Preventing Drug Use and HIV among street kids

an outreach worker’s handbook
Who this handbook is for?

- This handbook is meant for use by peer outreach workers to provide 'key messages' to street kids on preventing drug use and HIV.
- The target audience is substance using vulnerable street kids.
- The objective is to:
  - Help street kids to understand the risks involved with substance use, STIs and HIV.
  - Provide information on how to protect themselves from substance and HIV related risks.
How to use this handbook?

- The outreach worker should use a ‘story telling’ style to engage kids

- The issues discussed in this handbook should be covered over a span of 5-10 sessions depending on the level of understanding

- Ensure that there is enough discussion, feedback and participation from the kids

The contents of this handbook should be used at the discretion of the health educator, depending on the need and relevance to the target group and the area of work.
What is in this book?

**Session 1**
Vulnerabilities

**Session 2**
Substance abuse

**Session 3**
Information on STIs and HIV

**Session 4**
Services for street kids
What is in this book?

Session 5
Referrals and networking

Session 6
Life skills

Session 7
Making healthy choices
What influences a street kid?
Rag picking and scrap dealers

- Kids involved in rag picking sell their scrap to scrap dealers who generally pay them little.
- Many scrap dealers give small loans to the kids to maintain and ensure a steady flow of scrap to the dealers.
- Rag picking is often seen as a lucrative business for street kids. It is very difficult for them to seek alternate work.
UNCLE, AT LEAST PAY US FIFTY PAISE MORE PER KG PLEASE!

YES, IT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE TO US - YOU WOULD STILL MAKE YOUR PROFIT.
Vulnerabilities
Vulnerabilities

I picked these five syringes outside the hospital in the garbage.

Doing drugs is bad enough but this way we could get HIV too!

Yes that is unsafe! I always use only clean/new syringes.
Drug abuse with peers

- Kids involved in rag picking sometimes pick up used needles/syringes from garbage dumps
- Many children use old needles for injecting
- Some kids sell ‘used’ needles to others
- Kids feel that washing the syringes once with water makes them safe to use
I picked these five syringes outside the hospital in the garbage.

Doing drugs is bad enough but this way we could get HIV too!

I think I am the safest, I don’t do drugs at all.

Yes that is unsafe! I always use only clean/new syringes.
Peer influence

- Lack of proper guidance and a sense of frustration may lead to being easily influenced by peers.
- Kids are easily influenced by their peers.
- Since most street kids do not have families, they ‘hang out’ with their peers.
- Kids are often influenced by older kids who they see as leaders.
- Most kids learn about drugs and sex from their peers.
HEY MINTOO! TRY SOME OF THESE CAPSULES IT WILL MAKE YOU FORGE ALL YOUR WORRIES!

YAAR! BAPPA THANKS, YOU GUYS ARE SUCH GOOD FRIENDS - EVEN TINKU GAVE ME SOME 'SOLUTION' TO TRY - FOR FREE!
Drugs and sex-risky behaviour

- Kids become a part of the vicious circle of exploitation
- A lot of kids face sexual violence and abuse
- Many kids perform sexual favours in exchange for drugs
- Most kids are unaware of the risks involved
- Being sexually active is viewed as ‘macho’ among boys
I am sick since yesterday, no money for 'stuff' and I am in no condition to work—loan me some stuff!

Spend the night with me, if I am satisfied, I can consider helping you.

You know nothing comes free!
See, you can earn a hundred rupees if you spend only 15 minutes with each of us.

Hmm! Sounds better than picking rags all day.

He is paying her for 'sex' between us boys. It's just a little fun.

