

**GIRLS' POWER INITIATIVE
(GPI) NIGERIA**

"towards an empowered womanhood"

Sexuality Education Series

for
**Young
Persons**

No.

8

**Adolescent
Digest**

EDITORS

Bene Madunagu & Margaret Udo

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The topic for this volume originated from the GPI 3 - hour weekly interactive/participatory lessons with adolescents girls, aged 10-18 years, on issues of adolescent sexuality and reproduction health and rights education.

Through the experiences with adolescent girls during the weekly lessons where the girls would discuss freely, their concerns, it is from this sharing of experiences that informed the choice of the topics for this edition of the Sexuality Education Series for young people.

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Introduction

Girls' Power Initiative (GPI) Nigeria is an independent, not-for-profit, non-sectarian, non-partisan, non-governmental organization. GPI was founded in 1993 but effectively started the execution of regular comprehensive sexuality education programmes and other related and relevant activities in 1994.

GPI first started with two centres in Benin-City, Edo State and Calabar, Cross River State. By 2001 fiscal year, GPI increased its physical locations or centres to four, with the two new centres in Asaba, Delta State and Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. The National Secretariat of GPI is in Calabar in Cross River State.

GPI is a registered organization (Corporate Affairs Commission No. 10290,1997).

GPI was awarded a Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) in 2001.

The organization focuses on the education, leadership and other gender-sensitive life management skills and information on human sexuality, Family Life/HIV/AIDS Education (SFLHE), Sexual Health and Rights, Reproductive Health and Rights, particularly of adolescent girls, aged 10-18 years in Nigeria.

GPI's focus is to assist young girls to live healthy lives and achieve their full potentials, towards an empowered womanhood. It also includes assisting young girls to overcome the risks of early sexual activity, unwanted or unintended pregnancy, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS, unsafe abortions, all forms of sexual abuse and harassment as well as other forms of violence against women and exploitation.

GPI vigorously promotes gender equality and equity and works with adolescent girls to develop their leadership and capacity to respond to, and work for social transformation towards gender and social justice.

GPI's VISION is to be a leading sustainable feminist institution with critical consciousness and capacity for analysis on social and gender prejudices, committed to empowering girls into healthy, self-reliant and productive women for the achievement of positive changes and transformation of patriarchal values in Nigeria.

GPI's MISSION is to empower adolescent girls for social action through sexuality, human rights, life management and leadership skills training from a gender perspective.

GPI's Overall Objective are: to increase leadership and life management skills through providing a forum and safe space for girls to exchange ideas, seek solutions to their problems and receive support to develop.

To increase the awareness of adolescents, parents, guardians, teachers, media persons and the public on the issues of sexuality, gender and human rights of girls and women.

To reduce the social, cultural and religious practices, myths, patriarchal values and norms that violate the rights of the girl-child.

To increase the capacity of adolescent girls to overcome the challenges of growing up female in Nigeria and become catalysts for social change.

To increase the institutional capacity of GPI as a prime resource for the promotion of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) for adolescent girls from a gender perspective in Nigeria.

To increase policy advocacy capacity of stakeholders to advance the Sexuality, Human Rights and Sexual Health of adolescent girls in Nigeria.

FINDING HELP

What finding help means

Finding help involves providing or seeking assistance or support in order to find a remedy or relief from a problem, or make a situation more bearable.

Why seek for help?

1. It makes it easier for one to cope with problems/concerns
2. It gives solutions to problems/concerns
3. It gives an idea of where to go for additional help when it is needed
4. It relieves emotional trauma, especially when you share with someone
5. It can improve the quality of life.

People/ places you can seek for help

- Parents/guardians and other family members Counsellor-School guidance and counselling department
- Religious leaders
- Health care provider or practitioner
- Teachers
- Trusted experienced adult

- Law enforcement agents
- Social workers
 - Non-governmental organizations, e.g. Girls' Power Initiative, Positive Development Foundation, Pro-health International, Mother Against Child Abandonment, (MACA), Society For Family Health, Network To Curb Sexual Abuses on Girls and Women, etc.
- Specialist government institutions
 - Community members- Community- based organizations, e.g. Green Code, WYCUT, HOPE Worldwide Nigeria, etc.
- Government agencies/ministries, e.g. Ministries of Women Affairs and Justice
- Community health centres/posts
- General hospital
- Youth -friendly health centre
- Police station
- Fire service station
- Emergency Response Centre

Steps to take when you have a problem or concern

- Identify the concern/ problem
- Recognize that help is needed
- Keep calm, stay focused and try not to be nervous
- Look for a trusted adult, i.e. parent, teacher, guardian, counsellor, etc. and inform him/her
- If possible, seek help in company of trusted and supportive friends

- Wait for assistance to be provided; follow the directives of those providing the assistance

Barriers to finding help

- **Ignorance:** Most people are ignorant of the availability of help to their situation, or that their situation needs help.
- **Non-conducive environment:** Young people, or people generally who may be seeking for help need an environment that is conducive, where they can get all the attention there is, where there is privacy and they need to get the assurance that their problems are confidential.
- **Lack of adequate knowledge about available services:** Many are unaware that any help may be available: they may be aware of an agency, but may not know how it can be of help.
- **Inaccessibility of services:** Distance to be travelled to where the service centre is located, the cost of the service, restriction on use, etc., all make the service inaccessible.
- Some young people could find some adults very abusive and judgmental, or unapproachable. If so, they would find it difficult to approach such adults for help.

