

EDUCATION FOR LIFE

A BEHAVIOR PROCESS

FOR GROUPS

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EDUCATION FOR LIFE: A BEHAVIORAL PROCESS

This is a program designed for use with groups who are living in an area where there is a high prevalence of HIV infection and a need for safe sexual behavior. Depending on the age and experience of the individuals in the group, it aims at either reinforcing present safe behavior or bringing about a change in behavior. In either case, it is the individuals in the groups who choose the appropriate behavior and then commit themselves to it. The group and its leader simply facilitate this.

The process is based on the “helping skills” model of Gerard Egan (Egan, Gerard, “The Skilled Helper”, Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, Monterey, California, 1986.), a behavioral and problem-solving model. This was chosen because the prevention of AIDS requires behavior change in most cases and this is not easy to achieve. It does not happen simply by giving people information about the disease. This process is designed to facilitate a person’s movement through the various stages of behavior change: identifying the problem, choosing goals, and planning action. In the “Education for Life” program, the model is used to help individuals examine their lives and especially their sexual behavior, determine what behavior is safe and possible for them, and then commit themselves to action. The group support helps in clarifying the problem and increasing commitment.

This process can be summarized as follows:

Stage I — Exploring the problem

- a. telling the story
- b. focusing
- c. looking for what’s been overlooked

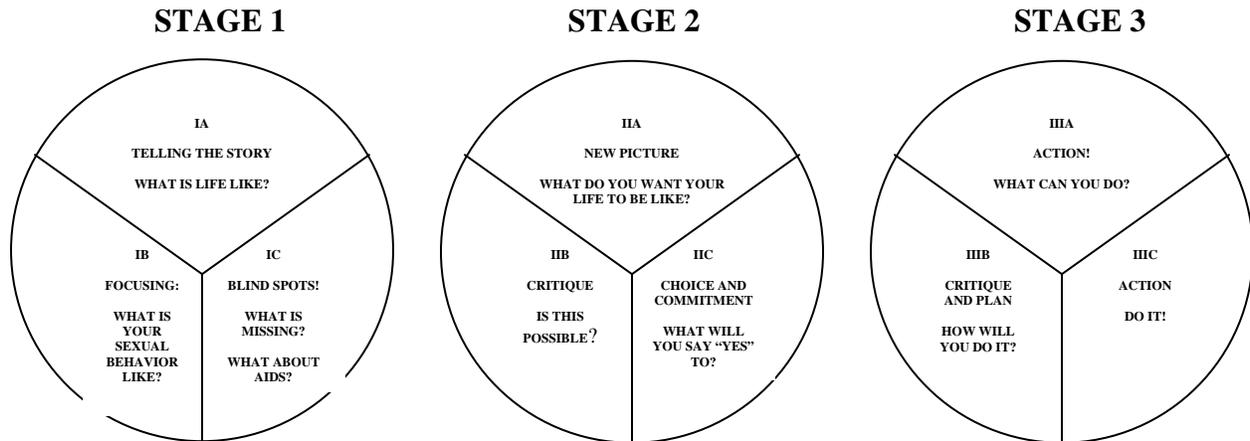
Stage II — Setting goals

- a. looking for alternatives
- b. critiquing these
- c. choosing and committing oneself

Stage III — Action

- a. identifying ways of acting
- b. making plans
- c. acting.

When this is made more specific in the “Education for Life” Program and diagrammed, it looks like this:

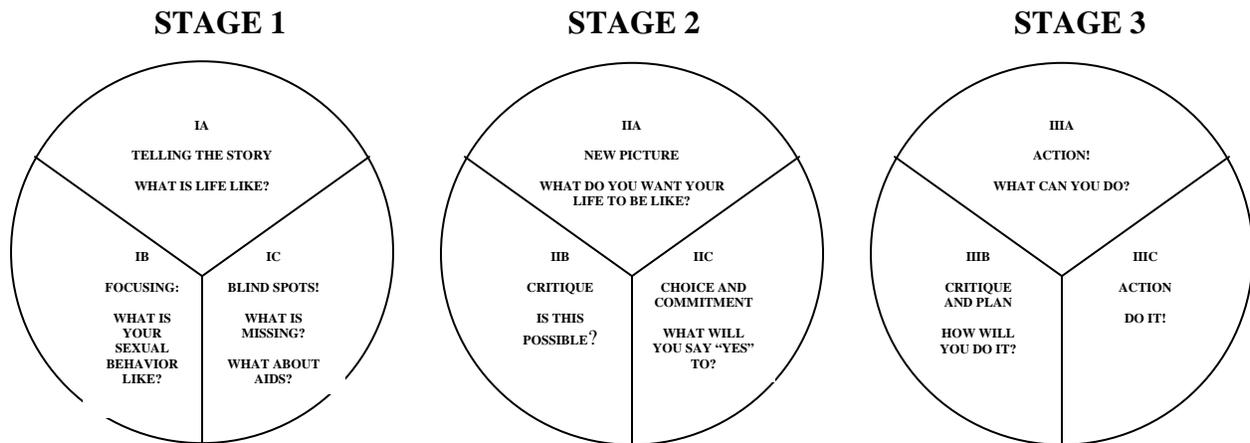


It is important to note that this is a process. This means it is dynamic and there is overlap of the various stages. One doesn't simply move in a straight line. This is especially true when working with a group; the discussions often go back and forth - yet always proceeding towards the action.

To facilitate the use of the program, guide questions are prepared for each stage and step. These are adapted to the specific group. A diagrammatic format has been adapted; each step with its guide questions is on a different page (an adaptation of a set of notes by Laura Dell, Institute of Pastoral Studies, Loyola University, Chicago). The group leader uses this as a guide for the discussions. Other questions may be added at any time.

There are many ways of using this program; much will depend on the age and needs of the group as well as the time available for meetings. It requires a willingness to meet and to share. And it needs committed and prepared group facilitators. They need to have a knowledge of HIV infection and a belief that behavior change is possible. They are then helped to understand how behavior is changed and trained in individual and group helping skills (See "I Want to Help" and "Helping A Group"). The length and type of training will depend on the prior skill of the leaders. Once trained they are encouraged to adapt the questions and the program to their particular groups. In most instances groups meet for an hour once a week. However, the possibilities are as numerous as the groups that will use the program.

EDUCATION FOR LIFE: A BEHAVIOR PROCESS



This process has been adapted from "The Skilled Helper" by G. Egan for use with groups as part of a preventive AIDS education program. It is meant to follow the information sessions and is structured so as to assist people in choosing a healthy life-style.

Each step has several sets of questions to aid discussion; the ones appropriate to the group are used as guides. The time span of the process, the length of the sessions and the size of the group will vary according to the needs of the group. A group leader is needed.

IA TELLING THE STORY WHAT IS LIFE LIKE?		
<u>COMMUNITY – ADULTS</u>	<u>GENERAL QUESTIONS</u> (Suitable for all groups)	<u>YOUTH: IN SCHOOL AND OUT</u>
-How do you earn your living?	What is your life like today?	How do you know you are popular?
-How do you add to this?	What do you dream about?	Who are you friends?
-What are your concerns for your family?	What problems do you have?	How do you choose your friends?
-Who helps you when you have a problem?	What makes you happy?	What hobbies do you have?
-What in your tradition helps you most?	What are you afraid of?	How do you spend your free time?
What in your tradition causes you problems?	What makes you angry? -sad? -hurt?	What do you know about your traditions?
-	What pressures are put on you? -by whom?	What are your plans for the future?
-	What do you value most?	What do you talk about with your friends?
-	How do you celebrate?	Where do you get extra money?
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-

- ADD YOUR OWN QUESTIONS

IB FOCUSING WHAT IS YOUR SEXUAL BEHAVIOR LIKE?		
<u>COMMUNITY – ADULTS</u> How do husbands and wives relate? What happens at times of celebration? Can a man (or woman) be satisfied with one partner? Why do men/women seek many partners? What do women/men say about sex when they're together? What do you value most in a relationship? -in marriage? - -	<u>GENERAL QUESTIONS</u> (Suitable for all groups) What do you mean when you say "sex"? What helps you form relationships? What do you know about your traditional sexual practices and beliefs? What do you think about them? Does your religious faith teach you anything about sexual behavior? What? Do you agree? - - -	<u>YOUTH: IN SCHOOL AND OUT</u> What have your parents told you about sex? What have others told you about sex? What do your friends say about sex? What happens at discos? Can girls and boys be friends and not have sex? Can a girl/boy be a virgin until marriage? Why do boys/girls have sex before marriage? How many partners do you think a young person has while at school? Can a girl say "No"? What will it cost her? - - -

