

Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

A HANDBOOK FOR YOUNG GIRLS AND WOMEN



Women Information Network
(WINET)



AmplifiedChange

WINET Informative series 10

**SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE
HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR):**
A HANDBOOK FOR YOUNG GIRLS AND WOMEN

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WINET Informative series 10

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List of Acronyms

BPFA-Beijing Platform for Action
FGM -Female Genital Mutilation
HPV - Human Papilloma Virus
ICPD(PoA) - International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action
IVD - Intravenous Drug
MHM - Menstrual Hygiene Management
NAWOJ –Nigeria Association of Women Journalists
PWDs – People with Disabilities
RH – Reproductive Health
RR – Reproductive Rights
SRHR – Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights
STIs - Sexually Transmitted Infections
SV - Sexual Violence
SWAAN -Society for Women and AIDS in Africa, Nigeria
UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WACOL -Women's Aid Collective
VVF -Vesico Vaginal Fistula
WHO – World Health Organization
WINET – Women Information Network
YORDEL-Africa – Youth Resource Development and Leadership Africa

Table of Contents

Acknowledgment	-	-	-	-	-	3
List of Acronyms	-	-	-	-	-	4
Introduction	-	-	-	-	-	6
What are Human Rights?	-	-	-	-	-	7
What are Sexual Rights?	-	-	-	-	-	8
Explaining Sex, Gender and Sexuality	-	-	-	-	-	9
Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights	-	-	-	-	-	9
Safe Motherhood	-	-	-	-	-	12
Sexual Violence and Sexual Abuse	-	-	-	-	-	13
Facts about HIV and AIDS	-	-	-	-	-	20
Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)	-	-	-	-	-	22
Cervical Cancer	-	-	-	-	-	23
The Menstrual Cycle	-	-	-	-	-	24
Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM)	-	-	-	-	-	25
Unintended Pregnancy	-	-	-	-	-	27
Abortion	-	-	-	-	-	27
Menopause	-	-	-	-	-	28
Harmful Traditional Practices	-	-	-	-	-	29
Assertiveness	-	-	-	-	-	31
Self Esteem	-	-	-	-	-	32
About the Partners	-	-	-	-	-	34
References	-	-	-	-	-	37

INTRODUCTION

This handbook is the training manual for provision of information on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) for young girls and women with disabilities. WINET's several years of working and interacting with People with Disabilities (PWDs) in Enugu State, created an opportunity to recognize the need to educate female PWDs on their Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) as human rights because increased knowledge of SRHR will impact positively on their sexual health.

The project idea emerged during WINET celebration of 2016 International Women's Day with women and girls with disabilities at Special Education Centre Oji River, Enugu State, when one of them said "our women and girls with disabilities are not aware of their sexual, reproductive health and rights, so people take the advantage to sexually abuse them. It is important for us to know our sexual, reproductive health and rights".

This illustrated training manual titled Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights: A Handbook for Young Girls and Women aims at increasing individual awareness of SRHR as human rights for young girls and women with disabilities; empower them to claim their SRHR and become active in advocating for SRHR. Information will be made available using rights-based approach and training by sign language interpreters and in forms like braille. The objective of the project is to provide information on SRHR to young girls and women with disabilities and enable them to make informed choice about SRHR.

WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world, from birth until death. These basic rights are based on shared values like dignity, fairness, equality, respect and independence. These values are defined and protected by law. They apply regardless of whether you are a person with disabilities, where you are from, what you believe or how you choose to live your life. They can never be taken away, although they can sometimes be restricted – for example if a person breaks the law, or in the interests of national security.

(Source: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights/what-are-human-rights>)

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) website explains that "Human Rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status".

In Nigeria, fundamental human rights of all citizens are protected by the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as Amended. In Chapter 4, the Fundamental Rights of the citizens are listed. Section 33: covers Right to life, which provides that every person has the right to life. No one shall be deprived intentionally of his or her life; save in execution of a sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offence of which he or she has been found guilty in Nigeria. Section 34: provides for Right to Dignity of Human Person- Every individual is entitled to respect for the dignity of the person and accordingly - No person shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment. No person shall be held in slavery or servitude. No person shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour.

WHAT ARE SEXUAL RIGHTS?

Sexual rights are human rights. These rights cover the following things: Everyone has the right to equality and freedom from all forms of discrimination based on sex, sexuality or gender. Everyone, no matter what their sex or gender or sexuality, should be given equal respect.

