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# **AIDS EDUCATION FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

## **BOOK ONE LEARNING ACTIVITIES**



**MALAWI AIDS EDUCATION FOR SCHOOLS**

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# **AIDS EDUCATION FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

## **BOOK ONE LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

Produced in cooperation with the Malaŵi Ministry of Health, AIDS Secretariat, Health Education Unit, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Community Services, UNICEF, WHO, Malaŵi Institute of Education and USAID/AIDS COM.

1992 Edition

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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## INTRODUCTION

This book is written to help students learn about a new disease called AIDS. It has been written in the form of short plays to make the material more interesting while retaining the factual content that students must learn if we are to conquer this epidemic.

Topic One explains the meaning of HIV and AIDS and how HIV affects the body. Topic Two discusses how AIDS is and is not spread. Topic Three deals with how to prevent the spread of AIDS.

As yet there is no cure for AIDS and no vaccine to prevent us from getting the disease. The only way to stop AIDS is through education. We hope this book will be helpful in ensuring that you know how to protect yourself and others from AIDS.

TOPIC ONE  
WHAT IS AIDS?

**BACKGROUND**

Shula is a girlfriend of Ndoda's. Shula has been expelled from school because she is pregnant. Ndoda is the father of the child. Five weeks after the baby is born, people learn that both Shula and the baby have diarrhoea and fever. Shula visits a government hospital for a blood test. The tests reveal that both she and the baby are HIV positive. Monde is a close friend of Shula's and comes from the same area. During form period Monde tells the teacher what she has heard about Shula.

**CHARACTERS**

Teacher  
Monde  
Nandi  
Mwangisi  
Chenjeranawo  
Nini  
Chisu

A group of other students to represent the immune system and to play the part of disease germs.

**SETTING - THE CLASSROOM**

Monde: Sir, I have heard that Shula has a baby boy. Shula and the baby have diarrhoea and fever, and when they went to the hospital they were both found to be HIV positive. What does that mean?

Teacher: What, HIV positive! That's very unfortunate. Oh, no...it can't be true.

Monde: Why do you look so worried? It is not as bad as all that. They look alright.

Teacher: No, they are not alright. It means they have a virus called HIV.

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Monde: What does HIV stand for?

Teacher: It stands for "Human Immunodeficiency Virus." The name "HIV" is taken from the first letter of these 3 words. H for Human, I for Immunodeficiency and V for Virus. This means that the disease affects human beings, it destroys the immune system and it is caused by a virus, which is a special kind of germ.

Monde: What does this HIV do?

Teacher: It causes a terrible disease called AIDS.

Monde: What exactly is AIDS?

Teacher: The word AIDS is an abbreviation which stands for "Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome." A-I-D-S.

Monde: Why was it given this name?

Teacher: "Acquired" means to get something, something you are not born with. "Immune" refers to the body's defense system which protects us from disease. This defense is provided by white blood cells which defend the body as a army defends a country. "Deficiency" is a lack of something. "Syndrome" means a group of signs or symptoms which are found together in a person with a particular disease. In short, this disease is called AIDS because one is not born with it, the disease destroys the immune system and people with AIDS develop a certain group of signs and symptoms.

Nini: Sir, you have mentioned that white blood cells bring about immunity. How do they do it?

Teacher: White blood cells defend the body by producing chemicals called antibodies which fight germs. The antibodies kill germs which invade our bodies.

Nini: But how is immunity destroyed by HIV?

Teacher: Well, the HIV attacks the white blood cells which would normally be protecting us from infection. The virus gets inside a white blood cell and takes control of it. The HIV turns the white blood cell into a miniature factory for producing more HIV. The white cell finally dies and breaks apart. When this happens the viruses that were inside the cell flow into the blood stream and attack more white cells.

Nini: Is that what destroys the immune system?

Teacher: Yes, after enough time, many white cells are killed and the immune system is weakened so much that infections that we can normally fight off take advantage of the body's weakness. Examples are skin infections, pneumonia, tuberculosis, chronic diarrhoea and fungal infections. These are sometimes called "opportunistic diseases."

