

GROWING UP

Growing Up is published quarterly in Lagos, Nigeria by Action Health Incorporated (AHI). AHI is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation dedicated to the promotion of adolescent health and development. We serve as an advocate and a catalyst for change in the present poor status of adolescents' well-being by increasing public awareness and implementing innovative education, healthcare and youth development programmes.

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Cover: **Tolulope Salisu & Damilola**

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Ever wondered why adolescence is such a delicate period? Think about it, you're young, energetic and you feel bold enough to accomplish almost anything and you start to make very serious decisions that can affect your future. For example, you decide whether or not you want to choose a career or vocation, you develop a general attitude to life, you want to experiment based on love adventures you've heard or read about, you determine what type of friends you want to have, you choose values that influence your attitude and behaviour and determine the path that will shape your future forever.

Making decision that affect your life is a development process that occurs in the adolescent years as you attain adulthood. However this should be done after due consultations with people in position to offer good advice. Peer pressure has led

many youths astray into drug use, prostitution, and in some cases have resulted in unplanned pregnancies. Retracing your steps can be a long and hard journey.

Young people often make mistakes and get condemned for their action. Some are made to feel it is the end of the world but, is it really? The inspiring stories below are true experiences of young people who at a point in their lives made the wrong decision but were able to rectify the mistakes and get back on track.

There are several lessons to learn from their stories. Perhaps a key lesson would be that it's never too late to make amends regardless of how terrible the situation or mistake might be.

TOLULOPE'S STORY

"At age 18, I had just completed my secondary school and was preparing to go to the university when I discovered that I was pregnant. Sola and I have been in a relationship for three years and have always had protected sex. However, after the third time, we felt

Never Too Late

there was no need to use the condom again especially since we loved each other and was faithful to each other. That single decision almost changed my promising future. I missed my period and realised I was pregnant. I received my JAMB result and a letter of admission to study law at the University of Lagos a few days after. How would I start school with a bulging stomach? How would I cope with the shame that it would bring to my parents? Each time I thought about it, I felt too scared to inform my mother who had warned me several times not to have sexual intercourse at my age. I had no choice than to inform my cousin and younger brother. These were the only two people I could confide in. They both persuaded me to abort the pregnancy. It was a big decision I had to make. Moreover, I felt I should let Sola know before going ahead with the abortion since he was the father of the unborn child. Sola's reaction shocked me. He did not believe me. He said I must be joking and left for school immediately. He

was in his first year in the University. I did not see him again for several months. Fully convinced about the need to abort the pregnancy, I went from one hospital to the other, meticulously taking the prescribed drugs but the more I did, the bigger my tummy became.

At a certain point, my mother noticed my swollen legs and took me to a traditional medicine practitioner for treatment. He examined me and looked at me suspiciously. As soon as he opened his mouth to reveal the cause of the swollen legs, I pleaded with him not to tell my mother. I had to do it non-verbally. I did not want my mother to know. I visited the herbal doctor later and was given a local herb to drink. This reduced the swollen legs but did nothing to the baby. The pregnancy was already five months and I had to do something quick. I went to see another doctor, a consultant, who told me, I would give birth to the baby naturally but it would be dead. He also informed me that I would have to stay at the hospital for a few days and would require N7, 000 (seven thousand Naira) for the treatment.

I had to raise money urgently. I lied to my father that I needed N4,000 for lesson and some books and he gave me the money. My cousin was able to get the

You may be convinced that you don't have what it takes to get into school or make amends. But that depends on your perceptions of yourself



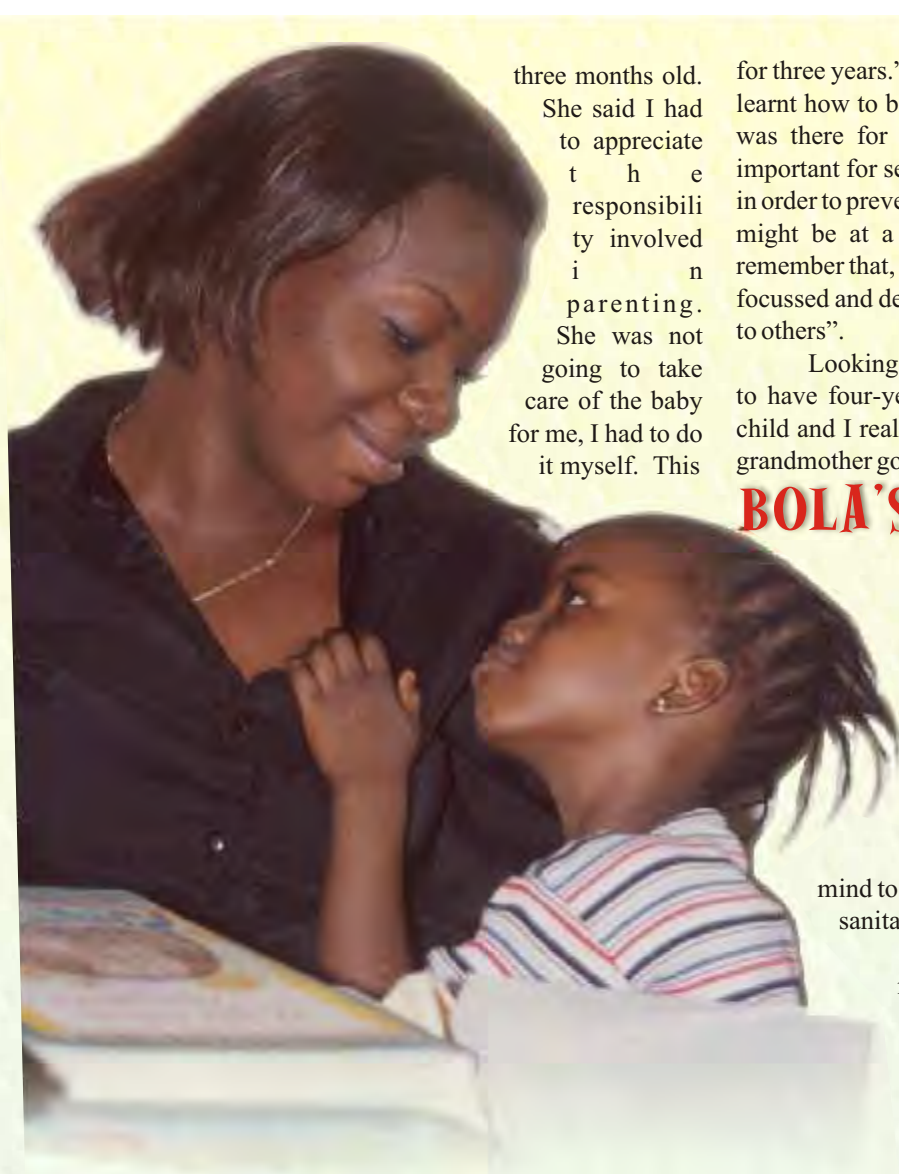
N3,000 balance. Once the money was completed, I informed my mother that I would like to spend a week with my grandmother at the village. She gave me gifts to give to her. I was glad that things were working out as planned. Later that evening, I picked up my bag and stepped out of the house. Just then, my mother came rushing into the house. She had spent the whole day at Church and I was not expecting her so soon.”

Recalling the incident that took place that dreadful evening, her mother, Mrs. Adenike Salisu explained,

“I never suspected for a second that my daughter was pregnant. She was going to abort the five-month pregnancy when I came in. I was informed in a vision in church that my daughter was pregnant and was going to have it terminated and that it was dangerous for her. I rushed home and saw her stepping out with her bag. I took her to my room and pushed her to the bed, I removed the loose wrapper she was tying and saw the marks of pregnancy on her slightly swollen stomach. I was highly disappointed but the deed had been done. All I could do was persuade her not to abort the pregnancy. Thank God she listened to me.”

“After the arrival of my baby, I realised why my mother warned me not to get pregnant at my age. I was faced with the burden of caring for a baby for 24 hours and I had other challenges too. One day, I was taking my child to the clinic when I saw one of my old friends who told me she was going to school. She had just gained admission to the university. I felt very sad throughout that day. I felt depressed and hopeless. Sadly, I had no one to turn to. Even neighbours treated me like a condemned child. They told their children - my friends - to keep away from me so that I will not have a bad influence on them. All my friends deserted me except my cousin, my brother and my mother. My father's initial reaction was expected. He was so disappointed in me that he disowned me and asked me never to visit him again. Nevertheless, I summoned up courage and decided to make the best of my situation. I realised I had made a mistake but there was still hope. I felt that I had to prove people who saw me as completely useless wrong. This made me sit for the next Joint Admission matriculation exam for entering into the Nigerian University.