International Women's Health Coalition states that for women and girls, the right to control their own bodies and their sexuality without any form of discrimination, coercion, or violence is critical for their empowerment. Without sexual rights, they cannot realize their rights to self-determination and autonomy, nor can they control other aspects of their lives. Indeed, it is the attempts to control women's and girls' sexuality that result in many of the human rights abuses they face on a daily basis, including gender-based violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and limitations on their mobility, dress, education, employment and participation in public life.

Other definitions, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) working definition, make the link between sexual rights and existing human rights that are critical to the realization of sexual health, and includes:

- the right to equality and non-discrimination;
- the right to be free from torture or to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment;
- the right to privacy;
- the right to the highest attainable standard of health (including sexual health);
- the right to marry and to found a family and enter into marriage with free and full consent of the intending spouses, and to equality in and at the dissolution of marriage;

- the right to decide the number and spacing of one's children;
- the right to information and education;
- the right to freedom of opinion and expression;
- the right to an effective remedy for violations of fundamental rights.

(Source: <https://iwhc.org/articles/sexual-rights-human-rights/>)

EXPLAINING SEX, GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Sex concerns the biological differences between men and women. Human beings are born male or female with different reproductive capacities; these are called sex differences.

Gender involves how an individual or society defines "female" or "male". Gender roles are socially and culturally defined attitudes, behaviours, expectations, and responsibilities for males and females. Gender identity is the personal, private conviction each of us has about being male or female.

Sexuality is the way in which an individual experiences being male or female. This includes physical and biological aspects of one's life (e.g., menstruating, being pregnant, or having sexual intercourse), as well as emotional aspects (such as having feelings for another person) and social aspects (such as behaving in ways that are expected by one's community, based on whether one is male or female; this includes gender roles). (Source: Wikipedia, the free Encyclopedia).

SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

Sexual Health includes aspects of sexuality not necessarily related to reproduction. It recognizes the fact that people may have sex for the purpose of pleasure, not just reproduction, and that people have health needs related to such sexual activity. Attaining sexual health means having a responsible, satisfying, and safe sex life. Achieving

sexual health requires a positive approach to human sexuality and mutual respect between partners. By recognizing sexual health and sexual rights, health and education systems can help prevent and treat the consequences of sexual violence, coercion, and discrimination, and can ensure that healthy human sexuality is enjoyed by all people and is accepted as part of their overall wellbeing. The UN agencies adhere to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action, which subsumes sexual health under reproductive health. The Programme of Action states that reproductive health implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life (ICPD, Paragraph 7.2).

•

Reproductive Health (RH): is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and is not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes. Reproductive health therefore implies that people have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when, and how often to do so (ICPD, Paragraph 7.2). It is based on the recognition of the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly on the number, spacing, and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health. It also includes their right to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion, and violence, as expressed in human rights documents (ICPD, Paragraph 7.3)

Sexual and Reproductive Health: Definitions of Sexual Health and Reproductive Health overlap. To avoid confusion and to ensure that all areas are covered, many health workers, planners, and policymakers now use the term "Sexual and Reproductive Health", which refers to everything included in both sexual health and

Reproductive Health. This term can refer to a state of health and well-being, types of services, or an "approach" to service delivery. According to a book titled, The Churches and Sexual and Reproductive Rights Training Manual on Sexual and Reproductive Rights for Churches and Ecumenical Organizations *"Sexual and Reproductive Rights are human rights interpreted from the point of view of sexuality and reproduction"*.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

What are Reproductive Rights (RR)?

As defined in the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) and The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) documents, Reproductive rights are: "certain human rights recognized in national and international legal and human rights and other consensus documents, including:

- Recognition of the basic rights of couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children.
- Right to have information, education and means to do so.
- Right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health.
- Right to make decision concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence.
- The right to self-protection and to be protected against sexually transmitted infections (STIs and HIV and AIDS).
- The right to adequate, accessible and affordable health services including information, education and communication programmes to women especially in the rural areas.

In simple terms, it can be regarded as our entitlements and used as tools to intervene in areas where reproductive rights are denied and violated.

Reproductive health and rights issues include:

- Rape
- Incest
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Vesico Vaginal Fistula (VVF)
- Early/(Child) Forced Marriage
- Unintended pregnancies
- Unsafe Abortion
- Maternal Mortality
- Inheritance of Widows

(Source: *Reproductive Health and Rights, (2007), BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights, Legal Literacy Series 5*)

It is pertinent to mention that Section 27 of The Enugu State Child Rights Law (2016) prohibits Female Genital Mutilation, while sections 23 and 24 prohibit child marriage and child betrothal.

