

COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS AND SOCIALIZATION REGARDING SEX

All communities have expectations or scripts for sexual behaviour. Most often these are learned informally through watching people interact, listening to conversations, and observing the consequences that others experience as a result of their actions. Sexual scripts may also be taught directly, as, for example, in rituals and rites of passage from one life stage to another. What communities expect and teach may be in concert or conflict with HIV prevention. Knowing about community expectations and being sensitive to them can help in planning prevention programming and in interpreting evaluation results. Community representatives and teachers were asked about the local expectations with respect to school-age youth and playing sex in order to get a sense of how these fit with AIDS prevention initiatives and the actual behaviours reported by youth.

From the qualitative data it was clear that community leaders viewed sexual intercourse as natural and normal, an expected result of sexual urges and social obligations that came to the forefront with puberty.

What I know is that when one reaches the age of playing sex, he finds himself playing sex. (Community16_M: 190 - 192).

When you have reached the age of 13 years, you're a grown up, because you are probably experiencing your monthly period. This is the time boys/men will start looking for you and if you accept to become friends, automatically you will have sex. (Community18_F: 586 - 590)

They feel it is their time. I think this comes automatically that you [women] need your fellow in that way...These people think that is the only way they can live and if it is not that then they are not happy.

Question: So they need partners?

They need partners, temporary partners for those who are not married (Community20_M:139 - 147)

In traditional times, rites of passage occurred close to the time of puberty and signaled entry into adulthood. Formal instruction in sexual matters occurred at the time of puberty, often as part of rites of passage, with the expectation that sexual relationships were soon to follow.

50 years back these young girls were put in a house of the older...and taught how they can refrain from dirty movements and go about their sexuality when the time reaches...these days these things are not taking place (Community16_M: 422-430).

It was their [grandmothers] responsibility to make sure the girls were virgin till then [marriage]. But now there are no such rules (Community13_M: 158-161).

My grandmother would come and talk to us because she was freer with the girls than the parents...But now people are dying so fast...Some don't have their grandmother. Some do (Community14_F: 304-308).

Young people married soon after, with their earliest sexual desires and drives accommodated in marriage.

Today, Kenya faces a situation that is common around the globe. As more years of education are made available and expected for children, childhood is prolonged well beyond the ages at which marriage and childbearing had occurred in the past and a new stage, *adolescence*, is introduced. This creates several dilemmas: who is responsible for these child-adults; how do beliefs about sex as an activity that is natural, normal and expected post-puberty interface with a prolonged period of adolescence. The tensions and difficulties that result, particularly for families with limited resources, are evidenced in the following comments:

Some parents have just left their children free, their children can just visit places whenever they feel like or to any place where she does not even have a relative (Teacher4_F: 763 - 764).

It is very hard to find them waiting to have sex until they are married. They are still following their traditions; it is just like in the olden days you would not find children going to school they would just be herding cattle. It is not until the government came in and stressed the importance of school that the parents started taking their children to school (Community13_M: 70 - 77).

Rites of passage, as signs of readiness to enter adulthood, have lost some of their meaning as many youth do not take up adult roles and responsibilities until well-beyond the age when these rites have typically taken place. This leads many to question how youth should now be taught about sex and what the new scripting of sexual relations should look like.

Like what used to happen in the olden days [teaching young people about sex]. That is not there (Community9_M: 302).

Age for Sexual Initiation

When discussing community expectations and socialization of children to these expectations, adults spoke often of the mixture of new and old ways, with most unclear about how to integrate them into a single, coherent script. This is seen in the diversity of ages and stages provided by adults for when sexual initiation was expected to occur. While everyone identified a specific age or stage when playing sex became expected and acceptable, there was no consensus on what this age should be. The most commonly cited time was at marriage or when youth were ready for marriage. In both Luo and Kisii communities, the latter was often identified as the age of puberty – e.g., when a girl has begun menstruating she is both ready for marriage and for sexual activity.

They should wait until they get married (Community18_F: 306).

Expectation is that these boys and girls should only do it after they are married (Teacher9_F: 605-607).

When she starts her monthly period...she has reached the age of playing sex because that is the age of marriage (Community16_M: 226-229).

In this community, the members think that their children once they have reached the adolescent stage are free [they] should conduct themselves the way they feel like (Teacher4_F: 492-495).

On the other hand, some youth and adults advocated postponing sex until after marriage and marriage until school completion. This delay was most often justified as necessary because of the presence of AIDS and the need to postpone sexual activity in order to complete school or to remain safe.

They should first seek education without thinking of sex. Then after school and education they get married and have sex at their homes with their partners, after they wed. I would wish that because we used to do that in olden days. (Community22_F: 438 - 441)

Playing sex before marriage is bad and even in the bible playing sex before marriage is bad (Boys11: 190-191).

A person should wait until they reach 18 years of age (Community13_M: 169).

They should do it at the age of above 20 then others to reach 26 (Teacher15_M: 569 - 570).

Sometime back there was a tradition that before you marry a girl you should have had sexual intercourse to prove her fertility...[now] the community have supported that sexual intercourse come maybe after marriage (Community23_M: 166-168).

Especially a time like this leave alone tradition...better a child has finished school or college and has been employed (Community2_M: 192-196).

As is the case in many cultures, the expectation for postponing sexual activity was applied most stringently to girls.

They tend to be a bit careless with the boys, they only want [worry] about the girls. You know the girl should behave this way. But the boys, they don't know that it is these boys who go from girl to girl (Teacher17_F: 670 - 673).

Cultural Norms

Both Kisii and Luo leaders spoke of a past when rules and sanctions related to sexual behaviour were clearer.

A long time ago they used to say that if a child conceives when she is still at home, then she cannot get married...or can only get married as a second wife (Community12_M: 282-286).

There used to be customs for girls and boys long ago...if you break a girl's virginity you compensate her. Such are no longer there....as a custom girls were to wait until marriage (Community13_M: 156-159).