Situations that may require help

- The following situations may present a problem where help may be required
- Relationships
- Concerns about changes in the body
- Lack of shelter

- Sexual assault/abuse
- Loss of valuable items
- Unplanned pregnancy
- Drug/alcohol dependency
- Conflict
- Choosing a career
- Divorce/separation
- Bereavement
- Financial problem, etc.

1. Finding Help: When choosing a career

Making the right career choice is one of the most vital decisions of your life. To fulfill your dreams and ambitions, it is very important that you start your career path on the right note. There is no particular age or time to make your career choice.

You can start whenever you want, but practically, as soon as you understand and realize your responsibilities and ambitions in life, it becomes important to set out in the right direction. To help you take the right step, to follow the right career direction, here is a list of top tips for making the right career choice:

1. **Choose what YOU want:** Do not choose a career blindly because your parents think that you should opt for a particular career option. Don't go for a career similar to your best friend's simply because you don't want to lose contact with your friend. The consequence can be drastic.
2. **Follow your talents and dreams:** Your career should be based on your own talents and dreams. If you make a career based on your talents and dreams, then you will be enjoying and living your life fully. The simplest way to find the right career is to make a list of your interests, according to your own abilities and then find out all the career options related to your interests.
3. **Do practical research:** Once you are clear in your mind about the career options you can choose, it is the right time to do some practical research. Talk to people who are already in the profession. Ask them about their experiences and find out information regarding their career, in terms of educational qualification required, what they like best about their job, what are the skills required?, etc. Talking to the people who are already in the field of your interest, will definitely give a clear picture of your career. You will get all the details about the advantages and disadvantages of your chosen career, straight from the horse's mouth.
4. **Decide about what lifestyle you want:** Be honest to yourself from the very beginning and think about what type of life style you dream for your future. Will you be interested in jobs which

have day and night shifts? Are you ready to travel on regular basis? Will family responsibilities allow you to work at odd hours? Do you want a desk job? Do you want direct clientele - oriented profession? You need to ask yourself a number of questions before you opt for a career. Look for all the positive and negative aspects of your career option and then decide accordingly which one will suit you the best keeping in mind your future and family responsibilities.

5. Expand your knowledge: On regular basis, try to read books on different professions as it will help you to get the details of the various career options. And the more you know about the career path you want to walk into, the better it would be in making the right career choice.

6. Check with the career counsellor: Make an appointment with the career counsellor who will be able to guide you in the right direction.

Follow these tips and do not panic in choosing your career, believe in yourself, your dreams, and your talents;

choose accordingly and then simply zoom ahead in your life.

1. Finding Help: When sexually abused

Sexual abuse is when:

- You're being touched in a way you don't like without giving permission or consent
- You're being forced to have sex (intercourse)

- You're forced to look at sexual pictures or videos
- You're made to watch someone do something sexual
This can include someone flashing or exposing themselves to you
- You're made to do something sexual to someone that feels uncomfortable or wrong.

No matter what someone has told you, if this is happening to you, it is not your fault. No one has the right to do things to you that you don't like, even if the person is your boyfriend or girlfriend. It will take courage, but if you speak out about it, there are people who will listen to you and help you.

It doesn't matter who the person is that is making you do these things. The person is sexually abusing you. It is possible to be sexually abused by someone you know and love. This does not make what they are doing okay.

Who can sexually abuse young people?

You can't tell by looking at someone whether the person is likely to sexually abuse or not. Any person might be capable of sexually abusing someone, but it is more likely that sexual abuse would be by someone you know. The abuse might even be by someone you love and trust, like a member of your family. A person who sexually abuses can be male or female, old or young.

In such incident, you need to get help or risk having it haunt your life, if not immediately, then later. Sexual violence is a crime, no matter who commits it or where it happens. Don't be afraid to get help.

There are three important reasons why you should get help:

1. Stopping the abuse
2. Starting to get over what happen
3. Protecting other children and young people.

If you've been sexually abused there are services that can help.

You don't have to report the assault to police if you don't want to. Other services and organizations won't insist that you do. However, consider getting medical help as soon as possible because you may be at risk of pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections.

Steps to take if you are raped

1. Telling family and friends

If you've been raped, the first thing you may want to do is tell a family member or a friend. They are the people closest to you and they will usually listen to you, understand how you're feeling *and taking the next step* with you.

However, you may have mixed feelings about telling your friends and family. They may give you just the help you need, but sometimes where they may not be so helpful, they may blame you or themselves.

The important thing to remember is that you can choose who to tell and what to tell. And anyone you tell should react in a way that helps you, rather than worrying about their own feelings. You are the one who has been assaulted and you need to focus your energies on yourself.

When rape incident occurs, remember to go to where you are, without taking your bath, and go with evidence like torn clothes for proper diagnosis and documentation at the police station and hospital.

