

Growing Up

A NEWSLETTER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Putting an end to Sexual Violence



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

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This edition of Growing Up is produced with support from The MacArthur Foundation, Population Programme,

Putting Sexua

Patience was very young when she lost both parents. As a result of this, she was withdrawn from school and made to work as a maid with the family of Mr. Okosun to make ends meet. With this development, Patience was very happy that she had a home she could live in, unaware that she was in for trouble, as Mr. Okosun had other plans. Few nights after she moved in with the family, Mr. Okosun went into Patience's room and forcefully had sex with her. This marked the beginning of the young woman's ordeal as the man regularly went to her room to sexually abuse her. To compound her problems, he warned her not to disclose to anyone what he was doing to her. Not long after the first night, Patience discovered that she was pregnant and Mr. Okosun outrightly denied being responsible for it.

A 38-year-old man recently raped three sisters whose ages ranged between five and ten years. The man admitted the crime at a well-attended press conference held in Lagos. According to news reports, the mother of the three girls came home from work one day only to find out that her five-year-old girl was missing. This led to a search of the neighborhood by the entire family. All of a sudden, the little girl's muffled cry was heard coming from one of the rooms in the building where they lived. When the search party, including the mother got to the room where the girl's cries were coming from, she was found naked and weeping while the man hurriedly tried to pull up his trousers.

Violence, in whatever form can be very tragic. However, sexual violence is particularly traumatic. Apart from the obvious physical injuries it inflicts on its victims, it also leaves deep-seated emotional and painful wounds, which can last for an entire lifetime if left unchecked. Sexual violence in a nutshell can be described as the use of sexual actions or words that are unwanted by and/or harmful to another person. The term sexual assault and sexual violence are often used interchangeably, however both terms are used to describe a wide variety of abuses. Specific forms of sexual violence

g An End To d Violence

By Feyi Fowowe

include some of the following:

Date/ Acquaintance rape: Contrary to what many people believe, rape is usually perpetrated by people known to the victim. Perpetrators of rape can include friends, acquaintances, or even the victim's boy/girl friend, depending on the victim's sex. Cares need be taken to prevent the occurrence of this. A level of skepticism should be exercised when relating with the opposite sex, especially when it is possible that over familiarity can lead to one being taken for granted. Most times, such a rape is unpredictable and usually unexpected as perpetrators may have established some level of relationship with their victims before carrying out the act. Another misconception on this issue is the belief that rape cannot take place when two persons are in a dating relationship. It should be noted that any sexual intercourse, in which either of the partner's consent is not sought, or when such partner is forced or deceived into the act is called rape. This is an indication to the fact that there can also be sexual violence in marital relationships.

Child sexual abuse: When an under-aged person, a minor (child) is forced into sexual act by an adult, child sexual abuse has taken place. The adult takes advantage of the child's innocence, ignorance, and inability to decide for him/herself. The rate of child sexual abuse in Nigeria is rising at an alarming and disheartening rate. Sexual abuse is grossly underreported in the media despite the high rates of its occurrences. Neighbours, cousins, uncles and even sometimes parents, have been identified as perpetrators of this ignoble act.

Incest: Incest is also on the increase and refers to sexual

abuse that is committed by one family member against another. Also called family sexual abuse, incest can be committed by parents, siblings, other family members, or an unrelated person living or treated as part of the family. Cases of incest in our society are often unreported or under-reported partly because victims are usually confused as to whether such an act actually constitutes an offence, since the perpetrator is a family member. Sometimes when incest is recognised as offense, the victim keeps sealed lips in order not to drag the family's name and integrity in the mud. This explains why in this part of the world, incest is regarded to and treated as private family matter rather than a crime against the society and humanity, which it really is!

Prostitution: Prostitution can constitute a form of sexual violence when it involves the buying and selling of people, for the purpose of sexual activities. This has become very rife in the country as many girls are usually lured out of the country by people who promise them a better standard of living abroad. These girls are however used as a means of generating income for their sponsors, through prostitution. Prostitution also includes trading sex for food, clothing, shelter, drugs, and even companionship.

Although both girls and boys can be victims of sexual violence, it is said to have a woman's face as millions of women and girls are victims or survivors of sexual violence. It is painful to note that despite the havoc sexual violence wreaks on the lives of women and girls, very little has been done to curb the menace. More painful however, is the fact that the figure of sexually

violated people keeps on rising every year. This particularly becomes obvious when one takes into consideration the hundreds of thousands that are sexually violated but are unable to make such violation known to the public. This is probably so because of the victims' misgivings, but mostly because of a social system which pays lip service to curbing sexual violence, and a legal system, which discourages prosecution.

Despite the underestimation of the force and magnitude of the problem, research has made it possible to identify factors, which may increase the likelihood of a person being sexually violated. These include:

- **Prior history of sexual violence:** It has been observed that women who are raped before the age of 18 are twice as likely to be raped when they reach adulthood as those without the history of sexual violence. Perhaps one reason that can be adduced for this is that victims of sexual violence tend to display such characteristics as fear, anxiety and guilt, which inevitably attract further abuse.
- **Gender:** As stated earlier, women are more likely to be victims of sexual violence than men, as 78% of the victims of rape and sexual assault are women. The obvious reason is the age-old perception of women as the "weaker sex", but also more obvious is the fact that sexual violation of women by men is most often motivated by a desire for power, control and domination.
- **Drug or Alcohol use:** Using of drug and drinking of alcohol increase the chances of a person losing touch with reality, and being raped in the process: Stella's experience succinctly drives the point home. She said "I got drunk and asked to be taken home. I was carried into a room like a sack of potatoes, I said "NO" several times and was ignored. I don't remember much of the rape except that it happened".

Taking drugs or alcohol therefore lowers one's resolve and makes one more vulnerable. Today many parties organised on campuses usually have lots of alcohol, which make acts of sexual violence quite rampant at such parties.

- **Poverty:** About 65% of Nigerians are estimated to be living below poverty line. That is, they live far off the universally approved standard of living. They lack basic social infrastructures and amenities, and live on a meager amount, which has been estimated as \$1 per day (about N150). With this dismal figure,

poverty, apart from reducing the standard of living, has also increased the vulnerability of those in this group to sexual assault. Poverty makes women and even children more dependent on men for survival and therefore less able to control their own sexuality or consent to or negotiate for safer sex. It also makes them unable to recognize their own victimization or to seek help when victimized. Furthermore, poor women may be at high risk of sexual violence because their economic status necessitates that they engage in high-risk survival activities such as prostitution.

WE MUST ACT NOW!

Sexual violence is not just a 'social' problem like many people would like to label it, rather, it is a heinous crime that is so freely perpetrated in our society because of the failure of the relevant authorities and most often, the reluctance of victims to prosecute the perpetrators. Such failure and reluctance is unfortunate because sexual violence wreaks so much havoc on the lives of its victims, scarring some of them for life; in most cases, leaving very lasting consequences for everybody - the victims, their families and sometimes a whole community. In terms of physical consequences, women who experience sexual abuse are significantly more likely to have sexually transmitted diseases as well as other health problems such as chronic pelvic pain, gastro-intestinal disorders and complications during pregnancy. Apart from this, victims of sexual violence face both immediate and long-term psychological consequences such as depression, low self-esteem etc.

There are also the social consequences like strained relationships with family members and a reluctance to trust or establish intimate relationships as a result of the experience. Thus from the foregoing, it is imperative that a full-fledged war be waged against sexual violence. All hands must be on deck to ensure that the system, which pays lip service to justice, is sanitized. It is also important to ensure that justice is actually carried out. Victims (male and female), parents, politicians and law enforcement agencies all have a role to play in this war and must start acting now.

MESSAGE TO GUYS

Most people who are victims of sexual violence are women while men are the usual perpetrators. This is because in our society, men are taught to behave in a certain way as well as fill certain roles. They tend to be defined and evaluated by what they do instead of what

they are. Their role is usually that of the protector and provider as well as the conqueror. As a result of this, women, classified as the “weaker sex”, generally tend to be submissive and have little say when it comes to sexual decision. When they do they are usually disregarded. While there could be many reasons adduced for why men are sexually violent, it would be agreed that the only reason men are sexually violent is because they choose to be. Like many other actions one takes in life, the decision to violate a woman or child sexually is a choice thus, all forms of sexual violence regardless of the amount of planning or not, are choices that men make. They

are choices that men can choose not to make. Rape is not an “uncontrollable urge” that comes over a man as he walks down a street, watches a woman, or gets sexually aroused. Rape is a behaviour that is chosen. People generally choose how they act. Such choices may not be conscious, but they are choices nonetheless thus, men need to take responsibility for their actions, behaviour, choices and most of all the consequences of those choices.

When you, as a man choose to violate a woman, you are only making a statement about what kind of man you are. Strength is not necessarily measured by your ability to make a woman do what she really does not want to do, rather, strength is measured by your ability to command trust and respect from a woman as a result of your own behaviour. Most often, the decision to rape or sexually violate a woman is motivated by a desire for control, dominance and power. However, true power comes from a place deep inside you. It isn't attached to a position or a talent or mindset. Rather, being powerful means knowing deep within you who you are, and living your life as an expression and celebration of who you are. Thus, power has nothing to do with control.

MESSAGE TO VICTIMS

Men as well as women can be victims of rape. Although, greater percentage of rape cases involves men forcing women into sexual acts, women can, and equally do rape men. It is no other thing but rape when a man is coerced and intimidated into sexual behaviour he does not desire.