This made my father happy. He gave me every support; financial and moral. When the results were released, I passed and was again given admission to the University of Lagos. Unfortunately, my mother did not allow me to go to school then because my baby was only



three months old. She said I had to appreciate the responsibility involved in parenting. She was not going to take care of the baby for me, I had to do it myself. This

for three years.” Tolu also learnt other lessons. She says, “I learnt how to be a good mother like my own mother who was there for me when I needed her most. It’s also important for sexually active youths to have protected sex in order to prevent an unplanned pregnancy. For others who might be at a crossroad like I once was, they should remember that, It’s not the end of the world, they should be focussed and determined to become a source of inspiration to others”.

Looking back, both Tolu and her mother are happy to have four-year-old Damilola. “She is a lively, happy child and I really love her“ says Tolu. She also keeps her grandmother good company when others are away.

BOLA’S STORY

I 5-year-old Bola (not real name) dropped out of Junior secondary school as a result of her addiction to cocaine. “ I was a victim of sexual violence (gang rape) and soon got introduced to drugs by various sexual partners. Eventually, I became depressed. I developed scars and keloids through the risky behaviour I was involved in. I lost total control of my mind to the extent that I no longer bothered to use a sanitary towel during menstruation.

My guardian whom I lived with (my mother resides overseas) became worried about my condition. She knew I needed help and she took me to a youth development organisation where I was examined and counselled about self-esteem and the need to return to school and avoid risky behaviour. The health provider visited me every week and gradually, my condition improved. I gave up smoking and other risky sexual behaviour and I am now considering returning to school. (Bola is still undergoing treatment).

These true testimonies are inspiring accounts of young people who became badly battered. Although some are able to weather the storm, getting back on track was not easy. It took a process. There are many other adolescents like Tolu and Bola who perhaps have had worst experiences. It is never too late to make a change.

You may be convinced that you don’t have what it takes to get into school or make amends. But that depends on your perceptions of yourself and about the way things are? How do you see yourself, what’s your point of view about life, what are your beliefs etc? The way you see yourself is important. What you see is what you get, if you believe you’re dumb, that very belief will make you dumb. Are your perceptions of yourself helping or hindering you? Do you have low perception of yourself? Develop self-paradigms in order to bring out the best in you.

Your confidence needs to come from within you. It takes faith to live by principles, especially when you see people close to you get ahead in life by lying, cheating, indulging, manipulating and serving only themselves. What you sometimes don’t see, however, is that breaking principles always catches up with them in the end.

s t e r n decision however did not affect her love and support for me. Another opportunity presented itself again the following year when I passed my JAMB and gained admission to the University of Lagos to study Mass Communication. This changed the tide of things for me. I suddenly won the admiration of my neighbours and friends. My happy father gave me both moral and financial support, while my mother offered to nurse the baby while I was away during the week. Some neighbours offered to give me weekly ride to school in their car, some gave me gifts. I became a reference point for neighbours who told their children they had no excuse for not excelling since I could make it despite the surrounding circumstances. I also made-up with Sola, the father of my child and we plan to marry in a next couple of years”.

Tolu, Sola and Damilola maintain a cordial relationship and look forward to each weekend when they devote time for one another. Tolu is now in her third year at the university and her four-year-old daughter is also in school. She supports herself by organising entertainment events such as carnivals, football competitions, and serving as the Master of Ceremony at events, in addition to the stipend she receives from her parents. Tolu lives a fulfilled life and discusses about her child with her friends. Her advice to youth is to “love all and trust no body”. Explaining further, she says, “ when Sola came up with his initial reaction and attitude, I never believed he was the same man I had known

Factors That Influence Deviant Behaviour

- 1) Frustration at home or in school
- 2) Conflicts, quarrels, fight between parents or between a parent and an adolescent child.
- 3) Divorce or desertion of the mother /father in the family.
- 4) Exaggerated strictness of parents or school authorities.
- 5) Poverty.
- 6) Lack of interests, love or attention shown by parents toward their adolescent children.
- 7) Early childhood experiences.
- 8) Over protectiveness of parents.
- 9) Peer group influence.
- 10) Exaggerated expectations or demands of family and school with regards to academic performance.
- 11) Early or late onset of adolescence.
- 12) Physical disability.
- 13) Lack of information about sexuality.
- 14) Emotional problems- depression, sadness and disappointment

Examples of Deviant Behaviour

- Stealing/Cheating
- Running away from school or home
- Use of alcohol / drugs
- Teenage pregnancy

How to Prevent and Correct Deviant Behaviour

1. Know what to expect during adolescence.
2. Communicate with informed and trusted adults
3. Cultivate good values – respect, honesty, prudence, self-control etc
4. Have faith in your abilities
5. Accept yourself as you are
6. Avoid situations that are

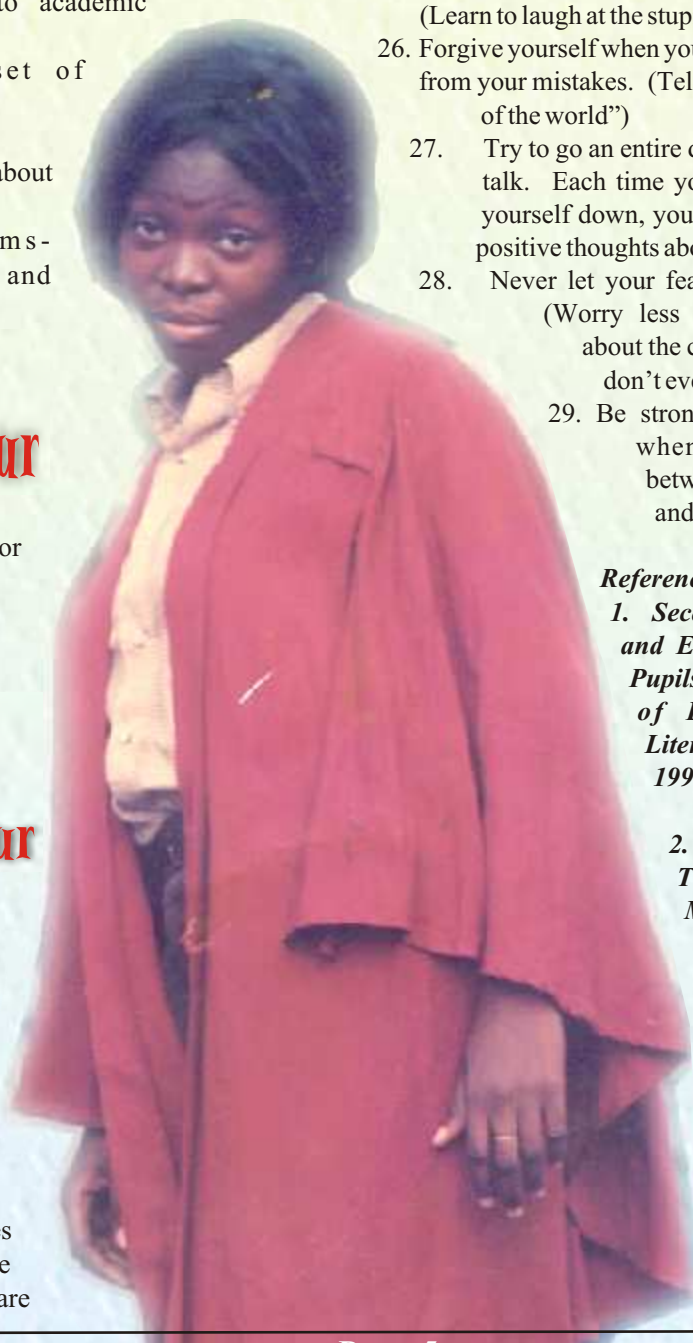
- likely to lead to deviant behaviour
7. Move with the right group that share similar values with you
8. Get control of your life
9. Improve your relationships with your friends
10. Make smarter decisions
11. Get along with your parents
12. Overcome addiction
13. Define your values and what matters most to you
15. Increase your self confidence
16. Be happy
17. Find balance between school, work, friends and everything else.
18. Stand up to yourself and resist peer pressure
20. See life as a generally positive experience
22. Be goal driven
23. Make a promise to yourself and keep it
24. Tap into your talents
25. Be gentle with yourself – this means not expecting yourself to be perfect by tomorrow morning. (Learn to laugh at the stupid things you do.)
26. Forgive yourself when you mess up and learn from your mistakes. (Tell yourself “it’s not the end of the world”)
27. Try to go an entire day without negative self-talk. Each time you catch yourself putting yourself down, you have to replace it with 3 positive thoughts about yourself.
28. Never let your fears make your decisions. (Worry less about failing and more about the chances we miss when we don’t even try.)
29. Be strong in the hard moments when there are conflicts between doing the right thing and doing the easier thing.