Monde: Why do you call tuberculosis and pneumonia "opportunistic diseases"? We have heard about them and we consider them common.

Teacher: We call them "opportunistic diseases" because they take advantage of the "opportunity" created by our weakened immune system to make us sick. A normal, healthy body can fight off these diseases, but because a person with HIV lacks normal body defenses, these common diseases can be life threatening. This means a person can die of a disease like tuberculosis that normally wouldn't be

fatal if the patient is given good medical treatment.

Monde: This is still hard to understand, sir.

Teacher: I know it is, Monde. Let me see if I can make it clearer. Can I please have twelve volunteers to come to the front?

(THE STUDENTS COME FORWARD)

Six of you form a circle and hold hands. You will represent the immune system. One of you stand inside the circle to represent a person's body.

(THE STUDENTS TAKE THEIR POSITIONS)

Now, five of you pick up the flash cards with the name of a disease...malaria, TB, pneumonia, common cold and AIDS. Each of you shout out the name of your disease and try to break into the circle. But this time you cannot.

(THE STUDENTS SHOUT THE NAME ON THEIR CARDS AND TRY TO FORCE THEIR WAY INTO THE CIRCLE)

This shows how the immune system keeps diseases out of your body. But now, let's see what HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, does to the immune system.

(A STUDENT REPRESENTING HIV RUSHES IN AND BREAKS THE CIRCLE OF JOINED HANDS. HE SHOUTS "HIV...HIV..." AS HE BREAKS THROUGH THE CIRCLE. THE STUDENTS REPRESENTING THE IMMUNE SYSTEM FALL DOWN, LEAVING THE PERSON REPRESENTING THE BODY STANDING ALONE)

Did you see what happened? HIV has broken down the joined hands representing the immune system. Let's see what happens next.

(STUDENTS HOLDING FLASH CARDS WITH THE NAMES OF DISEASES PUSH THEIR WAY INTO THE CIRCLE AND ATTACK THE PERSON INSIDE. PNEUMONIA SHOULD BE THE LAST ONE TO ATTACK. THE PERSON INSIDE THE BROKEN CIRCLE ACTS OUT THE EFFECTS OF EACH DISEASE, SHAKING FOR MALARIA, COUGHING FOR TUBERCULOSIS, GASPING FOR BREATH FOR PNEUMONIA.)

When the immune system is destroyed by HIV, we are helpless to fight off diseases, and eventually we die from one of them. You should remember that HIV is the virus or germ which destroys the immune system, and AIDS is what we call the condition when the diseases we cannot fight off begin to appear. Thanks very much to all of you. You may now go back to your seats. In our play today we have seen what HIV and AIDS is, how the immune system works and how HIV weakens the immune system.

(THE STUDENTS RETURN TO THEIR SEATS)

Now look at this picture. Who do you think is infected with HIV among these people?



1. You cannot tell if someone has AIDS by how they look.

Mwangisi: (POINTING AT A THIN MAN IN THE PICTURE)  
This man has HIV. I have heard people  
get very thin when they are infected.

Chisu: (POINTING AT ANOTHER FIGURE IN THE  
PICTURE) No, it's this one...

All the group: (TALKING AT THE SAME TIME) No, it's  
him...no, it's that one...it's her.

Teacher: Actually, it is not possible to tell who  
has HIV by just looking at people. It's  
possible that they all are infected with  
HIV, even though most look healthy.

Monde: Then how did the doctor know that Shula  
and her baby are infected with HIV?

Teacher: Ah, that is a good question, Monde. The  
presence of HIV in the blood causes the  
white blood cells to produce antibodies  
to resist the HIV. A blood test which  
detects these antibodies can tell us that  
the person is infected by HIV. All  
district hospitals and some mission  
hospitals have testing centres where  
blood tests of this kind are carried out.  
Through such tests doctors can tell who  
has HIV infection and who does not. If  
someone is found to be infected, we say  
they are "HIV positive."