Prolonged schooling has pushed marriage, but not sexual activity, well beyond the age of sexual maturity for most youth. Typically parents are expected to maintain control of their school-children, though many spoke of the difficulty of doing so and others decried what they perceived as parental permissiveness.

Because traditions have changed and education has come...the young parents allow girls and their boyfriends to come visit the girls (Teacher12_M: 516-527).

You know sex is in different ways. You see money like in this village many young people fish. They start fishing because their parents cannot take them to school but when a young person starts to have his money he feels equal to the father and the father cannot advice him because you can only have control on your child if you provide for him / her. (Community24_M: 108-113).

Norms around sexual instruction are also changing, with multiple, at times conflicting, norms existing side-by-side. Some were clear that the taboo against adults other than grandparents talking about sex with children remained. This was particularly true once children reached sexual maturity. At this point they were considered “learned” and to speak to them about sex would be considered a sign of disrespect.

Calling the name of private parts to a child is almost a taboo. So it is tradition (Teacher2_M: 62-63).

We have this culture that doesn't allow us to talk [to children] about sex in public (Teacher27_M: 213-124).

Direct contact between a boy and a father or a girl and a mother is still a problem. So actually our children can't learn about sex through their parents (Teacher18_M: 685-688).

When a young boy or girl is circumcised, they consider themselves adults and they have respect among other adults. For example my son, there are some things I should not talk about when he is around because he is circumcised. And if it is a girl, there are certain things the father cannot talk about when she is around because once she is circumcised, she is an adult and should be respected. So when they pass that stage we automatically know this child knows about playing sex (Community15_F: 432-441).

Some recognized that the cultural taboo against speaking with the young about sex needed to change in order to protect young people from HIV/AIDS.

Most parents don't really talk to their children about sex...but because of what is happening now they have to be told the need to break taboos...I think now that they have seen what is taking place they can break the taboos and talk about it freely now (Teacher1_F: 88-95).

And some claimed it was, in fact, changing.

A mother can talk to her son...and a father to his daughter...depending on how free the two are. There are boys who do not feel insulted if you ask them such questions, as pertaining their sex life (Community8_F: 178-192).

When combined together as leaders, we talk about sex freely with our children, whereby we don't hide anything (Community21_M: 456-459).

It has been like a taboo to talk about sex to the children but it is almost getting broken (Teacher1_F: 227-228).

Question: *Do you think there is a problem talking with boys about sex?*

These days no...now is not the time of hiding anything from a child. They should be told the truth...because the disease HIV/AIDS is killing children, middle aged people and old people (Teacher11_F: 209-222).

Where do young people learn about sex? According to community leaders, young people learn about sex informally or don't need to learn, since it is natural:

They learn it from peer groups (Community3_M: 325).

They learn about sex in the discos (Community30_F: 418).

That [sex] is natural, nobody teaches them (Community11_M: 348).

According to young people, the most common form of learning about sex was through observation. In fact, woven throughout each focus group discussion with students were references to learning how to play sex through observation.

Young boys will see how dogs are playing sex in the field and they will copy what the dogs do (Boys8: 862-863)

As a child grows up they will copy what they see going on. For example they will hear that in a given village a boy played sex with a given girl and so as you keep on hearing these things you eventually decide to try sex (Boys11: 605-608).

When they try to look at the TV they see what people do [play sex]...and say let us just try

taste this (Boys6: 226-232).

Enforcement of Norms

Communities typically maintain a variety of formal and informal sanctions that serve to reward or punish those who adhere to or violate community norms. Some extreme examples: a pregnant girl may be expelled from school because of her pregnancy while a girl who is a virgin at marriage may command a higher bride-price, a boy who fathers children out-of-wedlock may be held responsible for their support or may be considered a less desirable marriage partner, sexually active youth may be called names, adults who rape very young children may be subject to legal or physical penalties. When asked about how sexual norms and expectations were enforced, many responded that there was no real enforcement.

Question: [Are there rules] *that spell [out] what to do if a child behaves in a certain way?*
There are no such rules here (Community14_F: 501-503).

There is nothing much that can be done [to enforce the expectations] (Community19_F: 259).

We've talked to them but they don't listen. So, we tell them that the world will teach them or they'll die from the disease so you just leave them (Community7_F: 592-595).

You sit her [your child] down and she refuses to listen then the world will teach her (Community17_F: 367).

Others provided examples of enforcement.

The boys and girls can be exposed at the assembly grounds so they are beaten and punished (Community8_F: 388-390).

Lastly he/she will be in the hands of the government (Community16_M: 350).

The chief can take him and beat him thoroughly with a stick and if he is a kid that listens he will stop that behaviour (Community30_F: 353-355).

Generally, however, enforcement was seen as a difficult task, with parents, rather than the community, carrying much of the responsibility.

It is difficult for the community, it is very difficult (Community3_M: 260).

[If] *you get children misbehaving. You will come and tell [the child's parent], "that daughter of yours is not good"* (Community28_F: 299-301).

Parents have a real role to play (Community21_M: 275).

If his daughter has been impregnated...look for the person who has done this

(Community24_M: 264-265).

In the presence of a predominantly informal method of teaching about sexual expectations, community members expressed frustration that young people did not heed their advice or warnings about abstaining from sexual activity.

They don't listen to what we tell them as parents or as leaders (Community1_M: 220-221).

Even if you stop her I don't think she will listen to you. You may talk but she will not follow (Community28_F: 229-230).

Even if you tell them to wait they will not listen (Teacher25_M: 309).

However, though youth were considered to be difficult to reach, community leaders were unwilling to give up and recognized the importance of perseverance.

We can't get tired. Children are children and a child is a fool. We will not leave them. We will continue educating them even if they do not listen we will continue teaching them. You know a stupid person never sees his stupidity so we have to tell them in the morning, evening, tomorrow and even the day after, you will continue telling them (Community25_F: 285-291).

The Views of Youth

When asked what they had been taught about sex, young people reiterated much of what the adults had said about the absence of specific times of learning or specific rituals of instruction. Mostly they spoke of learning about how to protect themselves against disease.

