

*ZINDAGII SHOISTA*  
**LIVING WITH DIGNITY**  
**WORKSHOP MANUAL**



**Part 1:** Social empowerment



**WhatWorks**  
TO PREVENT VIOLENCE  
A Global Programme To Prevent  
Violence Against Women and Girls



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The views expressed in this manual are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the UK government.

This manual drew on the third edition of the South African adaptation of *Stepping Stones*.<sup>1</sup> Zindagii Shoista employs the format and exercise style of this manual and built on many of its strengths, but constitutes a substantial departure, as it is designed to be used by families with older and younger generations and includes a lot of material that is not included in the original edition of *Stepping Stones*. The authors are, however, very grateful for the opportunity to draw on its material in the process of writing this document.

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<sup>1</sup> *Stepping Stones* is a training manual for improving sexual and reproductive health communication and relationship skills written by Alice Welbourn (A. Welbourn, *Stepping Stones*, Oxford: Strategies for Hope, 1995). The manual was initially adapted for South Africa by Rachel Jewkes and Andrea Cornwall, with Mzikazi Nduna and Nwabisa Jama contributing to the second and third editions.

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# Introduction

## What is Zindagii Shoista (Зиндагии шоиста)?

Zindagii Shoista is a workshop series designed to help promote harmony within families and reduce violence. By considering wider family dynamics when working with local communities, it aims to create a socio-economic environment that enables women to enjoy greater protection from sexual and gender-based violence, with a focus on violence against women and girls. The workshop comprises two parts:

1. Social empowerment
2. Economic empowerment and livelihoods

The workshops address questions of gender, relationships, family conflict, violence and communication. When family members are in conflict or a family member is abused, this can affect all members of that family. In the workshops, participants are encouraged to recognise that relationships between husbands and wives are embedded in the broader context of the family and the community in which we live. These strongly influence how we act, the possibilities open to us and our ability to lead lives that are safe and happy. Knowledge is important, but to make changes in our lives, we need to understand what affects our behaviour and that of the people around us, and we need certain skills to be able to better communicate with our families and the community.

Zindagii Shoista workshops provide opportunities for participants to examine their values and attitudes towards gender and relationships within the family, to build their knowledge on health and to develop skills to help them communicate effectively. The workshops are based on participatory learning approaches, which take into account that people learn better when they are able to discuss and decide things for themselves, rather than just receiving lectures. The workshops are designed for men and women, for the young and elderly. Each session has been designed to build on previous sessions and so the manual is intended to be used in its entirety with a group of participants who work through all the sessions.

## How is Zindagii Shoista different from other methodologies?

Zindagii Shoista is unique in that it:

- focuses on skills building: the workshops help to build participants' critical reflection, communication, relationship and negotiation skills;
- employs participatory learning approaches: no didactic teaching (classroom style); participants' existing knowledge is explored, affirmed and supplemented;
- is flexible: many of the exercises have been used successfully in global regions and with all age groups; participants themselves determine the focus of each exercise and tailor it to their lives and culture;
- focuses on gender: the workshops are designed to be a gender transformative intervention, enabling participants to reflect on who they are as men and women, what ideas they have about how men and women should act, how they relate to the other gender and how fair this is; the Zindagii Shoista programme promotes gender equity and helps participants explore how their relations could be more fair and equitable;
- focuses on communication: communication about sensitive matters is often difficult and so the workshops

- endeavour to provide skills that help participants express what they want to say, even when it comes to difficult subjects, in a way that is assertive but not threatening to other people; and
- places an emphasis on empowerment: the workshops show participants how to decide for themselves what they can do to improve their relationships and their lives. In this way, it gives participants skills that can be applied in areas of life far beyond the scope of the material discussed in the programme.

## Using Zindagii Shoista

### The manual

This manual outlines the Zindagii Shoista programme. Each session is intended to build on the previous ones. It is important to follow the sequence of the exercises in the sessions and not to use the manual like a recipe book, picking and choosing exercises. The earlier exercises build up to working through some difficult issues. Missing the earlier exercises might make it challenging for participants to cope well with the later, more confronting exercises. Missing the later exercises would mean that participants would lose out on acquiring key skills to help them put their knowledge and ideas into practice.

The programme aims to enable individuals, their families and their communities to change their behaviour through the exercises. The manual is based on the assumption that family and community-wide change is best achieved through a personal commitment for this from each of its members. This demands some effort from each participant involved in the workshops and, as explained below, participants are strongly encouraged to make a commitment to attend all the sessions.

### Facilitating Zindagii Shoista

Conducting Zindagii Shoista training requires a number of skills. These include: experience in participatory learning approaches, facilitation, communication and counselling skills, gender and sexuality awareness, open-mindedness, creativity, imagination and humour. This manual was written for people who have these skills and who work with local groups. However, running Zindagii Shoista workshops is about more than just having the right skills. It is also crucial that facilitators have the time – and institutional support – to run the workshops over a period of a few weeks.

Active facilitation of Zindagii Shoista is vital. As a facilitator you must summarise and draw conclusions from each exercise and enable participants to summarise what they learned in each session. You must also be able to challenge the participants. The key to building participants' knowledge through a participatory approach is being able to question what is said in a way that makes participants think, rather than just saying "you are wrong". It is very important to do this, otherwise the group environment can potentially reinforce unhelpful attitudes or popular myths. The order of the exercises is designed to help with this, as it is best to draw on the ideas and principles discussed in earlier sessions to help participants question what is raised in the later sessions.

Ideally before you begin working with this manual, you should attend a training course. If that is not possible, it is important to work through the material even if it seems familiar to you. Begin by reading the entire manual, together with the colleagues that you will work with to run the workshops. Then try out the exercises on each other, going through the sequence that the manual suggests.

This programme is designed to challenge people's (including our own) attitudes and behaviours towards themselves and others. You are likely to find this rather confronting. You may also feel nervous about things going wrong or not going according to plan. Going through the manual beforehand will therefore help you work through some of your worries, and also alert you to any areas that might be difficult for the community and any challenges that may arise. Practising the exercises as if you were a participant will give you a chance to discover the effect that they have and how it feels to experience them first-hand, which should make you a more effective facilitator.

## **Training facilitators**

It is recommended to train facilitators to conduct the Zindagii Shoista workshops. An ideal training programme should last about 10 days and should be structured as follows:

Days 1–3: Facilitators to go through the entire Zindagii Shoista programme as participants.

Days 4–7: Background information on the core areas covered by the programme should be provided so that facilitators can gain expertise in these, which is essential for authoritatively facilitating the sessions and answering any questions that arise. During this time:

- have further discussions on gender inequity and gender relations to build understanding of gender-based violence, laws related to this, and services and sources of help;
- build knowledge on the health issues covered in the workshops;
- encourage non-judgemental attitudes among facilitators (it may be useful to invite guest speakers to talk about difficult issues such as becoming divorced, living as a divorced woman, being a widow, abandonment by a husband or infertility); and
- build participatory facilitation skills.

Days 7–10: Facilitators should go through the programme again and each take turns to be the facilitator of different sessions with their colleagues. They should be given feedback and guidance on their facilitation skills and they should use this time as a chance to discuss how the work will be organised and the sources of information required to support problem solving in the groups.

## **Participants and groups**

### **Groups**

Zindagii Shoista is designed to be used for small groups of peers, not for open meetings. As good practice has been shown repeatedly, people share and learn best from talking first with those who are most similar to them. If I am an old man, I am most likely to talk openly with other old men. They are my peer group. Similarly, if I am a young woman, my peer group will be other young women. Talking about families and relationships is often difficult at the best of times and would be even more so in large, mixed groups. Peer groups provide a safer space to express views and feelings that might be really difficult to talk about with people of other generations or the opposite sex. It is also easier to build trust and confidentiality in a small peer group. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you use this training material for small, single sex peer groups only, and not for open meetings.

### **Size**

The ideal size for a peer group is 15–20 people. This is large enough to work with and small enough to encourage everyone's individual involvement.



## *Selection*

There are no rules for selecting groups, but remember that people generally talk more freely with people like themselves. We recommend four separate groups: younger women, older women (those who have married children), younger men and older men. Groups must always be single sex and generally it is best to select people in the same age group who are likely to have similar life experiences. It is important to ensure that peer group members are comfortable with each other. Peer group work highlights the power of the Zindagii Shoista approach: if peers as a group make a decision (or pledge) to change their behaviour in a particular way, they can help each other adhere to this commitment. Sometimes behaviour change is most difficult when we try to do it ourselves, as it feels like it is 'only us' who are losing out on the pleasures or benefits of the common yet harmful practice. If we make decisions to change with our peers, it can feel a lot easier.

If you want to have the most impact on families and a community, we recommend that you work with different age groups – younger and older. This is important because younger people are greatly influenced by the behaviour of elders and elders may be very influential for young people who have not attended the workshops. If people of all ages are trained, they are better able to reinforce the use of these skills in daily life and it is much easier to sustain the changes beyond the period of the programme. There is no age limit on the ability to benefit from Zindagii Shoista.

It is not always necessary for couples to both participate in the workshops, but it is preferable. If both partners participate, it is much easier to put into practice the ideas about relationships that come out of the workshops.

## *Meetings of peer groups*

Ideally Zindagii Shoista will be provided to different peer groups in a community (or other settings) and these will run in parallel so that the different groups are doing the sessions at about the same time. Where possible, it is ideal to schedule meetings, in which peer groups can come together and be given an opportunity to communicate with one another about their feelings and views on matters that have been explored in the sessions. This promotes communication between the different peer groups, gives people a chance to practise assertive communication, and provides an opportunity to build understanding across sex and age divides.

## **Location**

### *Privacy*

It is a good idea to find a private place to conduct the workshops, as adults are not likely to want to have children around during the sessions.

### *Size*

You also need to choose a location that is small enough for groups to feel comfortable but that at the same time has enough space for people to move around.

## Timing

### *Time of year*

The timings of the workshops should take into account seasons and holiday periods or busy periods on farms. If a workshop clashes with other activities in the community, attendance is likely to be very low. Plan ahead to avoid this happening. Unexpected events, such as inclement weather or transport breakdown, can interrupt your schedule. It is therefore always a good idea to allow extra time in the schedule so that you do not run out of time.

### *Time of day*

At what time of day you train can be just as important as where you train. It is best to ask different groups in the community what would be the best times for them to meet. You can then arrange a number of different session times to fit in with each peer group.

## Duration of workshops

We suggest that you run the workshops over a few weeks on a one- to two-session-per-week basis. We recommend that you do it over this length of time so that people can put what they are learning into practice in their day-to-day lives between each session. If the sessions are too far apart, however, people can forget what they did in the last session.

### *Duration of each session*

Each session lasts around two to three hours, depending on the participants. Some participants may want to explore issues in more depth and some may work through the material more quickly. For this reason, we have only given guidelines about how long each exercise should take. We have, however, designed the sessions so that they take on average two to three hours.

In each session, we suggest you spend around:

- 10 minutes on the introduction
- 10 minutes on each of the warm-up and wind-down exercises
- 40–60 minutes on each longer exercise

If any of the groups feel that they need more time, we suggest they should be allowed the flexibility to spend more than one meeting on each session.

### *Pace*

Each group will have its own starting point and perspective. It is important that groups are given the time and space to work through the sessions and develop their understanding of all the issues at their own pace. If a group needs more time, you may need to arrange extra sessions.



## How the sessions are structured

The rest of this manual presents the sequence of sessions. At the end of some sessions and at the end of the manual (Appendix), additional information is provided to help you run the sessions. Below is a summary of a few basic principles upon which all the workshop sessions are designed.

### *Aims*

The aims of each session are outlined for facilitators. At the start of an exercise, facilitators should not say what the aims are as this may constraint the discussions. You can explain what the aims were when you sum up at the end of a session.

### *Emphasis on 'we' and 'us', not 'they' and 'them'*

Throughout the text, we have used the words 'we', 'us' and 'our' and have tried to avoid 'they', 'them' and 'their' when talking about concerns and dilemmas in order to make the point that we all benefit from listening and understanding ourselves and others. If you use the words 'we', 'us' and 'our' during your sessions, you will find that participants will quickly develop confidence in you as someone who is willing to reflect and to share.

### *No note taking*

Please strongly discourage note taking during the sessions. Nobody needs any pen or paper, except when you provide it for particular exercises. Note taking can be very unsettling for the other members of the group, particularly when people are talking about sensitive or private issues. It also signals that the person who takes notes is not involving him or herself fully in the group's activities.

### *Use of games*

Many of the sessions include games, which some participants might object to as being childish. Sometimes facilitators who are unfamiliar with participatory techniques prefer to have a discussion instead and find conducting a game or another interactive exercise a bit daunting. But a discussion is rarely as productive as an analysis of a game or interactive exercise. Once people have a go and see how useful these techniques can be, they feel more prepared to continue with them in further sessions.

### *Use of role play*

Zindagii Shoista includes a number of exercises in which participants are asked to perform a role play. Role plays are an incredibly powerful learning tool because they require the actors to process, that is really think through, their ideas and not just repeat them. Participants remember lessons they learn through role play long after they would have forgotten facts they were taught in lectures. Acting can feel daunting for people who are not used to it, but it is amazing how quickly participants can settle into different roles. We do not provide scripts for role plays and do not specify exactly the situation that is to be performed. This is because role plays must reflect the real life situations of participants and they are the best people to know what those are. Try to avoid telling them what to role play, although you can help them decide if they are too shy to come forward with an idea. Remind them there are no prizes for good or bad acting.

### *Sitting together in a circle*

To encourage people to feel part of the group, as well as to participate fully, we would strongly encourage groups to sit in a circle rather than in rows. This way, people are able to make eye contact and everyone is on the same level.

## **Other things to keep in mind**

### *Counselling and giving advice*

People may want to ask your advice about their situation. As a facilitator you should not give advice to participants. You can give information and ask relevant questions to help a participant decide what to do for him/herself (e.g. What do you think would be best? Have you considered if there are other options? Have you thought about talking to your family about the matter?). Depending on the problem, it may also be appropriate to refer the participant to a service, such as a health clinic, for assistance.

### *Working in a small community*

Before you start planning the workshops, we recommend that you first meet with the people who are regarded as community leaders to explain what you want to do. Remember to think of women's leaders, as well as the religious leaders, political leaders or leaders of other groups in the community. You may need to conduct several small preparatory meetings to ensure that you have contacted everyone concerned. The more you have the leaders on your side from the beginning, the more chance you have of conducting a successful workshop without these people feeling worried or threatened. Do not underestimate the importance of this first step. It is especially important if this workshop series is the first involvement that you are going to have with the community.

Informal contacts can also greatly help. Go and sit in a tea shop and chat with whomever is there. Find teachers at schools to let them know what is going on and to see if any of them want to attend. Talk to the shopkeepers or traders to gain their interest, and so on. Find out about venues and appointment times. Communities have different needs. Make sure you do not promise what you will not be able to deliver.

# Session 1:

Let's communicate



# Session 1: Let's communicate

**Purpose:** The purpose of the first session is to help a peer group form itself, and to help participants develop skills around listening, analysing communication and cooperation. There are many exercises in this session, but most of them are very short and some may take less time than we have allocated for them.

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**Materials:** Flip chart, pens, markers, sweets.

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**Time:** 2–2.5 hours

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| <b>Exercise 4</b> | Trust and confidentiality | 30 minutes |
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| <b>Exercise 6</b> | Body language             | 15 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 7</b> | Building self-esteem      | 30 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 8</b> | Closing circle            | 10 minutes |

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## Exercise 1: Introducing ourselves

10 minutes



**Aim :** For the facilitator to learn the names of the participants, for everyone to have a go at speaking and to have fun.