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AMBITION

I don't crave for sex
Nor HIV and AIDS
I ask for freedom and shelter
Give me three rights of a man
The right to think my thoughts
The right to say my thoughts
The right to stand my ground
Then let a fitting body
My humble heart provide
Where sanction may abide

Seye Alomilagba
Eva Adelaja Girls Secondary School
Bariga

Say No to AIDS

Prevention is the key
But difficult to achieve
Easy to govern
But impossible to enslave
AIDS can affect anybody
It is no respecter of any person
Nobody wants it
Everybody hates it
But to say No is the problem
To say No is difficult
Abstaining is not easy
How can AIDS be prevented without prevention?
Remember: Prevention is better than cure
It is okay to say No
Just let your No mean No
To AIDS, STDS, HIV and SEX
Save your life
Say NO to AIDS and
Live a free live

Ogunfowora 'Adeshola F
Ex. Student of A.V.H.S.

Poems

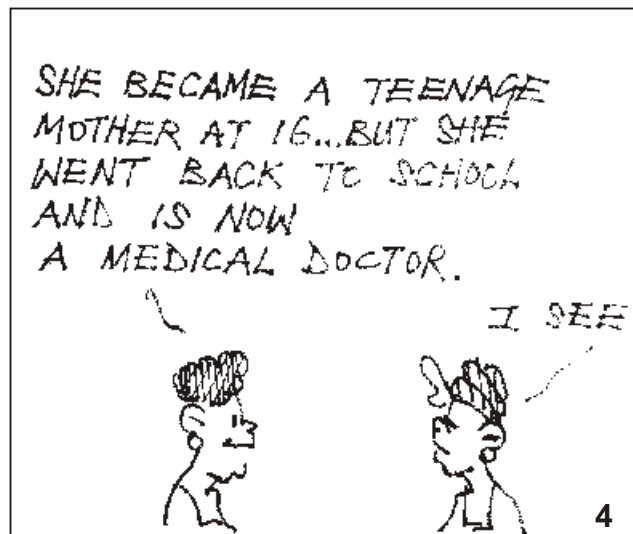
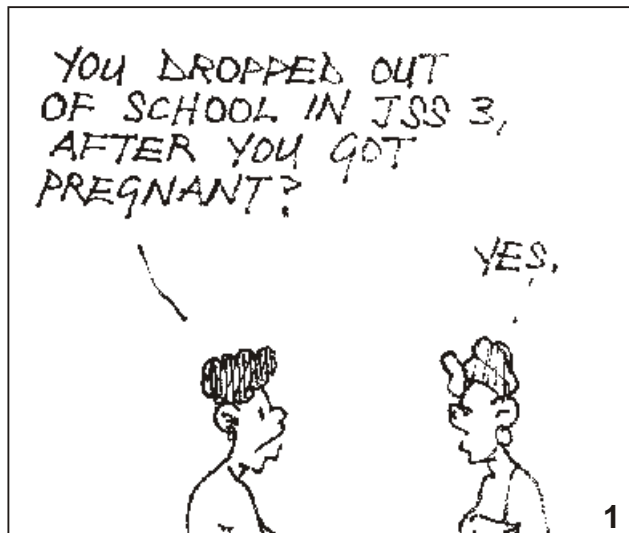
Cure for AIDS

It is time to find the
Cure for AIDS
AIDS is just like an
Opponent ready for war
But we are to get prepared
To fight the battle against AIDS
Go to the place where the weapon is kept

What is the weapon?
The weapon is abstinence,
This is one of the best weapons against
HIV/AIDS
For those who cannot abstain
Use condom
Because AIDS has come to stay
But we shall force AIDS out of the Society
Before it is too late
We like warriors will arm ourselves with
protection
We shall not share or use sharp unsterilized
instrument
Nor accept the use of unscreened blood
transfusion
We will do all it takes
To kick AIDS out of the world

Prince-Kunle Olowe
Ayedere Ajibola High School
Ketu

Cartoon



Dear Diary

Moji Onifade

Monday

I was so nervous and excited at the same time. Today was the first day of the competition. I was really engrossed in the preparations that I totally forgot what happened yesterday. After the first round of questions, I became very confident because my school was having an upper hand over the other schools. I noticed that every body from my school was cheering us except Vivian. When I saw her, I remembered what she told me the previous night. Through out the remaining round of the quiz, I could not really concentrate. And this reduced our performance but it was a good thing that we had had a high score from the onset. This gave us a good chance. One of our teachers whose name is Mr. Alfred was really crossed at me. He told me that if we did not win, I stood the risk of getting a suspension from school. I was so angry at him but I could not say anything.

Tuesday

I could not meet with Vivian to talk to her yesterday so I decided to see her early in the morning before getting ready for the day's competition. When I got to her room, I met Regina there comforting her, she was crying. I asked what the matter was and she said Mr. Alfred had asked her to have sexual intercourse with him or he would ensure that she failed her exams. I was so confused and I wish we were back in school where I would have gone to meet the counsellor for advice but this time, I had to do it on my own. I still was not catching up in the competition and I knew that if things went on the same way in the next round, we would forfeit the 1st

position to our opponents.

Wednesday

I saw Vivian today and she was not feeling any better. I was determined to win the competition so I decided to get my mind off it. I did better today and we started gaining an upper hand again. This was not because I succeeded in getting my mind off the situation on ground, but because I knew it was important for me to win the prize for my school. Vivian said that Mr. Alfred had come to threaten her again and she was scared. Regina said that we had to find something to do before it got out of hand and we decided to meet again the next day since we had separate rooms.

Thursday

There was no competition today because the organizers said that today was meant as a resting day since the semifinals were taking place tomorrow. It gladdens my heart when I heard that my school qualified for the semifinal. I went to Vivian's room and met with Regina. We decided to report to the other teacher who came with us. We expected her to be more sympathetic and understanding. Vivian did not want that because she was scared and it took a lot of reassurance before she agreed.

Friday

The competition was very hot and my school qualified for the final round just by one point ahead of the second winning school. I was so glad

that we qualified but I knew we were to buckle up if we were to win.

Saturday

Today was the final of the competition. We tried hard and I was sure of winning. When the judge picked up his microphone and announced the winner, my heart sank. We lost. I was so sad but the speech he gave afterwards made me feel better. He said there was nothing bad in loosing but that not trying at all was what was bad. He said the most important thing was that we lost gallantly and being able to face the challenge of loosing will always make us winners. I was very happy to hear that and I felt better. My teachers did not share the same opinion with the judge. They were disappointed at our performance and did not hide it. However I refused to be sad because for once I realized that I was afraid to fail. Vivian still had her problem and we decided to put an end to it.

Sunday

In the evening, we decided to go and see Miss Okon, the second teacher. When we got there, we did not have the courage to speak up. Eventually, I spoke up. She looked at us very closely and said that she hoped we were not lying. We all assured her that it was true. She told us that she did not believe us and that we should make sure no one else heard about it if we did not want to tarnish the good name of the school. We were all very disappointed and Vivian was even more scared! I'll tell you what happened in the next edition.



NEWS Reel

TEENAGE FESTIVAL OF LIFE 2001

This year's Teenage Festival of Life focused on a Mural Design and Painting Competition aimed at developing skills (creative and civic skills) and competencies that will empower young people to make responsible decisions in order to grow into healthy responsible and caring youths and adults. Beyond skills' development, the competition also provided opportunities for young people to participate in community project, thereby contributing to community development.

The climax of the event which held on Wednesday 14th November had as its theme: Mirror on the Wall: Creating Images of Ourselves. In his opening remarks, the Special Guest of Honour, Professor Idowu Shobowale, the Lagos State Commissioner for Education, praised AHI for the initiative and encouraged the young people to continue to engage themselves in positive

aimed at providing guidelines and modalities for the design, form, style and framework for participating in the



competition. Two students and one fine art teacher were invited from each school in Shomolu and Kosofe Local Education Districts. Two representatives from the Lagos State Ministry of Education, Mr. A.A. Adenekan, and Mr. Biodun Oni, also participated at the workshop.

A total of 28 schools were present at the two-day training from June 14th -15th 2001. The schools were divided into two groups, and the training was conducted for each group on separate days. Mr. Shola Ogunfuwa and Mr. Gbile Oshadipe, who are both seasoned artists handled the training. The participants also had the opportunity to ask questions.

developmental activities that will enhance their future prospects. The highlight of the day's activities, was the presentation of awards to winners by Dr Aderemi Desalu, the Special Adviser to the Lagos State Governor on HIV/AIDS. Other activities for the day were slide presentation revealing the painting process at the 26 participating schools, drama presentation by the AHI drama troupe, poem recitation, and a dance drama by the Black Image troupe.

