Module 3

Knowing and Understanding My Adolescent
Module Overview

The family, particularly, the parents, should be the first “someone” whom the adolescents should turn to in times of trouble. They are the ones who play a major role in guiding their adolescent as the latter goes through the various stages of development. During adolescence, the family/parents still serve as a source of social, economic and emotional support. Yet while adolescence is a time of great and dramatic physical and emotional change, it does not need to be a time of misunderstanding and conflict. Many parents feel that adolescence is typically associated with rebellion and anti-social behavior — this is not usually the case. This stage offers a time for adolescents to think about the world in a whole new way, which opens the door for establishing a self identity and increasing social interaction. It is important that parents recognize this important phase. Parents should let their adolescent explore the world and learn things for themselves, yet, still provide them with the necessary advice and guidance.

This Module serves to educate the parents about their adolescent. Parents should recognize that with proper guidance “adolescents are very bright individuals who have a tremendous amount to contribute to development if their energies are channeled into constructive activities.” They will also realize that balancing guidance and discipline with freedom and acceptance is the ideal way to help adolescents through the changing years. And while walking this fine line can be a challenge to both parent and adolescent, the former should work hard to develop the trust and confidence of their adolescent and thereby empower them to make the right choices and responsible decisions.

Parent and adolescent are journeying together! This is the best indication of a healthy and harmonious relationship between the two. The more that parents learn about their adolescents, the more they will understand them; and vice versa. The more they know and understand each other, the more pleasant the journey can be!

This Module is composed of the following sessions:

- Session 1: Rediscovering the Journey of Adolescence
- Session 2-A: Discovering Human Sexuality
- 2-B: Understanding Fertility (Fertility Awareness)
- Session 3-A: Confronting Threats and Risks of Adolescents
- Session 3-B: Protecting My Adolescent
Session 1: Rediscovering the Journey of Adolescence

Objectives:

By the end of the session, the participants will be able to:

1. Understand what the adolescents are going through in the context of the principles of human development;
2. Reflect on the key events/changes they are experiencing with their adolescent children and identify ways to positively handle and cope with the challenges of adolescence;
3. Clarify and resolve worries, concerns, and fears related to changes during puberty and adolescence;
4. Appreciate how the four (4) core challenges of adolescence impact on their relationship with their adolescent children; and
5. Gain new insights on how they can become better parents to their adolescents;

Time Allocation: Three (3) hours (suggested)

Materials needed:
Flip charts
Metacards
Pentel pens
Masking tape
Pictures/drawings for Opening Activity

Opening Activity

Option 1: “Flashback”

1. PREPARE the following drawings/pictures with the respective labels
   — Riding a Rollercoaster
   — Climbing a Mountain
   — Walking on a Hanging Bamboo Bridge
   — Going through a Long, Dark Tunnel.

2. POST each drawing strategically in the 4 corners of the room. If you are unable to prepare the illustrations/pictures, just post the labels in the 4 corners of the room.

3. INTRODUCE the activity by saying:
   A lot of metaphors/imageries have been used to try to capture the essence of adolescence. One of these is that adolescence is like taking a journey. As
you look around, notice the four (4) illustrations or labels which correspond to the four (4) ways which is often used to describe this journey. Today, let us look back and try to capture for ourselves what the period of adolescence feels like to each one of us.

4. GIVE the following instructions:
   — Just like your adolescent children, all of you have undergone the period of adolescence. Looking back when you were younger and adolescent, how did you generally feel during this time? Which of these four (4) illustrations best capture your experiences as an adolescent?
   — Based on what you think, go and stand in the corner which you think best describes what you are experiencing or have experienced.

5. CLOSELY OBSERVE participants and TAKE NOTE of those who seem to have difficulty choosing their spot.

6. Once the participants have made their choices, TELL them to share among themselves the reason why they chose this particular spot. Ask them to focus on feelings and experiences which they feel highlight what the period of adolescents was/is like for them. Give them 5-10 minutes for the sharing. DO NOT ALLOW THEM TO SIT DOWN.

7. If there are more than six (6) participants in any spot, DIVIDE them further so that there are no more than six (6) in any group.

8. Ask each buzz group to summarize their sharing by choosing 3-5 words/adjetives that best describe the experiences they have undergone in their teens and the 3-5 top reasons why they chose their particular spot.

9. Allow each buzz group to report. PRINT their responses on the board. PREPARE the following matrix to facilitate presentations and discussions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Riding a rollercoaster</th>
<th>Climbing a Mountain</th>
<th>Walking on a hanging bamboo Bridge</th>
<th>Going through a long dark tunnel</th>
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10. In PROCESSING the activity:
    — FOCUS on significant similarities and differences.
    — SHOW inter-relationships of reasons and perceptions.

11. SYNTHESIZE the activity.

12. LINK the activity with the session saying:
Enhancing the capacities of your adolescents and responding to their needs require a deeper understanding of what they are going through at their present stage. It is only by having an open mind to their behaviors, their joys and pains, their dreams and passions, and all the things that they are undergoing at their current stage of development that you as parents would know them and better understand them. Thus, you would become their partners in their development. It is, therefore, worthwhile to discover or rediscover the journey of adolescents towards development.

13. PROCEED to your KLPs.

**Option 2: “Passing Scenes”**

1. INTRODUCE the activity by saying:

   Your lives and your memories paint a thousand pictures. Every experience you have, every passage that you make, paints a picture comparable in beauty and color to the scenery around you. Adolescence is a passage. The experiences of adolescence can be captured in pictures.

2. HANG/POST the pictures in different areas inside the room. PROVIDE ample space between pictures.

3. GIVE the following instructions:

   “I will be showing you four (4) pictures. From these pictures, choose one which for you best portrays the experiences of adolescence and best depicts what the passage of adolescence is all about. We will have two (2) rounds. After the second round, go to the place where the picture you have chosen is hanging. Stand there until I give you the next instructions.”

4. ALLOW participants to walk around and scrutinize the pictures.

5. After about three (3) minutes, TELL THEM to go to the spot where the picture they have chosen to represent what adolescence is.

6. TELL THEM there can only be at most six (6) participants per picture. The rest then should move on and stand near their second choice.

7. Once all participants have made their choice, TELL THEM to discuss among themselves the reason why they chose this picture.

8. WRITE this as a guide question to help them in their discussions: “In what way does this picture capture the feelings and experiences that adolescents go through as they make this passage?”
9. ASK the group to report/share their discussions.

10. SYNTHESIZE the discussions.

11. Link the insights from this activity to the session saying:

   “Enhancing the abilities of our adolescents and responding to their needs require a deeper understanding of what they are going through at their present stage. It is only by having an open mind to their behavior, their joys and pains, their dreams and passions, and all the things that they are undergoing that we as parents could know them and better understand them. Thus, you would become their partners in their development. It is, therefore, worthwhile to discover (or rediscover) the journey of adolescents towards development.”

12. Proceed to discuss your KLPs.

KEY LEARNING POINTS

☑ Becoming a parent is one of life’s most important opportunities. It also poses a difficult but rewarding challenge.

   — Unfortunately, it does not come with an instruction manual or guidebook.

   — It demands from you the ability to meet the demands of building a happy and healthy family, and raising children who are happy, caring, competent and confident.

☑ Parenting is a lifetime profession. Having children is a binding and irreversible decision for life. It is a decision that affects your personal life, that of the child and that of your whole family.

ASK the participants: “How did you learn to become a parent?” ASK 2-3 participants to SHARE their experiences.

Before discussing this KLP, ASK the participants to SHARE how they arrived at a decision to have a child/children.
You are parents for life. It is not a job you can resign from or something you can just leave behind and give up.

It must always be well thought of, made with careful consideration and serious preparation.

It should not be left to chance or sheer luck.

ELABORATE on these statements. CITE examples.

☑ Parenting can be the most rewarding work of adult life.

Nothing brings more joy and pride than a happy, productive, self-confident and loving adolescent.

Sometimes, as adolescents move toward independence they can cause their parents stress and grief to the point where parents worry a lot about how their son or daughter is doing.

Many of the challenging aspects of transition are normal and while stressful, should not unduly alarm parents.

☑ Adolescence is a crucial part of human development. To better understand this process, parents need to understand the basic principles of human development.

The more you know about what is happening to your adolescent, the better you can cope with the changes and transition he/she is experiencing.

POST meta cards or visuals corresponding to each of these principles.

ASK, “In what ways do you think you are still growing? What happens if one were to stop growing?”

CONCRETIZE by citing or drawing out from participants’ examples or experiences of defining moments in their life (e.g., retreats, trainings/seminars, heart aches, moving to a new school or residence, death or departure of a loved one, family break-up.)
There are six (6) principles of human development.

**PRINCIPLE ONE: Human development is a life-long process.**

- We never stop growing. Even you as parents and other elders are still growing.
- What and who you are today is a result of all your experiences from the time you were conceived.
- Experiences in your life which shaped your growth and had a significant impact on you, are the defining moments of your life.
- To better understand and relate with your adolescents, you need to be aware of what they consider as the defining moments of their life. Knowing these will give you insights on what they value and cherish most.

**ASK participants for examples/experiences which they think demonstrate this principle.**

**PRINCIPLE TWO: We are active in our own development.**

- Your physical characteristics and behavior influence others and how you communicate and relate with others.
- Their response in turn also influences you, e.g., our own view of yourself and the attitudes, values and behavior you choose to have.
- You also influence your own development by shaping and selecting the environment you are in.

**ASK participants what they think are the effects/consequences of the environment on a person’s growth.**

**ASK participants to compare their environment when they were growing up vis-à-vis the environment of the present generation**

**DEEPEN discussions. SHARE examples/experiences highlighting how the difference between the old and present generations can have both positive and negative effects.**

- Your environment includes not only your physical surroundings but the network of relationships and activities that you are part of.
- You often choose environments that match your own personalities, interests, preferences and goals.
● There may also be instances when you choose to be with people, based not so much on common interests and goals, but on a desire to be accepted, to be “in”, to make a statement or to make your presence felt. (e.g., magpapansin para matanggap).

● As a result, you are shaped by the unique set of social contacts and experiences to which you actively expose yourselves.

● The difference between the world your children live in today and the world you grew up in, can result in variances in the way you think and behave.

— You can use these differences as bridges between the past and the present.

— You can build on these differences to enrich and broaden your horizons and perspectives.

In discussing principles 3, 4, and 5, ASK participants to first explain and elaborate on the principles. ASK them to recall and share with the group changes which they observe among their adolescent children.

POSE some key questions related to menstruation and “wet dreams”.

PRINCIPLE THREE: Development is change. Adolescence is a time of change.

● Adolescents are individuals ages, 10-19. Youth refers to those in the 15-24 age group.

● Among boys and girls, the reproductive organs, the parts of their body that makes it possible to have children, start to work.

● The years between late childhood and early adolescence are the most rapid and dramatic periods of physical change in the human life cycle.

● For girls, the physical changes usually happen in the order below.

   1. Breasts grow
   2. Pubic hair develops
   3. Vaginal discharge appears
   4. Underarm hair grows

● For boys, the physical changes they experience during puberty include the following:

   1. Testes and scrotal sac grow
   2. Pubic hair begins to appear
   3. Penis grows longer and testes continue to get bigger
4. Voice changes and begins to deepen
5. Facial hair grows
6. Breasts may become tender and larger

● There are also some changes which happen to both boys and girls, these include:

   1. Increased activity of sweat glands
   2. Increased production of oil glands
   3. Loss of “baby fat”
   4. Muscle development

● These changes can be troublesome, unsettling and/or confusing but they cannot be avoided.

● Your own understanding and feeling towards these changes will have an important impact on your adolescent’s attitude towards these changes and their ability to cope with them.

● How you perceive these changes will have an important impact on your attitude towards yourself, your outlook towards the future and other continuing changes.

● The most important things that your adolescent should remember during this stage are: “The adolescent should feel good about him/herself! This is part of their journey, their healthy transformation into adulthood.”

ENCOURAGE participants to share their experiences on the changes they have noted when their children reached adolescence. MAKE them recall details, such as at what age these changes occurred, the intensity of the changes and how their children reacted to these.

SUMMARIZE by pointing out the differences in their own experiences.

PRINCIPLE FOUR: Development is multi-directional.

● The pattern of change varies from one person to another.

● The pace of development may vary from one aspect of development to another.

● As parents, you should know that while puberty happens to everybody, it does not happen to everyone at the same time. It can begin as early as 8-9 years old or as late as 15.

● There is no set timetable for change. As people mature, there is even greater variance in their development.

   — The age at which puberty begins is influenced by: the age one’s parents reached this stage themselves; nutrition; percentage of body fat and a host of other factors.
   — The changes may not occur at the same time for adolescents of the same age. Some
— Girls usually start their “growth spurt” when they are around 10 years old or sometimes, as early as 9.
— Boys usually begin their “growth spurt” about 12-18 months after most girls. Once their “growth spurt” starts, they grow faster than girls do.
— Boys continue to grow 3 to 4 years after most girls have finished growing. Boys often do not finish growing until age 20 or 21.
— Developing earlier or later than others does not mean there is something wrong. It simply means their body is growing at its own special rate.

Example: Babies begin to walk and talk at different ages. The same holds true with adolescents. They mature physically and emotionally at different stages.

● As parents, you should avoid comparing your children with their siblings or other children.

● You must show them that you value their individuality, and accept them as they are.

CONCRETIZE KLPs by asking participants to share examples of endings and beginnings which they observed in their teens and/or experienced during their adolescence.

PRINCIPLE FIVE: Development involves transition.

● Adolescence is a period of transition. It is a journey from childhood to adulthood. It is marked with endings and beginnings.
  — Example: As adolescents grow older, they give up their dolls, toys and begin to have interests in pocket books, computers, and members of the opposite sex, among others.

● During transition, it is normal to experience feelings of excitement, confusion, uncertainty, fear and even isolation.

● It is a beginning because adolescents are learning new ways of being and behaving.

● It is also a period of awakening. It is discovering new images of oneself, new abilities, new relationships, new perspectives, new experiences and new insights.

● Adolescents develop new skills to help them effectively face the challenges.
● It is an ending because it is a time of letting go.
  — It is unlearning what is no longer appropriate, acceptable or useful.

LEAD participants to a discussion of the differences in needs and priorities as children grow up (e.g., from babies, to toddlers, to pre-school, school-age and then teens).

PRINCIPLE SIX: Each stage of development has specific challenges, goals and tasks.

● These challenges, goals and tasks are called developmental tasks. They are like building blocks. They are tasks that should be realized within a certain period otherwise they become your fixations.

● They serve as the foundation for your adolescents’ successful transition to adulthood, independence and maturity.
  — For infants, it is to eat, sleep and explore their world. For adolescents, it is to become their own person.

● Successfully meeting these challenges lead to a more satisfying life, and paves the way for happiness.

POST visuals or write down 4 I’s on the board. ENCOURAGE participants to identify what these 4 I’s are. Provide clues/tips to help them zero in on the right I’s.

There are four ‘I’s’ which capture the essence of the developmental tasks within the adolescence stage.

THIS IS THE FIRST ‘I’. POST the meta card or visual corresponding to this developmental task.

DEEPEN discussions. CONCRETIZE through examples and illustrations.

IDENTITY - a set of attitudes and beliefs about who we are. It underlies and impacts on our relationship and interaction with others.
● Identity becomes a central concern especially in middle adolescence. This is primarily due to puberty, which makes adolescents aware that they are changing and becoming a new person.

● The developing intellectual capacity of adolescents also allows them to start reflecting on themselves and on their future.

● They can imagine being someone other than who they are now and living a life that is quite different from that of their parents or that which their parents imagine for them.

ASK participants: What are the situations when you often feel this “tug of war”? What do you usually do? Some possible examples: choice of clothes, hair cut/color, wearing of fashion accessories.

● As they struggle to define their identity, they are torn and feel pulled in two different directions. On one hand, they need to feel unique and special; on the other hand, they want to belong or to fit in with their friends.

WRITE the mnemonic “BECOME” vertically on the board.

During this stage, adolescents want to BECOME. In general, this search for identity is seen in the following behaviors and actions, regardless of age.

ENCOURAGE participants to guess what each of these letters stand for. PROVIDE clues and hints to guide them.

ASK them to share their own experience with regards to their adolescents being fad and fashion conscious. CITE examples of celebrities who created their own style (e.g.: Jolina Magdangal).

ASK for reactions and feelings regarding these KLPs.

