

GROWING UP

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LOOKING GOOD

Feyi Fowowe

my school uniforms regularly, something that I had not done often in the past.

When my mum saw that I was interested in looking better, she bought me a series of books on looking good and keeping healthy. I tried as much as possible to apply all the tips I could. She also bought me a new uniform. She had refused to do that in the past because she knew I would not take proper care of them. Suddenly, I started feeling very good about myself. The initial feeling of dread I had when entering the school premises disappeared and was replaced by a sense of self-fulfillment. Consequently, the disposition of my classmates towards me changed and even my teachers acknowledged that I was looking quite tidy. This further reinforced my commitment to looking good and it became a priority for me. My determination was rewarded when I was made the health prefect in my second year in the Senior Secondary School. It was a very rewarding moment for me because it finally proved to me that I was worth something.

FRIDAY'S STORY

The first time I realized that I had mouth odour was the day I interrupted a group discussion being held among some boys in my coaching center. Being a proactive person, I had joined the discussion without anyone's permission. However, soon after I opened my mouth to speak half of the guys got up to leave and the three others who remained glared at me as if I had just dropped from Planet Mars! Thinking that their reaction was as a result of my rude interruption, I apologized and made to take my leave. However, one of the boys pulled at my arm and whispered into my ears "Your breath stinks, that was why the other guys left!" This came as a rude shock to me because I had never seen myself as a smelly person. However, a neighbour of mine later on told me that I actually had a bad breath and that the only reason people refrained from telling me was because they did not want to hurt my feelings.

"Looking good is good business" so goes a popular saying, and if there is any 'business' young people love and enjoy, it is that of looking good. For girls, as well as boys, looking good is quite important as it determines to a large extent their self-esteem and the way they are perceived among their peers. It is therefore no surprise that every young person wants to look good. Puberty is a period of fun as well as challenges. It is the time when so many physical changes take place in the body. It is the time when young people start to get pimples all over their faces, experience growth spurts and body changes that may leave them feeling confused. It is also a time when young people want to look good! Below are some tips on looking good and the experiences of some young people who learnt how to take good care of themselves and in some cases, turned what they thought was a disadvantage to their advantage.

BIDEMI'S STORY

When I was a child, I wasn't so much bothered about the way I looked because I had my mum there to ensure I looked good and presentable. I was nonchalant and was always dependent on her to wash my clothes and dress me up when going to school or parties. As I grew older, I realized that I had grown so dependent on my mum, so much so, that I had not taken the time to learn the intricacies of looking good. I remember a particular day in school when I was not allowed to enter the school premises because I was very untidy-my hair was bushy and my uniform rumpled. On another day, I was called out during the school assembly and used as an example of what a rough student looked like. The sneers got worse when even some of my close friends in school avoided me as much as possible because of my poor dressing habits. My self-esteem was battered; I could not hold my head up in class or walk into the school premises without feeling insecure. I soon realized that I had to do something to make myself more acceptable to others and I knew that the starting point was to take better care of myself. I started by washing

GOOD



Well, my feelings were hurt and I felt quite depressed at the thought that people knew I had bad breath and avoided me because of it. However, after much introspection, I decided that instead of wallowing in self-pity I could do something about my bad breath and even see it as a mountain to conquer. Thus, my journey to personal cleanliness began. Instead of brushing my teeth once a day like I used to do, I started brushing it twice a day. I even used salt water to rinse my mouth cause I heard it was effective. Apart from this, I stopped taking chocolates and only chewed gum that had mint in it. My goal was not just to have a mouth rid of odour, but also teeth that sparkled. It seemed as if many of my schoolmates did not notice the changes I had made. The only obvious indicator was that people no longer walked away when I talked and were more attuned to what I was saying. However, I had cause to grin from ear to ear on the last day of school when a classmate showed me what a female student had written about me in the yearbook. When asked whom she thought was the coolest guy in class, she mentioned

my name, and guess what reason she gave? "He has the most attractive smile and he's the best looking guy in class!"

NKECHI'S STORY

I have always been a fat person, and during my first few years of puberty, this fact made me very sad. I would sit for hours and gaze at the pictures of models like Naomi Campbell wishing that I could do something to look as thin as they looked. Every time someone behaved in what I considered a "not-so-nice" manner, I would attribute their attitude towards me to the way I looked. The more I wished I looked thin, the more dissatisfied I got and the more depressed I was. On a particular day I went to my mum and asked her why I was so fat. She explained to me that it was as a result of genetics and that I would always be fat because everyone in my family was fat. My mum advised me to just appreciate the way I looked and enjoy my youth. However, that did not pacify me and of course things got worse. I quickly developed a low self-esteem and refused to go to parties or get involved in other fun things my mates were enjoying just because I felt I was fat and ugly. Whenever my friends told me that some guy had asked them out, I would feel sorry for myself. I believed that no one would want to associate with me because of my looks and I could not completely relax in the company of the few friends I had.

When I was 15, my elder sister who was schooling abroad and whom I had not seen in four years came back home. The first thing I noticed when I saw her was that she was fat... and beautiful! In fact, she looked almost as beautiful as all those models I had seen in the fashion magazines and she looked content and happy too. Later on, she told me that beauty does not depend solely on one's looks, but on what one made of one's looks. She also told me that I could use my looks to my advantage or disadvantage and that I should stop comparing myself with others who were thin because I had a unique look and something that they did not have. This was a whole new perspective to me as I had always associated being beautiful with being

thin. She however told me this was not so and gave me a few tips on how I could look good despite my size. She helped me begin to see the beautiful features I had and I began to appreciate myself. I shopped for clothes that suited me instead of all the mini skirts I had once tried to wear. I started feeling good about myself and I made more friends. I suddenly started having fun and I discovered that I had talent for making people laugh. The best compliment I ever got was from a little girl who said that she hoped she looks like me when she grows up!

THE FIRST RULE FOR LOOKING GOOD

It is a well-known fact that the kind of person one is, is more important than how a person looks. It is also widely believed that what is on the outside is a reflection of what is on the inside. Thus, the first rule for looking good is that you must feel good within you! Most young people have three similar but separate images of themselves- how they look, how they think they look and how they believe other people see them. However, none of these is the path to looking good. What is most important is how you see yourself. This is because, in the long run, how you see yourself determines how you act, and how others will see you. If you stand huddled in a corner of a room, worried that someone might notice that you are too fat or too thin, the chances are that they will. However, if regardless of what you look like, you stand tall and greet people with a smile, you would certainly attract people by your outward show of confidence. We are all unique and no two persons are the same. Thus, whether you are thin, fat, short, tall, dark or light- complexioned, does not matter. What really matters is how YOU feel about your looks. You have to appreciate those qualities that make you unique and never compare yourself to others.

So, you want to look good? Start by taking time to build your self-confidence and appreciate your special qualities. If you have always been negative about your looks, start by looking at yourself

in a full-length mirror. Next, name at least two of your good qualities. It may be your long dark hair, or the way your teeth sparkle when you smile. Always try to remember these good points whenever you are feeling unsure about your appearance. It will help you feel better about yourself.

THE SHAPE OF YOUR BODY

There are over five billion people on this earth and it's doubtful if any two of them are precisely identical. This is because the shape of your body is determined to a large extent by that of your parents. Thus, if your parents are fat and tall, then it's likely that you'd be fat and tall too. Some people are large with big feet and broad shoulders. This usually means that their body is built around a larger bone structure or skeleton. Others have small frames built on a delicate skeleton. Another factor that can influence the shape of one's body is metabolism. Metabolism is the word, which describes the process in which the body changes food into energy. Some people have a faster metabolism rate than others. Yet another factor that can affect the shape of one's body and one's weight is the amount of food one eats as well as one's rate of metabolism. People who are thin and wiry often have the fastest rate of metabolism; they can eat as much as they like and still not put on any extra weight. On the other hand, people with a more rounded figure usually have a slower rate of metabolism. Their bodies take longer to change food into energy and any extra food is stored as fat.

Thus, you shouldn't worry so much about the shape of your body since it is determined largely by factors you cannot control. This does not however mean that you cannot work on improving the way you look. For instance, many young people who are on the fat side sometimes go on diets, and do exercises to cut down on their weight. It is therefore very important to know that one's lifestyle is also very important in determining one's shape. Thus, one of the ways to control one's weight is by paying attention to the type and amount of food one eats and how much exercise one gets. Different

exercises can work on different parts of the body slowly, to change or firm up one's shape. However, don't get too obsessed with your weight!

Going on a diet to try and force your weight down, or even starving yourself is both dangerous and unhealthy.

FIRST THINGS FIRST: YOUR SKIN

Every part of your body contributes to how you look; however the skin contributes a whole lot to how you look. The skin covers every part of the body. It is a tough waterproof wrapping which is elastic enough to allow one move in every direction, and it is made up of three different layers. The first layer, which is called the Epidermis, is made up of dead skin cells and contains a special protein called keratin, which is very tough. It is the layer of the skin, which contains granules of the colouring pigment known as melanin. Melanin is what gives the skin its colour. The epidermis is also the protective layer of the skin and is toughest in places where the body needs protection, such as the soles of the feet. The tiny holes in the epidermis also allow liquids from the inside of the skin to escape. The next layer known as the Dermis contains tiny blood vessels, which carry blood to the skin. It also contains nerves, which transport messages to the brain. These messages tell your brain what you are feeling and touching. They also relay messages of pain and temperature. The Dermis also includes the sweat glands, which produce sweat, and hair follicles where hair grows. Next to the hair follicles are the sebaceous glands, which produce oil called sebum. This oil coats the hairs and skin and keeps them supple and waterproof. The third layer of the skin is called the subcutaneous layer and helps one to keep warm. The fat contained in the layer is a store of energy, which can be burned off when one needs it.

