

PEER EDUCATION 101: FOR US BY US

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Table of Contents

- 1. What is Peer Education?**
 - a. Peer Education & CSE and SRHR*
 - b. Peer Education vs. Traditional Education*
- 2. Planning your Peer Education Program**
- 3. What makes a good Peer Educator?**
 - a. Key Values of a Peer Educator*
 - b. Ground Rules for all Peer Educators*
- 4. Foundational Knowledge for Peer Educators**
 - a. Importance of root causes of Gender-Based Violence*
- 5. Skills Training for Peer Educator**
 - a. Public Speaking & Presentations*
 - b. Facilitation & Moderation*
 - c. Time management*
 - d. Dry runs: Classroom Simulation*
- 6. Classroom Challenges**
 - a. Students*
 - b. Technical Difficulties*
 - c. Confidentiality & Safe Space*
- 7. Best Practices**
 - a. Ideal Classroom Size*
 - b. Important Resources*
- 8. Documenting your program**
 - a. Why is it important?*
 - b. What do you need to document?*
 - c. How do you do it?*
- 9. Evaluation & Feedback**
- 10. Challenges in the context of Bangladesh**
 - a. Society*
 - b. Parents*
 - c. Schools*
- 11. Reflections**

What is Peer Education?

The first and most important thing you should know going into this manual is what actually peer education is. **Peer education is a community-driven educational model that relies on a ‘peer’ to deliver knowledge.**

Peer education is an effective way of sharing information on topics like sexual health as young people generally seem to feel more comfortable discussing ‘taboo’ topics with people they see as being ‘on their level’¹. Trained peer educators aim to develop knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and equip students with skills to tackle social norms and fight the culture of gender-based violence.

According to UNICEF, Peer education is a popular concept that implies an approach, a communication channel, a methodology, a philosophy, and a strategy².

According to UNESCO, peer education is one of the most effective tools at promoting healthy behavior among young people³.

Who is a peer educator?

A peer is simply a person who has some type of shared experiences with the people they teach. It can come from being of similar age, socioeconomic background, having similar interests etc.

So how does Peer Education work?

Adolescents are highly influenced by their peers. While this is true for both negative and positive behaviors, if used correctly, positive peer influence is extremely beneficial to reshape and strengthen behaviors and thought patterns within the youth⁴. As the topics we deal with are sensitive and there is often a culture of taboo around these, young people are most likely to rely on their peers to get information, which can lead to students obtaining misinformation. To counter that, the peer education model can be empowering as students will still be getting information from young people but who are equipped with the right training and knowledge. This effectively increases the students’ access to credible information regarding sexual and reproductive health education. A peer educator is not only equipped to facilitate learning but also provides students with the best solution based on their own relevant experiences.

What type of topics do you focus on for Peer Education?

- Consent
- Masculinity
- STDs
- Menstruation
- Rights of Gender Diverse People
- Cyber Harassment

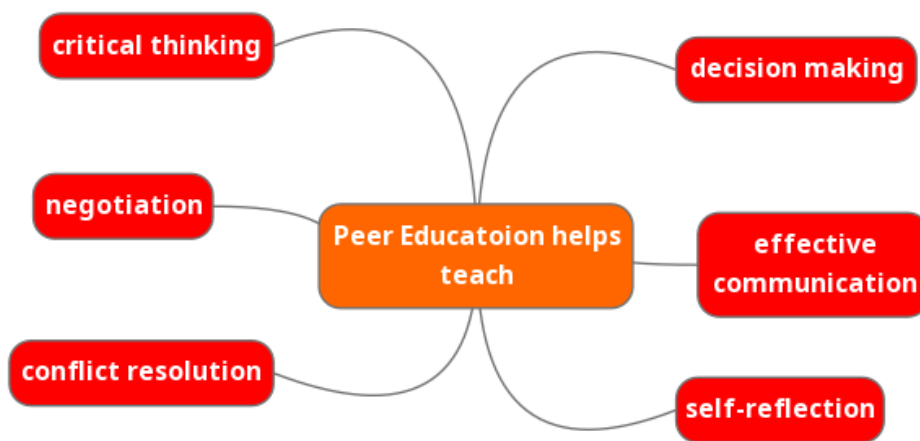
¹ <https://www.yeah.org.au/hub/what-is-peer-education/>

² UNAIDS, Peer education and HIV/AIDS: Concepts, uses and challenges, 2000
<https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/files/PeerEducationUNAIDS.pdf>

³ Reference missing

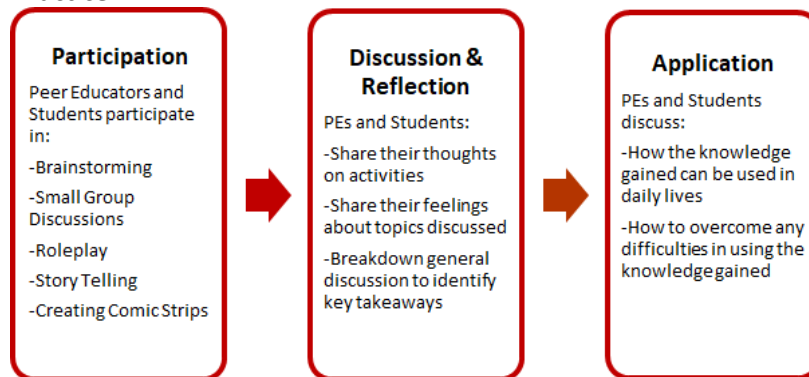
⁴ UN Interagency Group on Young People’s Health Development and Protection in Europe and Central Asia, Peer Education Training of Trainers Manual, 2003

Peer educators try to create a safe classroom environment by ensuring relatability, confidentiality, providing non-judgmental guidance and an unbiased approach. Even though peer education can be both formal and informal, we have seen that the use of informal language that adolescents are familiar with is more likely to motivate students to initiate friendly conversations where they will be more open to sharing their thoughts, values and experiences. These discussions end up being a useful tool for knowledge sharing. Due to shared interests and a common experience, information is shared quite easily. Peer educators are often perceived as a friend rather than an authoritative figure; therefore, it is likely that students will be more open to receiving advice from the educators. The students through such active learning are also more likely to retain the knowledge and apply them in their day to day lives. Peer education is the most impactful in a small group. Within a smaller group, students are more likely to interact openly and engage in constructive discussions.



Peer educators need to ensure that what they have been teaching in a class is not limited within the confines of a classroom but is also applied in the student’s day to day lives. An effective way to achieve this is through the use of interactive activities and to ask students to reflect upon those activities. Simply sharing information about a certain topic is not at all effective in changing one’s behavior. Peer educators ensure that students feel confident with the knowledge that they gain and to incorporate that in their daily lives. Rather than being passive listeners, students are able to become active and key players.

Peer Education in Practice:



How does Peer Education empower the youth?

We believe that every individual has the right to make their own choices about their sexual and reproductive health. To make these right decisions and to maintain one's sexual and reproductive health, young people must have access to accurate and effective information. Peer education aims to inform the youth to make empowered decisions.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are fundamental human rights that are currently being denied or restricted in many parts of the world⁵.

SRHR include issues like abortion, HIV and other STIs, maternal health and rights, contraceptive access, gender-based violence, discrimination, stigma, and more. Achieving SRHR for all supports equality, contributes to women, girls, and those who are discriminated against, and helps build communities that are healthy, safe, and just.

In 2018, the Guttmacher-Lancet Commission on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights issued a definition SRHR. It defined reproductive health and listed the elements of reproductive health care—i.e., family planning, maternal health care, safe abortion where not against the law, education on sexuality and reproductive health, and prevention and appropriate treatment of infertility, reproductive tract infections, and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. ICPD described reproductive rights as resting on, “the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so.” ICPD also defined sexual health as including, “the enhancement of life and personal relations”⁶.

What is Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)?

We believe that every young person should have the right to information - whether it be about relationships, family life, sexual health and rights, gender roles or culture.

UNFPA defines “comprehensive sexuality education” as a rights-based and gender-focused approach to sexuality education⁷.

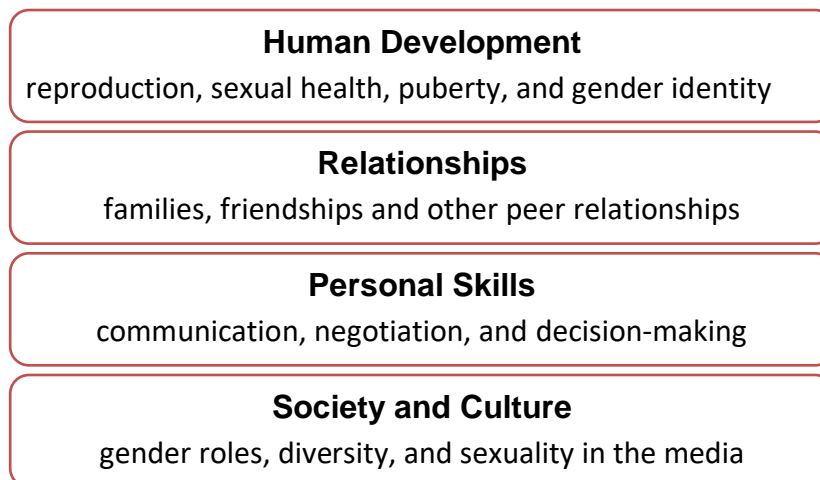
CSE is curriculum-based education that aims to equip children and young people with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will enable them to develop a positive view of their sexuality, in the context of their emotional and social development.

Please make sure the references are the same font and size **Key areas of CSE:**

⁵ <https://srhrforall.org/what-is-srhr>

⁶ Accelerate progress—sexual and reproductive health and rights for all: report of the Guttmacher–Lancet Commission <https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2818%2930293-9>

⁷ <https://www.unfpa.org/comprehensive-sexuality-education#:~:text=Comprehensive%20sexuality%20education%20is%20a,school%20or%20out%20of%20school.&text=But%20it%20also%20goes%20beyond,their%20sexual%20and%20reproductive%20health.>



CSE recognizes that young people have a right to information about their bodies and their human rights. It reinforces the idea that adolescents should be equipped with the information to make informed decisions about their lives. CSE can help adolescents understand gender norms, power dynamics, consent, unhealthy behavior in peer-to-peer relationships, and details about their sexual and reproductive health. Open conversations surrounding topics like consent help anchor the importance of respecting boundaries in adolescents early on, thereby reducing the incidence of consent violations in the future. CSE cultivates a culture of accountability of perpetrators so that acts of gender-based violence never have to be tolerated by any gender.

According to UNESCO, CSE is one of the only long term solutions to gender-based violence.

Anyone who is working to educate others on CSE topics must understand how this education connects to gender-based violence in their society. We will touch more on this in Chapter 3. For now, you should know that CSE effectively addresses the issue of gender-based violence and rape culture in two main ways. On one hand, it equips young people with tools and knowledge to hold themselves and their peers accountable for any form of violence - bullying, gender-based discrimination, harassment, or even assault. On the other hand, it empowers young people to stand up for their rights, to speak out when they experience any form of violation or violence and face injustice. CSE uses a rights-based approach and puts young people first.

Why is PE model good for teaching CSE and how is this model different from traditional classroom education?

So now we know that PE is an effective approach to empower young people. To Kotha Bangladesh, peer education feels like the best way to teach CSE. But what makes us think that?

We will be sharing our hands-on experience to tell you why exactly we think that!

- In a traditional classroom setting, a teacher is likely to be significantly older than the students and will be perceived as a figure of authority and power. Whereas, our peer educators are recruited from an age group that is close to the age of our students. Students may feel hesitant to have open conversations surrounding sensitive topics of CSE such as healthy relationships, consent, bullying. Our experience tells us that in Bangladesh, students feel a sense of shame about

discussing these topics due to the fear of being judged or being perceived as an “indecent” student. Traditional teachers may be reluctant to have open dialogues regarding these topics, they can be biased or judgmental or prone to perpetuate harmful stereotypes. We have seen that students feel more much comfortable about having conversations around these topics with PEs than they would with a traditional teacher.

- PEs are trained to be unbiased and free of judgment so that students are able to open up about their experiences. Our students have told us that PEs are also able to bring a wealth of relatable knowledge which helps students understand complex topics relatively easily.
- Students have also shared that the PEs never made them feel embarrassed about their stories and stated that they were truly comfortable in sharing their opinions as they believed the PEs not only understood them but also related to them.
- PEs and students share the same language when communicating which means our sessions are full of jokes, frank discussions as well as powerful and vulnerable stories.
- The peer education model is able to easily break down the communication barrier to make space for open conversation regarding challenging topics.

Our priority has always been to ensure that students know we are on their side, we understand them, and they are safe with us.