DEEPEN discussions. ENCOURAGE differing views and exchange of ideas.
B- rand sensitive or fad and fashion conscious

- Clothes become symbols of the identity and take on a special meaning for adolescents. Clothes become the vehicle for them to differentiate themselves from parents and other adults.

  — At this stage, they may become fad or fashion conscious and brand sensitive. Thus, what is "beautiful" and "ok" for them, may at times not be acceptable to adults.

  — As parents, you need to understand and to a certain extent, tolerate these “fashion statements”, appropriate for the situation.

- We parents also need to help them realize that while being fashion conscious per se is not bad, “Brands do not make a person.”

  — Wearing more expensive brands does not make one prettier or better looking.

  — Style is how one carries one’s clothes, shoes, accessories.

  — One can make his/her own style or “fad”. A person need not be a follower. He/she could be a trendsetter.

  — It is all right to be different.

- You should avoid imposing your taste and style on your adolescents. Doing so would create unnecessary tension as well as embarrass them.

ASK for examples of situations where exploitation and experimentation can lead to risky and/or unhealthy behavior. Be prepared to give your own examples (e.g., drug abuse, alcoholism, cigarette smoking, and early sexual involvement).

DEEPEN discussions.

As you go through these KLP’s try to build empathy and understanding for why parents react the way they do.

E - xploration, experimentation, trying in different roles and identities. This is part of the struggle of adolescents to define their identity. This is part of the search for who they are, and what they are capable of being and doing.

- Parents must be able to effectively balance their need for safety versus their child’s need for adventure.
— You should realize that being curious and wanting to be adventurous per se is not bad. 
— While the need for adventure and exploration can open the doors to risky and/or unhealthy behavior, it can also help them discover their talents and broaden their horizons.

● If parents become overprotective, adolescents can miss out on valuable opportunities for growth and self-discovery.

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| **ASK for examples of safe and healthy ways to have a “natural high.”**  
**REINFORCE positive, healthy choices and CLARIFY consequences of unhealthy or risky ones.  **AVOID BEING PREACHY or JUDGEMENTAL. |

**Here are some bridging techniques.**

● Show them that there are safe and healthy ways to have fun and excitement in one's life.

● Spend time with your adolescents and share these adventures with them. Your presence can help guide them to “safer” experimentation and exploration.

● Be open enough to share your own misadventures in your youth. Focus on lessons you learned from these experiences.

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<td><strong>ASK participants to share their experiences in dealing with their adolescents’ fickle mindedness.</strong></td>
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**C - onstantly changing interests, preferences, plans, friends.**

● Commitments made at this stage are often tentative, Adolescents may change their preferences, plans and passions, as quickly and as often as they change clothes.

— Someone who has taken ballet, piano or guitar lessons for years may suddenly decide this phase of his/her life is over.
— Another who has often expressed plans to become a professional doctor, architect, or lawyer, may find a new found interest in music and sports.
— Long time best friends may drift apart as one seeks identification with sports heroes and another with the theater group.
— Romantic interests and crushes may at times become like “flavors of the month”.

● This rapid pace of change in interests can sometimes be a source of frustration to adults.
— You must realize that these rapid changes are part of the adolescents’ intellectual and personal maturation.

**ASK participants for other examples related to this.**

**Obsession about appearances.**

- To the adolescent who is exploring different social roles, looking the part may seem all-important.

  — The adolescent may suddenly develop mannerisms that seem phony or may engage in “instant transformations” such as changing the spelling of their name, adopting a new accent or vocabulary, and having a new hair style or hair color.

  — They may also dress in ways that seem bizarre to adults, but are vital to their fragile identity of the moment.

  — Because a teenager’s brain had just recently developed the ability to do abstract thinking, comparison is the norm. They may tend to compare themselves with others they see in the movies, TV and magazines, or with their peers.

**ASK whether they agree with this viewpoint. DEEPEN discussion. CITE examples and illustrations.**

- As parents, you must help them realize that:

  — Those who compare themselves with others, usually end up having a poor body image; either not liking the way they look, feeling unattractive or becoming uncomfortable with their body or specific body parts.

  — The more parts of themselves that they are uncomfortable with or ashamed of, the lower their self-esteem will be.

  — Being overly pre-occupied with how they look may lead them to engage in unhealthy behaviors, such as extreme dieting,
ASK participants whether they agree with this viewpoint. ENCOURAGE them to share their opinions.

LEAD them to discuss how this viewpoint compares with the popular belief that “not doing anything opens your hearts and soul to the devils.” EMPHASIZE that the operative word here is “BALANCE.”

M - ake believe, daydreaming, fantasizing, imagining.

● Some of the most important experiments in identity formation take place in fantasy and daydreams—imagining different roles and identities, fantasizing about relationships.

● As parents, you must realize that:
  — Doing nothing, as with imagining and daydreaming can be a valuable opportunity for growth.
  — A certain amount of aloneness is necessary for growth.
  — In your desire to show them your love, be sure you do not remove their opportunity for dialogue with self.

DISCUSS with participants various causes in your locality/community. RELATE this to the role of the family in community development.

ASK the participants to share experiences related to this stage. CITE other behaviors or situations related to the subject.

E - ngaging in idealistic, cause oriented activities.

● Devotion to causes may be motivated as much by the adolescent’s interest in the cause as the desire to be somebody who is known and to stand out among others.
  — Campaigning to save the environment or raising money for various causes gives teenagers both the feeling of being special and important and a sense of belongingness to a group.

● The youth culture provides a ready-made identity that distinguishes and sets the new adolescents apart from their former identity as a child and their identification with their parents.

● In early adolescence (sometime between 10 and 13), the search for identity can lead to over-identification with friends. This is because at this stage, adolescents want to distinguish themselves from parents and adults.
LEAD participants to DISCUSS ways of handling this negative streak of adolescents.

- Thus, during this stage, one may become and act like a stereotypical teenager, i.e., like everybody else.

- Adolescents have also a tendency to challenge parents’ opinions, question their values, debate their rules and tell them in countless ways to go away and leave them alone.
  
  — At this stage, adolescents do not seem to understand compromise, They will usually opt to “crash and burn” if necessary, just so as to be able to prove a point (e.g., “You can’t force me to do anything I don’t want to do.”).

- Avoid power struggles with your adolescents. This often ends up as a lose-lose situation.
  
  — You have things to do beside argue.
  — Teens are willing to escalate their behavior if you are willing to escalate yours. For example, they can fail a class to show you that you cannot force them to do their homework.
  
  — Sometimes, they give you “surface compliance”. That is, they will do as you tell them but will get back at you by failing in another task.

- The only way to avoid a power struggle is to sidestep it.
  
  — Do not try to convince them that your decision is the right one.
  — Meet objections with an acknowledgement that you know they do not agree with your decision but that your decision is not up for negotiation.

- During mid-adolescence (sometime between 14-17), teens tend to distinguish themselves from others.
  
  — They experiment and try out a variety of differing political attitudes, romantic involvements and commitments.
  — These tentative identities have an “all or nothing” or “do or die” quality in them.

- During late adolescence (sometime between 17–24), plans and passions change.

- Adolescents become more introspective about themselves and their life and are seriously looking for answers to the different questions:
  
  *Who am I?*
  *What do I believe in?*
  *What do I want?*
— They become more pragmatic and realistic. They begin to give up the childlike faith that they can do anything they want. They settle for a more realistic assessment of their capabilities and opportunities. They begin to ask:

\textit{How can I achieve my goals?}
\textit{Where am I willing to compromise?}

● During this stage, parents can become effective mentors. Teens need someone with whom they can openly or fully discuss their dreams, plans and aspirations.

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<td>Ask participants to give examples for each of these areas. DEEPEN discussions regarding adolescents’ various choices/options. LEAD them to realize how having many options can be more of problem than a blessing.</td>
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The key indicator that adolescents have achieved an identity is when they are able to at least make tentative commitments to:

— A sexual orientation (i.e., are they gay, straight or bi-sexual);
— A preferred career or occupation (i.e., they choose a course in college, get employed, or start a business activity for income generation);
— A lifestyle (i.e., they settle for a simple lifestyle or pursue an avant garde one);
— A political and religious belief (i.e., join groups and campaigns).

● The key challenge facing adolescents is the fact that they have so many different options.

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<td>THIS IS THE SECOND I. POST the meta card or visual corresponding to this developmental task. BEFORE discussing this KLP, ASK participants to describe what they think this “I” means and how they think this specific I is known in the behavior of adolescents. DEEPEN discussions on this KLP. PROVIDE examples of gradual independence and increasing autonomy. ASK participants their own examples.</td>
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\textbf{INDEPENDENCE} - a period where adolescents want to be able to make their own decisions, choose their own friends, plan their own activities, think their own thoughts and dream their own dreams.
• Adolescents want and need to take charge and have control of their own lives.

• As parents, you must help them to realize that:
  — They need to gradually achieve their independence.
  — Independence comes with obligations and responsibilities. Thus, they need to become more responsible and show they are responsible, so they can gain increasing autonomy.

• Adolescents want to be **FREE**. This search for freedom and independence is most often always played out in the home setting.

WRITE down vertically on the board the mnemonic, “F-R-E-E.” ENCOURAGE participants to guess what each of these letters stand for, prior to discussing them. PROVIDE clues. USE related KLPs to elaborate on their statements, when necessary.

**F- focus shifts from family to friends**

• As adolescents seek to be independent from parents, they gravitate towards their friends. They begin to spend more time with them.

• At times, adolescents treat their friends as the ultimate authorities who have the right answers to everything. This can be a dangerous position to take. **ASK them for examples of why and when this can become dangerous.**

  — To avoid this, be friends with your children’s friends. Invite them to your home. Get to know them. **ASK for effective techniques on how they can become friends with their children’s friends.**

• Do not view/treat your children’s friends as your enemies or competitors. They are your potential allies. **— Treat them as partners in helping your child/teen grow into adulthood.**
• Expressed antagonism and criticisms of your teens’ friends can be detrimental to your relationship with your child.

□ This will put your teen in the defensive and may encourage them to engage in behavior meant to further displease you.

ASK participants to share experiences on this KLP.

R - requires physical, psychological space and privacy.

• As adolescents move toward independence, they demand to have their own clearly defined space.

— They want to have privacy and freedom from unwanted intrusion.

• They also want to dissociate or separate themselves from their family. Often, this includes not wanting any public display of affection or not wanting to be seen in public with their parents and other family members.

— While this action is understandable, they need to recognize that these actions may make their parents/other family members, feel that they are rejecting them, or worst, are ashamed of them.

TRY to build empathy for parents as you discuss these KLPs. MAKE an analogy between parent-child dissociation and their own experience in dealing with a friend who is no longer giving them as much attention as before.

ASK: Why is the adolescent’s move towards independence often viewed as defiance, rebelliousness or hard-headedness?

• Growth towards independence may easily be mistaken for defiance, rebelliousness or hard-headedness. This is because of the following:

— Adolescents begin to question parental values, challenge their opinions and oppose their rules.
— Adolescents also go to great lengths to reinforce the feeling that, “I have to do this my way”.
— With this attitude, the relationship between adolescents and their parents may change. Parent and child confrontations may also increase.
— Nevertheless, while adolescents can disagree with their parents and express their differing opinions and thoughts, they have to learn to do so in an agreeable and respectful manner.

**ASK them how these situations make them feel and how they usually react.**

- These unexplained changes in behavior often leave parents puzzled, confused, upset and hurt.
  — Because of this, the relationship between adolescents and their parents may change.
- Parent and child confrontations may also increase. This is because of two related actions:
  1. Adolescents most often tend to express their need for independence through aggression, criticism and quarreling or secrecy and silence.
     — These behaviors often make parents feel their children no longer respect them, are taking them for granted or worst, that they do not love them anymore.
  2. Parents tend to give too many orders or advice or are too critical of their teens’ ideas and behavior. They engage their children in “**verbal combat.**”
- Parents need to recognize that this is a natural part of being an adolescent. They should not take it personally.

**TRY to also help the participants identify possible triggers which make adolescents engage their parents in “**verbal combat.”**

**ASK** them, “What usually sparks arguments with your adolescents?” **WRITE** their answers on the board. **REFER** to their answers to illustrate the KLPs.

- Think of arguing as a verbal tantrum. Adolescents unleash a torrent of questions, challenges and reasons, all designed to wear their parents down.
- Teens argue because they want to be out in the world and experience new things, many of which require your permission, your money or your car keys.
- Verbal skills and logic develop tremendously in the early years, and the older kids get, the better they become at arguing. Actually arguing becomes a sport — it’s a way for your teen to exercise their ability to think and state a point of view.
One of the less obvious reasons why kids argue with their parents is to measure themselves against them. If your teen can score a point, stump you or convince you to see it their way, this boosts their self-confidence.

It is not that they want to reduce your status. They respect and look up to you. Winning is their way of rising to your level and it lets them feel as smart as you, for the moment. That is healthy.

It is really important to validate your teen when he or she comes up with a good argument. That does not mean you have to give in or change your mind; just letting them know you respect and acknowledge their point of view can take a lot of steam out of a debate.

Another reason teens are good at arguing is because they are highly motivated and have spent many years studying you.

— They know your soft spots, and — secretly — they bank on your empathy.
— They are sure that you love them and want to please them, at least some of the time; smart kids factor in all these things when they take a stand.

That is why, as parents, you have to be even smarter than your adolescent.

Parents also argue when they feel challenged because it may seem like they are losing control over their child’s life.

If you are like most parents, you are particularly vulnerable on issues like driving, drinking and drugs because you are thinking of your child’s safety and may feel wounded when your concerns are minimized. So what should parents do?

One solution is deceptively simple and devastatingly effective: Do not argue.

— If you have set up rules about dating or school and you do not intend to change, state your position, be clear and calmly tell your teen that there is nothing more to say. Then disengage at this point. End of argument.
If you and your teen have arguments about ideas or opinions, just agree to disagree. Validate your teen’s right to have a point of view. Let your adolescent know you respect him/her but that you have a different point view.

Learning that nobody has to win in arguments is a valuable life lesson.

— Shouting, extreme personal criticism, becoming aggressively argumentative and being unreasonable are counterproductive and could only lead to more misunderstandings.

— It can also create a stressful and unhealthy home life for everyone in your family.

E - xpects to be consulted.

Adolescents begin to ask for an equal voice in decisions affecting their lives. When they are not consulted, they are offended.

— Thus, when you notice them to be unusually silent, encourage them to talk. Ask them to share with you what is on their mind.

— Provide time to sincerely listen. Respect their feelings and thoughts

THIS IS THE THIRD I. POST the meta card or visual corresponding to this developmental task.

INTIMACY - a period where adolescents begin to develop intimacy with others, having a special friend or being “on” with someone.

Adolescents begin to develop intimacy with others. Having a special friend or being “on” with someone, makes them feel IN.

WRITE the mnemonic, “IN” vertically on the board.

ENCOURAGE participants to guess what each of these letters stand for. Provide clues, if necessary. USE related KLPs to elaborate on their statements.

I - ntense feelings. Partly because of all the hormonal changes going on and the numerous other changes they are undergoing, the adolescents feelings for others tends to be more intense than at any other stage of life.
N - nurture special relationship. Adolescents look for intimate relationships because they feel that others of their own age are going through similar experiences and will be able to relate with what they are going through.

— The development of intimate relationships also provides an outlet for self-disclosure.
— To a large extent, social psychologists believe that what adolescents call “love” is an attempt to define one’s identity.
— The loved one becomes a mirror to reflect and gradually clarify their own image of themselves.

• Parents often view with suspicion “budding” intimate relationship among adolescents. They fear that “falling in love” is an adolescents’ passport to early marriage.

— They fail to see that having a crush or puppy love is part of an adolescents’ effort to define his/her identity.

• Parents should loosen up in dealing with their adolescents’ crushes.

— If they see that you understand them in this aspect, you will be in a better position to monitor the progress of any intimate relationship they get into.
— This will also enable you to guide them accordingly and to be their friend, not just a parent.

This is the FOURTH ‘I.’ POST the meta card or visual corresponding to this developmental task.

WRITE the mnemonic, “LIFE,” vertically on the board.

ENCOURAGE participants to GUESS what each of these letters stand for. PROVIDE clues, if necessary. USE related KLPs to elaborate on their statements.

INDIVIDUALITY - a period where adolescents move through middle and late adolescence, susceptibility to peer pressure declines. They begin to have a life of their own.

• As adolescents move through middle and late adolescence, susceptibility to peer pressure declines. They begin to have a LIFE of their own.

L - looking for uniqueness.