My feelings were hurt and I felt quite depressed at the thought that people knew I had bad breath and avoided me because of it. However, after much introspection, I decided that instead of wallowing in self-pity I could do something about my bad breath and even see it as a mountain to conquer.

Due to the various functions the skin performs, it needs utmost care in order for it to remain supple and healthy. Eating plenty of fruits and vegetable, getting regular exercises, and lots of fresh air and sleep are vital to having healthy skin. It's true that not everyone is born with perfect skin, but if you pay adequate attention to your skin, you'll definitely have healthier and better-looking skin.

The most important thing you have to do in caring for your skin is to keep it clean. As young people, we are very active and usually always on the move. Many young people engage in one sport or the other. You can therefore imagine how many germs get stuck on your body on a daily basis! It is vital that you wash away all these dirt and germs as they may cause infections if left unattended to. Washing also gets rid of all the grease and dead skin cells that build up. The skin on the face is thinner and more delicate than the rest of your skin. It dries out quickly because it's exposed to the elements all day. Thus, you should not wash it more than twice a day since this may irritate your skin and cause more problems.

WHAT TYPE OF SKIN DO YOU HAVE?

The type of skin you have is determined by how much or little sebum is produced by the sebaceous glands. The smaller the amount of sebum the skin produces, the drier it is. Most skin falls into one of three categories.

Dry Skin

Dry skin contains very little sebum. It is also very sensitive to the sun. If you

have dry skin, it is essential that you moisturize it regularly to prevent it from looking dry.

Oily Skin

Unlike dry skin, oily skin produces too much sebum. It often has an oily sheen and becomes greasy soon after washing. The oiliest area is the panel down the central part of the forehead, the nose and the chin. This is where the most sebaceous glands are located. People with oily skin are likely to get more spots than people with other skin types.

Combination Skin

If you ever notice that some parts of the skin on your face are dry while some other parts are oily, you probably have Combination skin. This type of skin is a combination of oily and dry skin. It normally produces greasy patches of skin down the center of the face and on the chin and nose, while the remaining of the skin on the face will be dry. If you have Combination skin, you may need to use two different sorts of cleansers and moisturizers.

No matter what skin type you have, you should ensure that you keep your skin clean and fresh. There are various ways in which this can be done. Here are some:

STEAMING: To give your skin a deep clean, fill a large bowl with hot water from the tap. The water shouldn't be boiling. Cover your head and the bowl with a towel, and then lower your face over the steam, keeping it at least 30 centimeters above the bowl. After about 10 minutes, you will notice your face begin to sweat. This is because Steaming opens up the pores of the skin and leaves it clean and elastic. Take off the towel, wash your face with soap and water and splash your face with cold water. This will close the pores of your skin again.

SOAP: Washing with soap and water is an easy way of cleaning your face. However, some harsh soap can wash away the natural oils that keep the skin supple and waterproof. Thus, when choosing soap, choose one that is mild

and make sure you rinse off all the lather after washing.

CLEANSERS: These contain a mixture of oil and water. They are gentler on the skin of your face than soap and are particularly helpful to people with dry skin. To use one, massage a little cleanser onto your face and neck with clean fingers, cotton wool or a tissue and wipe the cleanser off thoroughly.

MOISTURISER: Moisturizers are creams, which are applied to areas of the skin that feel especially dry or tight after washing. These creams help trap natural moisture in. If you have dry skin, then a moisturizer is just what you need. You can also use a moisturizer if you are going out in the hot sun or in the wind or rain because all of these dry skin out. Boys can also use moisturizers after shaving.

FACE SCRUB: Face scrubs are very fine, gritty cleansers that are used to get rid of dirt as well as dead skin cells. They leave the face feeling smooth and fresh. Although your skin should feel fresh and tingly after using a face scrub, it should not feel sore. It is also very important to use this method sparingly, probably, once a week. This is because giving yourself a face scrub can stimulate the sebaceous glands, making your skin oilier. It is also important that you use a moisturizer after giving yourself a face scrub.

WHAT'S THAT SMELL!

Has anyone ever walked past you and you wondered why he or she smelled so much? Contrary to popular belief, sweat has no smell of its own! It is the stale bacteria left on the surface of your skin when the sweat dries that cause the unpleasant smell called body odour. Unfortunately, people who have it are usually unable to perceive the smell on themselves! So, if you have body odour or a "sweat problem", what can you do? One very effective way of dealing with body odour is to use either a DEODORANT or an ANTIPERSPIRANT. These both help to keep you smelling nice and clean. However while deodorants do not stop you from sweating but contain chemicals, which neutralize the smell

that is often caused by the bacteria in sweat, antiperspirants dry out the sweat glands so that less sweat is produced. Also, deodorants are supposed to get rid of odor; they have special ingredients that kill bacteria. Antiperspirants on the other hand work to keep you dry. They contain aluminium salts to clog the pores in your underarms so the sweat won't come out. You also can find combination of deodorants and antiperspirants that are designed to fight odour and wetness. You can buy both products in stick form, as a roll-on or in a spray can. However, sprays can be strong and can cause inflammation on sensitive skin. Never use deodorants or antiperspirants on inflamed or broken skin, or immediately after shaving your armpits.

Apart from antiperspirants and deodorants, there are other products, which can help you smell fresh. One of such is body lotion. Body lotion is a moisturizer, which can be used on the whole body to make it feel and smell good. If you suffer from sweaty or smelly feet, there are foot sprays and foot powders, which will help, dry your feet and cover up odour. To deal with feet odour, it is important that you air your socks and shoes at the end of each day. Smelly feet are quite prevalent among students because many tend to wear the same pair of socks without bothering to wash or air them. Thus it is important to never wear dirty socks as this could cause your feet to sweat as well as cause infections. Another product you can use in order to smell good is talcum powder. Talcum powders are scented and also help cool your skin. You can use this just after taking your bath.

In preventing body odour it is very important that you wash all dirty clothes as well as iron them before putting them on again. For your school uniform to look and smell clean, it is important that wash away all the sweat and dirt that might have been accumulated during school activities. The armpits may have residue from sweat and deodorant. Certain brands of detergents may be able to remove these stains and odor but not always.

Although it is pertinent that students should have more than one uniform, if you happen to have just one, it is important that you still keep it clean by washing and ironing it once it gets dirty.

If you have a friend that has body odor, you can tell him/her in a friendly manner. If you do it in a friendly and supportive manner, the person would probably appreciate your honesty and concern and thank you for it. You should however be sure to keep the conversation private so no one else hears.

YOUR HANDS

There is one part of your body that is easy to overlook- your hands. Many of us feel that as our nails look fine then there is really nothing to be bothered about. But there is a lot to be bothered about when it comes to your hands. This is because the hands, especially underneath your fingernails are a very conducive place for germs to thrive. There are probably hundreds of them crawling under your nails right now! Your hands are your tools, and you use them constantly. You rely on your hands when eating, shaking another person's hand, typing on a keyboard, catching a ball, putting on your shoes and cleaning up after using the toilet. Thus, they can easily accumulate germs even when they look clean and fine. It is important to deal with these germs as they can get inside of you and cause you to have an infection. You could get a stomach upset or even a food related illness after touching raw meat, eggs or poultry.

Washing is the number one way to keep your hands clean and prevent the spread of infections. You might think, "well that is quite easy", but the fact is that many of us do not wash our hands properly. In washing your hands, it is not just enough to use soap and water; you have to scrub vigorously. Wash the palms, the top of your hands, in between your fingers and underneath your fingernails for at least twenty seconds. Rinse your hands thoroughly,

if possible with warm water. Ensure that you dry your hands after rinsing them. You don't just wash your hands once a day or when you feel they look dirty. You should wash your hands before you eat anything, after you use the toilet, before you prepare food, after you touch raw meat, before you touch a baby, after you cough or sneeze, after blowing your nose and after you play sports.

Your fingernails are an important part of your hands, partly because germs love to hide under them and partly because they are the most obvious part of your hands. Many of us don't pay attention to our fingernails until we have to cut them! Fingernails are made up of keratin, which is also a main ingredient in hair, claws, feathers and animal horns. Your fingernails grow constantly, about one-quarter inch per month. The nails on the hand you use tend to grow faster than the ones on your other hand. To keep your nails clean, trim and file them as often as needed. You can buy nail care tools such as a clipper and a nail file. You also can get an emery board, which is like a long, thin strip of cardboard with a sandpaper finish on both sides; this tool is used for filing and smoothing the nails.

We are all unique and no two persons are the same. Thus, whether you are thin, fat, short, tall, dark or light-complexioned, does not matter. What really matters is how YOU feel about your looks.

Quite a number of young people have a certain nail problem; they bite their nails! If you are a nail biter you know that this is a very difficult habit to break. Apart from the germs that could get into you, it also takes away the nail's ability to protect the fingertips and leaves the nails looking ragged and torn. If you really want to stop this habit you can do it! It may help to keep your nails filed smooth; the fewer rough edges to tempt you, the better.

You may also want to think about the millions of germs that get into your mouth when you chew or bite your nails. Another thing you can do is to determine those moments when you are most likely to bite your nails. During those times, make a conscious effort to keep your fingers away from your mouth and figure out some healthier ways to deal with stress.

WHAT ABOUT MAKE-UP?