2. Seeing a doctor

If you have been raped you may want to have a medical check-up by a doctor. The doctor can begin tests for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), such as HIV/AIDS and may also be able to give you medication to prevent a possible pregnancy.

If it makes you feel more comfortable, you can ask for a female

doctor to do the check-up. It is also your right to have a support person there during any part of the examination. If you decide to report the assault to the police, a medical check-up may be needed to collect forensic evidence (which may later be used in court). The risk of getting a disease as a result of sexual assault is fairly low. But it is important that you have the tests at regular intervals to check whether you've caught a disease. The tests are all free and confidential. It's important to visit a doctor in order to prevent a possible pregnancy. A doctor can give you medication to prevent pregnancy after the sexual assault. The medication can work up to 72 hours after the sexual assault but the earlier you take it the better.

3. Reporting to the police

It can be a hard decision whether or not to report a sexual assault, but the most important thing is to do what's best for you. Take the time to think about what you want to do.

There are many reasons why women may or may not tell the police. But whatever the decision and the reason, remember you cannot and should not be forced against your will.

If you decide to report the assault to the police, the first thing you will have to do is make a formal statement. This means telling the police in detail what happened to you. The statement is usually taken by a police officer who is specially trained to respond to people who have been sexually assaulted.

You can ask to have a female officer take your statement if it makes you feel more comfortable. If there is no female police

officer at your local station, you can ask for one to be brought in from another station. Once you have made your statement the police would then decide what charges, if any, should be laid.

Stress; Time Management and Young People

I**ntroduction:** It is often rightly said, “time and tide wait for none” An individual should, therefore, understand the value of time for him to succeed in all aspects of life. People who waste time are the ones who fail to create an identity of their own. Ask yourself which activity is more important and how much time should be allocated to same? Know which work should be done earlier and which can be done a little later.

What is time management?

- Time management refers to managing time effectively so that the right time is allocated to the right activity.
- Effective time management allows individuals to assign specific time slots to activities as per their importance.
- Time management refers to making the best use of time as time is always limited.
- Time management refers to making the best possible use of available time.
- Managing time well enables an individual to do the right

thing at the right time.

- Time management plays a pivotal role in one's personal as well as professional life.

Time management plays a very important role not only in organizations but also in our personal lives.

Time management includes:

- i. Effective planning
- ii. Setting goals and objectives
- iii. Setting deadlines
- iv. Delegation of responsibilities
- v. Prioritizing activities as per their importance
- vi. Spending the right time on the right activity.

- **Effective planning**

Plan your day well in advance. Prepare a To-Do-List or a “TASK PLAN.” Jot down the important activities that need to be done on a single day against the time that should be allocated to each activity. High priority work should come on top, followed by those that are not of much importance at the moment. Complete pending tasks one by one. Do not begin fresh work unless you have finished your previous task. Tick the ones you have already completed. Ensure you finish the tasks within the stipulated time frame.

- **Setting goals and objectives**

Working without goals and targets in an organization, school, home or personal life would be similar to a

situation where the captain of the ship loses his way in the sea. Yes, you would be lost. Set targets for yourself and make sure they are realistic ones and achievable.

Setting deadlines

Set deadlines for yourself and strive hard to complete tasks ahead of the deadlines. Do not wait for your superiors to ask you every time. Learn to take ownership of work. One person who can best set the deadlines is you yourself. Ask yourself how much time needs to be devoted to a particular task and for how many days. Use a planner to mark the important dates against the set deadlines.

Delegation of responsibilities

Learn to say “NO” at assigned responsibilities. Don't do everything on your own. There are other people as well. One should not accept something which one knows is difficult to handle. The roles and responsibilities must be delegated as per interest and specialization of employees/persons for them to finish tasks within deadlines. A person who does not have any knowledge about something needs more time than someone who knows the work well.

Prioritizing tasks

Prioritize the tasks in terms of their importance and urgency. Know the difference between important and urgent work. Identify which tasks should be done within a

day, which one should be done within a month and so on. Tasks which are most important should be done earlier.

■ **Spending the right time on the right activity**

Develop the habit of doing the right thing at the right time. Work done at the wrong time is not of much use. Don't waste a complete day on something which can be done in an hour or so. Also, keep some time separate for your personal calls or for checking updates on Facebook or Twitter. After all, as human being you need time for social bonding.

Benefits of good time management

* **Time management makes an individual punctual and disciplined:** One learns to work when it is actually required as a result of effective time management. To make the judicious use of time, individuals should prepare a "TASK PLAN" or a "TO-DO" list at the start of the day to jot down activities which need to be done in a particular day as per their importance and urgency against the specific time slots assigned to each activity. A task plan gives individuals a sense of direction at the workplace. An individual who knows how his day will look like would eventually work accordingly, leading to an increased output.

It makes one to become more organized: Keeping the things at their proper places minimizes the time which goes on unnecessary search for documents, important files, folders, stationery items and so on. For better time management, individuals should keep their workstations, study zones,

cubicles, meeting areas clean and organized. People would learn to manage things well as a result of time management.

