



STRENGTH IN **SISTERHOOD**

YOUR 21ST EDITION



- MY FIRST PERIOD
- I AM A LESBIAN
- PAPGELD
- GASLIGHTING

ACTIVITY

Feminism is a vision of gender equality in all parts of our lives to achieve fairness, have equal opportunities and fight all forms of discrimination.

Discuss in your club

Young women and girls face many challenges. What is your biggest challenge or problem?

We all need to raise our voices!



HOW TO
Activists'
Handbook
2018



European Union

The content in this magazine supports the focus on human rights for Young Women and Girls (YWG) and the application of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) through a training and advocacy programme for YWG funded by the European Community.

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Fighting the war on women!

Recently the media has shown us that femicide is increasing. Femicide is the killing of a woman – either by a lover, a friend, a family member or a member of society. It seems there is a war on women's right to exist. As women, we feel unsafe when reading about femicide. We have many unanswered questions. Why is this happening? Who is to blame? How are women supposed to live comfortably in this world?

How I see myself as a woman has changed because of these fears. I am aware of how I behave around men. In fact, I am overly aware. I am suspicious.

One of the biggest news reports on #femicide in 2017 was the murder of #karabomokoena. Sandile Mantsoe, the man convicted of killing Karabo, is now serving 32 years in prison for the crime. Personally, I feel that 32 years is not long enough. What about those affected forever by #karabomokoena's death? Her family and friends? I watched him walk in and out of the courtroom. He seemed to expect to walk free. He did not show any remorse. Is 32 years really enough?

This, and other similar stories, encourages our work with RISE. We want to create safer environments for all women. We hear many heart-breaking stories from our RISE club members. Our duty as a social justice organisation is to provide information, give referrals and support to our sisters. We want to ensure that a woman has all the tools she needs to get justice. She needs information. The law is also supposed to be on her side. She should find the courage to speak out against her abuser. She needs to be supported and she must be listened to!

Look at the relationships you are in. Do you notice any warning signs? Think about the people you love the most. Is it worth it to stay in a situation where you do not feel safe? Speak to your RISE sisters to know more and be empowered to get help or leave before it is too late!

Dee
xoxo

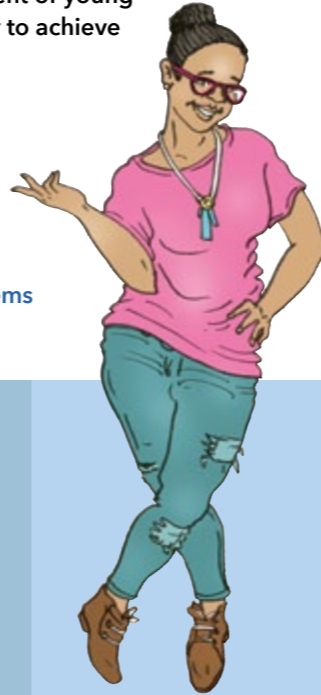
BUILDING YOUR CLUB



The vision of the RISE Young Women's Clubs

The RISE vision is to build a movement of young women and girls helping each other to achieve their full potential by:

- 1 | Staying healthy
- 2 | Getting a good education
- 3 | Becoming strong leaders
- 4 | Accessing equal opportunities
- 5 | Creating new solutions to problems



Club Activities

Ideas to make your club stronger when planning a project

- Take turns to talk. Listen without interrupting.
- Make sure that everyone has something to do.
- Make the project's success your goal.
- Tell us about your project.

Never give up on your dreams!



Run your club successfully

- 1 | **Keep an attendance register.** This is to record members' attendance and activities.
- 2 | **Have a Club ritual.** This can be a song, poem or dance used at the beginning and end of every meeting.
- 3 | **Take minutes.** Minutes help keep a record of actions, decisions and problems in a meeting. Keep minutes short and simple. The Club Secretary takes the minutes.
- 4 | **Have a project plan.** Plan the project before starting it.
- 5 | **Read through the RISE magazine.** Use the Sisterhood discussion guides to share your thoughts and ideas.

Life skills

Accepting yourself, and accepting that other people are different from you, are valuable life skills. Your club will teach you these life skills.

Club member roles and responsibilities

Club members have different roles and responsibilities. Take turns with these roles in your club so that everyone learns new skills and grows in confidence.

The Chairperson

- Leads and directs discussions
- Makes sure meetings follow the plan
- Encourages all members to take part in discussions, activities and projects

The Secretary

- Takes minutes
- Records all decisions made
- Makes sure that the monthly reports include all attachments
- Scans in the cards at each meeting

The Treasurer

- Helps with fundraising events
- Keeps a record of the money

The Timekeeper

- Records when the meeting starts and ends
- Tracks the time spent discussing issues and planning activities

Tips for your club meetings

Your RISE club meeting will be different from any other RISE club meeting.

