

## Session 7: Impact of Parental and/or Spousal Conflict and Violence



### 7.0: Introduction

<b>Participants</b>	Women and Men separately
<b>Objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To reflect on their experiences of partner conflict.</li><li>2. To discuss the consequences of experiencing and witnessing spousal conflict.</li><li>3. To envision intimate relationships based on respect.</li></ol>
<b>Duration</b>	2 hours
<b>Preparation</b>	Review in advance, information about participants, prepare questions on a flipchart and revise/ expand questions accordingly.

## **Activity 7.1: The Violence around me**

**Time** | 50 minutes

### **What the facilitator needs to know**

- a) Spousal or partner violence (domestic violence) is a common problem in our families/ communities.
- b) It is deeply rooted in unequal social and power relations, and is seen as 'natural' or 'normal'.
- c) However, violence is a learned behaviour – boys and men are often raised to think that violence is an acceptable means of maintaining control particularly over women and children, resolving conflicts or expressing anger.
- d) Most of the victims of violence are women and children but it is often difficult for them to speak out and seek help. Some of them may fear that the person inflicting violence may revenge if they seek help.
- e) Violence, especially the most severe forms, does not only have negative and lasting effects on the victims, but it also undermines ability by the victims to respect, and love the violent person. Witnessing or suffering conflict/ violence in childhood also teaches children to associate anger or rage with violence later in life.
- f) We all get angered but anger should not lead to violence. We have a responsibility to control ourselves when we feel angry.
- g) To construct healthy, non-violent, and respectful relationships with spouses and/ or children, fathers/ mothers should consistently practice to:
  - ⊙ Listen carefully to the other party
  - ⊙ Be patient and stay calm
  - ⊙ Agree to disagree
  - ⊙ Set realistic rules, communicate them clearly to family and stick to them
  - ⊙ Allow conversation/ dialogue and negotiations.

**Objective** | To reflect on their own experiences of partner conflict.

**Materials** | Flipchart, masking tape, markers and a case story

**STEPS**

- 1 **Provide** an overview of the session objectives. *(This exercise is addressing really sensitive and difficult issues, which may evoke emotions and might cause discomfort if connected with personal experiences of some participants).*
- 2 **Explain** to the participants that the activity will help them to explore common causes of conflicts and to discuss the consequences of violence on parents and children.
- 3 **Prepare** participants to listen to the story *(this needs everyone to be very attentive).*
- 4 **Read** a story and then provide a list of questions later for discussion.
 

