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# Parenting

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Module: Sexual Education



Help a Child (HAC) is a Christian, child-focused development organization working with local Partners in Asia and Africa. The Head-office is based in the Netherlands where the organization is known under the name Red een Kind (REK). Help a Child wants every child to have a loving and dignified existence and a promising future.

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# Table of Contents

Information for the Facilitator .....	5
Goal of the Module: .....	5
Introduction to the theme.....	5
Important to know.....	5
Session build up .....	5
Session 1: Sexual development.....	6
Introduction for the Facilitator .....	6
Exercises.....	8
Welcome.....	8
Exercise 1: Sexual development (0-12 years).....	9
Exercise 2: Sexual development (12-18 years).....	10
Exercise 3: Body changes puberty.....	11
Exercise 4: Let's go sharing!.....	12
Homework.....	12
Session 2: Talk about sexuality with children .....	13
Introduction for the Facilitator .....	13
Exercises.....	14
Welcome and recap .....	14
Exercise 1: Your experiences.....	14
Exercise 2: Importance of talking about sexuality with children .....	15
Exercise 3: How to talk about sexuality with children? .....	16
Exercise 4: Norms and values.....	17
Homework.....	18
Session 3: Risky behaviour and consequences.....	19
Introduction .....	19
Exercises.....	20
Welcome and recap .....	20
Exercise 1: Your experiences.....	21
Exercise 2: Risky behaviour .....	21
Exercise 3: Consequences of risk behaviour .....	22
Exercise 4: Let's go sharing!.....	23
Homework.....	23

Session 4: Resilience .....	24
Introduction .....	24
Exercises.....	25
Welcome and recap .....	25
Exercise 1: Materials sexual education.....	25
Exercise 2: Do you follow or not?.....	26
Exercise 3: What is resilience?.....	26
Exercise 4: Learn your child to say ‘no’.....	27
Exercise 5: What did you learn? .....	28

## | Information for the Facilitator

**Goal of the Module:** making parents aware of the importance of sexual education, getting information about the sexual development of children at different ages, finding a way how to talk about sexuality with children, what are risky behaviours and its consequences. We will also talk about how we can make our children less vulnerable/more resilient.

### **Introduction to the theme**

Young children and sexuality is for most parents a strange combination. Isn't sexuality about kissing and sleeping together? In some contexts, sex is a taboo subject. However, sexuality is not only about sexual activities, but also about discovering the body, feelings, about differences between boys and girls and being aware of good and bad touches. All starting from the very moment the child is born!

It is important that parents are aware about the sexual development of their children and talk with them about it. Sexual education is guiding your children in the sexual development that starts from birth. As a parent, you guide your children by letting them experience their body, feelings and making friends. Older children need to be guided in making the right choices about sexuality.

### **Important to know**

It is important to read the information and prepare the sessions well. So, make sure you know what you are going to do during the session and prepare the exercises well.

In this whole module, we speak from the perspective that the parents give sexual education to their own children. We know that in some countries this is not usual; in these countries aunts, grandmothers or other relatives give sexual education, and often, in quite a general overview. You as a facilitator should keep in mind that you have to translate the module to your own setting. This includes also the sexual development stages. The sexual development stages who are used in this module are guidelines.

### **Session build up**

<b>Session Title</b>	<b>Content of the session</b>
<b>1. Sexual development of children</b>	Analysing the different stages of sexual development of children. Looking at different ages. We also look at body changes during puberty or adolescence.
<b>2. Talk about sexuality with your children</b>	Making parents aware of the importance of talking about sexuality with children.
<b>3. Risky behaviours and consequences.</b>	Making parents aware of risky behaviours and its consequences.
<b>4. Resilience</b>	Making parents aware of what resilience is and how they can make their children less vulnerable.

# Session 1: Sexual development



**Goal:** Making parents aware of the sexual development of children

**Materials:** A flipchart, big papers and some markers

**Duration:** About 2 hours

## | Introduction for the Facilitator

### *Introduction to the theme*

It is important that parents know the different stages of sexual development of their children. All parents know something about it, and have experience with it. In this session we would like to share their knowledge and experiences with each other and learn about the sexual development of children. What are the different stages of sexual development? And what happens with the body of your child in puberty?

### **Textbox 1: Childhood sexual development**

Children do not only grow in length, they also grow sexually. Sexual development is more than sexuality. It is also about friendship, love and experience of boyhood and girlhood (being a boy and being a girl). Another important thing is that they learn if and when they are comfortable or not and with what (session 4). Children are constantly acquiring social norms. They learn what is appreciated or what is expected to do in interactions and relationships. In the different development stages, common and healthy expressions of sexuality are likely to show. A lot of adults want to know which behaviours are appropriate and what indicates a healthy sexual development. In this session we first discuss the sexual development of children at different ages and behavioural characteristics that goes with it.

#### *0-6 years*

Young children are curious about their bodies; this also include genitals/private parts. They are exploring their bodies by watching and feeling, they are not ashamed of their naked bodies, want to know where pee comes from, use dirty words (poop/pee/penis) and want to know how you can see if you are a boy or a girl. For parents it is important to teach the young child the names of the body parts, give basic information about the main differences of male and female, help the child understand how to interact with peers of the same age, provide basic answers to questions about the body and bodily functions, encourage the child to understand privacy and tell what things are appropriate and what is inappropriate.