If you have ever been a victim of sexual violence, it is important that you know you are not alone. The situation becomes worse when victims are unable to report the crime or are repeatedly violated by the same person. Whatever the situation, the first thing you

need to know is that it is not

your fault that you have been violated, and you do not deserve to be violated. Once you recognize this, it becomes less difficult for you to take action. One of such action will be to report the matter immediately to the relevant authorities. Although our society, especially the police, have undermined the crime, if you do not report the case, you are only aiding the perpetrator and at the same time, you are helping to perpetuate the culture of silence which is so prevalent in

our society. If however, you

are unable to report the matter to the relevant law enforcement agencies, then it is important you tell an adult, a parent, and if possible, you may also choose to confide in a close friend or counselor. The reason you need to share your experience with someone is because you need not bear the burden alone. Also as stated earlier, you are not the only one who has been a victim of sexual violence. Talking to someone may therefore help begin the healing process you need. You can also speak with your school counselor or a counselor at a youth Centre such as Acton Health Incorporated, Lagos or a counselor at the Social Welfare Department of any local government close to you.

However, beyond what anyone can do for you is what

While there could be many reasons why men are sexually violent, it would be agreed that the only reason men are sexually violent is because they choose to be.



you can do for yourself. You must never lose faith in yourself. If you do, you will be giving the violators control not only over your body but also over your mind. If you believe in yourself, you can start all over, regardless of what your current circumstances are. Oprah Winfrey, the popular talk show hostess is one such woman, who despite experiencing series of abuse as a young girl, has become one of the greatest talk show hostesses of our time.

Further more, adult females perpetuate a percentage of sexual abuse on young boys. It is important to state here that men are usually assaulted, and like women, it affects them to the core of who they are. Whoever you are, and regardless of your sex, healing from being sexually victimized is still a life long process. You must decide that you will not be controlled, harassed, verbally abused or raped by anybody. You must believe that you can gain strength and knowledge to overcome the fear instilled in you by those who want to (or who already) sexually violate you. You must believe that you can get out of a violent and unhealthy relationship and that no one else can control your destiny. Women must especially believe that by taking

control of their own lives, they can break the culture of violence.

MESSAGE TO GIRLS

While sexual assault is never the fault of the victims, girls need to take responsibility for their lives. A lot of girls who have been raped especially by close acquaintances never suspected that they could be raped and this gave the perpetrators the leverage to carry out the act. As a girl you must be conscious of who to trust and who not to trust. That is why you shouldn't date just anyone. More importantly, you must be conscious of your surroundings and where you should go and shouldn't go. Although you've probably heard it before, but it cannot be over emphasized that you shouldn't go to deserted places when on a date, as this creates a convenient location for the act to be perpetrated. As much as possible go out in groups if you have to go out at night. Moreover, ensure that you tell someone where you are going. It is important for you to know that your body language is very important especially when you are with members of the opposite sex. Although, one has no excuse to rape anyone, your body language

may be interpreted as asking for it, and may give the perpetrator the idea that you really want to have sex and are just pretending.

Furthermore, if you have a boyfriend and have abstained from sex, it is essential that you define the limits of your relationship and set boundaries where sex is concerned. Never assume that your partner knows that you do not want to have sex, rather, be explicit about what you would and would not allow. If your boyfriend continues to pressure you for sex, then you may have to rethink your decision to date him since he doesn't respect your choice of abstinence. "What if the violator is a very close friend or even a family member?" you may ask. The best answer to this question is to never keep quiet. The power of the perpetrators lies in secrecy. Most people who continuously or repeatedly rape are able to do so because their victim has decided to keep quiet. Moreover, the more you keep quiet, the more comfortable the perpetrator feels, and the more intense the violation. Make a choice today that nobody, not a friend, boyfriend, acquaintance, or family member is going to sexually victimize you and choose to speak out if they ever do.

Somewhere inside of most women lives a creature of themselves, an independent force (however small) that can sense danger and send out a warning signal. It is important that you respond accordingly once you sense this warning.

MESSAGE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

The level of security in any country is determined by the quality of its law enforcement agencies and the same applies to sexual assault. As long as we have a law enforcement that downplays the problem of sexual violence and ignores requests of victims, then there is little chance of curbing the problem. Thus, when a victim of sexual abuse calls the police for assistance, the police is under an obligation to respond speedily and to treat the situation as a crime. Apart from suffering violence from the perpetrators, the police often subject victims to further victimization, and this shouldn't be so, little wonder then that victims of sexual abuse prefer not to report the matter to the police. In order for an officer to make an arrest, the crime does not have to be committed in his presence. The officer has the right to arrest the abuser based on observations at the scene of the crime.

The officer considers physical injuries, statements by the victims and other witnesses, and comes to a

decision about whether or not to arrest the abuser. This should be the ideal situation, however, many girls who have been raped and reported the matter to the police claimed that they were taunted, embarrassed or ignored and this shouldn't be so.

In conclusion, it is important to emphasize that sexual violence is not a myth; it is a crime, an injustice, a violent act, that is perpetrated everyday in our country against children, women, and in a few cases, against men. It is therefore our collective responsibility to ensure that we expose rapists and report any form of sexual violence. Most importantly, it is our responsibility to ensure that violators are prosecuted. We should also create a safe environment for young girls to grow by laying the foundation they need to become responsible and healthy adults.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE BEEN RAPED:

- Speak to someone you trust and keep your clothes and try not to bath. (If you bath, you will wash away the evidence of the rape).
- Report the case in a police station as soon as you can. This enables the police officer to gather enough evidences, as he might need to visit the site of the rape. You might request to speak with a female officer in a private room to avoid taunting and embarrassing glances commonly given by male police officers.
- Ensure to relate the story with exactness. When you are required to write a statement, you should write everything you can remember about the

(cont'd on page 30)

Make a choice today that nobody, not a friend, boyfriend, acquaintance, or family member is going to sexually victimize you and choose to speak out if they ever do.

POEMS



Advice

Don't ask advice from anyone
Who doesn't trust you
Don't give advice to anyone
Who is jealous of you
Don't ask a woman for advice
About a rival of hers;
A coward about war
A merchant about bargain
A buyer about selling
A stingy person about gratitude
A cruel person about kindness
A lazy slave about a difficult task
A casual worker about finishing a job.
Instead, always pray that the Almighty
Shows you what to do.

By Febishola Famoye

*St. Augustine's' College of Education,
Akoka, Lagos.*

Thought It Hurts

When you do your best
And you deserve the best
You get deprived of the best
At the end of it all.
Though it hurts
To be at a loss
Since it was not your flux
That put you at a loss
Oh! You are not worth the loss at all.
Though it hurts
To be made to fall
Never remain on the floor
Get up and walk tall.
You are the most treasured of all
Though it hurts
Do not feel hurt
Because when the night is gone
There is always a morning after
And the best of you
Though it hurts
Always remember
That you are the sunshine
That the world can definitely
Do without always walk tall.

Peculiar Ediomomo-Abasi

Moral Guide

A birthday gift it was
Given to me by my grandma
A package of ten Do's and Don'ts
Written on a silver plate
Almost like that given to Moses at
Sinai
The content simple but instructive
Says do this and don't do this
Do that and don't do that
A daily guide it has turned to be
Like a close companion
We associate every tick of the
clock
Little wonder then
I have come to be what I am today
A well-behaved child

By Ajayi Titilope

My Mother

There never could be anyone else like
my mother
Sent to me from my heavenly father
Could there be another
Who could have loved me like her?
Could there be another who bore my
pains like her
Even if there is another
Certainly it is not the same as my
mother
Who beats and corrects me when I'm
wrong
And when I cry, she sings me a song
But she loves me always as I see
She never lets me stay far from her
knee
And while I grow older
Her love never alters
Yet stronger and deeper I cherish her
better
In all life's bother, I love my mother

Aderayo Kehinde

*Eva Adelaja Girls Secondary School,
Bariga*

PHOTO REPORT

14th International Conference On AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA 2005)

The 14th International conference on AIDS and Sexually transmitted Infections in Africa (ICASA) held from 4th-9th December 2005 in Abuja. A three-day Pre-ICASA Youth Forum was organized from 1st-3rd December 2005. AHI served as one of the co-sponsors of the Youth Forum. Other sponsors were the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Plan International and MTN Nigeria Communications Limited, Ltd. During the Youth Forum, AHI organized four Resource Mobilization Workshops on proposal writing as well as securing funds from donor agencies, private sector and the Internet. The ICASA provided an opportunity for AHI to share its work, especially in promoting young people's health and development.

The organization facilitated sessions on HIV/AIDS and Education, HIV/AIDS Education and the Media as well as the Role of NGOs in Response to HIV/AIDS and Young People. AHI also set up an exhibition booth, which served as an avenue to interact with other programme implementers and provided access to the organization's publications, including those related to project activities. Particularly, four Capacity Building Roundtables on Programming for Young People were organized by AHI, namely:

- ✓ How to Ensure Youth Participation in Programmes
- ✓ How to Design Youth-Friendly Health Services
- ✓ How to Start and Run Anti-HIV/AIDS Clubs
- ✓ How to Communicate with Your Child About Sexuality.

The following pictures tells the story.



Young people from AHI and some other youth-serving organisations in Africa during ICASA 2005.