- ADD YOUR OWN QUESTIONS

IC BLIND SPOTS WHAT ARE YOU MISSING? WHAT ABOUT AIDS?		
<u>COMMUNITY – ADULTS</u>	<u>GENERAL QUESTIONS</u> (Suitable for all groups)	<u>YOUTH: IN SCHOOL AND OUT</u>
What do your friends believe about AIDS and sex?	How do you feel about AIDS?	Is “playing sex” the real problem?
What does your wife believe? -your husband?	What do you really think causes AIDS?	What does your family tell you about sex and AIDS?
What does a woman do if her husband is unfaithful?	Can AIDS be prevented? How?	What example does your family give?
What do you think happens or should happen if one partner has the virus?	Do you know anyone with AIDS? How did they get it? Are you sure?	Why do some young people continue to “play sex” if they know they can get AIDS?
What role does drinking play?	What traditional practices may spread AIDS?	Do any of your friends have the virus? How do you know?
-	What do you understand by “safer” sex? Is it possible?	-
-	Do you still have any unanswered questions about AIDS?	-
-	-	-
	-	

- ADD YOUR OWN QUESTIONS

IIA NEW PICTURE WHAT DO YOU WANT YOUR LIFE TO BE LIKE?		
<u>COMMUNITY – ADULTS</u>	<u>GENERAL QUESTIONS</u> (Suitable for all groups)	<u>YOUTH: IN SCHOOL AND OUT</u>
What is the most important part of your relationships?	What do you really want?	Who are your friends?
What are you doing after work?	What is making you happy? -angry? -sad?	How are you spending your free time?
What are you telling your children about life?	How is your life different?	Where do you get extra money?
What are you talking about with your friends?	How is your life unchanged?	What are you telling your younger brothers and sisters?
What is your relationship with your wife/husband like?	Do you want to prevent AIDS? Can you? Are you?	What is the most important thing in your life?
What do you tell other men/other women about AIDS and sex?	Describe your daily life now that you are living safely?	-
-	What problems do you have?	-
-	What are all the ways you have changed?	-
	What are all the ways you have stayed the same?	
	-	

- ADD YOUR OWN QUESTIONS

IIC
 CHOICE AND COMMITMENT
 WHAT WILL YOU SAY "YES"
 TO?

<u>COMMUNITY – ADULTS</u>	<u>GENERAL QUESTIONS</u> (Suitable for all groups)	<u>YOUTH: IN SCHOOL AND OUT</u>
Which solution is also best for your partner?	What is the best solution for you?	Which solution will give you the kind of adult life you want?
-	What is the best and safest way for you to behave?	-
-	Do you think you can live safely?	-
-	Do you really want to do it?	-
	How do you feel about the changes you have to make?	
	How do you feel about the behavior you don't have to change?	
	-	
	-	
	-	

- ADD YOUR OWN QUESTIONS

**IIIA
 BRAINSTORMING
 STRATEGIES
 WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

<u>COMMUNITY – ADULTS</u>	<u>GENERAL QUESTIONS</u>	<u>YOUTH: IN SCHOOL AND OUT</u>
<p>How will you tell your partner(s) about your choice?</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>	<p>(Suitable for all groups)</p> <p>How are you going to do this?</p> <p>How are you going to change?</p> <p>How are you going to continue what is safe?</p> <p>What do you need to do first? What next?</p> <p>Who will help you?</p> <p>When will you start?</p> <p>How will you start?</p> <p>Will anyone else be affected by your choice?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">-family?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">-friends?</p> <p>-</p>	<p>How can you tell your close friends?</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>