We are taught that as young people we should not play sex until our time reaches to play sex (Girls14: 1342-1343).

That if you play sex you might get AIDS (Boys13: 1384).

When you are married you must have only one partner (Girls3: 1382).

Despite the absence of formal teaching, young people expressed a desire to be told about sex by a variety of people including *teachers, parents, grandparents, chief, pastor, doctors and nurses, older sisters and brothers*. What was important to young people was being taught by people who were comfortable talking about sex and who they felt free to talk to in return and by those who would “tell the truth.”

Not just any teacher but the one who is free with the students (Girls16: 2137).

They [parents] are the ones young people can be free with (Boys12: 1507).

Teachers tell the truth. At home your father may be immoral himself so he feels guilty talking about it (Boys13: 1398-1401).

They were able to clearly articulate what they would like to learn:

- *Ways to abstain*
- *What sex is and how you are supposed to engage in it*
- *How to remain faithful to your partner*
- *How to protect yourself from AIDS*
- *Consequences of playing sex*

And reasoned that they needed this information in order to avoid:

- *Disease and death*
- *Stigma attached to having AIDS [If you have sex before marriage you may get infected and people might run away from you (Girls5: 402-404)].*
- *Early pregnancy*
- *Being denied traditional marriage and community status [She(a girl who has played sex) can only get married as a second wife... You cannot be accepted in the community. You will look like a prostitute. (Community12_F: 273-285)].*

Young people reasoned that if they were taught about sex it would enable them to protect themselves, and felt that they could not protect themselves without the guidance and support of their elders.

Once they are taught those who hear and take heed will refrain from playing sex. While those who don't take heed will continue playing sex and contract diseases (Girls4: 1111-1113).

It is important to be taught about sex because [then] we will start doing it the right way and it will help stop the spread of AIDS (Girls5: 2001-2003).

If you take care of yourself by not playing sex till the right time [you can protect yourself] (Girls16: 1478-1480).

It was clear in focus group discussions that youth had absorbed the messages of their elders about the desirability of waiting until marriage to play sex.

Playing sex before marriage is bad and even in the bible playing sex before marriage is bad (Boys11: 190-191).

It's bad. It kills people (Girls1: 136-139).

For those who saw the benefits of waiting however, sex after marriage was seen worth waiting for.

You know there is a time for everything. I support those who say...let's wait...[for] a good husband...[and not have to] remain at home which will lead [your] child to become like these street children (Girls5: 370-377).

This message gained immediate support from fellow peers.

*Others what do you think?
I suggest that [1st respondent]
I suggest [2nd respondent]
I agree with what [she] says [3rd respondent]
(Girls5: 385-387).*

Summary

Communities are caught between traditional expectations, patterns of being, and ways of teaching the young and the demands of today's society. This is particularly problematic in the area of youth sexuality where traditional beliefs in sex as natural and normal in post-pubescent youth together with a prolonged period between puberty and marriage leave youth and their elders without socially structured and sanctioned ways to deal with adolescent sexuality. Most ascribe to a preference to wait until marriage, but face difficulties realizing this preference in their actions.

SEXUAL SCRIPTS

Sexual scripts codify the norms that guide the sequence of events and interactions that culminate in sexual events such as intercourse. They are much like the scripts of a play or movie, complete with identification of appropriate actors, times, locations, motivations, dialogue and events that lead to and follow playing sex. While the possible diversity of scripts is immense, the reality is that in each culture there are only a limited number of scripts that appear to be followed with regularity. HIV prevention usually requires some modification or addition to sexual scripts. This may be a change in the timing of sex (e.g. to a later age), the actors (only between married partners), or in the dialogue or activities that lead up to playing sex (e.g., the introduction of condoms). Familiarity with existing scripts is important for effecting such changes.

Dating Relationships

In focus groups, the conversation about boy-girl relationships began by asking participants about the nature of dating relationships among people their age in their own community. Their responses indicated that students began dating between 9 and 20 years of age, with 11-15 years the most common age to begin dating. Sexual activity appeared to underlie all dating scenarios and young people often spoke of “dating” and “playing sex” synonymously. When asked what boyfriends and girlfriends do together common responses were:

Most of them play sex and do things which are not good (Boys11: 68-69).

Question: *What do boys and girls who are dating do together?*

Sex{tc "Sex"}

Question: *And what else do they do apart from sex?*

Just talking, talking about love. (Girls1: 63-68)

Question: *What are the things boyfriends and girlfriends do when they are together?*

They kiss

Question: *Talk loudly; don't fear?*

Play sex{tc "Play sex"}

Question: *What else do they like doing when they are together?*

They like sleeping on the bed{tc "They like sleeping on the bed"}

Question: *Apart from kissing what else do they do?*

Playing sex

Sex

They play sex{tc "They play sex"}

Question: *Is there anything else they do when they are together?*

Silence (Girls10: 90-110)

When other activities were mentioned, they appeared to be a prelude to sex. Thus, boyfriends and girlfriends were said to talk about sex, which often led to sex:

They talk as they walk home and when they arrive at the boy's house

he tells her to remove her underwear. They both enter the bed (Boys7: 110-119).

Their joint recreational activities also led to sex:

A boy can even take a girl home to listen to music. After they listen to music, they eat and then the job starts [sex] (Boys8: 125-126).

*They play together
They walk together
They can even sleep together
They hug each other
They go home telling stories (Boys12: 116-120).*

Only one student described a young dating couple without reference to playing sex.

They usually go to discos, movies, go swimming (Girls5: 102-103).

However, in several interviews with adults, discos, dances, and movies were thought to be connected to playing sex and were, therefore, frowned upon. Of interest is the fact that, despite the attention paid to these by adults, few students mentioned discos or movies as something they did together.