• They no longer want to be seen as being like other people. They want to be recognized as unique individuals.
— They begin to move from extreme clannishness and conformity of early adolescence.

**I - nterests are based on personal choices.**

- The teenager now chooses his/her close friends and activities not because they help him/her fit in, but because he/she really likes them.

**F - eels confident enough to compromise and/or give in.**

- Because they have achieved a certain degree of independence, they no longer have to prove their individuality by disagreeing with their parents or engaging in other defiant behavior.

**E - xpectations are more realistic and reasonable.**

- Adolescents at this stage have developed a more mature outlook in life. They have become more pragmatic and realistic.

— Growing up can be difficult and stressful. The task of parents is to help their adolescents recognize and understand the underlying patterns and processes, in order to make it a wonderful and enriching adventure.

The experiences during this period in life can be the adolescents’ stepping stones towards shaping their future and becoming the very best that they can be. It will prepare them for their transition to eventually **BECOME FREE IN LIFE.**

### Closing Activity:

**Option 1: “Yellow, Red and Green: Stop, Start and Go**

1. **INTRODUCE** the activity by saying:

   Life is a journey. Going through life effectively is knowing how to read the streetlights. There are yellow lights for look/reflect, green lights for go and red lights for stop. Based on our discussions today, I would like you to identify what you think are your yellow lights, green lights and red lights as you journey with your adolescents.

2. **ASK** participants to complete the following whip statements.

   — I feel …
   — I realized . . .
From now on:

— I will continue . . .
— I will start . . .
— I will stop . . .

3. Give about 5 minutes for individual reflection. DIVIDE participants into small groups of no more than 5 members each.

4. GIVE them no more than 20 minutes for their discussions.

5. When they are in the last round of their discussions, TELL them:

"Now that you have identified your yellows, greens and reds, I would like you to choose three Yellows, three Reds and three Greens which you think will serve as helpful reminders for parents of adolescents going through puberty. MAKE a poster or a collage highlighting these reminders."

6. When all groups have finished their outputs, INSTRUCT them to post their poster or collages on the wall.

7. GIVE participants enough time to walk around and go over the outputs of the other groups.

8. SYNTHESIZE main points for YELLOW, RED and GREEN.

9. PROCEED to your Closing Statement. You may also READ the poem, “To My Child, With Love” *(Annex 1)*.

**Closing Statement**

As parents you need to show to your adolescent that you CARE:

- **C** connect and communicate with their adolescent children
- **A** advise their adolescent that it is natural to feel confused, awkward and strange.
- **R** reassure them that these changes are normal and part of growing up.
- **E** encourage adolescent to talk about their feelings and ask questions about whatever bothers and concerns them.

**Option 2a: “To My Child, With Love”**

1. POST the poem “To My Child, With Love” *(Annex 1).*
2. ASSIGN 2 participants (who read well) to read 1 stanza each of the poem.
3. After they have read the poem, SOLICIT the participants’ reactions or feelings.
4. SUMMARIZE participants’ insights and feelings.
Option 2b: “To My Child, With Love”

If your participants are more musically and/or artistically inclined, the poster or collage can take the form of a song or a creative presentation of any form.

Option 3: “Within You Is the Promise of the Future”

1. READ the poem, “Within You Is the Promise of the Future” (Annex 2) with feeling.

2. After you have read the poem, SOLICIT the participants' reactions and feelings

3. ASK them to share what they think the message of the poem is pertaining to adolescence and their challenges as parents.

4. SUMMARIZE the participants' insights and feelings
Session 2-A: Discovering Human Sexuality

Objectives:
By the end of the session, the participants will be able to:

1. Differentiate human sexuality from sex, sexual orientation, among others;
2. Illustrate the major components of sexuality in the context of their own personal experiences;
3. Discuss how sexuality-related choices and decisions can affect the life and future of adolescents;
4. Recognize the importance of talking openly and honestly with adolescents about sexuality related matters; and
5. Clarify and demystify some of the more common sexual myths adolescents are exposed to.

Time Allocation: Two (2) hours (suggested)

Materials needed:
- Flip charts
- Metacards
- Pentel pens
- Masking tape

Opening Activity:
Option 1: “Media Sexionary”

1. INTRODUCE the activity by saying:
   “The media has become among today’s most effective teachers. Their influence is wide ranging and deep. They have effectively sold products, changed perceptions and shaped values. They often influence us, without us even noticing it. Aside from the advertisements you easily remember, there are other more important things the media have imprinted in your memory.”

2. TELL the participants:
   — Divide yourselves into groups of 5 members each.
   — In 5 minutes, list down the many images/messages of sex which you have learned from the media.
   — Do this by completing the phrase “Media say sex is . . . .” with as many words or images/pictures that you can think of.
— Write your answers on the tear sheets that I will be distributing.
— The group with the most number of remaining descriptions/images after we have crossed out similar answers wins.
— Start writing and stop once I give the signal.
— Post your outputs on the board immediately after I tell you to stop.
— If a group continues to write after I have given the signal to stop, they will be disqualified.

3. SIGNAL the groups to start. After 5 minutes, GIVE the sign to stop. CROSS OUT similar answers between and among groups and then ASK the group representatives to COUNT the remaining answers of each group.

4. GO OVER the posted outputs with the participants.

5. DECLARE the winner.

6. PROCESS the activity. ASK:
   — Was it easy / difficult to recall media’s messages about sex?
   — Where did you get most of your descriptions/images? Radio, TV or print?
   — What do you think about the way the media present sex?

7. SYNTHESIZE. LINK with the session proper by SAYING:
   “We have seen how the media have succeeded in penetrating our minds and influencing how we view sex. More and more, our adolescents’ exposure to the media and electronic technology makes available to them different messages on sex and related matters. In the succeeding session, we will have a chance to validate the accuracy of these messages and views.”

Option 2a: “Top of Mind”

Note to the facilitator: If you feel your participants may be threatened by the activity described in Option 1, or are too shy to answer the questions, do either one of these two alternative activities.

1. INTRODUCE the activity by saying:

   “Part of being human and having feelings is having likes and dislikes. When we like something, we usually enjoy it, value it or appreciate it. On the other hand, when we dislike something it usually brings us distress, difficulties or disappointments. Today, let us reflect on what it is that we think boys and girls like and dislike about being a boy or a girl.

Write these 2 questions on the board:

- What do you think boys usually like/dislike about their being a boy?
- What do you think girls usually like/dislike about their being a girl?
2. TELL the participants to answer these questions individually, and to feel free to list as many answers as they can think of.

3. After 5 minutes, ASK the females to form one group and the males, another. ASK the groups to put together what they have listed and to write these on newsprint paper.

4. TELL the groups to present their outputs.

5. After both groups have presented, ASK:
   — Was it easy/difficult answering the questions?
   — What made it easy/difficult answering the questions?

6. GIVE participants the opportunity to express their reactions or feelings about the various responses.

7. ASK participants to:
   — Note similarities and differences in their answers and the reasons for their likes/dislikes.
   — Share their realizations or learnings from the activity.

8. SYNTHESIZE

Option 2b: “Top of Mind”

1. INTRODUCE the activity by saying: “Sex means differently to different people. There are many words or images/pictures that come to our mind when we hear the term.”

2. PROVIDE meta cards to each of the participants.

3. ASK participants what comes to their mind when they hear the word “sex.”

4. TELL them to write their answers on the meta cards.

5. POST meta cards on the board for processing.

6. GO OVER the posted meta cards by ASKING each participant to read the outputs.

7. PROCESS the activity. ASK:
   — Did the words come easily or was it difficult? Why?
   — Where did you get most of your words, descriptions and images?
   — Elicit responses from the participants, then proceed to discuss the KLPs.
Option 3: “My Sexuality-Dyad”

Note to the facilitator: This option can be used if the participants are too shy or conservative. This would make them open up without really making them uncomfortable.

1. INTRODUCE the activity by saying:
   “Each family has its own values about many subjects, including sexuality. Some family values are based on religion, culture and/or life experiences. Often family “messages” about anything are learned by its members through casual conversations and interactions with family members.”

2. INSTRUCT the participants to choose a partner and form a dyad.

3. TELL participants that they will each ask their partners the following guide questions:
   — How did you learn about sexuality?
   — When you were an adolescent, with whom did you discuss sexuality-related matters?
   — Did you like the way you learned about sexuality?
   — What would you have wanted to be different?
   — Where do you think your values about sexuality came from? How did you learn them?
   — What are your family’s values about ________________ (fill the blank with topics that you are curious about, these might include: dating, courtship, virginity, marriage, abstinence, pre-marital sex, contraception and pregnancy, among others.).

4. ASK the first two pairs to share the outcome of their discussion.

5. PROCESS the activity. ASK:
   — Was the activity difficult? Easy?
   — Which questions were difficult/easy to answer? Why?

6. PROCEED to discuss your KLPs.
KEY LEARNING POINTS

After reading this introductory KLP, ASK participants: “What do you think is the reason for this?” When you have gotten a number of answers, FOLLOW-UP with: “What do you personally feel about this? Do you think sex should be openly discussed or not?”

USE your succeeding KLP’s to reinforce positive views that have been expressed. DO NOT openly contradict negative feelings. Instead, PROBE and CLARIFY.

ASK participants what they think are the advantages of openly talking about sexuality-related matters. REINFORCE answers with your sub-KLP.

✔ Generally, in our culture, talking openly about sex and sex-related subjects such as genitals, our body, our physical expressions, has traditionally been a taboo.

✔ Understanding sexuality is an important component of appreciating the sexual tendencies and behaviors that have implications on the sexual health of young people.

✔ SEXUALITY encompasses the individual’s total personality, particularly his/her way of thinking, behaving, loving and relating with God and other individuals.

— It is an important part of each of us. It includes all the feelings, thoughts, and behavior of being female or male, being attracted and attractive to others, being in love, as well as being in relationships that include sexual intimacy and physical sexual activity.

✔ As parents, being able to talk openly and honestly about sexuality is important.

— It helps you sort out your feelings, develop your own sexual standards, understand the viewpoints of others and obtain information needed to make responsible sexual decisions.
— Sexual ignorance or lack of information about your body can also cause disappointments and inability to give and receive sexual pleasure.
— Our adolescents should know that basing sexuality-related decisions on misinformation or false beliefs can have serious and distressing consequences such as unplanned or unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, and other similar problems.
✓ Understanding your sexuality is an important component of knowing yourselves better and relating effectively with your partner, your adolescent children, and other people.

   — Sexuality helps you to define your feelings of self-worth. It is one of the most important factors that shape your identity and helps us define who we are.

✓ Your adolescent children should know that their body is a gift from God. It is something to be appreciated and not be ashamed of.

✓ Each individual should understand and appreciate his/her sexuality to be able to make responsible decisions. This is the best way of harnessing the gift that we have received from God/ Allah/ Supreme Being.

PREPARE meta cards corresponding to each of the 5) major components of sexuality.

   — Our sex
   — Our sexual orientation
   — Our gender identity
   — Our Sexual Identity (body Image)
   — Our values, attitudes, feelings and emotions

POST each component as you discuss it.

✓ Human sexuality is complex. It goes beyond mere physical expressions and sexual organs. It has 5 major components:

1. OUR SEX — being male or female and how the human body works and develops. It includes the biological concerns on reproductive anatomy and physiology.
   — Humans have two sexes — male and female.
   — Sex is determined when the egg is fertilized.

ASK participants for their opinion and experiences related to the issue at hand.

Before you PROCEED to the next component, EMPHASIZE that Fertility is one very important element in the discussion of human sexuality and sex. TELL participants that you will discuss this further in the next session on Fertility Awareness.
2. **OUR SEXUAL ORIENTATION** - being straight, gay, lesbian or bisexual. It is the preference of an individual to have a sexual relationship with either someone of the opposite sex or someone of the same sex.

— At present, how an individual’s sexual orientation develops, is not yet well understood.
— Various scientists have proposed differing sources for sexual orientation, including genetic or inborn hormonal factors and life experiences during early childhood.
— Many scientists share the view that sexual orientation is shaped for most people at an early age through complex interactions of biological, psychological and social factors.
— However, recent studies on the origins of sexual orientation reveal that “sexual orientation is not a choice. It is not something people can decide for themselves or for others. It has a very strong genetic component and is not purely determined by life experiences.”
— Since a person’s sexual orientation is not a matter of choice and its origin remains a mystery, it is best if one simply respects and accepts both oneself and others, regardless of sexual orientation.

3. **OUR SEXUAL IDENTITY (Body Image)** - our feelings about our body and about being a man and a woman. It includes concerns on relationships and intimacy, sexual response, sexual awakening, and other sexual concerns, such as frigidity and impotence.

There are two major questions associated with our sexual identity:

- *Who am I sexually?*
- *How do I relate to others as a sexual person?*

4. **OUR GENDER IDENTITY** - the psychological sense of being male or female and our personal and/or social norms for feminine or masculine behavior.

— It concerns the individual’s concept of sex roles and stereotypes.
— The most significant influence to our sexuality comes from prescribed gender roles – the social norms and values that develop the relative power, responsibilities, and behavior of women and men.
— The prescribed gender roles for women and men reinforce the imbalance of power relations between the sexes which are likely to be manifested in the person’s expression of her/his sexuality.
— The prescribed passive role of women in sexual relations inhibits women from negotiating with their partners on the timing and nature of sexual activity which could result in unwanted pregnancy, disease and sexual violence like rape, incest and forced sex.
— Moreover, as a consequence of the passive role, women tend to suppress their sexual desires. Meanwhile, sexual conquest as a manifestation of manhood is almost a traditionally invested role for men.
— The imbalance of power between men and women may be due to a lack of basic knowledge about how different risky or protective behavior can affect sexual and
reproductive health and consequently the quality of their sexual relationships.
— Prescribed gender roles, however, can be influenced and changed. Learning, listening and talking about sexuality are just some of the important ways by which individuals can be assisted to change their perceptions of themselves and to understand the relationship between their individual behavior and the social and cultural context in which they live.

5. OUR VALUES AND ATTITUDES, FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS - about life, love and the people our lives touch.

• Our sexuality is a product of what we are born with and our own unique life experiences that have shaped our attitudes, feelings and values towards ourselves and towards other people.

• The sociological approach to understanding influences to sexuality has been identified by sociologists to be occurring at four levels, the:
  —** macro level or society as a whole;**
  —** sub-cultural level** at which one’s social class or ethnic group may have an impact on one’s sexuality;
  —** interpersonal level** in which interactions with parents, peers, or lovers influence a person and finally,
  —** individual level,** in which each has her/his own level of sexual desire, sexual orientation and a set of sexual values stored memory.

ASK participants what they think are the choices and decisions that their adolescents will make related sexuality. PROVIDE relevant stories to emphasize a point.

☑ Some of the most difficult choices and decisions that your adolescent will make will be related to their sexuality.

— These choices will shape their decisions about friendships, relationships, family, school and career.
— These choices will shape their future and the type of life that your adolescents will have.
— The choices and decisions that your adolescents make reflect their values, beliefs and priorities.
— In addition to deciding what is right for them, they also need to decide how to do what is right for them. **This is not always easy.**

☑ Therefore, it is necessary that adolescents be provided with opportunities to develop into a sexually healthy and personally effective individual.
— It is important to know their own self and how they think and feel
— What makes them comfortable and what does not — what they want and what they do not want.

✓ Thinking about their answers to these basic questions will help them understand their real feelings about sex:
1. What are my sexual limits…am I clear with myself about what I will do and won’t do?
2. Do I want to have sex?
3. Does my partner want to have sex?
4. Am I ready for sex?
5. Am I ready for the possible consequences of my behavior?
6. What are my feelings for the other person?
7. Have we talked about this?
8. Are we loving and caring friends?
9. What do I want to get out of it?
10. Do I have accurate information about sex?

✓ Sex may mean to them as:
1. Having someone who loves you?
2. Feeling special and worthwhile?
3. Developing a relationship?
4. Finding a life partner?
5. Keeping a relationship going?
6. Waiting until marriage?
7. Satisfying a physical need?
8. Becoming accepted and popular? or
9. Getting to be a part of the “in” group?

DEEPEN discussions. If you did not use “Media Sexionary” as an Opening Activity, DIVIDE participants into buzz groups and ENCOURAGE them to define “What sex means. . .” or “What young people expect from sexual relationships?” If you did use “Media Sexionary,” RELATE their answers to this activity.

✓ What sex means to your adolescents may change over their lifetime.

✓ One thing they should keep in mind as they make their decisions is that saying “no” is a valid option. Saying “no” is OK.