Effective time management boosts an individual's morale and makes him confident: As a result of good time management, individuals can accomplish tasks within the stipulated time frame, making them popular in their organization as well as amongst their peers. People who understand the value of time are the ones who would manage to stand apart from the crowd. Individuals who finish off work on time are looked up to by others and are always the centre of attention, everywhere.

Individuals who stick to a time plan are the ones who realize their goals and objectives within the shortest possible time span: Managing time effectively therefore, helps employees to meet targets, way ahead of deadlines and finish off task just when it is required.

Effective time management can help an employee to reach the pinnacle of success quickly and to stay firm at the top for a longer duration. An employee who works just for the sake of working would fail to create an impression and cannot be ever taken seriously at work. Effective time management plays a pivotal role in increasing an individual's productivity. Output increases substantially when people manage their time well.

- **Better time management helps in better planning and eventually, better forecasting:** Individuals learn to plan things well and know where exactly they stand regarding future plans.

- **Research says that individuals who accomplish tasks on time are less prone to stress and anxiety:** Remember, there is no point in wasting time and cribbing later. Finish off pending work on time and then you would have ample time for your friends, relatives and family members.
- **Time management enables an individual to prioritize tasks and activities at workplace:** It is foolish to stay overburdened. Do not accept anything and everything that comes your way.
- Time management helps an individual to adopt a planned approach in life.

Time management skills

The judicious use of time by an individual to succeed in all aspects of life refers to Time Management. Time management not only helps individuals to make the best use of time but also ensures successful accomplishment of tasks within the stipulated time frame.

It is essential to do the right thing at the right time to earn respect at work. People who do not value time fail to make a mark and are never taken seriously.

Let us go through some skills necessary for effective time management:

1. Stay organized

- The workstation must be kept clean and organized.
- Keeping important files organized helps you retrieve them immediately and thus, saves time which goes on unnecessary searching. Staple important documents together. Put important

documents in folders. Keep files in their respective drawers with labels on top of each.

- Do not keep stacks of files and heaps of paper on your desk.
Throw away whatever you don't need.
- Keep stationery items and your personal belongings like books, cell phone, car keys, clothes/uniform, and wallet at their proper places.
- Develop the habit of using an organizer. Plan your day well in advance.
- Never write on loose papers. Keep a notepad and pen handy.

2. Learn to prioritize

- Set your priorities. Do not work just for the sake of working.
- Prepare a “Task Plan” or a “To-Do” list the moment you settle down for work.
- High priority tasks must be attended to immediately. Do not start your day with something which does not require your immediate attention.
- Tick off completed tasks. It gives you a sense of relief and satisfaction.
- An employee must understand the difference between high and low priority tasks and also between important and urgent work.
- Do not indulge in irrelevant activities. You will waste your entire day and the output would be zero.
- Be clear about your roles and responsibilities at the workplace, home, church and school.

3. Be punctual and disciplined

- Being punctual helps you complete tasks, way ahead of

deadline.

- Avoid taking too many leaves from work. Such an attitude is completely unprofessional.
- Make sure you are there at your desk, five minutes before your actual time.
- Strive hard to complete tasks on time. Do not keep assignments pending or wait for the last minute.

4. Take ownership of work

- Do not work only when your boss is around. Work for yourself. The dedication has to come from within.
- Be responsible for your work and learn to accept your mistakes.
- If you have accepted something, then it becomes your responsibility to complete it within the allotted time slot.
- As a student, learn to read every day, do not wait until it is examination period before you start reading as this may cause some stress on you while trying to cover unattended assignments.

5. Be a little diplomatic

- Do not accept everything which comes your way, a polite “NO”, in the beginning will save your reputation later.
- The employees must be delegated responsibilities depending on their specialization and background. This way, they would take more interest and eventually finish the work on time.

6. Be more focused

- Be a little focused and concentrate on your work. Do not waste time by loitering and gossiping around.
- Do not take long personal calls at work. Finish off work and leave for the day on time. You will have ample time to catch up with your friends or log on to social networking sites. Playing games while you are at work/school is something which is not expected of a professional.
- As a student be more focused on your books and assignments than loitering around the school premises and playing games during school hour.

7. Be reasonable

- No individual can work for the whole day. Do include some time in your daily schedule to speak to your team member sitting next to you.
- Do not over burden yourself.
- Create time for extra curricular activities like football, dancing, drawing, singing, competitions, etc.

Stress Management

Stress can be both positive and negative, and unique for each of us. Stress is actually good for us as it helps us to develop. If we do not experience stress in our lives, we may not learn and develop.

Stress becomes a problem when it begins to affect us physiologically, having a negative effect on our health and lifestyle. One definition of negative stress is when there is an imbalance between perceived demands made on us and our perceived ability to cope with what is

expected of us.

Some signs of negative stress

Irritability and depression

Anxiety

Dryness of throat/mouth

Nausea

Breathlessness

Heart palpitations

Inability to concentrate

Feelings of weakness/dizziness

Nervous laughter

Easily startled by small sounds

Crying

Trembling hands

Stuttering/speech problems

Insomnia

Sweating

Migraine headaches

Pre-menstrual tension/missed periods

Back pain

Neck pain

Loss of appetite

Nightmares

Fatigue.