The child becomes aware of the opinions of others and will compare itself to others (thick-thin/big-small). Children this age are also discovering that genitals/private parts have a sexual function, but do not yet fully understand how it works exactly. For parents it is important to give basic information about the basics of human reproduction. This also includes the role of sexual intercourse. Parents can start with giving information about puberty and physical/bodily changes.

#### *9-12 years*

The child starts to slowly have body changes (boys growing fast and girls getting breasts). He or she is becoming ashamed of his/her naked body and will find sex interesting. They have the feeling to either talk about it or to not talk about it at all. For parents it is important to give their children ongoing information about body changes during puberty and educate them about social and emotional aspects of puberty, and help to normalize the new emotions they have. Parents also have to provide age-appropriate information about sexual behaviours and sexual transmitted diseases (STDs). Another important aspect is that children need support in understanding their responsibilities in friendships, showing them characteristics of healthy friendships and relationships.

#### *12-18 years*

In this stage of development children would like to be independent, they think they already can manage things on their own, but in most cases they cannot do it yet. They find friends very important and want to belong to a group. Maybe they start flirting and may start feeling sexually attracted to someone for the first time. They also can have mood swings. In this stage they explore that they would like to have a relationship and discover their need and boundaries sexually. In some cases youngsters have their first sexual experience, and in others, some are already beginning a family. For parents it is important to recognize what the child needs and provide accurate information about sexuality and sex, and reproductive health. A lot of children in this age find information in a different way if they don't get it at home. Adults can support youngsters as they navigate social and cultural messages about sexuality.

### **Textbox 2: Body changes puberty**

In puberty the body is maturing. Which physical changes are taking place during puberty? Everybody is unique, so no one changes at the same place at the same time. Body changes can make children uncertain or proud. Peers and media have influence on their self-image (the way they look and think about themselves). It is important that they accept their own body, and accept that they as well as others are unique and special.

#### *Body changes - boys*

The first thing most boys notice, is that they are growing fast. Their hands, feet, shoulders and chests become bigger. Hairs starts to grow on the legs, under the armpits and they get pubic hair around their genitals, private parts. They are going to sweat, so hygiene is important. The voice is also changing, sometimes it is high and sometimes it is low.

The 'Adam's apple' is growing so the voice gets lower. Some boys get pimples and spots. Hormones also cause changes; they can feel sexually attracted to someone, which makes them excited. Hormones will also start the production of semen. At some moment this semen comes out of the penis, this is called the ejaculation. It happens quite often at night, this is called 'wet dream'.

#### *Body changes - girls*

The first thing most girls notice, is that breasts start to grow and their bodies fill out more, especially the hips. Sometimes the breasts grow at different speed. The girls can start with wearing a bra when they think they are ready for it. Hair starts to grow under the armpits and they get pubic hair. They are going to sweat, so hygiene is important. Some girls get pimples and spots. Between the age of 10-15, age differs, every girl gets her first menstrual period. This happens one time a month because one of the two ovaries releases an egg. It takes a few days per month. Hygiene is very important during these days.

#### **Important to know**

Talking about sexuality can be difficult. In a lot of places, talking about sexuality is taboo. So, make sure everybody feels safe during the session. It could be that men and women rather do these exercises separately. You as facilitator have to judge if this is necessary or ask the parents what they prefer. Do also prepare the session well, read the textbox above and make sure you have everything you need for the exercises!

## | Exercises

#### **Welcome**

This is our first session of the module sexual education, from the Parenting series. In this session, we will look at the sexual development of children and everything that goes with it. What does the sexual development of children look like? What is good to know about these things for you as a parent to support and understand your children, and help them to develop a healthy view on sexuality?

Before we really start, let's talk through our basic rules again to refresh. What is important to make sure the sessions will go on smoothly?

- Be there at every session. If you are not able to come, make sure people know and will inform you about what happened
- *(Bring up the rules you set up with the group at the very first gathering)*

Ok, now that we all know again what is being expected, we can really start. We will start with looking at the sexual development of children at different ages.





### **Exercise 1: Sexual development (0-12 years)**

Time: About 30 minutes

1. Before you start this exercise you have to write (in BIG letters) the following 4 age categories on a big paper. On paper 1: 0-4 years, on paper 2: 4-6 years, on paper 3: 6-9 years and on the last paper 9-12 years, and make 4 spots in the area.
2. Gather the group together and tell them that you have made 4 spots in the area. One spot 0-4 years (see the big papers on the ground), the second spot 4-6 years, the third spot 6-9 years and the last spot 9-12 years.
3. Explain that you are going to read sentences, sentence by sentence (see sentences below). If you read the sentence the parents have to walk to the spot they think fits to the age categories of the sentence you read (keep the paper with the right answers with you). Mix the age categories if you read the sentences.
4. After every sentence you read, if the parents are at the spot they think is right, discuss why they have chosen for that age categories. If they are right, explain why, and if they are not right, explain why it belongs to another age category.
5. Tell the group that it is okay if they have it wrong, explain also that every child has its own development stages. It may be that it does not match with these sentences. No worry, every child is unique!

#### 0-4 years

- The child needs to be hugged to create trust and a safe feeling.
- The child is not ashamed of his/her naked body.
- The child is exploring his/her own body by watching and feeling.
- The child wants to know where his/her pee comes from.  
The child wants to know how you can see if you are a boy or a girl.

