect each other's opinions and values.

Let's have a break in one hour's time, after working in small groups.

© AHR TAG



The group leader

Most groups need someone to act as a leader or co-ordinator. The group leader could be the person who started the group or someone who the group elects. Depending on your group, this could be a different member each week, or it could be a regular leader who may also be a professional trainer or other expert.

A group leader explains group activities, guides the discussion and provides information where necessary. Being able to lead group discussions and use different activities to involve participants is a very useful skill. The ideas suggested here can be used for the different group members to practice and improve facilitation skills. These skills are very useful for developing confidence to participate in broader activities with others (see Part 6).

If you are a group leader, especially a permanent one, you have an important responsibility to the group. People will give extra weight to your views and opinions. Some leaders can have a big effect (good or bad) on members' lives. Even if the work you do is voluntary, you should be careful to act as professionally as possible.

Remember: as a leader you are responsible for the group running smoothly but each member has their own responsibility also. If you feel that people are placing too much responsibility on you, you may find it useful to refer to the list on page 29.

One of the group leader's main roles is to get people to contribute equally and to listen to one another. The following exercise may be a good starting point.

ACTIVITY

3.5

A GROUP EXERCISE TO GET EVERYONE TALKING

AIM To help to develop self-esteem and encourage people to talk in a group.

- 1 Ask everyone to write down five qualities that they like about themselves.
- 2 Going around the circle, ask each person to choose one of those qualities and say it to the group.

This technique encourages everyone to take part equally, and no one person is singled out for the answer. Each person also has plenty of answers to choose from. If everyone seems to be feeling comfortable with this, you can ask them to go around again, giving a second quality.

1. *Generous*
2. *Good at making people laugh*
3. *Helpful*
4. *Loyal friend*
5. *Caring*

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Listening to each other

Listening is a skill that is often taken for granted because it is confused with hearing. Listening involves hearing, but also much more. Being a good listener is perhaps the most important skill for a group leader to have. Listening is necessary to give responses to what you hear and to check that information you have delivered has been understood.

Active listening

- Turn your whole body to face the person who is speaking.
- Try to be relaxed and lean slightly towards the speaker.
- Look at the speaker gently, offering plenty of eye contact but not staring.
- Let the speaker know that you are listening by occasionally nodding your head, making encouraging sounds, or saying something like *'really'*, *'yes'* or *'I see'*.
- Try not to interrupt the speaker.
- Take brief notes, perhaps jotting down key words, which you can use for asking questions later.
- Be aware of what is said and what is not said.
- Stay calm and neutral – try not to allow your emotions to stop you from listening.



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Another technique for good listening is to reflect or offer back to the speaker what you understand that they are saying (reflective listening). Rather than repeating exactly what the person has said, reword something to show that you understand what they are expressing. For example, '*You are feeling nervous because you haven't done this before*', or '*You are feeling pleased because you have been able to talk with your father*'. If your understanding is not correct, this gives the speaker a chance to explain further.

Appropriate and sensitive questions can:

- encourage thinking
- find out what is already known, and what is not
- stress or highlight important points
- expand or share knowledge and information within the group and to hear a range of ideas
- encourage involvement and participation (an opportunity to draw out quieter members of a group)
- prevent disruptive behaviour, such as side conversations or domination by a few people
- keep the group interested and the discussion moving
- keep the meeting to its aims or to bring it back on track
- check what has been understood during the session (and to help people remember).



© International HIV/AIDS Alliance

Good listening and asking questions in the right way lead to lively discussions.

Asking questions

There are two types of questions:

- **closed** – invite a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer. For example, ‘*Do you agree?*’, or ‘*When did you realise this?*’ are closed questions.
- **open** – give people more choice in how to answer. They are questions like ‘*How do you feel?*’ and ‘*What do you think?*’

If you do not want to always ask questions use statements which encourage more information (‘door openers’). For example: ‘*I’d like to hear your opinion on that issue*’, ‘*I am interested in hearing what you have to say*’ ‘*It would be helpful if you could explain that a little more please.*’

Receiving replies

It is generally best not to repeat answers given by group members – this takes up time and can discourage people from listening to each other. If a reply is not loud enough, ask the person to repeat what they said: ‘*A little louder please*’. If an answer is incorrect, accept the reply but then rephrase your question to the same person, or to the group. There is generally something useful in any reply, if only as a starting point for further discussion.

- Give group members a moment to think about a question. A slight pause will not stop the flow of the meeting.
- Check that you don’t offer value judgements after replies, such as ‘*That was a good answer*’, or ‘*Well done Lucy, you’ve always got the right answers*’. This can make other people hesitant. If they think they don’t have the ‘right’ answers they may not answer at all.
- Make sure that you listen carefully when someone answers.
- Always thank the person for their reply.



Try to give everyone the opportunity to answer questions.