✓ There are a variety of good reasons to choose abstinence.

✓ The best reason is because you think it is the right thing to do.

✓ Not being ready for sex is another good reason.
In summarizing these, EMPHASIZE the three (3) IF’s:

☑️ Three things that your adolescent should remember:
  ✔️ IF you don’t feel ready, don’t do it!
  ✔️ IF you have mixed feelings and are under a lot of pressure from your friends and/or partner, don’t do it!
  ✔️ IF you have doubts, don’t do it!

PREPARE a poster with this message. “SAYING NO TO SEX IS OKAY”. POST it in the board/wall as you discuss the KLPs.

You can also PREPARE meta cards for each of these statements.

PROBE for participants reactions/feelings. ASK: “Why is saying NO okay?”

ASK: What are the indicators or reasons to say that someone is not ready to have sex?

You can turn this into a contest to ENCOURAGE more answers.

DIVIDE participants into 4 groups and ASK them to take time giving out their responses (only one answer at a time). Any group that fails to give an answer (up to the count of 3) is “knocked-out”. The remaining/surviving group wins. PRESENT the list provided in the KLPs to summarize their responses. IDENTIFY which indicators they missed out on. DISCUSS implications.

☑️ There are a number of ways to tell when someone is not ready for sex. You can tell your adolescents these messages: “You are not ready to have sex if:”
  — You think sex equals love.
  — You feel pressured and afraid to say no.
  — You just want to have sex because you think everybody is doing it.
  — You just want to have sex to get it over with.
  — You are doing it to prove something.
  — You are not really sure if you should do it or that you want to do it.
  — Your instincts/feelings tells you not to.
— You are not sure how you feel about your partner or how your partner feels about you.
— You think it will make your partner love you and it will keep you together.
— You are not thinking about tomorrow (i.e. how having sex can affect your relationship, the well-being of your partner and/or change both of your lives)
— You are not willing to take on the responsibility of parenthood if you or your partner becomes pregnant and has a child.
— You don’t know how to protect yourself.
— You cannot talk/have not talked to your partner about sex.
— You are too embarrassed to talk to your partner about safe sex.
— You are under the influence of drugs or any other substance.

☑ Realizing and accepting you are not ready for something as complex as sex, is a sign of maturity.
   — This realization is something that your adolescent should feel good about.

☑ Another reason to choose abstinence or to wait is because this is the “safe” and “healthy” way.
   — The risk of contracting Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) or HIV/AIDS which could threaten your adolescent’s health is real.
   — The risk of unwanted pregnancy which could alter his/her educational or career plans and shatter his/her whole future is also real.
   — While practicing safe sex greatly reduces these risks, it does not totally eliminate them.

☑ Abstinence is the only completely safe behavior. Thus, if your adolescents choose it, they should feel good about it. They should feel proud about their choice.

DEEPEN discussions. PROBE for feelings and reactions.

REFER to Trainer’s Supplemental Materials on “50 Ways Why You Are Not Ready To Have Sex.”

☑ Practicing abstinence is not always easy. Adolescents will face a lot of pressure to have sex. If they choose abstinence, they need to think about the sources of that pressure and how to avoid or resist them.

☑ It is important to realize that it is never too late to choose “abstinence”.

☑ Even if they have already had sexual intercourse in the past or have engaged in sexual intimacies, they can still choose to stop.
This will form part of the supplementary materials/readings for this Session/topic:

As we have seen earlier, the development of sexuality is very much culture-bound. It is surrounded by false beliefs, stereotypes and misconceptions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Myths</th>
<th>Facts</th>
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| 1. A real male always wants and is always ready to have sex.        | - Masculinity is not dependent on the number of one’s sexual partners or on how frequently one experiences sex.  
- Some males simply don’t want to have sex. They may think that sex before marriage is wrong or know that they are not yet ready for it.  
- Not all males who have sex are “always” ready for it.              |
| 2. There is something wrong with a guy if he has not had sex by the time he is 15. | - There is no magical age at which someone should be having sex.  
- Because someone does not want to have sex, does not mean there is anything wrong with them. |
| 3. If you don’t express your sexuality freely, you must be repressed, sick or frigid/impotent. | - There are studies indicating that sexually active teenagers are more likely to be prone to alcohol abuse, use of illegal drugs, and are also more likely to have trouble in school. Sexually active girls were also reported to be more likely to be depressed, feel lonely, have low self-esteem or attempt suicide. |
| 4. Males have stronger sex drives and are more interested in sex than females. | - Sexuality is shared equally by males and females. No one is more sexual than the other. The female sexual drive can be just as strong as the male. However, Philippine society has traditionally allowed males to express their interest in sex more openly.  
- This is attributed to the prevailing stereotype that males are more sexually aggressive than females and must “release” these desires as part of their being “normal” males. |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Sex creates intimacy.</td>
<td>- Sex can be an expression of intimacy but it is not the means to intimacy. True intimacy is not built through sexual encounters. True intimacy is built on trust, respect, understanding, honesty and commitment. When unrestrained physical intimacy dominates a relationship, other parts of that relationship suffer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 6. Casual sex without long term commitments is both fun and “freeing”. | - Those who settle for “hit and run”, short term casual sex, are settling for second best sex.  
- A noted journalist describes casual sex as “a diet of fast food served in plastic containers”. |
| 7. If you love someone, you are going to want to have sex with him or her. | - While we often use the term “making love” for sexual intercourse, love and sex are not the same thing. There are many ways to show love besides having sex. |
| 8. All teenagers are having intercourse these days.                  | - While there are teenagers who are having sex, there are many who are not.  
- Many of those who have done it did not really want to. They let themselves get talked into it. |

Closing Activity:

Option1: “My Resolutions”

1. ASK the participants to think of the 3 most important things they have learned from the session and what they resolve to do as a result of these learnings. Use the following whip statements:
   — The 3 most important things I learned/realized. . .  
   — Because of these learnings/realizations, I will. . .

2. GIVE them 6 minutes to complete the statements. ASK them to share what they have written.

3. DIVIDE them into groups of no more than 5 members each.
4. ASK each group to convert a wall into a “graffiti type” poster where they will post their key learnings and resolutions.

5. TELL the group to mill around and read the other groups’ output.

6. SUMMARIZE their learnings and resolutions.

7. CLOSE the session by SAYING:
   “As parents, you should be fully aware that it is a tough time to be a teenager. They are constantly surrounded by sexual talk, images and risks. They may also be experiencing strong sexual feelings. At the same time, they must decide what is right for them and how they can do it. This is not always easy. Our role is to guide and understand them.”

Proceed to your closing statement:
So, always remember these 3 points:

One: There is a lot of misinformation about sexuality.
   There is no guarantee that everything your adolescent children hear from their friends is absolutely true.
   The messages that they get from the media are also not always true and accurate.

Two: Peer pressure is a fact of life. They need to know how to handle it. If they withstand the pressure and make their own decisions, they are on their way to being a healthier and happier adult.

Three: In saying “NO” to early sexual involvement, they are making a positive choice in life. They are saying “YES” to personal growth and development. They are saying “YES” to responsible sexuality and a healthy and happy life.

Option 2: “Three Points” (Whip Statements)

1. INTRODUCE the closing activity by saying:
   “Now that we have completed the session, I will give you 10 minutes to reflect and complete at least one of the following whip statements:”

In this session…1) I felt… 2) I learned … 3) I realized… 4) I will do or not do…

2. After 10 minutes, ASK the participants to share their reflections.

3. After all the participants have shared their responses, PROCEED to your closing statement:
   “As parents of adolescents today, it is very important that you establish your own safe and healthy sexual norms to guide your children. Understanding the norms of society, and working to eliminate risky and unhealthy behaviors will make your communities a better place for your children and the coming generations.”
Session 2-B: Understanding Fertility
(Fertility Awareness)

Objectives:

By the end of the session, the participants will be able to:

1. Define Fertility Awareness
2. Discuss the importance of Fertility Awareness
3. Identify and explain the parts and functions of the male and female reproductive systems
4. Discuss the dynamics of male and female fertility
5. Explain the menstrual cycle; and
6. Discuss the concept of combined/joint fertility

Time Allocation: One and a half (1-1/2) hours (suggested)

Materials needed:

Illustration of the male and female (internal and external) reproductive systems with labels
Matrix of the menstrual cycle with color-coded labels (10 sets)
Masking tape
Presentation materials and other visual aids

Opening Activity

“Comfort Ability Test”

1. DIVIDE participants into two groups - male and female.
2. ASK participants to list down other terms for vagina (for the male group) and penis (for the female group).
3. POST their answers on the board and ask one member from each group to read their list.
4. PROCESS how the group felt while brainstorming on their answers.
5. EXPLAIN the relevance of the activity to the topic.
6. PROCEED to discuss your KLPs.
KEY LEARNING POINTS

Before discussing the KLPs, ASK participants if they have any idea what fertilility awareness is.

- Fertility awareness is one of the tough issues parents must be able to discuss with their adolescents.
- As such, it is imperative that parents should be knowledgeable on these topics.

PROCEED to defining fertilility awareness and its importance.

- **Fertility Awareness** refers to the recognition of the fertile and infertile phases of a woman’s reproductive cycle. It relies on the daily observation and interpretation of the changing signs to determine a woman’s fertility status.

**Importance of Fertility Awareness:**

- To understand that men and women are not only gifted with the ability to reproduce, but more importantly, with the ability and the capacity to understand and fully appreciate their own fertility.
- To recognize that the human body is, by itself, already equipped with mechanism for the natural management of fertility.
- Knowing one’s body and fertility empowers the person to make a healthy, informed and responsible decision on his/her family life aspirations.

TELL participants that they will have a review of the Human Anatomy. This will be undertaken through this simple activity:

ASK participants to label the different parts of the reproductive system (i.e., males to label female parts and females, to label male parts).
The Human Reproductive System

☒ While people have special body parts used for sexual intercourse, the primary sexual organ in men and women is the brain.

☒ Our brains control the hormones that regulate the reproductive systems of our bodies, and also control our sexual activities.

☒ Pituitary hormones influence important changes.

☒ Testosterone causes the adolescent male to develop secondary sex characteristics: deepening of the voice; growth of facial and body hair; growth of scrotum and penis; rapid spurts of increase in height and broadening of chest and shoulders.

CHECK that they labeled the parts correctly. PROCEED to discuss your KLPs while referring to their answers.

The Male Reproductive System

☒ The Male Reproductive Anatomy

☒ Sperm production starts at puberty and is continuous for the rest of his life. Average sperm production is 100 million daily.

☒ “Wet dreams” (nocturnal emissions) occasionally occur when an “overflow” of sperm is ejaculated while the male is asleep. This is a normal part of adolescence where spontaneous erections occur.

☒ Sperms are produced in the Testicle.

☒ The sperm cells travel to and mature in the Epididymis, a long coiled tube at the upper part of the testes;

☒ They are then transported/propelled from the Epididymis thru a long, muscular tube called the Vas Deferens.

☒ Nourishing protective fluid containing glucose is released from the Seminal Vesicles.

☒ Alkaline secretions are provided by the Prostate Gland.

☒ Cower’s Glands secrete a clear lubricating fluid into the urethra that cleanses and neutralizes the acidity of the passage.
This pre-ejaculatory fluid nourishes and assists in the movement of sperms and prepares the **Urethra** for sperm transport outside the penis thru ejaculation (the release of semen from the urethra).

Semen is the viscid fluid which is composed of the sperm and the fluids from the cowper’s gland, prostate gland, and seminal vesicle.

**The Female Reproductive System**

**✓ The Female External Reproductive Anatomy**

- **Vaginal Opening** – it is the entrance to the vaginal canal. During sexual excitement, it widens to allow the entrance of the penis. During childbirth, it widens to allow the delivery of the baby.

- **Labia Majora** – the outer lips that protect the vaginal opening. They are covered with pubic hair starting from puberty.

- **Labia Minora** – are the inner lips that protect the vaginal opening which are not covered with hair.

- **Urinary Opening** – is located above the vaginal opening. It is the entrance to the urethra, the tube to which urine leaves the body.

- **Clitoris** – is a peanut-sized organ above the urinary opening and is a major area of sexual arousal for many women.

- **Mons Pubis** – is a pad of fatty tissue that covers the pubic bone. It helps protect the internal reproductive organs and cushions the impact during intercourse. This is covered with pubic hair starting from the teenage years.

- **Vulva** – refers to all the outer parts described above.

**✓ Female Internal Reproductive Anatomy**

- **Uterus** – is a small, hollow, muscular organ where pregnancy develops. It serves as incubator where the fertilized egg, is nurtured and over the course of nine months, grow to be a newborn child.

- **Cervix** – it looks like a small, round ball. It has an opening that widens to enable sperm to swim into the uterus. It also widens to allow for the birth of a baby. Acts as the passage thru which the baby exits the uterus into the vagina.

- **Vaginal Canal** – it is located at the front of the cervix. It expands during sexual intercourse and during the birth of a baby.
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- **Ovaries** – the primary sex glands of a woman; considered as the storehouse of woman’s eggs. They are two very small organs attached to the uterus. Eggs begin to grow here and during the woman’s fertile time, one egg will develop and leaves the ovary.

- **Fallopian Tubes** – are tubes attached to the uterus. The mature egg enters the fallopian tubes and waits for the sperm. Fertilization could happen here if the meeting of sperm and egg takes place within 24 hours.

ASK participants, “Do you know how many days in a month that a man is fertile?”

**Dynamics of Fertility**

**The Male Fertility**

☑ Men are always fertile.

☑ Nature awakens the boy to his fertility with his first wet dreams.

☑ At puberty, the testicles produce sperm cells under the influence of the hormone, testosterone.

☑ A normally healthy man continues to produce sperm cells throughout his entire life.

☑ The man’s reproductive component is in abundant supply.

☑ Approximately 50,000 new sperm cells are produced each minute with as many as 100 million produced each day.

☑ There are between 300 to 500 million sperm cells in a normal ejaculation. Only about a hundred would actually survive the journey to the fertile ovum.

☑ Out of the several sperm cells that arrive at the ovum and attempt to penetrate the egg cell, only one would be admitted for fertilization.

☑ At the very moment that one sperm has succeeded in penetrating the cell wall of the ovum, the chemical composition of the ovum changes, making it instantaneously impervious to penetration by other sperm cells.

☑ Sperm cells outside the husband’s body can survive as long as 3-5 days in a favorable environment such as in the wife’s fertile cervical mucus; otherwise, they will die almost immediately.
✓ Although the sperm cell is the smallest cell in the male body, it carries 23 chromosomes, which is exactly half the number required to form a new human being. While the ovum also contains 23 chromosomes, it is the sperm that determines the sex of the new baby to be conceived. Each sperm carries either an X chromosome which results in a female baby, or a Y chromosome which results in a male.

✓ Threats to Male Fertility:

— Smoking
— Drugs/substance abuse
— Chronic alcohol abuse
— Overly intense exercise
— Chemicals, pesticides, fertilizers, radiation
— Infections of reproductive systems such as prostatitis, epididymitis, orchitis
— Trauma or injury to the testes
— Certain jobs or work which exposes the scrotum to intense heat
— Systemic diseases like diabetes mellitus, thyroid dysfunction
— Certain drugs, such as beta blockers, may cause erectile dysfunction.

ASK participants, “Do you know how many days in a month that a woman is fertile?”

Female Fertility

✓ Women of reproductive age are at most times infertile.

— Between puberty and menopause, a woman is only fertile for just a few days at a time during each monthly cycle, when her body releases an egg. The egg (ovum) matures and lives for about 12-24 hours.

✓ Girls achieve reproductive capability earlier than boys, on the average around age 12.

✓ Woman’s fertility starts at puberty, with her first menstrual period and ends at menopause

✓ When a baby girl is born, her young ovaries already contain approximately 400,000 immature eggs and follicles, however, only around 400 of these eggs will ever mature

✓ The fertility cycle of a woman varies in length from below 24 days (short cycle), within 25-35 days (average cycle), to more than 36 days (long cycle).

✓ A woman has times of dryness and wetness, in each cycle.
— Dry times are infertile times
— Wet times are fertile times
— The time when the woman feels dry but is still wet, is a fertile time

☑ Most of the time the cervix produces a thick mucus which effectively seals the uterus from any outside contamination and the woman observes dryness or no mucus discharge

☑ The cervical crypts contain cells which are sensitive to the fluctuation of the ovarian hormones over the course of the menstrual cycle

☑ The crypt cells produce different types of mucus

☑ Approximately 100 cervical crypts line the cervical canal

☑ The menstrual cycle begins on the first day of menstrual bleeding and ends the day before menstrual bleeding begins again.