Student Perspectives on Peer Educators

Source: Kotha student Focus Group Discussion

“I felt safe because of the mutual connection - you guys felt like older apus (sisters). I could relate to you guys like my own sister. Whenever I said, apu, I have a problem, you listened, so it felt safe. Normal teachers aren't like you guys because all of you are really young, you guys are closer to our age so you understand our struggles and what we go through.” - Grade VII Student

“I definitely felt like it was a safe environment mostly because everybody was allowed to share and ask questions, you guys made it so easy to ask questions, clarified a lot of doubts.” - Grade VI Student

“You guys never made us feel embarrassed for our struggles. I had an experience where I would tell the teacher something and the whole class would know about it, but you guys made sure our stories were confidential.” - Grade VI Student

“You were close to our age, but what made us trust you was that you guys were so casual, we learned in such a normal and casual environment and I loved that.” - Grade VIII Student

Student Perspectives on Teacher Relationships

Source: Kotha student Focus Group Discussion

SHAME & JUDGEMENT

“Even if some teachers are chill, you do feel they are judging you. With teachers, we don’t really share that kind of relationship. But, it also depends on the topic. We can discuss topics like bullying with teachers, but for topics like intimacy, consent we might not be comfortable.” - Grade XII Student

“Teachers are in power, they have a significant effect on our academics. I want to uphold a certain image and would not discuss everything freely.” - University student

TRUST

“Apart from the age gap, many times teachers ended up telling the parents. So, there’s a trust issue.”- University student

CULTURE

“The topics that were discussed, if the teachers had discussed them, I don’t think I would have the confidence to ask them questions. For example, in the class of consent, I asked a lot of questions and gave very explicit examples. You let me walk through it and explained it.” - Grade X Student

“It does boil down into how our culture is set where we are conditioned not to speak about sex, pleasure in front of our elders. There is the fear of being judged by the teachers that is not there when we are with our peers.” - Grade XI Student

Planning your program

Now that we have covered the basics of Peer Education, let's think about an actual Peer Education program. Before developing your program, it is crucial for you to figure out why you are doing what you are doing, who you are doing it for and how exactly your program will help them.

Who are your participants?

What age will my participants be?

Different age groups have different needs and different ways they can benefit from CSE related programs. The UNFPA Operational Guidance on CSE recommends that CSE content be age-appropriate. You could choose to work with young children, teenagers, or young adults. A program targeted to middle school students who are usually aged between 11 to 13 years of age will probably have very basic concepts of consent whereas one targeted to grade twelve students will have more advanced components.

What gender will my participants be?

Kotha recommends to always work in co-education environments with participants from different genders learning together. However, sometimes you might want to work with one specific gender taking into the account cultural context of the community you are working with. Young girls may not be comfortable speaking on reproductive health issues in front of boys. Although this is something we want to change in the long run, in the short run, their comfort should be prioritized.

Economic Status

Participants from low-income communities have different realities and face different challenges compared to others. This will be very different when working with a private school with students from middle class or upper-class backgrounds. It is crucial that the content used reflects this. For example, child marriage is a form of gender-based violence that is significantly more common in low income communities. Therefore, CSE programs should include topics on child marriage. For resources on content development, please refer to the annex. In addition, you will need to be prepared to have resources such as venues for your sessions, equipment such as computers, screens, cameras, mics etc. Private schools may already have a lot of the required resources and so there might be less investment from your program.

What is your program objective & design?

If you are reading this book, chances are you care about this work and want to bring about change in terms of how people think about issues of gender and sexuality. That's awesome! But not enough. We need to be very clear about what specifically we want to achieve with our CSE program.

Awareness vs. Education?

This is an extremely important question to ask yourself before you get started working on the ground. Awareness programs involve distributing educational materials and sharing information, stories and

statistics. The main objective of such programs is to simply share information. Education programs go beyond awareness. They involve equipping your target audience with specific skills and knowledge as well as incorporating elements of behavior and attitude change. Awareness programs are usually one-time events whereas education programs involve repeated sessions with your target group. Knowing these differences is important so we can assess how much time, effort and money will be required.⁸

School based vs. Community based

One of the most important factors to consider when planning is whether your program will be institution based - part of schools or universities - or whether it will be an independent community based one. There are pros and cons to both but which one you choose will depend on your priorities. Community-based programs and sessions for young people are typically organized in community common spaces such as village squares, courtyards or playgrounds, or through “safe spaces” programs that are implemented through adolescent clubs, youth centers or “fun” centers. School based programs are ones which are carried out on school premises and are built into students’ schedules⁹.

What do I need to know before?

Before jumping into designing a program, it is a good idea to do some research on your target audience and their needs. As mentioned above, catering your content to these needs is crucial! This can be done through secondary research or by primary research. References used in this booklet can be a great source of secondary research.

Who are my stakeholders?

Stakeholders are different groups of people who are affected or can affect the work that you are doing. When planning for a CSE program, key stakeholders will include **school teachers, admins, students, alumni and parents**.

For primary research, focus group discussions (FGDs) are a great way to find out more about your target audience. FGDs are discussions where you find out experiences and thought processes of a specific group of people - in this case - the different stakeholders! The number one priority is always young people and students. It is always best to have people directly from the community or school you will be working in take part in your FGDs. So for example, if you are implementing a CSE program in Area X, get young people from that area of the city. If you are going to School Y, get students from that school!

Through your FGDs you should aim to find out:

1. How does this group of people feel about the topics you will be teaching?
2. Gather stories or experiences CSE topics
3. What would they like to get out of such a program?

FGDs with teachers and admins can involve understanding teachers’ existing attitudes and mindsets on the topics you are interested in working with. They can also prepare you for challenges you might face during implementation.

⁸ Included Involved Inspired: a Framework for Youth Peer Education Programmes. IPPF, 2007.

⁹ Ainul, Sigma, et al. “Adolescents in Bangladesh: A Situation Analysis of Programmatic Approaches to Sexual and Reproductive Health Education and Services.” 2017, doi:10.31899/rh7.1004.

Given the context of Bangladesh, it is most difficult to reach parents and to work with them to gain their support for CSE programs. So, if you are unable to have dialogues with parents through formal events, focus group discussions or dialogues - remember informal methods can be very helpful as well! For example, using your own networks and connections to start a casual conversation to understand the mindset of parents who are from the community where you will implement your CSE program.

What resources will I need?

You may not have all the resources required to implement the CSE program you have planned for. It is a good idea to plan how you may get these resources. There are a few categories of resources you might need:

1. **Money** - to pay for transport, pay peer educators, buy snacks for students and PEs
2. **Materials** - printed materials, arts and crafts for classroom activities
3. **Equipment** - cameras and laptops
4. **Time** - how much time will trainers need to put in? How much time will PEs need to put in?

These questions will help when you are recruiting PEs, when you are deciding how many programs you want to take on, whether you will need to fundraise or have schools pay for implementation costs etc.

What makes a good PE

So far we've talked about why peer education is important and better than traditional teaching models for CSE, but the programme is only as effective as the people working behind it. The hardest part of this whole process is, arguably, picking the right people for the job. These are the same people who would be going into classrooms and be responsible for modeling attitudes and behaviors of impressionable adolescents. It is critical, above all, for them and you to realize how much weight this carries. How do you make such a decision (about whom to choose)?

Most people would tell you that diligence, knowledge and motivation are key - and these are definitely good qualities to have. However, you can assume that someone who understands the type and amount of work involved would likely be diligent and motivated. As for knowledge, that's something one can build on over time, not something one must come in with. We'd argue that two other things are much more important and outrank the rest - (a) willingness to unlearn and change mindset, and (b) the values they embody. In our experience, there are 4 important boxes that PEs must tick or (be willing to) learn along the way:

I. Feminist values

People cannot be working in this field, if they are uncomfortable with addressing themselves as feminists. You might be thinking that this is too radical, but it is important to question where this discomfort or hesitation comes from. First off, what do you understand the feminist movement to be? To us, it's the fight for gender equality and justice, with women and gender minorities at the center of the movement because the current system puts women and gender diverse people at a disadvantage in all spheres of life.

Core Feminist Values/Ideals:

- ***Right to choice***
- ***Right to live free from violence and fear of violence***
- ***Right to opportunities***

It is recognizing that patriarchy is one of the pillars on which the culture of violence stands. Recognizing and acknowledging that cismen disproportionately benefit from this system of patriarchy, is the first step towards abolishing the culture of violence. [You'll be reading more about the culture of violence in the next chapter.] If you want to teach CSE, you have to understand why we need it in the first place. A person is not fit to be teaching CSE to adolescents, if they do not realize how the patriarchal system is set up, and seeps into every aspect of our lives. Everything from understanding consent to access to birth control pills (everything in between, and beyond this) is dictated by patriarchy. This is why feminist values are crucial

for all PEs to have - because it tirelessly fights all the harms that patriarchy inflicts upon people of different genders. This brings us to the next point:

II. Recognizing privilege

Do you think you are privileged? Most people you ask would probably not have a 'Yes' or 'No' answer to this question. In our minds, our struggles, rightly so, feel the most intense to us (so not too privileged), but then again, we'll probably follow it up with "other people have it worse - think of starving children in war-torn countries" (definitely very privileged). You can see why navigating privilege is tricky. One measure to gauge privilege might be to compare ourselves to a peer (in families, workplace, classroom, etc.). Ask yourself: How much more or less effort did it take them to be at the same position as me?

It's important to note here that privilege is intersectional. A person has multiple ways to define their identity - race, biological sex, gender, sexuality, religion, age, physical appearance, socioeconomic, minority/majority, and so on. Each of these aspects of their identity puts them at an advantage or a disadvantage under different circumstances. As a PE, one should not only assess their own privilege, but also understand how other people's "privilege score" shapes their lives. This builds empathy and allows PEs to understand their audience better. Recognizing privilege is the steppingstone to opening our eyes to unfair discrimination:

III. Unlearning bias

What is your take on survivors of rape? On the murder of sex workers? On domestic violence? On accommodations for people who are differently abled? On brutality against religious or ethnic minorities living in your country? There's a person at the worse end in each of those questions. When we pass judgement on that individual or feel like it's justified to hate on them because "that would never happen to me" or "they deserved it", we are exhibiting lack of empathy. We assume that they had the same chances and struggles in life as we did, that we were dealt the same card (privilege) - which is simply untrue.

Bias can take many forms and isn't always obvious. It's subtle, almost subconscious. And that's what makes it so difficult to deal with it. We have been conditioned to see things a certain way by society from an early age. Hence, to rid ourselves of our biases, we need to unlearn what we've been taught. We have to make it a personal responsibility to educate ourselves first and then others. As PEs, it's important to unlearn, and actively fight against the prejudice and discrimination in this field of work. PEs should have respect for all individuals, regardless of any aspect of the individuals' identity. [Refer to Ground Rules in the next chapter.] Lastly, a PE should be a

IV. Critical thinker

The world isn't neither black-and-white nor grey. Maybe multiple shades of grey. As a peer educator, you'd come upon multiple instances where you'd simply not know what stance to take. And that's good; in the sense that it provides you the opportunity to educate yourself through research and conversations

with people. We shouldn't be rigid with our views when we are presented with new information that suggests otherwise. And we shouldn't agree with people when it goes against our core values just because we admire them. We should have the ability to assess the situation and information and come up with our appraisal of it. Of course, by centering this appraisal around who's the most vulnerable party in the situation. Our feminist values and understanding of privilege are meant to be guides in the assessment of any unknown situation. Every PE should be able to think critically (after research and discussion), and identify the vulnerable and the perpetrators in different scenarios.

At this point, you might be thinking - *That's great, but a peer educator is merely meant to be a teacher. Technically, it shouldn't matter as long as they have the knowledge for teaching CSE.* Well, knowledge without context is not effective or helpful to anyone. You could teach a student the definition of "consent", but if you cannot successfully make them see how consent changes depending on the different circumstances, you won't be doing your job right. A peer educator has a responsibility to be aware of the different contexts, or at least, be able to use their values to guide their students to an answer (to their many curious questions). Finally, a peer educator should never become complacent in their ways, they should always strive to know more and do better in and out of classrooms.

Ground rules for PEs

What are Ground Rules?

Ground rules are essentially basic rules that all peer educators must adhere to during the course of the training and when they go into classrooms. Ground rules are a good way to ensure all team members are on the same page regarding key priorities.