**Description :** Participants introduce themselves to others by picking up a sweet and passing the bowl with sweets to the person sitting next to him/her.



**Materials:** A bowl with small sweets in it.



### Directions:

1. Sit in a circle with the group. Everyone should be at the same level, including you. Introduce yourself, thank everyone for coming and explain that if people want to do this programme, they must make a real commitment to come to every group meeting. This is because new things will be discussed at each meeting, which build on what has been discussed previously. Therefore, it is very difficult for the group if members miss sessions or only attend one or two sessions.
2. Explain that you would like to learn everyone's names, as you are going to be working together for several sessions. You would also like to learn something special about each participant.
3. Start off by asking each participant to think of something interesting about themselves. Explain that you are going to pass a bowl of sweets around and each person should take one and introduce themselves by saying their name and something about themselves. Then they should pass the bowl to the next person.
4. Begin the game by introducing yourself and taking a sweet. For example, "I am Yuri and I like gardening" or "I am Subhiya and I am good at knitting".
5. Go around the circle in an anti-clockwise direction, with each group member introducing her/himself to the rest of the group and taking a sweet.
6. Once the bowl has returned to the participant who went first, that participant should start the next round by saying another fact about him/herself.
7. Continue going around until all the sweets are finished. Make sure there are enough sweets for each person to have two or three each, thus divulging two to three facts about themselves.



*If someone cannot think of anything to say about him or herself, it may be because they are shy. Bear this in mind, as these participants may need some help in the other exercises. Some participants may also find it embarrassing to say something they like about themselves. Give a lot of praise and encouragement to the shy people during the duration of the workshops.*

## Exercise 2: Hopes and fears

10 minutes



**Aim:** A chance for each participant to voice their feelings about the workshops, which enables you to gauge their understanding of the programme and adjust any misconceptions.



**Description:** Each participant voices one expectation and one concern they have about the workshops.



**Materials:** Flip chart, marker or pen.



### Directions:

1. Explain to the group that it is always a good idea for the facilitator to find out what participants are thinking about the workshops and that it would be nice to keep a record of this to look back on at the end.
2. Go around the circle and ask each group member to express one thing they want (or hope for) and one they do not want (or fear) to get out of the workshops. Encourage them to say: "I want ...." and then "I don't want...". Finish with your own statements.
3. Do not make any comments about their wants and concerns as you go around the circle, but record their comments on the flip chart.
4. Once everyone has stated a hope and a fear, you should provide further information about the workshops. If any hopes are beyond the scope of the workshop, you should explain this now. You could also try to reassure people about their fears.
5. Ask participants to remember what they said so that you can all review this together at the end of the workshops.

### Exercise 3: Ground rules

10 minutes



**Aim:** To agree on a set of rules for the duration of the workshops.



**Description :** Participants identify a set of rules to follow in the workshops.



**Materials:** Flip chart, marker or pen.



**Directions:**

1. Explain to the participants that they will be spending a bit of time together for the duration of the workshops and that in order for them to make the best of this time, it is useful to agree on some rules. What should these ground rules be? Encourage any participants who have an idea for a rule to suggest it. Write it on the flip chart. Encourage anyone suggesting a rule to explain it to the group. Does everyone else agree with this rule?



*If there are any obvious gaps or silences, suggest rules that group members may like to include, such as: we should not judge others, we should respect what others say, we should not gossip outside of the group, we should not interrupt people who are talking, we should participate fully, we should be punctual and not leave early, we should give each person a turn to speak, we should not tell other group members' stories as people should tell their own stories and we should respect the right of someone who decides not to share.*

2. Once all the rules that the group wants have been written on the flip chart, ask the group to go through them again so that everyone is clear what each rule entails.
3. Encourage group members to try to stick to the rules. Ask them to remind you and one another if you or any of them err from the rules.
4. Ask one group member to take responsibility for the flip chart. Ask her/him to bring it to each of the sessions so that it can always be referred to if needed.



## Exercise 4: Trust and confidentiality

30 minutes



**Aim:** To understand what is meant by the words 'trust' and 'confidentiality'; to increase awareness about the value of trust, confidentiality and not judging; to think about how we can ensure safety when we discuss personal things in the workshops and in our relationships.



**Description:** Participants work in small groups, followed by a presentation of the group work.



### Directions:

1. Ask the group to divide into small groups of four members each. Assign each group a character with a problem (see the box on the right for examples). The character needs advice from someone, perhaps a relative, a neighbour or a health worker. Ask the small groups to discuss among themselves who this character is going to tell and why he/she would tell that person specifically and not someone else.
2. Call everyone back to re-form the whole group and ask them to describe what they have discussed. Consider the different responses and emphasise the similarities. Talk about how we all have secrets or embarrassing feelings that we would like to share with someone whom we feel could reassure or help us. Mention that trust, confidentiality and being non-judgmental are crucial. This exercise shows that people discuss different problems with different people.
3. Ask participants to think about themselves: do they behave in a way that helps people trust them? Do not discuss this – it is just a question for participants to reflect on privately.
4. Ask the group: What is good about telling personal stories? Explain that we learn a lot from talking about our real-life experiences. It can help us understand our lives, solve problems, feel better about ourselves and gain strength from one another.
5. Ask the group: What are the risks of telling personal stories? Explain that we cannot be sure that all participants will not discuss our stories with other people. If a participant tells someone a secret outside the group, a member of the group might be angry or hurt, or may get into trouble with a parent or spouse.
6. Ask the group: What can we do to enjoy the benefits and reduce the risks associated with telling each other our problems? Explain that we have learned about trust and confidentiality, and now understand the benefits of sharing. If people say that they still feel uncomfortable sharing certain things, you can tell them that they can still share their story by pretending they heard about someone with the same problem (for example, by saying "my friend's husband uses drugs" instead of saying "my husband uses drugs"). We must care for each other and not tell private stories outside the group. We should always talk about problems in a considerate way without judging or joking.
7. Ask the group what they thought the aim of the exercise was and discuss this.

### Examples of problems:

- A 21-year-old who wants to have an abortion because she thinks her migrant husband has abandoned her
- A 36-year-old whose husband wants a divorce
- A 25-year-old with an alcohol problem
- A 55-year-old who is severely depressed

## Exercise 5: Listening skills

20 minutes



**Aim:** To help people realise the importance of listening skills in all life situations including in relationships.



**Description:** Participants work in pairs, with a group discussion to follow.



### Directions:

1. Tell the participants that they will need to do a lot of listening during this workshop. Explain that this exercise will help develop good listening skills.
2. Explain to the participants that they need to divide into pairs. One of them should describe an event in their life. The listener should concentrate hard, encourage the story and show interest in what is being said. After a couple of minutes, the listener should stop listening completely, however, the speaker should continue talking.
3. Start the pairs off and after a couple of minutes clap your hands, at which point the listener should stop listening. This person could yawn, look elsewhere, turn around, whistle or walk away – the important thing is that they should no longer listen, while the speaker continues to talk.
4. After another minute, clap your hands to signal to the speaker to stop talking. Ask the speaker and listener to change roles. Then, each pair should repeat the two stages of this exercise so that each participant has a chance to speak and listen twice.
5. Call the group to come back together. Ask participants how they showed that they were interested and listening in the first phase and how they showed that they were no longer listening in the second phase.
6. Ask the participants how they felt when they were talking and being listened to. How did they feel when the listener was not paying attention? Did they manage to continue with their story?
7. Recap how people can show they are good listeners. Ask participants about the ways in which we communicate with one another, apart from using spoken language. If someone mentions body language, explain that if we are aware of it, we can often change it to communicate in a different way. This is what the next exercise looks at.

## Exercise 6: Body language

15 minutes



**Aim:** To help participants understand the role body language plays in communication.



**Description:** Through role playing, participants are asked to demonstrate how body language can help onlookers understand what is happening, without hearing any words.



**Materials:** Flip chart, marker or pen.



### Directions:

1. Ask the participants what kinds of emotions we can communicate with our bodies and make a list on the flip chart. These may include: love, happiness, sadness, anger, submission, strength, weakness and so on.
2. Ask participants to divide into pairs. Each pair should agree on an emotion to communicate with one another. Without saying anything out loud, they should execute their emotion using only their bodies and faces, and no words.
3. Give the pairs two minutes to work on their performance and then ask everyone to return to the circle. Each pair then performs their scene to the others. For each performance, ask members of the audience to decipher what is going on. What emotion is each pair trying to convey?
4. Now, ask the pairs if the audience was right. If the audience did not guess the emotion, ask someone to show how else you could convey that particular emotion without talking.
5. Finish by asking participants to think about the ways in which they can use their bodies to communicate with one another over the next few days and weeks. Encourage them to think how they might use their bodies differently in different contexts in order to convey different messages.



*Encourage participants to be aware that people communicate and listen as much with their bodies as they do with their words. Explain how some body language can appear very powerful and aggressive, some friendly and warm, and some weak and submissive.*

## Exercise 7: Building self-esteem

30 minutes



**Aim:** To build self-esteem by helping participants understand that they are all special people; to make participants realise that parts of our lives make us happy and we need to remember these, especially when faced with problems.



**Description :** Participants complete exercise on their own and then discuss as a group.



**Materials:** Paper, pens.



### Directions:

1. Hand out pieces of paper to each participant and ensure everyone has a pen. Ask them to first work alone and write down three things that they like about themselves. Mention that these can centre round their personality, their achievements, appearance or anything that comes to mind, but try to avoid suggesting specific things as it is important for participants to come up with the ideas on their own.
2. When everyone has a list, ask participants to share what is on it with the others. Ask the other participants if they have similar things listed.
3. Give participants a second piece of paper and ask them to make a list of three things that are important to them. Mention that these can be people, relationships, values, ways they are treated or material things. Again do not make specific suggestions.
4. When everyone has a list, ask the participants to share what is on it. Ask the others if they have similar things listed.
5. Give participants a third piece of paper and ask them to make a list of three things that make them feel good or happy.
6. When everyone has a list, ask the participants to share what is on it.
7. Mention that it is very important to think about what we value and what makes us happy, as we often accept situations that make us unhappy.

In Zindagii Shoista, we will explore ways and develop skills for communicating that can help us change situations in which we are unhappy. The path to happiness and having better relationships has to start with an understanding that we are all special and by recognising what makes us happy. Only then can we determine the route we should follow to make our lives happier. Suggest that participants take their papers home and look at them occasionally to remind themselves that they are special and about what makes them happy in life.

## Exercise 8: Closing circle

10 minutes



**Aim:** To wind down the session and bring it to an end.



**Description:** Final exercise to conclude what was learned and to share the positives and negatives about the session, and to solidify the bond of the group.



**Directions:**

1. Explain that this session is now coming to an end and that to finish up, there will be a closing circle to review.
2. Everyone stands in a tight circle. Ask the first person to your left to put their right outstretched arm into the middle of the circle and say something they found difficult about the session and then something that they found good about the session. Ask her/him to use the phrases "I didn't like it when...", followed by "I liked it when..."
3. Then, ask the person to your left to place their right hand on top of the hand already in the middle of the circle and also say one thing they found difficult and one thing they found good about the session, and one thing they will share with someone before the next session.
4. Continue going around until all participants have their right hands placed in a stack on top of one another and have shared their positives and negatives about the session.
5. Finish by saying that this stack of hands represents our strength together as a group.

# Session 2:

Men and women – Expectations versus reality



## Session 2: Men and women – Expectations versus reality

**Purpose:** The second session aims to help participants explore constructed images and realities of the ideal man and woman, as well as how these are shaped and what implications they can have on individuals.

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**Materials:** Flip chart paper, markers or pens.

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**Time:** 2 hours

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### Contents:

|                   |  |            |
|-------------------|--|------------|
| <b>Exercise 1</b> | Introduction   | 10 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 2</b> | Mime a lie   | 10 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 3</b> | Men and women, young and old – The ideal and the reality | 90 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 4</b> | Closing circle and song                                  | 10 minutes |

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## Exercise 1: Introduction

10 minutes



**Aim:** To warm participants up and make them feel able to be actively involved in the session.



**Description:** Welcome participants, recall what was discussed in the first session and introduce the new topic.



**Directions:**

1. Sit in a circle with the group. Everyone should be at the same level, including yourself.
2. Welcome everyone back to the new session. Thank everyone for coming. Enquire about late comers or non-attenders.
3. Ask everyone to recount very quickly one good thing that has happened to him or her since the last session and one thing they like about themselves.
4. Review the first session. Ask participants to recall what we learned together. Remind them if they have forgotten.
5. Explain that we are going to discuss other things in this session.

## Exercise 2: Mime a lie

10 minutes



**Aim:** A warm-up game that seeks to demonstrate that what people say they are doing is not necessarily what they are actually doing.



**Description:** Each person mimes an action and, when asked, says they are doing something else. The next person has to mime what the previous person said they were doing.



### Directions:

1. Stand in a circle. Go into the middle of the circle and mime an action, for example, sleeping or eating. Ask the person who is next to you in the circle to ask you: "What are you doing?" You reply by saying a different action to what you were doing, for example, "I am digging". Everyone will laugh!
2. Next, ask the person who asked you what you were doing to take your place in the middle of the circle and to mime what you said you were doing.
3. Then, the person next to that person asks what they are doing and that person also lies about what they mimed.
4. The game continues until everyone in the circle has had a go twice.
5. At the end, ask the group: What does this game teach us about how we relate to others? We often say we are doing one thing, whereas in fact we are doing something different. This secrecy makes it more difficult to have open and honest relationships with the people in our lives.

### Exercise 3: Men and women, young and old – The ideal and the reality

**90 minutes**


**Aim:** To explore our perceptions of the ideal younger and older man and woman, and how different young and old men and women can be/are in reality. We are particularly keen to unpack the relationships between a son and his mother, a husband and wife, and a daughter-in-law and mother-in-law so please emphasise this in the small group work and discussion.



**Description:** Small group work and group discussion.



**Materials:** Flip chart paper, markers or pens.



#### Directions:

1. Explain that participants will be exploring how different people in society are expected to behave.
2. Ask the participants to break into groups of three or four and to take some flip chart paper. Ask the groups to divide the paper into two columns. The first column should have the heading 'Ideal' and the second column should be named 'Reality'. Then, ask the groups to divide each column into two rows and head one 'Husband/wife and family' and the other 'Friends and the community'.
3. Ask the group to discuss how people of their own age and gender are expected to behave to their wife/husband and family, and with friends and the community, and list this in the 'Ideal' column. The question to answer is: How are people of this age and gender expected to behave?
4. After a few minutes, ask the small groups to discuss what is the reality for people of their own age and gender in the family and in the community or with friends. Make notes in the corresponding column.
5. After another few minutes, give the groups another piece of flip chart paper and ask them to think about people of the same age but the other gender and then repeat the exercise. The question to answer is: What is the ideal way for this age group and gender to behave in society and what is the reality?
6. Call everyone back to re-form the whole group. Choose one small group and ask it to share its notes. First, the 'Ideal' column should be looked at. The questions to answer are: Did the other groups have the same points on their charts? Was anything different?
7. Choose another group's flip chart and ask the group what it has in its 'Reality' column. The questions to answer are: Does everyone agree? Is anything missing?
8. Then, discuss what the main differences between the ideal and the reality are. The questions for the participants to answer are: How easy is it for people of your age and gender to live up to what their families and the society expects? What are the main difficulties encountered?
9. Now, tell the participants that the other gender will be considered. Choose one small group and ask it to share its notes looking first at the 'Ideal' column. The questions to answer are: Did the other groups have the same points on their charts? Is anything different?
10. Choose another small group's flip chart and ask the group what it has in its 'Reality' column. The questions to answer are: Does everyone agree? Is anything missing?
11. Then, discuss what the main differences between the ideal and reality are. The questions to answer are: How easy is it for people of your age but the other gender to live up to what their families and society expects? What are the main difficulties encountered?