SAFE MOTHERHOOD

What is Safe Motherhood?

Safe Motherhood means ensuring that all women receive the care they need to be safe and healthy through pregnancy and child birth. The goal of safe motherhood is to ensure that every woman has access to a full range of high quality, affordable, sexual reproductive health services especially maternal care and treatment of obstetric emergencies to reduce deaths and disability.

Important safe motherhood



services include ante-natal care and counselling, skilled assistance during childbirth, care for obstetric complications and emergencies, post-partum care, planning information and services and adolescent reproductive health education and services.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

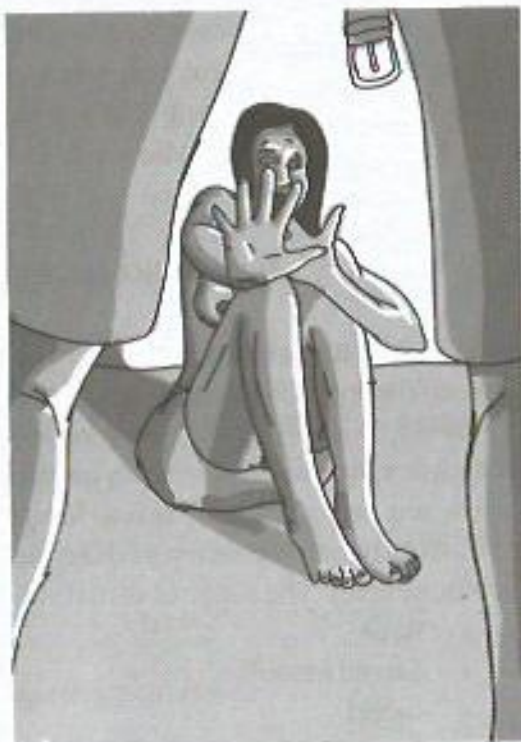
What is Sexual Violence (SV)?

Sexual Violence (SV) refers to sexual activity where consent is not obtained or freely given. It occurs any time a person is forced, coerced or manipulated into any unwanted sexual activity.

There are many types of Sexual Violence. Not all include physical contact between the victim and the perpetrator (person who harms someone else). The range of sexual violence includes:

- Rape
- Sexual Assault
- Incest
- Sexual Exploitation
- Unwanted or Inappropriate Sexual Contact
- Sexual Harassment

Sexual Violence is a crime and amounts to violation of a person's sexual right. (Source: [www. http://oasisinc.org](http://oasisinc.org)). Section 13 of The Enugu State Child Rights Law (2016) provides for the Right to Dignity of the child. It states that 'Every child is entitled to respect for the dignity of his/her person, and accordingly, no child shall be (a) subjected to physical, mental or emotional injury, abuse, neglect or maltreatment, including sexual abuse; or (b) subjected to torture, inhuman or degrading treatment.



What is Rape?

According to Wikipedia, rape is a type of sexual assault usually involving sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual penetration carried out against a person without that person's consent. Some young girls and women have been victims of rape. Rape is a punishable offence as it violates Section 34 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which provides for Right to the Dignity of Human Person. A rape victim can seek redress in protection of his or her fundamental human right.

What is sexual assault?

Sexual assault can be a violent, unexpected, traumatic and sometimes life-threatening event or series of events. Sexual assault is any unwanted sexual act or behaviour which is threatening, violent, forced or coercive and to which a person has not given consent or was not able to give consent.

What is incest?

Incest is sexual relations between people classed as being too closely related to marry each other, the crime of having sexual intercourse with a parent, child, sibling or grandchild. It is human sexual activity between family members or close relatives.

(Source: Wikipedia)

What is Sexual Exploitation?

Sexual Exploitation is an act or acts committed through non-consensual abuse or exploitation of another person's sexuality for the purpose of sexual gratification, financial gain, personal benefit or advantage or any other non-legitimate purpose. It is the sexual abuse of children and youth through the exchange of sex or sexual acts for drugs, food, shelter, protection, other basics of life and /or money. Sexual exploitation includes involving children and youth in creating pornography and sexually explicit websites.

(Source: host.jibc.caseytoolkitwhat)

What is Unwanted or Inappropriate Sexual Contact?

Unwanted sexual contact includes intentional touching, either directly or through the clothing, of the genitalia or anus, groin, breast, inner thigh or buttocks of any person without his or her consent, or of a person who is unable to consent. Unwanted sexual contact also includes making a victim touch the perpetrator.