Peer Educators must:

1. Always maintain a safe space and ensure that anything shared by students in classrooms confidential unless consent is received to share.
2. Always ensure that no one makes a sexist joke, be it an educator or a student. Sexist jokes or remarks normalize discrimination. The practice of labelling certain harmful acts, ideas, language, or behaviour as "normal" or "natural" aspects of life, thereby dismissing the harm caused by them. Normalization shapes people's mindsets and societal norms, later influencing people's behaviours.
3. Ensure that there are no jokes about rape or any other form of sexual violence/harassment. These can undermine the experiences of survivors, normalize instances of assault/harassment and further add to the prevailing stigma around the issue.
4. Have zero tolerance for victim-blaming. They must realise that responsibility should always be placed on the perpetrator and none of the faults lies with the survivor, regardless of their behaviour, actions, appearance etc. They must refrain from asking questions regarding the survivor's actions during or after an instance of violence.
5. Always believe survivors. They should believe that one has nothing to lose by believing a survivor's account, a survivor has everything to gain by feeling trusted and validated. The larger picture of building a culture that believes survivors is more survivors naming, sharing and reporting their abuse.

6. Not be transphobic. The trans and gender non-conforming community face many forms of discrimination, abuse and marginalization based on their gender identity and jokes at their expense further add to this.
7. Not be queerphobic. Queer communities, especially in Bangladesh, are often faced with microaggressions, stigmatization and violence based on their sexuality. The PEs should not make jokes at their expense, which will further contribute to this toxic culture.
8. Not body shame. Many people struggle with body image issues, insecurities, eating disorders etc and seemingly harmless jokes or comments of this kind can trigger intrusive thoughts or diminish self-esteem.
9. Always practice consent - informed, enthusiastic, continuous, revocable, freely given. Practising consent that follows all five principles helps build relationships in which both parties can recognize and respect each other's boundaries.
10. Not be racist. Overt expressions of racism such as hate speech and more common forms such as the use of racial slurs are all harmful to communities of colour around the world that experience systemic discrimination and violence.
11. Not discriminate based on skin colour. People face many forms of discrimination, abuse and marginalization based on the colour of their skin. Comments or jokes of this sort can promote harmful/restrictive ideals of beauty, degrade self-esteem and further contribute to a toxic culture.
12. Be sensitive to the religious beliefs and sentiments of others. Religion is a deeply personal matter, and everyone is entitled to possess and express their own beliefs. Any form of discrimination based on religion is never acceptable.
13. Not discriminate against those who may be part of the disability spectrum.
14. Actively listen to, respect and believe the experiences of others, even if they are unfamiliar or don't make sense to them. People have diverse lived realities (concerning sexuality, gender, race, ethnicity etc) and making space for everyone to share their personal experiences helps us build more inclusive spaces.
15. Be aware of and acknowledge one's privilege. A privilege is a form of power that can come in many different forms. It is important to think about what power or privilege we may hold and how that affects people around us.

The Importance of Building a Safe Space

As a peer educator, one of your key responsibilities will be ensuring a safe space. It is vital that you are able to build a relationship based on trust, respect and support with your students. It is essential that the students feel that they belong in this space so that they can openly discuss their thoughts and feelings. A lot of the time, students share their own lived experiences, such things can only be discussed when the students feel a sense of safety. While the ground rules for peer educators build the foundation of a safe space, there should also be some ground rules in place for students. Both peer educators and students must know that this is an inclusive space for all regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, religion or ethnicity. Even though the classes are full of jokes and fun conversations, peer educators must ensure that no one cracks any kind of insensitive jokes. The PEs also need to ensure that the students do not taunt each other about any of the experiences that have been shared in the classroom. The students should also know that any time if they feel uncomfortable or overwhelmed, they can step out of the classroom, accompanied by a PE. PEs should also make sure that students do not feel judged and can freely ask any question or thoughts they may have regarding a topic. A tool that we found to be useful

was to have a list of ground rules for students on display inside the classrooms. While the PEs are heavily responsible for creating this safe space with how they conduct the sessions, this list of ground rules can act as a reminder for students to know how they can behave in the classrooms.

Foundational Knowledge for Peer Educators

The importance of working on root causes of Gender-Based Violence

It is pertinent that peer educators realize specific instances of gender-based violence are not isolated events but rather exist as part of a larger culture that nurtures and reproduces this violence. The pyramid of violence breaks down the culture of violence. It shows that each layer in the pyramid reinforces another layer, ultimately creating a strong structure. Quite similarly, the culture of violence also relies upon levels of violence. The bottom or the foundation is created through normalization of harmful mindsets which reinforces the levels that are higher up.



How to Understand the Levels of the Culture of Violence Pyramid:

Normalisation: The practice of labelling certain harmful acts, ideas, language, or behaviour as “normal” or “natural” aspects of life, thereby dismissing the harm caused by them. In this case, it refers to the use and promotion of stereotypes, outdated gender roles, or sexist comments. Normalization shapes people’s mindsets and societal norms. These mindsets later influence people’s behaviour.

Degradation: Using words or actions to disrespect, insult, and put down individuals.

Removal of Autonomy: Putting an individual in a position where they are incapable of exercising their own rights, physical, sexual or otherwise.

Explicit violence: Extreme forms of physical violence, including sexual violence.

The culture of violence is institutionalized and upheld by normalisation of male dominance and the inferiority of women, which in turn manifests in the discrimination against women and girls. Rooted in these beliefs and practices, we assist in creating a society that blames victims for various forms of gender-based discrimination and violence instead of holding perpetrators accountable. This sends a clear message to victims that it is their responsibility to avoid being discriminated against, harassed or attacked. At the same time, it lets perpetrators know that they will be protected by those who have power. To counter this culture, peer educators need to address the attitudes, behaviours, and conditions that support, condone and lead to sexual and gender-based violence. The change needs to start from within your communities. Adolescents play an important role in utilizing social and cultural interventions that ensure such harmful behaviour and attitudes are no longer encouraged and as a peer educator you can ensure that. By breaking down the root causes of gender-based violence, you can instil positive values in students so that they grow up to be sensitive, empathetic and responsible members of society.

Skills Training for Peer Educators

Foundational Knowledge Training

+

Program Specific Knowledge Training

+

Skills Training

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Dry-Runs

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Classroom Sessions

Training for peer educators include building foundational knowledge such as what we covered in the Culture of Violence and PE Values sections as well as knowledge training in program specific topics and materials. For example, if your program is designed to teach students regarding consent, your knowledge training phase would include discussions and dialogue on this topic, assignments that PEs need to complete, outlines for classroom sessions with definitions etc. You could even bring in experts to speak to your PEs about topics included in your program! Then we move onto training PEs with specific skills which will help them effectively connect with and teach their students. This includes public speaking, facilitation, time management etc. Lastly, combining lessons learnt from all three elements of training, PEs should go through Dry Runs - an interactive training activity mimicking - before they head into classrooms.

Skills

Public Speaking & Presentation techniques

Public speaking in Peer Education is less about formally delivering a lecture and more about a fun but effective conversation between peer educators and students. Remember, being different from traditional teachers is a strength for PEs! In this section, we'll explore what aspects of public speaking a Peer Educator should be trained on, how to make a dynamic presentation using content for the classroom, and how exactly to train and evaluate a Peer Educator on the different presentation techniques and public speaking skills required.

Here are certain *qualities* of a public speaker that PEs should have:

Public speaking skills to focus on

A PE should be-

- Energetic
- Assertive
- Confident
- Humble
- Casual
- Loud
- Clear
- Relatable
- Friendly

We recommend that the peer educators use presentation slides to deliver the content inside the classrooms. It's not easy holding the attention of a room full of people for an entire class duration, let alone if they're teenagers. Therefore, visual aids will be your best friend. Here are some tips for creating the presentation slides:

1. Start with a 'Goals' slide

- a. One of the earlier slides should contain the exact points that students will know more about by the end of the class.

2. Be concise

- a. Text-heavy slides will overwhelm the students and cause them to lose focus. Only include the most important points on your slides.

3. Highlight Takeaways

- a. Slides should include a specific line that wraps up the main points the students must understand from each sub-topic. Takeaways are crucial to the learning experience, and must be included for each activity or sub-topic.

Take for example, the peer educators are conducting a class on Gender. In one activity, they discuss gender norms and stereotypes, identify harmful gender roles, and break down the differences between sex and gender. That's a lot of content to process and remember for the students, but there is some very specific information or idea we want them to walk away with after this activity. How do we ensure that? We leave them with one or two lines that sum up the entire activity:

“Gender stereotypes are socially constructed and different from reality. We are not defined by stereotypes.”

Just like that, a concise piece of information has been created for students to remember, even after the class is over.

1. **'Tag' Speech Challenge:** This exercise is most effective if done after some days of discussion on the content you intend to cover in classrooms. Write down relevant topics

on pieces of paper and put them in a bowl. The person tagged has to pick up a paper and deliver a speech on that topic. They would get 2-3 minutes to think about the topic before delivering a speech suited to the target demographic (age/school year of students).

** Another thing you could build into this exercise is eye and body movement!

- 2. Mock Classroom Session:** Assign each trainee (or groups of two) a specific topic from your chosen curriculum. Ask them to create presentation slides for the topic. On the day of the training session, allot each trainee (or group) with around 30 minutes to present their topics to the entire team. To make it more realistic and challenging, ask them to present as if they are in a classroom and the team members are their students.

What to look out for:

Regardless of what exercises you use, there are a few key things you need to ensure that your trainees are demonstrating.

- **Energy.** Remember that, ultimately, the students will reflect the kind of energy that the Peer Educator brings into the classroom. If the Peer Educator does not seem to be excited by the content themselves, the students will find the content boring. Encourage the trainee to use an **upbeat tone, gesticulate, and walk around the room** instead of standing in one place.
- **Enthusiasm.** If the peer educators read directly from the slides and maintain a monotonous tone, the students will definitely fall asleep halfway into the class. Therefore, the trainees must familiarize themselves with the content of the slides before presenting, and remain confident all throughout. If trainees are struggling with this aspect, ask them to develop scripts for themselves and practise at home in front of a mirror. Even though the delivery should feel natural, the script will help the trainees feel like they are in control of the content.
- **Interaction.** One key difference between regular presentations in the workplace or at college and presentations in the classrooms as a Peer Educator is the need for interaction. No student will be interested or be able to digest the content without interacting with the content themselves. Encourage the trainees to pose questions to the team members throughout the presentation so that it no longer feels like a lecture, but more of a discussion.
- **Relatable language.** Peer educators should use language that is accessible to the target demographic. Their explanations and use of vocabulary must be in accordance with the grade they are delivering the speech to, to ensure clarity. This will be particularly important in the classroom since peer educators would need to adjust how they deliver the content based on the level of understanding of the students, e.g. they can't conduct classes the same way for middle schoolers as they would for high schoolers.
- **(Appropriate) humor.** It's important to create a fun environment within the classroom by cracking jokes that would help students feel more comfortable. However, the peer educators must be careful about what sort of jokes they're making inside the classrooms - they should not be jokes rooted in racism, sexism or any discriminatory act; and they should definitely not make light of serious matters (e.g. abuse).

- **Non-judgemental language.** Peer educators should never patronize students or undervalue their experiences. Their use of language should promote an environment where students feel safe to voice their opinions and stories in the classroom, *even problematic ones*, so that the Peer Educator has the chance to walk them through the process of truly learning the material.

With time, the trainees will develop their own presentation styles that they are comfortable with. As trainers, you must carefully assess their presentations each time, provide feedback and check if they have incorporated the feedback the next time they present. It's normal for the trainees to be nervous the first couple of times, but a trainee can be considered fully trained when they are completely comfortable with the content and capable of presenting whenever necessary.

Facilitation

Since our model in no way wants to resemble traditional teacher-student dynamics, peer educators aren't meant to provide lectures - they are to facilitate discussions. The role of facilitators is to guide participants through a discussion, while keeping the right flow, ensuring the conversation is not derailed, and encouraging that everyone come out of the discussion having learned the right takeaways. Facilitation skills that are essential to Peer Educator trainees can be broken down as follows:

1. **Moderating discussions.** The only way that a CSE or SRHR class can be successful is if students speak up and share their thoughts and relevant experiences with the classroom when going through the content. However, it's important to maintain a clear structure throughout the discussion.

Exercise Tip: Trainees should be made to facilitate training sessions with other team members on their own in order to get a grasp of facilitation. Provide them with a topic and ask them to come up with key takeaways they want the participants to land on. During the discussion, as moderators, the trainees must:

- Have a clear idea of which main points they want everyone to touch on. Conversation can easily go on a different direction than intended and it is the responsibility of the facilitator to realign the discussion
 - Maintain turns. No discussion is effective if people are talking over each other
 - State takeaways at the right time. The tricky part is to not allow the participants feel like they are being told something from someone "more knowledgeable," and instead feel as though they came to these conclusions on their own. Once the discussion is headed in the intended direction, the facilitator can take control and finish off the conversation with a timely takeaway (which will be prepared ahead of the discussion)
2. **Active listening.** Any good facilitator speaks less and listens more. During discussions, trainees must concentrate on what each participant has said, understand their point of view, and come up with a prompt response. This skill can be developed during any discussion that takes place during

the entire training process. As trainers, you can gauge how well the trainees are listening by encouraging them to respond to each other during discussions and build off of each other's responses.