12. Now, tell the participants that the other age group will be considered. If younger people were considered first, now turn your attention to older people, and vice versa.
13. Ask the participants to break into their small groups again and to take some flip chart paper. Divide the paper into two columns, as before, with one headed 'Ideal' and the other 'Reality'. Then divide each column into two rows and head one 'Husband/wife and family' and the other 'Friends and the community'.
14. Ask the groups to discuss how people of the other age group but their own gender are expected to behave to their wife/husband and family, and with friends or the community, and list this in the 'Ideal' column. The question to answer is: How are people of the other age group but the same gender expected to behave?
15. After a few minutes, ask the groups to discuss what is the reality of life for people of their own gender but the other age group in the family and in the community or with friends. Make notes in the corresponding column.
16. After a few minutes, give the groups another piece of flip chart paper and ask them to think about people in the other age group and of the other gender, and to repeat the exercise. The question to answer is: What is the ideal way for this age group and gender to behave in society and what is the reality?
17. Call everyone back to re-form the whole group again. Choose one small group and ask it to share its flip chart. Look first at the 'Ideal' column. The questions to answer are: Did the other groups have the same points on their charts? Is anything different?
18. Choose another group's flip chart and ask the group what it has in its 'Reality' column. The questions to answer are: Does everyone agree? Is anything missing?
19. Ask the participants to discuss what the main differences between the ideal and reality are. The questions to answer are: How easy is it for people of your gender but the other age group to live up to what their families and society expects? What are the main difficulties encountered?
20. Now tell the participants that the other gender will be considered. Choose one small group and ask it to share its flip chart, looking first at the 'Ideal' column. The questions to answer are: Did the other groups have the same things on their charts? Is anything different?
21. Choose another flip chart and ask the group what it has in its 'Reality' column. The questions to answer are: Does everyone agree? Is anything missing?
22. Now ask the participants to discuss what the main differences between the ideal and reality are. How easy is it for people in the other age group and of the other gender to live up to what their families and society expects? What are the main difficulties encountered?
23. Ask the participants: Is it easier to live as a man or woman in the community? Are the differences fair?
24. Conclude by explaining that the idea of this exercise is to help people appreciate that there are expectations in our families, among peers and in the community of how people of different genders, ages and marital statuses should behave. These expectations place different pressures on people, but also provide people with different opportunities. Sometimes we are under pressure to behave in ways in which we do not want, which do not make us happy and may undermine our ability to achieve our goals.

Young married women in Tajikistan often find it very difficult to do what is expected of them and the burden of having to do different tasks can make them unhappy. Women are often advised to tolerate their lives, but this does not help them to solve their problems or become happier.

Married men may also be highly stressed as they are expected to provide financially for their household and also contribute to the broader family, but yet there are very few work opportunities in Tajikistan. Married men may also be drawn into conflict between their mother and their wife, which creates difficulties. Although men also face problems, in general they have more control over many areas of their lives than women do.

Older men and women are often expected to no longer have intimate marital relationships. This may also place a burden on them. Women often become depressed as they become older and experience changes in their bodies that they find distressing. This can lead to further tension at home. We hope to come back to many of these topics during the course of the workshops.



*Tell participants that there will soon be a meeting with all the peer groups and that all participants should present the ideal and reality for their age group and gender. Each group should choose the flip chart it will use for the presentation – it should have everyone's ideas on it – and nominate two people to present.*

## Exercise 4: Closing circle and song

10 minutes



**Aim:** To wind down the session and bring it to an end.



**Description:** Final exercise to conclude what was learned and to share the positives and negatives about the session, and to solidify the bond of the group.



### Directions:

1. Explain that this session is now coming to an end and that to finish up, there will be a closing circle to review.
2. Explain that one volunteer is needed to present a flip chart showing the ideal and reality of the lives of people of the same age and sex as the peer group. Clarify what would be on the chart, drawing on the discussions of the day.
3. Next ask everyone to stand in a tight circle with you. Ask the first person to your left to put their right outstretched arm into the middle of the circle and say something they found difficult about the session and then something that they found good about the session. Ask her/him to use the phrases "I didn't like it when...," followed by "I liked it when...".
4. Then, ask the person to your left to place their right hand on top of the hand already in the middle of the circle and also say one thing they found difficult and one thing they found good about the session, and one thing they will share with someone before the next session.
5. Continue going around until all participants have their right hands placed in a stack on top of one another and have shared their positives and negatives about the session.
6. Then say that this stack of hands represents our strength together as a group.
7. Finish by asking someone to lead the group in a song.

# Session 3:

## Relationships





## Session 3: Relationships

**Purpose:** Discuss relationships in family, provoke participants to think about happy and unhappy relationships through group work and promote good family relations.

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**Materials:** Many small pieces of paper (around 5cm x 5cm each), pens or pencils, flip chart paper, markers, sticky tape, Blu-Tack or Prestik.

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**Time:** 3 hours

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### Contents:

|                   |  |            |
|-------------------|--|------------|
| <b>Exercise 1</b> | Introduction                           | 10 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 2</b> | Hopes for and expectations of marriage | 20 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 3</b> | Joys of and problems in relationships  | 90 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 4</b> | Relationships – Happy or unhappy       | 20 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 5</b> | Closing circle                         | 10 minutes |

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## Exercise 1: Introduction

10 minutes



**Aim:** To warm up participants and make them feel able to be actively involved in the session.



**Description:** Welcome participants, recall what was discussed in the last session and introduce new topic.



### Directions:

1. Sit in a circle with the group. Everyone should be at the same level, including you.
2. Welcome everyone to the new session. Thank everyone for coming. Enquire about the latecomers and/or non-attenders.
3. Ask the participants to recount very quickly one positive thing that has happened to them since the last session and one thing they like about themselves.
4. Review the last session. Ask the participants to recall what was learned – images and reality of men and women, how much we influence how others act, etc. Remind them of anything they have forgotten.
5. Explain that relationships will be discussed in this session.

## Exercise 2: Hopes for and expectations of marriage

20 minutes



**Aim:** To explore what it means to be married.



**Description:** Pair work, followed by a group discussion.



**Materials:** Flip chart paper, markers or pens.



### Directions:

1. Explain that we are now going to talk about marriage. In Tajikistan, some people choose a partner they are in love with and get their family's permission to marry that person, while others enter into pre-arranged marriages. In this exercise, we will explore what different people (whether the married couple or people related to them) hope to get from a marriage.
2. Ask the group to divide into four small groups and give each a piece of flip chart paper and ask them to divide it into four. Label each section as follows: wife, husband, parents of husband and parents of wife.
3. Ask the groups to discuss among themselves and note down what they think a wife hopes to get from the marriage, a husband hopes to get from the marriage, the parents of the wife hope to get from (or achieve through) the marriage and the parents of the husband hope to get from (or achieve through) the marriage in the corresponding columns.



*Sometimes gains from a marriage are **material** (e.g. dowry or not having to feed the bride any more), sometimes it will be a **work contribution** (e.g. housework, gardening, etc.) and sometimes it will be an **emotional or symbolic** gain such as love or having children to extend the family.*

4. Call the groups together and ask one to share what is in its 'Wife' column. Ask the entire group if anyone has anything different. Then ask another group to share what is in its 'Husband' column and ask all participants whether anyone has anything different. Then ask another group to share what is in its 'Husband's parents' column. Ask all participants if anyone has anything different. Then ask another group to share what is in its 'Wife's parents' column. Ask all participants if anyone has anything different.
5. Ask the group: What are differences in what these various people want to gain from a marriage? You might want to look at whether the differences are associated with hopes and expectations related to material, work or emotional and symbolic gains.
6. Ask the group: How often is it that everyone gets what they want from a marriage?
7. Conclude the discussion by highlighting that this exercise has shown us that different people who are important in/to a marriage want to achieve different things from the marriage. It is no wonder then that marriages are often seen as unhappy and that there is ensuing conflict.

### Exercise 3: Joys of and problems in relationships

90 minutes



**Aim:** To help us acknowledge and discuss the problems we face in our relationships and with our families. Although joys are also discussed, it is important that we use this exercise, first and foremost, to explore problems in relationships.



**Description:** Individual work.



**Materials:** Small pieces of paper, pens or pencils, flip chart paper, marker.

**Facilitator's note:** Many issues raised here will conflict with your values. It is important to remain non-judgmental throughout the exercise.



#### Directions:

1. Explain that we are now going to talk about our marital relationships. First, hand out five small pieces of paper and a pen or pencil to each participant and ask them to write anything that comes to mind when they think of relationships between husbands and wives. Explain that these things can be good or bad, funny, and happy or sad.
2. While they are doing this, write the words 'Joys' and 'Problems' on two separate pieces of flip chart paper.
3. Collect the small pieces of paper into a large pile and explain that you will go through each one and ask the group to identify if it is a joy or a problem.
4. Take the first piece of paper and ask: "Is this a joy or a problem?" Ask if everyone agrees.



*Sometimes what will be written on the paper will obviously be a joy and there is no need to discuss it. It may also be a duplicate of a previous paper so again no need to discuss it. If what is written is unclear, ask the group "How does this happen in relationships?". Then everyone can decide if it is a joy or problem together.*

*Sometimes there will be disagreement so create a third pile, on which you put papers that describe both a joy and a problem. Make sure the group discusses when something can be both a joy and a problem. It is particularly important that each of the problems is explained and everyone understands that they are problems.*

5. After you have finished this part of the exercise, hand out more paper and ask everyone to think about relationships between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law and write what comes to mind.
6. Now, repeat what you did before by collecting the papers into piles and sorting them into joys and problems with the group.
7. Conclude the exercise by saying that we often find it hard to talk about difficulties we have in relationships between a husband and wife and between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law. This exercise has shown that there are many joys in these relationships but also many problems. We hope we will be able to show how through Zindagii Shoista we can find ways of changing how we live and reduce our problems.

## Exercise 4: Relationships – Happy or unhappy?

20 minutes



**Aim:** To explore how family relationships can be happy or unhappy.



**Description:** Role play.



### Directions:

1. Explain that in this exercise, we will delve deeper into relationships in the family. Divide the group into three smaller groups. Ask one group to prepare a role play that shows a happy marital and family relationship. Two of the group members will act as the husband and wife and the others will act as the other family members or neighbours. All members of the group should discuss and agree how they will demonstrate a happy marital relationship within a happy wider family.



*Encourage participants to use real-life experiences in this exercise. Happy relationships should be respectful, cooperative, show support and love, and be non-violent.*

2. Ask the other two groups to prepare a role play that shows an unhappy marital relationship within an unhappy family. Two group members will act as the husband and wife, while the others will act as the other family members or neighbours. All members of the group should discuss and agree how they will show the unhappiness of the husband and wife, and the wider family.



*There are many different ways in which families can be unhappy. Generally, in unhappy families there is no support for the wife, the children may be neglected, there may be alcohol or substance abuse problems, there may be violence against the wife, and there might be gossiping, shouting and possibly pressure to divorce.*

3. Call everyone back together and ask the groups to act out the role plays. Discuss: How were the happy and unhappy couples and families portrayed?
4. Ask the whole group: For the unhappy role plays, what could be done to make the relationship better and resolve conflicts? How can people act differently?
5. Ask the unhappy role play actors to follow this advice and change their role play so that the family situation becomes happy. The characters acting as the husband and wife and the parents-in-law should remain the same, but you may want to change some of the other characters in order to introduce any new people into the story (e.g. a helpful neighbour).
6. End by asking five people in the group to state one thing they have learned about families and relationships from this exercise. Sum up by saying that this exercise has taught us that we all play a part in whether our household is happy or not and may contribute to occasions when there is unhappiness.

## Exercise 5: Closing circle

10 minutes



**Aim:** To wind down the session and bring it to an end.



**Description:** Final exercise to conclude what was learned, what will be shared with others and to give participants the opportunity to ask questions.



**Directions:**

1. Thank everyone for coming. Ask each member of the group to say one thing that they have learned today, one thing they will share with someone else and one thing that they are looking forward to doing before the next meeting.
2. Ask if anyone has any questions about today's session.
3. Explain that the next session will be a peer group meeting and that participants will have to present a flip chart with a summary of the main problems that people of the same age and sex as them have in relationships. Ask for the group to suggest the 6–8 problems to include on the flip chart. Ask for a volunteer to present it at the peer group meeting.
4. Remind everyone of the time and place for the next session and say you look forward to seeing them all again.

# Session 4:

Peer group meeting





## Session 4: Peer group meeting



**Purpose:** To explore how family relationships can be happy or unhappy.



**Participants:** Role play.



**Materials:** Flip charts made during the previous exercise.



**Time:** Maximum 2 hours.



### **Directions:**

1. Each peer group first presents the ideal and then the reality for the way people like themselves (age and gender) should behave in society, based on the discussions they had in Exercise 3 of Session 2. They can use the flip charts they made.
2. Then all participants should discuss whether they agree with the ideals that have been presented. The questions to answer are: Does our society think there is only one way of being an old man or woman, and a young man or woman (the ideal)? Can anyone think of examples of people who are considered role models in our society who are different?
3. This exercise shows us that most people struggle to live up to society's ideals. However, there are different ways of being a man and a woman and we do not always have to follow the 'ideal'. Sometimes we have to compromise in some areas and accept that we cannot fulfil ideal roles, but instead we can offer something different. For example, a young man may struggle to earn money but can help his wife with her domestic duties so she has more time for income generating activities.
4. Invite each peer group to present their flip chart from Exercise 3 of Session 3, on the main problems that people of their peer group have in relationships.
5. Discuss: What can we all do to help each other reduce our problems?
6. Discuss: If we can make a request to other peer groups for something that would help us reduce our problems, what would we ask for?
7. Ask for volunteers to share what they have learned today.
8. Sum up the main points and encourage everyone to continue coming to meetings. Explain that all the issues raised will be discussed in the later sessions.

# Session 5:

Family health – Part 1



## Session 5: Family health – Part 1

**Purpose:** The purpose of this session is to understand the important aspects pertaining to family health.

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**Materials:** Flip chart paper, pens, markers, hat, small pieces of paper.

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**Time:** 2–2.5 hours

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### Contents:

|                   |                                       |            |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Exercise 1</b> | Introduction                          | 10 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 2</b> | Talking to our children about puberty | 40 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 3</b> | Preparing for marriage                | 40 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 4</b> | Protecting fertility                  | 40 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 5</b> | Closing circle                        | 10 minutes |

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## Exercise 1: Introduction

10 minutes



**Aim:** To warm participants up and make them feel able to be actively involved in the session.



**Description:** Welcome participants, recall what was discussed in the last session and introduce the new topic.



**Directions:**

1. Sit in a circle with the group. Everyone should be at the same level, including you.
2. Welcome everyone to the new session. Thank everyone for coming. Enquire about the latecomers and/or non-attenders.
3. Ask each participant to quickly recount something positive that has happened to them since the last session.
4. Review the last session. Ask participants to talk about what they learned.
5. Explain that we are going to discuss family health in this session.

## Exercise 2: Talking to our children about puberty

40 minutes



**Aim:** To develop skills for giving our children advice so that they can understand the changes happening to their bodies during puberty.