(cont'd on page 11)

PHOTO REPORT



AHI's Executive Director, Mrs. Nike Esiet and Ms. Tanya Zebroff of the World Bank at AHI's Exhibition booth.



Youth participants and some UNICEF staff in a group photograph at the Pre-ICASA Youth Forum.



Some participants at the Skills Building Workshop organized by AHI during ICASA 2005.



Dr. Aderemi Desalu of LASACA and Dr. Ibrahim Atta of NACA with AHI team during their visit to AHI's Exhibition booth.



The Executive Director, AHI, Mrs Nike Esiet (3rd from left) and the Finance and Admin. Manager, Mrs Bimbo Jide-Aremo (Extreme right) with officers of the FMOE HIV/AIDS Unit and Lagos State Ministry of Health.

Cartoon

AT THE END OF HIS LESSON ON "HOW TO WRITE AN APPLICATION LETTER," OUR ENGLISH TEACHER TOLD ME TO WAIT BEHIND.



WHEN THE OTHERS HAD GONE, HE STARTED CRACKING DIRTY JOSES— AND LATER, SLIPPED A LOVE LETTER INTO MY HAND.



I REPORTED HIM TO THE PRINCIPAL AND HE GOT A SACK LETTER.



NOW, I HEAR HE'S BUSY AT HOME WRITING APPLICATION LETTERS!





Dear Diary

Chidinma Ogbonna

Monday

Dad had lost so much blood and was still unconscious, as a result of yesterday's incident, in which he was cut with a machete. The doctor however assured us that he would be fine. Mum was crying profusely. Since I have never seen so much blood before, I was scared to look at dad, as he lay there unconscious. So many thoughts ran through my mind. For instance, I wondered what life would be like if he should die. I don't even want to think about it; that means we would become fatherless and mum would become a widow. NO! NO! NO! Suddenly I found myself shouting NO! About the same time, I realised that all eyes were on me; it was then that it dawned on me that I had actually thought aloud. Before we left the hospital dad had regained some level of consciousness after taking three (3) pints of blood.

Tuesday

I woke up to find my aunt in the sitting room, she had heard about the accident and had come to confirm things for herself. She was surprised to see me, as she expected I would have gained admission into a higher institution of learning. I told her about my experiences with the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) and she advised mum to get me enrolled in a professional school instead of allowing me to sit idly at home. She explained that in such schools, I would receive lectures that were related to my choice of course, after which I would take the professional exams. Later in the day, we all went to see dad who had now fully recovered from his unconscious state and was only waiting for his stitched arm to heal up.

Wednesday

Today was very hectic for me at home, as I was involved in a lot of cooking and washing. I was so tired and sweaty at the end of it all that I decided to cool off by first having a cold shower and then taking a nap. I was about drifting off when the doorbell rang. Initially, I thought it was part of a dream but at the third ring, I sprang up and dashed for the door to find out who was there. I was surprised to find mum standing at the door and I wondered why she did not go with her key. From her looks, I could see that she had had a rough day at work. I welcomed her and apologized for keeping her outside that long. She sat down and threw a big brown envelope at me, inside was a form for a professional course. I was glad that at last I would stop sitting idly at home. As I thanked her she told me to make sure I filled the form and submitted it the following day.

Thursday

I woke up very early this morning so I could get dad's breakfast ready and take it to him on time. I also planned to submit my form early. I met a shocking case at the hospital. A girl aged about 14 was said to have Vesico Vaginal Fistula (VVF). I asked the nurses what VVF means and they explained to be that it was an "abnormal communication between the urinary bladder and the vagina that results in the continuous involuntary discharge of urine into the vagina vault." The girl was said to have it because she was too young

to have a baby. I was surprised because the so-called mother was still a child herself. When I got to dad's private ward, he told me that the man who cut him with a machete had just left after paying the bills and apologizing to dad for his action. Dad said he also brought some provisions; when I asked dad if he asked him why he was chasing the other man with a machete, he said it was because the man owed him five thousand Naira and had refused to pay back. When I told dad about the girl with the VVF, he further explained to me that she probably could not deliver the baby on her own without a caesarian operation because she was too young and did not get to the hospital on time and had been in labour for too long. At the end of it, I was glad that I had a father I could talk to. When I realised that I was running late, I bade dad goodbye and quickly rushed out of the hospital so I could submit my form on time. In my rush, I bumped into someone at the entrance. I looked up to apologize only to see this handsome dark complexioned young man smiling at me. I smiled back and apologized, while I hurried off.

Friday

A joyous mood was all over my house today. Why? Dad came back home. My sisters and I did the cleaning, mum prepared breakfast while my brother stayed with dad. The breakfast was very delicious. My own joy was double fold. Mum told me that I was to start my professional course on Monday, wow! My joy knew no bounds. However, I was told I had to go to the school later to sort out a few things.

Saturday

My cousin came over with some of their friends and we all went for a picnic at the Badagry beach. I was happy because it was an opportunity for me to have fun and be with friends. The picnic was fun as we had surplus food and drinks. I also got to meet so many people, but mum almost ruined it for me as she kept calling me on my cousin's phone. It got so bad that every one started calling me "mummy's pet". Why won't mummy understand that I am a big girl now, 18 years is no joke.

Sunday

It was a very sunny day, I am sure God knew it would be sunny that was why he made it a Sunday. After church I hurried home to prepare lunch for the family, my aunt came around and was glad to hear the news that I would resume school on Monday. When the lunch was ready, she however, said she would prefer soft drinks as she had already eaten earlier. Mum said I should go and buy soft drinks for my aunt. As I got out, I discovered that it was drizzling and didn't want to get my clothes soaked. However, right in front of our gate, a car sped past me and splashed muddy water on me, I was very angry but all that the car driver did was to wave an apology to me. I was still thinking of how I was going to wash the white jeans with the mud stains when someone shouted my name and as I looked over my shoulder, behold... guess who?



NEWSREEL

Abia And Rivers States Conduct Learning Visit To Lagos State

A delegation from Rivers and Abia States, comprising of officials from the Ministries of Education (MOE) and the UNFPA State Advisors paid a two-day visit to Lagos State between November 28-29, 2005. The learning visit aimed at understudying the approach adopted by the Lagos State Ministry of Education (LSMOE), which has been collaborating with Action Health Incorporated (AHI) in spearheading the implementation of the Family Life and HIV/AIDS Education programme in public junior secondary schools.

Activities conducted during the visit included interactive sessions with key stakeholders involved in the implementation and management of Family Life and HIV/AIDS Education (FLHE) Curriculum in Lagos state, especially Lagos State Ministry of Education and Action Health Incorporated. During the team's visit to LSMOE, discussions were held with the Honourable Commissioner for Education, Professor Olakunle Lawal, the Permanent Secretary, Mrs. J. O. Osun and some key Directors involved in the programme. Participants also had extensive discussions with some trained FLHE teachers, students/peer educators and principals during field visits to schools.

The learning visit afforded participants the opportunity to appraise the successes and challenges associated with the FLHE implementation process as

well as document necessary experiences and lessons learnt to facilitate the replication of the Lagos model in Abia and Rivers states. Reflections and recommendations on way forward was conducted as the last activity at Action Health Incorporated.

At the end of the visit, participants affirmed that the visit had inspired them and assisted them to recognize effective ways of partnering with relevant stakeholders in implementing the FLHE curriculum in their respective states.



A team from Abia and Rivers States MOE led by AHI in a group photograph with the Lagos State Commissioner for Education, Prof. Olakunle Lawal.

'Groom And Search' Organises HIV/AIDS Campaign For Youth



Participants at the event with copies of the "Growing Up" Newsletter.

'Groom and Search', a non-governmental organization based in Lagos recently organized a seminar on youth health and

communication. The three-day seminar, which started on September 1, 2005 and was basically aimed at promoting youth development also provided an opportunity for young people to learn about their sexuality and HIV/AIDS.

In attendance were eminent stakeholders, as well as personalities from the media, and Non Governmental Organizations. Dr. Aderemi Desalu, the Chief Executive Officer of the Lagos State AIDS Control Agency (LSACA) used the forum to call on all and sundry to join hands with stakeholders to fight the HIV pandemic.

In her presentation, Mrs. Tayo Amodu of AHI informed participants about the basic facts about HIV/AIDS including the modes of transmission, ways of preventing HIV and ways of not contracting HIV as well as care and support for persons living with HIV/AIDS. More than one hundred and twenty (120) people attended the programme.

Network Of Nigerian NGOS (NNGO) Visit AHI



Members of NNGOs in a group photograph with some AHI staff.

September 27, 2005 saw Action Health Incorporated (AHI) playing host to a delegation from the Network of

Nigerian Non-governmental organizations (NNGO).

The visit was aimed at fostering relations between the body and AHI and to further receive first hand information on the operations of the organization.

Also on the team were Ms. Phil Hurst and Mr. Megan Evans from the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA). The pair was in the country to commence a four-day international training course tagged, 'Developing communities-Nigeria', which was designed to take place at both the state and local government levels throughout the country.

On hand to receive the delegation was the Finance and Administration Manager of AHI, Mrs. Bimbo Jide-Aremo who intimated them on the activities of organization since its inception. She encouraged members of the team to share experiences on youth programming in their various fields after an extensive discussion on AHI's programmes and strategies. The delegation was taken on a tour of AHI, where they had the opportunity of interacting with the staff of AHI.

World AIDS Day Marked

AHI joined the rest of the international community to mark the World AIDS Day on December 1, 2005.