Did you hear that? You should give me something too for spending the night with you.
Paid sex

- Kids (especially girls) are easily lured into paid sex
- Kids abusing drugs are more vulnerable to being sexually exploited
- Boys who indulge in anal sex do not perceive it as sex, they view it as 'fun'
- Many kids on the streets are sexually active
Substance Abuse
Substance Abuse
Substances commonly abused
Abuse of ‘solution’

- Many kids in South Asia abuse ‘solution’ (like correction fluid and methylated spirit)
- There is a misconception that solution abuse is less harmful
- Abuse of ‘solution’ may lead to dazed appearance, unsteadiness, slurred speech and unpredictable behaviour
- These, in turn, can lead to dangerous and reckless acts including unsafe sexual behaviour
Why is Sonu looking so sad? Didn't get his daily fix? Switch to 'solution' yaar. It's not as harmful as smack.

No, no! That is not true! 'Solution' is really harmful for your body too!

You mean 'solution' isn't harmful?
‘glue sniffing’

- Kids normally procure tyre glue from shops selling automobiles, spare parts/tyres
- Correction fluid is bought/stolen from stationary shops
- At times, kids buy an extra supply only to sell it to other kids, at double the rate on holidays
- In some cases paint thinners and petrol are also abused by kids
"How come you managed to buy a tube? It's Sunday - the market is closed!!"

"I buy four extra tubes on weekdays and sell it for double the rate on holidays."

"What brains this 'Cnot u' has! If he wasn't an addict, he could be a businessman, man!"
Substances commonly abused by street kids

- Solvents (Correction fluid, tyre puncture glue, thinners) are put on a cloth and inhaled through the mouth
- Spasmoproxyvon and diazepam are taken orally
- Smack is injected, chased or smoked
- Cough syrup and alcohol are taken orally
- Locally brewed country liquor is consumed by some street kids
DRUGS COMMONLY ABUSED BY STREET KIDS

- CORRECTION FLUID
- SPASMOPROXYVON AND DIAZEPAM
- SMACK
- TYRE PUNCTURE GLUE
- INJECTABLE DRUGS
- ALCOHOL
- CHARAS, GANJA, TOBACCO
- COUGH SYRUP
Information on STIs and HIV
Information on STIs and HIV
What is HIV?

- HIV (human immuno deficiency virus) is a virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)
- Anyone can get HIV
- You cannot tell that someone has HIV by looking at them
- The only way to know whether you have HIV is through a blood test
How HIV spreads

- Sharing HIV infected needles
- Blood transfusion (of infected blood)
- Unsafe sexual intercourse with a HIV infected person
- A HIV+ mother to her unborn child
HIV SPREADS LIKE THIS!
HIV does not spread by

- Holding hands
- Hugging and kissing
- Sharing food and utensils
- Sharing toilets
- Mosquito bites
- Playing
HIV does not spread like this!

- Holding hands
- Sharing food
- Kissing
- Sharing toilets
RISKS
How to protect yourself from HIV

- Wear a condom correctly each time you have sexual intercourse
- Avoid injecting
  - If you inject, make sure you use clean needles
  - Do not share needles
- Accept blood which is tested for HIV
- Anyone practicing risk behaviours should get tested for HIV
INJECTING SAFELY

- Buy packed syringes and needles.
- Wash hands with soap properly before injecting.
- Always clean syringes with bleach before use.
- Carefully choose the vein for injecting.
- Do not share needles.
Safe injecting

- People who inject drugs can place themselves at risk of HIV and other blood borne viruses.
- Safe injecting practices can protect against infection.
- HIV can be transmitted through injecting practices that allow the blood of an infected person into the bloodstream of another person.
- Injecting drug use may lead to abscesses (symptoms include swelling, redness, a hard lump or a pus-filled sore located near and where you inject).
- Clean the abscess with soap and warm water, then dry the area and put on a bandage.
INJECTING SAFELY

- Buy packed syringe and needles
- Wash hands with soap properly before injecting
- Always clean syringe with bleach before use
- Carefully choose the vein for injecting
- Do not share needles
People who inject drugs need to practice the following:

- Never share any equipment, including the mix, water, swabs, filters, needle, syringe, etc.
- Clean the needle properly, using bleach and or clean water.
- Wash your hands thoroughly before and after injecting.
- Don’t help others or let them help you unless hands have been washed—and even then there is no absolute guarantee that it will stop infection.
- Wash and clean the area being used to mix and prepare (e.g. table).
- Never bend the needle/syringe.
- Dispose off used equipment in disposal containers.
- Always have safe sex and have regular sexual health checkups.
INJECTING SAFELY

1. USE CLEAN OR NEW SYRINGES
2. WASH HANDS WITH CLEAN WATER
3. FILL SYRINGE WITH BLEACH
4. SQUIRT OUT ALL THE BLEACH FROM THE SYRINGE
5. FILL SYRINGE WITH WATER AND CLEAN WELL
6. THROW AWAY THE WATER FROM SYRINGE AND GLASS
7. IF BLEACH IS NOT AVAILABLE, CLEAN SEVERAL TIMES WITH CLEAN WATER
8. DO NOT SHARE NEEDLES, COOKERS OR COTTON!
Never inject in:

- Head or neck
- Groin
- Wrists
NEVER IN THESE AREAS!!
What are STIs?

- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Street kids are vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections due to unprotected sex
- Most street kids don’t go to the doctor as they are unaware of the seriousness of the symptoms or they don’t think it is necessary to do so
- Early treatment must be sought from a qualified doctor
That 'Sir' told me they have an office where we can go for counselling if we are having some health problems — it's called Primary Health Centre.

Yes, I went there too. The doctor, Samb, is very nice. If you want, he can do a test for your sores — for free, but only if you want it!
Symptoms of STIs

- Burning sensation while passing urine, sores and ulcers in genitals, pain in lower abdomen
- STIs can be treated only by doctors
- The sexual partners of those infected with STIs must also consult the doctor and get treated
- The full course of medicine prescribed by the doctor must be completed
LISTEN TO WHAT THE DOCTOR SAYS. THOSE ULCERS IN YOUR GENITALS NEED TREATING.

I ALSO HAVE SEVERE PAIN IN MY LOWER ABDOMEN!

ULCERS, SORES, Blisters in the genital area, burning or pain on passing urine, lower abdominal pain are all symptoms of STI's in both girls and boys.

ACCHA, THAT MAY BE THE SOLUTION TO THIS TERRIBLE ITCHING SENSATION.
What? You still don't use a condom after knowing you have a sexual infection.

I already have an infection! What difference does it make?

There is a greater chance of contacting HIV, if you already have an STI. It is not safe for both of you.

It is important that both of you get treated.
Services for Street Kids

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'The Nurse told me they have an office where we can go for counseling if we are having some health problems. He's called Primary Health Center.'

Yes, I went there too; the doctor there is very nice. If you want, he can do a test for your sores – for free! But only if you want it!
Services for Street Kids

**Dialogue:**

Figure 1: Services for Street Kids

- **boy:** That 'She! told me they have an office where we can go for counselling if we are having some health problems. They called Primary Health Centre.

- **girl:** Yes, I went there too; the doctor said it is very nice. If you want, he can do a test for your sores - for free! But only if you want it!
Services for kids

- Government hospitals provide free voluntary counselling and testing for HIV
- Many NGOs provide drug, STI and HIV related services
- There are very few 'child-friendly' services
WE HAVE TO ACCEPT THIS IS OUR FATE. IT CAN'T CHANGE!

THE PROBLEM IS, THERE IS NOWHERE WE CAN GO FOR HELP.

CAN WE EVER BE NORMAL AGAIN?

AFTER MY LAST EXPERIENCE I WON'T GO TO ANY 'CENTER!'”

YOU ARE KIDDING! A REAL 'CENTER' FOR KIDS?

BUT 'MINTCO' JUST CAME OUT OF A NEW CENTER AND HE HAS BECOME A TRAINER.
Referrals and Networking
Referals and Networking
HAI! ITS MINTOO! SO ITS TRUE, YOU HAVE CHANGED!

HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO STAY AT THE CENTER FOR SIX MONTHS? I RAN AWAY AFTER TWO WEEKS.