**Description:** Small group work, then group discussion.



**Materials:** Flip chart paper, pens or markers.



### Directions:

1. Explain that in order to have a healthy family, it is very important that everyone in the family has information about their bodies and health. Remember: education is power. Children often become very confused as they grow older and when their bodies start to change. They may feel there is something wrong with them or they may ask their cousins or friends and get incorrect information. Our bodies change at different times in our lives and it is important that we know what is happening and can give helpful advice.
2. Ask the group to break into four small groups. Two will consider changes that happen to boys between the ages of 10 and 16 and two will discuss the changes that happen to girls between these ages. All groups should list the changes on flip chart paper and discuss their causes.
3. Call all the participants to come back together and ask the first group to present. If the group is composed of male participants, it is best to start with the changes in boys, as they will find it less embarrassing to talk about. The same applies if the group is composed of women. Ask: Does everyone agree that these are the changes taking place? Is there anything the group has missed? Do you agree with the explanations of why these changes are taking place?
4. Now ask the group which examined the other gender to present. Ask: Does everyone agree that these are the changes taking place? Is there anything the group has missed? Do you agree with the explanations of why these changes are taking place?
5. Check the facilitator's note and add any information that has been missed and correct anything that is incorrect.
6. Mention that a big change with puberty is that there is a need for boys and girls to start washing more often. Ask: What advice should be given about hygiene?
7. Conclude by saying that it is very important that adults talk to children about their bodies.



*We often do not know how to do it or worry about doing it too early. However, it becomes a bigger problem if we leave it too late as girls and boys find the changes around puberty distressing if they do not know what is happening to them.*

**Changes in girls:** The first changes are the development of breasts and the growth of hair in the pubic region. This can happen from age 8, but in some girls will not start until age 12–13. Generally, after these changes start taking place, girls will grow taller. About two years after the start of pubic hair growth, girls will start to grow armpit hair and may develop acne. The biggest change for girls is the start of menstruation. This normally also occurs about two years after they show first signs of breast development.

It is important that girls are told about menstruation and how to look after themselves during their periods before they start menstruating. They should be told that when they are older they will menstruate for about five days every 28 or so days. It should also be emphasised that periods can be very irregular in young girls – some girls will have a long gap between their first and second period (it can be months); other girls will find they bleed every 2–3 weeks. Young girls can also have very bad menstrual pain. It is helpful to advise them that holding a hot water bottle or taking painkillers can help alleviate this pain.

**Changes in boys:** The first changes that boys notice are changes in their genitals. Their scrotum and testicles get larger and they start to develop pubic hair. They will then start to grow rapidly in height. This happens at about the age of 10–13. About a year after these changes start, they will find their penis starts to grow bigger and their voice starts to change. Their voice will get deeper but sometimes it can sound squeaky beforehand. About a year later, they will start to grow hair on their face and under their arms. They may also get acne. During puberty, boys often start to find that they wake up in the morning with an erect penis and may have had a discharge in the night. This is called a ‘wet dream’ and it is normal during puberty.

**Mental health changes:** It is important to explain that the changes during puberty happen so that our bodies can get ready to reproduce. As soon as a girl starts menstruating, she can get pregnant and a boy can get a girl or woman pregnant from puberty. The changes in children’s bodies are caused by changes in hormones that control the body’s ability to reproduce. These hormones may also impact on how children feel and it is common for teenagers to become moody, depressed and/or short-tempered due to these changes. When puberty starts, teenagers often think they will be like this for the rest of their lives. It is important to reassure them that as they get older their acne will go away and girls’ periods will settle down – and for most people their mental health will also improve.

### Exercise 3: Preparing for marriage

40 minutes



**Aim:** To look at the health and virginity checks before marriage, particularly in the context of a Tajikistan law that requires a certificate of the girl's/woman's virginity and the couple's health before marriage.



**Description:** Group discussion.



**Materials:** Small pieces of paper, pens or pencils.



#### Directions:

1. Explain that we are now going to clarify our thinking around health and marriage, and how important it is for a son or daughter to be a virgin when he or she marries.
2. Hand out six pieces of paper to each participant.
3. Ask the participants to write down three positive things (one each on three pieces of paper) about the health check and/or virginity test and remind them that they should say whether this is positive for a man or a woman (or both).
4. Then, ask them to write three harmful things (one each on three pieces of paper) about having a health check or virginity test before marriage, and again to note if it is harmful for a man or woman (or for both).
5. Collect the papers and sort into two piles (positive and harmful).
6. Start with the pile of the potentially positive things. Go through the papers and ask the group: Why is this positive? Does everyone agree that this might be positive?
7. Then look at the pile of the potentially harmful things. Again go through the papers and discuss as a group: Why is this harmful? Does everyone agree that this might be harmful?
8. Reflect on the piles overall. Are there more advantages for women or men? Are there more disadvantages for women or men? What does this tell us about gender privileges in Tajikistan?
9. Conclude by saying that virginity testing before marriage highlights the double standards in society, as we apply different standards for women and men, which is unfair. Actually it would be a good thing for a man or woman who has had sex with a person other than their future wife or husband to get checked for sexually transmitted infections (STI) before marriage so that they can get treated. Illnesses should be private matters and people should be able to seek treatment without being stigmatised in the community. Ask the group: Is it possible to work within the law, while not damaging the lives of and stigmatising men and women?



#### Advantages of health checks before marriage

There can be a genuine advantage to knowing before we marry whether we have an STI or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), as these can be treated. These diseases can also be passed to the wife/husband if they are not treated or if proper methods to prevent transmission are not consistently used (e.g. condoms to prevent HIV).

#### Disadvantages of health checks before marriage

It is not possible to look at a man and know whether he is a virgin, so virginity testing, in practice, is only applied to girls and women. When a doctor does a virginity test, he/she examines the woman's

hymen to see if it has been torn. This is not a fair or reliable way of knowing whether a woman is a virgin. The hymen is quite small and there are many variations in its anatomy, which could lead to a conclusion that a girl is a virgin when she is not or vice versa. The hymen sometimes gets torn through trauma, for example a fall, which has nothing to do with sex.

Girls who are said not to be a virgin are highly stigmatised, their families often feel shame and they usually cannot get married. This is unfair. Many couples would like to make their own decisions about how important it is for them that the woman is a virgin. This is very difficult, however, as a certificate is needed before a wedding.

There is already a problem with unregistered marriages in Tajikistan. Wives in these marriages are very vulnerable to getting divorced or abandoned, which makes it very difficult for them to claim financial support afterwards. There is a risk that more marriages will be unregistered, as families may not have the money needed to acquire the virginity certificate.

It is most likely unfavourable for a person to learn that they have a STI in this way. In all societies, STIs are highly stigmatised. People with a STI want to find out about this in private and be given treatment without other people knowing about it. HIV is particularly stigmatised and a person with HIV may be ostracised from their family or community. If a person has HIV, he/she would want to be able to choose who they tell and when.

There is also a risk that STIs and HIV are wrongly diagnosed. All medical tests have a risk of showing a false positive result. When tests are done for a rare condition in Tajikistan, such as HIV, there is a risk that some people will be told they have the infection when they in fact do not. In community-wide screening of people before marriage, many people who are diagnosed to have HIV will not have it. This risk can be reduced by using a second test to confirm the findings of the first one, but this is more costly.



## Exercise 4: Protecting fertility

40 minutes



**Aim:** To examine the causes and consequences of infertility, ways of protecting fertility and options for those who cannot have children.



**Description:** Group discussion.



**Materials:** A hat, small pieces of paper with the quiz statements written on them, flip chart paper, pens.



### Directions:

1. Explain that now we are going to learn about infertility and ways of protecting fertility.
2. Explain that fertility is highly valued in Tajikistan. In this exercise, we are going to do a quiz about fertility and infertility. Explain that we will pass around a hat and each person will take a piece of paper from the hat and read it out loud.
3. The participant should say whether they think the statement is true or false and explain why to the group. After, ask all participants: Is he/she right?
4. Allow the group to discuss each statement but provide the correct information if anything is incorrect.

### Quiz statements to write on pieces of paper:

- Men who drink and smoke too much are less fertile.
- The best time for a woman to get pregnant is during her menstruation.
- The best time to have sex to conceive is one week after the end of a woman's menstruation (12–14 days after the first day of menstruation).
- Women are the cause of infertility.
- A woman can get pregnant in her 40s if she is still menstruating.
- A woman who is breastfeeding cannot get pregnant.
- It is a woman's fault if her child is a girl.
- Women who are very thin find it harder to get pregnant.
- A man can make a woman infertile if he gives her a STI.
- Healthy couples can have difficulties conceiving.
- If a woman has not conceived in 2–3 years, she will never get pregnant.
- Medical doctors can provide treatment for infertility.



### Answers:

- **Men who drink and smoke too much are less fertile: TRUE**  
Alcohol and tobacco reduce sperm production and lower its mobility. This makes the sperm less effective. Women whose partner smokes or drinks often can get pregnant after their partner has stopped or reduced smoking and drinking for a few months.
- **The best time for a woman to get pregnant is during her menstruation: FALSE**  
This is a period when a woman will not get pregnant as she is shedding the inner lining of her womb and does not have eggs.

- **The best time to have sex to conceive is one week after the end of a woman's menstruation (12–14 days after the first day of menstruation): TRUE**  
A woman can get pregnant 12–14 days after the first day that she menstruates, as this is when she is most likely to release an egg.
- **Women are the cause of infertility: FALSE**  
There are many reasons why a couple may be infertile – some of these lie with the woman and some with the man.
- **A woman can get pregnant in her 40s if she is still menstruating: TRUE**  
A woman may get pregnant at any time from her first period until her menstruation stops. Most women menstruate until their mid-40s or early 50s and could still get pregnant at these ages.
- **A woman who is breastfeeding cannot get pregnant: FALSE**  
A breastfeeding woman can get pregnant, but many women do not get pregnant when they breastfeed because of the impact of breastfeeding on their hormones.
- **It is a woman's fault if her child is a girl: FALSE**  
The sex of a child is determined by the genes given to the child by its father.
- **Women who are very thin find it harder to get pregnant: TRUE**  
Very thin and very fat women find it more difficult to get pregnant. If a woman or her family wants her to get pregnant, it is important she has a healthy, balanced diet.
- **A man can make a woman infertile if he gives her a STI: TRUE**  
A man who has had sexual relations with another person can acquire a STI and pass it to his wife. The infection can cause a woman's tubes that allow the eggs to pass down to the womb to become blocked. If a couple has a problem with infertility and the man has had sexual relations with another person, it is very important that he and his wife are both checked for STIs. These can be treated and often fertility will be restored.
- **Healthy couples can have difficulties conceiving: TRUE**  
Many healthy couples have difficulties with conception. On average, it can take a year for a couple to get pregnant.
- **If a woman has not conceived in 2–3 years, she will never get pregnant: FALSE**  
Some couples with fertility problems can still conceive after many years of trying.
- **Medical doctors can provide treatment for infertility: TRUE**  
Many gynaecologists can do tests and provide treatment for infertility. Some of the treatment and advice they give is quite simple. It is not true that all treatment for infertility is very expensive.

**Exercise 5: Closing circle****10 minutes**

**Aim:** To wind down the session and bring it to an end.



**Description:** Final exercise to conclude what was learned, what will be shared with others and to give participants the opportunity to ask questions.

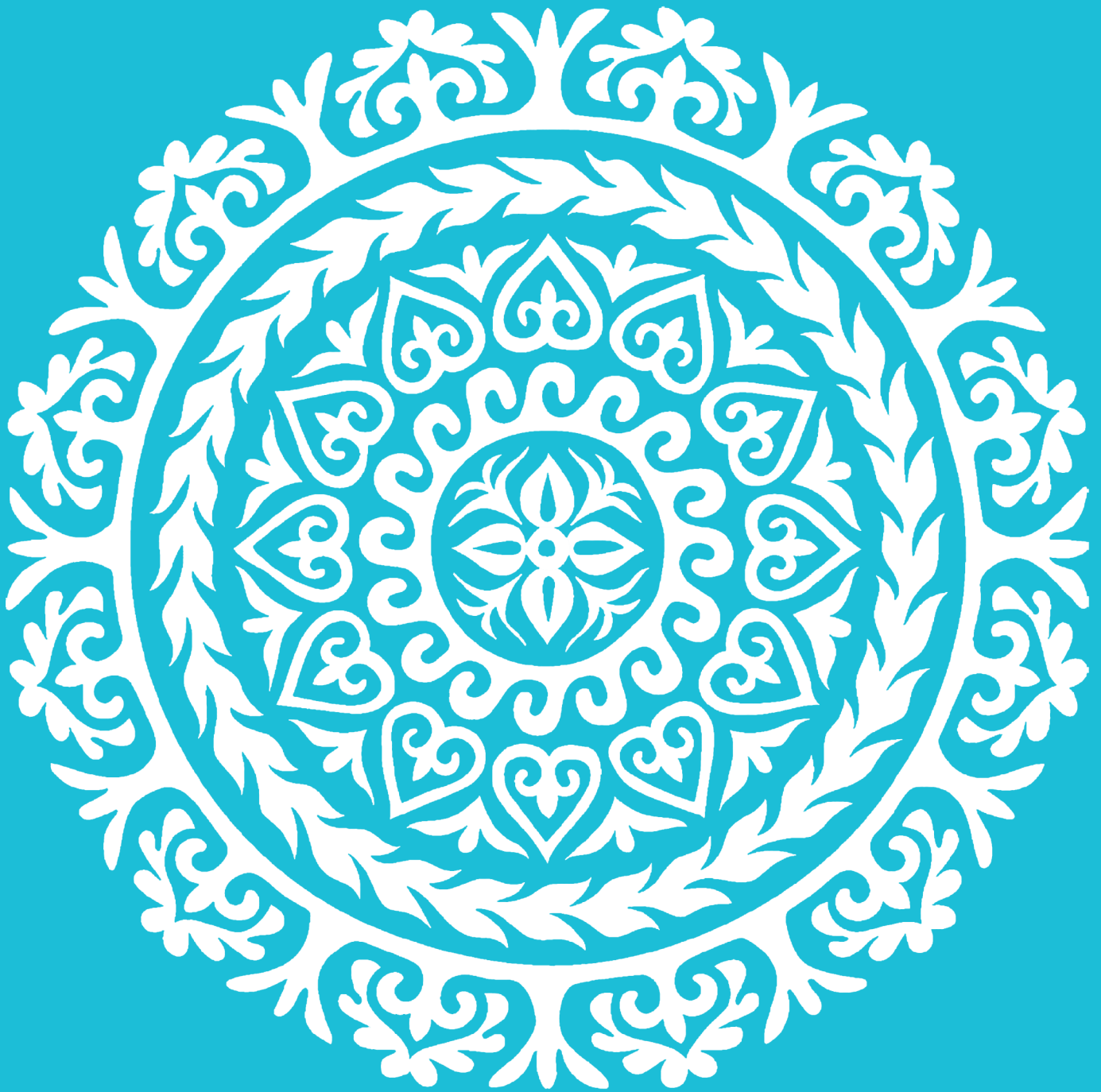


**Directions:**

1. Thank everyone for coming. Ask each member of the group to say one thing that they have learned today, one thing they will share with someone else and one thing that they are looking forward to doing before the next meeting.
2. Ask if anyone has any questions about today's session.
3. Remind everyone of the time and place for the next session and say you look forward to seeing them all again.

# Session 6:

Family health – Part 2



## Session 6: Family health – Part 2

**Purpose:** The purpose of this session to understand the important aspects pertaining to family health.

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**Materials:** Flip chart paper, pens, markers, hat, small pieces of paper.