Short-term physical symptoms of stress

Faster heart beat

Rapid breathing
Increased sweating
Cold skin

Cold hands and feet
Tense muscles
Feeling sick
Butterflies in stomach
Dry mouth
Desire to urinate
Diarrhoea.

Long-term physical symptoms of stress

Change in appetite
Feelings of intense/long-term tiredness
Aches and pains
Frequent illnesses such as back pain, digestive problems, headaches, skin eruptions, colds, etc.

Long-term stress: Internal symptoms

Worry or anxiety, confusion
Inability to make decisions
Feeling ill
Feeling overwhelmed by events
Mood changes
Feeling out of control
Increased lethargy
Sleeping difficulties
Increase in smoking/drinking
Changes in eating habits
Reliance on medication.

Behavioural symptoms of long - term stress

Talking too loud/too fast

Yawning

Fiddling and twitching

Changing work patterns

Neglect of personal appearance

Increased truancy

Being unreasonably negative

Making more mistakes

Making irrational judgments

Being more forgetful

Difficulty in making decisions

Inability to concentrate

Being more accident prone

Bad moods; being irritable

Becoming defensive

Being critical

Aggression

Irrationality Overreaction.

Causes of stress in school

Too much/too little work

Exams/tests

Time pressures and deadlines

Having to perform beyond/below your experience or your perceived abilities

Having to overcome unnecessary obstacles

Lack of relevant information, support or advice

Lack of clear objectives

Unclear role expectations

Demands from pupils or teachers

Technology

Lack of resources/equipment.

Ways of managing stress

Talk to a friend or an adult about any worries

Do some physical exercise each day

Listen to music that you really enjoy

Make sure you have some humour and fun each day

Practise positive thinking every day: "I can..." "I will ...". Eat and sleep well. Your body needs energy, rest and relaxation lead to repairs, in order to cope better with stress. At the end of each day, check the successes you have had: the good times with your friends, etc.

Make a list of things that help you relax and repeat some each day.

Stress-busting tips

Learn to say 'No'.

Smile inwardly when someone is nasty to you. Think of *their* hurtful words as *their* problem.

Give yourself a treat regularly - go to recreational centres.

listen to music, meet up with a friend for a chat, go for a walk.

Make time each day to switch off and spend time with family and friends.

Always have something special to look forward to - a fun planned at the weekend or annual holiday.

On Friday evenings, go out and enjoy yourself, instead of slumping in front of the TV.

Get to bed at a reasonable time.

Watch your diet and food intake.

Take full responsibility for how you feel rather than blame other people. Don't say, 'You are annoying me.' Say, 'I feel annoyed when you repeatedly tap your pencil on the desk.' Be positive - imagine that your glass is half full, not halfempty.

Beating stress means changing your usual habits for something much better and more positive.

The benefits of lowering stress levels are huge, you will have improved health, more energy and your skin and hair will glow!

Strategy... 1 minute First Aid stress management

Feeling a little stressed? Try this 1-minute First Aid de-stressor. Sit still on a chair. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath in through your nose, while saying, 'I am calm', in your mind. Hold your breath for 3 seconds before letting it out through your mouth and saying, 'I'm in complete control'. Repeat this exercise for *just one minute*. *Open your eyes* and observe how you feel.

Rights and Responsibilities

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the General Assembly on the 29th of November, 1989. In order to improve the quality of life of children worldwide, enhance their dignity and protect inalienable rights and ultimately mobilise and focus on global attention on their physical, mental, moral and spiritual development, UNICEF organized a World Summit for children from 29th -30th , September, 1990 at United Nations headquarters in New York.

Seventy-one heads of state and government, including Nigeria attended and signed a declaration and a plan of action which identified specific programmes that would impact directly on children.

The world summit led to the development of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and currently over 198 countries, including Nigeria has ratified the convention. It is one of the most widely signed international treaties. As a follow up to the convention the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at its heads of state summit in Addis Ababa in 1990, adopted a charter on the rights and welfare of

the African Child.

This charter which is derived from the United Nations convention takes cognizance of the socio-cultural peculiarities of the African Child. So, while the UN convention looks at the rights from the global perspective, the OAU charter looks at the rights from the African perspective. In order to mobilize sufficient attention, the OAU subsequently proclaimed in Abuja, 1991, the 1990s as the "Decade of the African Child" and set aside June 16, every year, as the Day of the African Child.

Who is a child?

According to UNICEF, a child is anyone between the ages of 0-18years

What is a right?

A right is defined by UNICEF, (1995) as "a natural due, a moral claim and a legal entitlement."

What are children's rights?

Every child and young person has rights, no matter who they are or where they live, and regardless of class, ethnic group, religious values or sex. Nearly every government in the world has promised to protect and fulfill these rights, yet most of them are still violated worldwide.

Children's rights are the human rights of children with particular attention to those aspects that would help children to survive,

develop and participate in their community equally and actively.

Such can also be defined with particular attention to the rights of special protection and care provided for the young, including their right to association with both biological parents, human identity as well as the basic needs for food, universal state-paid education, health care and criminal laws appropriate for the age and development of the child. Interpretations of children's rights vary in different countries depending on their culture and values; they range from allowing children the capacity for independent action, to ensuring children being physically, mentally and emotionally free from abuse, though what constitutes "abuse" is a matter of debate in various societies.