The World AIDS Day is an initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO) to sensitize the world of issues around HIV/AIDS, issues such as modes of transmission of the virus, the symptoms, ways of preventing it, the importance of knowing ones HIV status, the importance of counseling before and after the test (pre and post test counseling), the use of Anti-Retro Viral drugs and the need to show love, care and support for People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHAS).

This year's event which had as its theme; "Stop AIDS, Keep the Promise" and "Support PLWHAS, stop Stigmatization", as its sub-theme aimed at creating awareness on the need to stop stigmatization and discrimination against people living with the virus and to ensure adequate care and support etc for PLWHAS.

The event was marked in AHI with rallies around the major streets in Kosofe/Somolu/Mainland Local Government Areas where Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials on HIV/AIDS were distributed to members of the public.

Centre-based activities for in-school youth were also organized to sensitize young people on the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among young people in particular and the society at large.

Highlights of the programme included song rendition, drama presentation, quiz competition and poem recitation by students of various secondary schools in the Local Government Area and prizes were given to winners.

Other school-based activities took place in Igbobi College, Yaba, Ojota Senior Secondary School, Jibowu Junior High School and Immaculate Heart Comprehensive Junior High School. At the Federal Government Girls' College, Sagamu where Mrs. O.O. Buhari was the guest speaker/facilitator of the programme, the students were given information on the modes of transmission of the virus, girl/boys vulnerability to HIV and care for People Living with the virus etc. At the end of the programme, the students promised to help reduce the spread of HIV by abstaining from pre-marital sex. They also pledged to start caring for PLWHAS and take precaution when coming in contact with blood and body fluids.



AHI's Programme Assistant, (IEC), Mrs Amodu facilitating a session during the event.

Special Report

By Gbenga Awomodu

TFL 2005: Twelve Years of Celebrating The Youth

It was a Thursday morning, bright and promising. Everywhere around the Main Auditorium of the University of Lagos, Akoka, looked rather calm. University students were beginning to go about their daily academic business. You would not know something spectacular was about to begin if not for the banner hung atop a strategic corner of the exterior part of the hall. It screamed the message, "Putting an End to Sexual Violence." The other clues to the impending programme were the sight of young men and women discussing passionately at the main entrance of the hall, and a van from which some white plastic chairs and tables were brought down.

Entering into the reception area of the hall, one was welcomed by a bevy of beautiful girls and handsome young boys and who were beaming with charming smiles and ushering guests to their seats. The atmosphere was charged with excitement. Soon, droves of secondary school students started trooping in for the event. Those who were out of secondary school did not fail to turn up to catch the fun either. Even the adults were not left out. School teachers, PTA Health Counsellors, AHI-trained peer educators, school principals, Community Development Association (CDA) members, Government officials, representatives of other Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Donor Agencies, parents and other individuals were all present in their hundreds to

witness, firsthand, the annual event.

By the time it was 9:00 am, even the newest person on campus would have known what was happening. It was another Teenage Festival of Life! Since its debut in November 1993, the TFL has metamorphosed from an ordinary street rally into a grand gathering that a lot of youths and adults look forward to and cannot afford to miss every year. It has become a household event in the community of secondary school students in Lagos state. For most of them, a year without the TFL is synonymous with a day without food.

Over the years, Action Health Incorporated, through its landmark innovation- the TFL- has afforded young people the opportunity to discover and showcase their innate talents and abilities, while trying to pass cogent messages across to the society and its policy makers about issues that affect the lives and well being of young people. The programme has, in the past dozen years, advocated for societal and behavioural change using edutainment modes such as drama, songs, poetry, essay writing, debate and artwork/poster design. It has attracted a host of dignitaries, people who command a lot of respect in their respective professions and the society at large, and those whose opinions carry a lot of clout. The likes of veteran broadcaster, Bimbo Oloyede, of Channels Television, former Chairman of the National Action Committee



D1 (Chief Dayo Adeneye) of Prim Time Jamz was the Master of Ceremony.



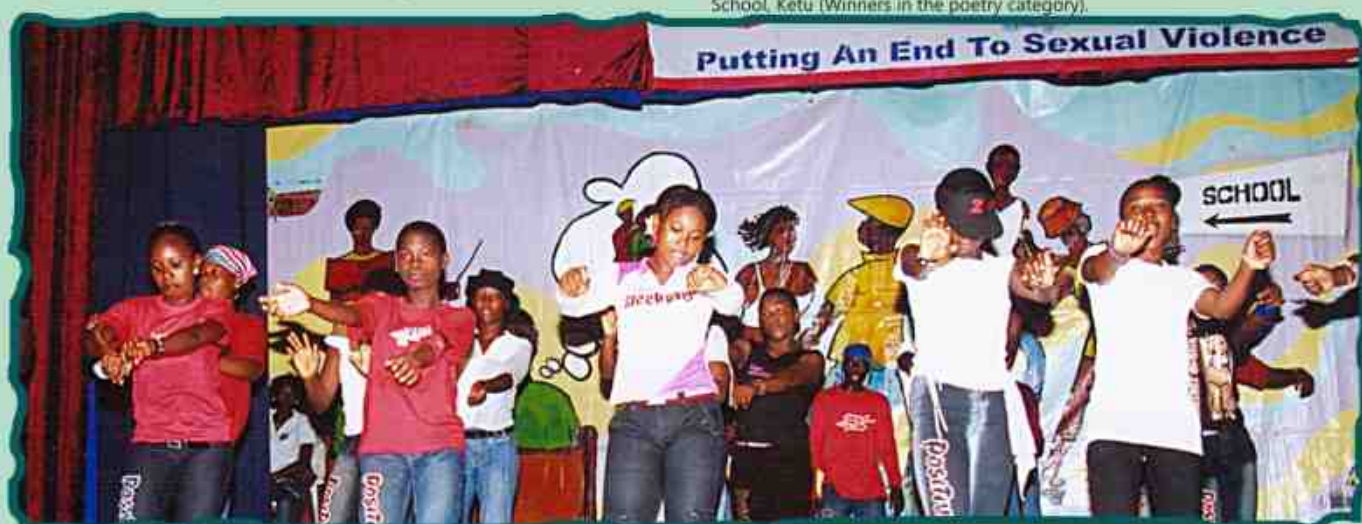
Welcome address by the Executive Director, Action Health Incorporated, Mrs. Nike Esiet.



Mrs. Dolores Oredugba, Director of Curriculum Services Dept., Lagos State Ministry of Education (far right) and other invited guests.



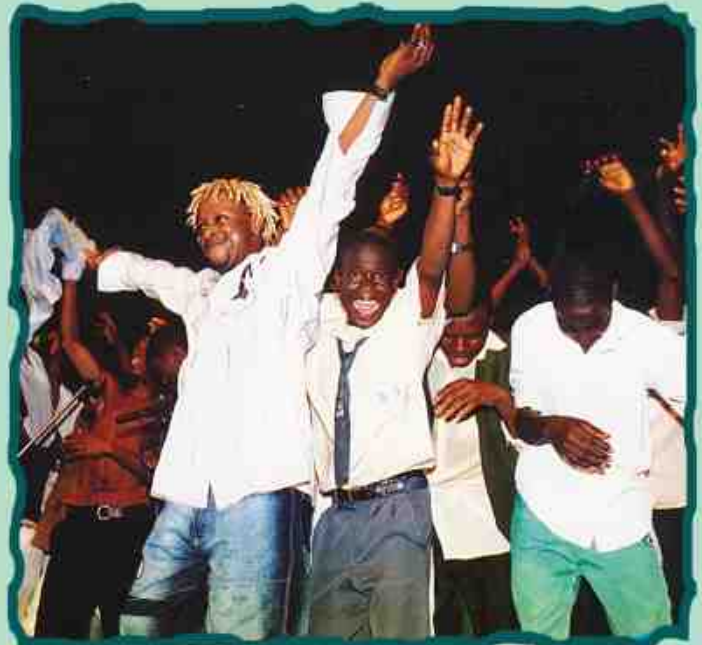
Hon. Babajide Omoworare, a representative of the Special Guest of Honour, Senator Adefeleke Mamora presenting a trophy to a student of Orishighun High School, Ketu (Winners in the poetry category).



The 'Positive Youth Voices' on Stage during the festival.



Seun Odunusi and Chidinma Ogbonna, two young comedians groomed by D1 during the festival.



Tony Tetuila thrilling the young people.



A drama presentation by students of Birrel Avenue High School, Sabo.



Mrs. Rekia Idris, representing Dr. Nike Adeyemi, Federal Ministry of Health, giving out a consolation prize to one of the participants.



A cross-section of participants at the event.

on AIDS (NACA) Prof. Ibrionke Akinsete, and other important dignitaries have participated in past TFLs.

The TFL is a unique concept, which allows for a high level of youth participation. It is a programme for the youth, planned by the youth. Young people are involved in not just planning, but also implementation and assessment of the programme.

The Teenage Festival of Life 2005 was organised to create positive values in young people and contribute to youth efficiency and responsible living, leading to general well being of the youth and provide opportunity for young people to apply practical knowledge and expertise in solving problems faced by youths in the larger society. It was also aimed at helping youths to develop skills and competencies that would enable them grow into healthy, responsible and caring youths and adults, and providing them with the opportunity to participate in community development programmes and engage in creative and productive use of their leisure.