You will find from the age of nine to fourteen years. Is like going for preparation. When they come back in the evening they have something to learn, things like that. Going for preparation means when they go to watch this films it's like they are being prepared for sex When they come back in the evening they will put what they saw in the film for test (Community1_M: 541 - 550)

What I observe is that when a person attends a funeral in somebody's home there is a disco throughout the night even for four days. So where there is this music boys and girls go to dance and that's where they meet and that is where they play sex. (Community14_F: 541 - 545)

These nocturnal dances they should not attend, this one can be (Community 21_M: 517)

Well mostly adventure and the pressure from friends and also I think what they see in the movies, in the videos, there are these things they are calling the video halls and we have come down very strongly on these ones. The kind of pictures they show there are very bad, from the West, so our young ones want to try to imitate what they are seeing in the video halls, so I think that is a major reason. (Community6_M: 184 - 191)

Even church activities were considered by some to have the potential to lead to sex for boys and girls.

There is this called you know every church they say overnight prayers things like that. Overnight prayers on my side I'm not pleased because they keep young people together.

They say these ones are saved and when you leave them to continue with the lesson. They then stop the lesson and they start learning their own things (Community1_M: 447 – 459).

In some communities, young people spoke of relationships between boys and girls as prohibited by adults.

Here in school we are cautioned about these things [dating and sexual relationships] (Boys6: 83).

Those things are prohibited [premarital sexual relationships] (Boys11: 357-358).

According to young people however, forbidding relationships led to secrecy, rather than abstinence.

You cannot know [if people are dating] because they do it secretly (Boys6: 97-98).

From Dating to Playing Sex

There appeared to be little differentiation between dating and playing sex. Many described sexual relationships among young people as akin to dating, and thus playing sex was common.

Playing sex [among young people] occurs everywhere (Boys11: 181).

Although some attending boarding school denied that it was common in their school.

It [premarital sex] happens in the village but over here [at this school] it does not happen (Girls4: 157).

And some were not sure of the extent to which young people played sex in their community.

Maybe they do (Boys11: 165).

Yes, but not frequently (Boys4: 153).

Some youth indicated that there were those who would rather wait to play sex .

[Boys would] rather wait (Boys15: 388).

Some want to play, and some don't want to (Boys12: 499).

They would rather wait (Girls16: 822).

Most of them want to play sex but few of them do not (Boys8: 842).

However, they acknowledged that very few waited until marriage to play sex{"No one waits"}

As long as a girl has reached adolescence stage, if a boy approaches her for a love affair, she will accept. (Boys11:192-199)

Question: *There are not virgin ladies or men?*

Men who want virgin ladies are there but no virgin ladies.

Question: *That's what you see?*

Yes

Question: *And virgin girls who want virgin men?*

There are but to get them is difficult (Community4_F: 487 - 495).

First Sex

Though students claimed 11-15 as a typical age to begin dating, some indicated that sexual activity might begin earlier, often as a result of imitating parents.

Some kids even start at 7 years old. (Boys13: 1214-1217)

When they are young, Sometimes parents are very careless. They can do sex when their small kids are seeing. You know they will imitate what they are doing when they are small. Only a sister and a brother can imitate what they are doing. After imitating what the parents are doing, next round they will do themselves. Now they will go out to show other kids. (Community10_F: 465-472)

Children like to play sex with their cousins or small kids (Boys8: 339-340).

Negotiating Sex

Apart from these very early, pre-pubescent sexual encounters, youth described two starting points for sexual scripts. In one, sexual intercourse was described as occurring haphazardly, with no apparent premeditation, negotiation or prelude – i.e., as something that just happens.

On Sundays [young] people work routine chores and start talking to each other, then hide in the bush [play sex] (Boys13: 61-63).

When they meet, they agree even to play sex (Boys6: 145).

The other was characterized by a process of negotiation and gift giving, in which letters or messages were sent to the girl or boy of interest, through a mediator.

They write letters to each other and send it through a third party. So at times the third party breaks the news (Girls4: 65-67).

He talks this girl [mediator] into...helping him...[and] gives her something [for doing this]...the girl will tell the boy to be ready, today I [mediator] will bring for you that girl (Boys8: 931-938).

Boys were described as being the initiators of most relationships and the ones who were unrelenting in their pursuit. As part of expressing their interest in playing sex it was customary for boys to shower girls with gifts.

Sometimes you get a boyfriend [who] gives the girlfriend money. He buys her lotion and other things. He tells her that anything you want I will give you. I love you so much...then they sleep together (Girls10: 201-208).

Gifts

Money or the exchange of gifts clearly formed the basis of most sexual relationships and youth provided elaborate details and descriptions of gift giving. Boys thought that money was a primary motive for girls to play sex.

It may be a source of money for a girl so whenever she wants some money she goes for sex (Boys13: 755-757).

Boys and girls alike were insistent that if a boy gave money or gifts to a girl, he was entitled to receive sex in return.

If you give her something small, she will play sex (Boys8: 672-674).

The boy gives the girl money and after you have used it, he comes back for the money or you have to play sex with him. So the girl just accepts (Girls16: 408-410).

Maybe the girl has taken too much of his money and when the boy starts demanding his money the girl decides to agree to play sex so that she can clear her way (Girls14: 835-837).

If girls refused to keep up their end of the bargain there were severe consequences.

She will be given a gift then she will just accept...and if she refuses, she can even get abducted...she is grabbed by force...then she gets raped (Boys12: 161-623).

Gifts that were commonly listed included:

- *Shoes or slippers*
- *Petroleum jelly*
- *Lotion*
- *Clothes*
- *Jewellery*
- *Petticoats*
- *Scented oil*
- *Mandazis [pastry] or biscuits*
- *Food*
- *Money*

A few boys attempted to estimate the amount of money it took to get a girl to agree to play sex.

Boys give 200 [Schillings]...Girls even take 10 [Schillings]...some girls are so cheap they even take 10 Shillings (Boys13: 447-448).

A mediator was especially important in negotiations that involved the provision or exchange of money. In these cases, the mediator helps to bargain for the right price and is responsible for the exchange of money between the boy and girl.

[My friend] visits me at home and let's say she bring me money from the boy and I receive it (Girls4: 71-73).

Gifts and money in exchange for sex played an important role for girls from poorer families.