The basic principles of children's rights are:

- Every child has the right to life and to be allowed to survive and develop
- Every child is entitled to a name, family and nationality
- Every child is free to belong to any association or assembly
- Every child has the right to express opinions and freely communicate them on any issue, subject to restriction under the law
- Every child is entitled to protection from any act that interferes with her/his privacy, honour and reputation
- Every child is entitled to adequate rest, recreation (leisure and play) according to her/his age and culture
- Every child is entitled to receive compulsory basic education and equal opportunity for higher education, depending on

individual ability

- Every child is entitled to good health, protection from illness and proper medical attention for survival, personal growth and development.
- Every child must be protected from indecent and inhuman treatment through sexual exploitation, drug abuse, child labour, torture, maltreatment and neglect.
- No child should suffer any ethnic discrimination, irrespective of ethnic origin, birth, colour, sex, language, religious, political and social beliefs, status or disability.

Responsibilities of a child

Inasmuch as children have rights, they also have responsibilities towards such rights. It is not a world of getting everything without doing anything to show how important these rights are. The various responsibilities are:

1. Every child has responsibilities towards his/her family and society, the Nigerian state and other legally recognized communities, nationally and internationally.
2. Subject to his/her age and ability, such other limitations as may be contained in this and any other law, the child shall have a duty to:
 - a) Work for the cohesion of her/his family
 - b) Respect his/her parents, superiors and elders at all times and assist them in times of need
 - c) To serve Nigeria, placing his/her physical and

intellectual abilities at its service.

- d) To contribute to the moral well-being of the society.
 - e) To preserve and strengthen social and national solidarity
 - f) To preserve and strengthen the independence and integrity of Nigeria
 - g) To respect the ideals of freedom, equality, humaneness and justice for all persons
 - h) To preserve and strengthen Nigeria's, Africa's and human cultural values in his relations with other members of the society in the spirit of tolerance, dialogue and unity
 - i) To contribute to the best of his/her abilities and at all levels, to the solidarity of the African people and the human race.
3. Parents, guardians, institutions, persons and authorities having responsibilities for the care, maintenance, upbringing, education, training, socialization, employment and rehabilitation of children in their care, such as will equip the children to secure their *assimilation, appreciation and observance* of the responsibilities set out in the convention.

As young people you are the parents and leaders of the future, your contributions will determine what kind of world could be secured for your future.

Young people and public speaking skills

Introduction: Giving a public speech at any age can be tough. Having to give one when you are young can be even more daunting. Learning adequate public speaking skills can really help a child through life. It builds confidence and helps young people to become better at communicating. The ability to communicate effectively is one of the pertinent skills needed by young people because the act, if continually practised, will lead to perfection.

What are public speaking skills?

Public speaking is the process of speaking to a group of people in a structured, deliberate manner, intended to inform, *influence*, or entertain the listener. The purpose of public speaking can range from simply transmitting information, to motivating people to act. Public speaking can be a powerful tool to use for purposes such as motivation, influence, persuasion, informing and translation.

Public speaking is something we cannot avoid in life. The

situation will arise when called upon to stand up and speak our minds out. Public speaking is one of the most feared activities in young

people's lifetime. Through practice, a young person can improve his\her public speaking skills.

Types of public speaking skills

Knowing the different types of public speaking will enable you to choose a style best suited to your audience and for accomplishing the goal of your speech.

- 1. Persuasive public speaking:** it aims to shift the opinions or behaviours of the audience to align with the message the speaker is delivering. Debates and speeches given at certain forums use this method of public speaking.
- 2. Story-telling public speaking:** being able to tell a story in an entertaining and engaging way. Your goal is to capture the audience attention with your story.
- 3. Informative public speaking:** if you specialize in a skill or trade, you may need to speak in ways as to educate and inform people of your job. skills and the procedures you might use to perform some type of service.
- 4. Poetry public speaking skills:** whether you read or recite it... many people love to hear poetry in clubs and at social events.
- 5. News casting/broadcasting public speaking:** this is

mostly a professional kind of public speaking that involves the media; i.e. radio, newspaper, magazine, television and internet.

6. **Entertaining public speaking skills:** the purpose here is solely to entertain people, make them laugh or cry. These often involve narratives and other types of speeches to convey information or a character's thought to the audience.
7. **Ceremonial public speaking:** at a funeral or wedding, award ceremony, graduation, swearing-in and at other times in which people are honoured, remembered, or some sort of important events that need to be witnessed; there are always people who speak at such events.

What to consider when planning public speaking

Who: Before you carry out a conversation, “who are you going to talk to”, should be the number one question you must have in mind. You must know your audience, their background, values and common interest that may help you in your presentation. It will also help you to know the people who are going to listen to your presentation.

Where: Knowing the venue and being there early is half the battle. Try to get a feel of the place. Stand on the stage or wherever you are supposed to deliver your speech. Being early at the venue will give you some time to prepare and compose yourself. Never forget to check the sound systems if you need to make use of them.