2. Only a blood test can prove someone has HIV.

Nandi: If a person is HIV positive does it always mean that they have AIDS?

Teacher: Not necessarily. There are many people who are HIV positive and yet feel perfectly healthy. And here is a great danger. You may look and feel well, but if you are infected with HIV, you can infect other people as well.

Chenjeranawo: But sir, I am not yet clear on the difference between HIV and AIDS.

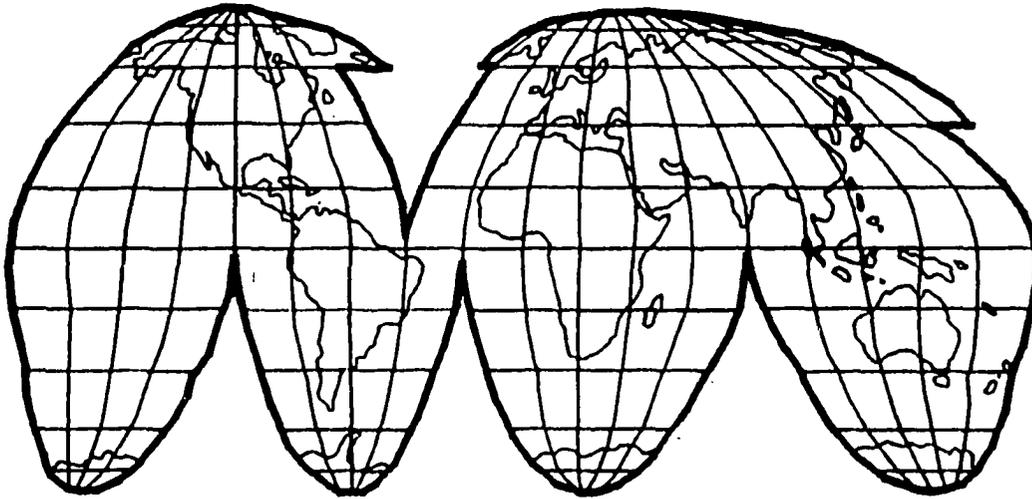
Teacher: Can anyone explain the difference?

Nini: HIV is a virus that causes AIDS. AIDS is a condition which develops as a result of HIV infection. Is that right, sir?

Teacher: Yes, very good! Remember, you cannot tell if a person has AIDS by just looking at them. But an infected person may show these symptoms: diarrhoea which lasts for a long time...weight loss which cannot be explained...thrush, which is a white coating in the mouth...skin infections, such as itchy lumps and skin rash anywhere on the body. However, don't jump to the conclusion that someone has AIDS simply because he or she has one of these symptoms. Only a blood test can prove the presence of HIV infection.

Monde: Why have we not heard of this disease before? Where did it begin?

Teacher: We are not sure where it began. It was first recognised, or diagnosed, in the United States in 1981. The virus which causes AIDS was identified in Paris in 1983. The first case of AIDS in Malaŵi was diagnosed in 1985. Since then the number of cases has been increasing in Malaŵi and all over the world. We must all learn about the disease if we are to protect ourselves and stop its spread.



3. AIDS has quickly become a world-wide problem.

#### REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does the term AIDS stand for?
2. What is the cause of AIDS?
3. What is HIV?
4. What is the relationship between HIV and AIDS?
5. List three common opportunistic diseases.
6. What is immunity?
7. How does the immune system work to fight disease?

TOPIC TWO  
HOW AIDS IS SPREAD

**BACKGROUND**

The teacher has invited a medical doctor, Dr. Phiri, to talk to the class about AIDS. Dr. Phiri agrees to come and asks his nurse, Miss Ngona, to come as well.

**CHARACTERS**

Teacher  
Dr. Phiri  
Monde  
Nandi  
Nurse Ngona  
Mwangisi  
Chisu  
Nini.

**SETTING - THE CLASSROOM**

Teacher: Good morning, class.