#### 4-6 years

- The child learns rules about what is normal and what is not normal.
- The child wants to know where babies come from.
- Boys only want to do boy things and girls only want to do girl things.

#### 6-9 years

- The child becomes aware of the opinions of others and will compare itself to others (thick-thin/big-small).
- The child will understand the difference between friendship, having a crush (on someone) and love.
- The child discovers that genitals/private parts have a sexual function.

#### 9-12 years

- Slowly the body changes (boys growing fast and girls getting breasts).
- The child is ashamed of his/her naked body.
- The child will find sex interesting (will/will not talk about it)

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### **Feedback to the group**

Well, this was our/the first activity about sexual development. Let's discuss together what went well and what was difficult. Ask the group if they have questions in response to this exercise. If they have questions, answer them, and if they have not, go to the next exercise you prepared.

It is important to tell that every child is unique and will go through this development at its own pace. So parents not need immediately worry if the development is a little slower or faster.

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### **Exercise 2: Sexual development (12-18 years)**

Time: About 30 minutes

1. Before you start this exercise, you have to write (in BIG letters) the following 2 age categories on a big paper. On the first paper 12-15 years and on the second paper 15-18 years, and make 2 spots in the area.
2. Gather the group together and tell them that you have made 2 spots in the area. One spot 12-15 years and the second spot 15-18 year, see the big papers on the ground.
3. Explain that you are going to read sentences, sentence by sentence (see sentences below). If you read the sentence the parents have to walk to the spot they think fits to the age categories of the sentence you read (keep the paper with the right answers with you). Mix the age categories if you read the sentences.
4. After every sentence you read, if the parents are on the spot they think is right, discuss why they have chosen for that age categories. If they are right, explain why, and if they are not right, explain why it belongs to another age category.
5. Tell the group that it is okay if they have it wrong, explain also that every child has its own development stages. It may be that it does not match with these sentences. No worry, every child is unique!

#### 12- 15 years

- They would like to be independent, they do things themselves.
- Friends are very important, they want to belong to a group of peers.
- Start flirting.
- They can feel sexually attracted to someone for the first time.

#### 15- 18 years

- Mood swings.
- They would like to have a relationship.
- Discovering sexual needs and sexual boundaries.
- Some youngsters have their first sexual experience.

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### **Feedback to the group**

Well, this was the second activity about sexual development. Let's discuss together what went well and what was difficult. Ask the group if they have questions in response to this

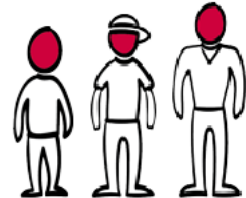
exercise. If they have questions answer these, if they have not, go to the next exercise you have prepared.

It is again important to tell that every child is unique and will go through this development at its own pace. So parents not need immediately worry if the development is a little slower or faster.

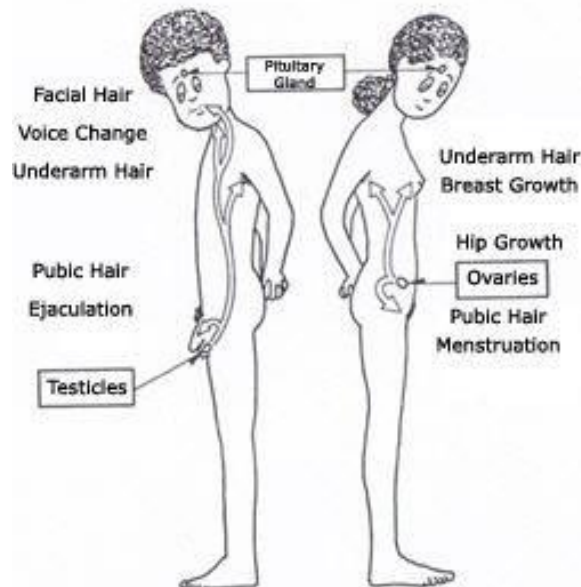


### Exercise 3: Body changes puberty

Time: About 30 minutes



1. Ask the group to sit in a semicircle.
2. Ask the parents what they know about body changes during puberty.
3. Write down everything they say on your flipchart.
4. If you wrote everything they said down, discuss what it includes.
5. After that, show the picture from the boy and the girl below.



#### Feedback to the group

Thank you all for your input! And explain: during puberty the body is maturing. In this picture you can see physical changes taking place during puberty. As we said before, no one changes at the same time and at the same place. This also applies to the body changes.

These body changes could make them feel proud and sometimes uncertain. Peers and media can influence their body self-image. This is the way they feel about their body and look at it. It is very important as a parent to stimulate your child to accept its body, and also to accept others to be unique in their own way.

These 4 topics are the most important things to remember and tell your children:

1. The body of your child changes during puberty: girls become women and boys become men.

2. The moment they start to change is different for everybody, most of the time, girls are starting to change earlier than boys.
  3. Your child has a unique body and a unique personality, so the way he or she changes also differs. This is the way God has created us.
  4. Your child can feel insecure at times, but remember to stimulate your child to be proud of who he/she is!
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#### **Exercise 4: Let's go sharing!**

Time: About 30 minutes

1. We have heard a lot today. Now is the moment to share with each other.
  2. Let the parents make 3 or 4 groups.
  3. Tell that this is the moment that the parents can share their knowledge and experiences regarding sexual development and body changes. They can also ask each other for advice or they can share a situation.
  4. Tell that you are around and available for all the questions they have and for advice.
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#### **Feedback to the group**

This is already the last exercise for today! Thank you for sharing with each other. We did this session in groups to share, talk and think together. As a parent, or parent to be, you are the professional for your child. You know your child best. So you could estimate what your child needs. Sometimes that is difficult. Every parent sometimes doesn't know how to handle a situation. So, do not be ashamed to ask another parent for advice, or just share your story. Together we are better!