Encouraging group participation

- Stimulate discussion by putting a question to the group as a whole, to get everyone thinking about the answer. Then ask a specific member of the group to give you an answer.
- Try to give everyone the opportunity to answer questions. If you rely on the same few people all the time, the others will feel less involved. If you cannot remember who you have asked already then ask for 'someone who hasn't answered yet'.
- If the participants are very quiet you may need to use more direct questions. Make sure that the questions are not too difficult for the group to answer. When encouraging a shy group, or dealing with a sensitive issue, it can be useful to ask a question to everyone and then ask for one reply from each person (see Activity 3.1 for an example).
- Ask different people to start the answers and make your choices unpredictable. If you start always at the person to the left of you, for example, you may find that no one will want to sit there.

Helping everyone to take part equally

Two common problems in many groups are that some people may be very quiet, and others may dominate and take too much of the group's time and attention. There are many different reasons for under- or over-participation, and there may be underlying problems that you do not know about. Sometimes these problems just solve themselves with no intervention, and



© ICW

The group leader can make people feel at home and encourage participation.

sometimes the group members may take the responsibility on themselves. In some cases, a group leader may need to take action.

Under-participating members

Very quiet, or non-participating, group members may:

- avoid eye contact
- sit slumped or turned away from the group
- say very little or nothing at all
- talk to the person next to them, but not to the whole group
- arrive late and/or leave early
- miss meetings altogether
- not listen to the discussion
- not respond even when encouraged.

Some people may feel embarrassed or shy about the subjects discussed, or even that they are attending the group at all. It is very common for people to feel ashamed of being affected by HIV and AIDS, or for seeking help and support for any other problem. Some people may not be used to talking openly, and may find this hard when they do not know the other group members. Sometimes people join a group only to please someone else, and do not want to be there. Other people may feel that they deserve special attention.

Most people will understand that not everyone finds it easy to participate in a group, especially at first. However, very quiet or obviously unhappy members can be discouraging to everyone.

To encourage participation from someone very quiet or reluctant:

- try asking them very simple questions which are easy to answer
- ask rounds of questions that require everyone to answer
- encourage them to speak very near the start of the meeting (this can help to set a pattern for the rest of the session)
- be encouraging when they do participate
- involve them in work in pairs where they can share responsibility for reporting back to the group
- ask them privately about why they do not choose to speak in the group
- get to know them during breaks, or before and after meetings
- do a role-play and cast them in a dominant role
- try to sit them near people who are friendly and encouraging.

Over-participating members

Dominant or over-participating group members may:

- talk often for a very long time
- always speak first, making it harder for others to contribute
- interrupt when other people are speaking
- get off the main point or topic
- dominate the smaller-group discussions
- reveal inappropriate personal information about themselves
- bring up their own personal problems all the time
- comment on everything, and ask a lot of trivial questions.

Sometimes groups are happy for one or a few dominant members to do most of the work. As group leader, you may have to point out that this is not in the best interest of everyone else. Alternatively and more commonly, the quieter members may feel discouraged about coming to the group if it is difficult for them to take part fully. The group may feel annoyed and resentful towards both the dominant member and you, the leader, for letting the situation continue.

It can help to understand why someone is over-participating. Possible reasons include: nervousness, insecurity, they do not know how to relate to others in a group, embarrassment about attending the group, wanting to be the centre of attention, they might usually be a leader themselves and find it difficult to be an equal member, or they may never have been told that their behaviour can be a problem.

Ways in which you can discourage over-participation include:

- give people a time limit for their contributions. If someone is speaking for too long, remind them of the time, ask them to conclude, or to finish in a specific time (e.g. *'two more minutes'*)
- make a point of asking others for their opinions
- state plainly that the work and attention of the group should be shared equally among group members
- speak privately to the dominant member about their behaviour
- have a skills session on listening techniques (for example, see page 40)
- sit any dominant person about two places away from you in the circle (where it is harder for them to get so much of your attention)
- say *'That sounds like an interesting point but we haven't the time to discuss that now'*
- give a dominant member a specific supporting role such as note-taking or tea-making.



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Assertiveness

One reason why people find it difficult to participate in groups is having the confidence to state clearly their wishes, values and decisions – being ‘assertive’ about what we think and feel in a clear and direct way which does not bully the other person. It is difficult, especially for women or people who are traditionally not respected, to assert themselves.

CHECKLIST

Reasons to be more assertive

- * You will have increased self-confidence because there will be fewer situations in which you will feel threatened.
- * You will have greater confidence in others because you will not look down upon them.
- * You can take greater responsibility for your own wants, needs and decisions.
- * You will have better working relationships because there will be a better chance that people will work with you rather than against you.
- * You will save the time and energy (that you used to spend worrying, feeling angry or guilty).
- * You will take more initiatives because you won't be afraid to make mistakes.
- * You will have more control over people and situations that used to control you.
- * You are less likely to be personally or professionally exploited – and more likely to be taken seriously as a confident and competent person.

