

ACCESS TO SAFE ABORTION



Contents

Exercises	3
EXERCISE 1: BRAINSTORM ON ABORTION	3
EXERCISE 2: ABORTION AND RIGHTS	4
Assignment	6
ANNEXURE A: "SELMA'S STORY (PARTICIPANTS' VERSION)	7
ANNEXURE B: "SELMA'S STORY" (FACILITATOR'S VERSION)	8

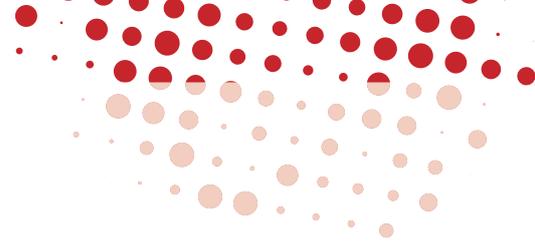




1. EXERCISES



EXERCISE 1. BRAINSTORM ON ABORTION



Adapted from 'Abortion: Decisions and Dilemmas' (Brook). Available at: <https://www.brook.org.uk/shop/product/abortion-decisions-and-dilemmas>

Overview:

An introductory exercise that supports participants to discuss words they associate with the term 'abortion' and start to distinguish between facts and values relating to abortion.

Objectives:

- To introduce the topic and clarify the meaning of the term 'abortion'
- To learn basic factual information about abortion and have the opportunity to correct any myths
- To consider different opinions and beliefs relating to abortion, and understand the difference between these and facts

Materials:

Flipchart paper, marker pen.

Time:

15-20 minutes

Instructions:

On a large piece of paper, write down the word 'abortion' in the centre. Explain that by 'abortion' you are talking about the choice to end a pregnancy (you may wish to clarify the difference between this and miscarriage).

Ask participants to call out any words or phrases which come into their head when they hear this word. Explain that these could be things they hear from their peers, from the media, or from family.

Write all the words down without any discussion until the paper is full and place a question mark after each word or phrase.

When the paper is filled, ask participants for their first impressions of the brainstorm. They may feel that a lot of the words are negative, or that abortion is a very complex subject with lots of different issues involved. Ask participants why they think you might have used question marks after all the words.

Depending on the responses you receive, explain that you used question marks because:

- Not everything on the board is factually correct
- Some words, particularly those connected to values or emotions, will not be the same for everyone
- Making a decision about pregnancy can be difficult, there are lots of questions someone might ask themselves, or people around them
- There is a lot of confusion and misinformation about abortion

The important point to draw out of this is that there are facts we can know about abortion (such as what the law says, medical information) and there are values, which will be different for different people, and which do not have one answer (e.g. when life begins). Make it clear to your participants that when discussing abortion, it is important not to confuse facts and values.

You can make this point by using examples from your brainstorm: clarifying factual information and giving more detail on any words or phrases that are not clear to the group.



This exercise is an opportunity for people to freely share any words they associate with abortion (which may not reflect their own experiences/ perspectives). It is important to try to keep the space safe, especially for those who have experienced abortion (which you may or may not know about). This includes setting out clear ground rules, correcting any misinformation, and opening up a discussion about abortion-related stigma and how it might affect people.

EXERCISE 2: ABORTION AND RIGHTS

Adapted from 'Abortion care for young women: A training toolkit' (Ipas). Available at <http://www.ipas.org/en/Resources/Ipas%20Publications/Abortion-care-for-young-women-A-trainingtoolkit.aspx>

Overview:

This exercise supports participants to understand how certain international and regional conventions and declarations help ensure that young women's human rights, and particularly their sexual and reproductive rights, are respected.

Objectives:

- To identify human, sexual and reproductive rights that support a young woman's right to a safe abortion
- To describe possible consequences when a young woman's human, sexual and reproductive rights are violated

Materials:

Postit notes
"Selma's story" (Annexure A – Participant's version)
"Selma's story" (Annexure B – Facilitator's version)
Flipchart paper.

Time:

60 minutes

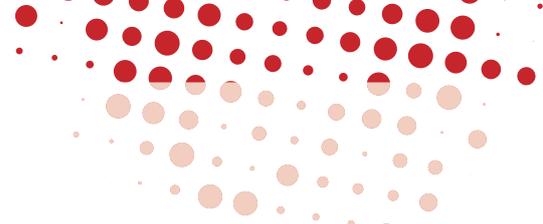
Instructions:

Introduce the activity by telling participants that during this activity they will discuss rights, in particular sexual and reproductive rights, as they apply to young women 10 – 24 years of age.