- ADD YOUR OWN QUESTIONS

IIIB CRITIQUE AND PLAN HOW WILL YOU DO IT?		
<u>COMMUNITY – ADULTS</u>	<u>GENERAL QUESTIONS</u> (Suitable for all groups)	<u>YOUTH: IN SCHOOL AND OUT</u>
What help will you need -as you grow older? -as you change jobs? -as people move away? - - -	What are the steps of your plan? Which are the best ways <u>for you</u> to do this? What are the advantages and disadvantages of <u>each</u> possible action? Is this plan practical? What is the most important step you will take? Who will support you? Who will help you? Do you have the strength you need? -	What help will you need -as you grow older? -as you move to a new place? -as you finish school? -as you go to work? -as you change jobs? - -

- ADD YOUR OWN QUESTIONS

IIC ACTION YOU DO IT?		
<u>COMMUNITY – ADULTS</u>	<u>GENERAL QUESTIONS</u> (Suitable for all groups)	<u>YOUTH: IN SCHOOL AND OUT</u>
-	What will make this work?	-
-	What might get in the way?	-
	What will you do if it starts to get too hard?	
	What will you do if you get stuck?	
	Whom will you go to for help?	
	What support would make it easier?	
	Who will try and make you fail? -What will you tell them?	
	-	

- ADD YOUR OWN QUESTIONS

SAMPLE TRAINING WORKSHOP

No. of participants — 25-30

Length of time — 2 days

Prerequisite — know facts about AIDS

Session 1

- introductions by participants
- expectations; what do they hope to learn?
- introduction to principles of behavior change

Session 2

- input on building a helping relationship (See “I Want to Help”)
- skills practice

Session 3

- explanation of the “Education for Life” process
- give time to read guide questions
- small group discussion to raise questions about process

Session 4

- input on the aspects of group function
- role play of a group discussion using “fish-bowl” technique (group discusses one of the steps in the process)
Ex. Group 1 discusses Ia; Group 2 discusses Ib, etc.

Session 5

- small group discussion on how the participants will use the process in their particular work or life situation
- deciding what each individual will do as the “very next step”
- sharing in large group

The length and format of each session vary with the group being trained and with the particular training skills and talents of the trainer. It is essential that the group be involved in a very active way. The material in this booklet has proved helpful to the author in carrying out training sessions. Much of the material is given out as handouts once the topic has been discussed.

AIDS AND CHANGE OF BEHAVIOUR

The prevention of AIDS requires either the reinforcement of safe behaviour or the change of unsafe behaviour - sexual behaviour, which touches a person at the core of their being. To help another person in this task requires an understanding of behaviour change processes and the building of a helping relationship. It is not enough simply to share information or to use scare tactics.

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE IS DIFFICULT— WHY?

Because present behaviour is:

1. A habit — when a person does something for a long time, he/she no longer even has to think about it. It is done automatically. To change, one has to pay attention and this takes energy.
2. Comfortable — No one prefers discomfort; anything new requires getting used to and is usually uncomfortable at first.
3. Without resistance — Familiar behaviour occurs without resistance; any attempt to change meets resistance as a normal reaction.
4. Self-chosen — The “child” inside of each person fights to maintain autonomy and resists change imposed by another.
5. Rewarded — People repeat behaviour that is rewarded and do not repeat that which is punished. The person’s perception of reward and punishment is crucial here.

HOW BEHAVIOUR IS CHANGED

There are three major steps:

- I. Know and accept the present reality (behaviour)
- II. Choose and commit self to a possible new behaviour
- III. Act!

**NONE OF THIS CAN OCCUR WITHOUT THE BASIC ATTITUDE THAT
CHANGE IS POSSIBLE!**

To help another person change, we help them move through these stages. This requires not only the belief that the person can change but also the willingness and ability to accept and support the person every step of the way, especially in that person’s choice of new behaviour. Unless the person believes change is possible, wants to change, and finds some reward in the new behaviour, change will not occur. And unless the helper has positive attitudes and skills, the necessary helping relationship will not be formed. (See “I Want to Help”).

THOSE WITH HIV INFECTION CAN LIVE POSITIVELY!