As part of the preparations for the TFL 2005, an eleven-man committee comprising nine young people and two senior staff of AHI was set up. The committee which commenced work in March 2005 had, among others, the mandate to choose the theme for the TFL 2005, draw a list of activities and special presentations for the event, generate ideas for Poster and Banner design, propose categories of competition and modalities of entries, and suggest best crowd control method and guest artistes.

Thereafter, posters were placed at strategic places within and outside the AHI Youth centre and were also distributed to schools in Somolu, Mainland and Kosofe Local Educational Districts (LEDs). The posters specified the theme of the Festival, venue and date, different categories of entries, expected prizes, and rules and regulations guiding the event. Calls were made to young people who would want to serve as comperes, ushers and registrars at the event.

Capacity building activities were also organized to enhance the quality of the competition. A training workshop was conducted on 6th & 7th July 2005 to enlighten students and teachers from secondary schools in the aforementioned LEDs on the essentials of stage presentations. The workshop, which had 35 teachers and 156 students from 60 schools in attendance, had Mr. Lookman Sanusi of Bubbles Communications Limited as the workshop consultant.

With the students and teachers better informed,

various schools submitted their entries and a harmonization exercise was held on 12th September to assess and score each entry based on the criteria agreed upon. The judges at the exercise included professionals from media houses, schools, and the National Association of Theatre Arts Practitioners. The number of entries was pruned down to 48, including 14 drama entries (1 non-competitive), 19 song entries (2 non-competitive) and 15 entries for poem- for the pre-judging exercise.

The pre-judging exercise was on from 10th-11th of October 2005. 510 students and 30 teachers attended the two-day event, which was held to obtain the best three entries in each category, from 34 schools. Criteria such as originality, theme realization and voice projection were employed in selecting the best three entries in each category. This saw Lagos City College, Sabo, Birrel Avenue Senior High School, Sabo and The Apostolic Church Grammar School, Ketu, coming 1st, 2nd, and 3rd respectively in the drama category. Kosofe Senior College, Gbagada Senior Grammar School, and Comprehensive Senior High School, Alapere, were 1st, 2nd, and 3rd respectively in the songs category, while Orishigun Senior High School, Girls Junior High School, Agege, and Baptist followed the same order in Poetry. In the Artwork/Poster Design, National College, Gbagada, Orishigun Senior High School, and Birrel Avenue Senior High School followed suit.

Following the result of the pre-judging exercise, there was the need for proper grooming of the best three schools in each category and other non-competitive groups so that the presentations would meet up with acceptable standards of stage performance. To actualize this goal, Mr. Lookman Sanusi conducted grooming sessions with the students from 17th October - 8th November 2005.

The planning team also did a lot of the publicity in the media. On Saturday October 29th 2005, four AHI staff members were at Eko FM on a programme tagged "Youth magazine." They were able to talk about the TFL and invite young people for the programme. In the same vein, media kits were made available to media organizations as part of the attempt to get the media well informed about the TFL. The kits provided information such as the mission and vision statements of Action Health Incorporated, the genesis of the Teenage Festival of Life, including its Aims and Objectives, the TFL for the past years and the theme for this year's TFL.

Two days later, a technical support session on "Putting an End to Sexual Violence" was held at the AHI Multipurpose Hall to make TFL winning entries' presentations better, promote young people's access to support and counseling in case of any violation of their sexuality and ensure portrayal of sexual and gender violence in an acceptable manner.

The day before the TFL was set aside for dress rehearsals. The participants were able to familiarize with the stage and costumes. The comperes, made up of two AHI Youth Programme Staff and two other out-of-school young people who had a feel of the stage with Chief Dayo Adeneye (a.k.a. D1) of Prime Time Jamz who had been grooming them for about three weeks. The 18 ushers and 9 registrars who were all young people in and out of secondary school were once again briefed about appropriate conduct and dress code. All was now set for the D-day!

Thursday, 10th of November 2005 is a day that will certainly prove unforgettable for the next 365 day in the memory of about 3,000 people who attended the Teenage Festival of Life 2005. The programme, anchored by Chief Dayo Adeneye (a.k.a. D1) of Prime Time Jamz, lived up to its billing as it drew various dignitaries from the society. At the event, the Executive Director of Action Health Incorporated, Mrs. Nike Esiet, emphasized the need for the over 2500 young people, drawn from over 80 secondary schools within and outside Lagos state, in attendance to develop skills and competencies that would allow them to identify and avoid sexual violence, and make responsible decisions that would enable them grow into healthy, responsible and caring youths and adults. The Representative from The MacArthur Foundation, Mr. Godwin Odoh, was present to deliver a good will message. A director in the Lagos State Ministry of Education, Mrs. Babs Akinyeye, represented the Special Guest of Honour and Honourable Commissioner for Education, Lagos state, Prof. Olakunle Lawal, who was unavoidably absent. Hon. Babajide Omoware of the Lagos State House of Assembly also ably represented the chairperson for the TFL 2005, Senator (Dr.) Adeleke Olorunimbe Mamora.

There was rousing ovation and rapturous applause as very groups and schools entertained and educated the audience with their excellent presentations. The Positive Youth Voices of Action Health Incorporated thrilled the audience with their sonorous voices and rhythmic dance steps, as they presented their song

titled "S-T-O-P!" AHI's Drama Troupe also stressed the warning, "It Could Be You" with their drama on Sexual Violence. The winning schools were not found wanting either and they simply performed wonderfully well.

In the drama category, Lagos City College acted out *The Lost Dream*, Birrel Avenue, *The Young Virgin*, and Apostolic Church grammar School, Ketu, *Quit Sexual Harassment*. In the songs category, Kosofe Senior College sang *Say No To Sexual Abuse*, Comprehensive Senior High School said it was *Not By Force* and Gbagada Senior Grammar School chorused, *We Need To Stop The Crime*. In the category that Prof. Wole Soyinka is well known for, Orishigun Senior High School, explored *The Scourge Of Sexual Violence*, Girls Junior High School, Agege, echoed *Rise Women Rise*, and Baptist Academy, Obanikoro dealt with the *Casanova*. Other highlights of the day included the projection of the Artwork/Poster Design entries by Mr. Emmanuel Ehinmero. In this category, National College, Gbagada, depicted *Rape Na Crime*, Orishigun senior High School asked in painting, *Sexual Violence, Which Way Out?* while Birrel Avenue Senior High School captured *Violent To Humanity*.

The excitement and fun climaxed when popular artiste, Tony Tetuila came on stage. The young people in the hall were held spellbound and cheered to frenzy as he effortlessly and perfectly dished out some of his hit tracks: *You Don Hit My Car*, *Na You Sabi* and *E Go Better*. The atmosphere was further charged when, suddenly from backstage, the most successful female rapper in Nigeria in recent times, "Sasha", came on stage to do a song with Tetuila. She received a well deserved applause for her superb performance.

All said and done, it was time for the winners to smile home with their prizes. Tears of joy moisturized so many faces as students and teachers went forward to receive their trophies, plaques, and consolation prizes. While many were very happy and elated, others were not so happy- they had expected to be first prizewinners, but either ended up second or third prizewinners. "Everybody cannot be a winner," Uwagbai Esse, an SS2 student of Birrel Avenue Senior High School, who was voted the TFL 2005 Most Outstanding Actress stressed.

The event ended on a happy note as everyone smiled home, happy to be among the winners and witnesses of the Teenage Festival of Life...

(cont' d on page 30)

AHI's Youth Share Experiences About ICASA

The International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa is an annual conference that brings together youths, adults, non-governmental organizations, medical experts and people who are either infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. This year's conference was a grand event as thousands of people within and outside Africa gathered at Abuja, the Federal Capital of Nigeria, to deliberate on the progress made towards combating the HIV/AIDS scourge as well as make recommendations around the theme of the conference, which was tagged "HIV/AIDS and the family".

For Action Health Incorporated, this year's ICASA event was an eventful one because ICASA provided AHI with an opportunity to highlight her work with young people in promoting adolescent sexual health and development as well

as resource materials on young people etc. AHI also participated in the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) roundtable, the World Bank Satellite Session on HIV/AIDS Education and the UNFPA session on prevention of HIV amongst young people. AHI was one of five (5) co-sponsors of the Youth Forum. Others were UNICEF, UNFPA, PLAN, MTN. Also AHI conducted skills building sessions in her booth. The ARSRC also had 3-4 sessions in their community village. AHI was represented at the event by four young people, Gbenga Awomodu, Christopher Adebayo, Chidinma Ogbonna and Feyi Fowowe; as well as the Executive Director, Mrs. Nike Esiet, a Board member, Dr. Uwem Esiet and the Finance and Administrative Manager, Mrs. Bimbo Jide-Aremo.

Pre-ICASA Youth Forum

The four young people that represented AHI participated in the Pre-ICASA Youth Forum, which held from 1st-3rd December 2005. The three-day forum, which attracted thousands of concerned youths was aimed at ensuring that young people came together to express their views about the progress made by their respective countries in combating the scourge, as well as draw up concrete plans for the way forward. The plenary sessions, group activities and workshops held during the forum provided a good opportunity for young people to articulate the challenges they face in the fight against HIV and AIDS; garner skills that would enable them work better in the field of HIV/AIDS as well as propose workable strategies. The young people worked tirelessly throughout the entire programme and came up with a communiqué, which stated recommended plan of action for the continent.