— Menstrual bleeding is due to the shedding of the uterine lining previously prepared for implantation, indicating that no implantation happened.
— About the time menstrual bleeding begins, several eggs have begun to grow in the ovaries.

☑ The length of a woman’s menstrual cycle can normally vary by a few days from cycle to cycle. Menstrual cycle could be as follows:

— Regular cycle (25-34 days)
— Short cycles (24 days or less)
— Long cycles (35 days or more) which are normal.

☑ The post-ovulatory days are usually fixed in all of these cycles (11 to 16 days). It is the pre-ovulatory days that vary in length.

1. **Menstrual Phase**

— The first day of the cycle is the first day of menstruation. A woman experiences bleeding from her vagina during menstruation which normally lasts from 3-5 days.
— The menstrual phase includes all days of menstrual bleeding.
— The bleeding experienced by the woman is actually the shedding of the thickened uterine lining which is prepared in case there is a pregnancy.
— During menstruation, the ovaries are resting, the cervix is open allowing the uterine lining to flow to the vagina.
— There is no cervical mucus present.

2. Pre-Ovulatory Phase

— The pre-ovulatory phase includes all dry days after the menstrual bleeding stops. The length of the pre-ovulatory phase varies.
— Some women may not be able to observe dry days after menstruation, especially women with short cycles.
— During this phase, the following changes are happening inside a woman’s body:

  ■ The ovaries are still resting.
  ■ The mucus forms a plug at the cervix. Because of this, a woman feels dry and does not see any mucus. The mucus plugs the sperm from swimming into the uterus. The woman is relatively infertile.
  ■ Egg cells begin to develop. As the eggs are growing, the capsules surrounding the eggs begin to produce the hormone estrogen.
    - Estrogen causes special changes to take place in the woman’s reproductive system before ovulation and as ovulation approaches.
  ■ The pituitary gland releases a hormone called Follicle Stimulating Hormone (FSH) which stimulates a few ovarian follicles to grow, but only one follicle will reach full maturity. This follicle will secrete the hormone estrogen which will thicken the endometrial lining.
  ■ The lining of the uterus starts to thicken.
  ■ The basal body temperature continues to be low.
  ■ The cervix is firm and closed.
  ■ The pre-ovulatory phase is the infertile phase which includes all dry days after the menstrual bleeding stops.

3. Ovulatory Phase - - *this is the highlight of a woman’s fertility*

— Occurs 12-14 days before the onset of the next menses
— One mature egg is released and stays in the fallopian tube. It can be fertilized by the male sperm for only up to one day or 24 hours
— The uterine lining continues to thicken ready to receive the fertilized egg.
— The cervical mucus is wet, slippery, stretchy and clear. This mucus helps sperm live and swim to reach the egg. It nourishes the sperms.
— The vaginal sensation is wet
— There is a slight dip in the basal body temperature, about 0.5°C
— The cervix is soft and open
— The estrogen drops a bit, but remains high
— Progesterone begins to rise
4. **Post-Ovulatory Phase**

   - It has a constant length which is approximately 14-16 days. After ovulation, the follicle is transformed into the corpus luteum, which produces an increasing amount of the hormone called **progesterone**.
   - Progesterone causes the following changes to occur during this phase:

     - The uterine lining stays in place for about 12-16 days or until menstruation starts again.
     - The uterine lining continues to thicken to nourish a possible pregnancy.
     - If the egg is not fertilized, it dissolves and is reabsorbed by the body.
     - The cervical mucus becomes pasty and is no longer slippery and stretchy; the vagina also feels dry.
     - The cervix becomes firm; the cervical opening closes so that the sperm cannot pass through to the uterus.
     - The basal body temperature increases and remains high for the rest of the cycle.

   - If pregnancy does not occur, the amounts of estrogen and progesterone decreases after day 22, which causes the uterine lining to break down and blood to flow out of the cervix (menstrual bleeding).

   - If pregnancy occurs, estrogen and progesterone continue to be produced, so that the uterine lining can nourish the developing pregnancy.

**Fertilization**

- Fertilization occurs once the mature egg cell meets or unites with a sperm cell.

- With the help of the cervical mucus, millions of sperm cells swim up to the uterus through the fallopian tube, but usually, only one sperm penetrates and fertilizes the egg cell.

- The fertilized egg is called embryo.

- Once fertilized, the embryo is embedded into the surface of the uterus (endometrium) so it can establish contact with the mother’s blood supply for nourishment.
Combined/Joint Fertility

- The equal contribution of the male and female in the decision and capability to have a child, despite the fact that only the woman bears a child for nine months and gives birth. This simply means that a male sperm and a female egg are needed for fertilization to occur.

- It involves the contribution of sperm cells by the husband and the egg cell by the wife, but more importantly, the joint decision and the ability of the married couple to have a child.

- Sperm cell and egg cell contains exactly 23 chromosomes each which carry with them the characteristics of the father and mother which would be inherited by the baby.

- When a sperm successfully fertilizes an egg, the 23 chromosomes from the father and 23 chromosomes from the mother combines to form an entirely new DNA molecule that would result in a unique individual with a complete set of 46 chromosomes. This is the scientific basis that new life begins at fertilization.

- The sex life of husband and wife is integrated with their periods of fertility and infertility.

- Proper communication between couples and a good marriage are mutually reinforcing virtues.

- The very process of monitoring, discussing, and abiding by their fertility strengthens a couple’s rapport, bond, and family life.

- A healthy, loving relationship between spouses is necessary in achieving fertility awareness.

**By always being aware of their fertility status…**

- Couples can achieve or postpone pregnancy without risk to their health and well-being.

**Fertility awareness strengthens and enriches the bond and commitment of husband and wife, contributing to a sound and harmonious family life.**
Closing Activity:

Option 1: “The Menstrual Cycle Matrix”

1. Provide each couple with the menstrual cycle matrix.
2. Give them 5 minutes to label the matrix.
3. Post their answers on the board and check their answers.
4. Proceed with closing statement.

Option 2: “Whip Statements”

1. INTRODUCE the closing activity by saying: “Now that we have completed the session, I will give you 10 minutes to reflect on and complete at least one of the following whip statements”.

   *In this session...* 1) I felt... 2) I learned ... 3) I realized... 4) I will do or not do...

2. After 10 minutes, ASK the participants to share their reflections.

3. PROCEED with closing statement.
Session 3-A: Confronting THREATS AND RISKS of Adolescents

Objectives:
By the end of this session, the participants should be able to:

1. Identify the THREATS AND RISKS confronting young people of today.
2. Discuss the causes and consequences of risky behavior among young people.
3. Explain why young people are particularly vulnerable to threats and risks.
4. Demonstrate increased empathy and commitment towards the threats and risks and other difficulties facing the youth.

Time Allocation: Three (3) hours (suggested)

Materials needed:
Flip charts
Magazines or newspapers
Paste
Crayons
Meta cards
Pentel pens
Masking tape

Opening Activity

Option 1: “THREATS AND RISKS at Primetime”

1. DIVIDE participants into small groups of no more than 6 members each.
2. INTRODUCE the activity by saying:

   “In media networks, primetime refers to time slots where viewership or listenership is highest. Today, our primetime is focused on Filipino adolescents and the threats and risks that they face in the Millennium. As I give you the instructions for this activity, imagine that you are investigative reporters.”

3. TELL the participants:
   - You will be given 10-15 minutes to prepare a 5-minute presentation identifying the major threats and risks which you think Filipino adolescents face.
   - You can either have a mock panel interview featuring personalities who will talk about this topic or have a feature presentation highlighting what you see
as the major threats and risks facing Filipino adolescents today.

4. PROCESS the activity by asking participants to:
   — Pinpoint similarities and differences in their presentations.
   — Identify what, if anything, struck them the most or what they want to know more about.

5. SYNTHESIZE their outputs either by writing down THREATS AND RISKS vertically on the board or posting corresponding cut-out letters.

6. ASK the participants to fill-in the corresponding threats and risks for each letter. RELATE the content of their primetime report to your identified threats/risks.

7. PROCEED to discuss your KLPs.

Option 2: “Identifying THREATS and RISKS”

1. This is a variation of Option 1. Ask the participants to do the same activity, but each group will use different approaches, as follows:
   Group 1 - Picture Collage/Cartooning
   Group 2 - Song
   Group 3 - Rap
   Group 4 - Poem

2. PROCESS the activity using the guide questions in Option 1a.

Option 3: “Red Light, Green Light — Identification of THREATS AND RISKS”

1. CUT out slips of paper, each with a particular sexual behavior written on it. You will need at least one slip of paper for each participant.

2. PREPARE three separate signs on three large pieces of paper.
   - The first sign would have a large green circle to represent “little or no risk. and the words, “little or no risk” written on the upper half to represent.
   - The second sign would have a large yellow circle to represent a medium level of risk.
   - The third sign would have a large red circle to represent very risky or harmful behavior.

3. LEAVE enough space under the circles to write or paste the slips of paper with the names of the sexual behaviors on them.
4. POST the 3 pieces of paper with large circles side by side on the wall.

5. HAND OUT the slips of paper to the participants so that each person has one.

6. INVITE participants to come forward one by one and read aloud the sexual behavior on their paper, and place their slip of paper on the sign they feel is most appropriate.

7. GIVE no clues regarding what the “risky for what.” Tell then only that green means “little or no risk,” yellow means “somewhat at risk,” and red means “high risk.”

8. INVITE participants to comment on any sexual behavior they feel have been placed in the wrong category. ENCOURAGE the person who originally placed the behavior in this category to explain or defend his or her choice. ATTEMPT to get group consensus and clarify risks factors.

9. As the group discusses the behaviors, HELP them realize that what is risky behavior for exposure to pregnancy may be very different from risky behavior for sexually transmitted infections. Both may be different from risks that may damage self-esteem, self-image, or relationship.

10. LEAD a discussion about how the level of “risk” depends on the individual and the specific circumstances. REMIND participants that sex acts between two “uninfected” people will not spread sexually transmitted infections (STIs). However, if one of the partners has an STI (even if there are no symptoms) the infection can spread to others. Many sexual behaviors are not easily classified. For example, sucking the partner’s breast is unlikely to spread disease. However, a participant might suggest that this behavior is so stimulating that will likely lead to sexual intercourse. Therefore, it might be categorized as “high risk.”

11. SUMMARIZE what puts a person/adolescent at risk for STI, pregnancy, and damage to self-esteem and self-image. CLOSE with the following statements:

- As parents you must be aware of the broad range of sexual behaviors to which your children are exposed everyday
- Though you often view sexual behavior in terms of risk (pregnancy, loss of innocence and infection, among others), it is important to see how they can enrich your lives on a daily basis.
Option 4: “Identifying THREATS AND RISKS”

1. GO BACK to the outputs of the Opening Activity in the preceding session (Option 1).

2. SYNTHESIZE their outputs either by writing down THREATS AND RISKS vertically on the board or by posting corresponding cut-out letters.

3. ASK the participants to fill-in the corresponding threats/risks for each letter. RELATE the content of their primetime report to your identified threats/risks.

4. INTRODUCE the session by saying, “The design and implementation of more effective interventions for youth development entails a deep understanding of the various issues confronting the youth. It helps us identify the problem areas and concerns that affect youth development outcomes. In this session we will discuss the various THREATS and RISKS confronting the youth of today.”

5. PROCEED to discuss your KLPs.

KEY LEARNING POINTS

☑️ Adolescence is a period of increasing vulnerability and risks. Even as it opens the door to a wider world, new kinds of relationships and new types of challenges, it exposes the youth to greater threats and risks.

ASK participants if they are familiar with the characteristics of landmines (i.e., it is hidden, cannot be seen until it has blasted you or a part of your body off, it can kill or maim).

- These threats and risks are potential landmines in the adolescents’ journey to adulthood. They pose very real dangers to their safety, health, well-being and future.
- Adolescents are exposed to a growing number of more diverse threats and risks, than any other generation has ever been.
— As times have changed, the problems confronting adolescents have grown more complex, too.

☑ As parents, you should be the first allies and partners of your adolescents in development. We need to know and understand these threats and risks facing our adolescent children.

**DISTRIBUTE** to participants copies of the handout with the most common problems of the Filipino youth from YAFS3. **DRAW OUT** reactions, comments, observations. **RELATE** to outputs of the Opening Activity.

— The more we know about these threats and risks, the more we will be able to address these issues and facilitate a more conducive and favorable environment for adolescent and youth development.

**WRITE** the words, **THREATS AND RISKS**, vertically on the board. Fill in with what they have previously identified and give them clues to assist them in identifying remaining **THREATS AND RISKS**.

**These THREATS AND RISKS** are the following:

- Too Early Sexual Involvement
- HIV-AIDs/STI
- Rape and other forms of Sexual Abuse/Violence
- Early Marriage
- Abortion
- Trafficking and Exploitation of youth and children
- Survival Sex
- Abandonment / Armed-Conflicts
- Natural Resource Degradation
- Dysfunctional Families and Demoralization and Increasing Passivity of Youth
- Rising Criminality/ Rising Incidence of School Drop-outs
- Income Deficiency / Inaccurate and Inadequate Information
- Substance Abuse/ Several Forms of Gambling
- Knowledge and Skills Inadequacy and Ineffectiveness

**DRAW OUT** ideas from participants on the results/effects of “too early sexual involvement.” After hearing their responses, **POST** the meta cards or visuals with the mnemonic, **W-A-S-T-E-D** and **REFER** to their responses as you discuss what the mnemonic stands for.
**Too Early Sexual Involvement.** This refers to engaging in some form of sexual encounter or sexual intercourse at an early age. Too early sexual involvement often leads to WASTED lives.

- Weak self-image and low self-esteem
- Adolescent or teenage pregnancy
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Tainted Reputation and Tarnished Image
- Emotional wounds
- Disrupted goals
- Disappointed parents
- Dim future

**Before discussing the letter “W”, ASK participants how too early sexual involvement could lead to weak self image and low self-esteem.**

- **Weak self-image and low self-esteem.** Too early sexual involvement may have damaging effects on the adolescents' self-image and self-esteem.
  
  — Self-esteem is an inner attitude of self-respect, a sense of personal worth and a state of valuing one's self.
  
  — Self-esteem is a sense of liking one's self and feeling personally secure.

**ENCOURAGE participants to SHARE examples or true-to-life stories to illustrate these KLPs without necessarily identifying the involved parties.**

**The guilt and anxiety that often accompanies too early sexual involvement can have a destructive effect on how young people see and feel about themselves.**

  — It can make them feel ashamed, disgusted and unworthy of being loved.
  — It can diminish their sense of self worth and self-confidence.
  — It sometimes creates a feeling of helplessness which can lead to depression.
  — It can also lead to promiscuity or a tendency to engage in casual sex because of low self-esteem and feeling of worthlessness.
Before discussing this KLP, ASK participants what are the problems faced by adolescents who get pregnant. ENCOURAGE them to SHARE examples or true-to-life stories to illustrate these KLPs without necessarily identifying the involved parties.

 Adolescent or Teenage Pregnancy. Pregnancy, especially for an unwed adolescent, is extremely stressful and emotionally devastating.

— They may feel overwhelmed by reality and serious consequences of their situation (e.g., negative reaction of family and friends, unwillingness of the father of unborn child to accept/assume the responsibility, fear of social rejection, fear of scandal and shame or guilt).

— Most often, the uncertainty and gravity of the situation they face may also make them feel alone, hopeless and helpless.

— Unplanned and/or unwanted pregnancies do not only cause emotional anguish, they can also limit the options of both partners for a better future. It can also endanger the health of the adolescent girl and her unborn child.

ENCOURAGE participants to share ideas on how teen pregnancy can limit the options of young people. LEAD them to identify effects on both partners.

Most often, a young girl who becomes pregnant faces these problems.

— She may have to leave school. If that happens, her education is interrupted and she will have an increased likelihood of being unemployed or underemployed. This could limit her opportunities to provide a stable future for her child.

— She may be rejected by her boyfriend and even her family.

— She may be forced to get married or be with someone she does not really want as a lifetime partner.

— She will find herself faced with numerous responsibilities for which she may be unprepared. At times, this may lead to other psychological and emotional problems such as anger and disillusionment.
TELL participants that STIs are also referred to as STDs (sexually transmitted diseases), which were formerly known as VD or venereal diseases.