Some girls according to their family background are poor and in school can't afford a biro pen or petroleum jelly. A rich boy will buy them for her so with time if a boy approaches this girl for sex she will easily accept (Boys11: 416-420).

Some suggested the reason that girls from poor families played sex was specifically to gain money or gifts.

If the child is not well prepared from home...their basic needs...especially in girls...if they miss those things that they require they will go out for handouts and these ones really now make the girl indulge in sex the act (Teacher16_M: 519-525).

Because of poverty; like now you know these schools near here, if they get somebody who is very rich let's say a tycoon, he comes he gives one thousand to a girl. The girl will say this one thousand I will buy oil, nice things but she has got the disease because of poverty (Community10_F: 200-205).

Maybe she has no shoes and if she gets a boyfriend he can buy for her shoes. Parents are also different. There are those can't afford to buy things; they are not well off. So, this girl may see a girl with good shoes or a nice dress and she will also want these things. (Community14_F: 374-382).

Several connected prostitution with material needs.

That is what I told you, because of this prostitution, these men meet with these virgins through prostitution line because this virgin does not have anything to help her living. So men are the people who have money, who have food, who have what have you, which can help these young ladies, so this is a way of ruining this young generation. Because you bring in her way things, which she has not reached to think such like having money, having good clothes, having good shoes in a dirty way. So that is instilling prostitution in these girls at a younger and this is ruining this generation. Because this is a generation, this is a good generation but these men are ruining her. [Community16 : 393 - 403]

It comes because of poverty. You find a young child female goes for sexuality earlier because of poverty. You will find a young girl strolling with a young woman or a bigger girl or older than her by age; she goes with her in prostitution. This young girl accompanies this lady because of poverty. She joins this lady because of poverty Community16_M: 250-255).

Partners

Sexual relationships were typically described as occurring with boyfriends who were older in age than their girlfriends.

You can find an 11-year-old girl having sex with a boy of 17 years (Girls4: 161).

In most cases you will find a boy with more years (Boys6: 338).

It was commonly accepted that boys date younger girls because they are presumed to be more fresh, innocent, and unknowing.

Another reason is that he sees this one who is young she cannot think far like the one who is older (Boys6: 359-360).

The younger girls who “cannot think far” were described as easily accepting or quick to give in to sexual persuasion or gifts.

She can easily accept, she can give me the way I want (Boys6: 351-352).

Let us say I am older and my girlfriend is in class 4 or 5, now she will just follow my order (Boys8: 184-185).

Interestingly, there was also the perception that older boys wished to maliciously ruin a girls life by forming a relationship with and engaging in sexual activity knowing that they were infected.

You find that he might spread them [STD's] to the girl thus interfering with her education (Boys11: 233-235).

If a young boy knows he has AIDS and wants to spread (Boys15: 121).

Attitudes toward dating older females, however, were often negative with boys expressing fear of doing so. They admitted to feeling a powerlessness and lack of control over sexual encounters with older women.

She can hurt you because she might demand too much and maybe you cannot satisfy her. You are the one who will get hurt. But she will be very happy.

The way she grooms herself in a manner that when you look at her you just accept (Boys12: 253-254).

Older women were also described by boys as overly seductive and coercive.

There are some girls without boyfriends who choose small boys then rape them (Boys8: 247-248).

Secondary school [girls] go to younger boys, who they can trick (Girls: 316-317).

The young boys bring something to their house...and the woman locks the door and insists of having sex with him (Boys13: 303-304).

She lures schoolboys with money (Boys15: 123-124).

In some cases, boys adamantly refused to entertain the idea of a sexual relationship with an older girl.

*Do some boyfriends play sex with an older girlfriend?
That one is not possible (Boys11: 221-226).*

However, older women and girls were also seen as providing several advantages.

They say that they have bigger breasts so when they lie on them they feel nice (Boys13: 243-244).

*Maybe someone else has already played sex with her and opened her...people like those ones who are not opened [virgins], they [the boys want to] open for themselves ... Older girls are already opened, they [younger boys] don't disturb them (Boys12: 212-213).
(Boys12: 207-213).*

Community leaders spoke of sexual liaisons between girls and older men as resulting from trickery and deceit and fraught with difficulties.

That's their nature. They want many girls and that's why you see they marry many women, even now those who have three or four wives and the kind of life they lead, they still want young ladies to play sex to and interferes with her life [Community18 : 418 - 427]

*That happens a lot of time. There are men who are old, lets say these ones who have become parents, also with the body lust when he sees somebody's daughter he wants to try his best even if it means giving money or buy something valuable to accept to play sex with him. The community has always discouraged this. They're a few people with this kind of behaviours in our community whose work is to spoil other people's daughters.
[Community2 : 279 - 286]*

Yes with a virgin girl he feels younger and feels very good. Most of these girls are forced because they don't like it, it is not their wish to play sex with these men and most of them

are mostly raped, forced. [Community26 : 512 - 517]

Girls, however, spoke primarily of the benefits associated with playing sex with an older boy or man. These largely centred on the idea that older boys were more reliable and better able to provide money in exchange for sex.

The girl sometimes goes to play sex with the [older] boy so that the boy can give her money (Girls5: 293-294).

Older males were also perceived as more capable of taking care of a girl if she became pregnant.

Even if she gives birth he [older male] will buy the baby clothes for the baby (Girls8: 361-362).

Girls described older men as a source of sustenance and well-being and were quick to use this as a justification for engaging in sexual relationships with them. This can be seen in the following focus group responses to the question “Why do young girls engage in sexual relationships with older men?”

*Anything she wants she will be given.
To help you with any problem you have.
If your parents can't help you he can help you.
If you don't have parents he will help you.
He will give you money to take to school.
He buys you clothes if they are torn.*
(Girls9: 354-427)

Older males were also perceived as more gentle and kind and not as likely to use force or physical action to get their way with a girl .

You might find the boy is polite he is not harsh and when she annoys him he doesn't beat her (Girls14: 237-238).

Despite this apparent preference for older boys or men, it is notable that the majority of pregnancies in girls in Standards 6 through 8 were ascribed to agemates who were not in school, with very few ascribed to business travelers, family friends or relatives.