(Wikipedia)



What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual Harassment is bullying or coercion of a sexual nature and the unwelcome or inappropriate promise of rewards in exchange for sexual favours.

What is sexual abuse?

Sexual abuse is when someone in a position of power or authority takes advantage of a person's trust and respect to involve them in sexual activity. It can involve any of the examples above. Sexual abuse can occur between: A child and an adult.

(Source: Sexual Assault and Resource Centre, (SARC) Government of Western Australia, Department of Health website).

Sexual abuse is a violation of a person's right to dignity of Human Person provided for in the Nigerian Constitution and any victim can seek redress in a law court. Sections 34 and 35 of The Enugu State Child Rights Law (2016) prohibit unlawful sexual intercourse with a child and other forms of sexual abuse and exploitation.

People with disabilities suffer one form of sexual abuse or the other. This is not unrelated to the vulnerabilities they face. This handbook will mention some manifestations of sexual violence, what to do when abuse happens and persons who are likely to abuse people with disabilities.

Persons who can sexually abuse people with disabilities

People with different disabilities may face different challenges and have very different needs. Some disabilities may put people at higher risk more than others. In various studies and reported cases of sexual violence, it has been confirmed that persons who are close to victims do have a tendency to abuse them. Cases of incest by fathers against their daughters and brothers against their sisters do exist. However NOT all persons close to people with disabilities are

likely to sexually abuse them. We have mentioned a few to enable people with disabilities be more vigilant.

- Care givers - These are the people most close to persons with disabilities. They can be nurses, doctors, lawyers and other categories of persons who provide care. There is need to maintain professional relationship with caregivers and speak up when the feeling that violation might take place or has taken place, especially when there is the feeling that the behavior is outside expected call of duty.
- Family members/ Friends - These include fathers, mothers' brothers, boyfriends, girlfriends' aunts and uncles. They are usually the closest persons to people with disabilities and in some cases genuinely mean well. However with the high rates of incest and sexual abuse, there is the need to take note of any behavior that might lead to abuse.
- Strangers- Depending on the form of disabilities, strangers can creep in on their victims especially when family members or care givers are far from them. There is therefore the need to find ways to communicate discomfort around strangers. Some predators shower gifts and praises and might eventually take advantage of vulnerabilities. It is important to note that people with disabilities do not require pity but support and respect for the dignity of their person.

Ways sexual violence can manifest

Sexual violence can manifest in the following ways:

- Unsolicited pity and showering of gifts as a form of gaining trust and eventually take advantage of a person with disability
- The perpetrator may threaten, coerce, or force someone into

non-consensual sex or sexual activities by making them feel they are doing them a favor.

- An abuser may take away access to the tools a person with disability uses to communicate, such as a computer, phone, braille materials, walking aid, thereby placing them in a difficult position.
- Many people with disabilities may not understand or lack information about healthy sexuality and the types of touching that are appropriate or inappropriate. This can be especially challenging if a person's disability requires other people to touch them to provide care. A predator might take advantage of this situation.

Getting help

Sexual assault and abuse of people with disabilities often go unreported. If you or someone you care about has been sexually assaulted or abused, the most important thing to know is that it is never the victim's fault. Everyone has the right to safety and protection.

You have a responsibility to report any abuse to ensure that it does not continue, you also have a responsibility to encourage someone who has been abused to take action. You can report to the following:

Civil society organizations

- Civil society organizations usually receive and carefully listen and document complain from survivor.
- They refer or accompany survivors to the police station.
- They ensure that police follow through, assists to ensure medical report is obtained from appropriate hospital.
- They offer procedural guidance and any assistance as may be necessary to ensure the well-being of survivor.

Social Welfare Office

- They usually receive and carefully listen and document complain from survivor.
- They investigate and enquire into cases of sexual violence and document survivors' visit.
- They counsel survivor on their right to lodge a criminal complaint.
- They offer procedural guidance and any assistance as may be necessary to ensure the well being of survivor.
- They offer referrals of the matters to police or magistrate courts.

Health Care Workers / Hospital staff

- They offer survivor medical examination and treatment if sexual violence is confirmed
- They document the visit and treatment given to the survivor
- They make themselves available to testify in the court regarding the case where and when necessary

Visit to the police station by survivor

- Police ensure that case is documented.
- Investigate claim including listening to witnesses.
- Provide prosecutorial support.
- Ensure survivor and witness are protected.