Lots of girls like to make-up. Some because it enhances their natural beauty and others because it covers up certain skin blemishes. Whatever reason you may have for wearing make-up, it is important for you to know you need only very little make-up to enhance certain features. Use a little wisely and bring out the best in your face. For students, make-up is hardly allowed in schools and so you should only use make-up when the occasion is right. Note that you should not use make-up because others are using it; only choose to use make-up if you want to use it and if it suits you. You might also have to seek the permission of your parents in order for you to use make-up.

To use make-up, start by considering your face in a mirror. Decide what shape it is and also what your best features are. These are the ones you can emphasize by using the right make-up. Before you start, make sure that your face is clean and free from grease and put on some moisturizer. There are various type of products, which you can use to make up your face. Here are some:

Foundation: This is a skin-coloured cream, which you can use all over your face to cover up blemishes or uneven colour in your complexion. Using your fingertips or a pad, smooth foundation onto your face, taking care to spread it evenly. Remember that your complexion is at its best when you are young. It has its own healthy glow, but foundation covers this up. Thus it is best not to use any foundation at all or use just a light water-based foundation, which is as close as possible in colour to your own skin.

Face powder: Face powder is commonly used by people of all ages. It comes in different shades and you would have to choose one that complements your complexion. You can use it to stop your skin from looking too shiny and to keep your face looking fresh.

Eye shadow: You can use this coloured powder to shade your eyelids. You can mix different shades or colours depending on what suits your complexion. If you have deep-set eyes, use a light shade.

Eyeliner: The easiest eyeliner to use is a soft coloured pencil. Use it to draw a thin line around the eyes. This makes the eyes look bigger and more dramatic. Don't share eyeliners as you can easily spread eye infections.

Mascara: Mascara is a thick liquid, which is applied on your eyelashes to



colour them and make them look thicker. Don't share mascara with anyone else as you can easily spread eye infections.

Lip colour: This long-lasting cream usually comes in shades of red or brown. Use a colour near to your own colour. Don't put too much lipstick on or it will just smudge. You can use a lip brush for a softer look. You can also use lip-gloss, especially during the harmattan to prevent the skin on your

lips from breaking and to give it a supple look.

At the end of each day, it is important that you clean off whatever make-up you might have used during the day. This is because if you leave make-up on your face, it can block the pores and cause spots or blackheads. Blackheads are caused by excess sebum in the pores; as the sebum reaches the surface of the skin, it hardens to a small dark head. Thus, remove makeup thoroughly with a cleansing cream. Massage the cream into your face and then wipe it off with cotton wool. If however you do not have access to a cleansing cream, use mild soap and water to wash your face and dry gently.

YOUR HAIR SPEAKS VOLUMES!!!

Really want to make an impression? Then start by taking good care of your hair. Why? Because the hair is the easiest to change and is one of the first few things people would notice when they look at you. There are thousands of individual hairs growing on your head- somewhere between 100,000 and 150,000. They will create a dense, thick mass or a thin fine veil, depending on just how many hairs you have. Each hair grows about 1.25 centimeters every month and drops out after three years. Your hair is curly, wavy or straight. This depends on the shape of the root from which the hair grows. A smooth root makes straight hair while a curved root makes curly hair. The strand of hair we actually see, called the hair shaft is completely dead. It is made of a form of protein called keratin. It forms scales, which if the hair is in good condition overlap each other to form a smooth layer. The hair grows from a tiny pocket called a follicle, which is found just below the surface of the skin. Like the sebaceous glands on other parts of your body, the pores on your head also create the natural oil called sebum, which keeps the hair smooth and shiny.

There are different hair types depending on how much or little

Eating plenty of fruits and vegetable, getting regular exercises, and lots of fresh air and sleep are vital to having healthy skin.

sebum is being produced. If your sebaceous glands produce too much sebum, you'll have greasy hair. Your hair may also become oilier when you are ill or when you are worried about something. If your skin is greasy, you are likely to have greasy hair as well. On the other hand, if your scalp produces too little sebum, your hair may feel dry and lifeless. This type of hair can look dull or brittle and it sometimes feels rough to touch. If you have dry hair, use only a mild shampoo to wash your hair and don't wash your hair too often. This is because washing removes the little sebum in dry hair. Another type of hair is normal hair. This has a natural shine and is smooth to touch. If you have normal hair, take care of it, by shampooing and conditioning it regularly.

COMBATING HAIR PROBLEMS

Hair problems can be quite alarming and can do a lot of damage to the beauty of the hair. However, almost everybody has problem with his or her hair at one point in time. What is most important is how you go about ensuring that you deal these hair problems.

Split ends. People who have long or dry hair or frequently use a hair drier are more likely to have split ends. To prevent this, have your hair trimmed by a hairdresser regularly, especially just after retouching your hair. Also try to reduce the amount of heat you use on your hair. A good conditioner is also useful for treating split ends.

Dandruff: like the skin on the rest of your body, the skin on your scalp is constantly renewing itself and shedding dead cells. If you have a dry scalp, these dead cells can build up and get caught in your hair causing dandruff. If you have dandruff, make sure you take time to massage your

scalp when you wash your hair, to get a good circulation of blood to the surface skin. You can also use a special anti-dandruff shampoo, but you would have to choose with care, as some can be harsh on the scalp.

Head lice: Head lice are tiny insects that live on people's scalps. Contrary to what many people think, you do not only get head lice because your hair is dirty or because there is sand in it; head lice like to live on clean hair! So there's really nothing to be ashamed of if you happen to have them. The first sign you'll notice is itching. If you look carefully, you'll see tiny eggs sticking to the hair close to the skin. If you have lice, you will need to buy special lotion or shampoo from

the pharmacy, and a large comb to comb out the eggs. Your hairdresser can also be of great help in terms of advising you on specific product that are effective in treating head lice.

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TRIBUTE TO A MAN OF VALOUR

We have lost a gem. Yes, indeed we (young people) have. We've lost an adult who was a friend of the young people. He couldn't bear to see us in pain, let alone allow us lead risky lives. Dr Olikoye Ransome-Kuti, was truly a "father" to all young people. He was an advocate of adolescent reproductive health and a role model worthy of emulation.

Born on 30th December 1927 to the late Rev. & Mrs. Ransome-Kuti in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Dr Olikoye Ransome-Kuti scaled through life's huddles to become a renowned pediatrician. He rose to the pinnacle of his career from a lecturer to a Professor and became the Head of the Pediatrics Department, College of Medicine, University of Lagos. He served the nation meritoriously in various capacities as the Minister for Health, the Chairman of the National Committee on AIDS, consultant to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation and a member of the World Health Organization. He stood out as a professional who transformed the country's health care delivery system and was instrumental to the development of the Adolescent Reproductive Health (ARH) Policy and has greatly influenced other programmes related to the improvement of the health status of young people in Nigeria.



LATE PROF. OLIKOYE RANSOME -KUTI

In 1999, he participated in the first National Conference on Adolescent Reproductive Health and during his address at the occasion; he said, "The state of adolescent reproductive health is a national emergency. Action on it should be led by the Federal Ministry of Health and supervised by the Head of State." He observed also that many Nigerian youths are bodily damaged because of early marriage, adolescent pregnancies and so forth, and advised that Nigerian youths should be well informed about their reproductive health in order to avert ARH tragedies in the country. He further stated, "Government should commit itself to ensuring physical and healthy development of the youths and the nation."

The late Dr Olikoye Ransome-Kuti who until his death worked assiduously, has left a legacy for all young people to follow. The legacy of honesty, hard work, patriotism, professionalism and healthy living. These virtues, which he has passed on, should be maintained. There is no doubt that his memories will linger on in the hearts of all he has positively affected both directly and indirectly and even generations yet unborn would hear of his good works. May his gentle soul rest in perfect peace.

By Jawando Oluwaseun

Poems

IN LIFE'S SYMPHONY

You are a necessary part
A specimen of wondrous art
An instrument of purest gold
From which life's melodies unfold
Without your presence, life would be robbed
of subtle harmony
No other knows what you know
No other shows what you can show
To life, for life, with life, through life
In life, of life, by life-true life
You are a special note in life's symphony

- Helen Brown

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

If you think you are beaten, you are
If you think you can't make it, then you can't
If you wish to win, but you think you can't
Then it's almost certain you won't
If you think you will lose, you've lost;
For out in the world,
We find we become whatever we think we are
Therefore you've got to think right
You've got to be sure of yourself
Before you ever win a prize
Life's battle isn't always won by the strongest or
fastest man or woman
But by the man or woman who thinks he or she can.

- Oluwaseun Jawando

WHY I'M ME

I asked a question
Why am I me?
Is it because I'm different?
Or because my appearance looks funny or good?
Can I compare this with others?
But hold on a minute,
Do I feel sad because people say I'm ugly?
Can I ever blame myself for being skinny?
Oh boy! Now I know why I'm ME!
I stand out in the crowd,
This makes me outstanding,
I never in my life created myself,
But the creator did and for a purpose
This made ME
And I appreciate my look and stature
'Cos every moment of my life is full of GREATNESS!
'Cos of the fact that I AM ME.

- Tunkarimu Tenny

GIVE TO...

Give to God - Devotion and Piety
Give to parents - Obedience
Give to Yourself - Respect
Give to partners - Love and Faithfulness
Give to friends - Sincerity
Give to fellow men - Humanity
Give to employers - Loyalty
Give to employees - Fulfillment
Give to subordinates - Encouragement
And give to foe - Forgiveness

Cartoon



Dear Diary

MOJI ONIFADE

MONDAY

My mom's gift was really cool; the coolest I have ever received - it was a SWATCH wristwatch. It looked like gold but I wasn't sure since I know my mum knows I'm very careless with stuff. It probably isn't gold but I really like it and I gave her a big hug just to let her know how I felt.

