SESSION 4
SHARING THE LOAD
(Couple Session)

Type of Session:
Couple

Session Outline:
Activity A: Opening and Welcome (10 minutes)
Activity B: Review Last Session (5 minutes)
Activity C: Overview of Current Session (5 minutes)
Activity D: Review of Homework and Goals (15 minutes)
Activity E: Identifying Triggers to Unsafe Sex and Barriers for Safer Sex (15 minutes)
Activity F: Things that Affect Decision-Making (15 minutes)
Activity G: Working Together to Make Decisions (10 minutes)
Activity H: Working Together to Improve Our Health (15 minutes)
Activity I: Working Together to Make Better Sexual Decisions (15 minutes)
Activity J: Moving Back to the Village (10 minutes)
Activity K: Homework (5 minutes)

Session Goals:
The goals of this session are:

- Learn to Identify Triggers to Risky Behaviors
- Teach Couples How to Plan Ahead to Handle Triggers
- Enhance Decision Making Skills for Health and Safer Sex
- Problem Solve Barriers to Risk Reduction

Materials Needed to Conduct the Session:

- CD track #7: “Let’s Stay Together” by Al Green
- Poster #1: Eban symbol
- Poster #3: Nguzo Saba
- Poster #6: FENCE
- Poster #15: Quotation by Smith
- Poster #16: Things that Affect Joint Problem-Solving
- Poster #17: Top Six Issues Couples Report About Sex
- Poster #16: Quotation by Smith
- Wheel of Relationship Uses
- Workbook for Facilitators
- Handout #7: Couple Goal Setting Form
- Handout #11: Dates for Under $20
- Handout #12: Worksheet on Your Triggers for Unsafe Sex
- Coin
- Post It Chart
- Magic Markers
- Homework # 4: Couple Connections
- Envelopes and Reimbursements (if being handed out by facilitators)
- CD player

**Instructional Time:**
2 hours (120 minutes)

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Estimated Time = 2 hours (120 minutes)
Activity A: Opening and Welcoming

**Time:**
10 minutes

**Materials Needed:**
- Clock
- Tape Recorder
- Newsprint: Ground Rules
- Poster #1: Eban symbol
- Poster #3: Nguzo Saba
- Poster #6: FENCE
- CD track #7: “Let’s Stay Together” by Al Green.
- Poster #15: Quotation by Debra McGee-Smith

**Procedure:**
1. Start by saying,

   *We are glad to see you back. This is the last session that we will have with you as a couple until the last session.*

   *We would like to begin by listening to a song and reading a quote that relate to our work together.*


   *We are beginning this session with the song, “Let’s Stay Together.”*

   *What does this song mean to you?*

   *This song reflects the principal of Unity or Umoja. It is about making a commitment to stick together through the hard times and stay safe together.*
FACILITATOR’S NOTE

Be sure Poster #15: Quotation for McGee Smith is visible on the wall.

We would also like to share the quotation for this week, by Debra McGee-Smith, who works on the Eban team at UCLA. Can one of you read it?

“I am learning, doing, and growing with courage to create a new state of being” by Debra McGee Smith, 2002.

What does this quotation mean to you?

How does it relate to protecting yourself and your partner from HIV and STDs?

Yes, through our strength, vision, and commitment, we can overcome obstacles and practice safe sex, despite our fears.
Activity B: Review Last Session

Time:
5 minutes

Materials Needed:
None

Procedure:

FACILITATOR’S NOTE

Be sure to prepare for the couples that had brought up positive STD results.

1. Start by saying,

_Last session, we talked about your sexual relationship and how to practice safer sex together._

_We introduced the Eban Café, a game you played to talk to each other about using condoms and other methods to protect each other from HIV and STDs._

_You also learned ways for using condoms and making them more fun._

_Do you have anything to share about how those experiences were for you?_
Activity C: Overview of Current Session

**Time:**
5 minutes

**Materials Needed:**
- Newsprint – Goals for Session
- Poster #3: Nguzo Saba

**Procedure:**
1. Start by saying,

   *This session is focused on Nguzo Saba Number One-Unity or Umoja, and Number three – Collective Work and Responsibility or Ujima.*

   *Do you remember what unity means, and how it applies to safer sex?*

   *What about collective work and responsibility?*

2. Facilitators will refer to Nguzo Saba poster. If participants do not remember, facilitators will provide the correct answer.