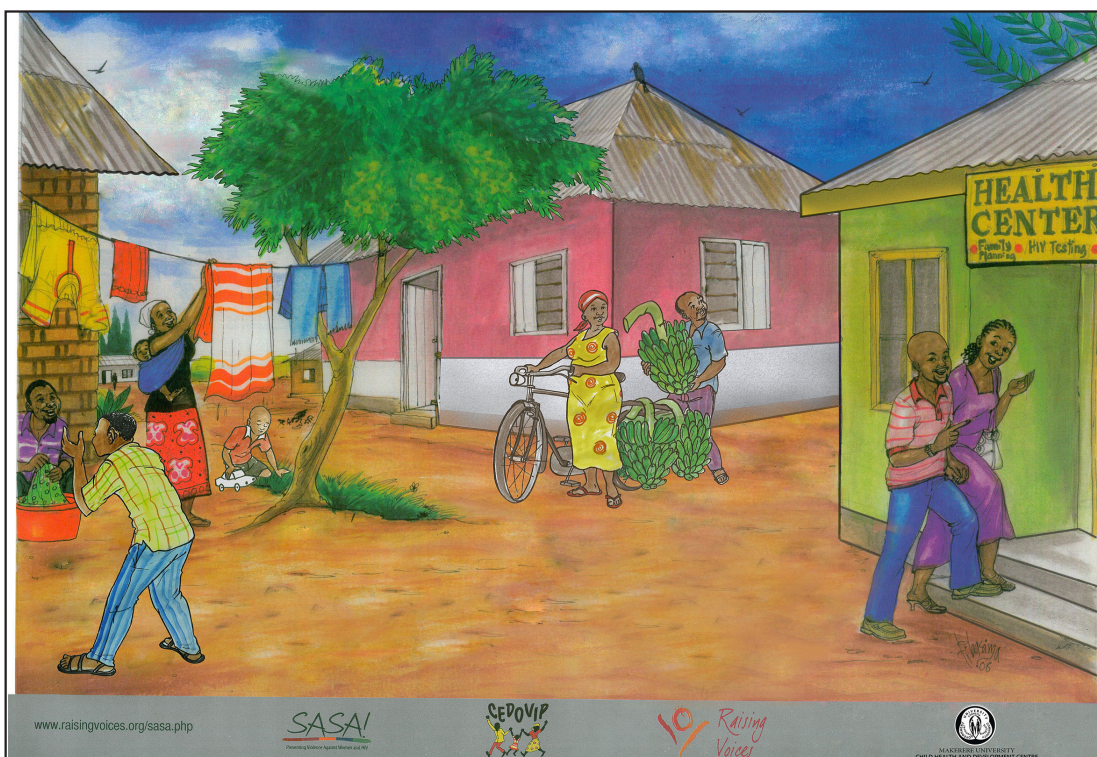
***The case story***

Susan and her husband John have a troublesome son, Henry, who is 11 years old. Henry is very energetic and creative. However, he often gets into trouble at school. On weekends and even on some school days, Henry escapes from home to watch video in the trading centre. Susan's husband often blames her for Henry's bad behaviour saying that she spends too much time at her job as a charcoal seller in the market, when she should be home more, watching over the children. One day Susan and her husband got into a heated argument and he hit her. He often did so but this time, Susan decided that she could not take it anymore. She lashed out at Henry and beat him up, blaming him for always bringing her problems. A male neighbour passing by, saw everything, but did not say anything. As Susan contemplated leaving her marriage, she thought about her children and got discouraged, saying the children would suffer without her.
- 5 After reading the story, **ask** if such a situation is familiar in their community or daily lives? *(Invite 2-3 people to share examples from their community)*
- 6 **Ask** the group to divide themselves into 3 smaller groups and let them discuss the following questions: *(provide 20 minutes)*
  - a) What is the most common type of violence practiced against women? Against men? Against children?
  - b) Is there a relationship between power and violence?
  - c) What are the consequences of conflict/ violence to the women? To the Children? To the Men? To the Family?
  - d) What are some of the examples of healthy spousal and family relationships?
  - e) How can we make our own relationships less violent?
- 7 After each group has discussed let them return and present what they discussed. ***(Allow about 10 minutes).***
- 8 **Ask** 2 volunteers to share what they have learnt and commit to non-violent and respectful ways of resolving conflict in their homes



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At this point introduce the 'power poster' to facilitate a discussion on positive ways to relate within families and the benefits of this to men, women and children



**1** We respect, value and help each other!

**2** We share the work and profits!

**3** We take care of our own and each other's health!

## Power Poster

### Discussion Questions

- 1) How do you feel about the families in the poster?
- 2) What are the benefits of this way of relating to each other? For Women? For Men? For Children? For Community?
- 3) Can women and men balance power in their relationships like the families in the poster? What are the barriers they are likely to face?
- 4) How can men positively assert their power in a home without losing their respect e.g.
  - Encouraging discussions in the home
  - Giving positive feedback
  - Avoid violence as the first option.

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**Ask** the questions at the back of the poster and ensure the discussion addresses how men can positively use their power without losing respect while at the same time retaining a sense of control as real men.

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Discuss how one can choose not to conform to the socially acceptable negative norms yet remain respected in society. **(You can refer to issues written outside the gender box in session 6)**

