

# Youth HIV Prevention Programs



Journey of Hope  
Series #4 of 6

Protecting the Youth..., Building the Future...

## Guidelines and Summary Action Plan for the Organization of a Church Based Youth Support Group

Today's youth are tomorrow's leaders. Providing our young people with the knowledge, tools, and support systems that they need to protect themselves from HIV and AIDS, is an essential part of developing strong, Christ-centered individuals. An effective Youth HIV/AIDS prevention program will, in addition to providing the required information about HIV and AIDS, include the following 7 objectives:

1. Creating a Youth Friendly Environment
2. Developing a Relationship with Jesus
3. Service to Others
4. Developing Mentoring Programs
5. Spiritual enrichment
6. Informational enrichment
7. Community "Out-reach"



### 3. Service to Others

#### Creating a Sense of Belonging, Achievement and Respect

In serving others, the youth gain a sense of accomplishment; they feel useful and needed, valuable members of their Church and the broader community and that they have influence in designing and implementing the program. Studies have shown that service for others strengthens resilience and the ability to cope in spite of difficulties.

Therefore, if we want to keep our youth away from risky behaviors, we need to encourage the following:

- Young people need to be part of a group or community in order to develop the sense of belonging,
- The youth needs to be involved in service as a way to accomplish goals and objectives, and as a consequence of this, develop the sense of achievement,
- Through the previous two items, the youth will at the same time, build-up the sense of influence or respect.

Through serving others the youth develop:

- A Spirit of Service
- Altruism
- Compassion
- Self-worth (high self-worth precedes a positive self-esteem)
- High Self-esteem



### 1. Creating a Youth Friendly Environment

- In order to have a positive impact on the youth, we need to create a supportive, loving and caring environment in which the youth are treated with respect.
- We need to:
  - Work with church members to develop a non-judgmental, but accepting attitude towards the youth,
  - Build-up relationships and connectedness with the youth. This is vital to keep the youth away from risky behaviors
  - Listen to and value what young people say
  - Talk with the youth, not to the youth; value their opinions,
  - Understand that you can only teach respect by showing respect
  - Give them responsibilities. Trust them,
  - Understand what really matters to the youth, and only set limits in this regard. Don't make rules simply for the sake of making rules. Give them time to learn,
  - Involve the youth in Church Programs, Support Groups, Community Outreach and Service, HIV/AIDS Prevention Programs, (in helping and teaching others they develop a more sure understanding for themselves),



### 2. Developing a Relationship with Jesus

Knowledge about HIV and AIDS is important but has a limited impact in preventing the spread of the disease,

- Jesus, the role model,
- Helping the youth to develop a personal relationship with Jesus, is the strong foundation that will give them the resilience to stand firm and the capacity to make the right choices,
- Jesus will make the transformation from inside. Transformation of behavior instead of changing of behavior. Changes are through the mind, transformation is through the Spirit,
- The "outcome" depends on the "income." Youth need to be encouraged to spend time reading the Bible and contemplating the wonder of God. It is the "in come" that will determine the "out come" of their lives, i.e. it is that which they take in and absorb, that will have the biggest effect.

### 4.- Developing Mentoring Programs:

#### Mentors

- Encourage members who relate well to young people to take a special interest in one or two of the young people of the church.

#### What is a mentor?

- Young people need to have a relationship with a person of significance to whom they can turn, for guidance and advice.
- Youth who are connected to someone of significance have been found to have:
  - More confidence
  - Self-respect
  - A better ability to cope with peer pressure
  - Ability to resist risky behaviors
  - More resilience



Adventist AIDS International Ministry

www.aidsministry.com



This material was designed to organize and empower Youth Support Groups in order to fight the HIV epidemic. Remember that the more we talk about it, the more awareness is created and higher levels of prevention achieved. Help fight silence and stigma on HIV and AIDS! Titles of Journey of Hope Series: #1) HIV/AIDS - General Information, #2) HIV Epidemic - How to organize my church, #3) HIV & AIDS - How can I help, #4) The Youth and HIV/AIDS, #5) HIV/AIDS Grandmothers Clubs, and #6) Counseling on HIV/AIDS, #7) HIV/AIDS & Nutrition

A Service to the Community from the Seventh-day Adventist Church

AIM – Adventist AIDS International Ministry. A Ministry of Hope, Love and Compassion

# Youth HIV Prevention Programs



## GOING INTO ACTION

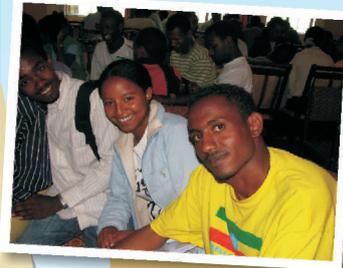
**IMPORTANT:** Before continuing with the following steps, obtain the permission from the Church Pastor or Elder to implement the Church Based Youth Support Groups' activities within the church premises.

Once the previous 7 steps have been put in place, then implement the following actions:

### 5.- Spiritual enrichment

The program needs to begin by building the youth's relationship with Jesus. This can include:

- Regular meetings of the youth
- Praying
- Bible Study
- Testimonies or sharing experiences
- Singing and praising



### DON'T FORGET Social "Fun" Activities ...!!!

While the focus is on youth community service and support, in order to build a sense of fellowship and friendship, it is important that the program include elements of healthy fun and social interaction for the youth such as:

- Games evenings
- Picnics
- Playing healthy Sports
- etc.

## REMEMBER!!!

### Building Christian Characters

*"Character building is the most important work ever entrusted to human beings, and never before was its diligent study so important, as now. Never was any previous generation called to meet issues so momentous; never before were young men and women confronted by perils so great as confront them today"*

*Ellen G. White, Education. p. 225*

In order to obtain good and long lasting results on Abstinence and Faithfulness, we need to start by uplifting Jesus as the "role model" for the youth, then, promote Christian values and principles, while modeling a Christian character.

Then, and only then, we will be able to talk about Abstinence and Faithfulness. Not the other way around...

A loving, caring and supportive environment needs to accompany this process in order to be effective.

### 6.- Informational enrichment

After helping to develop a relationship with Jesus, the youth need to be given accurate information on:

- Human Sexuality as a gift of God,
- Gender relations
- Responsible parenting
- Assertiveness training
- Family planning
- Peer counseling
- Breaking the cycle of violence
- Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), including HIV and AIDS.
- And other subjects of interest...

### 7.- Community "Out-reach"

- Caring for the community through social service and support.
- Learning to share what they have with others (Time, resources, knowledge, etc.)
- Target an area around the Church in which to identify schools or other places where young people meet, as target areas for outreach programs.
- Determine the needs of the identified targets, and develop relevant programs that teach about HIV and AIDS Prevention.
- All these together will help develop a higher level of resilience that empowers a young person to cope under difficult circumstances

You can use resources such as:

- Skits
- Puppet shows
- Christian music programs
- Relevant film shows, followed by discussion

Periodically, organize refresher HIV/AIDS programs at the church, where there can be greater emphasis on the spiritual component.

(Everything should be culturally appropriate; we wish to educate, not to offend. The environment should be one in which people feel free to ask difficult questions)

Faithfulness...!!!



Abstinence...!!!

Abstinence and faithfulness are the natural result of a Christian character



**CHRISTIAN CHARACTER**

Exercising our choice to adhere to our values and principles, builds character



**Developing Christian Values & Principles**

We base our values and principles on our Role Model



**Our Role Model: JESUS-CHRIST**

In putting together an action plan for a youth HIV/AIDS program, we begin by recognizing Jesus as our role model