Hospital/Health care provider

- Police should accompany or refer survivor to government hospital to obtain medical report (ideally this should be free).

Magistrate court

- Préside over preliminary enquiry.
- At this point, the case is now between Nigeria (not the survivor) vs the accused.
- The case will either be dismissed or moved to high court.

High court

- Preside over the case.
- Give a judgement.
- Where compensation is necessary, the court will award such.

FACTS ABOUT HIV AND AIDS

What is HIV?

HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus. It is the virus that causes AIDS. When a person is infected with HIV, the virus enters the body and then lives and multiplies primarily in the white blood cells—the immune cells that normally protect us from disease.

What is AIDS?

AIDS stands for acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

As HIV grows in an infected person, it damages or kills specific immune cells, weakening the immune system and leaving the person vulnerable to infections and illnesses ranging from pneumonia to cancer. Only when someone with HIV begins to experience one or more of these conditions or loses a significant amount of immune cells are they diagnosed with AIDS.



How does a person know if he/she is infected?

The only way to know your HIV status for sure is to be tested for HIV. Immediately after infection, some people may develop mild, temporary flu-like symptoms or persistently swollen glands. Even if you look and feel healthy, you may be infected. People are therefore advised to check their HIV status.

How is HIV transmitted?

Usually HIV is transmitted through:

- Unprotected sexual intercourse (either vaginal or anal) with someone who has HIV.
Or oral sex with someone who has HIV.
- Sharing needles, syringes, or injection equipment with someone who has HIV. HIV can survive in used syringes for a month or more. That is why people who inject drugs should never re-use or share syringes or drug preparation equipment. This includes needles or syringes used to inject both legal and illegal drugs as well as other types of needles, such as those used for body piercing and tattoos.
- Mother-to-child transmission during pregnancy, childbirth, or breast-feeding. Any woman who is pregnant or considering becoming pregnant should be tested for HIV. Women who test positive can get drugs to prevent HIV from being passed on to their foetus or infant, and they are counseled regarding breast-feeding.
(Source: www.amfar.org).
- Transfusion with unscreened infected blood.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STIs)

What are STIs?

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), also known as Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) or Venereal Diseases (VD) are diseases that are passed on from one person to another through sexual contact, and sometimes by genital contact - the infection can be passed on via vaginal intercourse, oral sex, and anal sex. Some sexually transmitted infections can spread through the use of unsterilized Intravenous Drug (IVD) needles, from mother to baby during childbirth or breastfeeding and blood transfusions.

(Source: <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/246491.php> accessed}.

How STIs are Contracted?

Sexually transmitted infections are more easily passed on during unprotected sex - without using a condom. Some infections can be passed on via sexual contact, but are not classed as sexually transmitted infections, because sexual contact is not the primary vector for the pathogens that cause the infections - an example is meningitis, it can be passed on via sexual contact, but usually people become infected for other reasons.

How are STIs Prevented?

- Abstain from unprotected sex
- Avoid sharing towels or underclothing.
- Get a vaccination for hepatitis B. This is a series of three shots.
- If you have a problem with drug or alcohol abuse, get help. People who are drunk or on drugs often fail to have safe sex.
- Get tested for HIV.

- Consider that not having sex is the only sure way to prevent STIs.

(Source: <http://www.webmd.com/sex-relationships/understanding-stds-prevention>).

Cervical Cancer

Cervical Cancer occurs when abnormal cells on the cervix grow out of control. The cervix is the lower part of the uterus that opens into the vagina. Cervical cancer can often be successfully treated when it is found early through a Pap test.

Causes of Cervical Cancer

Studies have shown that most cervical cancer is caused by a virus called human papilloma virus, or HPV. Some adults have been infected with HPV at some time in their lives, but most infections clear up on their own. An HPV infection that does not go away can cause cervical cancer. One can get HPV by having sexual contact with someone who has it. There are many types of the HPV virus. Not all types of HPV cause cervical cancer. Some of them cause genital warts, while others may not cause any symptoms.

Symptoms of cervical cancer may include:

- Bleeding from the vagina that is not normal, or a change in your menstrual cycle that one cannot explain.
- Menstrual periods that last longer and are heavier than before.
- Bleeding when something comes in contact with your cervix, such as during sex or when you put in a diaphragm, douching or pelvic exam.
- Pain during sex.

Treatment of Cervical Cancer

The treatment for most stages of cervical cancer includes:

- Surgery, such as a hysterectomy and removal of pelvic lymph nodes with or without removal of both ovaries and fallopian tubes.