Students: (IN UNISON) Good morning, teacher.

Teacher: Last time you had many question about AIDS. So I have asked Dr. Phiri to come talk to you. He is an expert on AIDS. He is a medical doctor at a government hospital. With him is Miss Ngona, a nurse at the same hospital.

Students: (IN UNISON) Good morning.

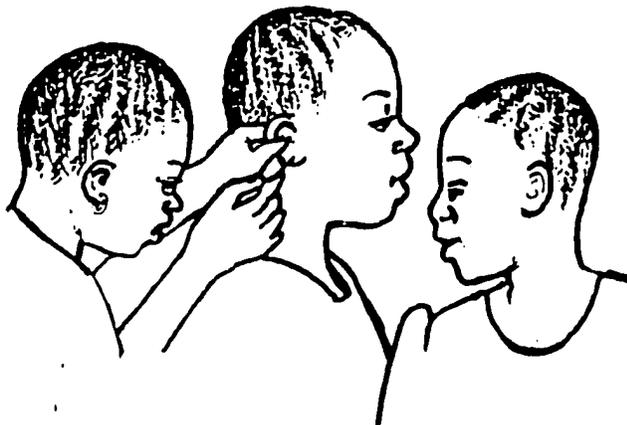
Doctor and Nurse: Good morning, class.

Teacher: I hope you will make use of their presence here by asking them as many questions as possible about AIDS.  
(TURNING TO DOCTOR) Over to you, Doctor.

**Nurse:** Thank you, Doctor. Yes, it is possible to get HIV through blood contact. One of the ways is through blood transfusion, but nowadays this is not a threat because donated blood is tested to be sure it does not contain HIV. Another way HIV can be spread is through contaminated needles. In hospitals and clinics this is not a problem because all needles used for injections are sterilized. But people can get HIV through needles if they receive injections from untrained people.

**Chenjeranawo:** Madam, is it dangerous to use the same needle to pierce the ears of several people?

**Nurse:** Yes, it is. Look at this picture. (SHE HOLDS UP A PICTURE FOR THE CLASS TO SEE) If the girl having her ears pierced is HIV positive, the needle can pick up a small amount of contaminated blood. If the same needle is used on another person without being properly sterilised, the HIV can get into that person's blood. This can also apply to any cutting or skin piercing instrument which has been used by an infected person and has not been sterilized.



4. A needle should not be used by more than one person unless it is sterilised.

Mwangisi: Madam, only 2 ways of spreading HIV have been mentioned. You said there are 3. What is the third one?

Nurse: Do you want to answer this question, Doctor?

Doctor: Yes...the third way is from mother to baby.

Nini: But how does this happen, Doctor?

Doctor: It can happen during pregnancy. The virus may pass from the mother's blood into the baby's blood stream before birth. HIV can also be transmitted to the baby as it is being born because both the mother and baby may bleed and the virus can pass from one to the other.

Nandi: You have said that body fluids can contain HIV. Can the baby be infected with HIV through breast feeding?

Doctor: This is an extremely important point. It is true that very small amounts of HIV are sometimes found in breast milk of infected mothers. But it is unlikely that the baby will be infected with HIV through breast feeding because of the small amount of virus in the milk. And remember, breast milk has antibodies which can protect the baby from many other infections. Therefore it is recommended that a mother continue to breast feed even though she is HIV positive.

Nini: Doctor, can you get HIV by shaking hands with a person who has AIDS?

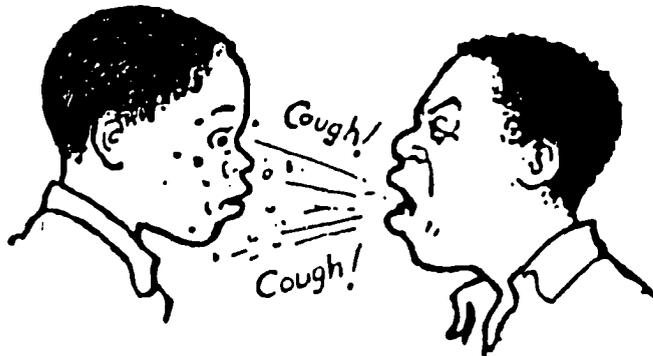
(SOME OF THE CLASS LAUGH)

Doctor: No...this is only one of the many wrong ideas some people have about AIDS. Remember, HIV is in body fluids. Since

shaking hands does not involve body fluids, it is not possible to be infected in that way.