Before the commencement of the mural painting, the participants were made to undergo some level of training especially since the young people though creative were limited in exposure and expertise. AHI organised a mural painting workshop





At the end of the exercise, the students had a clear picture of the aims and objectives of the competition. They had specific instructions about the length of sketches to be submitted, measurement for the mural painting, process for priming the wall, structure of the mural (portrait and landscape), types of painting (abstract, semi abstract and realistic), colour combinations, proper conduct during painting, role of inspectors (level of teacher's involvement) and modalities for inspection.

A team of eight experts were chosen as judges for the

competition. The judges consisted practicing artists including, Mr. Jide West, a fine art teacher at A.D.R.A.O. International School, Mr. Akinboyo Emmanuel Olurotimi, a fine art teacher at Feyland International School, Mr. Emmanuel Ehinmerò, a young graduate from Yaba College of Technology, currently serving at the National Gallery of Modern Art, Umuahia, Mr. Oriade Coker, a creations and studio artist and Art Consultant for AHI. The two officials from the Lagos State Ministry of Education, Mr. Adenekan and Mr. Biodun, also experts in the field, were also on the panel.

At the end of the process, six schools out of the twenty-six participating schools emerged tops. These include:

- Shepherdhill Girls High School, Obanikoro (1st Position)
- Gbagada Grammar School, Gbagada (2nd position)
- CMS Girls Grammar School, Bariga (3rd position)
- Isheri Grammar School, Isheri (4th position)
- National College, Gbagada (5th position)
- Morocco Comprehensive High School, Morocco (6th position)

WORLD DAY FOR THE DISABLED



The Networking Forum on Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights in Nigeria organised a seminar on Monday 3rd December to celebrate the World Day for the Disabled. The event which took place at the AHI training room had as its theme: The Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Young People with Disabilities: Challenges and the Way Forward. The seminar was aimed at building the capacity of the Networking Forum members.

Participants at the event included representatives of Society for Women and AIDS in Africa (SWAAN), Inter-Africa Committee on Harmful Traditional Practices (IAC), Planned Parenthood Federation of Nigeria, (PPFN), Action Health Incorporated (AHI), Community Life Project (CLP), Campaign Against Unwanted Pregnancy (CAUP), and DevCom. Others included Dr. (Mrs.) Akindayomi, resource person, Mrs. Braimoh Director Guidance and Counselling Unit, PTA representatives of some special schools, teachers from Modupe Cole

Care and Treatment School and some PWDs.

Highlight of the seminar included a presentation by Dr. (Mrs.) Akindayomi, Executive Director, Children Development Centre who shared some of her experiences both as a professional and a mother of a 17 year old son living with a disability. She noted that the society have negative attitude towards people with disabilities (PWD) especially with regards to their reproductive health status, without acknowledging the fact that PWDs also have sexual expressions and needs. Highlighting some values that influence the attitude of people towards PWDs, she said that the society regarded them as powerless and as having no rights. They are also viewed as not perfect and consequently left out in every thing that they should have access to. Finally, they are believed not to be productive and are therefore not useful to the society. Dr. (Mrs.) Akindayomi identified the various changes towards PWDs and noted that Nigeria is still struggling with providing them with their basic rights including food, shelter and clothing. According to her, many PWDs are still being avoided and rejected rather than being tolerated. She illustrated this further with two true stories based on her experiences. She urged participants to ensure that PWDs have access to good accommodation, good food, appropriate services, educational and job opportunities, and be encouraged to make maximum use of their potentials.

She concluded her presentation by giving reasons why the RH needs of PWDs should be addressed and presented what she considered to be their sexual rights as well as recommendations for addressing the issues raised.

At the end of the presentation, participants made comments and recommendations on reproductive health issues affecting PWDs. Some of these include change of attitude of parents to PWDs, proper training of teachers on RH issues, integration of sexuality education into their curriculum.

SENSITIZATION VISIT TO SOMOLU FOMWAN (FEDERATION OF MUSLIM WOMEN ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA)

AHI paid a courtesy visit to the executive members of the Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN), Somolu branch. The 35-member executive listened to Miss Osunkayode and Mrs. Oguntona, both representatives of AHI who enlightened them about the ARH

status of young people and the need for the group to take proactive steps to address the issue.

The FOMWAM members expressed their willingness to collaborate with AHI. The leader of the group, Alhaja Lawal talked about her interaction with AHI and the Vocational training of Shomolu

Adolescents at NOIC which she said showed the interest of the organisation in the development of the adolescents. Alhaja Lawal said that their group had similar projects in mind and would collaborate with AHI in implementing the project. Other questions and issues of concern were raised and addressed at the meeting.

WORLD AIDS DAY CELEBRATION

World AIDS DAY 2001 was held on the 30th of November 2001 at four different schools. The theme for the year was "I CARE DO YOU?" And the focus was on the role of

participated in the activities. The exciting programme was drawn up by members of the HLPCCs and activities for the day included riddles and jokes, poem recitations, miming, song presentations, debate and brief lectures by the resource person-three of whom were peer educators

Also present were journalists from three media houses and an independent international media organization working for Commonwealth state. Participants were given T-Shirts, Caps and refreshments to commemorate the day's event. It was a fun-filled event and the young men talked to themselves and identified ways to reduce the scourge of HIV/AIDS among the youth.

The World AIDS Day was also celebrated at the Action Health Incorporated Youth Friendly Centre. The activity at the center was anchored by Hakeem Braimah, a youth assistant. Representatives from the following three schools were present - Isheri Grammar School, Bariga Comprehensive College,

Ifako and Baptist Academy College, Obanikoro.

The students from Isheri Grammar School trilled the other boys with songs on HIV/AIDS and a poem was recited by Mr. Victor Chigbundu. At the end of the day, the boys were able to ask questions about their concerns and had their values clarified after series of discussions during the question and answer session.



males in reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS. The host schools were C.M.S Boys Grammar School Bariga, Gbagada Senior Grammar School Gbagada, Ikosi High School Ikosi and The Apostolic Church Grammar School, Ketu.

Four resource persons were sent to these schools to facilitate the activities for the day. Since target were males, invitation was extended only to boys. Each school invited male friends from neighboring schools. At the end of the day, over 900 male students

Open Air Seminar For Ifako Youth Community

As part of its efforts in community services, the Health Services Unit of Action Health Incorporated in collaboration with the United Progressive Youth Association of Ifako, a youth-led community development group, organised a seminar on 10th November along Babalola Street, Sawmill.

The open-air programme was attended by over 127 people comprising mainly adolescents and a few adults. Highlights of the day's event included lectures on HIV/AIDS, including modes of transmission, diagnosis, myths and misconceptions and prevention. The health educators from the

AHI youth friendly clinic also enlightened the youth about Substance/Drug Abuse and Harmful Traditional Practices.

The occasion presented an opportunity for young people to ask questions about issues affecting their health and development. Some of them were concerned about contracting HIV through circumcision and unprotected sex. These questions and concerns were addressed at the forum. Participants also received information from a drama kit presented by the United Progressive Youth Association titled "Attention". The drama emphasized the importance

of parent child communication. In the midst of cheers and laughter the youth and adults realised the need to talk about their concerns especially on sensitive issues such as their reproductive health. This was followed by a short speech by Mrs. Y.A. Oguntona, an AHI volunteer, who informed the young people about AHI's mission and activities. She encouraged the youths to participate in AHI's programmes and urged them to visit the youth friendly clinic if they had health concerns or require counselling on any issue.

Right To Education Part

Basic Education



Questions for Discussion

1. Look at the Fact Box. Some of the statistics do not look very encouraging. Do you have chalkboards? Textbooks? What does your school need?
2. Why do people say "Education is the Foundation of Development"?
3. If primary school education is compulsory, then what can government do to improve enrolment in some states where 80 per cent of the 6-11 year olds are not in school?
4. Some parents prefer to educate their boys, because they think the girls do not need education. Is this fair?

Activities

1. Design a school which has everything a child needs: such as, libraries, language labs, computer room, science laboratories, sport fields etc.
2. Find out how many girls there are in your school compared to the number of boys. What is the ratio of girls to boys?

Message to Government

Make basic education compulsory and free for all boys and girls.

Ensure that those enrolled do not drop out.

Provide educational and vocational information to guide children towards career choices.

Encourage moral and religious knowledge in schools.

Discussion

How can government ensure that children enrol in school, do not drop out?

Why is it important that government pay teachers salaries on time?

Why should government ensure that every Nigerian has a good education?

Message to Parents

Send your children to approved schools.

Complement school education with positive traditional values and moral training in the home.

Ensure that both girls and boys attend school.

Discussion

What is an approved school?

Many children leave school before completing primary school, why?

Why do some adults think educating girls is a waste of time?