Today was quite hectic, being the first day of the new session. There was so much cleaning up to do. I was however lucky that I was told to wash the corridors, some girls had to clean the toilet! Yawk! Imagine doing that on the first day of school! The principal later addressed us and told us that she expected us to behave like good boys and girls. Many of the students weren't really listening to her, and I was one of them. We were all busy gisting about all that happened during the holiday. There was so much to talk about! I however noticed that Tolu, one of my friends was absent. I'm sure she would be in school tomorrow, she's probably still in a holiday mood.

TUESDAY

Tolu still hadn't come to school. I went to see her guardian today to ask if she had a phone number I could use to reach Tolu and let her know that school had resumed in case she had forgotten. Her guardian said she didn't have Tolu's phone number but would try to get in touch with her.

We really didn't do much today. Some of our new subject teachers

came in to introduce themselves and give us the scheme of work for their respective subjects. I plan to read ahead of the class this session and so I wrote down the scheme of work as legibly as I could. I really intend to come out tops!

WEDNESDAY

I noticed today that there is a new student in class who I had not noticed before. I guess it's because she is so quiet. She kept to herself all through class today and no one even made the effort to talk to her. Well, I intend to talk to her tomorrow. I want to be her friend. She seems very lonely.

I'm missing home already. I wonder what mom and dad would be doing right now. Probably, they would all be having dinner! If only I could have a taste of mum's cooking tonight, I would be the happiest girl in the world! Guess what? I joined the school's female football team today! I look forward to a fun-filled session.

THURSDAY

I made myself a new friend! I summoned up courage today and I spoke with the new student. Her name is Joke and she's so sweet! At first, she was a bit evasive, but we soon warmed up to each other and we gisted like we'd always known each other. I however couldn't shake off the feeling that there was something wrong somewhere. She still had the sad look in her eyes. Oops! I forgot to check Tolu's guardian to see if she

heard from her. I'd do that tomorrow.

FRIDAY

I went to see Tolu's guardian today, and I got the most shocking news - Tolu is pregnant! That's the reason why she hasn't come to school. Her guardian had gotten a call from Tolu's mom and was told that Tolu was two months pregnant! I can't believe this, how did it happen? Who is the father? How does she feel? How? I have so many questions! I can't believe it that my dearest friend is pregnant. I've been crying all day...

SATURDAY

I still can't get over the fact that Tolu is pregnant. She is so smart and level headed. How could she have allowed this to happen? I wanted someone to share my feelings with, but I couldn't. I just can't let anyone know what has happened. I would never betray her trust. Funmi (one of my old friends in school) and I went to the salon to have our hair braided. I didn't realize she knew something was wrong. She just kept on smiling and telling me that everything would be okay. I felt so grateful and better afterwards.

SUNDAY

I stayed in my hostel throughout today. I got a novel from a classmate and read it. I was just about to take a nap when Joke came running into my room. She was in tears! I calmed her down and asked her what the matter was. What she told me was unbelievable.

I'll tell you about it in the next edition.



NEWS Reel

EGG BABY EXERCISE

The "Egg Baby Exercise" is an important exercise in the Adolescent Reproductive Health Education (ARHE) programme organized by the Information Education and Communication Unit of Action Health Incorporated. The activity is an integral part of the session on Teenage Pregnancy; a topic usually treated as part of efforts to enlighten young people about the challenges of parenting and the values of preventing unwanted pregnancy. The exercise is expected to assist young people in realizing the possible challenges of teenage pregnancy and parenting, as well as enabling them to make informed decisions especially about initiating sexual intercourse or engaging in unprotected sexual intercourse at an early age. The participants were asked to bring fresh eggs which were signed by the facilitator with dates. This symbolized the birth and registration of the baby. Each participant was asked to name his/her "baby" to help them refer to it as a human being and also generate a realistic feedback on their personal experiences of raising their babies. The participants were asked to write and submit a report at the end of the programme.

From the reports submitted, the experiences of the young people did not vary much. Being adolescents with various interests and naturally restless, the participants reported that taking care of the egg baby was very challenging as they had to give up some of their social activities such as going out with friends, they had to balance their house chores which included running errands for their parents with ensuring that the "baby" was safe from harm. Often they had to take their "baby" with them on errands and some of the participants reported accidentally breaking the "Egg baby" in the process. Some of the participants also reported

having to be extra vigilant to protect their "baby" from being eaten by members of their family or broken by others who did not appreciate the essence of the exercise. During the revision exercise with the students, on the last day of the ARHE Course, the participants commented on their experiences with the "Egg baby." They said that they now understand and appreciate what it means to be a parent; they admitted that the challenges and responsibilities were



enormous and many of them expressed their intension to practice abstinence in order to prevent an unwanted pregnancy.

Below is a report submitted by one of the participants:

"I participated in the first batch of the 2003 Adolescent Reproductive Health Education programme and this is my report on the egg baby exercise: I never imagined what taking care of a baby would feel like until I participated in the Egg Baby Exercise which I initially thought was going to be an exciting exercise but I was really disappointed at the end due to the turn of event.

The name of my "Egg Baby" is "Timilehin". Right from the day my "baby" was "born", I took proper care of it by putting it inside the refrigerator and by keeping it away from being injured especially in the bus since I had to carry him everywhere I go; including when going to AHI. It's really sad that my baby had to die after all the trouble I went through to protect it from harm. The egg baby's death surprised me that I began to think about so many things for instance "If this were to be a real baby, and I let it die as a result of my carelessness, how would I survive the ordeal?"

Now let me tell you how it happened. On one of the days I brought "Timi" to AHI I was on my way home and was hungry, I bought some groundnut, and I was eating it till I got to the car park. I boarded a bus going to my home. Right in the bus I continued eating the groundnut. In order for me to eat the groundnut very well ('cos I was really hungry) I had to put my Egg Baby on my laps. I just heard a sound like "pa", and then I found that the egg baby had fallen off my laps and broken. I was really upset because I had not done something really bad to the baby except that I was hungry and needed to eat. I had to ask myself whether I was wrong to eat because I was carrying my Egg Baby. I could not answer the question and I know people will not understand how I feel. But I had no option than to accept responsibility for allowing the baby to die. I had to leave the broken baby there and went home.

At the end of the day, I found this exercise thought provoking. It made me realize and appreciate what mothers go through and the challenges of parenting.

YOUNG PEOPLE OBSERVE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

This year's International Women's Day was commemorated all over the world on 8th March. The day was also observed at AHI as students from different schools converged at the AHI Youth Centre to participate in the activities scheduled for the day. The theme for the year was on "Gender Equality, Breaking the Cultural Barriers".

The participants had a discussion on the topic "Why Commemorate Women's Day?" The objective of the session was to educate the young people about the importance of setting aside a day to celebrate womanhood. The young people agreed that women played a vital role in the society and that it was expedient for due recognition to be given to them on such a day. They also agreed that it was important to understand that women had rights and that these rights needed to be respected in order to curb the incidence of violence against women within and outside the family. Other issues discussed include ways in which men could help in creating a supportive environment for women.



A student asking a question during the question and answer session at the school event held at Howels Memorial Grammar School

Other participatory sessions focused on gender stereotyping, gender inequalities and discrimination against the girl-child as well as the effect on the development of the girl-child. The AHI drama troupe added colour to the programme through a short drama presentation titled "Child Na Child", which showcased the discrimination against the girl-child in the family and highlighted the values of the girl-child. Similar messages were also passed on through poem recitations by some young people titled "Old Age" and "Gender Equality". AHI also facilitated the Commemoration of the day in four secondary schools around Lagos.

AHI CONDUCTS ADOLESCENT REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH EDUCATION (ARHE)

The Adolescent Reproductive Health Education is an annual training programme organized for young people during the holidays. This year's ARHE programme was held in the month of March with the aim of equipping participants with knowledge and skills about their reproductive health in order for them to lead less risky lives and enhance their ability to pass on factual information to their peers.

The topics treated during the training focused on Pubertal Changes, Personal Hygiene, Menstruation And Menstrual Hygiene, Values/ Values Clarification, Decision Making and Goal Setting, Communication, STIs and HIV/ AIDS, Teenage Pregnancy/ The Egg Baby Exercise, Abstinence and Safe Sexual Skills, Assertiveness and Negotiation, Contraception, Female Genital Cutting/ Harmful Traditional Practices, Unsafe Abortion, Drug Abuse, Reproductive Health Rights of the Adolescent, Health and Life Planning Club, Roles and Responsibilities of Peer Educators.



The participants had the opportunity to share experiences with their peers and to ask questions on growing up issues. At the end of the training, the evaluation revealed that the participants had acquired new knowledge and skills about their health and development.

RIGHTS OF A CHILD

PROTECTION AGAINST EXPLOITATION AND INHUMAN TREATMENT

Part II: Child Abuse, Torture, Sexual Exploitation and Drug Abuse

BASIC PRINCIPLE

Every child must be protected against all forms of exploitation and indecent or degrading treatment, including child abuse, torture, sexual exploitation and drug abuse.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

What does being protected against child abuse, torture, indecent and degrading treatments mean? To the majority of children who grow up in loving families, such terms are strange and out of place. What kind of person would want to torture a child? Unfortunately some adults are very cruel and there is a ready market for children who are often easy bait for kidnapers.