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**Time:** 2 hours

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### Contents:

|                   |                               |            |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Exercise 1</b> | Introduction                  | 10 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 2</b> | Pregnancy care                | 40 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 3</b> | How ageing affects our health | 50 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 4</b> | Closing circle                | 10 minutes |

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## Exercise 1: Introduction

10 minutes



**Aim:** To warm participants up and make them feel able to be actively involved in the session.



**Description:** Welcome participants, recall what was discussed in the last session and introduce/discuss new topic.



### Directions:

1. Sit in a circle with the group. Everyone should be at the same level, including you.
2. Welcome everyone to the new session. Thank everyone for coming. Enquire about the latecomers and/or non-attenders.
3. Ask each participant to quickly recount something positive that has happened to them since the last session.
4. Review the last session. Ask participants to talk about what they learned.
5. Explain that we are going to further discuss family health in this session.

## Exercise 2: Pregnancy care

40 minutes



**Aim:** To build knowledge on how to look after pregnant women.



**Description:** Interactive discussion.



**Directions:**

1. Explain that we are now going to learn about caring for pregnant women. Ask the group to break into four small groups and give some flip chart paper to each.
2. On the paper, the groups should draw two women: one in early pregnancy and one in late pregnancy.
3. The first question for the group is: How does a woman know she is pregnant? What are the early signs? Ask the groups to mark these on the picture of the woman who is in early pregnancy.



**Signs include:** menstruation stopping, breasts getting sore and then bigger, nipples becoming darker, nausea or vomiting in the morning, getting tired, changed food preferences (e.g. wanting fruit or meat).

4. Ask the groups to compare their signs of early pregnancy. If anyone mentions a woman's stomach getting bigger, you should clarify that this is something that usually happens later in pregnancy. You should also mention that some women have some of these signs but not all of them. It is advisable for a woman to confirm the pregnancy at a clinic or by using an over-the-counter pregnancy test early so that she can get the right care from the start or that she can terminate the pregnancy if she does not want it.
5. The next question for the group is: What changes should a woman see as her pregnancy advances? Ask the groups to mark these on the picture of the woman who is in late pregnancy.



**Signs include:** stomach getting bigger; at 18–20 weeks the woman will start feeling fluttering in her stomach as the baby moves and later this will feel like kicking; there may be swelling of the fingers, hands and ankles; tiredness; her breasts will continue to get bigger; some pregnant women develop haemorrhoids (blood vessels and tissue in the anus); some get a thick white discharge from their vagina that can be itchy, which is called thrush (treatment for these two latter problems can be sought at pharmacies).

6. The next question for the group is: What are the danger signs in pregnancy, that is the things that may happen to a woman that signal she should go to a health facility without delay?



**Danger signs:** There are six main dangerous situations in pregnancy that require immediate care:

- **Vaginal bleeding:** In early pregnancy this is usually a sign that a woman is at risk of miscarrying. A woman who starts bleeding in early pregnancy should rest until she can be taken to a clinic or hospital for a check-up. If she has severe pain alongside the bleeding, she needs to go to the emergency room as she may have an ectopic pregnancy, which can be fatal.
- **Vaginal bleeding later in pregnancy:** This is a very serious problem as it may be due to the placenta that feeds the baby separating from the woman's womb. If this happens, the baby can die and if there is a lot of blood, the woman can die. A woman who bleeds about 20 weeks into her pregnancy or later should go to a clinic or hospital immediately.

- *Baby stops moving:* All women with healthy advanced pregnancies feel their babies kick and move around inside them. This can happen as often as 10 or more times in an hour. Sometimes women do not notice this as much when they are busy but when they sit down or lie quietly their babies get very active. If babies get stressed, they stop moving or do not move as often. If a woman feels her active baby has stopped moving, she should lie down on her side for a couple of hours and see if the baby starts moving again. If she does not feel 10 movements in two hours, she should immediately go to a clinic.
  - *Very rapid weight gain, severe headaches and visual disturbances:* It is normal in pregnancy for women to gain weight gradually and to have mild swelling of their hands and feet. If a woman gains weight very rapidly (e.g. a big change is seen in one or two weeks) and her legs and face are swelling, she may have a condition called pre-eclampsia, which is dangerous and requires treatment. Other signs may be severe headaches and visual disturbances (e.g. seeing flashing lights).
  - *Epileptic fit:* A pregnant woman who has an epileptic fit must go to the hospital immediately. This may be caused by high blood pressure and indicate a condition called eclampsia, which can be fatal.
  - *Sudden gush of fluid from the vagina:* This is usually a sign that a woman's water has broken. She needs to go to the hospital. Normally this is the first sign that a woman is going into labour, but sometimes contractions do not follow and the woman may need help to go into labour. It is also important to check all is well with the baby at this stage.
7. Now ask: What other care does a woman need in pregnancy? Brainstorm as a group and make a list.
  8. Conclude by saying that we all want pregnant women to be healthy so that they can deliver healthy babies into our families and societies. We all have an important role in supporting and protecting women who are pregnant.



#### **Care for women in pregnancy:**

- *Healthy diet:* Pregnant women need to eat fruit and vegetables, and meat and milk so that their babies are born strong.
- *Rest:* Pregnant women get tired and they need to have plenty of rest so their babies can develop. Many women find that doing hard physical work is more difficult during pregnancy, as changes in their bodies make it easier for them to get aches and pains.
- *Light exercise:* It's also unadvisable for women to rest completely in pregnancy so light exercise is good. Heavy lifting and hard work is not good.
- *Emotional support:* Pregnancy is a very emotional time and many women worry that their bodies are ugly when they are pregnant. It is important that their husbands and family show them that they love them.
- *Alcohol and tobacco:* Pregnant women should not drink alcohol or smoke as this harms the baby.



### Exercise 3: How ageing affects our health

50 minutes



**Aim:** To build knowledge on how ageing affects our health.



**Description:** Interactive discussion.



**Materials:** Flip chart paper, markers or pens.



**Directions:**

1. Explain that now attention will be turned to the health of men and women as they get older. We know that as people get older they may develop health conditions such as cancer or high blood pressure. But rather than discussing these today, explain that it is the changes that are normal or very common among older people, which are often hard to talk about, that will be examined.
2. Ask the group to divide into four small groups and give each a piece of flip chart paper. Ask them to draw an older woman and an older man.
3. Suggest the groups start with the person of the same gender as them. Ask: What are the changes that people of your gender experience when they get older? Mark the changes on the picture.
4. When they have had a discussion, call everyone to re-form the whole group and ask what they have learned. Does everyone agree? Should anything else be mentioned?
5. Then ask the groups to talk about the other gender. Ask: What are the changes that people of the other gender experience when they get older? Mark these changes on the picture.
6. When they have had a discussion, call everyone to re-form the whole group and ask what they have learned. Does everyone agree? Should anything else be mentioned?



**Changes men experience as they age:** Men age in different ways to women and there are significant differences among older men. Some men show very few signs of changing, while others can have many distressing changes in their bodies. Two common problems are difficulties with erections and problems passing urine.

*Difficulties with erection:* This is more common as men get older and can be due to an injury, illness or medication, or a psychological difficulty. Sometimes it is just part of ageing. Men can find this very distressing, especially if they have a younger wife. It is advisable to talk to a doctor, as it is possible to get medication to treat this problem.

*Difficulties passing urine:* Men have a part of their body called the prostate gland that many do not even know about until it causes them problems. As men age, the prostate gland usually gets enlarged. A sign of this is difficulty urinating. Some men have to go to the toilet very often, some have to wait a long time before they start or take a long time to finish, and sometimes passing urine can be painful. When these symptoms are severe, it is advisable to see a doctor and get treated.

**Changes women experience:** When women get older, their menstruation stops. This is called menopause and it is associated with many symptoms, which can be very distressing. These may last up to 10 years and are caused by changes in women's hormones.

*Signs of menopause:*

- *Menstruation stops:* At first, periods become irregular (much heavier or much lighter), then women start to miss monthly bleeds, then periods completely stop.
- *Hot flushes:* Women become very hot and sweaty. If this happens during the night, they may wake up feeling wet. This might be accompanied by a general difficulty to tolerate heat.
- *Losing interest in sex:* Many women lose interest in sex, but not all older women want to stop having sexual relations with their husbands. Women may feel that their vagina becomes dry and sometimes itchy.
- *Sleep disturbance:* Women in menopause may find it harder to get to sleep or stay asleep.
- *Depression or anxiety:* Many women experience depression or anxiety, especially if they worry that their youth is over and their husbands will no longer care of them. They may be embarrassed by their hot flushes and hormone changes may also make them depressed. People with depression may feel sad and cry but they can also be short-tempered and aggressive. Women may also feel that their memory is fading and they cannot concentrate as well as before. Women who understand what is happening to their bodies generally experience less depression or anxiety, but if there are persisting problems it is important to talk to a doctor about possible treatment.

*Weight gain:* Many women and men gain weight when they get older. This is partly due to the hormonal changes and sometimes arthritis, however, as most women and men do less work around the home and garden or fields when they are older and spend more of their day sitting down and potentially eating more, this all leads to weight gain. Weight gain makes it more likely for a woman or man to develop diabetes or high blood pressure. It is important to continue doing some physical work and/or exercise as we get older. Even walking for 30 minutes each day is beneficial and will help prevent diabetes and high blood pressure.

7. Conclude by saying that in this exercise we have discussed things that we often find very difficult or too private to talk about. It helps everyone – young and old – if we understand the problems that older people may face and know how to help.

**Changes both sexes experience as they age:** *Arthritis:* Both men and women often get arthritis as they age. Their joints start to swell and become painful and they often do not bend as well as they used to. Commonly, hips, knees and hands are affected. Various treatments that can be bought from a pharmacy can help such as a knee support or pain medication. If it becomes very severe, an operation might be needed.

*Incontinence:* Both men and women sometimes suffer from leaking urine as they get older. It is particularly common in women who have had several children. It is important to talk to a doctor about the problem, as it is possible for women to have an operation to treat it.

## Exercise 4: Closing circle

10 minutes



**Aim:** To wind down the session and bring it to an end.



**Description:** Final exercise to conclude what was learned, what will be shared with others and to give participants the opportunity to ask questions.

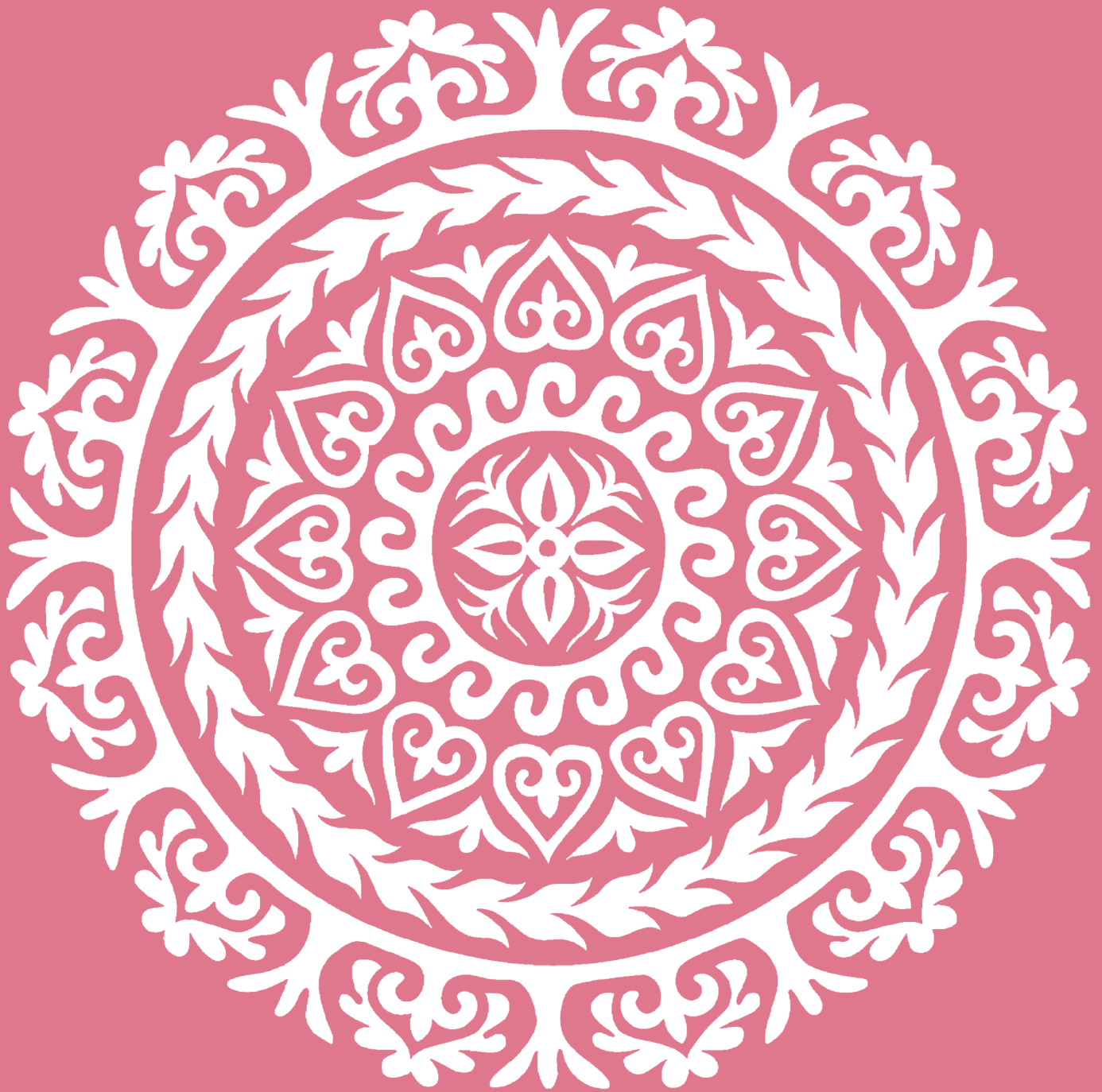


**Directions:**

1. Explain that this session has divulged a lot of new information. Say that you would now like to bring the session to a close with a reminder of how much knowledge and experience we already have to share among ourselves.
2. Ask the participant to your right to share with the group one new thing he/she has learned today. Then ask the next person to speak. Go around the circle, finishing with yourself, so that everyone has made a contribution. Ask each participant to identify one thing that they will share with someone else.
3. Finish off by thanking everyone for coming to the session. Arrange a mutually convenient time and place for the next session, before saying goodbye.

# Session 7:

Violence in relationships



## Session 7: Violence in relationships

**Purpose:** This session seeks to explore violence in relationships.

**Materials:** Flip chart paper, pens or markers.

**Special information:** Before commencing this session, find out if there are any women's organisations or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that provide services for abused women in your area. If so, find out their contact details.

*\* Please read the appendix on supporting participants who might be experiencing problems before commencing this session.*

**Time:** 2–2.5 hours

### Contents:

|                   |                                     |            |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Exercise 1</b> | Introduction                        | 10 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 2</b> | Positive and negative uses of power | 35 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 3</b> | Abuse in marital relationships      | 35 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 4</b> | Consequences of violence            | 40 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 5</b> | Closing circle and song             | 10 minutes |

## Exercise 1: Introduction

10 minutes



**Aim:** To warm participants up and make them feel able to be actively involved in the session.



**Description:** Welcome participants, recall what was discussed in the last session and introduce/discuss new topic.



**Directions:**

1. Sit in a circle with the group. Welcome everyone to the new session. Thank everyone for coming. Enquire about the latecomers and/or non-attenders.
2. Ask each participant to share with the group something positive that has happened to them since the last session.
3. Explain that power and abuse in relationships will be discussed in this session.