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#### **Closure**

Thank you everyone for working together today. I hope you have had a good time. I will see you the next time, have a good day!

*Close the gathering with a song, dance or prayer.*

## **| Homework**

For next time, I would like you to do the following at home. Observe your own child/children and look if you can see something we learnt today. Write it down, or just remember it for the next time. So the next time we will going to discuss that together.

## Session 2: Talk about sexuality with children

**Goal:** Making parents aware of the importance of talking about sexuality with their children

**Materials:** A ball, big papers and a marker

**Duration:** About 2 hours



### | Introduction for the Facilitator

#### *Introduction to the theme*

We all talk with our children, but do we talk with them about sexuality? Talking about sexuality with children can be difficult for parents. How do you talk about sexuality with children? What is important to tell children about sexuality? What do you tell? What do you not tell? In this session we will discuss the importance of talking about sexuality with children and everything that comes with it.

In some countries it is relatives who have the job to talk about sexuality with the children. Sometimes they do not provide correct information. It is important that someone talks about sexuality to a child; it doesn't matter if that is a mother, an aunt, an uncle or a grandmother. As long as somebody does it and the information provided is accurate!

#### **Textbox 3: Importance of talking about sexuality**

The atmosphere in the home has influence on the sexual development of a child. Parents who support their children, take interest in their children and create a cozy family setting, offer children a better space for a healthy sexual development. When parents make their children feel safe and loved, the children are usually more self-secure, more confident. When children get information at home about their bodies, falling in love and friendship, they learn that they can talk to their parents about anything. So, parents are an example for their children. They are not only an example in what they do, but also in how they interact with each other. Children notice more than you think and imitate that; that is the reason why parents have to be aware of what they are showing/doing.

Research<sup>1</sup> showed that talking about sexuality with children, makes children more resilient in this area. The meaning of giving sexual education helps a child during his/her sexual development, starting from the day he or she is born. Parents can help the child to discover his/her body, feelings and what they do not want and do want. To do this, parents have to talk about it with their child!

#### Textbox 4: Seven reasons to talk about sexuality with children

1. The child gets reliable information about sexuality.
2. Parents can give the child its own values about sexuality.
3. The child learns that it can contact the parents with questions and/or problems.
4. Parents can prepare the child for puberty.
5. Children who can talk positively about sexuality with their parents or relatives later have less problems in this area. They start generally later with sex and protect themselves against pregnancy and STDs.
6. Talking about sexuality makes children more resilient against sexual harassment and abuse.
7. Talking about sexuality with a child shows that talking about sex is normal. In the future they are able to better communicate about sexuality, their desires and limits.

#### *Important to know*

Talking about sexuality can be difficult. In a lot of places is talking about sexuality a taboo. So make sure everybody feels safe during the sessions. It could be that men and women rather do this exercises separately. You as facilitator have to estimate if this is necessary or ask the parents what they prefer. Do also prepare the sessions well, read the textbox above and make sure you have everything you need for the exercises!

## | Exercises

#### *Welcome and recap*

Welcome everyone! It is good to see you all again! Last time we looked at the sexual development of children. Today we will zoom in on ways to talk about sexuality with your children and the importance of this subject.

Last time we closed the gathering with homework. The homework was observing your child(ren) and look if you see some things about sexual development with your child(ren). What did you see? Do you think it fits the age of your child? Let's talk about that in groups, so everyone can share.



#### *Exercise 1: Your experiences*

Time: About 20 minutes

1. Split up in groups of max. 5 parents.
2. Discuss in groups about the questions above, share the things you saw by your child and if you think it fits the age of your child. Let's think and talk about it together.
3. Give everybody space to share and exchange their experiences.

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### **Feedback to the group**

Gather the group together and let one person per group summarize the outcome of their conversation. Were there specific things you want to talk about in the whole group? Do you have questions about something you noticed with your child(ren)?

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### **Exercise 2: Importance of talking about sexuality with children**

Time: About 30 minutes



1. Grab the ball and ask everyone to stand in a circle.
2. Tell them that it is important to talk about sexuality with a child, but do they know why it is important? In this exercise we are going to find out the importance of talking about sexuality with children.
3. Explanation of the game: throw the ball to someone and ask ‘Why do you think it is important to talk about sexuality with a child?’ The person who catches the ball has to give an answer. Go on till no one has anything to add. If someone knows nothing to say, he/she is allowed to throw the ball to someone who raises his hand because he/she knows something.

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### **Feedback to the group**

Thank you all for your input! We have heard a lot of things about what you all think about the importance of talk about sexuality with children. Research found out that talking about sexuality with children, makes children more resilient in this area.

The meaning of giving sexual education is helping a child during his/her sexual development, this starts from the day it is born. You can help your child discovering his/her body, feelings and what they do not want and do want. You can help older children in making healthy choices about sexuality. To do this you have to talk about it with the child!