- Chemotherapy.
- Radiation therapy.

HPV vaccine (Cervarix) is now available in the country and is said to reduce the risk of cancerous or pre-cancerous changes of the cervix and perineum by about 93%.

HPV vaccines are typically given to young girls and women age 9-26 years as the vaccine is only effective if given before infection occurs. (Source: culled from a paper on Cervical Cancer by Mrs. Florence Egwu, Chief Nursing officer, ESUT Teaching Hospital, Park Lane, Enugu, at the Community Dialogue on Sexual, Reproductive Health and Rights for Women in Enugu on 13th October 2015).

THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE

What is the Menstrual Cycle?

The menstrual cycle is defined as the time from the first day of a woman's period to the first day of her next period. When periods (menstruations) come regularly, this is called the menstrual cycle. Having regular menstrual cycles is a sign that important parts of your body are working normally. The menstrual cycle provides important body chemicals, called hormones, to keep you healthy. It also prepares your body for pregnancy each month. The average menstrual cycle is twenty-eight (28) days long. Cycles can range anywhere from twenty-one (21) to thirty-five (35) days in adults and from twenty-one (21) to forty-five (45) days in young teens. The menstrual cycle is a recurring cycle of events that takes place in the female body approximately every month.

(Source: www.google.com).

A Period or Menstruation is the monthly discharge of blood from the uterus that occurs in a non-pregnant female beginning in puberty.

(Source: www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/15 and www.ovuline.com).

MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT

What is Menstrual Hygiene Management?

Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) is defined as 'Women and adolescent girls using a clean menstrual management material to absorb or collect blood that can be changed in privacy as often as necessary for the duration of the menstruation period, using soap and water for washing the body as required

(Source: <https://bmcmwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12905-018-0527-y>)

The goal of menstrual hygiene is to ensure that women and girls can manage their periods in a way that is not only healthy, but that enables their full participation in school, work and other activities. (Source: <https://medium.com>).

May 28 is celebrated worldwide as Menstrual Hygiene (MH) Day.

Importance of Menstrual Hygiene

Menstrual hygiene and management can be essential in ensuring that your everyday life is not interrupted by menstruation. It ensures that you can continue with your daily routine such as going to school, going to work or doing household chores. It can also prevent potential situations of embarrassment and in turn, make a young girl or a woman feel confident about oneself and one's body. In this sense, maintaining proper menstrual hygiene is important for your wellbeing and development.

(source: <https://www.menstrupedia.com/articles/hygiene/why-hygiene>)

Why It is Important to Maintain Good Hygiene during Periods?

- Reduced risk of urinary tract infection: These bacteria can invade your urinary tract including urethra and urinary bladder, resulting in painful urination. Using damp and dirty menstrual clothes or using sanitary napkin for longer than four hours can act as a perfect environment for growth and multiplication of harmful bacteria and yeasts.
- Reduced incidents of rashes in genitalia: Prolonged wetness can injure the external genitalia and cause rashes during menstruation.
- Ensuring good reproductive health: Unhygienic absorbents or improper hygiene during periods can result in Reproductive Tract Infections (RTIs).
- Minimizing risk of cervical cancer: Cervical cancer is a cancer of the opening of the uterus which is caused by Human Papilloma Virus. This virus is transmitted sexually and unhygienic handling of menstrual waste can spread the infection easily.

What are General Hygiene Measures Necessary During Menstruation?

A girl or a woman can take the following hygiene measures during menstruation:

- Take a bath or shower at least once a day.
- Use clean undergarments and change them regularly.
- Change pads or tampons regularly.
- Wash the genital area with plain water (no soap) after each use of toilet and even after urination.
- Keep the area between the legs dry, otherwise you may experience chafing.

- It is very important to remember that vagina has its own self-cleaning mechanism and an external cleaning agent like deodorant or soap should not be used inside it.

(source: <https://www.menstrupedia.com/articles/hygiene/why-hygiene>).

When to see a doctor about Menstruation:

- If at fifteen (15), a girl has not started menstruating.
- If menstruation becomes irregular.
- If your period suddenly stops.
- If bleeding lasts more than seven (7) days.

UNINTENDED PREGNANCY

What is unintended Pregnancy?

Unintended pregnancies are pregnancies that are mistimed, unplanned or unwanted at the time of conception. Unintended pregnancies may also result from rape or incest. Vaginal sexual activity without the use of contraception through choice or coercion is the predominant cause of unintended pregnancy.