## Exercise 2: Positive and negative uses of power

35 minutes



**Aim:** To remind ourselves how we can show power and that there are different types of power, which affect us in different ways.



**Description:** A physical exercise conducted in pairs.



### Directions:

1. Divide the group into pairs. Ask each pair to think of an image, which they will act out, such as a photograph. They may speak but not move. The image will show one person in a position of power and another person in a submissive position. Give the pairs a few minutes to prepare, then ask them to swap (so that the powerful figure becomes the powerless and vice versa) to show how a person can exert power over another person in a different way.
2. Each pair should perform one of their scenarios to the rest of the group.
3. For each performance, ask the group: What type of power is being shown here? Ask the two actors to summarise in one or two words how it feels to have power and how it feels to be powerless.
4. Conclude by saying that we often think about power as exerting strength and sometimes violence, but there are also positive ways of showing power. Power comes from having knowledge and wisdom, there is power in being able to resolve disputes and there is power in being able to nurture and support a family. When we use power over someone in a negative way, we may feel good, but the receiving person may feel bad, scared or neglected, which are all negative emotions. If we use power in a positive way, then the receiving person also gets a positive emotion out of it. If none of the pairs showed power as something that can be positive, ask them to act out a scenario of power again, but this time to show that it can be positive – the power to do good.

### Exercise 3: Abuse in marital relationships

35 minutes



**Aim:** To enable participants to think about abuse in marital relationships and to distinguish between the use of physical force and other forms of abuse.



**Description:** Group discussion, followed by role play.



**Materials:** Flip chart paper, pens or markers.



#### Directions:

1. Explain that in this session abuse in marital relationships will be discussed, as we have all seen this either in our own families and/or neighbourhoods and communities.
2. As a whole group think about all the different forms of a buse in relationships. Make a list on a piece of flip chart paper.
3. Encourage the group to suggest non-physical and physical forms, and make sure that at least one example from each of the categories listed below has been suggested.



**Emotional and psychological abuse:** *insults (“you’re so ugly” or “you’re so useless”); a husband humiliating his wife in front of others; control e.g. a husband forbidding his wife to go beyond the yard of the home or stopping her from seeing family and friends; offering no help with domestic duties; a husband depriving his wife of access to food; a husband preventing his wife from using contraception or forcing her to have an abortion; a husband hurting something or someone she loves to punish and scare her; a husband not treating his wife as a proper family member; a husband telling his wife that he is considering marrying a new wife or having another partner; yelling, throwing things and threatening violence.*

**Financial abuse:** *refusing to give support to your child; a husband taking a wife’s earnings; not sharing money in the home fairly.*

**Physical and sexual violence may include:** *slapping, beating, pinching, hair pulling, threatening or attacking with a weapon; a husband forcing a wife to have sex or do something sexual she does not want to do; sexual violence against the wife from other family members.*

*If a man in the group says that he experiences abuse when his wife does not cook well, you should ask him how this hurts him. The forms of violence and abuse we are talking about from men (and sometimes their families) against women are hurtful and unfair.*

4. When the list of abuses is complete, discuss each point asking: Is this something that wives only experience from their husbands or may they also experience this from their mother-in-law or other members of the husband’s family?
5. Divide the group into small groups of three or four and ask them to come up with a short role play showing the ways in which partners may hurt each other. You may suggest that besides depicting the wife and the husband, one participant portrays the mother-in-law.



6. The small groups should present their role plays to the whole group. After each role play, ask the characters to stay in their roles for a few minutes and invite the rest of the group to ask the characters questions. The sorts of questions that might be asked are:
  - a. How does the wife feel when the husband abuses her?
  - b. Why does the husband abuse his wife? How does he feel?
  - c. What is the role of the other people present? Who are they and how do they feel?



*Many women find it particularly difficult to talk about the ways in which their partner abuses them as they feel that they are to blame. Encourage people to think about the situations of others if it is easier than talking about their own lives.*

7. End the role play by de-roling. Emphasise that although this kind of role play can evoke strong emotions, it is important to remember that it is just acting. Go around the group and have everyone say, for example, "My name is Shahriyor and I am not an abusive husband".

## Exercise 4: Consequences of violence

40 minutes



**Aim:** To encourage participants to think about the consequences of violence.



**Description:** Critical reflection.



**Materials:** Flip chart paper, pens or markers.



### Directions:

1. In this exercise, we are going to reflect on the consequences of violence for sufferers and perpetrators. Ask participants to divide into four groups and give each a piece of flip chart paper and pen or marker. Explain that we will start by considering violence by husbands against their wives.
2. Ask the small groups to divide the page into two columns. In one column, the groups should record all the consequences for women as people who experience violence and in the other column, they should write down the possible consequences men may face if they harm their wives.
3. Ask for the whole group to re-form. Ask one of the small groups to report what it has in its column summarising consequences of violence for wives. Does everyone agree? Did the other groups have anything else? Make sure participants consider the immediate consequences in terms of the wife's feelings, her health, impact on the couple's children, impact on the relationship and impact on the whole family.



**Consequences of violence for women (wives) may include:** *physical injuries that may even be fatal, depression, anxiety, fear, difficulty sleeping, being frightened of it happening again, hatred towards their husbands, divorce, suicide, reporting abuse to the police, shaming the family, losing a pregnancy, needing a hysterectomy.*

**Consequences of violence for men (husbands) may include:** *feeling guilty, feeling bad about themselves, depression, alcohol abuse, experiencing gossip, fear they will get punished, being arrested and possibly jailed and then not being able to earn money for the family, divorce, losing the wife's love, being shunned by friends or family.*

4. Ask the group what the consequences for children in families in which their mother is abused.



**Consequences for children:** *Children may become depressed and act out with aggression at home and/or school, may do poorly at school and may struggle to communicate with other children. Boys who witness violence at home might grow up to use violence themselves and girls are more likely to experience violence when they grow up. Children can also be hurt emotionally and financially if their parents get divorced.*

5. Conclude that there are many consequences of violence. When there is violence, everyone in the family suffers and this is why it is very important to prevent it.

## Exercise 5: Closing circle and song

10 minutes



**Aim:** To wind down the session and bring it to an end.



**Description:** Final exercise to conclude what was learned, what will be shared with others and to give participants the opportunity to ask questions.

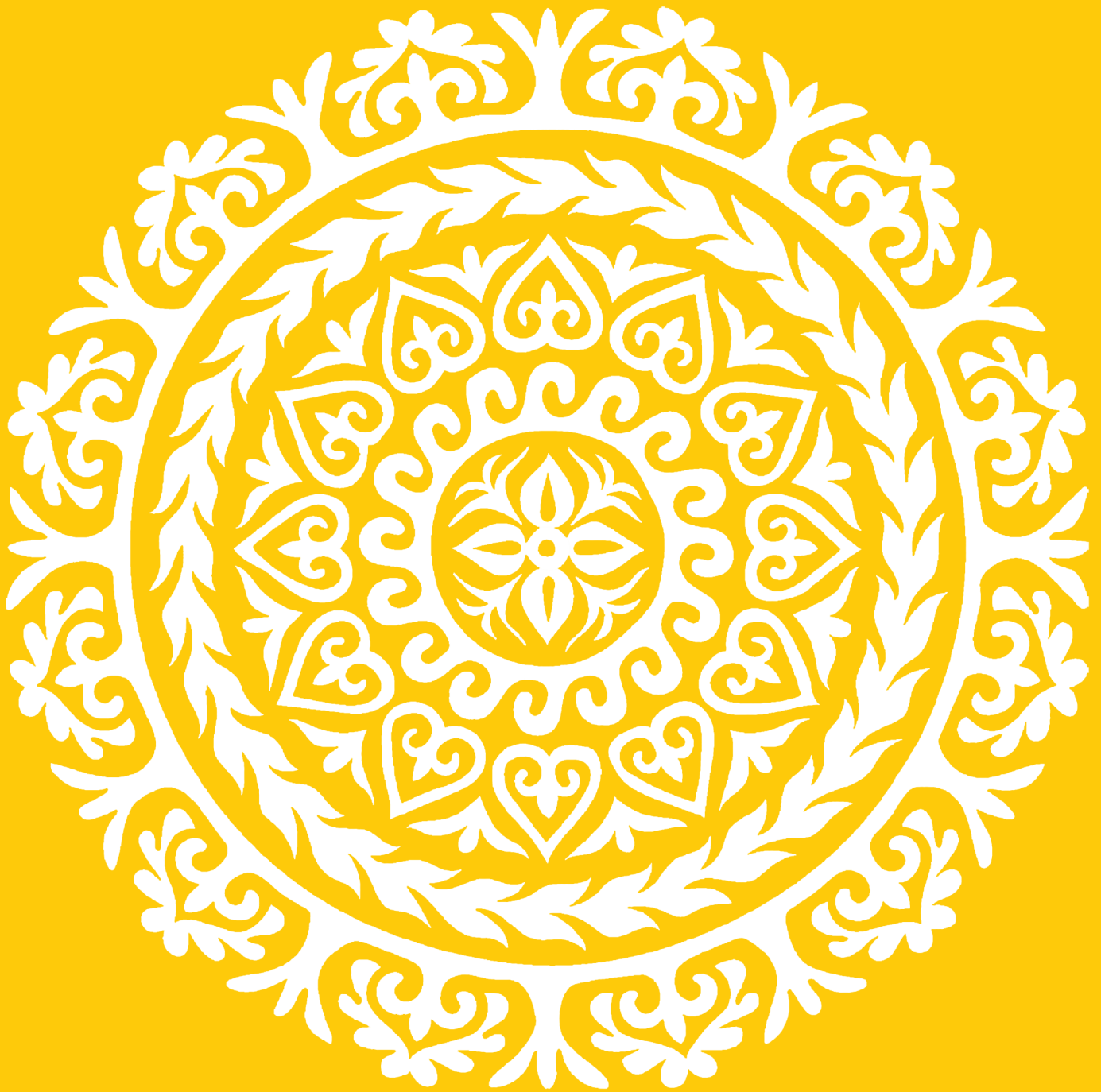


### Directions:

1. Explain that this session is now coming to an end and we have a closing circle.
2. Ask everyone to stand in a tight circle with you. Ask the first person to your left to put their right outstretched arm into the middle of the circle and say something they found difficult about the session and then something that they found good about the session. Ask her/him to use the phrases "I didn't like it when..."; followed by "I liked it when...".
3. Then, ask the next person to your left to place their right hand on top of the hand already in the middle of the circle and also say one thing they found difficult and one thing they found good about the session, and one thing they will share with someone before the next session.
4. Continue going around until all participants have their right hands placed in a stack on top of one another and have shared their positives and negatives about the session.
5. Then say that this stack of hands represents our strength together as a group.
6. Next, explain that we will talk more about how to support and help women experiencing violence and how we can stop violence in the next session. It would be good for everyone to think about what can be done before the next meeting.
7. Finish by asking someone to lead the group in a song

# Session 8:

Supporting women experiencing violence in relationships



## Session 8:

### Supporting women experiencing violence in relationships

**Purpose:** This session seeks to explore how women in abusive relationships can be helped.

**Materials:** Flip chart paper, pens or markers.

**Special Information:** Before commencing this session, find out if there are any women's organisations or (NGOs) that provide services for abused women in your area. If so, find out their contact details.

*\* Please read the appendix on supporting participants who might be experiencing problems before commencing this session.*

**Time:** 1.5 hours

#### Contents:

|                   |   |            |
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## Exercise 1: Introduction

10 minutes



**Aim:** To warm participants up and make them feel able to be actively involved in the session.



**Description:** Welcome participants, recall what was discussed in the last session and introduce/discuss new topic.



**Directions:**

1. Sit in a circle with the group. Welcome everyone to the new session. Thank everyone for coming. Enquire about the latecomers and/or non-attenders.
2. Ask each participant to share with the group something positive that has happened to them since the last session.
3. Explain that power and abuse in relationships will be further discussed in this session, as well as how abused women in the community can be helped.

## Exercise 2: Supporting abused women

30 minutes



**Aim:** To develop ideas for how to support abused women in the community.



**Description:** Brainstorming.



### Directions:

1. Explain that in this exercise we are going to consider how abused women can get help in the community, including how people like us can help when we see a woman being mistreated.
2. Split the participants into four groups and give each flip chart paper and pen or marker. Ask them to make a list of places and people from whom a woman can get help if she is experiencing abuse from her husband or a member of her family.



Sources of support may be **formal** (police, crisis centre) or **informal** (mother-in-law, father-in-law, neighbours, friends, wife's own family, trusted women village leaders).

3. For each source of support, ask each group to discuss among itself what the advantages of seeking this type of help are and what may be the associated difficulties a woman could encounter.



*This is a very important discussion as there is a law on domestic violence in Tajikistan<sup>2</sup> and women can get help from the police and crisis centres. However, doing so may bring about gossip and shame and therefore it may be difficult for a woman to stay in the marriage after seeking help. Some women experience severe violence and fear their husbands will kill them. In these cases, they might come to the conclusion that they will need to divorce their husband to be safe and will need support from a crisis centre or the police.*

4. Call the group together and ask one of the small groups to share its discussion on sources of support. Does everyone else agree? Are there any other suggestions?

1. Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on Prevention of Violence in the Family, adapted on 19 March 2013, <http://pdv.tj/en/LAW%20OF%20THE%20REPUBLIC%20OF%20TAJIKISTAN%20ON%20PREVENTION%20OF%20VIOLENCE%20IN%20THE%20FAMILY.docx>

### Exercise 3: Support for abused women from family and neighbours

30 minutes



**Aim:** To develop skills to support women experiencing violence as members of her family or neighbours.



**Description:** Role play.



#### Directions:

1. Explain that in this exercise we are going to go one step further and learn how we can best support women experiencing violence as members of her family or neighbours. There are a number of things that are very important and can be very helpful. Tell participants that these will be discussed as a group (see table above).
2. Draw an ear on the flip chart. Ask participants to guess what the first important thing is. Explain that most women who experience violence find it very difficult to talk about it. You can help a woman by offering to LISTEN to her. Ask the group: What are the characteristics of a good listener? Remind everyone of the listening skills exercise in Session 1 and mention that it is very important to not be judgemental when listening to people's stories and experiences.
3. Then write 'DO NOT BLAME HER' on the flip chart and say that you cannot support a person experiencing violence if you tell them it was their fault. Violence is the fault of the perpetrator and never the fault of the sufferer.
4. Write 'NO ONE EVER DESERVES VIOLENCE' on the flip chart. Discuss how anyone can do the wrong thing sometimes and that it is often necessary to have a conversation and ask why this has happened and how it can be prevented from happening again. This is the correct way to solve a problem, not through violence.
5. Write 'DO NOT TELL HER WHAT TO DO' on the flip chart. It is very important that a person who listens to another person who has experienced abuse does not tell that person what to do. Abused women should be asked what they think might make their situation better. They need to find the solutions themselves.
6. Write 'WHO CAN HELP?' on the flip chart. People providing support should ask the abused woman who she can try to get help from.
7. Write 'ASK ABOUT SAFETY' on the flip chart. As some men might severely injure or even kill their wives, it is important to ask women the degree to which they feel unsafe and if there is a sign of the violence escalating.