Message to Children

Mama Ibe was a successful yam trader. She had five children, two boys and one girl. Unfortunately, when Mama Ibe was young, she never had the opportunity to go to school. There wasn't enough money, and she thought it was very important to educate girls back home. She had, however, secretly yearned to go to school. If Mama Ibe could not go to school, this was not to be the case with her children. She spent her money to see her children educated, right up through the university. She was proud that all of her children were 'graduates'. In fact, her children did so well that Mama did not have to sell yams anymore. They retired Mama to a life of leisure, - or so they thought. But one day, Mama Ibe told, Mama Ibe was a little bored, so much so that her daughter, Amaka, noticed that Mama was not her usual jovial self.

"Mama, are you okay," asked Amaka? "You do not look happy." Mama looked at her daughter and smiled. "My children have given me everything a mother could want... It's just that I have nothing to do." Amaka looked confused, "you don't want to go back to the yam market, do you?"

"Oh no!... I don't miss selling yams... But, do you know what I have always wanted?" Amaka could not believe what her nearly 70 year old mother wanted. So she told her.

"Well, I have always wanted to learn how to read."

TRUE LIFE STORY

I was born nineteen years ago into a family of six children. My parents were poor. I was the last child. My siblings had to stay with different relatives because my

parents could not afford to take care of all of us. I completed my primary school education (which was free) and longed to proceed to the secondary level but my parents could not

afford to pay for my school fees.

When all my plans to go to the secondary school failed, I went to Lagos to live with my aunty (my mother's younger sister). After staying with her for four months, I received the news that my mother was seriously ill. Eventually, she died. A few months afterwards, my father visited us in Lagos. After breakfast the following morning, I went to his room since he did not come out for breakfast. I called him but he appeared deeply asleep. I

went to inform my aunty who also tried to wake him up. A neighbour next door, who is a doctor later, confirmed that he had died. I wept, and wept. What did the future hold for me without both parents alive? My future looked bleak.

After the death of my parents I didn't know how to find my brothers and sisters, I continued to stay with my aunty. I assisted her with her business. Each time I hawk my aunty's goods and sell very little, my aunty would beat the hell out of me. At times, she would complain about my coming home late. One day, I dared to ask her

about going to school, "you will have to go and ask your dead parents" she said, obviously angry. "They should have thought of that before they

Egbeda (within the Lagos metropolis). I found a place where I could pass the night. When it was around seven o'clock in the morning of the next

A TWIST OF FATE

abandoned you," she continued. I never repeated the request and her words remained in my memory. I was treated like a slave whom she could do whatever she liked with. I continued in this manner until one day I went to hawk as usual

One day, I dared to ask her about going to school, "you will have to go and ask your dead parents" she said, obviously angry.

and I didn't make enough sales. When I got home she went inside and brought out scissors and cut my long hair saying that it was my hair that was disturbing me from selling her goods. She sent me out and told me not to return if I don't bring any of my siblings to come and hear what was happening. I asked her to give me transport fare down to my hometown but she refused and told me to go and meet my dead parents in the grave.

I left her house late in the evening without a destination. I trekked from Ikotun down to

day, I continued my journey in search of a "miracle". I saw a sign board with the inscription: "House Girl Wanted" I went in and requested to see the Manager. After what seemed like a long interrogation, I was offered the job. When the man asked me

to bring a reference letter from any of my relations, I narrated everything to him and I informed him that I even have nowhere to stay.

Immediately, he drove me down to Allen-Avenue, Ikeja to a white man's house and they bargained for my salary which was later pegged to N3,500 per month. I began to live in the white man's house. One day, my master's friend came from the United States of America. He was on a short visit to Nigeria. He realised how intelligent and smart I was and informed my boss that he would like me to finish my education in the U.S. My boss accepted after a lot of persuasion, all without my consent.

That was how I left Nigeria for USA. Today I am in the best university in the U.S. studying a very good course and I hope to finish my education in due time.

Dear Aunty

Dear Readers, the “Dear Aunty” column treats questions young people ask about their reproductive and sexual health concerns. You too can write in and let us know what your concerns are. You are assured of confidentiality, as your real names will not be published. Send your questions to The Editor, Growing Up Newsletter (Dear Aunty Column), Action Health Incorporated, 15 Lawal St off Oweh Street, Fadeyi, P.O. Box 803 Sabo, Yaba, Lagos.

Q Sometimes I have sexual feelings I find difficult to control? Why is this so and what can I do about it?

Sexual and romantic feelings are natural. Most people have them.

Sexual feelings can be very strong when you are a teenager. A person with sexual feelings often wants to be close to someone and to touch him or her sexually. Some others do not have sexual feelings. Although this is less common, it is also okay. Sexual feelings arise because of things that happen to your body, in your mind and around you. Your body produces hormones that can cause sexual feelings and sometimes your mind may respond to experience or thoughts in a sexual way. Sexual feelings can also be influenced by where you are, whom you're with, what you're doing and what your friends believe about sex. It is important for you to be comfortable with your sexual feelings because it is natural to feel that way sometimes. However, don't get pressured into having sex except you are ready to face its consequences. Respect responsible sexual choices you or your friends make. You can also talk to a Counsellor or a trusted adult if you feel uncertain or depressed about yourself or your feelings. You can control your sexual feelings by engaging in sporting activities such as jogging, running, swimming, playing in-door games, exercising etc. You may also watch television or read a book. What is important is to engage yourself in positive activities that would distract you from these feelings.

Q How Can One Care for Someone Living With HIV/AIDS Guard Against Infection?

People living with HIV/AIDS can get very sick from common germs and infections

A and care should be taken to ensure that the germs do not spread to others. This can be done by washing the hands frequently. This is one of the best ways to kill germs. It is important to wash the hands after going to the toilet and before preparing food or eating. One should always wash the hands after sneezing, coughing, touching the mouth or genitals, garbage or someone's blood, semen, urine, faeces or vaginal fluid. The hands should be washed with warm soapy water for about 15 seconds.

It is also important to cover all sores, blisters or cut with a plaster or bandage. If the rash or sores are on the hands, he or she should wear disposable gloves and throw them away after use. Do not reuse. If you are sick, stay away from the person living with HIV/AIDS until you get well so that you do not pass on your illness to him or her. Also clean and dust the house, bath tubs, sinks, toilet etc regularly.

My girlfriend and I have agreed to have sex only with the use of a condom. Please can you tell me what to do. I have never used a condom before.

Q The male condom is a barrier contraceptive for men. Male condoms are like very strong rubber balloons. It often comes in a sachet and is rolled up.

It is important to use the condom before sexual intercourse begins and all through sex. It should be placed at the tip of an erect penis and gently unrolled all the way down. Leave the last centimetre or the teat of the condom empty to catch the semen. After ejaculation, hold the condom firmly around the penis and pull out from the vagina. Do not let sperm spill out. Carefully take the condom off and throw it away. Never use Vaseline or baby oil on the condom. It makes holes in condoms. Note that you must use the condom correctly each time you have sex and always carefully take out the penis out of the vagina soon after ejaculation and throw it away immediately. Check the label before you buy a condom to ensure that it is not expired or exposed to light.



Do you want to be a

NURSE

Registered nurses care for ill or injured patients (now commonly referred to as clients). They provide physical care and/or counselling and give advice to patients of all age groups and backgrounds in order to promote health education. They may work in a variety of settings, such as hospitals and other residential

establishments or in the community. They may work alone or in teams. They are often responsible for supervising the work of less experienced nurses and care assistants.

There are several branches of nursing: some of these are general, pediatrics, psychiatric, orthopaedic, theatre etc. However, this article will focus on general nursing.

GENERAL NURSING

The Job

The majority of general nurses work in hospitals, providing care and treatment for patients. Their basic duties include observing patients; assessing their condition and noting and recording their response to treatment; assisting doctors with physical examinations; preparing instruments; administering drugs; comforting and reassuring patients; and communicating with relatives. The more routine bedside nursing tasks, such as providing personal care for bedridden patients, serving meals, and making beds, are these days more often performed by hospital assistants (known as nursing aides).

The amount of responsibilities that nurses are given varies between, and even within, countries. Generally, however, since the level and content of nursing training has risen, registered nurses are now professionals in their own right. In Nigerian hospitals, a nurse is often responsible for a number of patients. They assess individual patient's needs, plan a nursing care programme, explain and discuss these with patients, and lead a care team. When they are not on duty, they give a report to the nurses who are about to take over, describing each patient's condition and the progress of the treatment plan. Patient's records and treatment care plans are often stored on a patient's case note.

Skills and Personal Qualities

- Accuracy
- Attention to detail
- Communication skills
- Confidence
- Critical thinking
- Decision making ability
- Emotional stability
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Good health
- Good interpersonal relationship
- Initiative
- Leadership qualities
- Manual dexterity
- Patience
- Persuasiveness
- Planning ability
- Problem-solving ability
- Sensitivity
- Stamina
- Tact
- Teamwork
- Technical/scientific ability
- Observant

Nursing is physically tasking. Nurses must be in good health. Although they are taught special techniques, they may face the risk of back injury when moving and lifting patients.