Let me explain to you why it is important to talk about sexuality with children:

1. The child gets reliable information about sexuality.
  2. You can give your child your own values about sexuality.
  3. The child learns that it can contact you with questions and/or problems.
  4. You can prepare the child for puberty.
  5. Children who can talk positively about sexuality with their parents or relatives few later less problems in this area. They start generally later with sex and protect themselves against pregnancy and STDs.
  6. Talking about sexuality makes children more resilient against sexual harassment and abuse.
  7. Talking about sexuality with a child shows that talking about sex is normal. In the future they are able to better communicate about sexuality, their desires and limits.
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### **Exercise 3: How to talk about sexuality with children?**

Time: About 40 minutes

1. Make two areas, one place is YES and the second place is NO. You can write it on a big piece of paper or you can just tell the group which place is YES and which place is NO. Make sure you have the four questions ready (see the four questions below).
2. Explain that you are going to ask them a few questions and that the parents have to choose YES or NO. If you choose YES you have to walk to the 'YES place', if you choose NO you have to walk to the 'NO place'.
3. Ask the first question: do you find it important to talk about sexuality with a child? YES or NO? Walk to the place of your answer.
4. Ask some people who are standing by the 'NO place', why not? Ask some people who are standing by the 'YES place', why do you find it important? (The first question is used here as an example).
5. Do this with all the questions below. By every main question you will find extra questions you can ask to the parents if they answered YES or NO.

The four questions:

1. Do you find it important to talk about sexuality with a child?
  - 'NO place': Why not?
  - 'YES place': Why do you find it important?
2. Do you want to talk about sexuality with a child?
  - 'NO place': Why not?
  - 'YES place': Why do you want it?
3. Do you find it difficult to talk about sexuality with a child?
  - 'NO place': Why not? Do you have tips for us? How do you do it?
  - 'YES place': Why do you find it difficult? What could help you?
4. Did you ever talk with a child/one of your children about sexuality?
  - 'NO place': Why not?
  - 'YES place': What is your experience with it? Was there a specific reason why you did it?

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#### **Feedback to the group**

Thank you all for your input and participation! We have heard some things about talking with children about sexuality from each other during this exercise. I will give you some tips and tricks for your role as a parent or relative in talking about sexuality with a child.

- Provide safety. Make sure the child feels protected, safe and loved.
- Make rules: If you have clear rules, you can teach the child what is allowed and what not. For instance, for young children: do not touch your private parts (penis or vagina) when together with other people.



- Share your norms and values about sexuality with the child.
  - Give the child some examples: show how you deal or dealt with some things yourself, you can be an example for a child. For example, show how you tell others your borders and desires.
  - Get involved. Get interested in what your child does, then let the child know that you care about him/her. The child feels that he/she can ask questions or tell you his/her problems.
  - Give information about sexuality and answer questions. If you talk about sexuality with a child, you show that this subject can be discussed.
  - Use a situation or example (about sex/sexuality) to start a conversation about sexuality with a child.
  - Create a situation where you do not have to look directly at each other. For children it is easier to talk about a sensitive subject if they do not have to look at you directly. So go for a walk or wash the dishes together.
  - Use graphics support for the story.
  - Use humor! Humor can take away tension.
- 



#### **Exercise 4: Norms and values**

Time: About 30 minutes

1. Split up the group in small groups, max. 5 parents.
2. Let the parents think, talk and share which norms and values they find important to tell their children when talking about sexuality. For example: unity, faith, equality, delight, love, human dignity, tradition, responsibility, self-development, meaning, etc.
3. Give them enough time to talk about it. After +/- 20 minutes, together discuss the outcomes of the conversations. Were there big differences? What were the differences? Did someone say something you also find important but did not think about yet?

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#### **Feedback to the group**

This is already the last exercise for today! Thank you for sharing with each other. We did this session in groups to share, talk and think together. Norms and values are important to share with your child. If you tell how you feel about certain things and why, your child learns also to think about it. And in a lot of things, children make your norms and values their own.

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#### **Closure**

Thank you everyone for working together today. I hope you have had a good time. I will see you the next time, have a good day!

*Close the gathering with a song, dance or prayer.*

## | Homework

For next time, I would like you to do the following at home. Go try to talk with your child about sexuality, or with the child you have to give the sexual education (as a relative). You can use the tips and tricks you have heard today, but do it your own way! It is important to be yourself (: The next time we will discuss how it went.

## Session 3: Risky behaviour and consequences

**Goal:** Making parents aware of risky behaviours and their consequences

**Materials:** A flipchart, a mark and big papers

**Duration:** About 2 hours



### | Introduction

#### *Introduction to the theme*

Sexuality can be something very beautiful, but unfortunately it also brings risky behaviours with it. In this module we will discuss risky behaviours and its consequences. What are risky behaviours and how can parents deal with these when it concerns their children?

#### **Textbox 5: Sexual risky behaviour and unhealthy sexual behaviour**

Sexual risky behaviour and unhealthy sexual behaviour are interrelated. Sexual risk behaviour means: if it is not safe, not voluntary, it is not pleasant or without consent, or if it endangers the health, freedom or choice and impedes social functioning. That counts for:

- Sexual abuse and sexual harassment;
- Unprotected sex with risk of unplanned pregnancy and unwanted (young) parenthood;
- Unprotected sex with risk of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or HIV/AIDS.