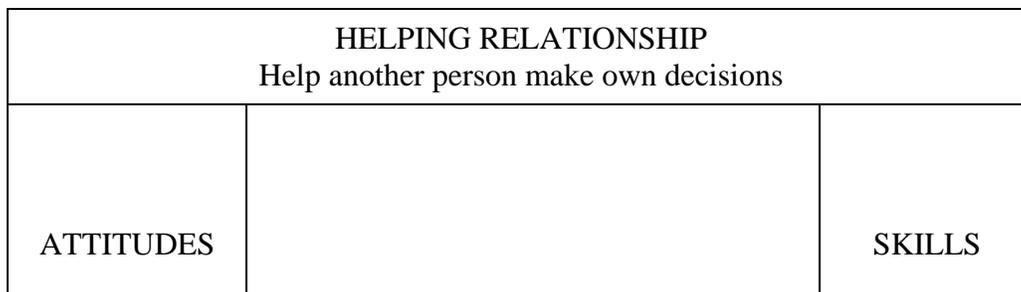
THE FURTHER SPREAD OF AIDS CAN BE PREVENTED!

PEOPLE CAN CHANGE THEIR BEHAVIOUR IF HELPED!

I WANT TO HELP

Whenever we help another person we need to form a relationship. To do this we need to have the right attitudes and some specific skills. Only then can we really help the person to make decisions about their life or to solve their problems. This is what helping or “counselling” is all about.

One way of looking at this is the following diagram.



The table represents the relationship between the helper and the person being helped. A table needs legs in order to stand and to hold things. If one leg breaks or is shorter than the other, the table will not be useful. When we form a relationship with another person it too must have “legs” — it must be supported by our right ATTITUDES and helping SKILLS. Otherwise the relationship will not last.

We build the first “leg” by developing attitudes in ourselves; by becoming aware of how we think and feel about the other person. The important ATTITUDES are:

<u>Belief in the person</u>	I need to believe that the person is good, wants my help, and wants to change.
<u>Warmth</u>	I need to welcome the person, smile, and be natural. Don't try to act like someone important.
<u>Confidentiality</u>	Whatever the person tells me should remain a secret. I do not have the right to tell someone else without the person's permission.
<u>Non-judging</u>	I am not the one to judge if a person is good or bad. If I want to help I must simply accept the person even when I don't agree with how the person is acting.

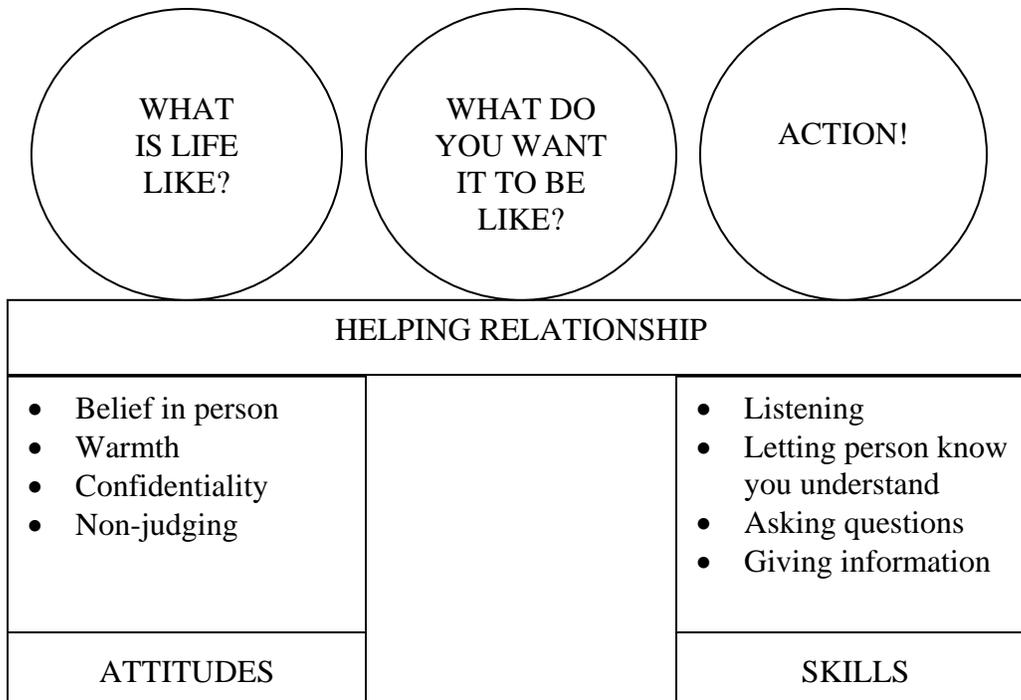
The second “leg” is built up by learning ways of acting that are helpful. The important SKILLS are:

Listening	I pay attention to the words a person says, to the tone of voice, and to how the person sits, walks, moves. I listen to what the person thinks, feels, and does.
Letting person know I understand	By nodding, saying “mm,,,”, repeating what I’ve heard, and asking when I’m not sure, I let the person know I’ve understood. This helps the person become clearer about the problem.
Asking questions	Ask questions clearly and gently. It is not an examination. Ask those which will help a person understand the problem better and also give more information. These are called “open questions”. For example, instead of asking “Do you have any children?”, (answer is “yes” or “no”), ask “Could you tell me about your children?”
Giving information	It’s important to be informed and to give clear and consistent facts. If you’re not sure, tell the person you don’t know but will find out. Information is not giving advice. Don’t tell a person what is best for him/her or what they should do. Simply give the facts and help them decide.

Now our “helping table” looks like this:

HELPING RELATIONSHIP Help a person make their own decisions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief in person • Warmth • Confidentiality • Non-judging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening • Letting person know you understand • Asking questions • Giving information
ATTITUDES	SKILLS

We put things on a table. So too, we put the act of helping another person on our relationship. We help the other person to look at and find solutions to their own problems. First we look at what the person’s life is like; we help them to tell all about their problems. Then we help them think about how it could be different. They decide how they want it to be. Then, after they’ve decided, we help them plan how to do it. Putting these three “steps” on the Table, it now looks like this:
 (Like Plates)

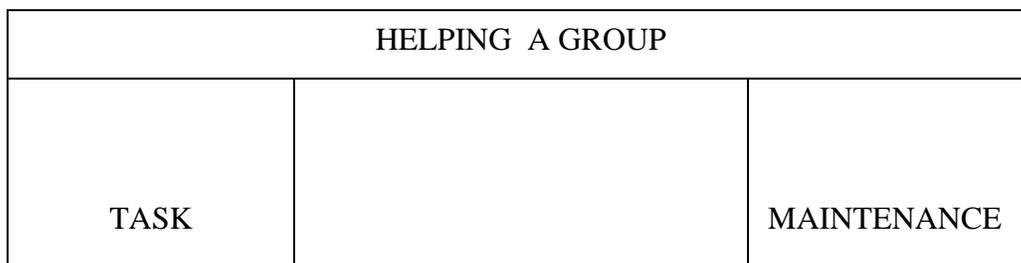


Build your own “helping table” and begin to help another. As you do, think about what you’re doing and how you’re doing it. We learn to help by helping.

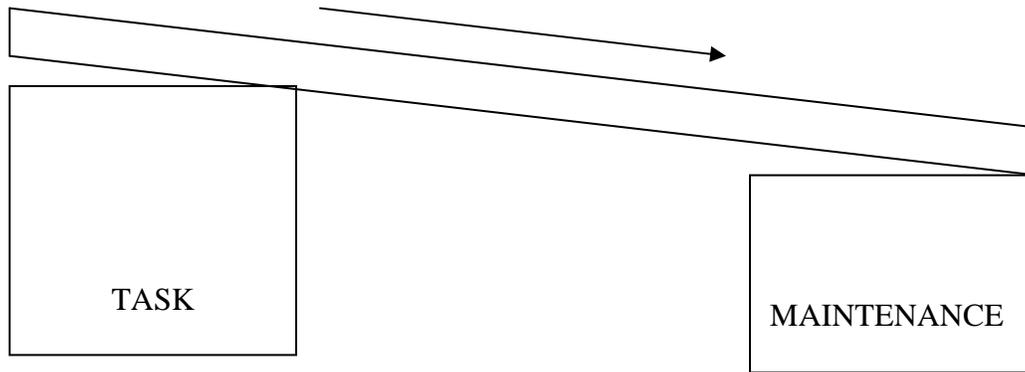
HELPING A GROUP

When we want to help a group we need to act in the same way as when we want to help an individual person. We need to build relationships which are supported by right attitudes and helping skills (See “I Want to Help”). But, we also need to learn how a group works and what we can do to help it work well.