   *We would like to complete our work together from these three sessions and prepare for reentering the group.*

   *Today, we will focus on your relationship and how what happens in your life, outside of your relationship, can affect how you two work together and how you make decisions about protecting each other.*

   *We will work on making effective decisions together to improve your health and your sexual life.*

   *We will also prepare to move back to the Village next week.*
Activity D: Review of Homework and Goals

Time:
15 minutes

Materials Needed:
- Homework for Session 3 (in workbook)
- Couple Goal Progress worksheet
- Dates for under $20 (will be in workbook, section 4-3)

Procedure:
1. Start by saying,

   Your homework was to meet to plan a Date Night and, then, have the Date Night. How did that go?

2. Wait for couple to describe experience and reinforce.

   We are glad that your Date Night worked out so well.

   What did you particularly enjoy about the planning of the date?

   Did you use a male or female condom, or other methods to reduce risk?


   We hope that you will do this again. There is a list in your workbook that gives you
ideas for dates that cost less than $20.

We know that you will be able to add to this list from activities that you enjoy together but may not do often enough.

Is there anything that you would do differently next time?

4. Use the goal chart and FENCE to problem solve any difficulties the couple had.

Good. We hope that this will increase your satisfaction with your relationship, contribute to having fun while being safe, and bring Umoja or Unity into your relationship.
Activity E: Identifying Triggers for Unsafe Sex and Barriers for Safer Sex

**Time:**
15 minutes

**Materials Needed:**
- Flipchart
- Markers
- Triggers Worksheet (in Workbook, section 4-5)
- Poster # 6: FENCE

**Procedure:**
1. Start by saying,

   We’ve talked a lot about barriers to being safe, or things that get in the way of being safe. Now we want to spend a few minutes on triggers.

   What comes to mind when you hear the word trigger?

   A trigger is something that leads to being unsafe. For example, if you have a drink and begin to feel a bit more relaxed, or if you have a drink in a favorite bar, which might put you in a romantic mood and makes you feel like taking chances. We all are less likely to be safe if we don’t have a plan in place to deal with triggers.

   Triggers can be people, places, things, moods or feelings. Let’s take a few minutes to figure out what are triggers for you that can lead to unsafe sex and then we’ll FENCE one of them.
2. Encourage couple to brainstorm their triggers for unsafe sex, individual and couple. Write ideas on the flip chart, writing them under the categories of “People”, “Places and Things”, “Moods and Emotions”, “Substances and Alcohol”.

3. If the couple says that they don’t have triggers, ask them what are some triggers that can lead a couple to have unsafe sex.

That’s a great list of triggers to unsafe sex. As you can see, we put them into the categories, or types of triggers.

4. For each type of trigger, reinforce participant’s ideas, ask if they can think of any other triggers of that type, and add to their ideas with other examples, such as the ones listed below.

**People**

*What are some other people triggers?*

*Your partner!!*

*What makes it challenging to practice safer sex in a relationship?*

**Places and Things**

*What are some other place triggers?*

*Sentimental places. Where you met, where you had sex before.*
**Special song.** Hearing your special song or a song that reminds you of a special time for you.

**Romantic event.** Watching a romantic movie together.

**Moods and Emotions**

*What are some other mood or emotion triggers.*

**Guilt.** You don’t want your partner to feel unloved.

**Lonely.** You want to feel more intimate with your partner and a condom seems to take that away.

**Substance and Alcohol Triggers**

*What are some substance and alcohol triggers?*

**Alcohol.** Beer, wine, harder liquor.

**Other substances.** Marijuana, crack, cocaine, heroin, etc.

5. Complete the list with the couple and ask them to identify the top 3 triggers that will likely lead them to be unsafe. Circle those triggers.

6. Facilitators can prompt couple to write their triggers on the Triggers Worksheet (Handout #12) in their workbook, section 4-5. If the couple prefers, the facilitators can write the triggers down on the worksheet.
What are the top 3 triggers on this list -- the triggers that have been the biggest problems for you in trying to stay safe?

Let’s work on FENCE-ing one of them. Which one would you like to choose?

You have already practiced FENCE with “barriers” or things that get in the way of being safe. Now let’s practice FENCE for planning ahead of time to deal with “triggers” that lead us to be unsafe.

What’s the difference between a barrier and a trigger?

7. Facilitator should help couple identify and understand the difference. Triggers lead to unsafe behaviors, barriers get in the way of being safe.

8. Facilitators should provide coaching and feedback as the couple uses FENCE to problem-solve one of their top 3 triggers. Provide positive reinforcement through the process and explore how realistic their action plans are to be sure they are practical.