Sexual risky behaviour and inappropriate sexual behaviour are also interrelated. Inappropriate sexual behaviour is an umbrella term. Inappropriate sexual behaviour is about a whole range of unacceptable behaviour or advances that are of sexual nature. This can be physical or non-physical.

Physical inappropriate sexual behaviour is: without consent, against your will or forced to undergo or perform sexual acts ranging from touching, subtraction, intercourse or oral sex. When there is compulsion and if the victim cannot deny or escape the situation and if there is no mutual agreement/voluntary.

Non-physically inappropriate sexual behaviour is about: inappropriate behaviour like making offensive sexual comments, sexual organs or sexual acts shown unsolicited or online publications or distribution of sexual images.

### **Textbox 6: Causes risk behaviour of children**

Individual level: They have inadequate or incorrect knowledge, low self-confidence, lack of personal values, poor communication skills, alcohol or drug use and reduced resilience. Characteristics of individuals also play a role such as sex, age, religion, culture, sexual orientation, etc.

Area: When children grow up in an environment where talking about sex is a taboo, this could lead to shame and guilt feelings about sexuality. Peers and social pressure can cause sexual border crossing. Peers and a supportive home can have a positive influence in making healthy choices about sexuality. The media, church, school and other institutions can convey certain norms and values that can have positive or negative influence on the sexual behaviour.

Social norm: Social and community values have a major impact on sexual behaviour.

### **Textbox 7: Consequences**

Physical or non-physical forms of inappropriate sexual behaviour can have negative consequences for the physical health and could cause physiological and/or social problems.

Examples of consequences for physical health are: injuries, unplanned pregnancy with all its consequences, infections with STDs or HIV.

Examples of physiological and social problems: anxiety and sleep disorders, behavioural problems, regressive behaviours, depression, concentration problems, mistrust, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress reactions, self-harm or relationships problems.

### ***Important to know***

Talking about sexuality can be difficult. In a lot of places talking about sexuality is a taboo. So make sure everybody feels safe during the sessions. It could be that men and women rather would like to do this exercise separately. You as facilitator have to judge if this is necessary or ask the parents what they prefer. Do also prepare the sessions well, read the textbox above and make sure you have everything you need for the exercises!

## **| Exercises**

### ***Welcome and recap***

Welcome everyone it is good to see you all again! Last time we have looked at ways to talk about sexuality with your children. Today we will zoom in into risky behaviours and the consequences of risky behaviour.

Last time we closed the gathering with homework. The homework was trying to talk with your child, or with the child you have to give sexual education to, about sexuality. Did you do it? How did it go? What did you talk about? What went well? What was difficult? Let's talk about that in groups, so everyone can share their experiences.



### **Exercise 1: Your experiences**

Time: About 20 minutes

1. Split up in groups of max. 5 parents.
2. Discuss in groups about the questions above, share your experiences in giving sexual education and talking about sexuality with your child. Let's think and talk about it together.
3. Give everybody the space to share and exchange their experiences.

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### **Feedback to the group**

Gather the group together and let one person per group summarize the outcome of their conversation. Where there specific things you want to talk about in the whole group? Do you have questions about something you talked about?

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### **Exercise 2: Risky behaviour**

Time: About 40 minutes

1. Let the group sit together and explain what sexual risky behaviour is.  
Sexual risky behaviour is: when it is not safe, not voluntary, it is not pleasant or wanted, or it endangers the health, freedom or choice and impedes social functioning.
2. Ask the group to think about examples of sexual risky behaviour. After that, add the things that are not mentioned yet:
  - Sexual abuse and sexual harassment;
  - Unprotected sex with risk of unplanned pregnancy, unwanted young parenthood;
  - Unprotected sex with risk of sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) or HIV/AIDS.
3. Make two places, one place stands for 'HEALTHY behaviour' and the second place stands for 'RISKY behaviour'. You can write it on a big piece of paper or you can just tell the group which place is 'HEALTHY' and which place is 'RISKY'. Make sure you have the 'causes' ready (see the causes healthy and risky behaviours below).
4. After that ask the group to stand up and explain that there is a 'HEALTHY' and a 'RISKY' place. If you choose 'HEALTHY' walk to the 'HEALTHY' place, if you choose 'RISKY' you have to walk to the 'RISKY' place.
5. Start the exercise by naming one of the causes of healthy/risky sexual behaviours. Mix healthy and risky causes. Explain if it is necessary why it causes healthy or risky sexual behaviour.

Causes healthy sexual behaviour:

- Warm and loving family.
- Sexual education.
- Talking about sexuality with parents/relatives.
- Positive peer influence.

Causes risky sexual behaviour:

- Incorrect knowledge.

- Low self-confidence.
- Alcohol or drug use.
- Social/peer pressure.
- Talking about sex is a taboo.

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### **Feedback to the group**

Thank you all for your participation! Do you have any questions in response to this exercise? Answer the questions if the parents have questions. We only appointed the most common causes of risky behaviours. If you want to know more causes you can ask me after the session for more information.

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### **Exercise 3: Consequences of risk behaviour**

Time: About 30 minutes

1. Gather the group together and ask them to sit in a semicircle. Ask them what consequences of risk behaviour are.
2. Write all the answers of the parents on your flipchart. If you think that the group is ready ask them for every answer why they think that is a consequence of risky behaviour. Discuss every point with them.
3. If you have discussed the answers on your flipchart, look to the answers below and tell the parents the points they missed. Explain when necessary the reason why.
4. At last ask the group how they think they can protect their children from risk behaviour, let them come with answers and discuss the answers with the group.