ABORTION

What is abortion?

Abortion is the deliberate termination of a human pregnancy, most often performed during the first twenty-eight (28) weeks. An abortion is when the pregnancy is ended so that it does not result in the birth of a child. Sometimes this is called 'termination of pregnancy'.



Types of Abortion

Spontaneous abortion (miscarriage): occurs naturally, without willful intervention and is rarely associated with death.

Induced abortion (termination): is intentionally or physically initiated and could result in complications or death if performed by a quack.

What are the reasons for induced abortion?

It has been observed that young girls and some women often seek induced abortion for various reasons including:

- Shame and stigmatization associated with teenage pregnancy.
- Desire to continue with education and not drop out of school.
- Fear of parental or family rejection.
- Poverty.
- Pressure from the male partner.
- Pregnancy as a result of rape or incest.

(Source: *Reproductive Health and Rights of Young People; A Family Life Education Handbook for Peer Health Educators* by WACOL, NAWOI, SWAAN and YORDEL - Africa, pp.188-189).

MENOPAUSE

What is Menopause?

Menopause is a time in life when a woman stops having periods because of hormonal changes.

It marks the permanent end of fertility and happens between age forty-five (45) and fifty-five (55) with fifty-one (51) being the most common age.

(Source: <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/health-and-wellness/menopause>)

Menopause is the time that marks the end of your menstrual cycles. It is diagnosed after a woman has gone twelve (12) months without a menstrual period. Menopause is a natural biological process. But the physical symptoms, such as hot flashes, and emotional symptoms of menopause may disrupt the person's sleep, lower energy or affect emotional health. There are many effective treatments available, from lifestyle adjustments to hormone therapy.

Symptoms - In the months or years leading up to menopause (perimenopause), one might experience these signs and symptoms: Irregular periods, Vaginal dryness, Hot flashes, Chill, Night sweats, Sleep problems, Mood changes, Weight gain and slowed metabolism, Thinning hair and dry skin and Loss of breast fullness. Symptoms, including changes in menstruation, are different for every woman. Most likely, one will experience some irregularity in your periods before they end.

(Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/menopause/symptoms-causes/syc-20353397>)

HARMFUL TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

What are Harmful Traditional Practices?

Harmful traditional practices are practices that are commonly accepted and promoted by a community or a group of people, which have adverse effects on the health status of the victim and infringe on his/her fundamental rights. Harmful practices could be traditional or modern in nature, but still detrimental to the health of the victim.

(Source: *Reproductive Health and Rights of Young People; A Family Life Education Handbook for Peer Health Educators* by WACOL, NAWOI, SWAAN and YORDEL - Africa).

Some harmful traditional practices include:

- Child Marriage

- Female Genital mutilation (Circumcision)
- Child labour.
- Human trafficking
- Widowhood rites
- The consequences of son preference.



A young girl being married off to an older man
(Source: Reproductive Health and Rights by BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights - Legal Literacy Series 5)



A girl being mutilated
(Source: Reproductive Health and Rights by BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights - Legal Literacy Series 5)

These practices adversely affect the health of women and children. Despite their harmful nature and their violation of International Human Rights Laws such practices persist because they are not questioned or the people have not taken action to stop them, due to lack of awareness of their rights as enshrined in the nation's Constitution, The Child Rights Act and the Child Rights Laws in some states including Enugu State. (Source: www.policyproject.com).

There are legal instruments available for victims of these harmful traditional practices to seek redress. In Enugu State, Section 23 of The Enugu State Child Rights Law (2016) prohibits Child Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation in Section 27, and Exploitative labour in Section 31. Enugu State has the legal framework to protect widows and widowers in the law titled "The Prohibition of Infringement of A widow's and Widower's Fundamental Rights Law 2001". There is a law Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) and Enforcement and Administration Act 2003 amended in 2005 in Nigeria. It prohibits all forms of human trafficking. The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in persons implements the Act.

ASSERTIVENESS

What is Assertiveness?

Assertiveness is the ability to honestly express your opinions, feelings, attitudes, and rights, without undue anxiety, in a way that does not infringe on the rights of others.

Why is Assertiveness important?

If you do not know how to be assertive, you might experience:

- Depression -- Anger turned inward, a sense of being helpless, hopeless, or of having no control over your life.
- Resentment -- Anger at others for manipulating or taking advantage of you.
- Frustration -- Why did I allow that to happen?
- Temper/violence -- If you cannot express anger

appropriately, it may build up.