Nindi:

But what about being sneezed at by a person with AIDS? I know we can get some other diseases in this way.



5. Sneezing does not spread AIDS, but we should cover the mouth to stop the spread of other germs.

Doctor:

No, even being sneezed at does not transmit AIDS. Here is a picture of a man sneezing. (HOLDS UP PICTURE) Even though it has been reported that saliva may have small amounts of HIV in it, the concentration is so low as to not be a threat. Nurse, can you show the class the poster we brought?

Nurse:

Here are some ways you cannot get AIDS. It is very important to understand the true facts, because wrong information can make us very fearful. But even more important, the person with HIV or AIDS can lead a miserable life since they are sometimes treated very badly by others because of fear. (POINTING AT A POSTER) Now, can someone tell us what this poster is showing us?



6. Some ways you cannot get AIDS.

**Monde:** It shows that we can't get AIDS by donating blood at the hospital.

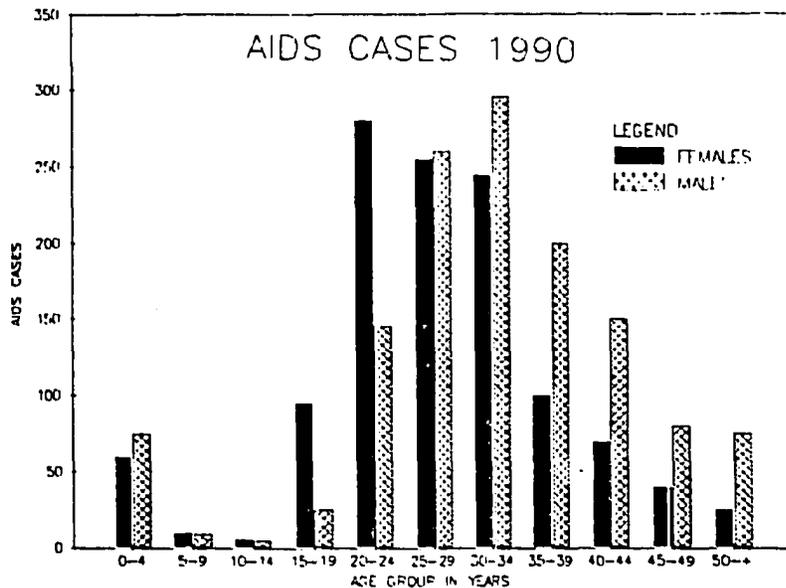
**Nurse:** Yes, because the needles used in the process of donating blood and in transfusing blood are sterilised. Can someone say what these other pictures tell us?

**Mwangisi:** They show that we can't get AIDS from shaking hands, drinking from the same cup, washing in the same basin or eating from the same plate with a person who has AIDS.

**Nurse:** That's right...we cannot get AIDS in any of these ways. And you cannot be infected by sharing clothes, using public telephones and transport or by working close beside an infected person.

**Chenjeranawo:** Can we get AIDS from mosquito bites? Many people have told me this is so.

**Doctor:** No, we cannot. Look at this picture. (HOLDS UP PICTURE)



**8. Age distribution of AIDS cases in Malawi.**

**Monde:** Is it between 20 and 44 years?

**Doctor:** Yes, that's right. And you see, if mosquitoes were responsible for the spread of HIV, the numbers of AIDS cases should be the same for all age groups, since mosquitoes bite everyone. Also remember that the age range of 20 to 44 includes those who are most sexually active. So these results make the point that sexual contact is the most important way of transmitting HIV.