#### Consequences of risky behaviour:

- physical or non- physical forms of inappropriate sexual behaviour can have negative consequences for the physical health and could cause physiological and social problems.

*Examples of consequences physical health:* injury, pregnancy, infections with STD's or HIV/AIDS.

*Examples of consequences physiological and social problems:* anxiety and sleep disorders, behavioural problems, regressive behaviours, depression, concentration problems, mistrust, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress reactions, self-harm or relationships problems.

- Unplanned pregnancy with all its consequences;
- STD's and HIV/AIDS.

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### **Feedback to the group**

Thank you all for your input! We have heard a lot of things about the consequences of risky behaviour. I hope this exercise makes you aware of the importance of sexual education.

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### **Exercise 4: Let's go sharing!**

Time: About 30 minutes

1. Gather the group together and ask them to make small groups from max. 5 parents.
2. Explain that we have heard a lot of things about sexual risky behaviour and the consequences today. This is a difficult thing to see and control by your child. We have already heard in the previous session that giving sexual education and talking about sexuality with a child reduces risk behaviour. So how would you make this subject (risky behaviour and the consequences) debatable with your child?
3. Tell the groups that they have to think about this subject and consider a few points that can help to discuss this subject with a child. Remind the parents of the tips and tricks about talking about sexuality with your child (previous session, exercise 3).
4. Let's go sharing your experiences and knowledge about this theme with your group members!

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#### ***Feedback to the group***

This was already the last exercise for today! Thank you for sharing with each other. We did this session in groups to share, talk and think together. Let each group tell their points and let them explain why they find these points important in talking about risk behaviour and consequences with children. Thank everybody again for their input and summarize the points for the group.

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#### ***Closure***

Thank you everyone for working together today. I hope you have had a good time. I will see you the next time, have a good day!

*Close the gathering with a song, dance or prayer.*

## **| Homework**

For next time, I would like you to do the following at home. Make something at home with which you could give sexual education to your child. This could be about STD's, body changes, behaviour, etc. Be creative, use paper, marks, wood. Everything is good! Bring it with you the next time.

## Session 4: Resilience



**Goal:** Making parents aware about the meaning of resilience and give them tips how to make their children resilient

**Materials:** A flipchart and a marker

**Duration:** About 2 hours

### | Introduction

#### *Introduction to the theme*

We all hope that our children become healthy and resilient. But how do we make our children sexually resilient? And what does sexual resiliency mean? In this session we will discuss what sexual resiliency is and how parents can make their children sexually resilient.

The previous session about risky behaviour and its consequences and this session about resilience have a lot to do with each other. Because if a child is not very resilient they are more easily taking risks. So the introduction in session 3 can also be used in by this session.

#### **Textbox 8: What is resiliency?**

People are resilient if they can stand up for themselves in an appropriate manner, also with respect for other people. Resiliency is more than just saying 'no' to something they really do not want to do. Resilience is:

- If you are able to guard your borders/boundaries;
- If you can say what you like, or do not like;
- If you can stand up for yourself and others;
- If you have self-confidence and a positive self-image;
- If you can solve problems independently;
- If you dare to ask for help.

#### **Textbox 9: Resiliency and sexuality**

If you want to make a child resilient, you have to give sexual education. If children get sexual education they learn that sexuality is a part of life. They also learn that it is important to protect their borders and those of others. Teach a child to say 'no' if they do not like specific touches or situations. It is also important to discuss what to do in emergency situations. If something happened they know what to do, they will find help easier. So making a child resilient has a lot to do with sexual education as we heard before in session one and two.



### **Textbox 10: How do you teach a child to say 'no'**

For a child it is difficult to say no to an adult, especially against parents. For a parent it is important to help a child by discovering their feelings and how to express these feelings. For instance, ask your child 'do you like it that daddy tickles so hard?' Then you have to encourage your child to say 'stop' and not only to walk away.

It is also important that parents do not force children to physical contact (even though it is rude in their eyes). In this way you can support your child to say 'no' to touches that they do not like. Also when they are not sexually intended.

### **Important to know**

Talking about sexuality can be difficult. In a lot of places is talking about sexuality a taboo. So make sure everybody feels safe during the sessions. It could be that men and women rather do this exercise separately. You as facilitator have to judge if this is necessary or ask the parents what they prefer. Do also prepare the sessions well, read the textbox above and make sure you have everything you need for the exercises!

## | Exercises

### **Welcome and recap**

Welcome to the last session of this module everyone! It is good to see you all again! Last time we have looked at the sexual risky behaviours and the consequences. Today we will zoom in into how we can make our children resilient.

Last time we closed the gathering with homework. The homework was, make something with which you could give sexual education to your child. Let's see what you all have made!



### **Exercise 1: Materials sexual education**

Time: About 20 minutes

1. Gather the group together and go sit in a circle. Ask every person individually what he/she has made. Ask why he/she made it? And ask were you use it for and for which age category it can be used.
2. Let everybody tell their story about the material they have made for sexual education.
3. The parents can ask questions to each other about what is made.

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### **Feedback to the group**

Thank you all for sharing, how creative! Nice to see the difference things. I hope we have learned from each other creative ways to give sexual education to your child.

