SESSION 5: COPING SKILLS

Rationale:
This session on Coping Skills begins with a review of risk practices. The session reviews assertiveness principles and self-management techniques that promote sexual safety. The group learns ways of coping with safer sex while under the influence of alcohol, coping with rejection and coping with negative responses from partners to even engage in safe behaviors.

Materials Needed

Materials Provided in the HAPPA Program Box:
- Opening Poem: "And Still I Rise"
- "Key Concepts on Behavioral Self-Management" handout
- Handouts from Previous Sessions:
  1) Facts on HIV/AIDS (Session 2)
  2) The SISTAS Assertiveness Model (Session 3)
  3) How to Put a Condom On (Session 4)
- "The Alcohol Effects" handout
- "Coping Situations" handout
- Closing Poem: "4Sistah"
- Session 5 evaluation form

Other Materials You Will Need for this Session:
- Flip chart, markers & tape
- Ground Rules/Expectations poster
- "Coping" flip chart page, prepared in advance (see box on page 44 for text)
- Paper and envelopes
THE SISTA PROJECT
Facilitator’s Manual

Goals:

a) To review how people can protect themselves from the HIV virus.
b) To review the SISTAS Assertiveness Model.
c) To review how to put a condom on correctly.
d) To discuss what coping is.
e) To discuss the link between alcohol and AIDS.
f) To discuss coping with alcohol use and sex.
g) To discuss coping with rejection and negative responses.
h) To discuss ways to help one cope better.

Objectives:

- Summarize decision-making steps.
- Identify proper condom use steps.
- Understand what coping is.
- Understand the link between alcohol and sex.
- Understand how to cope with rejection and negative feedback.
- Seek a friend with whom you can talk about coping and sex.
- Analyze sexual situations when under the influence of alcohol to determine possible points of intervention and prevention.

Session 5 Outline

1) Opening Poem: “And Still I Rise”
2) Review Session 4, including homework
3) Reviewing HIV Protection, Assertion and Behavioral Self-Management
4) What is Coping?
5) Coping with Alcohol During Sex
6) Condom Demonstration
7) Coping with Rejection/Negative Responses
8) The Beginning and the End Evaluation
9) Closure
I. Opening Poem

a) Distribute “And Still I Rise” to the women.

b) Read the poem with or to the participants.

II. Session 4 Review:

a) Session 4 Concepts

i. Distribute and discuss the “Key Concepts on Behavioral Self-Management” handout.

ii. Write the concepts on the flip chart to correspond with discussion.

b) Session 4 Homework

i. When discussing the first assignment, buying condoms, ask the women how they bought condoms, and how they felt buying condoms.

ii. When discussing the second assignment, asking their partner to use a condom, ask the women:

   1) ...what they said;
   2) ...how their partner responded;
   3) ...how comfortable they felt about the entire situation; and
   4) ...the difficulties they encountered.

iii. Address any questions or issues that arise.

III. Reviewing HIV Protection, Assertion and Behavioral Self-Management

a) Review the following handouts from previous Sessions:

   1) Facts on HIV/AIDS (Session 2)
   2) The SISTAS Assertiveness Model (Session 3)
   3) How to Put a Condom On (Session 4)
b) By repeatedly reviewing key concepts from each session, the women will become more familiar with the concepts and more comfortable in not only initiating but also maintaining safer sex behaviors.

c) At the end of this review, explain to the women that sometimes, difficult situations arise when trying to engage in safer sex behaviors (i.e., when a partner insists on not engaging in safer sex, when one partner or both are under the influence of alcohol).

   i. In these instances, we have to learn to cope or reduce the stress that we are experiencing.

   ii. During stressful situations, inappropriate actions are more likely to result.

d) The next exercise introduces the topic of coping; what it is and ways of coping effectively.

IV. What is Coping?

a) Prior to the meeting, prepare a “Coping” flip chart page with the following information:

   \[\text{Coping...}\]
   \[\quad \text{Is what you do to handle a situation.}\]
   \[\quad \text{Is important because it improves your ability to handle difficult situations.}\]
   \[\quad \text{Can be effective or it can not work so well.}\]

b) Ask the women what they would do if they saw a huge scary monster entering the room. (Plausible answers may include shutting the door, running out of the room, screaming for help.)

   i. Inform the women that all of their responses were examples of coping.

c) Discuss what coping is, referring to the “Coping” flip chart page.

   \[\text{* Alcohol can affect the way we cope.}\]
d) Distribute "The Alcohol Effects" handout.
   i. Read the handout together.