**THE BELL RINGS SIGNALING THE END OF CLASS**

**Teacher:** Well, thank you very much, Doctor, and you too, Miss Ngona. You have really helped us understand more about HIV and AIDS. Please promise that you will come back.

**Doctor:** Yes, of course...and thanks to you and the class.

**REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. State the three main ways in which HIV can be spread.

2. List three main body fluids through which HIV can be spread.
3. Why is it very unlikely that one could get AIDS through blood transfusions and injections given at hospitals?
4. List five ways that AIDS cannot be transmitted.
5. Why can you not be infected with HIV from a mosquito bite?

TOPIC THREE  
PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF AIDS

**BACKGROUND**

News has reached the school that Shula and her baby are dead. A group of boys and girls are returning home after a football match. Ndoda, Shula's boyfriend, is walking briskly ahead of them. He is spotted by Monde who calls for him to stop. Ndoda looks behind and sees the group of boys and girls walking quickly toward him. He waits and soon the group catches up with him. A discussion about the death of Shula begins.

**CHARACTERS**

Ndoda  
Monde  
Chisu  
Nini  
Mwangisi  
Chenjeranawo

**SETTING** - A road leading from the stadium to the school.

Monde: (TO NODA) What a terrible thing about Shula and her baby. Have you heard about it?

Ndoda: Yes, I have heard. I even went to her funeral. The baby died three weeks after Shula's death. When she was in hospital I went to visit her. Oh, AIDS is a terrible disease. Shula had wasted away so much that I could hardly recognize her towards the end of her life.

Nandi: Shula was your girlfriend, wasn't she?

Ndoda: Yes, she was my only girlfriend.

Chenjeranawo: I see. And you are not afraid for yourself with the death of your girlfriend?

Ndola: Not as much as before I went for help. I was so scared after the news of Shula's death that I decided to seek medical help at the hospital. Luckily enough Dr. Phiri was able to give me useful counselling. This has helped me to live a normal life with HIV, even though I know I will die from it someday.

Mangisi: You mean you have HIV?

Ndoda: Yes, I had a blood test. That is the only way to know with certainty if you are infected. I am HIV positive, but I can assure you that I feel quite healthy. However, I am always aware that I have HIV. This helps me to behave responsibly so that I do not spread the virus to others.

Chisu: Acting responsibly? Like doing what?

Ndoda: One way is by practising abstinence. I feel that since I am not married, why should I indulge in sexual contact? So I have told myself, Ndoda, its abstinence for you...that is, no sex for me.

Chenjeranawo: Ndoda, are you sure that is really possible?

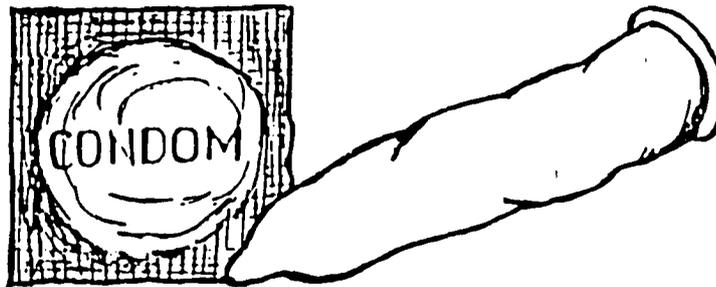
Ndoda: I don't say that it is easy, but it is possible. All it requires is being disciplined and sticking to one's resolution not to have sex once you have made up your mind. You school boys and girls should refrain from being in dark corners with your lovers to avoid temptation. Dr. Phiri has also told me that it is necessary for married people to stick to one partner. So, that's what I intend to do when I get married. I shall avoid sex outside marriage. I shall not have sex partners other than my wife.

**Monde:** (SURPRISED) You mean that you are thinking of getting married, Ndoda? Won't you transmit the HIV to your wife?

**Ndoda:** No, not at all. I intend to use condoms. Having seen how terrible AIDS is, I have no intention of spreading it to anyone, let alone my wife.