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### **Exercise 2: Do you follow or not?**

Time: About 10 minutes

1. Gather the group together and ask them to make couples.
2. Explanation of the exercise: before you explain the exercise ask the group first to listen and after you have explained the exercise they can start. Go stand before each other and put your hands against the hands of the person in front of you. Close both your eyes and start moving your hands together (up/down or to the right /left). If it is necessary you can do it first with a volunteer.
3. Okay now you can start with the exercise. Let's go following each other.



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#### **Feedback to the group**

Gather the group together and ask them about the exercise. What is your experience? What do you think of it? Why do you think we did this exercise? Let everybody share their experience about this exercise. After that explain why we did this exercise. We did this exercise to experience what your borders are. How close did you make someone come to you? Did you follow or did you take the lead? It is for everybody different what your borders are and that is good. But dare you to indicate your borders and can you stand up for yourself? All this is related to resilience. Thank you all for your participating and sharing!

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### **Exercise 3: What is resilience?**

Time: About 30 minutes

1. Gather the group together and ask them to sit in a semicircle. So in the previous exercise we mentioned resilience, but do we know what resilience is? Ask the group if they know the definition of resilience and let someone explain it.  
The official definition is: People are resilient if they can stand up for themselves in an appropriate manner, also with respect for other people. Resiliently is more than just saying 'no'.
2. Grab your flipchart and ask the parents what they know about resilience. Write down everything they say.
3. If you think everything they said is on the flipchart, discuss all the points on the flipchart and see if it is correct.
4. At last view if all the six points about resilience are mentioned. If not, explain the points which are not mentioned.
  - If you are able to guard your borders;
  - If you can say what you like, or do not like;
  - If you can stand up for yourself and others;
  - If you have self-confidence and a positive self-image;
  - If you can solve problems independently;
  - If you dare to ask help.

---

### **Feedback to the group**

Thank you all for your input and participation! These six points that are mentioned about resilience are very important to remember. But it is also important to stimulate your child to investigate his/her borders, to help them say what they like or what they not like. It is also important to help your child to solve problems, help them thinking 'how' but let them solve themselves. As we said before, let your child know that they always can ask for help and tell them where they can ask for more help. If you include this things during upbringing, children get more resilient.

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### **Exercise 4: Learn your child to say 'no'**

Time: About 40 minutes

1. We are still sitting together because of the previous exercise. In this exercise we will talk about how to teach your child to say 'no'. When should your child say no?
2. Why do you think it is important to teach your child say 'no'? Let the parents give the answers. For example:
  - Learn to discover boundaries;
  - Learning boundaries;
  - The chance of annoying experiences is less significant.
3. Thank you for sharing! But now the most important thing, 'how to teach our child(ren) to say no?' Let the parents make groups of 4/5 parents max.
4. If they sit in groups explain the exercise: Share your experience and knowledge about teaching your child to say no. If you have questions to others about this theme, you may ask the other person.

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### **Feedback to the group**

Gather the group together, thank you for your participation and sharing! I hope we have learned from each other by hearing stories and experiences from your group members. We already heard a lot of things but I want to give you some practical tips about learning your child to say 'no'. Teaching your child to say no, can start at a very young age. All children experience positive and negative feelings, but how should they handle it?

1. Teach your child to listen to his/her own feelings. Take this seriously and talk about it with your child.
2. Teach your child that it is his/her body and that he/she may decide who touches him/her.
3. Do not force your child to have physical contact, this can lead to negative experiences.
4. Teach your child which touches are normal, this is related to your own norms and values. For example: it is normal that mom gives dad a kiss. But it is not normal when mom gives the teacher a kiss.
5. Teach your child how to say NO to unwanted touches.
6. Think about 'what if' situations whit your child. For example: what if your friend hits you?
7. Teach your child what he/she should do if saying no does not help. For example: shout HELP!!!
8. Make arrangements with your child about safety. For example: do not go with a stranger!

I hope these 8 points will help you by learning your child to say no. Thank you all for listening. Has someone a question? *Answer the questions.*

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### **Exercise 5: What did you learn?**

Time: About 20 minutes

1. Gather the group together for the last group talk.
2. You as facilitator have to lead the group talk about what the parents have learned the most? Ask questions about what they have learned? What they are going to do with this knowledge? etc. Ask also if there is something they missed in this module? Make sure that everybody gets a moment to share their experience!
3. If everyone had his/her moment to share, thank the group for working together and for their openness.

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### **Feedback to the group**

Good to hear from everyone what you have learned in this module and what you are going to do with what you have learned.

I want to thank you all for your participation and impute! I hope that this module will help you further with giving sexual education to your child.

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### **Closure**

I think it was a good decision to go for this module. We have learned a lot of sexual education. You know there are more modules we can follow. We love to see you all back for the next module.

*Close the gathering with a song, dance or prayer.*



## Group Evaluation

*At the end of the module, evaluate the module together with the parents. Discuss these questions below and write down the answers that come forward.*

1. What have you learned from this module?
2. Did you miss anything? What else would you have liked to learn about this theme?
3. Do you already use something you have learned in this module in your daily life? If so, how and what were the results? If not, what is keeping you from using it?

4. What can you do after this module as parents in your family?

5. Question for all parents: what can you do after this module as a group?

Other comments:

**Please share this document with the Child Development Desk: [childdevelopment@redeenkind.nl](mailto:childdevelopment@redeenkind.nl). We want to hear about your experiences so we can optimize the Parenting Modules.**