Exhibition Booth

If there was one exciting place to be at this year's ICASA event, it was the AHI exhibition booth! The lively atmosphere, bright colours and friendly young people were pointers to the fact that Action Health Incorporated had carved a niche for itself in the area of materials development on Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive

Health Issues. As the people trooped in and out of the exhibition booth, the excitement was palpable: partly because many of them purchased useful materials, and also because many free materials were given out. The 7th of December was a particularly an eventful day as the wife of the executive governor of Borno State, Hajia Muazu visited the booth with her entourage. She asked young people at the booth several questions about AHI's work and expressed her satisfaction in the work AHI does with and for young people. She, as well as members of her

entourage, was given some of AHI's publications. Several other dignitaries visited the AHI exhibition booth. These include the Chairman, Lagos State AIDS Control Agency, Dr. Remi Desalu, Professor Ibironke Akinsete as well as several officials from the States' Ministries of Education.



AHI's Exhibition Booth at ICASA 2005.

Capacity Building Workshops



Young people listen attentively to a lecture as part of the 'Capacity Building Programme' during ICASA 2005.

One of the highlights of this year's ICASA was the roundtable discussions tagged "Capacity Building Workshops". The workshops which ran for four consecutive days featured major themes which are critical in combating the HIV/AIDS scourge. These topics, which were carefully selected include: "How to Ensure Youth Participation in Programming"; "How to Set Up Youth Friendly Services"; "How to Set Up and Run Anti-HIV/AIDS Clubs"; "How to Communicate With Your Child About Sexuality". The two-hour workshops had a total of 30 people in attendance and were attended by young people and adults alike. It was indeed an eye-opener for many

participants as it brought to fore several challenges faced by health workers, youths and parents in fighting the scourge. The sessions were quite rewarding as several propositions were made on the issues raised and participants left with a renewed sense of hope. One of the major outcomes of the workshops was that it was understood and agreed that a multi-disciplinary approach needs to be taken in curbing the spread of the scourge, such that parents, religious leaders, opinion leaders, teachers, political leaders, policy makers, including young people themselves should be involved in and that no part of the society should be left out.

YOUNG PEOPLE COMMENT ON THEIR ICASA EXPERIENCES



Gbenga Awomodu

Representing Action Health Incorporated at the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA) 2005 was a fantastic experience for me. It gave me a rare opportunity to meet with other young people and professionals who work in the area of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights from across Africa and some other parts of the world. Through the Skills-building Group Sessions, where I actively participated and was a rapporteur, I was able to hone my communication and public speaking skills. I actually made a good number of new friends (both Nigerians and people from other countries).



Chidinma Ogbonna

For me, the ICASA programme was exciting, thrilling, educative, interesting and challenging. It was quite an eventful one as I witnessed young activists working in the field of HIV/AIDS share their own experiences. It was a time to dialogue and synergise ideas on how this scourge can be brought to a halt. The conference therefore helped me to sharpen my team spirit as well as my commitment to working with other young people to curb the spread of the disease.



Christopher Adeboye

I would not have missed this conference for anything in the world! Apart from the new information about HIV/AIDS that I learnt from the various seminars and workshops, my participation at the Youth Forum, taught me some practical lessons. I learnt to be more responsible as I was in charge of the materials that were exhibited by AHI at the event; I learnt to be more careful with my things as some of my stuff was actually stolen! However, on the whole, it was quite interesting.



Feyi Fowowe

This year's conference was indeed an eye opener for me. Its funny how you think you know everything and then you meet people who know more than you. That was exactly what happened to me at ICASA. It was a time of learning for me. I was quite challenged by the many people I met who are actually infected by HIV, but whose zest for life has kept them at the forefront of the fight. It was also a time for introspection and rededication to the fight against the scourge. I was particularly excited by the session we had with Wole Soyinka and Winnie Mandela, two prominent people whose faces we only get to see on TV or in the papers! But I saw them life, and for me, it was quite thrilling. On the whole, I think I am a better person than I was before the conference and I am quite glad about that.

Lagos Tertiary Institutions Conduct Study Tour On South Africa HIV & AIDS/Life Skills Education

To ensure sustainability of the Family Life HIV/AIDS Education (FLHE) programme in Lagos State, a learning visit to South Africa's Department of Education was organized by Action Health Incorporated in collaboration with the Lagos State Ministry of Education for heads of tertiary institutions in Lagos State from 26th October 4th November 2005. The specific objectives of the programme were to facilitate a better understanding on the need for young people to have access to information and skills that will

enhance their sexual and reproductive health; facilitate the roll-out of pre-service training of competent teachers in FLHE delivery in Lagos State and to catalyze the establishment of functional human sexuality programme/HIV/AIDS programme in Lagos State tertiary institutions.

These objectives were achieved through interactive sessions with relevant officers of the South African Department of Education; field visits to schools and as well as sharing of relevant materials. The Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa (PPSA) facilitated the learning visit for the team. Highlights of the learning visit included interactive sessions with the officials of South African Department of Education, field visit to PPSA, field visit to public schools in Guateng Province and sharing of resource materials by the Department of Education and PPSA.

Several lessons were learnt from the visit, including Government's strong commitment towards addressing HIV/AIDS, provision of resources for implementation, enforcement of quality assurance through standardized assessment measures, capacity building for programme



Nigerian Delegates and Officials of South African Department of Education during the Study Tour.

implementers and sustainability plans for the programme despite opposition by pressure groups:

The learning visit inspired and increased participants' commitment to incorporate FLHE in the state's tertiary institutions, with a view to ensuring sustainability of the project in the state. The Nigerian delegate comprised Mrs. Winifred Abimbola Awoyinka Director Higher Education, Lagos State Ministry of Education (LSMOE), Mr. Hakeem Ajose-Adeogun Deputy Provost, Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education (AOCOED), Mr. Lawal Moshood Babatunde Lecturer, (AOCOED), Mr. Eleso, Taiwo Timothy Lecturer, (AOCOED), Mr. Adekunle, George Pius Lecturer, (AOCOED), Mr. Ibrahim, Tunde Lasisi Lecturer, Lagos State College of Primary Education (LACOPED), Mrs. Oshodi, Odun Oriyomi Lecturer, (LACOPED), Mr. Ekemode, Kamaldeen Olatunji Provost, (LACOPED), Mr. Adegbola, Adetunji Adekola (LACOPED), Prof. Amosu, Tundonu Adekunle Deputy Vice Chancellor, Lagos State University (LASU), Mrs. Amosu, Sewanu, Director, Basic Education Studies (LSMOE), Dr. (Mrs.) Ogunbiyi, Margaret Oluranti, Lecturer (LASU), Dr. Uwem Esiet, Director, (AHI) and Mrs. Bunmi Olatunde, Programme Manager, AHI.

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR GRADES AT SCHOOL

Your grades say a lot about you. Having good grades can enhance your self-image. Below are some of the ways you can improve your grades at school.

HAVE A BROAD VIEW: To improve your grades you need a broad view of what is required from you in each subject you are offering. You need to know the depth of the reading you will be required to undertake in each subject. This means familiarizing yourself with the syllabus of each subject at the various levels i.e. Know the syllabus for the term, for the session, and for the final examinations. Knowing this will help you plan your work.

Having got the idea of what is required of you; you have to set a target, which you required of yourself. Your target determines your approach to studies and your final results. A student with no target settles for whatever he/she gets, while a student with a target works towards a goal, which acts as a drive to great success.

SIT DOWN TO LEARN: Once you have set your target, you need to sit down to learn. To achieve this, you must do the following:

- ◆ Always be in class.
- ◆ While in class, pay attention to what your teacher is teaching you.
- ◆ Learn to ask questions if you don't understand what you are being taught.
- ◆ Always participate in activities when you are in class.
- ◆ Develop the habit of writing your notes immediately. Don't keep the writing of your notes till a later date.
- ◆ Always do your home work and assignments as soon as you can.

PLAN YOUR WORK: Planning your work means taking steps to acquire the necessary knowledge and getting yourself prepared for your examinations. To

achieve this:

- ◆ Determine the number of hours you will need to read per week.
- ◆ Draw a timetable that will include all the subjects you are offering.
- ◆ Start reading your notes from the first day in class.
- ◆ Consult necessary textbooks to shed light on each topic.
- ◆ Ask for your classmate's assistance on topics you don't understand. Do this immediately such topics are taught in the class.
- ◆ Consider reading when you will be less disturbed (probably during the night).

SOLVE QUESTIONS: The test of your knowledge is the depth of the questions you can answer. Read to find answers from past examination questions, as well as those in textbooks etc. The more questions you can answer the more likely your grades will improve.

USE YOUR MEMORY: Fall into the habit of relying on your memory. The more you expect your memory to perform the stronger it becomes. After reading, run in your mind the summary of what you have read and expect that your memory will retain at least 70% of what you have read.

PRAY: There is hardly anything in life that we can do without praying. So learn to commit your studies into God's hands.

Culled from Teenagers' Digest Magazine Vol. 1 No1, 2003

Fall into the habit of relying on your memory. The more you expect your memory to perform the stronger it becomes.



True Life Story

"Abused and Humiliated"

Life seemed promising; I really enjoyed my early childhood. I was a precious child and my parents took very good care of me. At age two, I started pre-nursery school because I was sharp and intelligent and the love and care shown me by my parents contributed to my brightness and intelligence.

The situation started changing when I was 10 years old. My parents began to have one problem or another. They would quarrel and fight and most times the quarrel was as a result of a little misunderstanding.