Ask participants what they think of when they hear the term "human rights." Allow for a few responses. Show slide and read the following definition: Human rights are basic rights held by all persons by virtue of being born a human being. They are inalienable and interlinked, and protect our freedom, safety, health and quality of life. All human beings are entitled to these rights independent of any biological, social, economic or political distinctions, such as gender or age.

Ask participants to share any international or regional conventions that they think are relevant to a young woman's sexual and reproductive rights and specify how. List responses on a flipchart.

Divide participants into five small groups. Inform the groups that they have 25 minutes to read through sections 6 and 7 of the module and answer all five discussion questions. Ask each group to identify one person who will report back.



Discussion questions:

- What human rights are covered in the Timeline of Rights?
- Which of these rights and conventions have been ratified by your country?
- How do these conventions and conferences relate to the sexual and reproductive health and rights of young women?
- What are the sexual and reproductive rights of young women? How do they relate to safe abortion?
- Are these rights enforced in your country?
- What are the barriers to access to safe abortion in your country? How can you overcome these?

Ask participants to join the larger group. Invite each group to share their answers and highlights from their group's discussion. After each group presents, allow time for additional discussion, asking other groups to add anything that is missing.

Summarize highlights from the participants' discussions and conclude with the following key points:

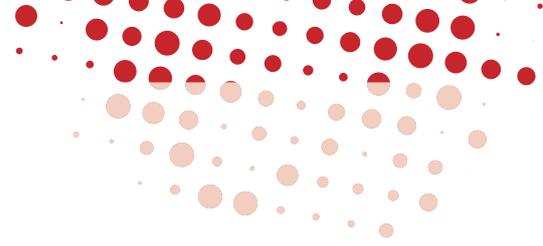
- All human beings are born with a set of inalienable rights that provide basic protections to life, safety, shelter and health among others.
- These rights are not limited by any factors such as gender or age. Young women have the same human rights as all other persons.
- Denying a young woman accurate and comprehensive information about safe abortion or safe abortion care is a violation of her rights.
- In cases of legal restrictions, providers can play important roles in protecting young women's lives and health – by giving information, counseling and advice, identifying alternative legal indications for safe abortion, and advocating for legal and policy changes.

Inform participants that for the second half of this activity they will practice applying these international rights to a young woman's situation.

- Provide all participants with a copy of "Selma's story" (Annexure A – Participant's version)
- Inform participants that for this activity they will read the handout, "Selma's story" and then, in their small groups, identify the various human, sexual and reproductive rights that have been violated in the case study.
- Inform the groups that they have 15 minutes for this task.
- Ask the participants to join the larger group.
- Read the first paragraph and ask one of the small groups to identify the rights that have been violated. Ask other groups for additional input if not all of the rights violations were identified.
- Point out any rights violations that the groups did not identify.
- Continue in a similar fashion, asking a different small group to identify the rights violated for each of the four paragraphs.
- Ask participants to reflect on the human rights, particularly the sexual and reproductive rights that they have identified as being violated.

Use the following questions and "Selma's story" (Annexure B – Facilitator's version) to facilitate the discussion. Allow approximately 15 minutes for the discussion.

- What are the different circumstances that lead to violations of young women's rights?
- What challenges do young women face in exercising their rights? How does this affect their options?
- What challenges exist for young women to exercise their full rights in your country/region?
- Who is responsible for fulfilling young women's rights? What needs to happen to uphold young women's rights at the government level? At the facility level? At the community level? At the individual level?
- What is your responsibility in ensuring Selma's rights are respected? What actions can you take at your level?



Highlight unique points and summarize using the following key points:

- Across the world, young women face human rights violations each day. They are disproportionately affected by violations compared to their male peers or adults.
- We have also seen how interconnected human rights are: without information it can be much harder to seek or receive health care. Similarly, without freedom from discrimination – equal pay, for example – safe abortion care may not be financially accessible to a young woman.
- This means that we have to work for young women’s rights at many levels, from the government to communities to individuals, and in many different areas. We are all responsible for fulfilling the human rights of young women.

Solicit and discuss any outstanding questions, comments or concerns with participants. Thank the group for their participation.

Note to facilitator: An option for this activity is to extend Part 1 and add an overview of national laws and rights frameworks for the country participants come from. Allow time for participants to discuss how their national laws and rights frameworks interact with international human rights.