TELL participants that you will discuss this in greater detail in the session on HIV/AIDS. However, if they have questions, write them on the board and remember to respond to them in the appropriate session.

- **Sexually Transmitted Infections.** The most serious STIs are usually passed on through sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual intimacies.
  - They are infectious diseases which often cause serious and permanent health damage, without necessarily showing any symptoms.

- **Tainted Reputation or Tarnished Image.** This is especially true for adolescent/teenage girls. Early sexual involvement may damage their image or reputation.
  - People will talk and make unkind/hurtful comments/observations about their values and their behavior.
  - They may also label them or call them names (e.g. “sawsawan ng bayan” or “smorgasbord”)
  - At times, boys will pursue them, not for themselves but for the favors which they think they can get from them.

- **Emotional wounds.** Experiences of countless adolescents reveal numerous regrets due to too early sexual involvement.
  - One teenage girl said: “It is nothing like what you see on TV or the movies, or hear in songs or read in magazines. I got really down.”
  - Another said: “It totally ruins your idea about sex. Looking back, having sex was not worth it. I should have waited.”

- **Disrupted plans. Dim future, Disappointed parents.** So many dreams have been shattered, so many opportunities have been lost, and so many young lives scarred by too early sexual involvement.
While the future may seem dim, if you know of adolescents who are already in this situation, you should empower and enable them to rebuild their lives.
— You must help them regain their confidence.

WRITE the word DESIRE vertically on the board. ENCOURAGE participants to guess what each of these letters stand for. PROVIDE clues if necessary. POST the meta cards corresponding to each letter as they guess each word correctly.

DRAW OUT ideas from participants on how and why these factors contribute to early sexual involvement and adolescent pregnancy. USE your KLPs to elaborate.

Young people’s interest in sex grows as they go through adolescence. There are a number of factors that contribute to too early sexual involvement and adolescent pregnancy.

The most common factors are related to DESIRE. This DESIRE often pushes young people towards too early sexual involvement.

- **D**esire to be “in”, “cool”, accepted or popular. *This is related to the mistaken belief that “everybody is doing it” and that maturity means, “having done it.”*
- **E**xploration/experimentation. Young people have a strong need to live out their fantasies and “test the limits.”
- **S**ocial and peer pressure. Media is constantly bombarding the youth with sexually-related messages. Hence, the youth feel the pressure to have their own “adventures” and “conquests” and/or to act out what they see on TV or the movies
  — At times, they may also be afraid to lose their friends or to be viewed as “different”.
- **I**nadequate or inaccurate knowledge. Young people may have inadequate or inaccurate information about sexuality, pregnancy and the risks of STI.
  — Most of the time, your adolescents can relate more with their peers in terms of their feelings and emotions, particularly when it comes to sex and sexuality-related issues. And they trade information, which are oftentimes inaccurate.
  — Other than peers, the media have become a major influence in shaping the attitudes, values and behavior of your children.

ASK participants “How do you see media as educators of your adolescent children?”
ASK participants to SHARE their personal experiences on how media has shaped or influenced their children.
DEEPEN discussion. ASK “What can you do about the powerful influence of media over your children’s lives?”

EMPHASIZE this KLP.

— Adolescents now more than ever are exposed to many forms of media:
— They are bombarded with various media messages with high sexual content. Research shows this often leads to early sexual activity among the youth.
— Based on a recent study, the average young viewer is exposed to 14,000 sexual references each year. Considering the number of media messages and the amount of time they spend with media, it is not surprising that adolescents are learning from them. However, only a handful of media institutions provide accurate information particularly on sex.

As parents, it is imperative that you become vigilant and aware of how powerful media is in providing information to your children. You need to develop strategies to influence your children to make wise media choices.

✔️ **R omanticism.** This may lead young people to engage in unprotected sex despite adequate information and knowledge.

— Many young people are under the false impression that sex has to be spontaneous in order to be romantic.
— They feel that talking about “sex” makes it “unromantic” and “cheap.”

✔️ **E scape from problems, parents or a troubled family.**

— At times, young people engage in sex as a diversion from problems and/or stressful home conditions.
— Their need to be loved, cared for and comforted pushes them to too early sexual involvement.
— Feeling hurt or distressed by problems can make them want to try anything that can make them feel better.

WRITE the PHRASE “When a teenager gets pregnant, we all carry her child” in a metacard and POST it on the board.
WHEN A TEENAGER GETS PREGNANT, WE ALL CARRY HER CHILD.

DRAW OUT reactions on this statement. USE voting technique (agree/disagree) Then ASK, “In what ways do we all carry her child?”

DEEPEN discussions on the effects of teen pregnancy not only on the adolescents’ family but on the community at large.

Distribute two meta cards to each participant. ASK them the following questions and tell them to write their answers on the cards:

- “When you hear the term “HIV/AIDS”, What comes to your mind?”
  “What do you think of?” (It can be a word, an image or a person/situation);

- REPEAT the question, substituting “STI” for “HIV/AIDS.”

PROCEED to your KLPs.

PROBE for reactions. ENCOURAGE questions.

- **HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus.** It is the virus which causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). HIV attacks the body’s immune system. It makes the body defenseless against infections and other diseases.

  — When the immune system is so weak that one’s body can no longer fight off serious infections and some types of cancer, that person develops full-blown AIDS.

- **AIDS stands for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome.**
  — AIDS is not single disease but is a syndrome, consisting of several serious manifestations of the breakdown in the body’s immune system.

- People already infected with HIV may look and feel healthy, with no visible signs of symptoms of the disease.

- A person can be HIV-positive and not be aware that he/she is a carrier of the virus. HIV may live and “hide” in the human body for years and be spread to other people, even before any symptoms appear.
  — Early symptoms of HIV/AIDS are hard to spot. These symptoms may be fairly non-specific, and are commonly found in other people with many different types of illnesses.
  — Symptoms of HIV may take anywhere from a few weeks to many years to appear. It is
the intensity of these symptoms and their persistence over time (more than 1 to 2 months) that should raise concerns about HIV infections.

☑ These symptoms usually include:

- **C** hronic diarrhea
- **H** ardening or swelling of glands located in throat, armpit or groin
- **R** ecurring fever or night sweats; vaginal yeast infection,
- **R** apid weight loss of more than 10-15 pounds
- **O** ral thrush (mouth infection with the yeast organism, candida)
- **N** umbness or pain in the hands
- **I** ncreasing shortness of breath
- **I** ncidence of skin discoloration or unusual rashes
- **C** hronic pelvic inflammatory disease

**Before discussing this KLP, ASK participants how they think HIV/AIDS is transmitted. WRITE their answers on the board. DO NOT CONTRADICT wrong answers. CLARIFY as you discuss sub-KLPs.**

☑ People can become infected with HIV in three ways.

- **Unprotected sexual intercourse** (vaginal, anal, or oral) with an infected person, either a homosexual or heterosexual.

- **Direct contact with infected blood or plasma products.** This occurs when a person is given blood transfusion from an HIV-infected donor or shares needles or syringes for drugs use, tattoos or piercing with an infected person.

- **Women with HIV can pass the virus to their unborn child during birth.** They can also pass it on during breast feeding.

☑ STI refers to sexually transmitted infections, some of which can be fatal, that are transmitted from one person to another usually during unprotected sexual contact.

☑ STIs often cause serious and permanent health damage without necessarily showing any symptoms.

- STIs include diseases such as gonorrhea, syphilis, herpes, genital warts, chlamydia and HIV.
- With some STIs, even if the symptoms go away, the person may still be infected.
- Many women who are infected but have symptoms may never be able to have children.
- Certain infections can also be passed on from a woman to her fetus during pregnancy and childbirth. It can lead to birth defects.

☑ STIs make one more vulnerable to contracting HIV - AIDS.
Before discussing this KLP, ASK participants what they think sexual violence is.

Rape and other types of Sexual Violence

☑️ Sexual Violence is an umbrella term for rape or sexual assault, sexual abuse, incest, sexual exploitation, pedophilia and sexual harassment. They are all violations of our bodies and personal space. They are all crimes.

☑️ Sexual assault or rape is a form of sexual violence. It is essentially a crime of violence and not motivated by sexual desire. Rapists use violence to abuse and dominate their victims, to express anger and feel powerful.

☑️ Rape is a crime of violence. It is not a sexual act. Neither is it a crime of passion and lust. It is a violent, brutal assault. Assailants seek to dominate, humiliate and punish their victims.

ASK participants if they agree/disagree with this KLP. Help them to recognize why and how men can also be victims of sexual violence.

☑️ Both men and women can become victims of rape/ sexual assault.

— Rape is not about sexual orientation or sexual desire. It is an act of power and control, in which the victim is brutalized and humiliated.
— Men can be and are sexually assaulted both by gays as well as women.
— Men fall victim for the same reasons as women. They are overwhelmed by threats or coerced by acts of physical and emotional violence.
— An assailant often uses the victim’s trust to isolate him/her.

☑️ Sometimes the victim is not even sure if she/he has indeed been raped. Instead she/he may feel confused and guilty about the assault. This is most likely to happen in "drug-induced" rapes.

— The assailant may use only enough force to gain control and get his/her date to do what he wants.
— He/she may not be openly violent. Because of this, date rape is hard to prove.
— But rape by a friend or an acquaintance is still rape. It is a crime.
— Rape, in any form or situation is not and can never be a victim’s fault.
ASK participants if they have heard of “date drugs” or “Roofies”. These are colorless, odorless drugs/tablets with a slightly better taste which can be mixed into one’s drink and dissolves quickly. In about 10 minutes, it creates a drunk-like effect that lasts for about 8 hours. It enhances the effects of alcohol, causes loss of inhibition, extreme sleepiness, relaxation and, worst, leads to amnesia/partial loss of memory.

PREPARE newspaper clippings on various incidents of rape and sexual abuse and POST during discussions.

ASK participants why children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse.

☑ Sexual abuse occurs when an older or more knowledgeable child, adolescent, or adult, takes advantage of a child or an adolescent for sexual pleasure.

☑ Sexual abuse of children and adolescents involves forcing, tricking, bribing, threatening or pressuring a child or adolescent into sexual awareness or activity.

☑ Every child and adolescent is vulnerable to sexual abuse. You must face the possibility that someone may harm or take advantage of your child or adolescent.

— Research indicates that as many as 1 out of every 4 children/adolescent will be the victim of sexual abuse.
— Very young children as well as older teenagers are victimized.

☑ Most of them are abused by someone they know and trust: a relative, family friend or caregiver.

— Sexual abuse can take place within the family by a parent, step parent, brother or sister or other relatives, or outside the home by a friend, neighbor, teacher, caregiver or a random molester.

— The abuse often begins gradually and increases over time.

PREPARE newspaper clippings on various incidents of rape and sexual abuse and POST during discussions.
Children or adolescents are usually coerced into sexual activity and are manipulated into silence either by threats, promises and/or their own feelings of guilt and shame.

- Sexual abuse usually starts with lustful looks, touching of private parts, and then progresses to fondling, prolonged kissing, oral sex and sexual intercourse.
- The use of physical force is rarely necessary to engage a child in sexual activity because children are trusting and dependent. They want to please others and gain love and approval.
- Sexual abuse is an abuse of power over a child or an adolescent. It is also a violation of child’s or adolescent’s right to normal, healthy, trusting relationships.

**EMPHASIZE this KLP. WRITE the main KLP on the board or on a meta card. ENCOURAGE participants to elaborate on this KLP.**

**PROVIDE examples by or citing actual cases. ENCOURAGE participants to share their own examples or experiences.**

As parents, you should recognize that empowering your children/adolescents is the best way to address/avoid these concerns. If your children know their basic rights they can stand firm without any hesitation or fear to resist any violations they encounter.

**ASK participants if there has been a case of sexual exploitation in their own or nearby communities. ENCOURAGE participants to share their own examples and experiences. FOCUS discussion on how the victims could have avoided being involved in sexual abuse.**

**ELABORATE by giving local examples. DISCUSS what they can do to protect their adolescents.**

There are various forms of sexual abuse.

**INCEST** refers to sexual relations which occur between two members of the same family, such as father and daughter, brother or sister, or mother and son. Situations which are almost as disturbing may involve those who are not blood relations, such as a step father and his step daughter.

**SEXUAL EXPLOITATION** refers to the hiring, employment, persuasion, inducement or coercion of a child or adolescent to:

- Perform in obscene exhibitions and indecent shows, whether live, in video or film.
- Pose or act as a model in obscene publications or pornographic materials
- Exposing children and/or adolescents to adult sexual activity or pornographic movies and photographs.
— Having children and/or adolescents pose, undress or perform in sexual fashion on film or in person.
— Sell or distribute said materials.

☐ Extreme financial hardship, economic difficulties or substance abuse are some of the reasons that sometimes push even parents, guardians, natural caregivers or relatives to engage in sexual exploitation.
☐ Young children and adolescents are being sold into prostitution or trapped in a lifetime of bondage to pay off their parents’ debts to money lenders

☑ PEDOPHILIA is another form of sexual abuse, where a young adolescent or a child may be either obliged or persuaded to have sex with an older person to fulfill the latter’s sexual desires. It is also form of sexual exploitation because of the immaturity of the victim.

ASK participants what they think sexual harassment refers to. FOCUS on the fact that: Sexual Harassment does not only include sexual behavior, but also includes words/language.

PROVIDE local examples using the local dialect.

☑ SEXUAL HARASSMENT refers to any unwanted verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature, which embarrasses, humiliates or intimidates an individual.

☐ It includes words or actions which interfere with the person’s school or work performance and/or create an environment which is hostile to a particular sex or sexual orientation.

— Verbal sexual harassment includes sexist remarks and jokes, inappropriate remarks about one’s body clothing or orientation and behavior, obscene phone calls, casual sex flavored comments and sexual propositions, suggestive or insulting sounds, or demeaning gender-specific criticisms.

ASK participants what they think the letters in the mnemonic, FEARS, refer to. RELATE to earlier discussions in the Opening Activity. INTEGRATE participants’ answers to your discussion of FEARS.

Sexual violence is a particularly difficult subject for the adolescent or child to talk about.

☑ The victimized child or adolescent often does not tell anyone about the sexual violence he/she experienced because they are overwhelmed by many emotions and FEARS.
**F**rightened by the possibility of:
— Causing trouble.
— Being sent away or taken away from home.
— The family breaking up.
— The family or a family member will be harmed.
— The offender/perpetrator being jailed/harmed.
— Losing adults important to them.

**E**mbarrassment and shame
— About being involved in the experience.
— About their bodies response to the abuse.

**A**nguish and anxiety due to the threats of the abuser and fear that no one will believe them.
— If the offender is a family member, loss of love and being sent away is often used as a threat.
— Sexually violated children feel isolated and alone. They are also confused because they may still love and care for the abuser and are often torn between loyalty, love, anger and fear of the abuser.

**R**eaction of the family members and most especially of the mother, if there was incest between a girl and her father or step father.

**S**ense of guilt. The abused child often feels that they have somehow consented or encouraged the sexual violence.
— They are angry at themselves, feeling as if they caused the whole incident.
— The abused child blames himself/herself or believes the abuse is a punishment for their being “bad”.
— They may also feel guilty for not being able to stop the abuse or to reveal it to others.

**S**adness
— About being betrayed by someone they love and trust.
— About having something taken from them.
— About being different.
— About being misunderstood or rejected (if they have told someone and they were not believed).

**ENCOURAGE** participants to share their ideas on disadvantages of early marriage. **You may also CITE relevant local data.**

**ENCOURAGE** participants to share true-to-life accounts which illustrate the difficulties encountered by young married couples.
Early Marriage

- Too early sexual involvement and teenage pregnancy may also lead to forced marriage.
  
  - An early marriage forces them to live with and commit themselves to someone they do not know very well.
  - It cuts short their adolescent years and forces them to a married life and other responsibilities that they may be unprepared for (emotionally, economically, physically and socially).
  - Many marriages or live-in arrangements between adolescents often end up either in separation or break up, and dysfunctional relationships.
  - Most early marriages are results of hasty decisions. Some are due to the need to conform to the family norms and expectations.

- Marriage should always be the result of a well-thought of choice, made in freedom. It should not be something forced on by circumstances or entered into because of fear or desire to get out of an unwanted situation.

- Early marriages also expose adolescents to frequent sexual activities with their partners and more likely result in unwanted pregnancies and undesired family size (unplanned family).

ENCOURAGE participants to share their thoughts on why people resort to abortion. They may cite actual cases in their community.

Abortion

- Abortion is illegal in the Philippines; yet it has been estimated that about 400,000 abortions are performed every year.