The Alcohol Effects

- Alcohol slows down the body functions; therefore, it takes a longer time to think and react.
- After one drink, your vision, hearing and speech become slower.
- Alcohol makes it easier to say and do things that may be embarrassing or show poor judgment.
- People are more likely to get in car accidents and do things that put them at risk for AIDS when they are drunk.

V. Coping with Alcohol During Sex

a) Ask the women the following questions:
   1) Do you act differently when you are drunk?
   2) What do you do?
   3) How does being drunk affect your ability to make decisions?

b) Distribute the "Coping Situations" handout.

c) Read "Sam the Seducer" together, then answer the questions that follow.

Situation 1: Sam the Seducer

Sam and Carla go out on a date to see a movie. After the movie is over, they go to a local bar for a few drinks. Sam takes Carla over to his house because his parents are gone for the weekend. Sam is feeling very romantic. Carla just
finished a course on AIDS education. She asks Sam if they could hug and kiss and get to know one another. Sam agrees.

Questions:

1) Do you think Carla behaves differently when she is drunk?
2) What do you think Sam acts like?
3) What should Carla have done to avoid this situation?
4) What do you like about how Carla handled the situation?
5) What could be some of the consequences if Carla has sex with Sam?

d) Read “Darryl the Drunk” together and answer the questions that follow.

Situation 2: Darryl the Drunk

Liz is at a party that is winding down. At this party, everybody is drunk. Liz is approached by Darryl. He is very drunk but he is a really fine guy who is a little older than the rest of the men Liz knows. Liz would love to go out with this guy because she thinks Darryl is much more mature and together than the younger men that she knows. Darryl has his own apartment. Darryl starts feeling all over Liz’s body, and she loves the way his body feels, so she starts feeling all over his. Darryl asks Liz to take her clothes off. Liz whips them off. Darryl and Liz are so excited that they forget to use a condom when they have sex.

Questions:

1) What should Liz have done to avoid this situation?
2) Would you have done the same? If not, what would you have done differently?
3) What would you say to get Darryl to wear a condom?
4) Do you think Liz has a chance of catching the AIDS virus?
VI. Coping with Rejection/Negative Responses

a) Tell the women that sometimes we may cope with situations, but they may not be the best ways to handle the situation.

b) Still using the "Coping Situations" handout, read Situations 3, 4 and 5 together and answer the questions.

Situation 3: Cheryl's Dumped

Cheryl has been going out with Allan for two years, but he's getting tired of her asking him to use a condom and he wants someone new and interesting in his life. So Allan dumps Cheryl for Rebecca. Rebecca is a sleaze. She's been with every guy in town. She doesn't care if Allan uses a condom or not. Allan dumps Rebecca after two weeks, after having unsafe sex with her. Cheryl wants to get back with Allan, so she takes him back.

Questions:

1) Do you think Allan has a chance of getting infected with the HIV virus? How?

2) Do you think Cheryl has a chance of getting the HIV virus? How?

3) What do you think about how Cheryl coped with the situation?

4) What would you do?
Situation 4: The Guy on the Side

You have been going with your man for three years. Although you really care for him, you are tired of him saying no to your request for safer sex. You have the hots for Alfonso. You secretly go out with Alfonso for a couple of dates and end up having safer sex with Alfonso.

Questions:
1) Is this an appropriate way to cope with your steady boyfriend insisting on not using condoms?
2) What could the consequences be of having sex with Alfonso?
3) What would you do?

Situation 5: He Just Says No!

You have been dating this guy for two years. You love him. Whenever you raise the topic of using condoms, he just says no to all your attempts.

Question:
1) What do you do?

VII. The Beginning and The End

a) Inform the group that the first booster session will take place in approximately two months, and that the second one will take place approximately two months after the first.

b) Tell the women that the booster sessions will give them a chance to review what they have learned in the five program sessions, talk about how they used their new skills, and ask any questions.

c) Consider scheduling the first booster session at this time.
i. Have each woman write herself a reminder letter, including some of her thoughts about THE SISTA PROJECT, as well as the scheduled date of the first booster session.

ii. Have each woman seal the letter in an envelope that she addresses to herself.

iii. Tell the women that you will be mailing them their reminder letters in approximately six weeks.

VIII. Evaluation

a) Distribute anonymous evaluation forms to all participants.
   i. This session will be evaluated as to how the information was presented and the extent to which the session accomplished its goals and objectives.

IX. Closure

a) Closing poem: “4Sistah” by Cedric Levon

b) Recitation of the Motto:

THE SISTA PROJECT Motto

SISTA Love is Strong,
SISTA Love is Safe,

SISTA Love is Surviving