When I was 13 years old, they could not continue their marriage any longer and they separated. My mother took me to Ibadan to stay with my aunt.

Initially things went well, my mum was responsible for the cost of my education, feeding and other necessities. This, she did in order not to put an extra burden on my aunt who had three (3) children; 2

boys and a girl. My mother used to send cash to my aunt and buy most of the things I needed and would most times keep them with her.

After some time, my auntie's attitude towards me started changing. I repeated Junior Secondary school (JSS 3) because my aunt spent the money, which was meant for my school fees, and I could not go to school that year, so I had to stay at home. Unfortunately my mother's visit was not frequent as she used to visit only on weekends. This meant that she did not know what was happening as my auntie had earlier warned me never to reveal what was happening, so I kept my mouth shut.

While I was staying at home, a neighbor (Mr. Taptin) who was 15 years older than me sexually assaulted

me. The first time, I bled profusely and did not know what to do. I took one of my wrappers and cleaned the blood stain. It was so painful and within me I vowed never to marry in my life if this was what having sexual intercourse entailed. Apparently, my aunt knew about it because when she came back that evening and saw me depressed and my dress was stained with blood, she didn't do more than just

telling me to clean up myself and get on with my house chores. Off course, she had repeatedly warned me not to disclose her family's problems to outsiders as she would strangle me and so I kept this blatant violation of my fundamental human right to myself. It didn't end there as Mr. Taptin continued to sexually defile me.

Those times were so painful for me and I became emotionally imbalanced. I lost my sense of self worth and self esteem. I

became so depressed that I lost my appetite for food and this took a toll on me as I became very emaciated. Fortunately, though too late, a neighbor of ours told my mother during her visit on one particular weekend that I had not been going to school and that something was emotionally wrong with me. My mum was so furious and she took me away that day. I started living with my mother but I could not tell her about my being sexually abused. This was partially because I held my mother responsible for my ordeal. I felt that she had failed in her responsibilities of nurturing me and giving me a sense of security and also because I felt worthless. The memory kept haunting me and I was ashamed of myself.

"Learn to be assertive, report any form of sexual harassment immediately so that it does not continue or lead to rape and if you have been sexually abused or raped before, talk to a

(continued on page 29)



Dear Auntie

Dear Readers, the "Dear Auntie" 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 Auntie Column), Action Health Incorporated, 17 Lawal Street, Off Oweh Street, Ilbowu, P.O. Box 803, Sabo, Yaba, Lagos.



Is it true that if a young man that has reached puberty decides to abstain from sex, sperm will accumulate in the scrotum and this will cause pain both in the scrotum and lower abdomen?



This is just a misconception because sperm cannot accumulate in the scrotum. If sperm is produced and the man does not have sex to discharge it from the body, it will be reabsorbed into the system. Complaint of scrotal pain and lower abdominal pain may occur as a result of some other sickness but not because sperm is accumulated. Wanting to have sex to relieve pain in the scrotum and lower abdomen is just an excuse and is not based on fact.



My parents fight all the time. It makes me feel sad and I don't know what to do. Can you please tell me what is responsible for this?



There can be several reasons for your parents' hostility to each other. Some of the reasons may be things they can share with people and some they cannot disclose to a third party. Parents may be under pressure because of the financial situation of the family, stress at the workplace, the children's behaviour or their academic performances. Try to find out the reasons for this hostility from your parents, but don't try to take sides with either of them. You may inform trusted family friends or a religious leader whom you know your parents respect to intervene. Also let your parents know that their constant fighting is affecting you and your siblings.



How do I know when my menstruation will begin and will it occur every month?



Menstruation is the periodic flow of blood from the vagina, which results from the shedding of the uterine lining when fertilization does not take place. It occurs in females who have reached puberty. When you reach

puberty you notice some changes in the body like enlargement of the breasts. Widening of the hips and vaginal secretions may also increase. These changes may commence from age 10 (or even earlier) or as late as age 18. At the onset, your menses may not occur every month, but by the end of the second or third year, most people would have established a regular pattern. The menstrual cycle varies for different females with a range of 20-35 days. Menstruation occurs every 21 days if your cycle is short or 35 days if it is long. Most females have their menses every 28-30 days. It is very common for adolescent girls to skip several months after the commencement of menstruation. The onset of menstruation or the first menstrual cycle is known as menarche.



For how long can HIV-Positive people live?



When HIV enters an individual's body, it attacks the immune system, which protects the body against infections and diseases. As a result of the weakened immune system, some of these diseases or illnesses may become life threatening. However, a person who is HIV-positive can live a healthy and productive life for several years by taking care of his/her health and avoiding risky behaviour. Living positively with HIV involves:

- Good nutrition
- Avoiding alcohol, tobacco and drugs
- Physical exercise
- Getting enough sleep and rest
- Seeking medical attention whenever an illness arises
- Seeking information about the virus
- Practicing safer sex by protecting others from the virus
- Joining a support group, of people living with HIV/AIDS
- Having hope and maintaining spiritual health
- Keeping surroundings clean.
- Taking Anti-Retroviral Drugs as prescribed
- Spending time with family and friends

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Career Guide

DO YOU WANT TO BE A PHYSIOTHERAPIST?

Physiotherapists, now often called physical therapists are health care specialists who assess and treat people whose mobility is restricted by injury, illness, or age. They use a range of rehabilitation treatments to improve mobility and relieve pain. These include exercise, manipulation, massage, ultrasound, hydrotherapy, and deep heat.

THE JOB

People with a wide variety of needs are treated by physiotherapists. Their clients can include accident victims, pre and post-operative patients, people with cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, nerve injuries, burns, fracture, amputations, head injuries, breathing difficulties, low back pain; arthritis and heart disease.

Doctors usually refer the clients of physiotherapists to them. At first contact with clients, physiotherapists look at their medical history and assess their capabilities, by using physical tests to measure such factors as range of movement, the amount of muscle wastage, their strength and weaknesses. After making an initial assessment of the problem, often in consultation with other health care specialists, physiotherapists decide on the aims and objectives of the treatment, bearing in mind the needs of the patient. The goals of a course of treatment may be to relieve pain, restore function, prevent disability, or achieve as high a level of independence as possible.

After developing a written treatment plan, physiotherapists treat and monitor patients'

progress, by using exercises to develop balance, to strengthen weak muscles, or to help patients to relax. Joints and unused muscles may be stretched and manipulated to increase their flexibility. Weights can be used to help improve coordination, strength and endurance. Hydrotherapy can be a particularly useful treatment, since the water supports the weight of the body and the heat soothes pains and relaxes muscles.

Health education and the prevention of illness and injury are becoming increasingly important. Physiotherapists offer relaxation classes for expectant mothers and exercise programmes to help them improve their muscle control after the baby is born.

Most physiotherapists work about a 40-hour week, which may include some evenings and weekends. Sessions are usually on an individual basis, but occasionally, physiotherapists hold group sessions for

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patients with similar problems. Therapists may see up to 15 patients a day. The job can be physically demanding and heavy lifting may sometimes be involved. Physiotherapists have to bend, kneel and stand for long periods of time.

Therapists work in the hospitals, clinics, sports clubs, schools and patients' homes.

TRAINING

To become a physiotherapist, an approved bachelor's degree in physiotherapy is required in most countries. Competition for courses is usually fierce.

Degree courses last for three or four years and cover anatomy, physiology, chemistry physics pathology, behavioural science, biomechanics, human growth and development. Also covered are evaluation and assessment techniques, disease and trauma, and the therapeutic procedures. In addition to academic study, physiotherapy students have practical, supervised clinical experience in hospitals and in the community.

After the initial qualifying programme, it may be possible to take further courses specializing in such areas as remedial gymnastics, sport injuries, paediatrics, cardiopulmonary, orthopaedic or mental illness. These courses usually lead to advance certification.

Most countries require physiotherapists to be state registered or licensed.

REQUIREMENTS

Useful subjects include mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, English language etc.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT THE LICENCING BOARD:

The Medical Rehabilitation and Therapy Board
Federal Medical Compound
Muritala Mohammed Way
Yaba, Lagos.
P.O.Box 3728.

Skills and Personal Qualities

- Attention to detail
- Communication skills
- Creativity
- Good with people
- Initiative
- Manual dexterity
- Patience
- Persuasiveness
- Planning ability
- Sensitivity
- Stamina
- Tact
- Team work
- Technical Ability

Some courses have a minimum height requirement of 1.6metres. A high standard of physical fitness is required.





Does a rape victim need to visit the hospital?



A person who has been raped is at risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections including HIV or getting an unwanted pregnancy. Medical attention is very important to obtain treatment for injuries and other health concerns. Treatment may include emergency contraception to prevent pregnancy or post-exposure prophylaxis in the case of HIV. In addition, medical evidence can be collected in case the victim wants to seek legal redress and this can be very important in proving the guilt of the perpetrators. The rape victim can also obtain counselling to deal with this traumatic event.



Why do I need to know my HIV/AIDS status?



One of the factors that make HIV infection more difficult to manage is late diagnosis. By this time the immune system is severely weakened and some individuals may have progressed from HIV infection to AIDS. With early diagnosis, which is by voluntary confidential counseling and testing, this can be prevented and the condition can be properly managed. Also if one is negative, he/she can obtain information on how to avoid risky behaviour in order to keep the negative status.