Hospital nurses may move between different departments, but more often they stay on one ward-surgical, gynaecological; medical; paediatrics, ophthalmology, ear, nose and throat, for example, or in specialised departments such as the operating theatre, accident and emergency, or intensive care.

Few general nurses work in the community,

where they provide nursing care for patients in their own homes and instruct family members how to perform some of the care tasks. Patients may have been discharged from hospital and need care and support until they are fully recovered. They may however be suffering from a long-term or a terminal illness and they and their families have opted for home care. Community nurses also enable some patients-elderly, frail people or those who have permanent disabilities and may for example, be confined to a wheel chair or who are partially sighted- to remain in their own homes rather than enter an institution. They visit them daily, or even more than once a day, and with the help of a hospital assistant attend to patient's personal hygiene needs, assist them in and out of bed, give injections, dress wounds, and give them their medication.

Public health nurses also work in the community. They visit schools to carry out health checks on children and arrange for immunization programmes. They may also teach individuals and families about health care, the prevention of disease, and about proper nutrition.

Some general nurses are trained as occupational health nurses. They provide health education and medical screening programmes for employees and deal with illnesses and accidents that occur on the premises during the working day.

Other nurses may work in doctor's (surgery/physician's) offices. They may carry out health screening, treat minor injuries, assist at minor operations performed under local anaesthetic, run family-planning clinics, and make decisions on whether to refer patients to a doctor.

Most hospital nurses have to work a shift system, since care must be given 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This may mean periodically working different shifts. As an alternative, some nurses opt for permanent night duty (usually working longer shifts for a smaller number of nights in a week), while others such as theatre nurses, work mainly during the day time and are on-call for a certain number of nights to cover emergencies.

Community nurses work largely during the day but may have to work at weekends (with other days off to compensate). Occupational health nurses work the hours agreed with their employers. These may involve night and weekend work, according to the type of industry. Generally nurses work regular day-time hours when the surgery is open, but these hours may include early morning work and extend into the early evening.

General nurses work with a wide variety of other medical professionals-such as doctors, surgeons, physiotherapists, and occupational therapists-and often with social workers. They are also usually the first point of contact for patient's families and communicate all news of the patient's progress to them. Sometimes of course they have to break bad news.

Hospital nurses work as part of nursing teams. Other general nurses are part of the care team, but they may be the only nurse within it. They must enjoy working independently and have self-confidence.

Nurses working conditions are variable. Generally, they work in comfortable medical premises. For those working in patient's homes, they must use the resources

available and carry a considerable amount of equipment with them. Most general nurses wear a uniform. Some do not. Nurses working in the community- and even in some hospitals- may wear their own clothes. Disposable aprons or overalls plus gloves are worn when performing many tasks.

Qualifications

Most possess a minimum of 5 Ordinary level credit to including the following: biology, other sciences, mathematics, e.t.c. Nurses must be registered – usually nationally – in order to work as a nurse, there are additional licensing requirements which is renewable by the Nursing and Midwifery Councils.

Training

There are two main ways of becoming a registered nurse. The usual route is by taking a diploma course at a nursing college (often referred to as school of nursing in Nigeria) that is linked with one or more hospitals. The average length of programme is three years. In Nigeria, it takes 3 years training in a government approved school of nursing, to become a registered general nurse, and 12-18 months to specialise in other branches, such as paediatrics, orthopaedics, midwifery, psychiatry etc. Training involves a combination of theoretical study in subjects including anatomy, microbiology, chemistry, physiology, nutrition, psychology, sociology, ethics, and nursing practice, together with clinical practice.

Nurses must achieve a minimum number of hours of clinical work in order to qualify. (This is automatically included in all programmes but any absence caused due to illness must be caught up by individual students.) Clinical experience and practice takes place mainly in hospitals, but there will be periods spent in the community and in other places of work. Training for psychiatric or learning disability nursing places greater emphasis on psychology and sociology than on physical nursing care.

The second route is to take a bachelor's degree from a university (B.SC Nursing). Students receive the same clinical instruction and experience as those in nursing colleges, but they spend more time on theoretical subjects, studying them in greater depth. Degree courses usually last three or four years, and sometimes five years.

A third route available in some countries is to take a short postgraduate course for students with degrees in subjects other than nursing. A relevant first degree, such as a science or psychology, is often required.

Nurses are required to continue their training throughout their career. In addition to attending in-service programmes designed to update their knowledge, they may also choose to take special courses to aid career progression or to enable them to take up positions in special areas. Such courses include

ophthalmic nursing, intensive care, operating department nursing, care of the dying patient and their family, drug dependency nursing, nursing management and many more.

Prospect & Outlook

Nurses work in hospitals, residential care establishments, hostels for psychiatric patients or people with learning disabilities, doctors' practices, clinics, homes for the elderly (where they are generally managers), in hospices for the terminally ill, in industry, prisons, educational establishments, the armed services, and in home nursing.

Employment prospects are good. There is a current shortage of registered nurses and the increasing elderly population makes more demands on nursing care. However, this is being balanced by an increase in the employment of care assistants to work under the supervision of registered nurses. Opportunities for part-time work are good. Some nurses work through agencies, which provide nurses for the private sector; others work as hospital bank nurses, working to cover permanent staff who are on sick leave or holiday. In both cases, nurses may choose the number of hours they wish to work.

There are well-defined promotion prospects in all branches of nursing. Promotion is normally to charge nurse/ward sister and up to head nurse or senior nursing officer in hospital work. Recently, the Nigerian Government had approved that a nurse could rise to become a Director

General. (Titles vary in different countries.) In the community, there are also team, district, and area management positions. Some nurses become clinical nurse specialists, and in some countries they may, after further training, become nurse anaesthetists.

A nursing degree often aids career advancement and it may be a requirement for promotion to some management posts. Other nurses take further training in order to become midwives, or move into other branches of nursing.

There are opportunities for nurses to work in all countries. Most countries accept each other's registration programmes, although a further examination to obtain national/state licensing is often a requirement. Alternatively, attendance at an orientation course maybe all that is necessary. Note that it is only the UK adult/general nursing diploma that is universally recognised, although nurses who have trained in another branch do find work in many countries. There are opportunities for short-term work in many countries. Contract work in the Middle East is widely available and there are posts in international aid work.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Nursing & Midwifery Council of Nigeria
6 Mobolaji Bank-Anthony Way Ikeja, Lagos
Tel: 01-961552-4

Profile of a Role Model

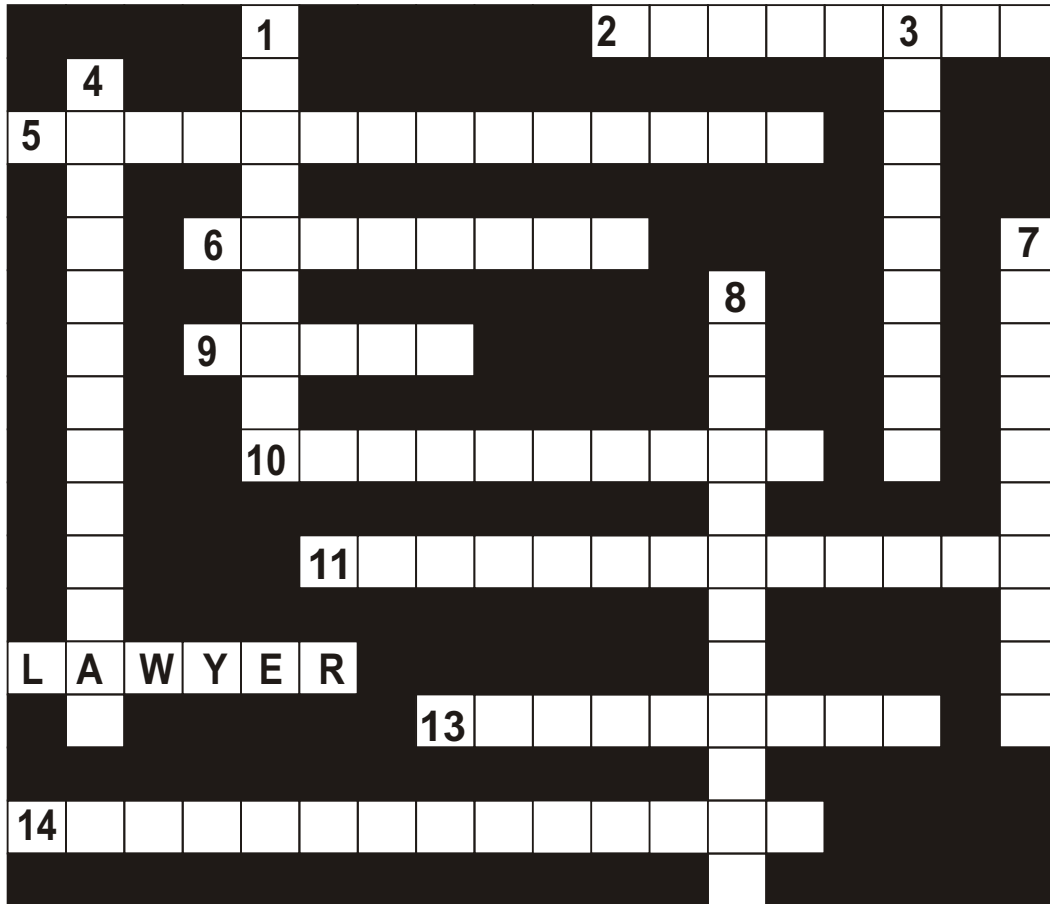
Mrs. Usifoh Charity Agbonma began her journey in the nursing profession in the 60's when she gained admission to the Seventh-Day Adventist School of Nursing, Ile Ife. After graduation, she proceeded to the Seventh-Day Adventist School of Midwifery, Ile-Ife. Her desire to attain academic excellence propelled her to continue with her education at the School of Hygiene, Eleyele Ibadan, after which she proceeded to Institute of Child Health and Primary Care, College of Medicine, University of Lagos. She graduated years later and forged ahead to the Center for International