Practising assertiveness can be useful as a group activity for the group to develop confidence in working with others (see also Parts 5 and 6). It can also be useful to work with some members of the group who feel less confident than other members of the group – for example, traditionally women are expected to listen to men and may find it difficult to assert their views in a mixed group. The role play activity on page 50 can be used to practice assertiveness skills.

HINTS & TIPS

Brainstorming

Do not worry if you do not have perfect handwriting. When putting points up on a chart or board, make them just that — brief points.



Don't try to repeat everything that is said in the discussion, but just note key words that will act as reminders.



Sometimes it is helpful to have important points or charts written up in advance. These can be displayed easily and can help to make your presentation more efficient.



If you use large sheets of paper to jot down these ideas they can be kept and displayed around the room. This helps to remind everyone of what has been done, and is a quick visual way to stress key points.

Techniques for successful group work

There are a number of different ways to get discussion going in groups. It is good to use different techniques in the group to keep everyone interested and participating.

BRAINSTORMING

AIM To bring out as many different ideas as possible — no matter how crazy — without worrying about how good or bad they might be until later.

A brainstorm is a technique to help a person or a group to think freely and creatively.

- ➊ Choose one behaviour which everyone in the group might practise, and which they agree contributes to an important health problem (e.g. drinking alcohol, smoking, unsafe sexual activity, unhealthy eating habits).
- ➋ Group everyone into teams of four people, and ask each team to agree on one person to take notes.
- ➌ Ask each team to 'brainstorm', listing as many things as possible which influence their own behaviour on the chosen topic. Every idea should be written down without comment until the group has run out of ideas.
- ➍ On a large piece of paper or flipchart, list all of the ideas from all of the groups.
- ➎ Working in the whole group, take out repetitions or unhelpful ideas, and try sorting the remaining ideas into categories or priorities.

ROLE PLAY

AIM To help people practise communication skills and solve problems with others and to help people practise new skills.

During a role play, two or more people pretend they are in a certain situation and act out how those people might behave in that situation. Role play involves people in the group, not real actors, who have had little preparation other than real life.

Role play involves three steps:

- 1** The group or facilitator describes an important problem or situation. Two or three people are asked to volunteer to 'act' out the situation. This should take 5-10 minutes.
- 2** Participants discuss what happened during the role play.
 - Is this a real problem?
 - Can it be solved, and if so, how?
 - How did the role players deal with it?
- 3** Participants make suggestions for overcoming the problem.

The role play can then be acted again, perhaps by different members of the group, to show a possible solution.



ACTIVITY

3.6

NO THANKS!

AIM To learn how to be assertive about our personal belief and right with other people.

1 Ask two people to role plays some situations (you will need to adapt the examples below to your own situation). In each role play person B should try to convince person A of his or her view. Person A should be assertive – firm but polite – about their right to hold their view.

Example 1:

Person A: *You believe that the DJ of the local radio would be the best person to invite to your support group fundraising disco. Be assertive about inviting the DJ.*

Person B: *You know that the local DJ is not as good as the local bank manager at giving speeches. Try to pressurise person A into agreeing to invite the bank manager to your fundraising disco.*

Example 2:

Person A: *You have been nominated as the treasurer for your club. You know that you do not have time to do the work this year because of family commitments. Be assertive about not accepting the nomination.*

Person B: *You want person A to be the group's treasurer. Try to pressurise them into agreeing to do this.*

2 Discuss in the group.

- Is it easy to be assertive?
- What did person B feel while trying to pressurise person A?
- What did person A feel while trying to be assertive?



PICTURE CODES

AIM To focus people's attention on a difficult situation at the beginning of a problem-solving session.

A 'picture code' is a poster-sized illustration without words, which shows a situation about which people may have strong feelings. The illustration should clearly describe the situation (e.g. a woman buying condoms, a young man visiting an STD clinic).

1 Place the picture code in a position where it can be seen clearly – on the ground or fixed to the wall.

2 Guide the group through a series of questions to stimulate discussion:

- What is happening in the picture?
- Does this happen in real life?
- Why is this happening? What does the picture make you feel?
- Do any problems or benefits arise from this situation?
- What are the root causes?
- What can be done about it (to make it happen more or less)?

At the end of the discussion, summarise what has been said.

This technique may be useful for starting discussions with other people, for example during public education sessions at schools.

OPEN-ENDED STORIES

AIM To present a real life situation and raise issues which people can easily understand.

An open-ended story is short and stops at a point where decisions are needed.

Tell a short story, which reflects a situation, which your group members are facing. The following example highlights the need to consider the needs of HIV-positive sex workers:

'Mary works in a brothel in town. She sends money that she earns to her mother who is looking after her two small children. She is sick now and her young children are unable to care for her. Her elderly mother depends on Mary for food and is getting too old to care for the children. Mary's relatives live in the neighbouring country. Other women in the brothel are starting to talk about Mary and saying that she should leave.'

- What could the other women do to assist Mary?
- What could people do about the children who will shortly be without a mother?
- What could the community do for the grandmother?