(Source: Revelle College UC San Diego website).

Situations that require one to be Assertive include:

- When refusing a request.
- When claiming your rights
- When being pressurized to do something, you do not want to do.

(Source: Reproductive Health and Rights of Young People; A Family Life Education Handbook for Peer Health Educators by WACOL, NAWOJ, SWAAN and YORDEL- Africa).

SELF -ESTEEM

What is Self-Esteem?

In sociology and psychology, *self-esteem* reflects a person's overall emotional evaluation of his or her own worth. It is a judgment of oneself as well as an attitude toward the self. Self-esteem encompasses beliefs (for example, "I am competent," "I am worthy") and emotions such as triumph, despair, pride and shame. (Source: Wikipedia)

Self-esteem is how we value ourselves; it is how we perceive our value to the world and how valuable we think we are to others. Self-esteem affects our trust in others, our relationships, and our work – nearly every part of our lives. Positive self-esteem gives us the strength and flexibility to take charge of our lives and grow from our mistakes without the fear of rejection. (Source: www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu).

Types of Self Esteem

High Self Esteem – One with high self –esteem has a fairly high opinion of oneself and abilities and usually manifests the following characteristics:

- Assertive: readiness to exercise one's rights.
- Confident: believes in oneself.
- Caring attitude: helpful, useful and shows concern and empathy towards others.
- Interactive: relates and associates well with other people.
- Respects authority: humble to those in leadership.
- Responsible: takes on assigned roles and tasks well.

Low Self-Esteem – One with low self-esteem is a poorly motivated person with the following characteristics:

- Arrogant
- Critical
- Rebellious
- Suspicious of people
- Inferiority complex
- Allows self to be pushed around.
- Feels disliked and unwanted
- Aggressive
- Inability to resist peer pressure
- Wanting to please other people
- Cannot express feelings
- Feels helpless and inadequate
- Likes to blame others

(Source: Reproductive Health and Rights of Young People: A Family Life Education Handbook for Peer Health Educators by WACOL, NAWOJ, SWAAN and YORDEL- Africa).

About the Partners

AmplifyChange

Amplify Change is a multi-donor challenge fund to support civil society advocacy for sexual and reproductive health and rights. It is a fund which aims to empower young people, men and women to realise their sexual and reproductive rights.

They support civil society and grassroots organisations that advocate for and promote better SRHR.

They provide support to groups working in countries where the needs are greatest like in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia

Women Information Network (WINET)

WINET is a media-focused independent, non-governmental organization. It was registered with Corporate Affairs Commission Nigeria as RC: 14892 in October 2002. WINET works towards the dissemination of information to promote gender equality, women's rights, human and political rights. The organization is for training of women, peace building, media advocacy and dissemination of information on all issues relating to the advancement of women's rights in the society. We aspire to empower women, girls and people with disabilities. We ensure that women and girls receive information to make informed decisions. Mission is to uplift Nigerians especially women, youths and people with disabilities by providing them with information to enable them to live a fruitful life in the society. Vision: An informed society where people will know their rights, duties and obligations.

WINET Objectives include to:

- Inform, educate and raise awareness on women's rights.
- Disseminate information on HIV/AIDS, Safe Motherhood, Sexual Reproductive Rights and Health
- Promote Democracy and Good Governance.

- Promote women's political rights agenda and advocate legislative reforms to eliminate institutional discrimination against women.
- Engage in media campaigns to promote the rights of women, girls and youths.
- Network with Government and non-governmental organizations with the aim of promoting women's rights, information and experience sharing.
- Engage in research and publications

Program Areas include:

- Media Campaigns
- Democracy and Good Governance
- Civic Education / Election Observation
- Women's Rights/ Human Rights Education
- Safe Motherhood
- Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights & Gender Based Violence,
- HIV/AIDS Prevention & Budget Advocacy
- Training
- Peace Building
- Research

WINET belongs to several Networks including:

- Transition Monitoring Group (TMG)
- Center for the Eradication of Violence against Women (CEVAW)
- Affirmative Action Initiative for Women (NCAA)
- Girl's Not Brides
- West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP)
- Women in Peace Building Network (WIPNET)
- White Ribbon Alliance Nigeria (WRAN)
- Civil Society for HIV/AIDS (CISHAN) Enugu State Chapter

- Legislative Advocacy Coalition on Violence against Women (LACVAW)
- Coalition of Eastern Non-Governmental Organizations (CENGOS)
- Nigeria Community Radio Coalition (NCRC)

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