- The reasons for resorting to abortion differ between adult women and adolescents. Adult women tend to seek a termination of pregnancy for social and economic reasons. Adolescents, on the other hand, have a wider range of reasons, from loss of educational opportunities to sexual violence and coercion.

Consequences of Unsafe Abortion in Youth and Adolescence

- The risk of death and illness due to abortion are high for women of all ages, but especially high for adolescents. The consequence of unsafe abortion is either death or complications (temporary or permanent).

- Deaths Due to Unsafe Abortion. There are groups of women at particular risk for increased deaths and complications from unsafe abortion. These are:
  
  - Women of young age;
Those who have not had children, and
Women who are poor.

Complications. The complications of unsafe abortion are many and may occur at the time of the procedure or later. There are medical, psychological and economic complications. The most common medical complications are.

- Cervical or vaginal lacerations;
- Severe infections such as pelvic infection or abscess;
- Severe bleeding resulting to anemia;
- Perforation of the uterus or bowel, tetanus;
- Intrauterine blood clots;
- Post-abortion infections can rapidly become generalized infections.

The psychological consequences of unsafe abortion are not as well-documented as the medical consequences, but are by no means insignificant. These could include depression, withdrawal and sexual dysfunction. In many instances, they manifest early and may improve with the passage of time. However, some of these psychological problems may be prolonged and require specialized care.

The social and economic consequences of unsafe abortion are borne by the girl herself, her family and the community.

Girls who survive may face a range of social problems. For example, if it becomes known that they have undergone an abortion, they may have to leave school or face disapproving attitudes within their community. Furthermore, they risk being thrown out by their families.

Girls who drop out of school, or are thrown out by the family, often marry early, get poorly paid jobs and may be tempted or forced into prostitution.

ENCOURAGE participants to share actual cases they know of involving trafficking and exploitation of the youth and children in their community.

Trafficking And Exploitation of Youth and Children

Trafficking involves the act of buying or selling a child or youth for money, barter, favor or any other consideration. “White slavery” is a form of trafficking.

- Trafficking in Persons - refers to the recruitment, transportation, transfer or harboring, or receipt of persons with or without the victim’s consent or knowledge, within or across national borders by means of threat or use of force, or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or of position, taking advantage of the vulnerability of the person;
The giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation which includes at a minimum, the exploitation or the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery, servitude or the removal or sale of organs.

Exploitation refers to the hiring, employment, persuasion, inducement or coercion of a child or youth to work in an environment or undertaking which are considered hazardous or deleterious in nature or would impair normal development.

CITE local examples or share stories. PROBE for feelings and reactions. MENTION policies protecting youth and children from trafficking and exploitation.

Young people who are usually most vulnerable to the twin threat of trafficking and exploitation are those who are characterized by 4 D's and are in:

— Difficult life circumstances.
— Dysfunctional families
— Deprived of better opportunities and institutional support
— Engaged in high risk behavior, such as drug and alcohol use

Extreme financial hardships, economic difficulties or substance abuse, are some of the reasons that sometimes push even parents, guardians, natural caregivers or relatives to engage in trafficking and exploitation.

Young children are being sold into prostitution or trapped in a lifetime of bondage to pay off their parents’ debts to money lenders.

They are exploited as cheap labor. They are doing hazardous work at negligible pay.

In 1953, the Director General of ILO (1983) captured the essence of exploitation as “the denial to children of their right to play, to learn, to enjoy a normal childhood”.

WRITE the mnemonic, HELPLESS, on the board. DEFINE what each letter stands for, after which conduct the following exercise: Throw a small ball towards a participant and ask him/her to share his/her opinion on why some young people are involved in survival sex, starting with the first letter. After explaining one letter, ASK the participant holding the ball to pass it to someone else who will then discuss the next letter. Do this until all the letters in the mnemonic have been discussed. USE the sub-KLPs to enrich discussions.
Survival Sex

☑ Survival sex is related to the issue of exploitation. It refers to selling of or trading sex to meet one’s basic needs, such as food or money, or even drugs, cellphones, companionships, and other favors and conveniences. It is basically an economic survival strategy.

☑ Studies reveal a vast involvement of youth and adolescents in survival sex. Many of them are HELPLESS.

H – Homeless and Runaways.
— Homelessness among young people is becoming a serious threat not only to the individual but to the society in general.
— Homelessness makes the youth so vulnerable to exploitation and abuses. Without any decent recourse to hunger and comfort, they indulge in selling their bodies in order to survive.

E - Exploited and Abused
— The intersection between sexual victimization and homeless youth has been documented as an antecedent (cause) for running away and as a consequence of doing so. Sexual abuse and exploitation emerge prominently as a cause of homelessness. Instead of finding refuge, they seek in the streets, the youth are further exposed to a multitude of risks including rape, sexual abuse, and prostitution
— Various studies show that a high percentage of homeless youth have been sexually abused prior to their becoming homeless and, once on the street, they become vulnerable to further sexual exploitation, rape and sexual assault.

L – Less Economic Opportunities
— Survival sex is definitely not a choice. Young people who are poor enter into this kind of situation to cope with their financial and survival needs.
— Women in general who have less economic means use survival sex to give their children shelter and education.

P – Psychologically disturbed
— Studies also show that disruptions in the psychological development of young people may contribute to their participation in destructive and oppressive activities including survival sex.
— Some researchers also postulate that childhood physical and sexual abuse influences a child’s decision to become involved in survival sex and prostitution.

L – Low self-esteem
— As a result of an abusive environment, children end up with very low self-esteem. Abusers take advantage of this situation and engage them in exploitative activities.

E – Engaging in Risky-Behaviors
— Trade-offs in survival sex do not only involve basic necessities for sex but also for drugs, and other addictive substances. Some young people opt to sell their bodies to
support their addictions and other risky behaviors such as drinking and smoking.

**S – socially marginalized and neglected**
— Because some young people are disconnected and marginalized from the community, many are forced to turn to survival strategies
— Existing structures in the society such as laws and social welfare programs may not be adequate to protect children from exploitation.

**S – sexually disrupted**
— Studies also suggest that disruptions in the psycho-sexual development of young people may contribute to their participation in survival sex.
— Young people may be involved in survival sex and “aggressive prostitution” as a means of “getting even” with their true aggressor.

**TELL** the participants that the “AND RISKS” part of the mnemonic represent all the Non-sexual risks faced by adolescents.

**POINT OUT** areas in your community where you find runaways and/or street children.

**Abandonment**
☑ This describes the situation wherein an adolescent or child is deserted by parents, guardians or caretakers.

☑ Another term for abandoned youth is throwaways. They include those who leave or were subjected to extreme level of abuse or neglect. Many of them end up as street children.

☑ Street children refers to children who live on the streets and are runaways, throwaways or homeless.

☑ Runaways are youth who leave and remain away from home without parental permission or consent.

☑ Some of the most common reasons for leaving home is to seek for better living conditions, rebellion from restrictive environment or from dysfunctional families with high incidence of neglect, abuse and serious conflicts.
— The largest number of runaways are those who leave home after disagreement with parents. They usually return home after a few days.
— Chronic runaways do not return home but live in transitory housing such as with friends, in cheap rooms for rent,
DISCUSS how you can help minimize the risks for runaways and street children in your community.

Street children are vulnerable to all types of abuse -- physical, sexual, social, emotional and economic.

- Unscrupulous characters use them either to get needed resources or force them to work and earn for them.
- Many are forced into prostitution or simply resort to “survival sex” (as previously discussed).
- They are exposed to sexual exploitation and prostitution.
- They become vulnerable to STIs and HIV-AIDS.
- They are also highly vulnerable to respiratory infection due to constant exposure to pollution and the natural elements. Other common ailments include lacerations, burns, headlice, and dermatologic problems.
- Substance abuse is part of the lifestyle of many street children. They use it as a crutch to cope with the instability and uncertainty of their lives.
- Street children are often victims of violence.
- They become involved in anti-social and criminal activities, such as street prostitution, drug dealing, theft and robbery.

CITE news and feature articles focusing on children or young adults who are victims of armed conflict. MENTION the recent case of a 13-year old NPA amazon who was shot, wounded and captured by government troopers.

DEEPEN discussion. SHARE actual experiences.

**Armed Conflict**

Armed conflict arises mainly from insurgency, rebellion, or rivalries between factions/groups. It may not necessarily be between rebels and government troops. It can also be between armed civilian groups and warlords, or gangs.

- Armed conflict is a threat to young people because often, it is they who are caught in the crossfire.
- Armed conflicts disrupt social networks and primary relationships.
- Children and young people become victims of human rights violation.
- Many children suffer from malnutrition and diseases associated with armed conflict.

There is no way of measuring the psychological and emotional toll on a young person who lives for years in situations of armed conflict.
The loss, grief and fear that adolescents experience face in armed conflict often create long-term psychological and emotional distress.

The horror of armed conflict and the continuing exposure to brutality and violence can also make adolescents distrustful of adults.

Armed conflict contributes to the disintegration of families and communities, the displacement of population, the breakdown of established social values and the destruction of various infrastructure (e.g., educational, health, transportation). This also results to situations where an adolescent or child is deserted by parents, guardians or caretakers.

ASK participants how they view environmental degradation. PROCEED with your definition. USE the local dialect in explaining what the natural resource base is.

Natural Resource or Environmental Degradation

Environmental Degradation. This is commonly viewed as endangering the natural resource base. It also includes the destruction of the immediate surroundings of an individual.

It is an issue that does not only affect individuals but the entire community and the world as a whole. Since the youth is an important actor in attaining sustainable development, their active participation in the environmental protection is important.

The environment is like a complex living machine. It consists of a network of life support systems or ecosystems, all of which are interrelated and interact with each other.

By degrading our resource base and damaging our ecosystems we are in effect destroying our environment. By doing so, we are not only putting our own survival at risk, we are also endangering our future and the very future of humanity.

PROBE for feelings and reactions. ENCOURAGE participants to share their personal views and opinions relating to the importance or role of family in their development.

Dysfunctional Families

The family is the basic unit of society. It is the well-spring of strength and stability of a community and nation.

It is within the family that children develop a sense of what is right or wrong; where they evolve a set of values and beliefs to live by.
— The family is also the place where children learn the roles they are likely to play and the behaviors that go with it. It is where children learn to socialize.
— The family provides the foundation of our behavior and attitude toward life. The kind of family a youth has would most likely define who he is and will be in the future.
— The family is the source of strength, support and guidance for the youth to actualize their potentials. The family facilitates the actualization of youth development.

☑ However, more and more young people are going through the transition from childhood to adulthood outside of the care of both parents.

☑ Over three-fourths of young people have parents still living together (Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality Study - YAFS 3). However, even in homes where both parents are present, children receive little or no attention from them or elders and there is minimal interaction in the family, leaving children alone to develop a set of values different from their parents/elders.

— Many youth issues are rooted in dysfunctional families. Parents fail to attend to the needs of their children making them seek other avenues where they can satisfy their needs. Sometimes in lieu of their families, they turn to their friends and peers. In worse cases, they find friends who have the same familial problems.

— The lack of attention and support from parents can also push young people into delinquent behavior which are mechanisms to attract the attention they need from their parents.

— Studies also suggest that most dysfunctional families are composed of parents who came also from dysfunctional families. As such, children of dysfunctional families often breed dysfunctional families themselves.

ENCOURAGE participants to share their views on why it is important for the youth to be involved in development activities. Also, ASK them to cite reasons why the youth are often not involved in community activities. TELL them to share actual experiences.
Demoralization and Increasing Passivity Of Youth

— The highly politicized structure and system of government has defeated the purpose for which the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) was created. In most cases, SK activities, from the selection of its officers down to the implementation of projects, are diluted with political color. SK officers and members are left either as implementing arms of local executives or as passive spectators to development activities.

— Though a number of SKs have genuinely been a positive force in their localities, as a whole the SK is often misunderstood and perceived by some sectors as unresponsive, inefficient, and corrupt.

ASK participants whether they agree or disagree with these perceptions regarding the SK. ASK them to cite actual experiences.

☐ The apparent demoralization and increasing passivity of the youth towards development concerns can be manifested in the following:

— Growing apathy regarding national issues and other community affairs;
— Low participation in community activities, and in environmental and cultural preservation;
— Limited participation in the planning and evaluation stages of local government projects;
— Widespread perception of the SK as an inactive and non-performing entity;
— Weak governance of student councils regarding the implementation of student’s rights and welfare.

☐ For their part, national and local government agencies have programs and services that address the different needs and problems of the youth. However, much needs to be done to strengthen institutional support for youth participation.

— There are inadequate health information and services specific for youth needs;
— The youth are not consulted and involved in the more crucial stages of program/project development, such as project identification and selection, project planning, and evaluation.

CITE recent data from local surveys regarding crimes in the participants’ regions/communities. You may also cite a recent cases which would further illustrate this threat.

ENCOURAGE participants to share actual experiences or stories.
Rising Criminality

- The surge in number of crimes has rendered our communities unsafe. This exposes everyone, especially children and adolescents, to greater risks.

- **Rising criminality** refers to the increasing occurrence and growing seriousness of crimes against persons and property.

- Widespread criminality exposes the youth risks of being mauled, attacked, kidnapped, raped, and even killed.

- Thee rising criminality as a social issue involves the youth both as victim and perpetrator.
  - The increasing incidence of crimes committed by young people is borne by facts from researches and the news.
  - Youth crimes and delinquent acts include theft, assault, obstructing justice, possession of weapons, substance abuse, and sexual violence.

- The involvement of young people in criminal and delinquent acts is rooted in very complex factors.
  - Violent acts in the family may have a significant influence on the behaviors of young people.
  - Peer pressure may also push an adolescent to commit offenses even beyond his will.
  - The community has a significant impact on the behavior and attitudes of the young people. Many offenses are committed by gang members who live in communities with high incidence of criminal offenses.
  - The media also contributes to the violent and criminal behavior of young people. Media portrays violence as an effective resolution to conflicts and disputes.
  - Socio-economic conditions also sometimes prompt young people to break the law. Researches have noted a high correlation between hunger and crime.

ENCOURAGE participants to share their opinions on why young people drop out from school. ASK them to share actual experiences.

EMPHASIZE the interrelatedness of social factors (e.g., income) relating to the education of the youth. CITE other factors affecting educational outcomes of the youth.

Rising Incidence of School Drop-Outs

- The rising incidence of school drop-outs among young people has serious implications on their lives, at present and in the future.

- Rising incidence of school dropouts refers to the growing number of young people who are out of school or have stopped attending formal schooling.
The rising incidence of school dropouts is a social issue which involves the youth as the primary victim.

- Poverty is a major factor in the rising incidence of school dropouts.
- Many of the youth have to leave school to work to support their family.

The psycho-social make-up of an adolescent is another important factor that influences the youth to drop out from school. Some do this just to get attention from their parents and other significant persons. Moreover, a psychologically disturbed individual, who has no clear direction and purpose in life is most likely lose interest in school.

CITE recent data from local surveys regarding unemployment in the participants’ regions/communities. You may also cite local examples to illustrate this threat.

Income Deficiency (Unemployment)

The adolescents and youth are a vast human resource of the country. A sustainable livelihood is important for a young person’s development and economic growth. A steady, stable source of income allows him or her to contribute to the national economy. Unfortunately, the employment outlook in the country is not so bright for many young Filipinos.

Unemployment is a reality for many young Filipinos. Many of them leave school early to look for work and help their families. Yet, many cannot find suitable employment. Even those who have completed college or who have gone to technical/vocational schools are not assured of jobs.

In 2002, the 3.1 million Filipinos who were unemployed were from the 15-24 age group. The high unemployment rate of young people is due to the country’s constricted market for young entrants. The encouraging educational profile of Filipino youths does not translate into better employment opportunities (Ogena and Berja, 2004).

- There is an increasing trend in youth unemployment over the years especially among 20-24 years old.
- Unemployment rate among women has been consistently higher than that among men and even higher than the overall youth unemployment rate.
- And for those who are qualified to hold sustainable employment, a large number seek opportunities outside the country.
- The prevalence of discrimination in employee recruitment, particularly among women, gays and lesbians, has contributed largely to youth unemployment.
- Youth engaging in temporary employment are also exposed to issues involving security of tenure, subcontracting, lack of access to social security and protection, poor bargaining power and limited protection by unions, and being paid less than their adult counterparts for the same amount of work.
Related issues to income deficiency brought by lack of employment opportunities include the prevalence of child labor and youth engaged in hazardous occupations, and the increasing incidence of young workers' exploitation, especially of young female OFWs and victims of human trafficking.