Force

Much in the sexual scripts that were described in qualitative interviews was spoken of using a discourse of force. Boys (and adults speaking about boys) felt forced by their sexual urges, their peers and by what they perceived to be the expectations of girls and their community. Girls felt forced by material needs, their peers, requirements of reciprocity and familial obligations, and by the actions of boys. These scripts made abstinence difficult and unlikely

In the self-completion questionnaires, 34% of boys and girls who had been sexually active said

they had, at some time, been forced. Although 36% of youth said they had, at some time, refused to play sex, in focus groups, refusing sex was described as uncommon.

To explore how force occurs and what it means, young people were asked to define force, comment on the extent to which it was present in their community, and recommend ways in which it could be dealt with.

Boys – Biological Force

The majority of boys, girls and adults asserted that boys could not control their sexual urges when they reached adolescence. Boys maintained that these urges forced them to play sex.

Are there boys who can't control their urges and desires?

Yes there are.

Yes there are.

Yes there are. (Boys11: 343-350)

Boys can't control because once they get stimulated whichever girl they will find they will ask to play sex with. (Boys8: 550-551)

Young boys of these days are mad I tell you, they can not wait. The ones I know including my own sons are bad. (Community5_F: 141 - 142)

When he is in puberty stage it forces him beyond control... He cannot be patient to wait or stop to play sex because when he has reached that age it forces him. (Boys7: 283-291)

It is almost impossible because with teen age, and this is the adolescence stage and at times they become even wild when they meet other sexes. So you find it almost impossible because at such times they pretend there is nothing said or taught against AIDS and therefore this is why we find that it is even impossible. So as we lead these people because they are even in the community, you see most of them may pretend that they are receiving from those who train them but afterwards you may find if you trace them you find them doing it the opposite way. So I don't think it is easy for these people to remain virgins. (Community20_M: 74-83)

Others explained it as a male biological urge that must be released.

The sperms reach a point they feel backache so they want to release. (Community10_F: 504-505)

Some blamed girls for creating sexual urges in males.

That is when boys say "you know girls disturb us a lot, you find a girl has worn a very tight dress and it has a slit and she is walking now our blood pleasure rises, that is what makes us to start those things". (Community7_F: 297-301)

Question: *Why do you think it is hard for young people to wait?*

Adolescence. When it begins there is nothing you can do. When you are in adolescence

you are like an insect. You frequently brush on girls you touch her you only think of doing sex. (Boys13: 360-365)

Despite the pervasive claim that male urges could not be controlled, some boys indicated that it was possible to resist sexual urges and suggested tactics for this.

Just get hold of a jembe (a hoe) and dig hard. By the time you are through with digging the sex feelings will have disappeared. In any case nobody is beating you up that you play sex (Boys11: 587-592).

By the help of your elder brothers or concentrating on something that is not evil (Boys6: 274-274).

When you are erect you may talk to another person, not a girl and it will cool...even pour cold water on your legs from the iron sheet (Boys14: 334-359).

When you are erect you may talk to another person, not a girl and it will cool. You may reduce it by force, because it cannot refuse. (Boys 13: 343-349)

Boys – Exclusion from Peer Groups

Boys who abstained, or worse yet, refused to play sex when they could have, described being excluded and rejected by their peers. They feared being labeled as “impotent” “weak” or “stupid” if they did not play sex.

Question: If there is a boy who says that I don't want anything to do with sex, what do you think his friends, other boys will think?

The other boys will not want to associate with him.

Yes they will not want to walk with him.

They can even insult him that you are impotent we don't want to walk with you, walk alone.

You there is nothing you can do even if you remain with a girl here. (Boys12: 438-445)

He is a weakling if he refuses sex but the girl wanted (offered).

He does not want this nice things or behaviours.

They may insult him

It means that you are weak and you do not even know how to talk to a girl.

Question: Apart from weakling, what else they might say?

That you are impotent, castrated

They may stop you from hanging with them, they may beat you, ask you how can we give you a girl and you refuse? (Boys13: 541-550)

They may chase him from their group because he is impotent (Boys15: 369-370)

Question: How do boys respond when another boy doesn't want to play sex with his girlfriend who wants?

They will tell him you are a fool you don't know. You are very stupid you don't know what to do. (Girls10: 632-635)

Question: *What will the girl think about the boy if he refuses to play sex?*
She will despise him
She will think he has AIDS
He will think maybe he has a disease that is why she refused. (Boys7: 339-343)

Boys – Spoiled Virility

Boys also expressed concern that if they were not involved in playing sex at a young age that they would not be able to impregnate a wife when married. The ability to impregnate a girl was seen as essential to masculine identity.

Boys believe that if they don't play sex now when they will be married they will be unable...some also think that if they start now when they are young their sperms will mature and...they can be able to make someone pregnant (Boys12: 769-774).

Trying [to play sex] can happen for example if a boy wants to see if he can make a girl pregnant (Boys8: 600-601).

All of these factors worked against a boy refusing or abstaining from playing sex. Boys were clear, and often adults agreed with them, that these factors ‘forced’ them to play sex and that most of them had no choice or control.

Girls – Physical Force

Boys and girls agreed that for girls, the consequences of refusing to play sex were particularly dire. If a girl refused to play sex, particularly if a boy had presented her with a suitable gift, she was expected to know and to accept the reality that the boy would force her to play sex.

Some girls [who refuse] like it when the boys force them (Boys13: 812).

He can ask. If she refuses he will throw her down, tear her clothes and force her to play sex (Boys7: 318).

He will beat her whenever he meets her...drag her away even if the girl doesn't want (Girls14: 407-408).

They will end up fighting...the boyfriend will end up using force...he will end up carrying her...he will lock her in a house where she won't be able to run away...then he will sleep with her (Boys2: 389-402).

That boyfriend of hers might kill her (Girls10: 751-755).

Of note is that in none of the focus group discussions did boys or girls describe a situation where a boy merely accepted ‘no’ from a girl. Instead, forced sex was described as a common experience by young people.