*Women are often worried about being able to leave as they may lose their ID and papers and not have their belongings. Abused women can prepare for the day when they may have to leave in a hurry by trusting a friend with a copy of their official papers and some money, or having a packed bag ready.*

*Women who experience violence from their husbands are always at risk. If they stay in the marriage they may experience more violence or may decide to commit suicide. Some men become especially violent when their wives try to leave them so there are also risks attached to leaving. For many women in Tajikistan being divorced is very difficult, especially if they do not have a job. Many women choose to stay in a bad relationship because they think it is better than being divorced or because they love their husband. These are very difficult decisions and women need to make them for themselves.*



8. Explain that now we will do a role play. Ask the participants to break into four groups and to develop a role play in which one participant acts as an abused wife and one as a neighbour who gives her support. It is very important that the neighbour asks the woman what has happened and offers good support.
9. The other members of the group should listen. After a few minutes they should discuss if they agree that the support given was the right support and whether all the key ways to show support (see table above) were included.
10. Now ask the other members of the group to adopt a role. One should be the husband and the others should be people who could help to mediate problems in the relationship to try stop the violence.
11. Now call everyone back together and ask each group to perform its role play.
12. Ask all the participants: Does everyone think this level of support will help?
13. Conclude by saying that violence against women hurts all of us and that we all have the power to try to stop it if we make it clear that we think it is wrong and that no woman deserves it. We have the power to stop violence against women!
14. Ask everyone to de-role.

## Exercise 4: Closing circle

10 minutes



**Aim:** To wind down the session and bring it to an end.



**Description:** Final exercise to conclude what was learned, what will be shared with others and to give participants the opportunity to ask questions.



**Directions:**

1. Explain that this session has covered a lot of areas which people find very difficult to discuss. Say that you would now like to bring the session to a close with a reminder of how much knowledge and experience we already have to share among ourselves.
2. Ask the participant to your right to share with the group one new thing he/she has learned today. Then, ask the next person to speak. Go around the circle so that everyone has made a contribution. Ask each person to identify one thing from this session that they will share with someone else.
3. Finish by thanking everyone for coming. Arrange a mutually convenient time and place for the next session.

# Session 9:

Changing behaviours



## Session 9: Changing behaviours

**Purpose:** The purpose of this session is to develop new skills for changing the ways in which we behave.

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**Materials:** Flip chart, pens or markers.

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**Time:** 2–2.5 hours

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### Contents:

|                   |  |            |
|-------------------|--|------------|
| <b>Exercise 1</b> | Introduction   | 10 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 2</b> | Hand push  | 10 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 3</b> | How we deal with conflict – Attack, avoid and manipulate | 40 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 4</b> | 'I' statements   | 40 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 5</b> | Taking control   | 30 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 6</b> | Closing circle   | 10 minutes |

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## Exercise 1: Introduction

10 minutes



**Aim:** To warm participants up and make them feel able to be actively involved in the session.



**Description:** Welcome participants, recall what was discussed in the last session and introduce/discuss new topic.



### Directions:

1. Sit in a circle with the group. Everyone should be at the same level, including you.
2. Welcome everyone back to the new session. Thank everyone for coming. Enquire about the late-comers and/or non-attenders.
3. Ask each participant to share with the group something positive that has happened to them since the last session.
4. Ask the participants what we learned during the last session.
5. Explain that we are going to develop new skills for changing the ways in which we behave in this session and will start with a game.

## Exercise 2: Hand push

10 minutes



**Aim:** To energise the group and introduce the idea of conflict.



**Description:** Participants form two lines and push against each other, followed by analysis.



### Directions:

1. Ask the participants to form two lines, facing each other. Each participant touches palms with the participant facing her/him in the other line. Call one line 'Line 1' and the other 'Line 2'.
2. Ask all the participants in Line 1 to start pushing against the person in Line 2, only using their palms. People in Line 2 can respond in any way they like.
3. After approximately 30 seconds, ask everyone to stop and change roles. This time, Line 2 members should push against Line 1 members, with Line 1 members responding however they like.
4. After another 30 seconds, ask everyone to sit down in a big circle. Ask participants how they felt doing this exercise. Did they respond by pushing back or by giving in, or doing something else? How did this relate to their real-life experience of conflict, for example, in their relationships? The question to answer is: When someone pushes you, do you give up or fight back? There are no right or wrong answers, however, our relationships are often influenced by how we respond in conflict.

### Exercise 3: How we deal with conflict – Attack, avoid and manipulate

**40 minutes**


**Aim:** To gain an understanding of aggressive, manipulative and passive behaviour.



**Description:** Group exercise.



**Materials:** Flip chart, pen or marker.



#### Directions:

1. Explain that this exercise will help us develop more skills for improving our communication and, consequently, relationships. There are many different ways to communicate and sometimes we do so in ways that are not helpful for influencing the behaviour of others. We would all like to be able to say what we feel and have the other person listen to us. However, sometimes in a conflict or disagreement, we attack the other person, sometimes we avoid conflict and sometimes we become manipulative. Most of us have used some of these strategies at one point or another. In this exercise, we are going to discuss how we can influence the behaviour of others or ways we respond when others try to influence us.
2. Begin by asking participants whether they are familiar with attacking, avoidance or manipulative behaviours, and to consider what types of behaviours can be categorised as each of these types. Add these as headings on a flip chart and brainstorm these types of behaviours with the group. List all the behaviours under their corresponding headings.

| Types of attacking, avoidance and manipulative behaviour |                                      |                              |
|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Attacking</b>   | <b>Avoidance</b>                     | <b>Manipulative</b>          |
| Shouting   | Withdrawing                          | Threatening to leave or kill |
| Interrupting   | Sulking in silence                   | Begging or pleading          |
| Exploding  | Avoiding conflict at all costs       | Guilt trips                  |
| Threatening ("If you don't do this...")                  | Talking behind someone's back        | Emotional blackmail          |
| Revenge ("I'll get you back for this...")                | Trying to forget about the problem   | Crying                       |
|  | Not being honest                     | Offering something           |
|  | Not saying what you think or feel    |                              |
|  | Pretending to agree                  |                              |
|  | Being polite but feeling sad or hurt |                              |

3. Remind the group that we all use some of these approaches sometimes. Often they may be the easiest way of dealing with a situation in the short term but in the long term they can create problems.

4. Remind the group that in a disagreement or when a difficult decision has to be made, we want the other person/people involved to understand our position and vice versa in order to come to an agreement that all parties are comfortable with and can stick to. These are the three elements of a good agreement (see table below).

| Three elements of a good agreement |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ✓                                  | All parties' positions are understood                    |
| ✓                                  | All parties feel comfortable with the agreement/solution |
| ✓                                  | All parties can stick with the agreement                 |

5. Now demonstrate with one of the participants how you could use all three types of behaviours when faced with a problem or conflict. Ask someone to read out the first part and you read the response.

**Mother:** *"I don't want you to go to college in Dushanbe. You need to stay at home and get married. No one wants to marry a woman who is too clever."*

**Daughter:** *"You are just jealous because you never had the chance to get an education. Do you want me to end up useless like you? You can forget it if you think I'm staying here one day longer."*

Ask the group whether this response was aggressive, passive or manipulative.

**Mother:** *"I don't want you to go to college in Dushanbe. You need to stay at home and get married. No one wants to marry a woman who is too clever."*

**Daughter:** *"You are my mother and I must obey you."*

Ask the group whether this response was aggressive, passive or manipulative.

**Mother:** *"I don't want you to go to college in Dushanbe. You need to stay at home and get married. No one wants to marry a woman who is too clever."*

**Daughter:** *"Ok I won't go but then I will end up poor like all my cousins. In 2–3 years, my husband will be in Russia and will leave me for a Russian woman and then I won't have anything to support the family with. It will be your fault that I had not been able to get an education and a job."*

Ask the group whether this response was aggressive, passive or manipulative.

6. Ask the group: Does attacking behaviour lead to a good solution? If not, why not.
7. Ask: Does passive or avoidance behaviour lead to a good solution? If not, why not?
8. Ask: Does manipulative behaviour lead to a good solution? If not, why not?



*The discussion should cover that in attacking behaviour, the attacker may impose his/her view, but the problem is unlikely to be solved. Just as in a battle, if the person attacked has more power than the attacker, they will win and the attacker will not achieve his/her goal. Passive behaviour does not address the underlying problems and leaves people unhappy. The use of manipulative tactics can result in a short-term solution, but usually makes people unhappy and people tend to dislike and/or avoid manipulative people.*



9. Now explain that there is a better way of solving conflicts by acting out the below scenario with a participant.

**Mother:** *"I don't want you to go to college in Dushanbe. You need to stay at home and get married. No one wants to marry a woman who is too clever."*

**Daughter:** *"I understand you worry about me being able to get a husband but I think I should go. It's only for two years and then I will be able to get a job and earn money. These days many people get married later and women who bring money into their home are more respected. I will also be able to help you when you are old."*

10. Ask the group what they think of this way of responding. Is it not more effective? Explain that in the next exercise, we will learn how we can communicate assertively. It is not just about what we say but also how we say it. Remind participants of the exercise in the first session that looked at how our body language plays a big part.

## Exercise 4: 'I' statements

40 minutes



**Aim:** To show how it is possible to deal with problems without antagonising the other party or withdrawing; to demonstrate an assertive but non-aggressive way of expressing feelings; to practise making non-judgemental statements and using a structure that can encourage rather than discourage difficult discussions.



**Description:** Group discussion and pair work.



**Materials:** Flip chart paper, pen or marker.



### Directions:

1. Explain that we are going to learn about assertive communication using 'I' statements.
2. Explain that there are four key elements in an 'I' statement. Write these on a piece of flip chart paper.  
**'I'** – The first element is 'I'. We have to be specific that we are talking about ourselves.  
**Feel** – The second element is a feeling or an emotion that you feel pertaining to the situation you want to change.  
**[The action or reason]** – The third element is the reason why you are feeling this way. This description should not feature blame of the other person.  
**[Solution]** – The fourth element is a suggested solution. It should not be a demand but a statement of what you would like.
3. Write a couple of examples and ask participants to identify the four elements.

### Examples:

- "I felt worried yesterday because you were planning with your friends to buy that expensive joma (Tajik national dress). If you want to spend money on big things, I would like us to discuss this beforehand as we do not have a lot of money and I do not want to be embarrassed when your friends find out that I cannot buy it for you."
- "I feel sad and concerned when you come home every night after drinking with your friends. I would like to see more of you and I would like us to have more money for the family. I would like it if we could agree on an amount of money that you can use with your friends so that we have enough money for expenses at home."
- "I feel pressured when you ask me to make you breakfast in the morning and I am sorry it's late. I would like us to share the work in the home because I have to feed and care for your two-month old grandson and my young daughter before I can help the adults."

These statements carry no blame and are phrased in a way that does not seek to annoy the listener. The expectations are presented in a non-judgemental manner (there is no "You must do so and so") and they do not accuse the listener. They state the speaker's expectations or hopes, but they do not demand that they be met.

4. Ask the participants to work in pairs and to first identify one aspect of their relationship with their husband or wife, or with someone else at home that they would like to change. Ask them to prepare

one 'I' statement that they could use to address this difficulty. Partners can help each other make their statements clear.

5. Call the group back together and ask the participants to share their statements. Give everyone else an opportunity to comment on them and offer suggestions how they might be improved.
6. Ask all participants to commit themselves to making one 'I' statement to somebody before the next session. You may suggest that they first try to make it in a simple context, for example, with a friend over a small problem. They can begin by saying "I feel happy when..." and see how this pans out.

'I' statements are a useful way of separating feelings from facts in order to clarify what the problem really entails. The formula may seem strange and unfamiliar, but with practice it can become an unconscious reaction rather than a laboured response.



*It is worth pointing out that 'I' statements can be used at work, the market or shops, with friends, on public transport or at any time when a person feels that their needs are not being met. They are not just to be used with partners.*

## Exercise 5: Taking control

30 minutes



**Aim:** To explore ways of taking control or feeling in control, rehearsing these ideas in front of a group, increasing confidence and finding more appropriate ways of presenting oneself.



**Description:** A group exercise looking at the ways we can use our own power in social situations.



### Directions:

1. Ask participants to lie on the ground.
2. Ask them to imagine that they are feeling completely useless, with no resources, no confidence and no control. Then, slowly, they should rise and start to feel better about themselves and gradually take control until they can act as someone who has complete power over their life and confidence. They move up a sliding scale from 1 (feeling completely useless, no control) to 10 (confident and totally in control).
3. Everyone walks around the training area, slowly changing their behaviour and actions as they move up their scale. When everyone has reached 10, they should stop walking.
4. You could ask a few participants to demonstrate their movements from 1 to 5, others from 5 to 10. How often do the participants feel they do this exercise in everyday life? What do they feel as they move up or down the scale? How can we apply this to our daily lives?

## Exercise 6: Closing circle

10 minutes



**Aim:** To wind down the session and bring it to an end.



**Description:** Final exercise to conclude what was learned, what will be shared with others and to give participants the opportunity to ask questions; remind participants to practise making 'I' statements.



### Directions:

1. Thank everyone for coming. Ask each participant to say one thing that they have learned from this session, one thing that they are looking forward to doing before the next session and one thing that they intend to share with another person before the next session.
2. Ask if there are any questions about today's session.
3. Remind participants to think about the four-point plan ('I' statements) for taking responsibility for our own actions and encourage them to make use of it at least once before the next session.
4. Remind everyone of the time and place for the next meeting and say you look forward to seeing them all again.

# Session 10:

Being assertive and showing appreciation



## Session 10: Being assertive and showing appreciation

**Purpose:** This session helps with building or improving assertiveness.

**Time:** 2.5 hours

### Contents:

|                   |                              |            |
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| <b>Exercise 1</b> | Introduction                 | 10 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 2</b> | Saying “no”                  | 30 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 3</b> | Developing persuasion skills | 30 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 4</b> | Expressing appreciation      | 30 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 5</b> | Assertive responses          | 30 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 6</b> | Closing circle               | 10 minutes |
| <b>Exercise 7</b> | Imaginary gifts              | 10 minutes |

## Exercise 1: Introduction

10 minutes



**Aim:** To warm participants up and make them feel able to be actively involved in the session.



**Description:** Welcome participants, recall what was discussed in the last session and introduce/discuss new topic.



**Directions:**

1. Sit in a circle with the group. Welcome everyone to the new session. Thank everyone for coming. Enquire about the latecomers and/or non-attenders.
2. Ask each participant to share with the group something positive that has happened to them since the last session.
3. Remind participants that in the last session we learned how to communicate assertively using 'I' statements. Ask how many people have tried out these statements since the last session.
4. Explain that we are going to discuss assertiveness in this session and will start with learning how to say "no".