The sexual exploitation of children, especially young girls, was recently highlighted in the European news, when a network of paedophiliacs was uncovered in Belgium. The bodies of two very young girls were discovered in the basement of a house where they had been imprisoned, raped and then left to starve.

Sexual abuse does not always take such bizarre and brutal forms. In many countries it is culturally acceptable for old men to marry very young girls of 7,8 or 9 years. Such girls are not ready for marriage and end up being damaged physically and emotionally.

Young women have also been lured by false promises of jobs in foreign countries only to end up as domestic slaves or prostitutes.

Most of the Nigerian girls lured by false promises of jobs in foreign countries have lost all contact with Nigeria as they are usually taken to remote areas and often end up working without pay in degrading situations. Children who grow up in war zones are even at greater risk. They may lose their homes and families. They can also be kidnapped and forced to serve as soldiers. Young girls who are kidnapped are often used as slaves or "wives" for the soldiers. The Ugandan Resistance Army had 3000 child soldiers, including 500 girls.

Besides war, children all over the globe face serious problems caused by adults:

- Who indulge them in drug and alcohol abuse
- Who expose them to too much sex and violence on TV?
- Who leave them at home alone unsupervised for long periods.

FACT BOX

The Bad News

- Twenty five countries around the world have thousands of children under the age of 16 engaged in combat.
- In 1996 more than 20 million children around the world had to flee from their homes because of war.
- An estimated 1 million children every year – mainly girls - enter the illegal sex market.
- War has separated 1 million children from their parents over the past ten years.

The Good News

- UNICEF has assisted more than 100,000 children in refugee camps in the "Great Lakes Regions" of Africa.
- More than 40,000 African children in refugee camps have been reunited with their families.
- UNICEF has assisted over 6000 "child soldiers" in Liberia to readjust to normal life.





QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- In The Liberian Civil War (which lasted for eight years and has recently ended), over 20,000 children were used by the NPF army.
- What kind of hardships do you think such children faced?
- List the "child rights" that were being violated.
- The recent wave of violence in US secondary schools has resulted in the deaths of more than 30 students.
- Write an essay on why you think there is so much violence in American public schools.
- Locate the "Great lakes Region" on your map of Africa.
- Which people have been fighting there since 1994?

MESSAGE TO GOVERNMENT

- Establish services to resettle orphaned children, or those who have been separated from their parents.
- Provide shelters and educational opportunities for street children and try to integrate them back into families.
- Legislate against the recruitment of children under the age of 18 into the military.
- Reunite refugee children with their families.

DISCUSSION

- What are some of the reasons children leave their homes and move into streets?
- What social services does government provide for children?

MESSAGE TO PARENTS

- Do not treat your children in any manner, which is physically, or mentally degrading.
- Do not let your children be exposed to situations in which they could be sexually abused.
- Do not use children for any illegal operations/ business.

DISCUSSION

- Do your parents allow you to watch X-rated films, i.e. those with excessive violence or sexual scenes?
- Why would an adult want to use a child for illegal business?

MESSAGE TO CHILDREN

It must have been 2 a.m when we heard someone smashing down the door to our hostel. I knew the soldiers had come for us. We had heard gunfire all day long. They shot the housemistress straightaway, as she tried to defend us. Terrified by the death of our housemistress, we marched off obediently at gunpoint into the bush. By the time we reached their camp, deep in the forest, it was almost dawn. Then we were thrown into one small room and left there. We were hot, thirsty and tired. I kept wondering what they wanted with us. Well, it did not take long before we found out. Within a few hours they brought us out and began to make us do every dirty job in the camp – washing clothes, fetching water, preparing food, and cleaning up. It was exhausting work, and we were already very tired from our nightlong trek. Those who dared to complain were thoroughly beaten. If the days were bad, the nights were worse, as some of the soldiers came in and took us away to be their "wives". I imagined that if I survived this war, I would probably die from AIDS. I think I prayed almost continually to God to let me die. I wondered what I had done to be punished like this. Little did I know at that time that our housemistress did not die! And one day she showed up like an avenging angel with a troop of soldiers and we were freed. I felt so overwhelmed by this act of courage on the part of our housemistress, that I vowed that I would spend the rest of my life working to stop human rights abuses.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- There are over 27 million children around the world displaced by war. What do you think can be done to help such children?
- The dangers faced by children who happen to be living in a war zone are many. Can you name some of them?

Two examples are lack of food or no health services

“LEARN FROM MY ORDEAL”

Why I chose to write this story I do not know. Perhaps, it is because I hope to find consolation in the thought that someone would read it and learn from my story; on the other hand, maybe I am just trying to find some relief by sharing my story with you.

I grew up in a very nice family, with two wonderful brothers and sisters. Unlike many of my peers who make the mistake I made, I was not from a broken home and both parents were alive and healthy. I had all I wanted; I was in a good school and was doing well in my studies. Many people referred to me as a high flyer. My father was my mentor (still is), and we both shared a very good relationship. During my first year in the Senior Secondary School, I was made the class prefect, and was quite involved in various academic activities in school. This further spurred me on to do well in my academics and I became a bookworm. I remember all too well the day this all changed.

It was a Tuesday morning and as usual we were settled down in class to begin our lessons for the day. Our class teacher whom we simply referred to as “Strict” because of her harsh nature walked into the class with the most gorgeous looking boy I had ever set my eyes on. He was half-caste and looked so good that for a moment I felt that he was not real. “Strict” introduced the boy as James and said that he was a new student and was going to be joining our class. I later found out that he was from England and had come to Nigeria because his father, who is Nigerian, got a new job here.

My initial reaction to James shocked me; perhaps, it's because I had never really been attracted to anyone like I was to him. Yes, I had had a few crushes but this was quite different. Anytime I walked past him, I would feel my palms sweat and my heartbeat almost double. I felt silly and I was really bothered because I kept on thinking that I would make a fool of myself. I decided to avoid him, but being the class prefect made this practically impossible. Then came the day when a guy in my class walked up to me and said that James had asked him to give me a letter. It was a love letter. The first I had ever received. I was thrilled to know that James liked me. I had even thought that he did not notice that I existed! Thus, when James asked me to meet him behind the school hall, I agreed. The school hall happens to be in the undeveloped site of the school and is the only building located on that site. There, James declared his love for me and told me that he wanted me to be his girlfriend. I agreed. It was as if I was a different person, as I gazed into his eyes and saw all the love in them.

As our relationship grew, I noticed some mannerisms in James, which I did not quite like. I realized that he bullied the junior students and was rude to many of our teachers. I however attributed his behaviour to a change in the environment and decided to sweep the issue under the carpet. My relationship with James blossomed and at the end of the session, we received the Hottest Couple award. However, my report card for that session showed that my grades had dropped considerably and I was not doing as well as I used to. My father was quite disturbed and asked me what the problem was. I knew what it was, but I could not tell him. My relationship with James was getting more and more intimate and I spent most of the day thinking about him. I could hardly concentrate on my studies. However, James and I had talked about sex and had set limits within our relationship. I had told him that I never wanted to have sex until I got married and he seemed to agree. After school resumed for the new session, my relationship with James seemed to wane.

We had our first fight and I decided to break up with him. This however became impossible when he came back to beg and ask me to forgive him. I did and it seemed as if he had truly changed for the better. A few weeks after this, James invited me to a party. A friend of his was traveling abroad and there was to be a send-off party in his honour.

I knew that my parents would not want me to go for the party because it was a night party. However, I did not want to displease James because of the fight we had. Thus, I lied to my parents that the JETS club of my school had a competition in another school and that I and the other girl who was also to represent the school, had decided to study overnight at her place to enable us familiarize ourselves with some of the likely questions we would be asked. My parents had no cause to disbelieve me and they gave me the go ahead to sleep at my friend's place.

I felt quite guilty as I met James at the venue of the party that night. I wondered what my parents would do if they found out that I was with a guy at a night party. However, I was convinced that they would never find out so I decided to have fun. There were many people at the party, and they all looked much more older than I did. They also looked very experienced. There was alcohol everywhere and guys as well as girls were smoking different brands of cigarettes. I started to feel uncomfortable when I noticed some guys and girls petting heavily. The picture of the party James painted was quite different from the one I saw that night. I sat down in a corner and watched as people danced and smoked. James was also part of those smoking and drinking, in fact, there was a girl sitting on his lap and whispering into his ear. Tears welled up in my eyes as I watched the scene.

I decided to take my leave and go back home. When James saw me leaving, he rushed to my side and asked me where I thought I was going. He said that I was not leaving and that if I tried to he would stop me. I was surprised at the way he talked; however to prove his point, he lifted me off the floor carrying me away from the others. By this time, I was crying with my arms flailing in the air. Everyone seemed oblivious to what was going on. Perhaps, it was because most of them were drunk. James carried me up the stairs into a dark room and dropped me on the bed. He then removed the jersey he had on. Suddenly, I realized what he was trying to do and I started screaming and crying for help. When no one came to my rescue, I started begging him, but he just laughed and pushed me hard onto the bed. He tore at my clothes and slapped me when I tried to resist. There and then, James raped me. The memory I have of that incident is so painful, that it is still like a dream to me. The same James who had whispered sweet words into my ears turned into a maniac right before my eyes.

After the incident, James just left me all alone in the room. It seemed as if everyone in the party had gone to sleep and so I waited until the early hours of the morning before going home. When I got home, my parents and siblings were still getting ready for the day. They were all shocked to see me and knew that something had gone wrong. I could not tell them anything; I just collapsed into my father's arms and cried as if my world had come to an end. After much persuasion, I told my family members all that had happened. Everyone, including my father cried. However, one thing I am grateful to my family for till today is that none of them shouted at me or blamed me for the incident. However, I could have avoided this if I had heeded and not gone to the party without my parents' approval.