Excellent job. Being prepared, planning ahead, finding ways to protect one another and stay healthy together can make a relationship stronger and enhance intimacy, instead of getting in the way of it. Safer sex is a way to show your partner you care for them – not a way to let anything come between you.
Activity F: Things that affect decision-making

**Time:**
15 minutes

**Materials Needed:**
- Poster #16: Things that affect joint problem-solving
- Flipchart
- Markers
- Dealing with a history of negative sexual experiences (in Workbook, section 4-7)

**Procedure:**
1. Start by saying,

   Now that we've talked about how to deal with triggers for unsafe sex, we would like to talk about your decision-making, which can affect how you manage triggers. We would like to discuss your roles in the relationship and the power balance as it relates to making important decisions that affect both of you.

   When we are in relationships, we must address problems or issues every day.

   Each couple has its own way of solving problems and making decisions.

   We have to decide on how money is spent, how to discipline the children, how to spend our free time, what movie we will see, etc.

   Can you name some difficult decisions you make as a couple?

2. Allow couple to give two to three examples of decisions they have to make.
Yes, those are excellent examples of difficult decisions that need to be made.

In relationships, we each play a particular role in how these decisions are made and our roles in making one type of decision (money matters) may differ from our roles in making another type of decision (sexual relationship).

One of you may take the lead in money matters and the other may take the lead in the sexual relationship. It could be the same person taking the lead role in these examples.

Every relationship varies because we are all individuals. Being a man or being a woman and the influence that you have on each other can affect how a couple makes many decisions.

Before we take this conversation about decision-making further, we want to use a concrete example that you just shared with us in this session.

You just FENCE-d a triggers together. The “C” in FENCE stands for “choose” the best option. Making this “choice” is essentially joint decision-making. So you just made a decision together. Take a minute and let’s talk about how you did that...

How DID you do that?

Who usually takes the lead in making decisions?

3. Facilitators should probe the couple to try to describe what role(s) they each played in making the “choose” the best option decisions. Help them to highlight whether one partner is dominant, or if they compromised, or what the process was.

4. Reinforce their process so the couple can understand it before moving on.
Now that you have a better sense of how you make decisions, let’s move on to explore what affects the decisions we make in relationships.

5. Be sure Poster #16: Things that Affect Joint Problem-Solving is visible.

In this poster, we have started a list of common things that can affect our behavior and decisions in a relationship.

You can also find this list in your workbooks in section 4.5, “Things that Affect Joint Problem Solving.”

6. Read out and discuss the issues that affect joint problem-solving.

Which of these things affect your decision-making?

We hope that you will also add some things to this list.

How do you think that you formed your ideas about how you should behave as a man and a woman in your relationship?

7. Give them time to suggest some ideas.

Yes, our ideas about how a man and woman should behave are learned from our parents, brothers and sisters, teachers, personal history in previous relationships, stereotypes in the movies and other media, etc.
Do you have some specific examples of what you have learned about being a man and being a woman and who you learned this from?

Some examples are:

**Male Power.** Both men and women may feel that the man has more power in a relationship and should make “important” decisions, especially those around money.

**Media.** This is what we often see in the media (like on television shows), so that may affect how a couple decides to handle money matters.

**Parenting.** Another example might be making decisions about parenting. Some people’s childhood experiences affect their decisions regarding parenting their own children. For example, if your mother made all of the decisions about parenting, you may feel that is how it should be in your relationship.

These are a few examples of things that can affect decisions in our relationship.

It is important to point out that our roles can change depending on the issue, and that several things can affect our decision-making in relationships.

8. Other Sexual Experiences

We have just talked about the things that affect our decision-making in relationships, but we would like to be even more specific and talk about the things that affect our decision-making about SEX.
Before we get into sexual decision-making though, we want to touch on a subject that can sometimes be difficult to talk about, but may affect both your sexual decision-making and your relationship.

We would like to talk about experiences you may have had a long time ago that can interfere with decisions about sex between you and your partner.

Your history of experiences with sex may affect your current sex life and how much you trust your partner.

Some people have had sexual contact with someone early in their lives against their will. These experiences are called childhood sexual abuse. Other people have been physically abused including being hit, kicked, and threatened.

Having these experiences can affect relationships and sex even if they happened a long time ago.

Past histories of sexual and physical abuse may make it difficult for men or women to:

- protect themselves from HIV and lead to unprotected sex;
- handle pain;
- talk to partners or to say “no” to them;
- ask partners to use male or female condoms;
- say what they like or do not like;
- avoid alcohol or drug;
avoid risky situations

A person with a history of past abuse can use the following steps in the process of healing:

**Step 1. Name It.** Take time to identify what happened. Some sexual behaviors should be avoided if they remind you of painful memories.