Brain drain, or the migration of youth to other countries to seek attractive jobs has also been identified as an issue, although it has been acknowledged to contribute greatly to the country’s economy. The challenge lies in building a balance between keeping Filipino talent within the country through attractive local job opportunities, and supporting those who wish to find employment abroad.

Due to prevalent unemployment among the youth, they are pushed to engage in illegal activities like prostitution, survival sex, drug trafficking.

**Substance Abuse (Smoking, Drinking Alcohol and Prohibited Drugs)**

Substance abuse is one of the greatest threats that confront our adolescents today. This session will provide parents with adequate knowledge to help curb substance abuse among the young.

“**SUBSTANCE ABUSE**” refers to the continued use of certain substances that interferes with the user’s normal behavior. It involves a pattern of pathological use of a substance, which results in social or occupational impairment.

**Addiction or Dependence** is defined as a “cluster of 3 or more symptoms occurring at any time within a 12-month period.”

- Tolerance, or needing more and more of a substance to achieve the same effect.
- Withdrawal, which involves unpleasant symptoms when the body is deprived of the substance, resulting in more frequent use to alleviate the negative symptoms.
- Taking the substance for a longer of time or in larger amounts than originally intended.
- Unsuccessful desire to minimize use of the substance.
- Too much time spent to obtain, use or recover from the effects of the substance.
- Social occupational or recreational activities are missed because of substance abuse.
- Substance use is continued despite knowledge that is causing a problem.

**There are two faces of dependence or addiction.**

1. **Psychological dependence** is when a person/adolescent thinks that he/she needs the substance to function properly. He/she craves the substance until it becomes the most important, biggest thing in his/her life, more important than family, friends, work and school.

2. **Physical dependence** is when a person/adolescents body gets used to the presence of the substance such that if he/she did not get the hit, his/her body displays withdrawal
symptoms, like extreme anxiety, irritability, tiredness, insomnia, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, depression, shivering and feels as if something is crawling in his/her skin

☑ Substance abuse among the youth has escalated in recent years.

— Based on the YAFS 3, 21 percent of all adolescents 15-24 years old is currently smoking with higher percentages among males compared to females (37.3% vs. 6.3%).
— Further, only 2.8 percent of all those aged 15-24 admitted to be currently using dangerous drugs, which is twice the 1.4 percent level reported in 1994. Females are much less likely to be on drugs than males.

☑ There are six main reasons why young people use and abuse dangerous substance. They CRAVE alcohol, tobacco and other prohibited drugs because of:

   C uriosity
   R ebellion against parents or other authorities
   A cceptance and belonging
   V ehicle for relaxation and feeling good
   E scape from problems or relief from stress.

Several Forms of Gambling

☑ Gambling is defined as any betting or wagering, for self or others, whether for money or not, no matter how slight or insignificant, where the outcome is uncertain or depends upon chance.

☑ It is enjoyable entertainment and can provide unparalleled excitement although it can financially drain and ruin some people.

☑ A person who cannot control the amount of money he/she loses in gambling is called a compulsive gambler. Compulsive gamblers are sick people. They are people whose gambling has caused growing and continuing problems.

— The first bet to a problem gambler is like the first small drink to an alcoholic. Sooner or later he or she falls back into the same old destructive pattern.
— Compulsive gambling is an emotional problem. A person in the grip of this illness creates mountains of apparently insolvable problems. Of course, financial problems are created, but they also find themselves facing family/marital problems, employment, legal problems, etc.
— Compulsive gambling is an illness, progressive in its nature, which can be arrested/stopped.

☑ To recover from one of the most baffling, insidious, compulsive gambling addictions will require diligent effort. Honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness — these are the key words to recovery.
Characteristics of a compulsive gambler:

— **Inability and Unwillingness to Accept Reality.** Hence the escape into the dream world of gambling.

— **Emotional Insecurity.** A compulsive gambler finds he/she is emotionally comfortable only when “in action”. It is not uncommon to hear a gambler say: “The only place where I really felt like I belonged was sitting at the gambling table. There I felt secure and comfortable. No great demands were made upon me. I knew I was destroying myself, yet at the same time, I had a certain sense of security.”

— **Imaturity.** A desire to have all the good things in life without any great effort on the part of the gambler seems to be the common character pattern of problem gamblers. Many gamblers accept the fact that they were unwilling to grow up.

☑ Lastly, a gambler has a strong inner urge to be a ‘big shot’ and needs to have a feeling of being all powerful. The gambler is willing to do anything (often of an antisocial nature) to maintain the image he or she wants others to see.

**Knowledge and Skills Deficiency**

☑ The development of the young people’s knowledge and skills through education is a major concern. Particularly in the face of continued poverty and rising unemployment, and the challenges and threats of globalization, education is a vital aspect that should be developed among the youth.

☑ However, many issues surrounding education in the country still persist. This include the following:

*Limited access to quality education and training.*

— The high cost of education has contributed to a high level of dropouts particularly from the private sector. Although there is an increase in enrolment rate, many cannot cope with the high cost of quality education. Many can only avail of free education from the public schools which are now congested and can hardly meet the needs of its enrollees.

— The quality of education has likewise been affected by the inadequacy of classrooms and educational facilities particularly in the urban areas. Needed school materials such as books are also lacking thereby affecting the quality of education.

— There is likewise a decrease in the number of competent teachers and education professionals. Teaching is a low-paying job. More competent teachers are more likely to move to other countries for higher pay.

— The High School Readiness Test reveals that almost all of the students who took the
test were not yet prepared to enter high school, scoring low in Reading Comprehension, Science and Math.

— Poverty remains the main reason for the increasing number of out-of-school youths (OSYs) in the country. Researches have also noted that a substantial proportion of dropouts cited sexually-related problems (e.g. pregnancy, early marriage, sexual abuse, etc) as their reason for leaving school.

— Limited government funding for education and education-related concerns.

— The need for special education programs for specific youth groups (SYGs) is also an important concern.

**Spiritual Emptiness**

☑ Spirituality is fast becoming an irrelevant issue among the youth.

☑ The current picture of the youth reflects the image of materialism. The journey of the youth is becoming a search for material wealth. Their values are no longer reflective of what is right and good but of what is popular.

☑ The media have defined for the youth what is “right” although they may be contrary to cultural norms and values.

—— Moral decadence and spiritual irrelevance is gripping the youth of today. As reflected by increasing number of delinquent acts, abuse and immoral activities committed by the youth themselves.

☑ With the concept of happiness in this material world, the youth are losing sight of their direction, meaning and purpose in life.

☑ Belief in a Supreme Being or Eternal Entity beyond this world provides a sense of meaning and purpose in what we do.

—— A spiritual and moral compass is necessary for the youth as they journey to search for their identities.
TRANSLATE the KLPs into concrete terms or examples so participants can relate to the issues. AVOID comparing religious practices and principles especially when the group is heterogeneous. LET them speak from their own experience.

✓ Spirituality nourishes our soul. It makes us transcend bodily desires that may lead us into false and temporal happiness and contentment.

— Without a sense of the One to which we attach the meaning of our lives, we are most likely lost or may commit serious mistakes.

— In the face of many challenges and threats, it would be an advantage for the youth to hold on to their belief in that One Supreme Being to enlighten them to do things rightfully.

Closing Activity:

Option 1: “Behind the Curtain Call…”

1. ASK participants to re-join their groups in the Opening Activity.

2. INTRODUCE the activity by saying:

   “Now that you are familiar with the THREATS AND RISKS confronting your adolescents, I will give you a few minutes to discuss among yourselves, what you think can be done to inform other young people and their parents about these threats and to protect them from these.”

3. GIVE the following instructions:

   Develop a 30-second plug for radio, TV or MTV. This should be aimed at encouraging young people to adopt behavior that will minimize their risk of exposure to any of these threats. Your plug should be crisp, catchy and concise. Present your plug the way you want it aired over radio, TV or other forms of media.

4. ALLOW 15 minutes for discussion and preparation.

5. ACKNOWLEDGE each presentation.

6. ASK participants which part of each presentation they liked best and why.
7. SUMMARIZE their answers.

8. CLOSE the session using this short activity.
   - Start by asking: How can you convert the negative word THREATS into a positive word.
   - Draw out answers/responses.
   - After getting substantial answers, SAY the Closing Statement as follows:

   “By removing the letter H, you transform THREATS into TREATS. **H stands for HAZARDS.**
   If we do our share and help promote healthy lifestyles and positive choices among young people, then we can change **THREATS to TREATS.**”

   **Together, we can Resist… Educate and Act Towards Safe and Healthy Lifestyles.**

Option 2: “Wish Ko Lang”

This closing activity can be done if there is not enough time to do Option 1.

1. PREPARE in advance a magic wand made from any available materials (cartolina, softdrink straw, etc)

2. ASK the participant s to think of one “wish” for their adolescent children

3. LET each participant hold the magic wand and declare his/her ultimate “wish”

4. AFTER all the participants have finished with the exercise, MAKE your own wish for the youth which should consolidate all the wishes of the participants.
Session 3-B: Protecting My Adolescent

Objectives:

By the end of this session, the participants should be able to:

1. Recognize effective ways and measures to PROTECT adolescents from threats and risks.
2. Identify other agencies and institutions that are working for the protection of adolescents.

Time Allocation: One (1) hour (suggested)

KEY LEARNING POINTS

This sub-session on “Protecting My Adolescent” serves as the concluding KLPs that will provide the participants with some “TIPS” on how to protect their adolescent from “THREATS AND RISKS.

ASK participants: “In what ways can you protect your children from threats and risks?”

Following is a list of pointers by which parents can confront the THREATS AND RISKS faced by their adolescents.

These guidelines are captured in the mnemonic, “PROTECTS.”

ASK participants to share their personal experiences regarding this KLP.

Pray for and with your Children

☐ There is a saying, “The family that prays together, stays together.” Prayers are your strongest weapon against all the threats and risks faced by your children.

☐ Prayerful parents get wisdom and positive behavior in dealing with their children.
Praying time is the best time for both parents and children to strengthen their relationship with each other and for putting God in the center of that relationship.

**DEEPEN discussion. ASK participants how they show their love and care for their children.**

Provide your children with physical care, love and all their needs.

- The physical, emotional and mental health of our children depends on the quality of care they get when they are growing up.

- As parents, you have an obligation to your children. You were the ones who brought them into this world. You should be ready to provide them with all their needs.

**TELL the participants about the different agencies and institutions which can be tapped in this undertaking (refer to the supplementary materials for the list).**

Report to authorities any untoward incidents/threats to the adolescent’s life.

- Parents should be vigilant and take action if any untoward incident happens to their adolescents. There are many agencies and institutions who can help in this regard.

**GIVE special emphasis to this KLP.**

Raise children to be God-loving and God-centered.

- You are responsible for the spiritual formation of your children; bring them closer to the Almighty through involvement in Church activities.

**ASK participants to cite activities of their children which they usually join.**
Observe activities whenever/wherever possible.

☑ Ensure that you are aware of your children’s activities both at home and outside.

☑ If possible, you should join your children’s activities. This will strengthen the bonding between you and your child/children.

TELL the participants that this is a must for parents.

Treat your children equally.

☑ As parents you should ensure that you treat your children fairly and equally. Unequal treatment among siblings may result in rivalry and jealousy.

ASK participants if they agree with this KLP.

Take enough time to be with your children.

☑ Quality time that you spend with your children is just as important as the quantity.

☑ You should reach out to your children to ensure a harmonious relationship with them.

ASK participants to share their personal experiences regarding this KLP. ASK them if they still remember the values that their parents taught them and which of these have they passed on to their children (particularly those pertaining to sexuality).

Educate your children on proper values, specifically on sexuality and healthy lifestyle.

☑ Parents are the children’s first teachers and the home, their first school. Suitable learning experiences must be provided in the home to hasten their mental development as early as infancy.
  — Parents are duty-bound to discover and help develop their children’s innate talents and abilities to the fullest extent possible.
  — Every child has the right to education. Parents are required to provide for their children’s schooling.
One of the most important things parents can do is to help their children develop a healthy attitude towards sexuality and develop a healthy lifestyle.

- Each family has its own set values on different subjects, including sexuality. Some of these values are based on religion, culture and/or life experiences.
- Value-laden “messages” about sexuality should be taught to adolescents during casual conversations and interactions with them. These are “teachable moments” or daily opportunities for parents to educate their children.

While it may not happen overnight, meaningful and fruitful conversations will transpire.

**Empower your adolescents.**

- Empowered children and adolescents are described as friendly, happy, self-confident, responsible, imaginative, creative, alert, and energetic. They have a positive attitude towards life, they enjoy work, and have good interpersonal communication skills.
- All these positive traits can be achieved if adolescents have high self-esteem. This is developed by allowing them to do things on their own, think for themselves, and make decisions in accordance with their level of development.
- Self confidence is an important component of social competence. This is developed by praising children for their efforts and congratulating them for their success. If they fail, encourage them to try again.

**Censor/Choose mass media (radio, TV, print and IT/Electronic media).**

- The media are emerging as the new “surrogate parents. They are fast becoming the adolescents’ main source of information and guide to “what is right or wrong.”
Media, to a great extent, exert great influence on the youth through the programs they watch, the books/magazines they read, or the music they listen to.

The media highlight and glorify risk-taking behavior and unhealthy lifestyles (i.e., alcohol and substance abuse, violence, early sexual involvement, impulsive decision-making, etc.).

As parents, you should give your children rules and guidelines for watching TV or reading print materials.

You should develop your children’s critical attitude and censorship of media messages and images.

Moreover, as parents you must advocate that media practitioners be involved in youth issues, especially in the dissemination of correct information as regards to youth health and development.

**Tell** participants that skills are inherent in their adolescents, but they have to be guided on how to use and enhance these skills.

**Ask** pax how they can assist their adolescent in harnessing the skills in them.

**Teach** them the practical life skills/self defense.

As parents, you need to nurture the inherent skills of your adolescents so that they can develop critical thinking and questioning skills.

You can help them develop the necessary attitudes, values and skills to resist peer pressure and say “NO” to unhealthy lifestyle and behaviors.

You can advise them how to handle themselves in potentially dangerous situations.

**Ask** participants to share their personal experiences in relation to this KLP.

**Tell** them what their options are and how they can best protect themselves.

You should help their adolescent realize that there is more than one way to handle a situation.

**Ask** participants how they ensure that their family is very much connected. Encourage exchange of opinions and sharing.
Stay connected and strengthen family relationship.

☑ Family relationship, particularly that between parents and adolescents is a powerful determinant in shaping the values, behavior and choices of young people.

☑ Your children watch how you and other significant adults behave and pay more attention to what adults do than what they say.

☑ Your stories from the past can give adolescents a more meaningful view and a clearer understanding of the past and serve as lessons for them to learn from.

DEEPEN discussion. RELATE this KLP to the growing clamor of adolescents to be active implementors of community programs.

Sustain active interest and involvement of the community.

☑ At the core of protecting your adolescent is active and continuing community support and involvement.

☑ The active involvement of the community will ensure sustainability of efforts in protecting your adolescents and facilitating their development.

☑ As parents, you need to help raise awareness about the needs, concerns, threats and risks facing your adolescents.

CLOSE session with this statement.

YOU should always remember that your adolescents are your future! When you protect them, you safeguard not only their present, but also their future.

As PARENTS, you have a big role to play in your children’s development. Play it well!
Annexes
“To My Child, With Love”

As you keep growing and learning, striving and searching, it is very important that you pursue your own interest without anything holding you back. It will take time to fully understand yourself and to discover what you want out of life.

As you keep growing and learning, striving and searching, I know that the steps in your journey will take you on the right path. Whatever happens in the future, I will always be rooting for your happiness and success and you can always depend on my love and support.

“Within You is the Promise of the Future”

Within you is an ideal, a voice of strength, and a promise of achievement still to come. Within your hands are special gifts and talents. Within your mind is the source of your dreams. Within you is the strength to carry your dreams. Within you is the strength to carry your dreams to completion.

Within your heart is the desire to meet the world on your own terms. You are strong; you are wise; You have a dream. Your have a spirit and confidence; You have faith. You are your own person, And you always will be. Within you is something so precious and are. Within you is the promise of the future.

References:

Commission on Population in partnership with UNFA. *Sexually Healthy and Personally Effective (SHAPE) Adolescent Training Package.*

UPPI. *Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality Study (YAFSS) 3.* Quezon City, 2002.