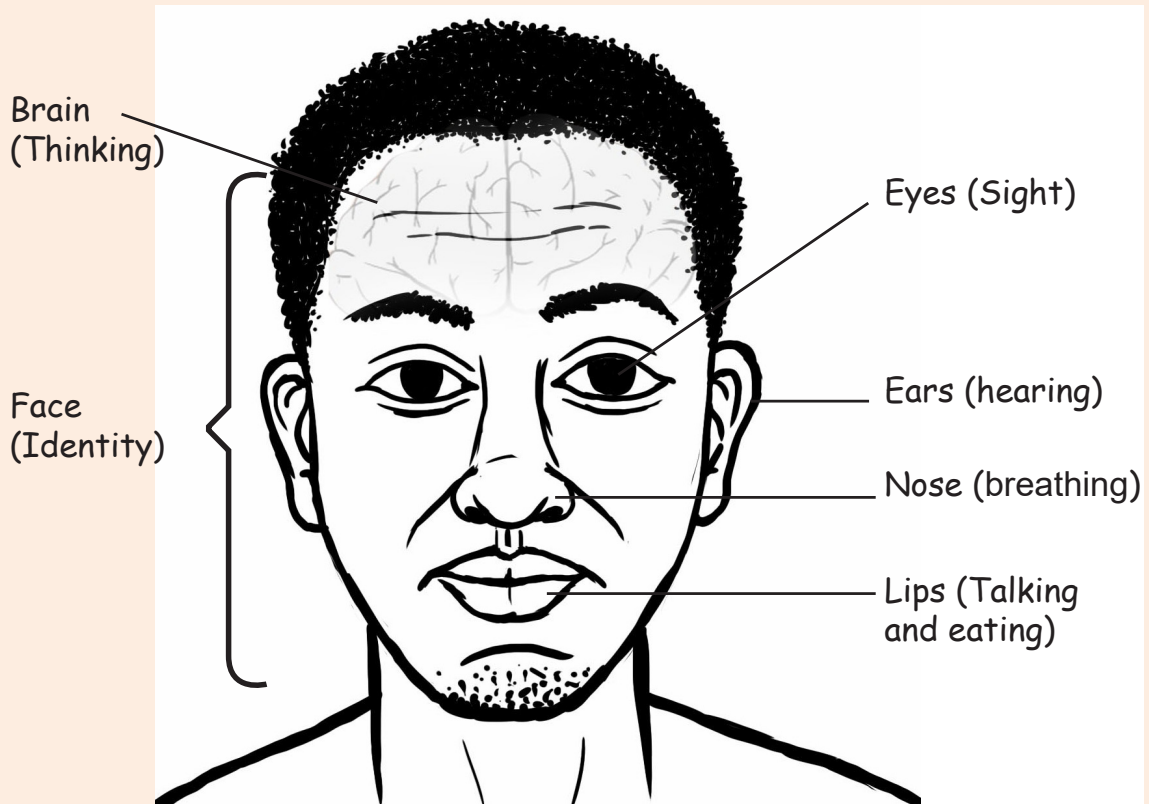
## Activity 7.2: The Head of Family

**Time** | 40 minutes

**Participants** | Men alone

### What the facilitator needs to know

- ⊙ We are using this diagram as an example to help participants to draw out and appreciate the true meaning and role of the Head of the Household. We use it to compare the human head and the functions it does for the body (person) and the functions that the Head of the Household should perform for the family.



### The head and what it does for the body

- ⊙ **The eyes** – seeing/ vision for the body: it sees opportunities that are good and communicates to the body.
- ⊙ **The ears** – must primarily hear and listen to the body (wife and children).
- ⊙ **The mouth** – feeds the body and ensures it doesn't go hungry/ does not suffer physical malnourishment. Similarly a father must be a provider for the family.
- ⊙ **The nose** aids breathing. It is the recipient of the breath of life. A man should ensure his family has life, that it doesn't get destroyed by anything, especially those he has control over.
- ⊙ **The face** – identity: what kind of generational identity does a father seek to give to his family.

- a) What image does the father give his family?
- b) Does this bring respect?

⊙ **The brain** in the head - a father is the think tank for the family. He inspires vision. People under him must know where they are going (direction). He should know what is right and wrong for the family.

**Objective** | 1. To discuss constructive ways men/ fathers can use their role to protect and benefit their families

**Materials** | Flipcharts, markers, masking tape and the picture of the head.

**STEPS**

- 1 | **Provide** an overview of the session objectives.
- 2 | Ask a volunteer to draw a structure of a human head on a flip chart or present a drawn structure of a human.
- 3 | Ask participants to name the function of each feature on the head.
  - a) The Eyes – for sight
  - b) The Ears – for hearing
  - c) The Nose – for breathing
  - d) The Mouth – for eating
  - e) The Brain – for thinking
  - f) The Face – for identity
- 4 | Let participants form 2 – 3 groups and discuss the following:
  - a) How do the different parts of the head benefit the body?
  - b) What happens if any of the parts of the head fails to function the way it is supposed to?
  - c) What does it mean when we say, men/husbands, fathers are the heads of the family in relation to the functions of the head? (**Provide 10 minutes**)
- 5 | Invite participants to return to the larger group and present their work.
- 6 | Are the heads of the families today, functioning to the benefit of their families?
- 7 | Ask participants to share how best they can learn from the functions of the features of the head to improve their leadership role in their families. (**You can use religious examples and positive cultural practices**).

**Close the activity by highlighting some of the following:**

1. *As we have seen that the functions of the head work to benefit the body, they do not function for their selfish benefits. Similarly, fathers should work hard to benefit their family. They should not use this position to abuse their family but rather to protect them.*
2. *Men should see that headship means being a leader by doing all the roles we have discussed that the head does for the body.*
3. *Fatherhood/ headship is not a position but a responsibility. It is not a name or a mere title but a function to protect, care, love, re-assure and refill emptiness, and should be a source of blessing to children and partners.*
4. *Headship means being a leader –being at the forefront and providing direction. Therefore, fathers especially, should learn from this activity and play their leadership role as a responsibility.*
5. *Parents, especially fathers, strengthen their children's competence. They support to form lifelong healthy attitudes towards work, along with serious habits of work. Without such leadership, children can have trouble grasping the connection between effort and results, standards and achievement.*
6. *Men are so privileged to share the title "father" with God and therefore, must reflect those attributes.*

## Activity 7.3: Home practice

**Time** | 5 minutes

**Materials** | Flipchart, masking tape and markers

**STEPS**

**1** | Try to practice one or two of the techniques on how to resolve conflict this week. You should tell your partner or children when you are going to practice it. Come ready to explain your experiences.

**2** | Bid farewell to the participants