What: What do you want to say or speak about? If you are

speaking to educate or inform your audience, make sure that you have accurate and updated facts in your presentation. It is not enough that you have prepared and have memorized your speech; you should also know what you are talking about, having made a thorough research about it.

How: How can you deliver your message across? A sound language skill is not enough to ensure success as a public speaker. Be sure to enunciate your words because poor pronunciation weighs much in evaluating your presentation. Visual aids are useful and helpful to get your message across. But the best aids are your expression, hand gestures and body language. When practising your speech, try to do it in front of a mirror to see how you look. Make sure that you have a solid opening, a good transition and a memorable conclusion.

When: When is the best time to speak and stop? Your pause and stops also play an important role in delivering your points across. Know when to start speaking and when to stop. Be aware of how long your speech is and tailor it to suit your audience.

Why: Why should they listen to you? Why were you chosen to speak in public? It may be because of your educational background, your work, experience or status in the community. Whatever it is, they want something from you. Identify the reason and prepare your speech to answer the audience expectations.

Public speaking need not to be a painful experience that you would rather forget and bury in the past. Knowing what you want to say and saying it right is the perfect equation.

Reasons why people fear to speak in public

There are a number of reasons why people are afraid of public speaking. It is such a great fear that is actually in the top ten greatest fears of all people. Not everyone is afraid of it for the same reason though. So, here are the top ten reasons why people are afraid to speak to large groups.

- 1. Failure:** Most people are afraid that if they speak in public they will fail in some way. They are afraid of failure and therefore, try to avoid it, because when they think, they see it coming. Most people who are afraid of failure are also afraid that people will make fun of them when they fail.
- 2. Insecurity:** Most people feel insecure when everyone is staring at them or sometimes just as bad when one or two people are not staring at them. When you are standing in front of a large group of people it can feel as if you are exposing your inner truths to them, even when you aren't saying something important.
- 3. Perfectionism:** Most people are so obsessed with making sure that it is perfect that they can't even get around to performing the speech in front of people.
- 4. Stress:** Some people worry so much about the stress it will cause them that they would eventually worry themselves into the stress they worried about. This only makes the worry and the stress stronger next time they go to speak in public.
- 5. Lack of confidence:** Most people do not have a lot of confidence in themselves. There is a fear that they simply cannot speak when they get in front of so many people.
- 6. Disabilities:** People who view themselves as having a disability,

whether it is or not, will often become too self-conscious and worried about speaking in public.

7. **Too many people:** Some people are just afraid of the sheer number of people who are going to be in attendance. This usually is also connected to a fear of failure or a fear of judgment.
8. **Judgment:** Most people are afraid that others are judging them badly. Even when this is not true, this can be one of the hardest fears to overcome because no amount of denial by the other people can make this fear be proven false.
9. **Lack of preparation:** Some people are afraid that they don't have enough training to prepare a speech, or they don't know enough about the material to speak on, and therefore have a fear of public speaking.
10. **Lack of knowledge:** There are those people who really don't know what to do, how to prepare, or how to practise, and this can cause a serious feeling of insecurity.

All of these fears can be overcome if an individual understands the importance of public speaking.

Importance of public speaking

Don't ever make the mistake of thinking that public speaking isn't important. It would be silly as saying you don't need water and food in life. Of course, these things are important. And if you think public speaking is important only in obscure or abstract ways, it's time to think again. Indeed, learning how to become an effective public speaker can be the key difference between success and failure in your life at home,

school, at workplace and in your community. But despite this fact, young people are always asking themselves and others, “Why is public speaking important? What's the use? What's the purpose?”

Young people need to know that there are multitudes of reasons that public speaking is important. Take a good look at the handful of them, collected for you, and then ask yourself why you think public speaking is so vital in the society.

- By learning how to speak effectively in the public, you'll be able to increase your own **self-confidence**. **Since public** speaking is one of the most prevalent fears in the world, by enabling yourself to master this difficult skill; you'll have the confidence that you need to meet the great future challenges. Public speaking helps you to become comfortable with people around you, including strangers. Without it, it'll be nothing to smile and shake hands and meet other people in more personal and less threatening circumstances.

It's important because at some point in life, just about everyone will be required to involve themselves in one type of public speaking or another. Accepting this fact quickly and preparing for it accordingly will help you wind up a step ahead of your competitors at work, home, school and around the environment. In fact, both undergraduates and graduates place oral communication at the top list of skills that were relevant to overall school success.

Using public speaking effectively will allow you to make a difference in your academic, career, among peers and in your community and perhaps, even the world. Because the skills you'll glean by learning the art of public speaking can boost your performance in any arena. By

sharing information with others, you're better able to increase the impact of your hopes, dreams, desires and goals for your life and the world around you.

Often the wrong perception is that only people involved in sales, marketing, mass media need to learn public speaking skills. However, the truth is that individuals from all walks of life have to speak in public at one time or the other. Once you improve in your public speaking skills, a marked improvement will be seen in your interpersonal skills, which in turn, will help you maintain a healthy relationship with your friends and members of your family.

- Public speaking skills give you an opportunity to accomplish great things. Because many of your competitors are afraid to speak in public, this will become your secret weapon as you realize that every time you speak in public it will boost your confidence and your list of opportunities expands.