Is it good to have two boyfriends/lovers at the same time and to be having sexual intercourse with the two of them?



Having more than a lover at a time may increase the risks of contracting STIs including HIV as well as getting pregnant. It can also lead to loss of concentration on other serious issues such as academic pursuits because starting a relationship even with only one person has its own challenges and responsibilities. Honesty, loyalty and respect are also important elements of a relationship and these would be missing in this case.



I am 15 years old. A male friend of my sister's wants to start a relationship with me and he has been pressuring me to agree to his request. I don't know what to

tell him



You need to give honest responses to some important questions: Are you matured enough to cope with the demands and responsibilities of starting a relationship? Do you know the level that the relationship between your sister and this guy is? Is it likely that he is or was in an amorous relationship with your sister? This kind of relationship will be exploitative in nature because of the difference in age; the young man may be more streetwise than you are. Most importantly, ask yourself how this relationship would affect the goals you have set for yourself.

"Abused and Humiliated"

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Some weeks after I got to my mother, I started feeling some itching sensation around my vagina and not quite long, I started noticing some yellowish discharge with an unpleasant odor. Through the help of a neighbour who promised not to tell my mother, I went to a hospital where I was diagnosed as having a reproductive tract infection. I was placed on treatment and the symptoms stopped.

In school, I summoned courage to talk to our Parents/Teachers Association Health Counselor (PTA H C) about what happened to me, and with a series of counselling I was able to overcome the memory of my painful experience.

I have learnt some lessons, though in the hard way.

On no account will I allow my young daughters to stay away from me when I become a mother as weak and irresponsible men tend to capitalize on their vulnerability. Again, I should have run out of the house in that same situation i.e, stained clothes etc, for other people to see. Probably, somebody would have taken the matter up and the shameless man would have been brought to book.

My fellow young people, learn and endeavor to be assertive, report any form of sexual harassment immediately so that it does not continue or lead to rape and if you have been sexually abused or raped before, talk to a counselor or a trusted adult.

TFL 2005: Twelve Years of Celebrating The Youth

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Participants Share Experiences About TFL

The Teenage Festival of Life 2005 may have come and gone, but the memory still remains with many people. The successful and wonderful performances by the students did not come easily. They were a product of strategic and time-taking preparation and input by the students and their teachers. Below are comments of some teachers and young people who participated in the last TFL.

Peace Ambrose (Student From Orishigun High School, Ketu -Winning School)

"I first participated in the TFL last year, but was not so lucky to qualify for the finals. This year, when I was announced the first prize winner, I felt very good, excited. In fact, saying that I was very happy is an understatement! I felt great joy in my heart. That day remains the best day in my life. My secret? That's very simple. I was very optimistic and was never ready to

give up. Most importantly, I put God first."



Mr. Kester Kudchinbu (Teacher from Baptist Academy, winning school)

"We have been part of the TFL before without winning anything, but this year my school won the third prize in Poetry and I felt on top of the world

because it showed an improvement in our level of seriousness and performance. I was able to bring my school principal along and he was captivated by what he saw. The whole programme was fantastic."

CHIDINMA OGBONNA (young compere)

"The 2005 TFL is one that I can never forget in my life as I was actually one of the main celebrants. The most gratifying however, was acting as one of the comperes for the event. I felt on top of the world. Another thrilling experience I had was working hand in hand with a prominent personality in the entertainment industry in the person of Chief Dayo Adeneye (D1) of Prime Time Jamz who was the MC of the occasion. The Teenage Festival of Life has really taught and helped me realize that there is nothing one cannot do if there is the will to do it, because I might never have thought I could present a programme of that magnitude being a shy person who was not used to facing a large audience. It was a great challenge for me, especially standing in front of very important personalities. It further boosted my team spirit considering the fact that I had to work with three other young people, Christopher Adeboye, Seun Odunusi and Mercy Asuquo. During the rehearsals, we were able to work well as a team, which was depicted through our performance. This year's festival brought out some hidden talents in me and also went a long way in instilling a high sense of self-confidence in me. I am glad I was part of this festival and would want to say a big thank you to Action Health Incorporated for this opportunity.

Putting An End To Sexual Violence

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rape.

- ◆ Request to be taken to see a doctor urgently. The doctor will examine you and give necessary treatments that will prevent the occurrence of pregnancy, and the transmission of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV.
- ◆ If you lay a charge, your case may go to court. The rapist's lawyer may ask you hurtful questions. This can be very hard but can be done if you are determined.

Do not forget that the police reports, your statements at the police station, as well as the doctor's notes would be used as evidence in the court of law.

References:

- (Soul City. Help Stop Women Abuse. 2000 Pg 24-25).
- "Against Our Will" by Susan Brown Miller.
- "Violent No More" by Michael Paymar.

Basic Skills For Young People

“APPLY YOUR EFFORT AND BE COMMITTED”:

People who are successful in their fields of interest do whatever it takes to get the result that they want. One of the most important tasks is to decide what you want, if you don't, you may end up at the wrong place. It may sound simple, but most adults can't answer the question of “what do you want to be doing when you get older?”. Identify a range of goals and work towards them until you can find something better (yes, you can always change your goals). Identify your goals and find out how they link to your school. Whatever you call your preferred future direction, write it down, draw it, paint it, make a collage of your direction and work towards it. If you can find something better, simply adjust your goals and direction. Remember to link your goals to your school work.

To create greater motivation for your school work, take time to find as many positive connections between the subjects you are doing and possible benefits for achieving your goals.

“BE HIGHLY MOTIVATED”:

Motivation is the force that causes you to take action. Apply the effort and commitment needed to do something.

These are two important parts to motivation:

Who are you doing it for? For myself or others ie, parents or teachers?

What are you doing it for? To gain benefits or avoid unpleasantness?

People tend to be successful when working toward positive outcomes on things they find personally fulfilling. In such cases, they will do whatever it takes to get the result that they want. One of the most important tasks is to decide what you want. If you don't plan where you are heading, you might end up in a course, occupation or lifestyle that is not very satisfying. If you haven't decided yet, identify a range of wishes for the future, and set about exploring the background of people who have achieved that lifestyle. Mapping out a plan to achieve your dreams is often called writing up a list of goals.

“RECEIVE FEEDBACK”:

This is the returning of a part of the output of any

system, as input, especially for correction or control purposes.

An important learning strategy is to identify and use feedback effectively, to enable changes to occur in how you do things, so that your performance may improve. Some examples of getting and using feedback are:

- ♦ A teacher writing comments on a piece of work she has assessed.
- ♦ Checking the answers to some mathematics problems in the back of the book.
- ♦ A music teacher demonstrating changes a piano student needs to make with his fingers as he plays the keys.
- ♦ Receiving the results for a test or examination.
- ♦ Reflecting on the outcomes of a job interview to consider improvements for next time.

Getting feedback is an essential part of the learning process. Using feedback to identify improvements is the difference between learning and being stuck with mistakes.

“MAKE THE CORRECTIONS”:

Make the most of feedback by correcting mistakes when work is returned. This is where learning really takes place, finding out how to do what you could not do “yesterday”. Unfortunately schools rarely provide time for this valuable task.

“MONITOR YOUR PROGRESS”:

Monitoring progress is an essential skill developed by all successful people.

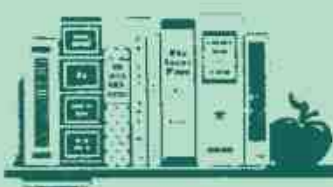
Do you keep track of the overall results that you are getting?

Very few students keep a record of their progress, possibly because it is difficult to see a trend from the results and scores. Tracking your performance helps you to develop the skills for recording target achievements as well as monitor outcomes based on assessment tasks.

References:

www.study.com.au/magic/skills/motivate

Study magic courses: student Resources.



Resources



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

BOOKS

“CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE”

By Kathleen Faller

This book provides guidelines and directions for both students and practitioners. It contains interesting case studies, which illustrate the variety of conceptual frameworks developed to identify and treat sexual abuse. It also helps readers empathize with victims and grasp the issues on more than just an intellectual or theoretical level

“THE PUBLIC NATURE OF PRIVATE VIOLENCE”

By Martha Fineman and Roxanne Mykitiuk

“The public nature of private violence” is a timely and path breaking book that explores the complex and diverse feminist/legal responses to domestic violence from a cross-cultural perspective. The essay in this volume writes about negative effects of child abuse by mothers, battering in relationships, state sanctioned violence, non-physical violence and incest. It offers a vast array of practical suggestions to combat the madness of abuse and oppression suffered by women and children.

“AGAINST OUR WILL”

By Susan Brown MillerIt forces readers to take a fresh look at their own attitudes towards rape. This book stands as a unique document of the history, politics and sociology of rape, the inherent and ingrained perception of equality of men and

women under the law. Facts on centuries of damaging lies and misrepresentations to reveal how rape has been accepted in all societies and how it continues to profoundly affect women's lives today are included in this package.

It is the most comprehensive study of rape ever offered to the public.

“VIOLENT NO MORE”

By Michael Paymar

The author Michael Paymar addresses the reader with respect, but doesn't sidestep the unpleasant issues by assisting the reader to understand the root of violence. Taking responsibility for violent actions and how to build relationships based on mutual respect. The book speaks directly to men who batter, offering guideline for change. Stories of previous violent men and women who were abused are included, many of them have since ended their use of violence, and their stories illustrate how they were able to change.