- 3. Conflict resolution.** In any discussion, there is bound to be disagreements between participants. Even though we try to minimize the chances of this occurring in the classroom by setting appropriate ground rules (which we will elaborate on in a later section), facilitators must still be ready to face any kind of conflict situation. Trainees must remind participants to be respectful of each other's opinions, while also following that same sentiment themselves. When two or more participants are engaged in conflict, the facilitator has to jump in and validate the opinions of each party. However, if the facilitator is aware that one of the opinions is damaging to the topic at hand, they have to calmly try to explain to the participants where exactly they're going wrong. Keep in mind that facilitators can never lose their cool.
- 4. Moderating group activities.** Our model recommends using interactive group activities to facilitate discussions among the students. The group activities have the potential of becoming disorganized if students are left to operate on their own. This is where the facilitators come in. During group activities, facilitators have to:
 - a. Clearly state and explain the instructions of the activity. They should be ready to repeat the instructions patiently as many times as required
 - b. Be ready to answer questions. They should make rounds and ask each group if they are confused about any step of the activity
 - c. Check up on groups. They should know how much progress each group is making and be there to support groups that may be lagging behind others

Exercise Tip: Trainees can be assigned to create their own group activities for a certain topic and moderate them within the team in order to develop group moderation skill

- 5. Answering curveball questions.** No matter how prepared a Peer Educator is, you can't fully predict what will come up during discussions within the classroom. We recommend that you create an FAQ for trainees before they go into classrooms so they are aware of what kind of questions come up. But, there's always a chance of a completely random question to be brought up. Trainees must learn to not be fazed by these questions and rather calmly think about what answer would easily clear up any confusion the student has.

Remember: saying you don't know the answer is always an option.

Exercise Tip: Trainees can develop the skill for answering curveball questions during dry-runs, which we will be discussed later on in this section.

- 6. Co-facilitating.** In an ideal classroom setting, there would be at least two peer educators conducting a class together. There are two different co-facilitation styles that can be used: Tag Team and Lead-Class Management. In the Tag Team style, the peer educators will take turns to deliver the content, ensuring the content is divided equally between them. In this case, both peer educators will engage in classroom management and address individual questions from students in addition to delivering the content. In the Lead-Class Management style, one Peer Educator will

deliver the content while the other will manage the class and help students with questions, especially during small group discussions. Both styles are effective and should be chosen depending on the strengths of each Peer Educator and the approach that would best suit the class. Regardless of what style is chosen, there can be many benefits to co-facilitation¹⁰:

- a. Preserving energy. Presenting to a class for 40 minutes to an hour on a stretch is no easy feat, especially for peer educators who need to be energetic and in high spirits while delivering the content. Having a co-facilitator allows each Peer Educator to take rest in between and remain energized when it's their turn to present.
- b. Highlighting individual strengths. peer educators can have certain sub-topics or activities they feel more confident facilitating. Having more than one Peer Educator allows each of them to play to their strengths and ensure an even more effective class.
- c. Bringing in new perspectives. As mentioned before, these classes must be interactive. This means that students will have all sorts of observations and questions that the peer educators have to address. While answering, multiple peer educators can add their unique perspectives and ensure that the students don't feel like they're learning hard and fast rules from a single person.
- d. Breaking up the monotony. We've talked about how peer educators usually develop their own presentation styles. Having more than one peer educator in class means a different energy, style and even voice will be brought in, making classes more interesting!
- e. Having a safety net. You can't expect peer educators to perform perfectly at all times. There will be times when a peer educator will get stuck explaining a topic, lose track of time or mix up the order, or, in general, just have a bad day. That's when a co-facilitator jumps in to help keep the class moving smoothly.

Exercise Tip: Trainees can learn how to be a good co-facilitator by partaking in joint dry-runs with other trainees. Here are a few things to keep in mind when evaluating their co-facilitation skills:

- Are they catching each other's cues well?
- Are they speaking over each other or taking turns?
- Do they seem to have each other's backs when one has a slip-up?
- Have they divided the content equally amongst each other?
- Do they get along well? Can they be considered role models for how students should behave with their group mates?

¹⁰ UN Interagency Group on Young Peoples Health Development and Protection in Europe and Central Asia. "Peer Education: Training of Trainers Manual" 2003
ft.ee/admin/upload/files/Peer%20education%20training%20materials%202003%20eng.pdf

Time management

CSE or SRHR topics are usually so vast, we could talk about them for days on end. Since we do not have that luxury in the classroom, making sure all the main points are covered within the given time is crucial. The duration of classes can vary significantly, therefore it is up to the peer educators to figure out a distribution of how much time can be spent on each subtopic in order to finish up the class on time. We recommend having this planned out well before the implementation of the program. Here is a sample of a time division created for a 60 minute class:

Time Management Outline:

TOPIC A

Sub topic 1 General discussion	15 minutes
Activity 1 Small group activity	15 minutes
Sub topic 2	10 minutes
Activity 2 Video screening	5 minutes
Activity 3 Main group activity with presentation	25 minutes Discussion: 10 minutes Presentation: 15 minute

Creating such clear time divisions will allow peer educators to pace themselves and ensure no more or less time is being spent on a certain activity. Peer educators should have these ready for each topic.

Even after preparing an outline of the time divisions, different unplanned scenarios may take place in the classroom. For example:

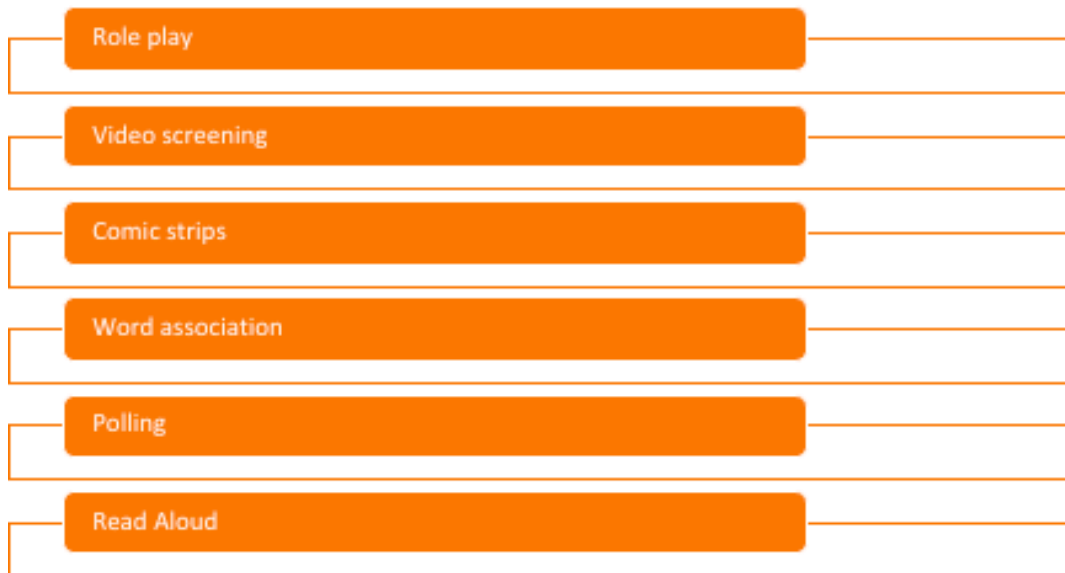
- Too much time can be spent on a subtopic while even more important parts are yet to be covered. In this case, the Peer Educator should pick up the pace and try to get to the next subtopic as soon as possible
- More time than intended can be spent on a subtopic due to more interaction from the students. If the discussion seems important, the Peer Educator can choose to skip one of the next subtopics
- The class time can end with content left to be covered. The Peer Educator must judge whether the remaining subtopics are critical to understanding

the whole topic. If not, it can be skipped. If yes, some time can be allotted in the next class to cover the material

Exercise Tip: Time management skills of the trainees can be assessed through presentations, activities, dry-runs and even just through examining how concise their responses and answers are during discussions.

Interactive classrooms tools & techniques

We may be repeating ourselves too many times at this point, but we can't stress this enough - the classes need to be fun and interactive. If the Peer Educator is the only one in the room talking the entire time, you can say the class isn't really a success. Imagine a traditional classroom setting: the teacher enters, points at the board and embarks on a monologue; the students can barely keep up or aren't even interested, they're handed homework and they go home feeling like they haven't learned anything new. We want to accomplish the opposite of this. And to do so, we must think out of the box. A few classroom tools and techniques that we believe are just the right balance of enjoyable and educational are:



Even though we keep reiterating the fact that these classes should be more of a discussion than a lecture, we realize that discussions among 30 or more people can never be as effective as, let's say, a discussion between a group of five. With fewer people, there is more time and space for each participant to think more critically, share all of their own views and opinions and listen to each other attentively. That is exactly why, in the sections below, we've mentioned dividing up the class into smaller groups during discussions.

Peer educators also have to keep in mind to relay activity instructions clearly to the students in every interactive tool, where necessary.

Role play

Let's start strong with our student-favorite activity according to Kotha Student FGDs: role play. It constitutes students acting out real-life scenarios in order to understand and analyse different interactions and reactions. Role plays and other theatre techniques provide an attractive way to deliver information through humour and true-to-life drama. It permits educators to dramatize the myths that people spread and show how to break them down. In a role play, people can explore problems that they might feel uncomfortable about discussing in real life¹¹.

“I really enjoyed the drama [role play] activities. They were very enjoyable and actually worked. We could use different perspectives and put ourselves into other people's shoes. We got to know what helps us and what would help others.” - Grade X Student, Kotha at School FGD

In many cases, they've already experienced or are experiencing the situations we bring up. Therefore, it is crucial that the students know how to apply the knowledge they gain in the classrooms, in their own lives. One of the best ways to prepare the students for this is to simulate these real-life scenarios in the classroom and allow them to play it out.

How it works:

- Peer educators can either design a scenario with dialogue and roles for students to act out in class OR simply give students a prompt with which they can design their own skit and dialogue ***(The topic can't be so narrow that everyone comes up with the same skit but not so vague that they get confused.)***
- Peer educators must provide a few questions that everybody must answer through their skit. ***(This is the chance for PEs to help students connect lessons learnt from the topic to their activity.)***
- Each group should present in front of the whole class so there is an opportunity to learn from different scenarios
- After each group presents, other students should be welcomed to ask questions or give comments and peer educators must provide immediate feedback.

¹¹ United Nations Population Fund. “Youth Peer Education Toolkit: Training of Trainer Manual.” 2005. www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/Youth%20Peer%20Education%20Toolkit%20-%20The%20Training%20of%20Trainers%20Manual.pdf.

SUPER TIP #1:

Peer educators should check up on the groups during discussion time to make sure they're all on the right track. If the Peer Educator feels any group is deviating from the topic at hand, the PE should repeat the instructions to them and give them hints or examples to guide them

Pointers for the Peer Educators:

- They should observe the skit thoroughly. Have the students addressed all the questions? Do the students remember all the key takeaways from the class? Mistakes are inevitable and excusable, but do they seem to be trying to learn, unlearn and relearn?
- They have to cheer for the students! Even if they feel some groups have performed much better than others, all teams should be applauded equally before going in with feedback. Working on a topic that the students have probably never had to learn about in school and then even having to perform in front of the entire class, is no easy feat, so everyone should be shown love and appreciation.

Video Screening

This one's quite straightforward and commonly used, yet extremely effective. Let's face it, if you're a student who has to come into classrooms and listen to the same people drone on every single week, you're bound to get bored. Watching relevant educational videos together in the classroom can be a great way to break up the monotone and spice things up a little bit. However, the activity can't end there. Each screening must be followed by critical analysis and discussion. The whole class can participate together or in smaller groups.

Pointers for the Peer Educators:

- When asking students questions about the video, some key things peer educators need to remember:
 - Push students to self-reflect
 - Push students to answer 'why's' - Why did you find something interesting? Why did something make you uncomfortable?
 - Push students to draw connections from the video to lessons learnt (takeaways!) from the topic
- Peer educators should highlight interesting parts of the video during discussion. It could be a striking statistic or a point that could give rise to debate among students
- At the end, PEs themselves should state some clear takeaways from the video

Word Association

Word Association is a highly energetic word game where students spontaneously share a collection of words in response to a given word by the Peer Educator. It is an exercise through which students realize how they have been influenced to think about certain topics or concepts by bringing to light how they associate particular words to certain situations or people or characteristics. This helps them recognize and unlearn biases that they have grown up with. So far, we have emphasized on critical thinking, self-reflection and analysis. For this exercise, students are instructed to answer with the first words that come to mind. The goal is to capture how students' minds work.