NO, THIS CENTER IS DIFFERENT, IT IS SPECIAL FOR KIDS LIKE US. NO BIG GUYS TO BULLY US EITHER!

WOW! WHERE IS THIS NEW CENTER MINTOO?
Linking up

- Some NGOs provide services for street kids

- Outreach workers should help in linking kids to health related services like detoxification centres, deaddiction programmes, voluntary counselling and testing centres and general hospitals and health centres
Dream... to recovery

AREE TINKU, YOU ARE LOOKING LIKE SALMAN.

YES CHIMP, I ALSO WENT FOR TREATMENT LIKE MINTOO AND I AM NORMAL AGAIN.

AND THIS CENTER HAS VERY NICE STAFF, IT MADE SUCH A DIFFERENCE I DIDN'T WANT TO RUN AWAY.
Life Skills
Life Skills
Refusal skills

- ‘Getting off’ drugs is only part of the rehabilitation process
- Life skills are crucial in keeping the child away from drugs and other unsafe behaviours, even after treatment
- Children out of rehab tend to feel out of place as they don’t fit into their old lifestyle nor they are accepted anywhere else
- This feeling may lead to a situation of relapse. Hence, aftercare and follow-up should be a vital part of the programme
I am sure you are dying to have a bit—stop pretending!

Oye Minto, yaar! Come have a 'shot' I wont charge you for it!

The best part of the treatment is that I learnt to say 'no' to anything that is not good for me.

Arre yaar! Don't worry, we wont tell anyone.
Supporting peers

Sir, Gopu also wants to give up drugs—can you help?

Of course you can be like Minto! If you are ready, we are all there to help you.
Being a role model to peers

- Since kids are known to be influenced easily by their peers, the peer educator could be the most effective role model.

- Seeing another kid as an ‘agent of change’ could be highly motivating for a street kid.

- The peer educator therefore should be one who possesses leadership qualities, is a good listener, is non judgmental, patient and understanding.
Wah! Mintendo, now you are my hero—I too want to be like you.

You mean you actually followed all that you are telling us.

It's not only about giving up drugs. It's about living a healthy lifestyle and making healthy choices.

But such a treatment must be expensive, how can kids like us afford it?

You mean you don't crave for a fix? It's very hard for me to believe!
INJECTING SAFELY

Buy packed syringe and needles

Wash hands with soap properly before injecting

Always clean syringe with bleach before use

Carefully choose the vein for injecting

Do not share needles
How to clean the needle/syringe

1. Wash hands well before and after injecting.
2. Fill syringe with bleach and keep for 30 seconds.
3. Squirt out all the bleach from syringe.
4. Clean all the items or surfaces to be used for preparing the injection.
5. Fill syringe with clean water and flush out well.
6. Throw away the water used for cleaning the syringe.
How to wear a condom correctly

Open the condom carefully

Put on condom when the penis is fully erect

Squeeze out air from the tip of the condom

Carefully roll the condom on the penis

After sex, hold the condom and remove carefully

Remove the condom without spilling
Making Healthy Choices

Now, I Decide!

- To make my own decisions!
- To make the right choices!
- To be in control
- To lead a safe and healthy lifestyle!
- To say no to drugs
- To ask for help when I need it.
Making Healthy Choices

Now, I decide!

- To make my own decisions!
- To make the right choices!
- To be in control
- To lead a safe and healthy lifestyle!
- To say no to drugs
- To ask for help when I need it!
NOW, I DECIDE!

- To make my own decisions!
- To make the right choices!
- To lead a safe and healthy lifestyle!
- To say 'no' to drugs
- To be in control
- To ask for help when I need it
Dealing with stigma

- Substance using street kids face ‘double stigma’—one for being street kids and the other for being substance users.
I am a changed person now.

Hey, you! How come you are all dressed up? Who are you trying to con now?

I changed my ways but I guess I can't change the views/stigma. Thank God I've learnt to deal with it!

Yes, I remember you! You used to sit down the lane-on drugs all the time.