## Exercise 2: Saying “no”

30 minutes



**Aim:** To help participants find effective ways of saying “no” to situations which they are being forced into.



**Description:** Role play.



### Directions:

1. Start by explaining that it is often difficult to clearly say/ask for what we want. Sometimes we agree to things even if we do not want them because the other person expects that saying “no, I don’t want to!” is too difficult. In this exercise, we are going to share our experiences of saying “no” and practise saying “no” in different ways to make it clear how we feel and what we want to say without offending the other person.
2. Ask each person to share an experience of a time in their life when they have said “no”. Who did they say it to? What did they say no to? What happened?
3. Explain that even though women are often expected to not say “no” in Tajik society, everyone often has to say “no” to things in their lives.
4. Explain to the group that they will be doing role plays of two different kinds of situations: In the first, one person will say “No, not now” in a way that doesn’t hurt or offend the other person, but helps them to listen and understand the person’s needs. In the second situation, the person saying “no” really means “no”.
5. Divide the group into pairs and suggest that one should act as a mother and the other as her son. The mother should request something from the son and he should say “no” or “no, not now”. Give pairs 2–3 minutes to rehearse their scenarios.
6. Call everyone back into a circle and ask each pair to share their scenario. Afterwards, ask: Does everyone agree that the son said “no” in a way that was effective and assertive? How can a son say “no” to his mother without being disrespectful? Ask the participants who acted as the mothers how it felt when the sons said “no” to them.
7. Ask the participants to re-form in their pairs and suggest that one person should now act as a mother-in-law and the other as her daughter-in-law. The mother-in-law should request something from the daughter-in-law and the daughter-in-law should say “no” or “no, not now”. Given pairs 2–3 minutes to rehearse their scenarios.
8. Call everyone back into a circle and ask each pair to share their scenario. Does everyone agree that the daughter-in-law was able to say “no” in a way that was effective and assertive? How can a daughter-in-law say “no” to her mother-in-law without being disrespectful? Ask the mothers-in-law how it felt when the daughter-in-law said “no” to them.
9. Ask the participants to re-form in their pairs and suggest that one should now act as a wife and the other as her husband. The husband should request something from the wife and she should say “no” or “no, not now”. Given pairs 2–3 minutes to rehearse their scenarios.
10. Then call everyone into a circle and ask each pair to share. Does everyone agree that the wife was able to say “no” in a way that was effective and assertive? How can a wife say “no” to her husband without being disrespectful? Ask the husbands how it felt when the wife said “no” to them.
11. Ask the group: In which other ways can these characters say “no” without showing disrespect?



There are many different ways of saying “no”. It is generally important that we do it in a way that is respectful. This means we can:

- use persuasion;
- offer alternatives;
- explore the consequences and suggest a different course of action; and
- show a gap in the other person’s argument, but in a respectful way.

### Exercise 3: Developing persuasion skills

30 minutes



**Aim:** A quick game to change the pace and challenge the participants.



**Description:** Pair work.



**Directions:**

1. Explain the following to the participants, acting it out as you go along:  
"We have seen how our body language can influence other people's responses to us. For instance, if someone is acting aggressively towards us, they may be leaning forward, with clenched fists. By changing our body language, we can improve/change situations. For instance, if we are sitting, we can relax our shoulders, uncross our arms, open our palms upwards, uncross our legs, hold our heads straight, look straight at the aggressor...all these things can create a more measured response in the aggressor!"
2. Now ask the participants to divide into pairs. The first one will act as the aggressor and the other will act as the persuader; then they will swap roles. The aggressor must hold his/her hand up in a very tight fist to show he/she is feeling very angry. The persuader has to try to persuade the aggressor to undo his/her fist. The persuader should use all his/her skills to persuade the aggressor to calm down and open his/her fist. The persuader and aggressor must not touch each other, but the persuader can say or do anything that he/she thinks will work to calm down the aggressor and persuade him/her to open his/her fist. If the aggressor thinks that the persuader has done a good job at persuading him/her, he/she can open his/her fist. But they must not give in too easily! Give the pairs five minutes each way to try out their persuasion techniques on each other.
3. See by a show of hands how many people managed to persuade their partners to open their fists. Praise and encourage everyone. Ask the participants to discuss what they have just experienced in this exercise and how this applies to their own relationships.

## Exercise 4: Expressing appreciation

30 minutes



**Aim:** To practice expressing appreciation, to practice all the skills that we have developed in Zindagii Shoista.



**Description:** An interactive group exercise.



### Directions:

1. Ask the participants to divide into pairs and to share with their partner two things that they really love about their husband or wife.
2. Now imagine that your partner is your husband/wife and verbally express how much you love or appreciate those two things about them.
3. Then, ask the pairs to think of two things that they really like and appreciate about their mother-in-law or father-in-law (or if they are older, about their daughter-in-law or son-in-law). Now imagine your partner is that person and express your appreciation.
4. Call everyone back together. Ask 2–3 people to share their statements.
5. Ask the group: How did expressing your appreciation make you feel?
6. Explain that it is very important that we express our feelings towards and appreciation of those around us. Our homework is to share these statements at home.

## Exercise 5: Assertive responses

30 minutes



**Aim:** To put everything we have learned together and use the skills to identify a conflict at home and find solutions.



**Description:** An interactive session with role play.



### Directions:

1. Explain that participants should recap the main skills and ideas learned during Zindagii Shoista, including:
  - a. understanding the pressure we are under due to how we live and what we expect of men and women;
  - b. understanding what is abuse;
  - c. understanding how we can help when there are problems at home and support women who experience violence;
  - d. understanding how we can address problems assertively; and
  - e. understanding how we can use 'I' statements and communicate better.
2. Ask participants to break into four groups and develop a role play. The role play should show a situation of unhappiness and violence at home. Give each group a few minutes to plan and rehearse this role play.
3. Next ask the participants to each play a role that helps to solve problems and make the home happier.
4. Remind participants that the main sufferer of violence should also play a role in solving the problem. He or she should talk to someone about the problem and work out what he/she would like to change to make things better. This should be realistic. Then use an 'I' statement to have a conversation that seeks to help change the situation.
5. Call the groups together and ask each group to present its role play. For each one ask: What are the types of abuse and violence that are demonstrated? Can you see good listening skills being used to help the abused person? What are some solutions? Can you identify the 'I' statement being used?
6. Ask the participants to de-role and explain that this exercise has brought together all of our new skills. Our challenge is now to use these in our homes and in the community to build greater harmony. This exercise has shown that everyone has a role in resolving violence, even the people living with violence themselves.
7. Say that one of the plays developed in this exercise will be presented in the last peer group meeting. Agree with the group which one it should be.
8. Conclude by saying that in the next session there will be an opportunity to make one request to your husband or wife and the older men and women (or younger men and women). This request should be something very important designed to help build family harmony. What should the request be? Participants need to agree on the request and agree who will be the spokesperson for the peer group.

## Exercise 6: Closing circle

10 minutes



**Aim:** To wind down the session and bring it to an end.



**Description:** Final exercise to conclude what was learned, what will be shared with others and to give participants the opportunity to ask questions.



**Directions:**

1. Thank everyone for coming. Ask each person to say one thing that they have learned today and one thing that they are looking forward to doing before the next meeting. Ask each participant to identify one thing they will share with another person.
2. Ask if there are any questions about today's session.
3. Remind everyone of the time and place for the final meeting and say you look forward to seeing them all again there. Say that we will end with one last game.

## Exercise 7: Imaginary gifts

10 minutes



**Aim:** To give a sense of sharing and appreciation.



**Description:** Group exercise in which each participant receives a 'gift'.

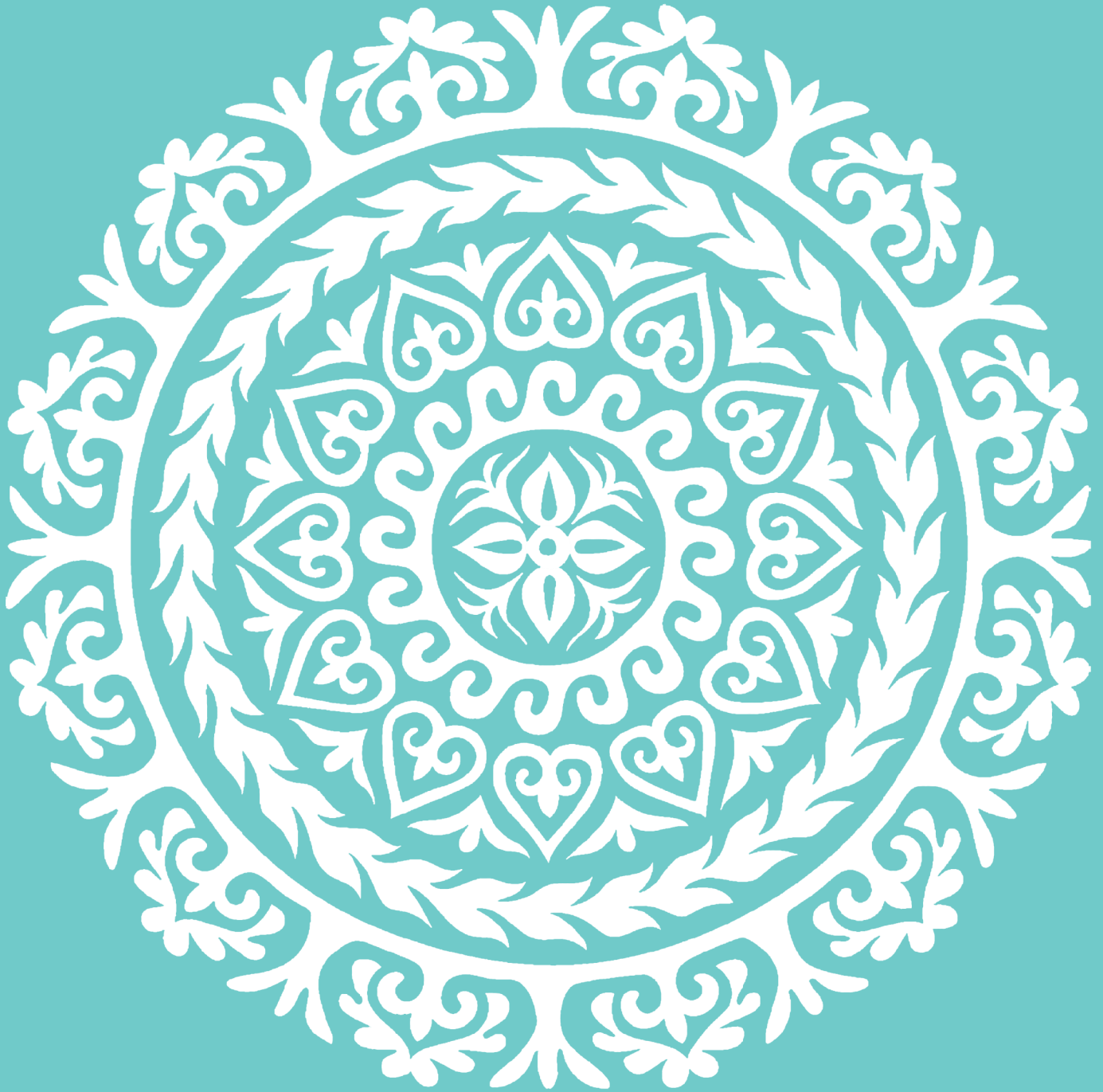


**Directions:**

1. Start off by pretending to hand a big present to the person on your left. Say his or her name, and then say that you would like to give them a present, which you know they would really like. For instance, if the person standing next to you is called Subhiya and you know she likes chocolate, you could say, "Subhiya, I would like to give you a year's supply of chocolate!" Then, pretend to pass this to her.
2. Then, this person turns to the person on his/her left offering him/her an imaginary gift of something he/she really likes. This goes around the circle, until you end up being given a 'present' by the person on your right.
3. Finish by thanking everyone for attending the session. Check with everyone that they all know the time and location and can come to the final meeting of all the peer groups.

# Session 11:

Final peer group meeting





## Session 4: Final peer group meeting



**Purpose:** To share peer group ideas and promote conversation and empathy.



**Participants:** Members of all four peer groups.



**Time:** Maximum 2 hours.



### Directions:

1. Thank everyone for coming. Reintroduce yourself and let each of your co-facilitators reintroduce themselves.
2. Explain that all peer groups have been performing role plays and that they have produced some great ideas. In this meeting, the peer groups will have a chance to see the work of all the groups. Explain that this is not a competition but an opportunity to share ideas. Explain that you know that some groups are feeling nervous about presenting their ideas in public and encourage them to be brave. Encourage the whole audience to support each presentation.
3. Peer groups should be asked to decide among themselves in which order they will perform.
4. Each peer group should perform a role play about family happiness and unhappiness. After each one, ask the entire group: What was the source of unhappiness or mistreatment shown? Is this common in your community? Do you agree that it is a mistreatment?
5. Discuss what the most important differences between happy and unhappy families are.
6. Discuss whether there are any differences between how the male and female peer groups and the older and younger groups showed mistreatment in the role plays. Do these differences reflect different gender expectations and roles in society? In what way?
7. Discuss: What can be done in the unhappy families to make them happy?
8. Explain that each of the peer groups was asked to make one special request to the groups of the other gender and age group for a change they would like to see that could help increase family harmony.
9. Ask the four spokespersons from the groups to come forward. They should stand together and take turns to make the special request and explain why it will improve family harmony.
10. Conclude by saying that each group has made a request and it is important that these are considered. Then invite any participant who would like to share their last thoughts about the Zindagii Shoista workshop.



*This meeting is important because it allows participants to voice their concerns to the other community members. It also enables them to consider how they could work together to find solutions or strategies to help members in the community who are experiencing problems. This is valuable groundwork for developing greater understanding between different sections of the community. However, it is also important for participants to work in their peer groups. Do not be tempted to abandon this. There is still a lot of sensitive material to be covered in further sessions, which require the privacy and safety of a peer group.*

## APPENDIX: Supporting participants with problems

It is very common for facilitators to become aware of a range of problems participants are facing when running the workshops. The following is a guide for how to deal with these situations.

First, it is important for a facilitator to remember that he/she will never be able to solve the problems in participants' lives, nor is it even desirable that a facilitator does this. This programme is about social empowerment and seeks to build skills that enable the participants to be able to address their own problems. It is much better to help people address their own problems than for facilitators to take these on themselves.

When you become aware of problems, you can do a number of things:

- List attentively, sympathetically and non-judgementally – in many cases you will find that this is what is most valued and that participants recognise that you cannot solve their problems and that this is not your role.
- Ask the participant what they would like to happen – you should not take action or assist with an action that participants have not requested.
- Provide information – before you start the workshops, you should find out some basic information, such as where the health facilities are in the area and what services are available, where mental health services can be accessed, where the police station is, as well as information about any NGOs in the area and the services they provide.
- Form an opinion as to whether there is a local service provider that may be able to provide some more assistance. This would depend on the nature of the problem.

### What type of problems may be encountered?

- **Domestic violence:** Many participants will disclose experiences of domestic violence. This training is intended to help them find their own solutions and you should share information about local NGOs that support women in Session 7. Participants should make their own decisions about whether to use any outside help.
- **Rape:** You might occasionally learn a participant has been raped. If this happened sometime in the past and has not been reported to the police, you may want to discuss the option of lodging a police report. The advantages of reporting rape are justice for the victim and punishment for the rapist that might prevent him from raping again. The disadvantages are potential gossip, divorce, further victimisation from the police, revenge from the rapist, family disharmony (if he is a family member) and the woman may be blamed. It is a sad fact that in most countries very few rapists are jailed. Therefore, we would advise you to carefully invite a participant to weigh up the pros and cons before reporting a case from the past. She may be better off going to a women's NGO and receive counselling.
- **Child abuse:** We suggest not getting involved in cases that are heard about as gossip. If you hear of a situation of ongoing child abuse, we would advise that you talk with the child's family (if it is not abuse from within the family) and offer to help connect it with a NGO that can provide ongoing assistance. If it is abuse within the family, it is better to connect the person who discloses abuse directly with an NGO.
- **Mental health problems:** Depression and/or anxiety are quite common mental health problems and are caused – and aggravated – by violence and disharmony in the home. We hope that the sessions will improve life for the family and this in itself will make many participants feel happier and less anxious. If you are made aware that a participant is severely depressed and that the workshops and the chance to talk about problems has not provided relief, then you should advise this person to seek mental health services.





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TO PREVENT VIOLENCE  
A Global Programme To Prevent  
Violence Against Women and Girls