Many boys force girls to play sex with them. They can even tear their cloths (Boys6: 303-304).

And on occasion, it was described as a group effort, wherein a boy who was refused rounded up his friends to either beat or rape the girl.

When she is on her way [to the shops] there is a bush there. She finds some boys...and she doesn't have energy to fight them all...if she refuses, then they rape her (Girls5: 1193-1197).

What happens when his girlfriend refuses to sleep with him?

He beats her.

He forces or drags [rapes] her.

He looks for many boys to carry her to their place.

(Girls9: 577-596).

If the girl is older than him he can look for other boys to come and help him beat or grab her (Girls9: 851-852).

Force was also described as a premeditated effort wherein the boy purposely planned a way to avenge a girl's refusal.

When the girl has refused the boy might time her and then let's say when the girl goes to the shop to buy something, the boy might call the other boys. Then they come and beat the girl who refused to play sex with him (Girls5: 853-857).

He may leave her, but when he finds her alone elsewhere [he will] rape her

And boys were known to threaten girls if they told anyone they had been raped.

After raping her he tells her that if she ever tells somebody, he will do something bad to her (Girls16: 438-439).

Girls – Expected to Say “No”

Girls recognized that despite the consequences of refusal, they were expected to refuse to play sex.

If the girl is intelligent enough, she will not accept. But there are some boys who end up forcing them (Girls16: 360-362).

A boy's body may heat up when he thinks about a girl. If he sees her then, even if they have to fight the girl must give in (Boys13: 215-216).

Question: *Do you think there are ways a girl can get her boyfriend to respect her wishes?*

No. (Girls10: 774-779)

The conviction that refusing sex would lead to force did not prevent girls from providing ideas on how to try to resist that force. Some suggested using religious persuasion:

She tells him the word of God, she reads for him a verse (Girls10: 792-793).

You will tell him in the name of Jesus Christ all that what you are thinking about [sex] will pass. This will make you pray for him everyday and he will change (Girls10: 1161-1176).

You tell him let's meet in church. When you meet him in church you take him to the pastor [and say] "Pastor, this person disturbs me everyday I've tried to tell him he has refused. Try to tell him "(Girls9: 1121-1125).

Instead of confronting the boy, some girls saw it fit to leave their fate in the hands of God.

The girl should continue to pray God to help her he doesn't spoil her badly (Girls10: 1155-1158).

Or they appealed to love

She must tell him the effects of having sex [early]...[and that] if you really love me just wait the time will come when we are husband and wife. The only thing to do respect me now and later you will be free (Girls5: 880-884).

Others suggested trying to reason with a boy either through a mediator or directly by themselves.

She will send somebody else to try to convince him on her behalf...or writes him a letter (Girls14: 608-609).

They should sit down and discuss and come to a conclusion (Girls16: 780).

Girls – Trickery and Cheating

Girls often spoke of being tricked or 'cheated' into playing sex, not necessarily by the sexual partner, but by someone else. This often happened when a relative (brother, sister, aunt, mother were mentioned) accepted a gift or payment from someone which obliged the girl to provide restitution by playing sex. Alternatively, a girl might be sent to get food, but her only way to do this was to exchange sex for the food.

** Q : How does this happen, what does he tell the sister?*

After introducing the two, then it is the brother who gets the fee because he has done for her a good thing. He tells the sister to go and finish with the friend!

Q : What does he tell his sister?

He tells her to go and finish with that boy and to talk nicely with the boy. He tells the sister to use that boy, maybe offer sex once in two weeks but eat a lot. (Boys13:650-660)

Some aunts spoil children, they invite girls to pay them a visit during holidays but had previously arranged with a man, so when you go, she might trick you to go and fetch something from his house instead you are going to your new household.

Or someone wants to talk to you in that house but when you go you meet different stories. (Boys13: 700-715)

Scripting of Physical Force

Boys felt that physical force was especially warranted when the transfer of money or gifts was not followed by granting the boy sex.

At times a boy might have given the girl a gift. When the time comes for sex the girl refuses. Then the boy will insist for a payback. If she refuses, he will rape her (Boys13: 785-787).

As with the haphazard occurrence of playing sex, in some cases, force had nothing to do with refusal and occurred in the absence of any apparent provocation.

Like when you are going swimming and...you don't know it is late to go back home...there are some boys who will just be waiting there. Then they will rape you later (Girls16: 1280-1282).

Or deceit may be used instead of physical force.

Yes that happens often. A boy may deceive a girl to drink so much alcohol for her strength and then she becomes so drunk. Then he has sex with her (Boys15: 539-542).

You may find a boy telling her that I will get married to you just for pleasure then he goes to another one [saying] I will get married to you. This one continues. Boys normally cheat them [girls]. So, we advise them strongly not to be cheated (Community1_M: 165-167).

Sometimes coercion or force was not perpetrated by agemates, but by adults.

A sugar mummy...might cheat the young boys that she will give them biscuits...then she rapes them (Boys8: 271-274).

Workers on the building project...some of them take advantage of the kids (Boys8: 318-319).

They [girls] may meet fishermen who buy them mandazis [pastry] and demand payback [sex] afterwards (Boys13: 899-902).

A teacher [female]...tells him to go and get something from her house then she does it...Do you know of any ways a boy can be forced to have sex? Yes, teachers...common with boys in boarding schools (Girls16: 1370-1390).

She [his mother] was dancing and calling her son come we play sex...and that son went and slept with her (Girls10: 1001-1016).

Maybe this cousin of yours has a friend, so they come and collect you from school to go to their house on the way they take you to somewhere else and rape you (Girls16: 1295-

1297).

Force was often described as more likely to occur in certain locations or times such as on the road, going to shops or marketplaces, at a boys house, or at night.

He will find her on the road and beat her because...she has refused (Girls10: 565-566).

Some boys who might be waiting somewhere so they can rape you... going to the shop at night (Boys16: 1315-1322).