**Step 2. Claim It.** Accept that past abuse was not supposed to happen. People are more likely to protect themselves when they realize that they do not deserve to be hurt.

**Step 3. Feel It.** Feelings of sadness, fear, shame, anger, and rage are common. Discussing your feelings about abuse can help to avoid depression, self-blame and using sex or drugs to avoid painful memories.

**Step 4. Frame It.** You can think about these past experiences, but try not to let it take over your life or your thoughts. We cannot change what happened in the past, but we can take control of our bodies now. Use condoms and talk to your partner about your feelings. Everyone deserves to be respected and protected from harm.

These guidelines can be found in your workbooks in section 4.7, “Dealing with a History of Negative Sexual Experiences.”

9. Using Talk and Listen
If you or someone you know have had these experiences and feel you want to discuss them in greater depth, there are low-cost counseling services in the resource guide. Sometimes it is useful to talk to someone you trust about harmful past experiences.

It is important to know if you are ready to talk to your partner about your experiences or if it would be better to talk with a counselor first.

You can use the Talk and Listen technique with your partner to talk about past abuse without judging what happened. Your partner may even want to talk with you when you are about to have sex. Whatever is going on, just stop and listen.

You may want to discuss if any past abuse happened to you, but only when you are ready. It is important that you both know that men and women often report abuse histories. Talking about past abuse can help both you to make sure that you will protect each other from future harm.

Let’s take a short break. If you would like referrals to discuss past abuse, or if you know someone who, friends or family, who might want some referrals, let me know.
Activity F: **Working Together to Make Decisions (10 minutes)**

**Time:**
10 minutes

**Materials Needed:**
- Wheel of Relationship Issues
- Coin
- Poster #6: FENCE
- Flipchart
- Markers

**Procedure:**

**FACILITATOR’S NOTE**

Be sure to relate the couple’s relationship issues to their sexual relationship.

1. Start by saying,

   *Now that we talked about some of the things that affect your decision-making, we’ll discuss how you face issues in your relationship, and how it affects your sexual decision-making. It is important that you recognize the issues that impact your relationship, your role in it, and how you as a couple unite to make decisions.*

   *Any issue that comes up in a relationship can affect the sexual part of that relationship.*

   *So, even if you are making decisions about money (or talking about the fact that money is tight), this can affect how, when, why, and where you have sex and if you have sex at all.*

   *We are going to play a little game called “Wheel of Relationship Issues” where we will*
look at a few different issues that couples face and you are going to discuss how you as a couple work together to address these issues, what things affect how you solve problems, and how you can use FENCE to work on this issue.

2. Take out the “Wheel of Relationship Issues”

On this wheel are several issues that couples face. You each will be asked to spin the wheel. This will determine which relationship issue you will discuss.

Then, as a couple, you will discuss an example of how you made a decision about this topic.

We are going to flip a coin to decide who goes first.

Okay. Spin the Wheel to decide which topic we will discuss.

3. If the arrow lands on sex, ask them to spin the Wheel again.

Now we would like to use FENCE to work on a problem associated with [put in topic from spinning Wheel].

4. Use FENCE to problem solve with couple.
**F** – Find out what is going on, and how you feel about it

**E** – Explore your partner’s feelings about it. 
You can use Talk and Listen to do that.

**N** – Name and Discuss your options. 
What are some things you can do about this issue. What are the pros and cons of these options.

**C** – Choose the best option. 
Which option do you and your partner agree would be best for dealing with this issue?

**E** – Execute your plan. 
Now you can put your plan into action. When would you like to do that?

Now we would like you [other member of couple] to spin the Wheel to pick another topic.

5. Person spins the Wheel.

Now we would like to use FENCE to work on a problem associated with [put topic from spinning Wheel].

6. Use FENCE to problem solve with couple.
You did a great job using FENCE to problem solve.
Activity H: Working Together to Improve Our Health

Time:
15 minutes

Materials Needed:
- Wheel of Relationship Issues
- Poster #6: FENCE
- Flipchart
- Markers

Procedure:
1. Start by saying,

Today we are working on communicating about different issues that come up in relationships and working together.

We would like to talk about how you can work together to improve the health of both of you, for example, by helping each other take medications for HIV or for other health problems.