Community Health Studies, University of Connecticut U.S.A. where she acquired further training in nursing. As a young promising professional, Mrs. Charity Usifoh was faced with the challenge of maintaining excellent performance in her studies. Through her parents' support and encouragement, and with determination and hardwork, she was able to rise through the ranks to the position of a Chief Nursing Officer (Health) Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, College of Medicine at the University of Lagos, Idi-Araba, Lagos.

Despite her busy professional schedule, Mrs. Usifoh devotes time for her family. She is happily married to a lovely husband and they are blessed with four children and one grand child. Her advise for any young person aspiring to take up the nursing profession is that they should base their choice on genuine love for the profession. "He or she must be prepared to work hard to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills and above all, must have the fear of God for that will make him or her do the right thing always in the line of duty," she says. She believes that with determination and hard work, young nurses can rise to management positions, be it in public or organised private sector

CROSSWORD



ANSWER

- 14 Horticulturist
- 13 Geologist
- 12 Lawyer
- 11 Meteorologist
- 10 Theologian
- 9 Pilot
- 8 Metallurgist
- 7 Accountant
- 6 Botanist
- 5 Radiotherapist
- 4 Paediatrician
- 3 Economist
- 2 Engineer
- 1 Zoologist

CLUES ACROSS

- 2 One trained to design, repair, and build objects(8)
- 5 Doctor that treats diseases by radiation(14)
- 6 Scientists who study plants(8)
- 9 Operator and controller of Aircraft (5)
- 10 One that studies religion and beliefs(10)
- 11 Experts in Science of the weather(13)
- 12 Person trained and qualified in legal matters{5}
- 13 Scientists involved in the study of earth's history as shown by the rocks and crust {9}
- 14 One that studies and practise growing flowers, and vegetables{14}

CLUES DOWN

- 1 Scientist who study animals {9}
- 3 One who study science of production, distribution and consumption of goods (9)
- 4 Doctor who study and treats diseases of children {13}
- 7 One who keeps and check financial account {10}
- 8 Expert in science of extracting and working on metals {12}

Why do young people indulge in drug and alcohol abuse and how can it be prevented?

Young people indulge in drug and alcohol abuse because they want to feel among, some take it to enable them memorize very well. And others cultivate the habit to overcome shyness. I suggest that the government should discourage unauthorised vendors. They should be exposed to training and counselling so that they would realise the consequence of their action. In addition, drugs should not be sold to young people without a doctors' prescription. Also, young people caught taking or selling hard drugs and alcohol should be sent to remand homes. This would serve as a lesson to their peers

Adewale Tolulope, 19 years (Female).

Young people get involved in drug and alcohol abuse because they want to forget about their problems and they feel that that is the best way to do so. Some times it's done out of curiosity or as a result of peer pressure. Their initial intention may not be to get addicted. I feel this could be prevented if health officials educate young people in schools during annual activities such as Prize Giving Day. They should show pictures or films of those who have destroyed their lives because of addiction to drugs and alcohol. Many young people would learn from the mistakes of others because many of them do it out of ignorance.

Olaniyan Esther, 14 years (Female)

Some young people are addicted to drugs and alcohol because they see their parents taking it and therefore want to experiment. Some parents even encourage their children to drink alcohol while others encourage the use of drugs so that their children will stay awake during exams. Unfortunately, they often blame their children when it gets out of hand without realising that they share out of the blame. The solution is for parents to show good example to their children. They should spend more time encouraging their children to study well ahead of their examinations and counsel them when they have concerns.

Osundairo Oladipupo, 17 years (Male)

In Nigeria today both young and old are involved in drug and alcohol abuse. This is as a result of poverty, lack of self-control and peer pressure. Media influence has also played a major role. Heroes and heroines of films are often drug barons, and alcohol abusers etc. They are portrayed as successful with flashy cars and big houses. Youths are tempted to make them their role models. The media has a social responsibility to society by ensuring that more educative films are aired.

Elijah Peters, 19 years (Male)

Some young people do not even realise that they are indulging in drug / alcohol abuse. This is because it is not regarded as abuse in the environment they find themselves. Ignorance plays a big role here. Similarly, youths from broken homes, or those in especially difficult circumstances such as street children may take to drugs and alcohol to help them sleep or prevent them from thinking. The society should try to meet the needs of the young people so that they won't be tempted to do things that would eventually harm them.

Ifeanyi Nzenwo, 17 years (Male)

Alcohol and drugs stimulates young people and gives them power at that point in time. Some people just can't read without drugs, some also can't make decisions without drug or alcohol. It can be prevented if they are made to realise the side effects of drugs and alcohol abuse by their parents, NGOs and other relevant government parastatals.

Jesu Tomi Shobande 19 Years, (Female)

FOCUS

TEEN STRESSORS

- Increase in the number of accidents or mishaps
- Frequent colds, flu, or other communicable diseases and chronic conditions
- Withdrawal; spending a lot of time alone; saying “no” to invitations from friends
- Hyperactivity
- Escapist behaviours (e.g. excessive TV watching)

Below are common examples of sources of teen stressors.

Given the “natural” challenges that come from within, in combination with stresses from the external world, teens worry about a lot of things. Some of the things they worry about change from year to year, as certain fears and questions subside and are replaced by new ones. Others are more or less constant they just take on different degrees of importance or qualities.

Often when adults look at teenagers, they see them as having a very good time. And, indeed, many teens do have lots of fun, much of the time. But some of that fun has a manic, out-of-control aspect to it. Sometimes it is hard to see that beneath the bravado and the high-spirited laughter, there is a lot of tension.

What are the common signs of teen stress?

Basically, teens react to stress in ways that are consistent with their personalities. Some face stressors directly, others indirectly. Some are active in their expression of stress, others take a passive route. The actual symptoms they exhibit are really not too different from the symptoms that adults show. In all likelihood, teens’ manner of coping mirrors that of parents and other family members. The possible signs of stress include the following:

- General irritability; arguing about everything, however minor
- Regressive or immature behaviour; they want their own way, they want it now, they can’t tolerate change from routine, and they are excessively sensitive to demands, expectations, or what sounds like criticism
- Obsession with external appearances and material goods; lots of time spent looking “right,” having the right haircut, etc
- School phobia; avoiding school work, cutting classes; sudden drop in academic performance
- Secretiveness; lying about whereabouts or actions
- Chronic dissatisfaction; nothing is good enough (including themselves)
- Loss of interest or pleasure in things they used to enjoy
- Excessive sleeping or sleeplessness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Significant change in eating habits
- Excessive or ongoing worrying
- Frequent crying spells

SEX

High on most teenagers’ lists is sex. They will worry most about the physical changes of puberty. Height, weight, the onset of menses, the embarrassment of menstruation, the size of breasts, body hair and body odor, facial features, acne, physical size and strength, unexpected erections, wet dreams, overall attractiveness – the list is long and every item very important. By secondary school, the more crucial preoccupation turns to sex itself: When is “it” going to happen? With whom? Under what circumstances? Who else is “doing it”? In some cases, the topic of sex is even more supercharged with anxiety, if homosexuality, sexual harassment, abuse, or incest are part of the picture.

Friends

Teens also worry a lot about their friendships. Relationships take on a whole new meaning in adolescence, and not just between teens who are dating or interested in each other sexually. Friendships help the adolescent define who he or she is. Belonging to a group is a way to establish identity and test out new values. Many of the expectations and needs teens have of one another go unspoken, but they are very real. The support and the heartache that friends provide can be very intense. Teens therefore worry about being liked, about being included in the right crowds. As they take on new risks, they worry about being made fun of, or being rejected. As they explore more serious romantic relationships, they worry about loyalty, commitment, intimacy.