How it works:

- The peer educator writes out specific words or situations relating to the topic being discussed, on the whiteboard
- The peer educator then asks the students to shout out words they think of when they read the words on the board. As soon as they start stating the words, the peer educator should write them all down on the board
- Once there are enough words, analysis and discussion on the responses should be started

Pointers for the Peer Educators:

- The more words there are, the more effective the discussion will be! So, the peer educator should push the students to keep throwing words their way
- They must challenge the students to confront why they thought of the words that they stated. Are there specific reasons these words popped into their heads? Can they explain their reasoning?

Comic Strips

One thing we've learned from interacting with students is that they tend to learn most through visuals and experiences. Therefore, visual storytelling can be a great way to grab their attention. Comic strips are a perfect medium, since they're short but can still fit in powerful stories and emotions. *"Comic strips were realistic and explaining it to others made us understand the concepts better,"* shared a student from Kotha's 2020 CSE program during an FGD organized by Kotha. We recommend finding relevant educational comic strips to use for this activity or even letting your creativity run wild and making your own comic strips!

How it works:

- The Peer Educator will provide each group of students with a comic strip
- Each comic strip will contain a specific scenario
- The Peer Educator will have the students analyse the strip and figure out what's right or wrong with the situation. The students should answer specific questions about the scenario, e.g.

Should anything have happened differently? Did everyone react in a way that nobody gets hurt?
What have I learned today that could have been applied to this situation?

- The Peer Educator will then call up the groups to the front of the class, have them discuss their comic strip scenario and read out their answers to the questions

Pointer for the Peer Educators:

- Remember Super Tip #1

Why are student presentations an important part of interactive classroom tools?

In most of the activities we've mentioned, we encourage the students to come up in front of the class and present. This practice can help in various ways. Firstly, the thought of having to present pushes the students to have more effective discussions before the presentation to make sure they can do a great job in front of everyone. It goes without saying that their presentation skills grow, along with their confidence. They also get a chance to speak on their own and take control of the class while the peer educators take a backseat. Lastly, it allows students to speak openly on sensitive topics, thereby breaking the stigma while reassuring them that it's okay to speak up about whatever they need to.

Now that we've covered all the different tools that can be used in the classroom, let's move on to what techniques a Peer Educator may use during class to ensure interaction and engagement:

Polling

Polling can help challenge students and make them put their knowledge to test. Or, polling can help students realize different characteristics of their own peer groups (How many of us have dated before? How many of us have faced bullying? How many of us know all the different parts of the female reproductive organs?). This personal connection helps them feel more invested in what the Peer Educator will talk about next.

Example polling question: How many of us know all the different parts of the female reproductive organs?

Does the next slide have some statistics the Peer Educator wants to share with the class? Instead of revealing the statistics straight away, they should give the students some options to choose from and ask which one they think is the right answer.

They should let the students throw guesses at them before disclosing the real statistics. The students get competitive and become really excited if their answer is correct!

Reading aloud

Peer educators should periodically ask someone to volunteer to read content from presentations or worksheets out to the classroom. This makes students feel more invested in the content and also helps them remember definitions and concepts more clearly after reading out themselves or listening to their peers read it out instead of just reading from the slide themselves.

SUPER TIP #2

If peer educators share their experiences in the class, students feel as though they can trust them and share their own stories. “Willingness to share personal experiences” was a point made by students of Kotha’s 2018 CSE program when identifying what characteristics their ideal Peer Educator should have. This contributes to creating a safe space in the classroom, as we talked about in an earlier section. The examples also help simplify terms/concepts for the students and helps them realize how this content can be applied to the real world.

Dry runs

Dry runs are the last stage of your training before you enter classrooms. Think of dry runs as rehearsals for your final show! Essentially dry runs are a simulation of the classroom environment in which you will teach as a Peer Educator. The great part is you will have plenty of space to mess up and learn with your teammates. During the dry runs phase you will combine all the other skills and knowledge and tips you learnt in the sections above.

How Dry Runs work

Dry runs are conducted for each specific session of your program. If you have sessions on gender, menstruation, and consent as part of your program, peer educators should go through dry runs for all three topics. Some programs might have multiple sessions for one particular topic. In that case, dry runs should be conducted for each of those sessions as well. All dry runs should be timed to ensure the Peer Educator is able to cover all materials of a session within the allotted time. Remember, we are trying to do everything exactly as we would during the actual session!

Here is what you will need:

- 1) Teaching tool: Get a whiteboard, blackboard or screen depending on what peer educators will use when conducting your session. During the dry run, the trainees should use this as much or as little as they plan to during the actual session!
- 2) Dry run supervisor(s): Depending on your resources, one or two trainers should be observing the dry run to later give detailed feedback.
- 3) Dry run audience: Try to have at least 2 to 3 people who can observe the session as an audience member, essentially playing the role of students.

SUPER TIP #3

Pair trainees up and have them imitate the conversation between a student and a PE. It not only prepares them for difficult/probable conversations in the classroom, but also helps them understand the mindset (what questions/concerns students might have) of the demographic they plan on teaching. Since we have already established that words carry a lot of weight in shaping students' minds, this is a great exercise for coming up with thoughtful and helpful responses.

IMPORTANT:

The idea is to have peer educators conduct a classroom session in front of a trainer and a few fellow team mates to create a mock classroom environment. For successful and effective dry runs, try to mimic the physical set up of the venue where you will take classes. If the PE will be conducting sessions standing up in front of a classroom, make sure you place your teaching tools accordingly and the trainee is standing up facing the supervisor and audience members during the dry run. Physically being in a similar position as the actual class helps trainees get into the right mindset!

Dry run styles

Paired: As we've mentioned earlier, we recommend having at least two peer educators co-facilitating each class. Therefore, in preparation for the classroom, it would be best to have peer educators participate in dry-runs in pairs as well.

Tip: Initially try to switch up the pairs of trainees. Once you find specific pairs that are working well together, they should go through more dry run sessions as a pair.

What the paired trainees should work on:

- Familiarizing themselves with each other's cues
- Learning to communicate better, even non-verbally!
- Supporting each other when either has issues going through a section
- Understanding which parts of the class outline are each other's strengths and weaknesses

Individual: While learning to co-facilitate is important, peer educators should also be capable of conducting a class by themselves. We never know when an emergency might occur that could cause a co-facilitator to be absent, leaving only one peer educator to handle the entire class. It's also just a good practice for peer educators to gain confidence in themselves and their command over the content.

Tip: A good set of dry runs will have a mixture of both paired and individual sessions!

When giving feedback on a dry run, it is important to keep in mind all the previous sections of this chapter. It will be a good idea to go over these sections and the key points in each section to formulate your questions for feedback. Here are some example questions to keep in mind based on previous sections when giving feedback to trainees:

- 1) Time management:
 - i) Did the PE finish within the allotted time for a session? Did the PE spend too much time on any particular sub topic or activity?
- 2) Public Speaking
 - i) Did the PE use language appropriate for their target audience? For e.g if the PE will conduct sessions for middle school students, the language used should be very simple as opposed to when they would conduct sessions for university students.
 - ii) Did the PE have enough energy to keep a session with a full audience energized and engaged with the content?
- 3) How did they answer questions posed by audience members? Are there topics they need more knowledge on?

Classroom Challenges

[The plight of the PEs]

Congratulations on making it this far! So far you have jumped through the hoops of recruiting, training and preparing for the classroom. The moment you step into the classroom, however, you will quickly realize that all that was just half the battle at best. The real test awaits you in the classroom. The pressure for performing well is ON, but wait what's that - oh my goodness, the projector has stopped working; the class is in chaos; and the school admin has decided that your material is not "appropriate" (stigma around sex-ed is very real) for the students...

No PE is ever fully prepared for everything that gets thrown their way, but this is where your quick-thinking and flexibility can help you stay afloat. Here are some common challenges you might encounter:

Technical difficulties

This includes malfunction of devices and files - laptops, projectors, speakers and microphones may not be working properly; these may not be available at your disposal in the first place; and, of course, the audio/video may not play and images may not load. Nothing is more panic inducing than this. However, we'd argue that this has the "easiest" fix. It is important that peer educators **know the material** by heart and not solely rely on technology to conduct a class. They should plan out alternatives and backups before entering the classroom. Although technology does play an important role, it's always best to prepare materials (and their minds) for situations where they would have to forgo technology.

If you expect the unexpected, it is no longer unexpected!

Whiteboard can be your best friend!

Believe it or not but the way peer educators write things out on the board impacts how much attention the students will pay to the content. The peer educators can try to make the board look visually appealing through using diagrams.

In addition, you can think of engagement tools and tactics (Hint: Chapter 5) that could be applicable in any classroom in the world. To reiterate: If there are 10 ways for things to go wrong, have at least 1 solution for each perceivable problem!

The following ones, we'd say, are things you might struggle with the most - people are always more unpredictable than technology.

Students

Different programs will work with different types of students. For some of you, the students your PEs will deal with might be workshop attendees, for some of you they may be online participants, for some of you they will be school students. Every time PEs will go fully prepared to take a class, and everytime you'll find that only 1 of 10 things is going their way - such is the rite of passage of a Peer Educator. It might be that your laptop breaks down in the middle of your lecture. A crow swoops in and snatches away your supplementary materials for class. You have a broken arm and can't move your hand around a million times. Anything can happen!

Teacher or friend?

One main issue the PE may face in the classroom is students not paying attention or "causing trouble". The PEs should not punish students like traditional teachers tend to do, such as kicking students out of the class, making them stand in a corner, threatening to send them to the principal, etc. Acting the same way as traditional teachers breaks the trust that PEs work so hard to establish with the students. Instead, PEs should directly engage the students with class content through asking them questions or keep a closer eye on them in class. However, the PEs should pay attention to what sort of "trouble" the students are causing and calibrate their actions accordingly. If the students are bullying each other, the PE should intervene and make the student who's being bullied understand that such behavior will not be tolerated. If the students are making light of serious matters in class, the PE *must* address it and help students understand the gravity of the situation. The goal should be to try to explain to the students why it may be harmful and can negatively impact others. The PEs can also try to break down why these behaviours go against the ground rules that have been set for them.

There are specific challenges for school based programs that PEs should be aware of! School based programs where classes are taken during the school hours are greatly affected by issues such as school events, exams or tests, or even special classes such as labs or physical education. Students may not be back in classrooms on time or have to leave early. They are also affected by other teachers who will be taking class before or after the peer educators. Losing class timing to such situations can impact how effectively PEs can work.

When making your schedule or your lesson plan, keep these details in mind. Reach out to school admins before the beginning of your program to make note of important dates and events that might affect your PEs and their classes.

Confidentiality & Safe Space

We have talked about the importance of safe spaces in Chapter 3. One thing we would ask PEs to not compromise on is privacy in the classroom, and confidentiality of students' matters. Although it can be a tricky situation to navigate, it is best to not have school teachers or admins in the classroom, even as observers. Having them in the classroom would disrupt the safe space we try so hard to establish. One of the main reasons why Peer Education is effective is because students feel comfortable voicing their opinions, asking questions and sharing stories without the judgement of adults they interact with on a daily basis. (Do you recall Chapter 1?) Allowing others into this space would build that wall right back up.

This is especially crucial for topics that are considered to be taboo or sensitive in your society or community.

Best Practices

Just as there are ground rules for peer educators while they are being trained, it is good practice to lay down some ground rules that PEs should introduce to students at the beginning of all classes.

Ground rules for students (Y-Peer Training of Trainers Manual, 2005)

1. Respecting each other, even when you disagree
2. Having the right not to participate in an activity that makes you feel uncomfortable, feel free to step out of the classroom if needed
3. Listening to what other people say, without interrupting them
4. No bullying or humiliating others
5. Respecting confidentiality
6. Being on time

Ideal classroom size & seating arrangement

When thinking of the ideal classroom setting, it is important to remember that one of our main aims is to design an interactive learning experience for students. This is crucial for the type of topics we will deal with as outlined in previous chapters. So, we must try to avoid crowding at all costs and create a positive physical environment in the classroom that will encourage interaction and discussion amongst students as well as with the PEs and also allow students to effectively work in small groups. In the end, our classes can only function if there is interaction from students. This is recommended by Sexual and Reproductive Health Facilitators' Training Manual (DSW, 2014) as well as what we have seen from working with students through Kotha at School. But how exactly do we do that?

First, the peer Educators should figure out how many students there are within a class. Next, they have to go to the school and ask how many rooms would be free during class time. They might run into some issues with scheduling and room availability but, if all that can be settled, each classroom should have around **20-30 students**. But what's the issue with classrooms having significantly more students than 30?