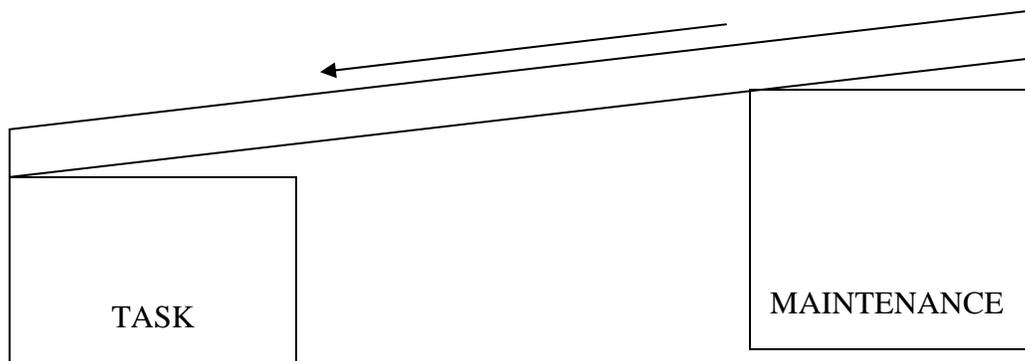
A group comes together in order to do some thing; this is called the group’s **TASK**. But, the group won’t stay together unless something is done to keep it going. This is called the **MAINTENANCE** of the group. Using the same symbol of the “helping table”, we can say that the legs of the “helping a group” table are the **TASK** and **MAINTENANCE FUNCTIONS** of the group.



If we put too much effort into doing the task and not enough into maintaining the group, the table will be unbalanced and look like this:



Or, if we spend all our time maintaining the group and not doing the task it will look like this:



In either case, the group will not function well, just as the table won't be useful,

To build the “task leg”, someone in the group needs to know how to:

- a. start the meeting or the conversation
- b. ask for information
- c. give information
- d. explain — often some people in the group talk about things others don't understand. Someone needs to explain.
- e. ask and give opinions
- f. make things clear — especially if someone looks “lost”
- g. put all the information together — help the group look at the whole problem.

The second or “maintenance leg” is built by those in the group who know how to pay attention to how people are thinking and feeling. People need to know how to:

- a. encourage each other — this helps people participate more
- b. invite the quiet ones to speak
- c. find out what’s wrong — especially if people are not attending, coming late, or keeping quiet, or getting angry, etc.
- d. express feelings — it helps if someone can say how they’re feeling
- e. help people understand each other — there are times when two people cannot do this without help
- f. relieve tension — someone who can help the group laugh.