Ever wondered why teenagers spend so much time on the telephone.

The answer is all about friendships: maintaining, testing, and reforming the social network which makes them feel secure and clear about who they are and where they stand. Of course, talking to friends on the telephone also gives them something to do! The importance of peer group can not be overstated, which explains the underlying anxiety of teenagers about not fitting in or not having friends to be with.

School

School is the stage where many of the teenage social roles are played out. It is also, of course, the place where accomplishment and mastery are tested, and a more serious pecking order ensues. Teens worry a lot about success in school, be it in the classroom or in extracurricular activities. Competition is an underlying element throughout virtually every school activity. By senior secondary school, only the good players make the team; only the popular kids get elected to the student council or other leadership positions. Given parent and societal pressure to succeed, it is no surprise that teens worry about failure. Performance and grades are the bottom lines.

Parents And Leaving Home

Teens also worry about their imminent departure from parents and home. In the earlier teenage years, the anxiety may relate first to being physically separated (for example, going to a boarding school). On another level, the anxiety concerns who is in control, which rules are “real” and which are optional, and the whole process of testing expectations and norms: “Will I be caught if I break a rule?” “What will the parent or teacher do if they find out I broke the rule?” This applies to norms of the peer group, as well as authority. Underlying this anxiety are several important questions that relate to the building of a separate identity: “Is the rule fair?” “Do I have a right to not follow the rules?” “If I don’t follow the rules, will I be more or less respected (by my peers, by my parents)?” “Whose approval do I really want?” “Will I still be loved if I go against the family tradition, or make choices that are different from the norm?” This then, leads into the difficult questions of values and choices (moral development) and becoming one’s own person.

For teens who have not had good relationship with parents, the anxieties may be complicated by the lack of feeling loved, or the fear of not measuring up to expectations. Depending on the home situation, the anxieties may have more to do with getting parental attention or approval rather than separation. Naturally, if parents themselves have problems (i.e., domestic violence, chemical addiction, employment instability), then teens may have a different host of concerns, including fear for their own safety or concern for the viability of the family. The separation task becomes all that more difficult for

teens who have not had some degree of family connectedness and stability. The potential stresses for this period of adolescence are then as diverse and numerous as for adulthood. They include the stresses (and consequences) or personal decision-making on everything from selecting a career, to getting jobs to marriage and having children.

From the Mundane to the Existential

During the bulk of adolescence, however, teens tend to worry about things in their own immediate lives and the near future. They worry about sex, about friends, about the immediate next steps related to separating from parents and becoming their own person. Some of their worries can be exceptionally practical and nitty-gritty, such as:

- (Simply getting up and getting to school on time
- (Not losing their notebook
- (Completing assignments
- (Passing exams
- (Other anxieties are more far-reaching
- (Having enough money to get all the things they want
- (Keeping up with other young people who have, more expensive clothes, greater freedom etc.
- (Avoiding conflict with peers and adults
- (Adjusting to physical or intellectual handicaps, or chronic illness
- (Feeling comfortable in a school environment where violence and abuse are commonplace
- (Getting home safely in an unsafe neighborhood
- (Changing schools due to a parent’s relocation
- (Dealing with parents who are fighting, alcoholic or drug dependent, or abusive
- (Coping with major changes in the family, such as birth, death, divorce, remarriage.

Depending on the young person’s circumstances, these fears and worries can be small or all consuming. Some teens also worry about the society they are growing up in. They may fear for some particular threat to their neighborhood (e.g., increasing crime and violence, etc.) Or they

may be angry at the injustice of society generally and worry about poverty and the environment.

Tips for Handling Stress

Some young people try to adopt short-term strategies for coping with stress. This include drinking, smoking, having excessive sexual intercourse, excessive sleep, procrastination etc. These only serve as distractions, an escapist behaviour which is short lived.

† It is important therefore to reinforce positive coping strategies. Some of these are listed below:

- † Talk to a trusted adult – studies show that teens who survive the transition period have at least one adult or those people who can listen and affirm a young person’s need to explore and make decisions, and at the same time provide some guidance and support by role modelling and gentle questioning rather than lecturing.
- † Engage in physical activities – some physical activities reduce stress. This is because they help the person relax. Examples of these include swimming, football, dancing, throwing a frisbee, bicycling, jumping rope, handball,
- † Power of positive thinking – if you believe something can be true, then it will be true. This can be done by thinking through what happened, determining what is your responsibility and doing something about it. It also means giving yourself the courage to try again after a failure and the ability to learn from the failure. It may mean believing in yourself even when others don’t seem to believe in you. In times of great stress, one needs to serve as one’s own best friend or wise parent even when they are not there in reality. You may encourage yourself by reading other people’s autobiographies.

Culled from Fighting Invisible Tigers, A Stress Management Guide For Teens. By Connie C. Schmitz, and Earl Hipp. Free Spirit Publishing 1995, USA.

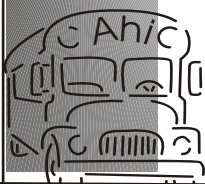
We have moved



RELOCATION NOTICE!!!

AHI has relocated its office and youth center to its permanent site situated at

**17, Lawal Str, Off Oweh Str,
Fadeyi, Lagos.**



Resources

The materials listed here are resources on adolescent development. Although AHI does not distribute any of these materials, they are available for use within our reference library at AHI Youth Centre located at Plot 54 Somorin Street, Ifako, Gbagada, Lagos.

BOOKS

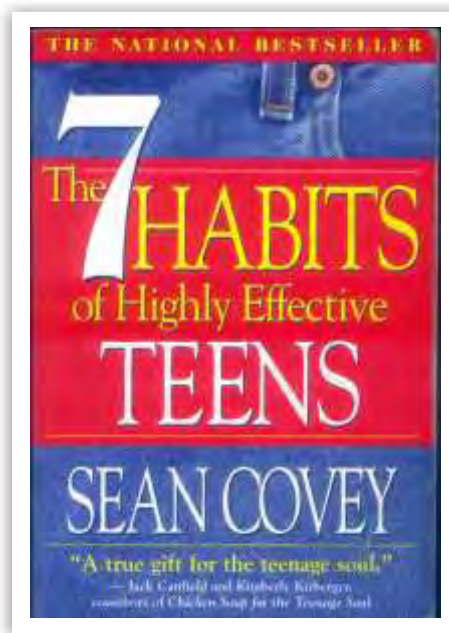
The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens

Sean Convey

Being a teenager is both wonderful and challenging. In the 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens, author Sean Convey applies the timeless principles of the 7 Habits to teens and the tough issues and life-changing decisions they face. In an entertaining style, the author provides a step-by-step guide to help teens improve self-image, build friendships, resist peer pressure, achieve their goals, get along with their parents, and much more. The book contains cartoons, clever ideas, great quotes and incredible stories about real teens from all over the world. It's a comprehensive 'manual' for young people who wish to become winners in the competition of life.

overwhelmed by the challenges they face everyday. The book will help young people move beyond mere coping to mastery of essential skills. The 12 sessions discussed in the book offers a complete course in stress management and life management for teens.

to social action, power skills such as letter writing, interviewing, speech making, surveying, fundraising, getting and handling media coverage e.g. It's a skills building book which empowers young people with the necessary information and skills to take charge of their lives and influence their environment positively.



Adolescent Risk Taking

Nancy J. Bell and Robert W. Bell

Adolescent Risk taking brings together a multi disciplinary group of scholars who examine adolescent risk taking from a multiple of perspectives with direct implications for promoting healthy adolescent life styles. The book is a valuable resource for individuals and institutions concerned with the health of adolescents, including behavioural and medical researchers, psychological and sociological theorists, clinicians etc.

Saying No to Tobacco: A Teacher's Guide

Nancy Abbey and Ellen Wagman

Based on a cognitive behavioural approach to education, Saying No To Tobacco maintains that young people must have access to accurate information, to be able to "personalise" the information in order to make it part of their lives, and be able to apply the knowledge to their personal decision-making process. It provides the teacher with a structured sequence of classroom activities to help young people resist peer pressure and say no to tobacco.

Fighting Invisible Tigers. A Stress Management Guide for Teens

Connie C. Schmitz, Earl Hipp

To survive and thrive, teens need to learn and practice specific stress-management and life management skills. They need to know how to relax, be assertive, build relationships, take risks, make decisions, plan for the future, take care of themselves... and keep a sense of humour. They need to recognise the signs of stress and know what to do when they feel

The Kids Guide to Social Action

Barbara A. Lewis

The book contains real stories about adolescents who are making a difference at home and around the world. It provides step-by-step guides