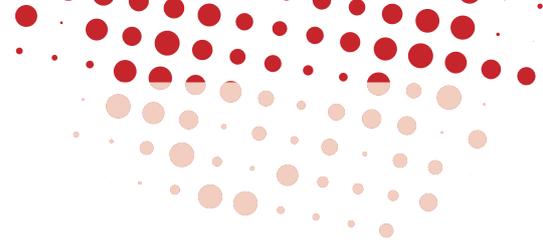
2. Assignment

Article 14 of the Maputo Protocol requires States Parties to ensure that the right to health of women, including sexual and reproductive health is respected and promoted. This includes the right to decide whether to have children, the number of children and the spacing of children.

It requires State Parties to take all appropriate measures to protect the reproductive rights of women by authorising medical abortion in cases of sexual assault, rape, incest, and where the continued pregnancy endangers the mental and physical health of the mother or the life of the mother or the foetus.

In your opinion, is it sufficient to merely ensure that national laws relating to termination of pregnancy are compliant with Article 14 of the Maputo Protocol in order to ensure access safe termination of pregnancies for all?

Please provide arguments to justify your answer in no more than 1500 words.



Annexure A:

“Selma’s Story (Participants’ version)”

Selma’s case study

My name is Selma, and I am a 17-year-old woman. I have worked in a factory for over a year. It is hard work, and I earn a very small salary, far below the national standard. I send most of what I earn to my family, who live in a rural area. I can read and write a little, but I did not go to school very long because my parents could not afford the fees for both my brother and me, and so he went.

I did not receive any information about sexual and reproductive health issues at home or school. During my first month at the factory, one of the supervisors pressured me to have sex with him. He did not use a condom or any other protection. He told me to wash afterwards, so I would not get pregnant, and not to tell anyone. Because no one talks about such things, I never told anyone. Luckily, I did not get pregnant.

My parents want to arrange my marriage to a boy from a neighbouring village soon, and they want me to stay pure for him. Not too long ago I met a boy in the factory. He treated me nicely and asked me if I wanted to go out with him. We started going out, and after a while, we started having sex. When we could get them, we used condoms. But it was hard to get condoms, and sometimes when we had a condom, we put it on late, after already starting to have sex.

Last month I missed my bleeding. My breasts became tender and a little bigger. I wasn’t sure if I was pregnant, but I knew that I could not have a child. My manager would make me leave my job at the factory if he found out. I could never travel home because it would bring such shame on my parents, and I could no longer be married. I heard of a lady who helps young women with these situations. She charges less money than the health clinic, and I wouldn’t risk being seen by someone who knows me, so I went to her. She inserted something deep inside of me. It hurt a lot and there was a lot of blood. All night I felt very weak and was in a lot of pain. My friend found me dead the next morning.

Annexure B:

“Selma’s Story” (Facilitator’s version)

Selma’s case study (with rights shown)

My name is Selma, and I am a 17-year-old woman. I have worked in a factory for over a year. It is hard work, and I earn a very small salary, far below the national standard. **(Right to fair and equitable income, freedom from discrimination)**. I send most of what I earn to my family, who live in a rural area. I can read and write a little, but I did not go to school very long because my parents could not afford the fees for both my brother and me, and so he went. **(Rights to information and education, and freedom from discrimination)**.

I did not receive any information about sexual and reproductive health issues at home or school. **(Right to information and education)**. During my first month at the factory, one of the supervisors pressured me to have sex with him. **(Right to security of person)**. He did not use a condom or any other protection. He told me to wash afterwards, so I would not get pregnant, and not to tell anyone. **(Right to information and education)**. Because no one talks about such things, I never told anyone. Luckily, I did not get pregnant.

My parents want to arrange my marriage to a boy from a neighbouring village soon, and they want me to stay pure for him. **(Right to decide if, when and with whom to marry)**. Not too long ago I met a boy in the factory. He treated me nicely and asked me if I wanted to go out with him. We started going out, and after a while, we started having sex. When we could get them, we used condoms. But it was hard to get condoms, **(Rights to health care and benefits of scientific progress)** and sometimes when we had a condom, we put it on late, after already starting to have sex. **(Right to information and education)**.

Last month I missed my bleeding. My breasts became tender and a little bigger. I wasn’t sure if I was pregnant, but I knew that I could not have a child. My manager would make me leave my job at the factory if he found out. **(Right to freedom from discrimination)**. I could never travel home because it would bring such shame on my parents, and I could no longer be married. **(Right to decide if, when and with whom to marry)**. I heard of a lady who helps young women with these situations. She charges less money than the health clinic, and I wouldn’t risk being seen by someone who knows me, so I went to her. She inserted something deep inside of me. It hurt a lot and there was a lot of blood. **(Right to health care and benefits of scientific progress)**. All night I felt very weak and was in a lot of pain. My friend found me dead the next morning **(Rights to life, and right to decide if, when and with whom to have a child)**.