2. The facilitator will use the same process to work on a medication-related problem.

We often do not think of health as a relationship issue, but taking care of ourselves is a big part of how to keep ourselves healthy and ultimately keep our relationship healthy.

Remember, one of our values for this week is Ujima, collective work and responsibility. That means you are both responsible for caring for each other and caring for the couple.

For this Eban village, there is a specific health issue that you face—HIV.
It is important to communicate about taking care of yourself. This communication can take place in the same way that we just talked about when you each brought up a problem and used the FENCE method to examine it. Before we look at how you can use the FENCE method to help keep each other healthy, we would like to make sure we have some facts on HIV medication and staying healthy.

If the HIV-positive person is on medication, it is important for you both to know that medication is not a cure for HIV or AIDS.

What do HIV medications do?

The medication can help keep you healthy, it can help delay getting AIDS, and it can decrease your viral load (that is, the amount of virus in your system).

The medications for HIV may decrease the amount of the virus in your system, sometimes to such low levels that the doctors cannot even detect the virus, but that does not mean the virus is not there. WE do not currently know how to detect how much virus is in all parts of your body.

So, you might feel a lot better, but you still have HIV and you can still give it to your partner.

So, even if you are taking your medications everyday and at the times you are supposed to take them, it is important to use a condom so you do not pass along HIV to your partner.

Another issue with HIV medications (and many other medications) is that they have side effects and sometimes that makes people not want to take them.
Do you feel bothered by medication side effects?

Although the medications work well to treat HIV, some people find them to be a burden or are bothered by certain side effects.

One side effect that many people report is decreased sex drive.

It is important to discuss these concerns about side effects with your doctor to make sure that you are taking the right medication and the right amount for you.

Do you have any questions?

You should not stop taking medications without first discussing this with your doctor. Sometimes stopping medications or taking them incorrectly without talking to your doctor may cause the HIV to become resistant to the medications, making it harder to fight off AIDS. Stopping your medications can cause your T-cell count to drop and viral load to rise.

If you feel like you cannot take a particular medication because it makes you sick, or for any other reason, call or see your doctor right away and tell them you want something different.

For a lot of people with HIV and other medical problems (like diabetes, heart disease, depression and a whole host of other medical problems), it is difficult to remember to take your medication when you are supposed to take it. Even taking vitamins is difficult to remember to do.
Are either of you taking medications?

3. Let couple talk about their medical regimen.

How does it go? Are you able to take your medications as prescribed?

4. Let couple talk about medication adherence. Probe for concerns or problems.

This is where you can help each other. We would like to use this as an example of a relationship issue, like the ones we just discussed and see if we can problem solve how you can help each other take your medications as prescribed.

5. Transition to using FENCE to problem solve medication adherence.

FACILITATOR’S NOTE

If no problem with couple, skip to sexual decision-making (section 9), but tell the couple they can use FENCE if they have problems with medication adherence in the future.

We would like you to use FENCE to walk through how to take your medications as prescribed.
6. Work with couple to use FENCE to solve a medication adherence problem.

That was very good. Do you think that you will be able to implement that strategy to improve adherence to the HIV medications.

We would also like to remind you that the seronegative partner may also need problem solving to adhere to his/her medication and healthy living habits.

Now we would like to move to decision making around sexual decisions.
Activity I: Working Together to Make Better Sexual Decisions

Time:
15 minutes

Materials Needed:
- Wheel of Relationship Issues
- Poster #6: FENCE
- Poster #17: Top 6 Issues Couples Report about Sex
- Flipchart
- Markers

Procedure:
1. Start by saying,

   As we said earlier, all issues that we face can affect our sexual relationship and how we make decisions to protect each other. The goal of this activity is to work on sexual decision-making issues that you face.

   We would like to use FENCE to show you how you can improve your decision-making process around safer sex.

2. Be sure that the Poster #17: Top Issues Couples Report About Sex is on the wall.

   On this poster, we have listed the top six issues couples report about sex. This is also in your workbooks on page 4.4. We have the top six for men and the top six for women, and you will notice some similarities and differences for each.

   Some of these may be a problem for you and others may not. What we are asking you
to do is to each come up with one example of a sexual decision-making issue that you as a couple have. It can also involve deciding how to handle one of your triggers. Then, we would like to use FENCE to work out strategies to solve the problem.

If any of the top issues for men or women rings true for you, you can choose one of them to discuss. If not, you can talk about another one that affects how you make decisions about safer sex.

We want you each to own or acknowledge your role in the problem. Then, we want you both to use FENCE to work through the problem and reduce your sexual risk.