Ways to improve your public speaking skills

1. Prepare: You have to know your material. Not just talking about, or memorizing words and facts. But really KNOW your materials. You can't predict what is going to happen that might cause you to get sidetracked. Murphy's Law dictates that something will happen. And when it does, it's best to know where you are. If you know the information well enough, you can get back on track. This has helped many public speakers a number of times on stage. If you memorize just a big blurb of stuff and you don't break it down, you'll be lost in a sea of information, if you lose your bearing. If you get lost within a chunk, that sea becomes a lake and you can find your way back to

shore fairly easily. Know your materials!

- 2. Rehearse correctly:** Most people don't realize this, but nerves have a serious effect on how you speak in front of people. Nearly everyone who gets nervous when speaking in front of people will speak faster than they normally would. This can lead to you not being understood and most certainly nervous. To avoid this pitfall, rehearse your speech more slowly than you would normally. That doesn't mean speak very slowly. That means just be more at ease and relaxed when you rehearse. That way, when the nerves kick in, you will most likely be speaking at a normal pace.
- 3. Hydrate yourself:** Most would think this a crazy thing to do before speaking. But you know why so many speakers keep water with them when they speak? Nerves dry up your mouth. And when your mouth dries up, you will have a harder time articulating your thoughts. To that end, make sure you drink plenty of water before and during your speech. Now this doesn't mean down it like you've not had water to your lips in days. If you do that, you'll most certainly need to pause in the middle of your speech to visit the bathroom. Either that or you'll REALLY embarrass yourself.
- 4. Relax before you go on:** This is another one of those tactics that most people don't think will work. It does. One of an actor's biggest jobs is finding jobs. To find jobs as an actor you have to audition. Auditioning is one of the single most nerve wracking things you will ever do. But how does one relax? By not obsessing over what you are about to do. If you go over and over your speech before you go on, you will be in a constant state of reminding yourself that you are about to make yourself nervous.

Instead, do something to get your mind off what you are about to do. Read a book or play a video game, to relax your heart beat.

- 5. Rest well:** The night before you are going on the biggest interview or speak in public, relax, go to the gym, catch a movie, read, or anything that is going to help you get a good night's sleep. Don't medicate yourself to get sleep. If you do, you'll wake up feeling worse than if you hadn't slept.
- 6. Dress to impress:** There are two reasons for this: Superstition and looks. When an outfit seemed to help you get a gig, it is better you would use it more than not. But how does this really help? You choose a speaking, interviewing, rallying outfit that makes you look good (both to yourself and others) and when you feel like you look good, your confidence will soar. Bring in the help you find that ensures just the right look that makes you KNOW you look good. The confidence you gain by this will greatly improve your speaking.
- 7. Articulate:** Have you ever listened to someone speak and was hard to understand? What do you do after a while? You tune them out. You find them uninteresting and assume they're not really knowledgeable about their subject. You can be the most brilliant person alive, but if your audience can't understand you, you will lose them. There are exceptions to this but for the most part, speakers who articulate are thought of much more highly than those who are not.
- 8. Be heard:** This goes hand- in- hand with number 7. If you can't be heard, you won't be heard. If you have a softer voice, you know you're going to have trouble. And most people tend to speak more

softly when they're speaking in front of a crowd. (Again, nerves can do many things.) Here's a way to help you out with this. When you rehearse your speech, do it in front of someone, but have them stand in the back of the room. Make sure they let you know if you can't be heard. You can even make a game of it by giving them a nerve gun and have them shoot you when they can't hear you.

9. Warm up: Your voice is like any other muscle in your body: You use it cold and it won't work well. If you roll out of bed, get dressed, drink your coffee, and go give your speech, you're going to have issues. Instead, make sure your vocal muscles are ready to work. When you give speeches, you are speaking for much longer periods at a time than you normally do. If you don't prepare yourself you can wind up with a sore throat (or sounding like you just smoked a carton of cigarette). Two of the best ways to warm your voice up

are by humming (single low- to midrange tones are best or simple melodies or scales) and by doing tongue twisters. If you need a good tongue twister to really get yourself ready try “The big black bug bled blue-black blood.” Repeat that for a while and you'll be ready to knock 'em over!

10. Don't fill the void: How many times have you heard a speaker or interviewed someone for a job only to turn them off because they filled the space between thoughts with sounds or words? You know the “I'm... ummmm... talking... Ummmm...!” This sounds horribly unprofessional. Instead of filling your voids with grunts, groans, and signs of weakness, fill them with thought- filled, connected silence.

Believe it or not, those pauses aren't as long as you think. And when your audience (be it a single person or a crowd) sees that you are still connected to them, even between thoughts, you will keep their rapt attention. In other words, don't drift off with ummm...errors ...uhhhh... eeeee...sounds or words between your thoughts. Hold your listeners' attention.

Conclusion

There are many benefits of public speaking as it's a great way to gain exposure, self-confidence and success. Every great speaker started out as a poor one, what made them a success was their willingness to take chance, try again, and view every opportunity as a learning experience to becoming great. Failure is having a goal and allowing fear to prevent the step. Take a step towards becoming comfortable speaking in public today; your increase in success awaits you.

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