- It becomes difficult for the students to properly engage with the content. Much of your content will rely on students sharing their input on class material. A large group can be intimidating leading to only a few students actively participating and sharing with the class. The rest either do not get the chance to speak up or have a difficult time even paying attention.
- Even if students are excited to share in class, it might be difficult to give everyone the chance to speak since class time is limited.
- The peer educators will find it hard to connect with the students, especially on an individual-level, since there wouldn't be much scope to get to know so many students. It won't be easy to figure

out whether some of the students are finding it difficult to understand any of the topics as they would get less chances to speak up, so PEs won't be able to assist them either.

- Many of the classes will also have group activities. Group activities are effective when there are roughly 4-5 students in each group so there is maximum engagement and scope for discussion. If the class size is greater than 30, each small group having only 4-5 students would lead to too many groups for PEs to effectively manage.

Ultimately, the classes would not be as effective as we want them to be. Alternatively, a class with 20 to 30 students would feel more cozy - students and peer educators will get the chance to know each other, have the space to speak openly and take the time to discuss and share with the class. Students will get more chances to ask questions and participate. A bonus would be if the students are from the same section and are friends with each other, since the familiarity can lead to comfort. In the end, we strive to create safe spaces for the students within classes, so the more comfortable they feel, the more successful we are.

Now that we're done fixing the number of students per classroom, let's think about the layout inside. Traditionally, classrooms contain chairs that all face towards the front of the class, where the teacher stands. But, as you should know by now, we don't do anything traditionally. We've already seen in Chapter 4 that one of our recommended classroom activities is small group discussions. The best way to do so is by sitting together in a circle, facing each other. Instruct the peer educators to make the students move their chairs around to form circles whenever a group activity calls for a discussion within their small groups. This arrangement makes it easier for the students to speak to each other comfortably, and it also makes it more convenient for the Peer Educator to walk around the classroom and check in on each group. Win-win situation!

Resources to make available/have on hand

Before going into the classroom, make sure the peer educators follow this check-list of resources to bring with them:

- **Topic overview:** These should outline the sub-topics and major themes to be covered under each topic of the program
- **Classroom outline:** These should be significantly more detailed than the **Topic overview**. It should follow the sequenced description of each segment of a class, including allotted timings. They should also include relevant background notes such as definition and examples as well as key takeaways to be shared with the students. Lastly, outlines should also have content delivery instructions for the Peer Educator where relevant (such as cues for which segment should include interactive tools such as polling or word association, which definitions would require more examples, or what time is best to share the takeaway for a segment).
- **Recommended**

Personal Outline: These should be made by each Peer Educator and include their personal notes, instructions as well as customized examples for each topic

- **Topic presentations:** These presentation slides should contain all the key information to be covered in each class. To learn more about how to create these slides, refer back to Chapter 4. The peer educators should have the presentations handy in a pen drive
- **Activity Materials:** These include all materials required for the group activities that students will participate in, e.g. printed copies of handouts and comic strips, audio/visuals, post-its, colored markers etc.
- **Technology:** Encourage the peer educators to carry their own laptops if possible since they might need to plug them in to project the topic presentations or screen videos

What to document and why?

What's the fun of this adventure if you don't have pictures to show for it! Well, it's a tiny bit more work than clicking photos (and maybe less fun). And you'll be reading more about how to do it and when to do it in the upcoming sections, but *what* exactly is it and *why* should you do it?

Documentation simply means the routine and systematic gathering of information of different phases of our program - from training to taking classes - for future reference. This information can be recorded as written documents, photos, videos or audio recordings. The most important thing to remember about documentation is that it is an ongoing process and not a one time thing.

Human memory fails us more often than we'd like to admit, so it is critical to document the work that we do - the process, results, feedback, challenges faced, best practices etc. The results and feedback portion of documentation will help us with Evaluation of our program which we will learn about in the next chapter!

Why is it important?

It might be difficult to understand why it is necessary to do all this extra work when we will already be busy training peer educators, developing content, conducting classes etc. However, spending some time and effort on documenting your program will pay off in the long run and help you run things smoothly and more effectively. Please don't underestimate this!

Documentation can help you to:

- 1) Identify what worked
 - It can teach us and other organizations about what best practices to use in the future
- 2) Identify what did not work
 - It can help us learn from our mistakes
- 3) Identify what needs to improve
 - It can help inform next steps by reassessing goals, modifying our program design or training process based on experience
- 4) Communicate your work to others for partnerships and collaborations
- 5) Keep track of achievements, milestones and progress

Now that we've covered why documentation is essential to a successful Peer Education program, let's get into what exactly you should be documenting. We'll be breaking down what to document into two categories: during the training phase and in-and-out of classrooms.

During training phase

We want the training program to be replicable and constantly improving. The best way to ensure this is to thoroughly document the training process so that we can look back and analyse what worked and what didn't.

Here's a list of key aspects to document during training:

- **Trainee experiences and opinions shared during discussion.** Ideally, training should consist of multiple discussions for each of the topics included in the program. Many experiences will be shared, opinions will be heard, and confusions will be cleared. The arguments or explanations or even just opinions that the trainees put forward during discussions can help determine how they will approach the same topic within the classroom. We will also be able to compare responses by the trainees from earlier discussions with those more recent, to see if there have been any changes. If it seems like their concepts are clearer than before, you're right on track
- **Questions during discussions.** It can be expected that a lot of the questions that the trainees have during discussions will come up in future training programs as well, so having these questions recorded will have you better prepared for upcoming discussions. You will be able to anticipate exactly which areas the trainees will find difficult to understand and tweak your game plan to make sure those points are broken down further.
- **Areas of confusion.** If the trainee seems to be confused and unable to articulate their thoughts during discussions, they would need more time to read up on or speak with you, the trainer, to gain more knowledge.
- **Meeting attendance.** Missing even one discussion can lead to a vast gap in knowledge in the absentee, so having a record of this will help you remember which trainees might need some extra help with certain topics. Keep a written record of how many trainees have attended, how many have notified you beforehand that they can't make it, and how many have missed the discussion without any prior notice.
- **Assignments and presentations.** A big part of the training process is the various assignments and activities that every trainee will have to be part of. All of their assignment submissions should be collected and stored. These can, firstly, serve as a reminder to them of what they have worked on and have been trained on, and will also help you keep track of the trainees' contributions and performance. Presentations by the trainees should also be documented - the pace they spoke at, how articulate they were, how clear they could be heard, etc. Their presentation slides should be collected as well.
- **Trainer to trainee feedback.** All feedback you share with trainees during activities should be documented. As the trainees participate in more activities, documentation will allow you to look back and check whether they have been incorporating your feedback each time.

- **Trainee work division during group assignments.** Make sure to keep track of who is working on which parts of the assignments, and whether there is equal contribution. If work divisions are documented, it can help to understand who is dedicating enough time to the training and who isn't.

In-and-out of classrooms

As we've said many times before, it's difficult to predict with 100% assurance what will happen in the classroom, but the more we document what has already happened, the more accurate predictions we can make for future classes.

Here's a list of key aspects the peer educators need to document in-and-out of classrooms:

- **Student input.** Since our classes are meant to be interactive discussions, we tend to pose many different questions to the students in every class. Sometimes, the answers are what we expect while other times they can be completely out of the box. All of these answers by the students must be documented by one of the peer educators present in the class. Let's say, the peer educators are doing a word association activity, and ask the students to give them some words they think of when they hear the given term. Each word that the students share should be recorded. This will help peer educators anticipate the students' word choices for future classes, around which explanations and takeaways for each activity can be built.
- **Curveball questions.** We always encourage students to shoot any questions they think of our way and we try to answer at the best of our abilities. Sometimes, the questions are what we want them to ask - questions that would help us build our case and strengthen our takeaway - while sometimes they're complete curveballs. These unexpected questions are great in the sense that it shows the students are critically thinking about the topics, but if these questions catch the peer educator completely off-guard, it can become difficult to answer. We don't want the peer educators to ever feel like they've lost control of the class or taken a hit in their confidence (even though they should know how to tackle curveball questions after their training on improvisation.) So, it's best to document all the questions brought forward by the students and later create an FAQ of sorts that trainees can refer to while preparing to go into the classroom.
- **Areas of confusion.** No matter how many times the peer educators practise and perfect their delivery and explanation, there are bound to be certain terms or concepts that students have a hard time wrapping their heads around. Sometimes we assume this would happen and already allot extra time for discussing those areas. However, while in the classroom, newer confusions may arise among the students that the peer educators did not account for beforehand. These areas of confusion must be documented so that necessary changes can be made to the outline to accommodate more discussion and further breaking down of the concept.
- **Outline modification.** In some situations, outline alterations can be made during the class itself. Peer educators sometimes have to make on-the-spot decisions about which parts of the outline to put more time into, which parts to cut out and which activities to change up. These

changes can depend upon factors such as how much students are resonating with a certain subtopic, what kind of level of understanding the students already have in certain areas and, sometimes, just about what feels like the best route of action in the given moment. All of these changes need to be documented so that the outcomes of these alterations can be analysed later on and, based on whether they worked better than the original outline, could be made into permanent changes to the main outline.

How to document?

During training phase:

Now that you know all the different aspects you should document during training, let's get into how you need to do it.

Discussions:

At the start of every discussion, have one of the trainees volunteer to take notes! Remind them to include everyone's responses and questions. If the discussion is held online, try to record it (with everyone's consent, of course). If not, have someone on the team take photos and short videos throughout the discussion, especially highlighting any group activities that take place.

Assignments and presentations:

Whether their assignment submissions are online or physical copies, always store them! During presentations, take photos or videos and also ask for copies of their presentation slides. Also make sure that any feedback that you share with the trainees is written down so you can always look back at them. In terms of group assignments, get input about work divisions through anonymous peer evaluation forms, which we will talk more about in the next chapter!

In-and-out of classrooms:

At least one of the peer educators inside a classroom should be given the responsibility of documenting the class. They should take notes including all the student inputs and questions, and any modifications made to the class outline. It is best to take audio recordings of the entire class, while video recordings can be a great alternative! They should also take photos to capture the most important moments.

Evaluation & Feedback

Any successful training program includes a strong feedback system. Trainees, trained peer educators and trainers all constantly have room to grow, but if you don't know what you're doing right or wrong, how can you possibly improve? Think of detailed, constructive criticism as the net that catches you when you're thrown into the world of Peer Education with no idea whether what you're doing is working. Never think of feedback as compliments or insults - they're objective observations designed to help you look at yourself from the perspective of everyone else involved in the process, starting from your peers to the students.

In this section, we're going to break down how to set up feedback channels for different groups to ensure 360-degree feedback.

Peer to Peer

Peer to Trainer

Trainer to Peer

Student to PE

Actors	Frequency	Suggested tools	Broad aims for trainee
Trainee/Peer Educator to Trainee/Peer Educator	Monthly/Weekly	Anonymous Feedback forms	To evaluate trainee during group work
Student to Peer Educator	Beginning and end of program	Surveys FGDs	To evaluate effectiveness of program
Trainee to Trainer	Monthly/Weekly	Anonymous Feedback forms Team call	To identify and improve on gaps in training
Trainer to Trainee/Peer Educator	Monthly/Weekly	One on one calls	To assess whether PE is ready for classroom

Make sure you keep the responses anonymous - even though feedback is not meant to be personal, trainees may still take criticism to heart. Don't break friendships!

Peer-to-peer

The first pairing is peer educators/trainees and their fellow peer educators/trainees. Since the trainees will typically be working as a team throughout most of the training period, they can sometimes know each other's strengths and weaknesses better than even the trainers. Therefore, it is crucial that the trainees evaluate each other through different phases of training. Once they have successfully finished training and go into classrooms, more rounds of feedback are required to make sure they're constantly building on their skills.

During training: Remind the trainees to be fully honest and objective in their answers since that is the only way that the evaluation will be effective.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

- Did they contribute equally in the assignments/projects compared to other team members?
- Was the quality of their contribution on par with other team members?
- Was there clear communication from their end at all times?
- Did they bring in fresh perspectives or creative ideas to the assignments/projects?
- Did they showcase strong public speaking or presentation skills?
- Were they able to adequately facilitate discussions and support co-facilitators?
- Were they punctual with their tasks?
- What are their overall strengths and weaknesses?

What do you do with this feedback? (box)

Once you have the responses from the peer evaluation forms, it's your responsibility to compile the results and share them with the trainees, preferably through one-on-one calls. Make sure you keep the responses anonymous - even though feedback is not meant to be personal, trainees may still take criticism to heart. Don't break friendships!

Recommended

Post classroom visit:

After each week of classes, co-facilitators should set up feedback calls with each other. As trainers, you can further accommodate the feedback by preparing questions they should answer for each other in detail. Here are some examples:

- Do you think our classroom dynamic is working? What can be done to improve?
- Do you feel supported by my co-facilitation? What should I change?
- Are you able to follow my cues? Should I be clearer?
- Have I been taking up too much time in my parts? Are there any parts you want to take over?

- Have I said or done anything in the class which you might disagree with?