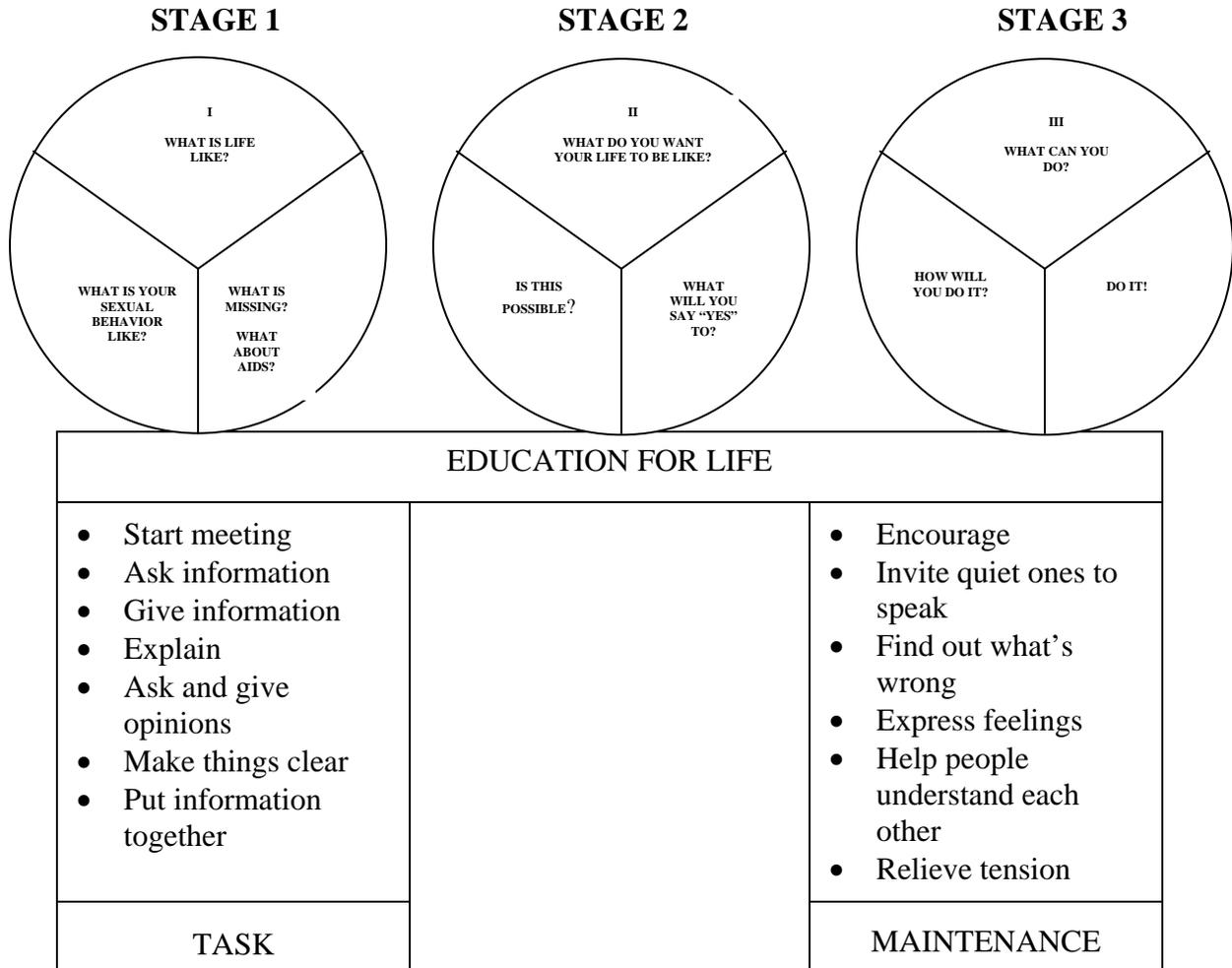
The GROUP HELPING TABLE now looks like this:

HELPING A GROUP	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start meeting • Ask information • Give information • Explain • Ask and give opinions • Make things clear • Put information together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage • Invite quiet ones to speak • Find out what’s wrong • Express feelings • Help people understand each other • Relieve tension
TASK	MAINTENANCE

It is ready for whatever purpose the group wants to use it for. One example of how it can be used is the Education for Life Program of AIDS education

In this program, individuals in the group are helped to make decisions about safe sexual behavior in their own lives. They look at what their life is like at present; then they decide how they would like it to be. And finally, they make a plan of action. This entire process rests on the “helping table” and the “group helping table”.

It looks like this:



For this program, as for most work in groups, there is a group leader. The leader needs to know how to build good relationships. But, the leader does not have (and should not have) to do all the task and maintenance activities. Each person in the group has a part to play. The good leader helps them to do this.

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THE PROCESS

The following are a few of the ways that the process has been and is being used. The list is not meant to be all inclusive; it is only a stimulus for further creative use of the process.

1. Small discussion groups meeting for about an hour a week over a period of time. Groups are small (about 6 members plus the leader) and do not change throughout the process. This allows for the building of trust and the providing of support. Examples are classes of secondary school students who meet for one class period a week as part of the curriculum, and groups of women in their clubs.
2. A week-long concentrated program going through the entire process. This may be helpful in situations such as nursing schools where students are on different daily schedules. It is helpful to repeat the process at a later time.
3. In connection with role plays or drama. Following an initial discussion using the guide questions of a particular stage, the group chooses the aspects that were most meaningful to them. They then act these out. This helps them experience the feelings involved in the issue and brings greater clarity and commitment. By letting them select the issues it avoids imposition of the leader's agenda.
4. In training facilitators and trainers in the Community Based Health Care Program (CBHC) and then incorporating it in the training of health workers at village level. This gives the trainees at each stage a chance to look at their own behavior and to consider making changes which will then increase their credibility in working with others.
5. ????? BE CREATIVE!