Two weeks after the incident, I returned to school. Everything still looked the same, from the school garden to the lines of students in the school canteen. However, a lot had changed inside of me. Something died inside me the day I was raped, something that I knew I could never get back. I saw James several times before we wrote our final exams but then we had both developed a mutual hatred for each other and avoided each other as much as possible. Many times, I felt like killing him or just inflicting the same pain he had inflicted on me, but it was impossible. However, I have learnt from my experience. I have learnt never to trust any one again, no matter how much I may think the person loved me. I have learnt to always trust my instincts. I have learnt to always stand for what I know is right and to never compromise no matter who may be involved.

I have learnt to trust my instincts and to always stand for what I know is right and to never compromise no matter who may be involved.

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, 17 Lawal Street, Off Oweh Street, Fadeyi. P.O.Box 803, Sabo, Yaba, Lagos.



For sometime now, my uncle has been making sexual advances towards me. I am quite confused and don't know what to do.

Sexual harassment or sexual abuse is never right. The first thing you have to remember is that your uncle has no right whatsoever to harass you, and you are not to blame. You could also document what happens. Write down specific dates, times, places, kinds of incidents, your responses, his answers and any witnesses. It is also important that you generate support for yourself before you take action. You have to break the silence and talk to a trusted adult who would be able to take prompt action. Your parents may be a good resort to turn to. However, if you do not feel comfortable talking to your parents about it, you could talk to a close adult family member. Collective action and joint complaints strengthen your position. It is very important that you let the harasser know as clearly, directly and explicitly as possible that you are not interested in his attentions. If you cannot do this verbally, you could do it in writing, ensure that you keep a copy of the letter. If you don't take action, your uncle may rape you or do something that would hurt you.

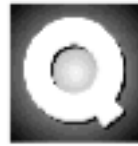


I am a lesbian and would like to know if I'm likely to get Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)?

Statistically, if you are young (between fifteen and twenty-four), and sexually active with more than one partner, you are at the highest risk of contracting a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI). However, if you are heterosexual and have sexual contact with someone who has an STI your chances of contracting the infection are high. For example, after just one exposure to gonorrhoea, you have a 40 to 50 per cent chance of contracting the disease.



If you are a lesbian, you are much less likely to get an STI because most STIs are not easily spread between women. However, it is still possible to transmit STIs like herpes during oral sex or through skin contact between an open sore and broken skin.



I am 21 yrs old and have never menstruated. What should I do?

Amenorrhoea (absence of menstrual period) is the condition of never having a period at the time menstruation usually starts (between the ages of 11 and 18), secondary amenorrhoea is the cessation of menstruation after at least one period. Some causes include dieting, starving, heavy athletic training, especially during early adolescence, use of certain drugs, a congenital defect of the genital tract, hormone imbalance, cysts or tumors, disease, chromosomal abnormalities, stress or emotional factors. As a remedy for lack of periods, ensure that you visit the doctor who can detect if there are any problems, and provide the appropriate remedy. It is important that you see a doctor as soon as possible to find out the reason why you have not menstruated at the age of 21.



I once heard someone talk about ectopic pregnancy. I would however like to know what it is exactly?

When the egg is fertilized, ideally, the fertilized egg should develop in the uterus. However, in the case of an ectopic pregnancy, the fertilized egg develops in the fallopian tube. Between 5 and 10 per cent of the women who have had previous tubal surgery or whose tubes are blocked as a result of a prolonged untreated STI, may experience ectopic pregnancy, but it can happen to any woman. Because all hormonal changes are similar to those of a normal early pregnancy, a person with ectopic pregnancy can have all the early signs of pregnancy such as fatigue, nausea, missed period, and breast tenderness. As the pregnancy progresses causing pressure in the tube, symptoms such as stabbing pain, cramps or dull ache may become severe. Ectopic pregnancy requires immediate treatment, as there is danger of severe blood loss and shock if the fallopian tube ruptures. If the doctor detects an ectopic pregnancy early enough, he/she may be able to remove the pregnancy and save the tube. In some cases, it may be necessary to remove the whole tube and/or the adjacent ovary. Ectopic pregnancy can also occur in the Cervix, Ovary or the abdominal or pelvic cavity. Symptoms of ectopic pregnancy usually occur shortly after the first missed period.



Reference:

The New Our Bodies, Ourselves
The Boston Women's Health Book Collective
Published By Simon & Schuster Inc. 1984.

SPECIAL REPORT

INTEGRATION OF SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN LAGOS STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Following the approval of the "National Sexuality Education Curriculum for Upper Primary School, Junior Secondary School and Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria, the Lagos State Ministry of Education has taken the laudable steps in ensuring the implementation of the subject in its secondary schools. One of the major goals of the project is to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS among young people in the State. It is also concerned with addressing other areas of growing up such as unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion, drug abuse, sexual harassment /abuse and other related challenges.

A planning workshop was convened in January 2003 where a work plan of action and steps to be taken was highlighted. Roles and responsibilities of the State as well as the implementing partner, Action Health Incorporated were also outlined. Three major activities that were listed, among others, was the sensitization of all teachers that would teach the subject (Integrated Science & Social Studies) as well as the training of 200 teachers that would teach the subject in 100 selected pilot schools.

ORIENTATION SEMINAR ON SEXUALITY EDUCATION FOR TEACHERS

The programme was officially flagged off by the Commissioner for Education, Professor Idowu Shobowale at a one-day orientation seminar on sexuality education for secondary school teachers in the State. The programme was well attended by all the directors of the Ministry, the Chairman, PP TESCO Alhaji Taiwo Ajomagberin, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Mrs. Oshun, executive members of the ANCOPPS Lagos State Branch and other senior officers of the Ministry including the teachers.

The orientation seminar aimed at sensitizing teachers about the concept of sexuality education, highlighting the roles of teachers as sexuality educators and reviewing some

participatory teaching methodology that would foster the effective teaching of the subject.

These objectives were achieved through the various activities that took place during the programme. In his key note address, the Commissioner for Education, Prof. Shobowale gave an overview of the interest of the State Government in teaching the subject to the students. He emphasized the need for the teachers to be committed, he said "I congratulate the selected



The Lagos State Commissioner for Education, Prof. Idowu Shobowale addressing teachers at the orientation seminar on Sexuality Education

teachers who have been counted worthy to teach this subject and hope that this seminar would be utilized to sustain adolescent health care in the State". He further stated, "it is important for us to take up the sexuality education project and counsel the young ones if we want our future to be secured. With the help of the teachers, we believe this will be done."

In a presentation on an Over- view of Adolescent Sexuality in Nigeria, the Executive Director of Action Health Incorporated, Mrs. Nike Esiet, presented the major issues of concern in adolescent sexuality. These include unintended pregnancies, unsafe induced abortions, sexual abuse, early marriage, female genital mutilation, STIs and HIV/AIDS. She provided statistics about the prevalence of the issues and explained the reasons why young people were susceptible to the issues of concern. The presentation was rounded off with a recommendation for the way forward in addressing the issues. These include advocacy, education, services and livelihoods.

A presentation on the definition of concepts such as sex, sexuality and sexuality education was taken by Dr. Uwem Esiet, Board Member of Action Health Incorporated. The presentation assisted participants to clarify the myths and misconceptions about educating young people about their sexuality while also appreciating the goals and values of sexuality education for young people. The key concepts and topics to be covered were also presented during the session.

The last presentation by Miss Bunmi Adeniyi, Programme Officer, AHI, focused on Teaching Methodology for sexuality education. The participatory session assisted teachers to identify useful teaching styles and methods that would enhance learning using the three domains, cognitive, affective and behavioural. Examples of useful teaching materials that could be used were also cited.

The day's activities were rounded off with a question and answer session as well as comments and recommendations by the participants.

SENSITIZATION SEMINAR ON SEXUALITY EDUCATION FOR THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION TEAM

The second phase of the project focused on the sensitization of inspectors who would be responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the project. The sensitization seminar on sexuality education for Monitoring and Evaluation team in Lagos State Secondary Schools was organized to equip the Ministry of Education officials with the relevant information and skills that would enable them do the job effectively. The overall goal of the training was to facilitate effective monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of sexuality education in Lagos State Secondary Schools.

Sensitizing the Monitoring and Evaluation Team about the Lagos State Government's decision to implement Sexuality Education in the State's public secondary schools, the Director Curriculum Services Department, Mrs. M.I Coker made a presentation on An



AHI's Executive Director, Mrs Nike Esiet making a presentation on the Key Concepts & Goals of Sexuality Education during the Sensitisation Seminar for the M&E Team

Overview Of The Sexuality Education Implementation Process In Lagos State. She informed the participants about the collaborative efforts made by the Ministry of Education and Action Health Incorporated in ensuring that young people had access to information about their sexuality. Throwing more light on the steps taken so far, the Director informed the participants about the Scheme Of Work for Sexuality Education, which was produced and published by the Ministry, and the selection of 200 teachers for training on Sexuality Education from 100 pilot schools.