3. Guide the couple to use FENCE to work through a sexual decision-making issue.

**F – Find out what is going on, and how you feel about it**

**E – Explore your partner’s feelings about it.**
You can use Talk and Listen to do that.

**N – Name and Discuss your options.**
What are some things you can do about this issue. What are the pros and cons of these options.

**C – Choose the best option.**
Which option do you and your partner agree would be best for dealing with this issue?

**E – Execute your plan.**
Now that you’ve chosen the best option, you can put your plan into action. When would you two like to do that?

What part did each of you play in this issue? (Own the problem)

What part did each of you play in the solution? (Own the solution)

How does this issue and the way you FENCEed it affect your sexual relationship?

How does this issue and the way you FENCEed it affect your ability to protect each other from HIV and STDs?
Activity J: Moving Back to the Village

**Time:**
10 minutes

**Materials Needed:**
- Poster #6: FENCE
- Flipchart
- Markers

**Procedure:**
1. Facilitators should consider whether the couple seems ready and able to rejoin the group at the next session. Explore couple concerns about attending the group in the next session.

   *At the next session our entire village – or group – from the beginning of Eban will come together again. We want to take a few minutes to talk about how you feel about that. Do you have any concerns about joining the group?*

2. If facilitators have concerns about the couple’s readiness, now is the time to discuss them with the couple. Work with the couple to prepare them.

3. Facilitators should then review the couple’s progress to date, using some of the following questions to initiate a discussion between the partners about how they have made progress on their homework and goals.

   *We would like to check in on how you have been doing on the goals you set as a couple to reduce your risks for HIV and STDs.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which goals did you set for yourselves?</td>
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<td>What strategies did you use that were successful?</td>
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<td>How did FENCE help you to work on your goals, and how can you continue use FENCE to solve problems?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What was fun?</td>
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<td>What was hard?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What problems did you face, if any?</td>
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4. Reinforce the couple’s progress on their goals.

5. Transition to discussion of moving back to the village.

This is the last session with just us for a while.

Next week, we will be meeting as a group with all of the couples you met on the first night.

6. Skip the next section if the couple disclosed the first night in the group. In that case, go on to other things they may want to talk about as a couple before the group.
While everyone in the village knows that you are here because one of you in the couple is HIV positive, hopefully, as a couple, you have discussed revealing your HIV status within the village.

What are your thoughts or feelings about meeting with the other couples and sharing your HIV status?

7. Facilitator addresses these concerns.

Are there any other things that you want to talk about as a couple before we move into the group?

You should decide together how much you want to reveal about your relationship in the group.

Remember, we will be the facilitators for the group, so we will always be available to address your concerns. We will not reveal anything that you said in these sessions with us and you should not feel pressure to say anything that makes you feel uncomfortable.
Activity K: Homework

Time:
5 minutes

Materials Needed:
- Homework for Session 4 (in workbook, section 4-9)
- Connection Coupons
- Couple goal progress worksheet
- Condoms

Procedure:

FACILITATOR’S NOTE
Refer to Homework #4: Couple Connections, in Workbook, section 4-9.

1. Start by saying,

The homework for this week will be focused on improving couple connections and giving you ways to feel closer to each other and to strengthen your bond.

We are going to give you each a coupon book, which includes coupons that has some things to do and some blank ones so that you can write down activities that you like.

During the week you can give your partner three coupons over the week requesting that he/she show love and affection to you by performing the specified activities. This coupon book, like the Eban café menu from last session, is meant to help you feel close and communicate about your relationship and about sex.

What are some safe activities that show love and affection and can be used to make a couple connection?
2. Wait for and reinforce responses.

Receiving a massage from partner, sensual touching, taking a relaxing bath together, cooking a romantic dinner, taking a walk on the beach, organizing a date night, spending time talking and sharing with each other, etc.).

3. Pass out Coupon Books for Couple Connections and let them fill in blank coupons.

Take a few minutes and think about or write some activities on the blank coupons that you would like your partner to do for you.

Good. You can write other ones at home that you think of.

Performing these favorite activities for each other can strengthen your connection. It is important that you experience being both a giver and a receiver.

You should also continue to check in with each other every week, to pick a day and time each week when you can talk about what you learned in the session, how you feel about it, and how you are doing.

What other couple goal would you like to work on?

4. Work with couple to set a realistic and achievable strategy for working on their goal.

That is a good strategy. You should write it on your Couple Goal Setting form.
We think that you will enjoy this homework very much and we look forward to welcoming you back to the village next week.