He will tell her to find him in his room [classroom] at break time where he will be doing mathematics...[and] ask her to come so that he can teach her mathematics...if she does not want [to play sex] he will force her and eventually she will agree (Boys8: 1025-1033).

They may meet along the way at night then he will rape her on the wayside or bush (Boys15: 542-543).

You go hide at the wayside and catch her by force (Boys13: 804).

Essentially, girls did not feel that they were safe or protected as force was likely to occur at anytime, anywhere, and by anyone.

Sometimes you will be forced to just go alone [walking home at night]...maybe you can get vehicles but it is only the driver and the conductor and you can even get raped in the car (Girls16: 1336-1344).

You come from home [from school] at six p.m. and at times it is dark so this person can time you and rape you (Girls16: 1303-1305).

Both boys and girls had clear ideas on what girls should do if they found themselves being forced to play sex.

- *Tell teacher, parent, siblings, friends, pastor, assistant chief or chief*
- *Cry for help*
- *Delay sexual encounter by making up an excuse*
- *Run away from boy*
- *Avoid going anywhere alone*
- *Threaten him with the word of God*

Girls felt that it was important to be able to talk to their parents if they were forced. However, this discussion was seen as conditional upon the openness of the parent to discuss such matters.

A case where you were raped, you can't go face your parents. You are embarrassed and you don't know how your parents will react. And you are no longer free with your parents (Girls16: 1410-1413).

Sometimes she is afraid to tell her mother (Girls4: 958-959).

If she is free with her mother or her parents she may go and tell them [but] most of them are not free of their parents (Girls5: 1253-1256).

And there was evidence of minimal action on the part of adults when girls reported a boy for coercive sex.

There was this about 12...a boy who was her neighbour...they talked and he asked her for a date later in the day but she refused...so when it was around 8:00 p.m., he grabbed her by force and raped her and he was found raping the girl. He was caught and taken to the lady's mother. They judged that case alone so we don't know what he was told (Girls3: 761-790).

The boy had forced the girl to play sex with him...when they [those who lived with her] asked her what had happened, the girl said that her boyfriend had told her to play sex...they [those who lived with her] took the girl to the home and talked to the boy who had played sex with the girl. When they were telling him not to do so, the boy told them that his uncle used to tell them that when a girl says no she means yes. They had talked much, [and] the boy learned that he had made a mistake and he apologised that the education of the girl did not continue (Girls5: 1054-1074).

It was clear that in the scripting of physical force, boys were the perpetrators and girls the victims. Boys were confident that they could not be physically forced by a girl to play sex.

If I don't want I will beat her and she will go (Boys6: 298-299).

A boy cannot be pushed to have sex by a girl (Boys13: 587).

Consequences of Playing Sex

Girls were more likely to own the consequences of early sexual activity as their own, whereas boys were more likely to talk about the consequences of sexual activity as applying to either 'all' or 'other' people.

Pregnancy had implications for girls' education and marriage-ability, and many felt this was the focus of concern for girls, with little attention paid to disease.

Girls is just straight forward, we normally tell them if you get a child at your early age you cannot continue with your education, you cannot be the first wife you cant be given that priority you will be the second wife or third wife. Three you cannot be accepted in the community. You will look like a prostitute. [Community12 : 302 - 307]

I was saying in the African community what girls fear most is pregnancy. When they have not got the pregnancy they will continue doing the sex. And these girls don't know that they can get a disease but die after some time. So the girls should be taught that even

if you don't get pregnant yes, you can go on playing sex and you don't get pregnant but you can get a disease and the disease will kill you after sometime. And the boy should be made aware that even if the don't get pregnant, they don't get pregnant because they are men but they can get diseases as girls can get a pregnancy and can get a disease and die so the boys will also get the disease even if they don't get pregnant. [Teacher11 : 441 - 455]

Girls too spoke of the consequence of pregnancy, but also spoke of disease, linking it most often with playing sex with *older* men. They saw older men rather than agemates as presenting a danger for disease.

It can make you get pregnant then drop out of school (Girls1: 146-147).

If you do sex with that old man he has even two wives and they have AIDS now he will infect you (Girls5: 360-361).

Boys knew that 'girls' could get pregnant and that 'others' could die.

It may make many people get AIDS infection and die (Boys13: 307).

For girls, sex before marriage may lead to unwanted pregnancies and subsequent abortions, which may destroy eggs leading to barrenness (Boys11: 254-256).

Boys were also aware and commented on how their own sexual actions could negatively affect the lives of others

You don't know that you have impregnated her in that community so you are going to bring up a problem for your father and mother (Boys12: 303-304).

But were less likely to recognize the negative implications of their own actions.

You can make her pregnant so she will stop her schooling but you will continue [school]. Boys you know have no loss (Boys8: 404-406).

In some cases, boys openly acknowledged how their sexual actions could result in negative consequences for them personally.

You get syphilis...and you are a boy it can kill your sperms...you cannot bear children... and so the women will leave you (Boys12: 293-296).

Summary

The scripting of sexual activity plays out in the following way:

- Dating is common during pre- or early adolescence
- The dating script of necessity involves playing sex; however, sex may also occur haphazardly between two people who are not in a dating relationship.
- The sequence of events leading to playing sex are as follows:

- Negotiation is initiated by a girl or boy, though most often a boy. This, for example, is through letter writing or a mediator.
- Boys give gifts (including money) to girls or to their family members to indicate their desire and intention to play sex with them.
 - Gifts are especially important when girls are from poor families who may play sex in order to obtain necessities for themselves or their families.
 - Older boys and men are seen as better gift givers.
- A gift delivered (whether or not it is desired or accepted) signifies an obligation to play sex.
- Despite this obligation, girls must, and do, initially refuse to play sex; however, they clearly recognize their lack of power to enforce this refusal.
- If a girl persists in her refusal, the boy is expected, and does, force her to play sex.

Boys feel compelled to play sex, even to the point of forcing girls, because they themselves feel forced by their biology and by peer and community expectations. In fact, boys impute the same intense biological and social compulsions onto girls and thus feel that girls want and need to play sex as much as they do.