Also present at the event was the Chairman Post Primary Teaching Service Commission (PP TESCOM), Alhaji Taiwo Ajomagberin. According to him, "the Lagos State Government is concerned about the present health status of its youth and has a desire to bring about a positive change." He therefore appealed to the M&E Team to understand the relevant concepts of Sexuality Education so that they would be adequately equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills that would enable them monitor teachers and

evaluate the effectiveness of the programme. He expressed his deep concern about the prevalence of child abuse in the State and encouraged the participants to take the work seriously and passionately. He cited instances of cases of abuse of students that were reported to him and

emphasized that the problems were real and needed to be addressed. He noted also that if young people were educated about their sexuality early enough, they (especially the girls) would be less vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse. The Chairman encouraged the participants to devise effective monitoring and reporting strategies in order to keep track of the processes, challenges and lessons learnt and to provide feedback to key stakeholders.

The training sessions focused on issues around the definition of terms and concepts and a presentation of framework, result framework, strategies, indicators and tools needed for the assessment of the indicators. During the session, the participants studied the diagrammatic description of the interdependence of factors that influence the way sexual health information and skills reach young people. The factors were discussed and the M&E Team were able to appreciate the importance of relating findings from field to the possible influences of the identified factors in the conceptual framework. Some of the highlighted factors included National and State policies and guidelines, political commitment, socio-economic factors, parental influences, religious leaders'

influences, teacher competencies, availability of resource materials and reaching/providing young people with sexual/reproductive health information and skills through classroom activities.

Other issues discussed included the strategic objective to reach 40,000 Junior Secondary School adolescents in 100 public secondary schools with sexual health information and skills, as well as the strategies for achieving the set objectives. At the end of the session, the M&E Team had a better understanding of the objectives, indicators and tools required for assessing the indicators. The participants' roles and responsibilities were also identified during the various sessions including the monitoring of the quality of the teaching of the subject, and the proper documentation of the monitoring process. The various departments were also able to have a clear understanding of their specific roles and responsibilities for instance, while the various departments including the Curriculum Services Department, the Monitoring and Investigation Department and other representatives of the PP TESCOM will all be involved in monitoring and documentation, the Curriculum Services Department had the supervisory role of collating the reports submitted by the M&E Team and disseminating the feedback from the field to the relevant stakeholders.

Another session focused on the applicability of the Sexuality Educator Assessment Tool (SEAT). The M&E Team discussed each of the assessment criteria and suggested necessary changes that should be made. Comments were made around the use of some words and sentences, which the participants felt, were ambiguous or inappropriate. Such words/sentences were replaced with suggested words/phrases, which were more explicit.



The Chairman PP TESCOM, Alhaji Taiwo Ajomagberin addressing the M&E Team during the Sensitization Seminar on the Monitoring & Evaluation of Sexuality Education in the schools



Some of the participants engaged in a group discussion during the Sensitization Seminar for the M&E Team

FOCUS

SHELL EDUCATES CHILDREN ABOUT HIV/AIDS

As early as 8:00am, young people and children had begun to troop into the Shell Petroleum Development Company Hall in Marina, Lagos. The casually dressed participants looked excited as they exchanged pleasantries with the familiar faces they saw each year. The event was the Annual Youth Health Forum organized for the children of the staff of the oil company.

The large turnout of young people at the event was very encouraging. It provided an opportunity to reach the youths, (many of whom were on holidays because of the ASSU Strike) with the information about their health and development. The event, which is coordinated at various State levels, was put together by the Medical Department of the Shell petroleum Company. According to the Chairman of the Youth Forum Planning Committee, Dr Oladapo Ojeniyi, the programme aimed at creating awareness and educating young people about youth health and development issues. The previous Youth Forum had focused on issues such as drug abuse and teenage pregnancy, while this year's programme was centred on HIV/AIDS prevention. In order to achieve this

objective, the Committee invited Action Health Incorporated (AHI) to co-ordinate the programme.

The AHI team involved the young people in interactive sessions including the "Feeling Good" and the Find Someone Who..." game. The participants were also educated through the edutainment strategy including film show, songs presentation, poetry recitals and drama presentation. The climax of the day's activities was the experience shared by a young person living with HIV Miss Kabati Ishaya had her audience spell bound as she provided answers to questions presented by one of AHI's Youth Staff, Miss Tenny Tunkarimu during a brief interview session. Miss Kabati explained how she contracted the infection as a result of sexual abuse by her uncle who raped her at the age of 13. She also shared her experience after confirming her HIV status. Miss Kabati narrated how her family and friends at school initially rejected her and how she was able to win their love and friendship again through constant education. She also shared the challenges she encountered including stigma, discrimination, and lack of care and support. In her words, "from last year to the beginning of this year,

I have not been attending programmes in protest against the stigma and lack of support for people living positively with HIV. But when I kept receiving letters of appeal by several people, I decided to take up the challenge again. My house has been bungled by robbers on three occasions because they thought I had money. I need to take care of those who have the virus, especially in my State, Gombe, which has the highest prevalence in Nigeria."

Miss Kabati also took time to answer questions by some of the participants. She also emphasized that ignorance, poverty, discrimination and stigma were the four major things that drive the spread of HIV/AIDS. She also explained that having the HIV virus did not prevent her from living her normal life. Contrary to people's expectations, she says she does not think of dying because death is an inevitable experience everyone will have. Rather, she's making the best of life. She has just concluded her secondary school education and intends to go further by studying Mass Education. In the time being, she is organizing a network of people living with HIV/AIDS in her State. She has a good relationship with a young man who has just graduated and is doing his Youth Corps Service. She hopes to marry and have her own children in the nearest future.

Miss Kabati's message to the participants and the society at large is, "we gain nothing by pointing accusing fingers at people. Rather, everyone should stand up and join in the fight against the spread of HIV." She also had this message specially for parents, "listen to your children when they complain to you about a family member that is harassing them." She also appealed to the Government and the civil society groups and the private sector to assist PLWAs by providing them with the necessary support including access to drugs and home based care for those who are already down. She also wants single teenage mothers to be assisted to get back to school.



Miss Eunice Aghete, an AHI Youth Assistant facilitating a session at the event

At the end of the programme, a lot of the participants came around to shake and hug Miss Kabati. Many of them also learnt a lot of new things. According to Esther Andah, her expectations before attending the programme were met. Hear her, "I've learnt more about HIV/AIDS and even seen a young person living with HIV. Her experiences really touch me and I will begin to be nice to people living with HIV and help them in my own little way. I have also learnt that HIV/AIDS is real and have learnt not to discriminate against PLWAs." Liadi Omowunmi, an Economics Student at the University of Lagos, also learned the same lessons. She said, "I learnt that hugging and sharing one's food would not make one get infected and also learnt that people living with HIV virus also have the right to be treated as normal human beings."

For Ebigwu Loveth, a Microbiology Student at the University of Lagos, the new lesson she learnt was removing stigma for PLWAs. Her words, "I've learnt that we should not discriminate against people living positively with HIV. We should show them love and how much they mean to us and to the society."



Miss Kabati Ishaya (right) with an AHI Youth Assistant, Miss Tenny Tunkarimu addressing participants at the programme

For Okoro Micheal Obinna, Geology Student from Ebonyi State University, learning four things that drive the spread of HIV is one of the new information he acquired from the programme. He also learnt that if one has the virus, one should not be shy nor try to hide it but rather spare the information in order to save the lives of other people.

Apart from learning about HIV, the participants also learnt about Sexually

Transmitted Infections (STIs) according to Ajayi Oyesina, a Mechanical Engineering Student of University of Lagos, he said, "I learnt about the different types of STIs and their causes and how to prevent oneself from contracting the disease."

The Youth Forum turned out to be a huge success as most of the participants confirmed that they learnt new things and that their expectations were met. The organizers also shared

similar views with the participants. According to Mr. A d e y e m i A d e n u g a , Secretary of the Youth Forum Planning Committee, "the aim of the event could be said to have been achieved." However, he said that a post event review would be carried out to properly assess the event. The committee hopes to continue to educate SPDC Staff's Children on information about their health and development in subsequent years.



Dr Uwem Esiet of Action Health Incorporated(extreme left) and some senior staff of the Shell Development Company pose for a photograph with Miss Kabati Ishaya at the end of the programme



CAREER GUIDE

DO YOU WANT TO BE AN ARCHITECT ?

Architecture is a challenging profession that demands skills in art, science, and technology. Architects design new buildings or convert existing ones for clients. Their prime aim is to satisfy their clients but they have to take certain restrictions and building regulations into account while working. They also plan and supervise the construction process. Architectural technicians assist Architects and receive directions from them.

THE JOB

Architects have to design buildings that are aesthetically pleasing, that serve the purpose for which they are intended and are comfortable and convenient for the people who live or work in them. They design Hotels, Schools, Hospitals, Factories, homes, and Office blocks as well as complexes, such as Shopping Centres and Industrial/Science parks. Architects often manage construction projects from initial feasible study to completion. They plan layouts, prepare sketches and working drawings, and specify materials to be used. They spend less time on design work than most people realize, and some projects they might spend 50 per cent of their time on administration and supervision.

Architects may receive a direct commission or bid for the work. Sometimes, this is done through a competition- a system under which a number of architects are invited to submit preliminary designs for a project. Once appointed, architects first meet with the client to establish their requirements. They may have to make suggestions to clients who do not have firm ideas. They also discuss the available budget and the required time scale. They may assist the client to choose a construction contractor and negotiate the terms of the contract. They may also take on the responsibility for obtaining planning permission.

During the design stage, architects must bear in mind building and design regulations, safety factors and fire regulations, the type of soil on which the building is to be erected, climate, and the requirements for heating, lighting, ventilating, and plumbing. (They work closely with the installation engineers). Architects prepare plans for a client's approval and, when this has been gained, expand the plans into detailed working drawings. Sometimes they construct a three-dimensional

model. They consult with civil engineers, construction managers, landscape architects, surveyors, and planners. They may often work long hours under pressure to meet deadlines. Architectural technicians work as part of the design team, assisting architects.