**Mwangisi:** (SHOWING GREAT INTEREST) What are condoms? Tell me more.

**Ndoda:** Condoms are thin rubber tubes which a man can wear over the penis during sexual intercourse to act as a barrier to body fluids. So if one is not sure of a sex partner's health, the use of a condom can prevent transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. But my friends, the doctor told me that the surest way of not getting AIDS is by practising abstinence. That would also be my advice to you for the moment, since you are not married anyway.



9. Using a condom can reduce the spread of HIV.

**Chenjeranawo:** Personally I don't like the idea of using a condom. After all, it is like taking a shower in a raincoat.

(LAUGHTER FROM THE GROUP)

**Nini:** It's all right for those who can stick to abstinence, but what about those who can't? They should be allowed to do the next best thing, which is...

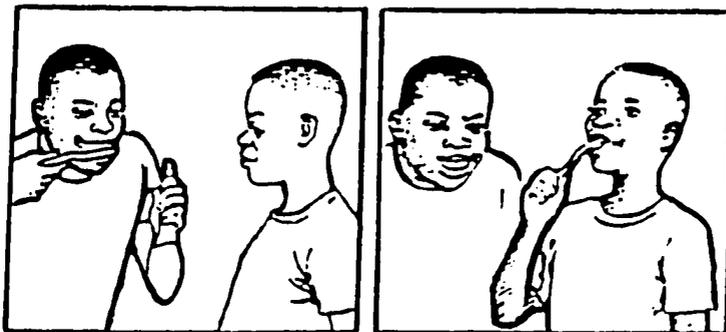
All: (SPEAKING TOGETHER) Using a condom!

Mwangisi: But, my friends, Ndoda is right. We should abstain from sex until marriage.

Ndoda: That's a good decision to make. And when you do get married, have a monogamous sex relationship. This means you must remain faithful to one sexual partner. If a married couple is free of infection and the man and wife are faithful to each other, there is no way they can get HIV. And their children will be born free of AIDS.

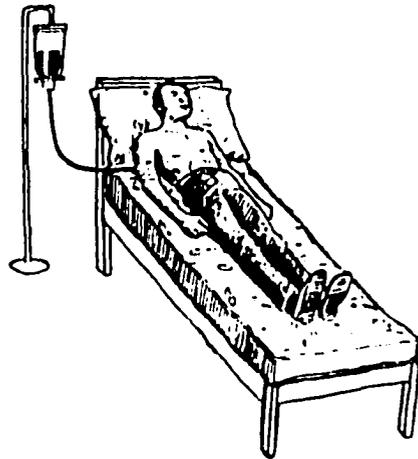
Nandi: I think the best way is to have no sex partner at all. In that way you will not be tempted to have sex.

Ndoda: Mind you, avoiding sex is not the only way to prevent the spread of HIV infection. Dr. Phiri mentioned that we should avoid such risky behaviours as receiving injections from untrained people who do not sterilise their needles, sharing razor blades and other cutting instruments and sharing toothbrushes.



10. Sharing toothbrushes can spread AIDS if there are open sores in the mouth.

Monde: Another way of preventing AIDS is by screening blood for HIV before it is transfused into patients.



11. Blood for transfusion is tested to be sure it does not contain HIV.

Chisu: Yes, that's true. Nurse Ngoni told us that blood from donors is now tested to be sure it does not contain HIV.

Chenjjeranawo: Well, well...it's already five o'clock. We have to get back to school before 5.30 for roll call. Thanks very much, Ndoda, for the information you have shared with us.

Ndoda: It was a pleasure. (SADLY) I wish I had known these things...before.

All: Goodbye, Ndoda...thank you.

#### REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. List five ways the spread of AIDS can be prevented.
2. How does using a condom prevent the spread of HIV?
3. What is meant by abstinence?
4. What is meant by a monogamous sexual relationship?
5. How can one be sure he or she does not have HIV?
6. Why is there no danger of contracting HIV when you donate blood or get a transfusion in a hospital?