To ensure peer educators who are not co-facilitators can also learn from each other, trainers should also set up group discussions where experiences can be shared. The frequency of such group discussions will depend on the length of your program but should take place at least once or twice. **If a peer educator is struggling with, let's say, classroom management, then a Peer Educator who is having an easier time with that aspect can share tips to help out.** The best way to make sure the program is running smoothly is to keep clear communication between everyone and have each other's backs!

Student-to-PE

We've already established that receiving feedback is the best way to understand which areas someone needs to work on. So, who better to ask for feedback about peer educators than their students themselves?

Pre-program: A baseline survey should be conducted among the students before the peer educators go into the classrooms. The survey responses will help peer educators learn about the level of understanding the students hold for the topics that they will be teaching. The peer educators can then tailor their approach to best fit the students. For example, if survey responses show that a majority of students already have a basic understanding of what bullying is, the Peer Educator will know that they can spend less time on the definition and put more emphasis on the other subtopics of that class.

Now that you know why baseline surveys are necessary, you're probably wondering what they should look like.

If you're confused about what kind of fields or questions you should add to your survey, we have your back: [\(make into a form template\)](#)

- Personal information. Student ID, grade, age, sex, and anything else that you think would be useful in building demographic data
- Have you previously received education on the topics that are part of this program?
- Did you feel comfortable and safe while receiving the said education?
- If you haven't received formal education on the topics then what are your current sources for receiving such information?
- Topic-wise questions. Do you believe gender stereotypes are harmful?

Tip: If there is sufficient time, you can set up extra dry-runs for the peer educators so they can practice the outlines they have edited to suit the students' existing understanding of topics.

Post-program: After all classes have been successfully completed, one important task will remain -- conducting a post-course survey among the students. This survey will help trainers gain feedback about Peer Educator performance throughout the program directly from the students. Make sure to hold this survey soon after classes end so that the experience is still fresh in the students' memory. Here are a few things that the survey should include questions on: (form template)

- Would you want to partake in the program again?
- Could the peer educators explain the content clearly?
- Were the peer educators relatable?
- Did the peer educators make you feel comfortable?
- Do you think the peer educators had strong command over the topics?
- What can the peer educators do to improve the classroom experience?
- Which teaching tools used by the peer educators did you find most helpful?
- Topic-wise questions

Tip: Leave space in your survey for descriptive answers as 'yes or no' questions are unable to capture the full picture.

While going back in time and incorporating the post-course feedback is unfortunately not possible (yet), this information is crucial for future programs. Based on the survey responses, you should ensure each Peer Educator is working on the areas that they need to improve. For example, if students shared that they didn't find a particular Peer Educator very relatable, ask them to come up with examples that would resonate more with the age group that the students belong to. The responses can also be used to restructure the outlines used, depending on what kind of classroom tools the students best responded to.

Trainer-to-trainee/Peer Educator

A major part of training is providing timely feedback to the trainees and keeping track of their performance. The best way for trainees to learn and improve is through hearing from you what aspects they're doing well and what can be done better.

Pre-training:

Before officially starting the training process, the trainees should go through a pre-test so that you can figure out what their baseline level of knowledge, attitudes and skills (or perceived skills) regarding the issues to be covered during training are. This will also help you gauge how much they've improved at the end of training compared to their initial standing. Here are a few questions you can add to the pre-test:

- I can describe the difference between gender and sex (scale: strongly agree, agree, disagree)
- I have a strong understanding of consent (scale: strongly agree, agree, disagree)
- I feel confident about leading a classroom session (scale: strongly agree, agree, disagree)
- I have previously participated in SRHR or CSE-related workshops (Yes or No)

During training:

You will, of course, have to provide immediate feedback to the trainees after assignments and presentations, as we've covered in our PE Skills Training chapter. Apart from that, you should also provide structured feedback through one-on-one calls with the trainees. Here are some points to include in your feedback and evaluation:

- Meeting attendance and punctuality
- Meeting Participation. This includes their overall level of enthusiasm and how much they interact and engage with the content during discussions.
- Assignment performance overview. Review what worked and what didn't in the latest assignments they've completed and also point out whether you've seen any improvements so far and how well they've been able to incorporate the immediate feedback you had given after each assignment.
- Communication. This includes how well they've consistently reached out to you about any issues they've been facing and whether they've succeeded in informing you about missing any discussions. This will be a good time to also go through the peer evaluation forms to check whether they were able to communicate with their peers well during group assignments.
- Overall strengths and weaknesses. These should be based on their performance throughout the training process. Think back to the discussion on what makes a good Peer Educator and identify how far off the trainees are from becoming ready to join the classrooms.

Tip: Allow space for questions from the trainees during the one-on-one calls, and ask them if they would like to explain why they may not have performed as well in certain assignments compared to the rest. Open communication from both ends will make the process much smoother!

Post classroom visit:

This is when you can utilise the post-course surveys that were conducted right after the program came to an end. Carefully identify common themes in the students' answers about the Peer Educator's performance. Hold one-on-one calls with the peer educators to explain what the students found helpful and what areas they can improve on for future programs. If there's a certain area that multiple peer educators struggled with, consider holding more training sessions or dry-runs before the next program begins.

Tip: Reviewing other forms of documentation from the completed program will come in really handy!

Trainee-to-Trainer

Even after following this manual to the tee, you can (shockingly) still have room for improvement! You can expect every batch of trainees to have their own unique needs that you can only accommodate if you know exactly what these needs are. Therefore, feedback from trainees to trainers is crucial to a successful training program.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

For trainer:

- Was there clear communication from the trainer regarding your role and commitment?
- Did you feel communication from the trainer during discussion facilitation was accessible and easy to understand?
- Did you feel the trainer was knowledgeable on the topics that were discussed?
- Did you feel the trainer had good moderation skills to lead discussions?
- Do you feel supported by the trainer?
- Do you feel you can reach out to the trainer regarding any problems within the team?

For training model:

- Do you think you have a better understanding of the topics discussed so far, compared to when training started?
- Do you feel like you have gained new skills since you joined the team?
- What elements of training did you find most helpful? What could be added?

In the team call, ask the trainees to elaborate on the common points that came up. Discuss with them about what could be the best possible solutions to any issues they brought up, or what kind of strategy you can follow to address any gaps in training they feel exist. In your own time, use the feedback to work on yourself and also plan out future training sessions with all their points in mind.

Challenges in context of Bangladesh

Peer-led CSE or SRHR education is nothing new to the world. If you were to look up peer educator training modules for such an education program, you'd actually get quite a few hits. But there's one thing that's common among all of those training modules - not a single one is written in the context of South Asia, or more specifically, of Bangladesh. We remember from Chapter 1 that our national policies recognize the importance of CSE for young people and also recommends the implementation of such programs. The government, policy makers, and experts all agree that this is something we need. Now, why is this a problem? The answer lies with just about any local here. We can plan such education programs all we want, but when it comes to the implementation, we face many unique challenges that training modules from other parts of the world fail to address.

Challenges with society:

As we all know sex, sexuality and sexual rights are considered to be taboo in our heavily conservative and patriarchal society. These conservative ideologies influence our culture and eventually everyday practices of Bangladeshi people, communities and institutions. So what does this mean? It means that it is extremely difficult to have open conversations on practically all topics related to CSE - whether that is gender identity, relationships, or even our anatomy! For young people like us, sadly it is even more difficult.

Young female participants of an education program on reproductive health by BRAC¹² shared that even a natural topic such as menstruation is considered to be such a shameful topic that the programme was the first time they could openly talk about it. Menstruation is perceived to be associated with sexuality and fertility putting it in the list of taboo topics in our country. Imagine trying to talk about dating or consent! Naturally, taking any step towards introducing a comprehensive sexuality education program in a country like Bangladesh can be considered an act of rebellion.

If we are part of organizations working in this field, you will find that an unspoken rule is to censor many aspects of our work in public so as not to garner hate. You might think, how do you work on Comprehensive sexuality education without saying you are working on it? Well, firstly, people try to stick to acronyms. Instead of comprehensive sexuality education, you will mostly hear CSE. Instead of sexual and reproductive health rights, you will hear SRHR. In fact it is actually very common for organizations to use words such as "Life Skills Education", "Physical Education and Health Science", "Home Science" etc. UNFPA's program which deals with SRHR is called Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS).

¹² Rashid, Sabina Faiz. "Providing Sex Education to Adolescents in Rural Bangladesh: Experiences from BRAC." *Gender and Development*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2000, pp. 28–37. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/4030471.

“We understood a lot of ideas regarding gender and sexuality - the way they work in the West, work differently here [Bangladesh],” shares a representative working on hijra, transgender and intersex rights in Bangladesh, during an FGD organized by Kotha.

Challenges with parents:

One group of people that pose a big threat to implementation of CSE programs is parents. We, the Bangladeshi youth, have been brought up in an environment where merely asking questions about our bodies wins us glares, retribution, or silence. Parents are uncomfortable discussing SRH issues with their children and young people feel they are not able to discuss physical and psychological problems with parents and other family members¹³¹⁴. Young people fear that their parents will assume they are engaged in “forbidden” activities if they try to have such conversations¹⁵. Hence, even though parents should ideally be one main source of SRH information for young people, parents in Bangladesh are the complete opposite - one research study shows parents as one of the top five barriers to SRH info and services for Bangladeshi youth¹⁶.

Unfortunately, parents’ reluctance to share SRH information with their children doesn’t just end within households. Attempts to introduce any form of SRH education in our national curriculum has been met with opposition from parents, to the extent that some of them appealed to the Minister of MOE to exclude chapters on puberty and reproductive health from the national textbooks. “We are cautious after getting the experience of criticism and resistance from the guardians and teachers in 2013,” shared officials in NCTB, recounting the efforts of parents to stop SRH education in schools. The parents’ logic is that young people do not need to know this kind of information before reaching the legal age of marriage¹⁷. “In our time (adolescence stage), we had no information about sex, but had no problems as well. Now, because of advanced information technology, the children have access to some electronic information,” shared mothers of General Education students. These ideals further stigmatize sexuality, sex education, and reproductive health and well-being¹⁸.

¹³ “Investing In Teenage Girls.” The Daily Star, 24 Aug. 2016, www.thedailystar.net/round-tables/investing-teenage-girls-1275208.

¹⁴ Ainul, Sigma, et al. “Adolescents in Bangladesh: A Situation Analysis of Programmatic Approaches to Sexual and Reproductive Health Education and Services.” 2017, doi:10.31899/rh7.1004.

¹⁵ “Religious Extremism and Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Secondary and Higher Secondary Education in Bangladesh.” Human Rights Documents Online, doi:10.1163/2210-7975_hrd-0141-2016033.

¹⁶ Ahmed, S. et al. “Digital Sister for Urban Youth: Using New Technology For Effective SRHR Communication for Urban Youth of Bangladesh.” (2016).

¹⁷ “Religious Extremism and Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Secondary and Higher Secondary Education in Bangladesh.” Human Rights Documents Online, doi:10.1163/2210-7975_hrd-0141-2016033.

¹⁸ Ahmed, S. et al. “Digital Sister for Urban Youth: Using New Technology For Effective SRHR Communication for Urban Youth of Bangladesh.” (2016).

Challenges with schools:

ADVOCACY TIP: FRAMING CSE AS A SOLUTION TOWARDS GBV

When approaching schools and working with school administration, framing CSE as one of the ways to tackle gender-based violence in Bangladesh can help organizations interested in implementing school-based CSE programs. In Bangladesh, the need to fight for young people's sexual rights is still too radical and controversial, there is consensus on the urgent need to address prevalent GBV. Posing CSE as a form of education that can help us tackle root causes of GBV such as people's mindsets and attitudes can make schools more receptive to having such programs at school. This is the advocacy angle that Kotha has been using for its Kotha at School program. In addition, Feri Across Generations Alliance, put out a petition for schools during the anti-rape movement in Bangladesh on October 2020. The petition called for schools to incorporate CSE into their curricula and contextualized CSE within the GBV fight. The petition was successful in pushing leading institutions to commit to demands.

The last barrier to implementing CSE programs in our education systems is the schools themselves. It is important to remember that schools in Bangladesh either fall under the General Education curriculum controlled by the national curriculum board, English Medium, operating independently and Madrasahs, which are Islamic education institutions. Depending on which type of school we are dealing with, we will need to work with different actors.