Their duties vary according to the policy of their employer but may include any or all of: carrying out preliminary research; gathering technical information; conducting site surveys; and testing local opinion on the proposed development. They usually prepare the very detailed working drawings that building contractors will work from. Increasingly, they use computer aided design techniques. They may construct three-dimensional models. Architectural technicians may be responsible for parts of the site supervision, organizing work schedules, contract administration, and liaising between all the people involved in a project. Senior architectural technicians are often in charge of all the administration and management in the architectural firm and may be responsible for the work of several technicians.

Their work is mainly office based, but those who make site visits spend a proportion of their time out of the office. Some architectural technicians specialized on the design side of the job – in which case they may be known as architect drafters.

TRAINING

Architects follow a programme of study and training that enables them to register with a national or state professional architectural body. This normally means first taking a bachelor's degree in architecture. Degree programmes last on average five years. In order to become fully qualified, they must also obtain approved practical experience (at least two years). An Alternative method of qualifying in some countries is to take a liberal arts degree followed by a three-or-four year master's in architecture. Part-time study routes



- Attention to detail
- Business Sense
- Communication Skills
- Computer Skills
- Creativity
- Critical Thinking
- Decision Making Ability
- Good with People
- Leadership Qualities
- Mathematical Ability
- Numeracy
- Organizational Skills
- Persuasiveness
- Planning and problem-solving Ability
- Spatial Awareness
- Teamwork
- Technical/Scientific Ability

model. They consult with managers and engineers and decide what kind of materials to use, and with estimators (quantity Surveyors) on the cost of the project. The final drawings include details of electrical system, position of power points, heating, ventilating, and plumbing structures.

Throughout the project, architects visit the construction site to monitor progress, ensure that instructions are being followed, and resolve any problems. Their work is not completed until the building is up and running, the bills have been paid, and the client is satisfied.

Architects are very much project leaders, working,

are sometimes available, but where these do apply it would take at least eight years to qualify. The drop-out rate is high.

Students must then pass examinations set by their professional association. Architectural technicians may choose either to take a full time course in a technical college/vocational school/college of further education or to find employment in an architectural company and then study for qualifications on a part time basis. The availability of each type of route varies from country to country and availability often depends on local employment conditions as well.

QUALIFICATIONS

Useful subjects include: Mathematics and Physics, arts, design, and geography.

PROSPECTS/OUTLOOK

Architects can choose to work in a variety of settings and in any size of firm—from one with more than a hundred staff down to working alone as a sole practitioner. Most work in architectural firms. Some work in government agencies. (Opportunity for this is variable. More are employed by national and local government departments in some countries than in others, for example.)

There are also openings with property (real estate) developers, construction companies, and with large organizations that have their own in-house architecture departments. Organizations likely to employ architects in salaried positions include major supermarket chains and hotel groups. Further opportunities exist in teaching.

Employment opportunities depend on the construction industry, which, in

turn, depends on the state of the economy. Job opportunities vary from country to country. Many architects trained in one country work overseas on long contracts.

Architectural technicians may work in any of the above settings. They, as well as architects, have the opportunity for self-employment. Architectural technicians may also train to become professional architects. Their experience and qualifications normally allow them to qualify in a shortened period of time.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, you can contact any relevant national association such as: the Nigerian Institute of Architecture (NIA) located at Idowu Taylor Street, Victoria Island, Lagos or the Architecture Registration Council of Nigeria (ARCON) situated at the Federal Secretariat, Victoria Island, Lagos.

PROFILE OF A ROLE MODEL



Mr. Olufemi Olojede is a Managing Partner with Clafem Consult an architectural outfit situated at Western Avenue, Ojuelegba, Lagos.

He had his primary education at the Apostolic Primary School, Odo-Okun, Modakeke in the 1960s before going on to St. Charles Grammar School Osogbo, for his secondary school education. He gained

admission into the Polytechnic Ibadan where he had his Ordinary National Diploma (OND) in Architecture before proceeding to the University of Lagos Akoka (UNILAG) for a BSc degree in the same discipline.

He says his father is his role model and the qualities he saw in the old man were “his diligence to work, honesty and being God fearing.” The challenges he faced when growing up were the positive competition among his brothers and sisters to excel academically despite their polygamous background.

According to Mr. Olojede, he was able to achieve his dreams through “zealous studying and being determined to succeed. His motto in life is “put God first in all your endeavours”.

The academic requirement for a person who wishes to study Architecture is a combination of science and art subjects which include Mathematics, English, Physics, Additional/Further Maths, and Technical Drawing. Such a student needs to be very good in technical drawing and

also in fine arts which stands as an added advantage. The qualities required when studying Architecture are: patience, hard work and the readiness to take up challenges.

Mr. Olojede’s advise to young people who are willing to venture into Architecture is that they should be interested in the course and should not be money conscious. They should also be academically sound and be willing to go through the rigours of training. “Though it’s a rigorous course, it is also interesting” he adds.

The professional bodies young people aspiring to take the job and become professionals can contact are: The Nigerian Institute of Architecture (NIA) located at Idowu Taylor Street Victoria Island, Lagos. There is also the Architecture Registration Council of Nigeria (ARCON) which is situated at the Federal Secretariat Victoria Island, Lagos. Undergraduates as well as graduate students can become members of the NIA. Examinations are also taken at different levels of entrance. The final exams known as the Professional Practice Examination qualifies one to become a registered member of the NIA and after some years of practice, the architect could be elected a fellow of the institute.

Arch. Olojede is a registered member of ARCON and NIA. He says, “The advantage of being a registered member of ARCON is that a number and stamp will be given to you and you stand a chance of being recognized in the country. He further advised young people aspiring to read the course to look ahead at a very bright future based on their capabilities since the society needs more architectural technicians to assist in designing standard buildings.

His dream for all Nigerians is that both the rich and the poor should be able to build affordable houses. To achieve this, he believes that the government needs to provide building materials at substantially low rates (i.e. local bricks and tiles for roofing etc.). “This way”, he says, “more people will be able to afford to own houses”. He is happily married and has two children.

Resources

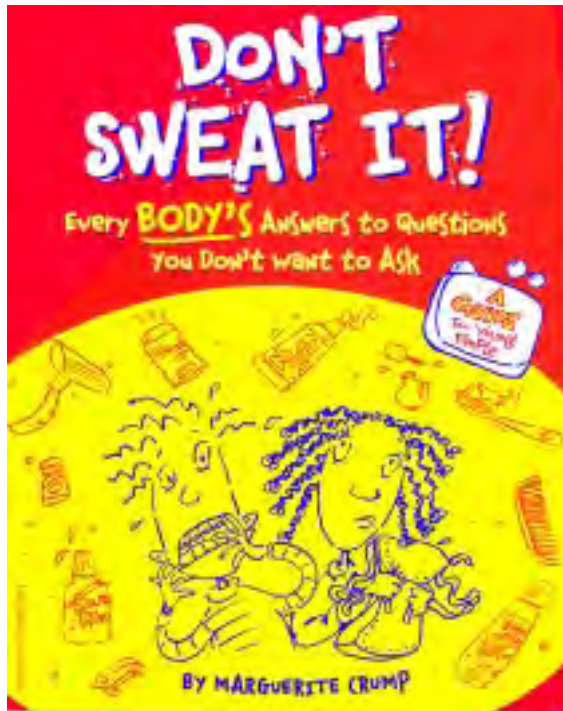
The materials listed here are resources on adolescent development. Although AHI does not distribute any of these materials, they are available for use within our reference library at the AHI Youth Centre located at 17 Lawal Street, Off Oweh Street, Fadeyi, Lagos

LOOKING GOOD: A YOUNG PERSON'S GUIDE TO BODY CARE WORLD BOOK INC.

This very insightful book provides young people with tips on how to look good as well as take proper care of their body. Detailed descriptions of different "body regimes" are also outlined and pictorial illustrations are given. Young people who are confused about the different changes taking place in their bodies will also find this book quite useful as other young people share their experiences and how they were able to overcome their challenges as regards taking care of their bodies.

DON'T SWEAT IT! EVERY BODY'S ANSWER TO QUESTIONS YOU DON'T WANT TO ASK MARGUERITE CRUMP

This book discusses the changes and personal health issues that are hard



to talk about face-to-face. Young people will have a lot to learn about personal hygiene from the book. The book will also help young people undergoing puberty to understand that body changes are normal for everyone, and so are the changes that go with them. Throughout this book, young people will read lots of fascinating facts and myths about the human body and learn how to practice healthy behaviour that would enable them look and feel better

THE RIGHT MOVES: A GIRL'S GUIDE TO GETTING FIT AND FEELING GOOD

TINA SCHWAGER & MICHELE SCHVERGER

Many girls worry endlessly about their outward appearance. This book is therefore geared towards helping young women appreciate their bodies more and practice habits that would enable them have healthier bodies. The book would be useful for young women striving to have a better appreciation of their bodies and a higher self-esteem

THE BEST OF THE FREE SPIRIT JUDY GALBRIATH, PAMELA ESPELAND & M. ELIZANETH SALZMANN

This book is fun to read! It is designed to attract young people's attention and keep them interested as they learn about the highs and lows of growing up, making choices and getting to know themselves. It is written in an easy-to-read style and touches mostly on how young people can use their creativity and intellect to improve themselves as well as appreciate their peculiarities and make the best use of them.