For English Medium schools, convincing school administrators to even consider implementing a CSE program is not easy. Since we've already looked at how parents are reluctant to allow their children to be learning these topics in schools, schools use that as ammunition to dismiss proposals for implementing CSE programs. For General Education schools, where some chapters related to SRH have been included in national curriculum textbooks, teachers have been found to gloss over such topics by telling students they would learn these in detail at a higher grade using other textbooks¹⁹. It is also common for schools to glue shut, tear out or staple chapters on human anatomy because they include human sexual organs. The teachers argued that this information would create an embarrassing situation for students and teachers in classrooms while teaching, specifically in co-education schools²⁰. "Teachers think we are teaching students how to have sex," shares a representative from an organization in Bangladesh trying to implement a CSE program, in an FGD organized by Kotha. According to one of Kotha at School's pre-course surveys, almost two-thirds of all students shared feeling uncomfortable going to their teachers if they were affected by cyber harassment. The most commonly cited reasons are feeling discomfort or shame, thinking that teachers will not understand or care about the issue.

If teachers are not actively trying to ensure students do not have access to CSE or SRHR information, they try to not personally engage with those topics. "It would be more informative if the school could arrange

¹⁹ "Religious Extremism and Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Secondary and Higher Secondary Education in Bangladesh." Human Rights Documents Online, doi:10.1163/2210-7975_hrd-0141-2016033.

²⁰ Ibid.

guest lecturers for this subject, such as an NGO person. I think they could explain this material more comfortably than teachers like us," shares a female teacher, co-education school, General Education²¹.

As we've mentioned multiple times before, for CSE classes to be effective, they must be safe spaces where students feel comfortable sharing their opinions without fearing judgement. "We have to obey the teachers in every respect, and there is a big gap between us. They are not our friends with whom we feel comfortable discussing any issue. How can you imagine I can get answers to my questions on reproductive health from them?" shared female students, aged 15-16 years from Grade 10, General Education²².

Taking on a program like this is certainly a brave decision, but in no way is accomplishing this impossible. Do not let these challenges discourage you, rather take them as an indication of the absolute need for CSE in a country like this. Remember that, despite all these obstacles, successful peer-led CSE or SRHR education programs have been implemented and will continue to take place in schools around you. Read on to learn more about how you can achieve the same.

²¹ "Religious Extremism and Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Secondary and Higher Secondary Education in Bangladesh." Human Rights Documents Online, doi:10.1163/2210-7975_hrd-0141-2016033.

²² Ibid.

Reflections

A. Lessons Learnt

Phew! This has been quite a journey, hasn't it? We hope this has given you the tools and confidence you needed to orchestrate and execute your programme. But what happens afterwards? You must reflect.

Remember the initial checklist you prepared (Chapter 2)? It is time to see whether you have met your expectations and promises. And it is also time to sift through your notes (Chapter 5 - Evaluation & Feedback; Chapter 6 - Documentation) to piece together the bigger picture - what have you learnt from all of this?

You should reflect not only on the things that worked, but also on the things that didn't. While we cannot do this reflecting for you, we can give you tips on how you should reflect. [*Because handing out free advice is our passion!*] The next, and the last, section would hopefully help you with this.

SHARIQA

Leading up to the CSE program

I was absolutely thrilled to be a trainee PE for Kotha! It required a bit of time commitment in an exceptionally busy month, but it was so worth it. I think training alongside people I trusted and felt comfortable with being vulnerable in front of boosted my confidence. I could rely on my team for honest constructive criticism as well as much-needed reassurance about what worked during the dry-runs. Much of what I've written throughout this booklet was heavily inspired by my own experience during this time frame. I don't think I fully panicked till the day we actually went into a school (it was just an introductory session, not a CSE class). Right then it hit me - *This is crazy! Who trusted me to teach a bunch of teenagers?! I'll definitely say the wrong things and be directly responsible for them not turning out to be decent human beings! And what if they hate me and don't interact with me - why should the students trust me!* I can't say that that feeling completely dissipated over time, but I cannot describe in words how great it felt to instantly connect with the students. I am so grateful to the students for making me feel so welcome and laughing at my lame jokes and offering to participate. Every morning when I felt like not rolling out of bed for class, this memory motivated me to not just show up, but give it my best in class.

During the program

The day the classes started, I quickly realized how important improvisation really is in a classroom. It wasn't things that I was prepared for - technology malfunctions - that got me but things that

were out of my control - a shorter class time than expected, a bigger class than anticipated, not having a co-facilitator in class with me. Again not those things exactly, but what that meant for the class - having to redesign class activities on the spot, making the call on what content to focus on/leave out, putting in extra energy to match the students', etc. This is also the part where my training really kicked in. Whenever I was stumped, I tried to go back to the basics - break down the concept in simplified terms, reiterate the takeaway, move my hands a million times, and so on. Moreover, I actively put in effort to not default into behaving the way I never liked my instructors behaving - shaming students for not being able to answer, yelling at them, exercising exclusionary punishment. This was a bit of unfamiliar territory but the PE ground rules helped! I always made it a point or at least tried my best to treat them as dignified individuals, to initiate civil dialogue, and to redirect their energy if they seemed distracted. I also learnt to reach out for help from teammates, other teachers and students when needed. I definitely learnt things along the way that enhanced my ability as a PE, and only added to my training.

After the program

I felt a whirlwind of emotions when this was over - a mix of relief, sadness, accomplishment, nostalgia, happiness, and more. I couldn't believe how far we have come since the first day of training. And even harder to believe that the programme had successfully concluded! I truly miss my students so much. Even though I get to interact with a few of them from time to time, not seeing them regularly in class is an odd feeling. I discovered that these students can be quite impressively insightful and empathetic if we ask the right questions and provide them with the right platform. All of us on the team also made notes on how enthusiastically the students participated in different activities to help us plan for future programmes. Different classes may be, well, different but PEs are nothing if not flexible! I am grateful for all the people I have met on this journey and all the experiences I've had with them - I'm ready to do it all over again!

AHONA

Leading up to the program:

In 2016, when Kotha implemented its pilot program, I mostly worked with the documentation process. Through this process, I was able to learn how powerful the peer education program was and subsequently, this inspired me to become much more involved in this program. In 2018, I had not only worked in developing the curriculum but also played an active role as a peer educator. The process of preparing for the classes had been quite daunting; it is quite tough to predict how exactly a session will proceed due to the nature of our topics. I believed that it was necessary to be ready to tackle any situation. I found myself paying a lot of attention to the language I used as I wanted to make sure the students would feel comfortable relating to us and speaking to us. It was important to ensure that the information we were providing was accurate, and we did not seem detached or prejudiced. I had entered the classroom with a mixture of nervousness and excitement.

During the program:

The stress that I felt leading up to the program disappeared rather quickly once I entered the classroom. While during the introductory session, the students seemed a little hesitant, over the next few sessions they were very enthusiastic. A few of our sessions took place right before the school day would end, and students still showed up with high energy. Even though, at first, it was tricky to strike the right balance between being friendly and relatable as well as being a source of reliable information, over the course the students and I connected quite a lot. We needed to build a safe space where the students were able to trust us. I had to keep in mind that the knowledge gained within the classroom should be absorbed by students in a way where they can easily remember it outside the classrooms, and apply it in their day to day lives. A few months back, when I had the chance to speak to a few of the students, they told me how they found our interactive activities to be enjoyable. Not only did they remember what we discussed but that they still have the comic strips that we worked on! While it was not an absolute smooth journey, it was much easier than I had anticipated.

After the program:

I will be ecstatic if someone asks me to go back to being a peer educator. While preparing for the classes had been stressful at times, the experience that I gained and the lessons that I learnt are extremely valuable to me. When I found out that the students still remember our classes even though a few years have passed, I feel a sense of fulfilment and joy. I will always cherish the relationships that I built during the classes. Being a peer educator helped me with public speaking, time management and decision making. It also helped me believe that I am better equipped at solving any challenges that come my way.

MAYABEE**Leading up to the CSE program:**

When I was chosen as a trainee Peer Educator for Kotha, I didn't feel like I had any reason to worry or second-guess my capabilities...until I participated in a dry-run of the classes for the first time. Forgetting words, blanking when asked questions, showing zero energy - all of the points that this training module says NOT to do, I did. Frankly, I felt like I was in over my head, but I had no intentions of giving up so soon. I took careful note of all the feedback I received from my trainers, and before the next dry-run, I practised in front of the mirror at home. Some people are comfortable with being spontaneous while in the classroom but I quickly figured out I liked to be as prepared as I could be so I began to write down detailed notes of what I wanted to say during class. I analysed what made me so nervous - was I having public speaking jitters? Was I worried about being most of these children's introduction to CSE topics? Was I just absolutely terrified of my trainers? It turned out to be a combination of all of those points plus a few more, but since I had found the sources of my issues, I only needed to work on the solution. Sure enough, by the

end of the dry-runs, I no longer felt inadequate or unprepared. I was ready to finally join the classroom.

During the program:

One of my biggest worries going into the classroom was that I'd have low energy and that, in turn, would ruin the environment we wanted to create for the students. But, as soon as I stepped into the classroom and interacted with the students, I knew this would never be a problem. The room was brimming with their energy and enthusiasm, and that boosted my spirits immediately. Some of my favorite memories include how my students kept saying they wanted every period to be "Kotha classes," how they planned new topics to be included to our curriculum so that the course wouldn't end, or how they'd engage with the content so deeply that they'd bring up their own scenarios and analyse them with the help of all the tools they learned about in class. Some students would make sure to sit at the front so they could interact with me more comfortably, some would help me explain topics to their peers (future peer educators!), and some would even control the class if it got too noisy just because they were that invested. Every tiny detail that I had learned during training came into use, and it felt like I was experiencing theories coming to life - all the classroom scenarios we played out were happening in real life. Of course, it wasn't all fun and games for me sometimes, as I faced challenges like running out of time to finish a topic, the projector not working, a few students disrupting discussions, etc. Looking back, I probably would have liked to manage time a lot better since rushing through a class is not ideal. I would also have liked to spend more time getting to know all my students, which is unfortunately difficult to do during such a short program. All in all, I'd say more things went right than they did wrong, and I really had nothing to worry about. By the last class, I received hugs (with consent!) from students who didn't want to let go of the program, learned about how so many of them wanted to stay in touch, and even got to know how some of them viewed me as their big sister whom they could share anything with. In the end, that's all that mattered.

After the program:

I have certainly been missing all my students and the classes ever since the program ended. I got to interact with some of the students a few months after the program and I was glad to know they felt the same way! I can confidently say working as a Peer Educator has been one of the most fulfilling and educational experiences of my life, because not only did I get to be someone I wish I had when I was younger, I also learned who they needed at that point and could try my best to be that person. The entire process, from training to delivery, has equipped me with skills I'd need forever. Public speaking? I'm less nervous than ever. Facilitation? I love moderating discussions whenever I can. I've even learned how to improvise and handle a situation spontaneously - all thanks to this program. I know it sounds cheesy but I must admit, I wouldn't trade this experience for anything else.

ANNEX

List of peer education resources

FOR TRAINING

1. Youth Peer Education Toolkit - The Training of Trainers Manual

Available online at: <https://www.fhi360.org/resource/youth-peer-education-toolkit-training-trainers-manual>

2. Included Involved Inspired: A Framework for Youth Peer Education Programmes

Available online at: <https://www.ippf.org/resource/included-involved-inspired-framework-youth-peer-education-programmes>

3. UNODC Module I Peer Education

Available online at: https://www.unodc.org/pdf/youthnet/action/message/escap_peers_01.pdf

4. Toolkit for Quality Peer Education

Available online at: <http://epto.org/toolkit>

5. Sexual and Reproductive Health Facilitators' Training Manual

Available online at: https://www.dsw.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/SRH-Facilitators-Training-Manual_DSW-2014-1.pdf

6. Youth Peer Education Toolkit - Standards for Peer Education Programmes

Available online at: https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/jahia-publications/documents/publications/2006/ypeer_standardsbook.pdf

7. Evidence-Based Guidelines for Youth Peer Education by USAID and FHI 360

Available online at: peer_education_guidelines_for_usaid_aug_2014_final.pdf
(advancingpartners.org)

FOR CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

1. SRHR Comic Series for Adolescent Boys by CMMS

Available online at: [SRHR Comic Series for Adolescent Boys by CMMS - Share-Net Bangladesh \(share-netbangladesh.org\)](http://share-netbangladesh.org)

2. "Let's Debunk the Misconceptions" booklet on most recurrent myths mentioned by both male and female adolescents

Available online at: <https://www.share-netbangladesh.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Lets-Debunk-the-misconceptions-English.pdf>

3. “Coping with strong emotions” - Illustrated Booklet and Teacher’s Guide on coping strategies

Available online at: <https://www.share-netbangladesh.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Comic-Book-Coping-with-Strong-Emotions-English.pdf>

<https://www.share-netbangladesh.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/TG-Coping-with-Strong-Emotions-English.pdf>

4. Wreetu Comic Book - Illustrated story-based book on puberty and menstruation

Available online at: <https://wreetu.com/book/>

5. “Nijeke Jano” - Booklet on adolescent sexual health

Available online at: <http://www.bangladesh-ccp.org/assets/images/resources/booklet-1.pdf>