Preparing for your meeting:

- **Read the RISE magazine.**
The themes, features and topics in the RISE magazine are carefully chosen to help you learn about different themes and make good decisions about projects.
- **Make a listening circle.**
The person on your right tells you 3 reasons why she joined RISE. Listen carefully and tell the sisters what she said. Then it is her turn to listen to the person on her right and tell the group what she said. Everyone must get a chance to tell the group what her neighbour said. Talk about what you have in common and what is different.



Do you have any projects you want us to know about? Write to us at rise@soulcity.org.za and your project could be featured in the next edition of RISE.

Sisterhood

Tiisetsang RISE Club

The Tiisetsang club is in Thabo Mofutsanyana Extension 2 district, Free State. It started in 2016.

Activities

Local clinic visit

The Tiisetsang girls went to their local clinic to ask for assistance from the nurses to help them complete their project questionnaire on women's sexual reproductive health rights and HIV. The clinic staff told them about contraception and emergency contraception (PEP).

Refilwe (16) raised the issue of teenage pregnancies in our community. **"We see many girls become pregnant. The RISE programme teaches us that we don't have to become pregnant while we are still too young."**

Mamello (17) told RISE magazine, **"As a RISE club we encourage others not to sleep with boys before they are ready. We tell them to just say 'no' to the boys. We also speak to women who are abused and support them to speak up against the violence."**

PEP stands for Post Exposure Prophylaxis. It means taking antiretroviral medicines (ART) after possibly being exposed to HIV to prevent being infected. They should be started within 72 hours of possible exposure.

Tsepang Yarona Orphanage visit

The club visited the orphanage where they cleaned the house, washed the babies and played with them. **"We also brought them little presents,"** said Ratopagati (16).

Meetings

The RISE club chairperson, Lindiwe (16), told RISE magazine that the club meets every Thursday and Friday at school to discuss the issues that affect them as young girls and women. Two of the biggest problems facing their community are alcohol abuse and violence against women. **"The police are not doing enough about these problems,"** says Motaung (18). **"Maybe we can come up with a plan for a safe house for women,"** said Bokamoso (15).

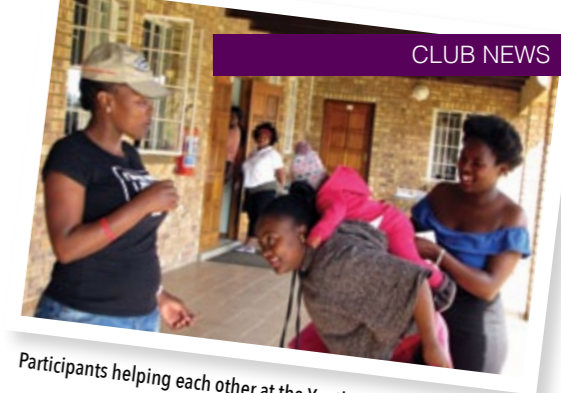
On Fridays, their RISE Volunteer, Mpho (24), joins the group to encourage them. **"We are better for joining the RISE club because we don't work as individuals. There is no 'I' in a team,"** said Mpho.



Matokgo Makutoane, Soul City Institute Advocacy Manager and the Raising Voices EU project at the Youth District Workshop.



Thabo Mofutsanyana Youth District Workshop



Participants helping each other at the Youth District Workshop



District Workshop Bethlehem



SHINE RISE YOUNG WOMEN

The Shine RISE Young Women's Club is from Monontsha, in the Free State. It has 20 members.

Reproductive and Sexual Health Rights Project

The Shine club visited their local clinic as part of their club project on sexual and reproductive health rights. Unfortunately, the clinic was understaffed and had only 2 nurses on duty.

Poster

So the Shine girls asked a local shopkeeper for stationery to make a poster. Some boys from the community tried to disrupt the club activity, but Hilda, the RISE volunteer, was able to control them. The Shine girls were very proud when the school principal put their poster up in his office to use as a reference.

Volunteer's role

Hilda explained that her role is to meet with clubs to guide discussions and help them with their projects.

The value of RISE clubs

Hilda said: **"RISE is a good initiative. The girls develop confidence and assertiveness. The projects help girls learn about the issues that are affecting them. They also learn the benefits of team work."**



Good Idea!

Every week each club member brings one rand to save for future projects.

Social Sisters RISE Club

Social Sisters club is from Wonderkop, Bojanala East District in North West Province. The club members are between 21 and 22 years old.

Club members reported on how hard it is for young women to receive help from nurses at the clinic. Malebo said, "Clinic visits can be intimidating. The nurses can be hostile so young people find it hard to ask for the help they need."

A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE CLINIC AND THE YOUTH

The club approached Wonderkop Clinic and asked if they could be a bridge between the clinic and the youth. A youth-friendly service partnership was formed. The Social Sisters became the first point of contact for young people who come to the clinic.



The club members teach the youth about different contraception choices. They explain the differences between condoms, oral contraception, injectables and devices. They also give the youth information on how to use the various methods of contraception properly. Contraception side effects, for example, how contraception can change your menstrual cycle, are explained.

Kabelo Morare, the enrolled nurse and coordinator of youth-friendly services, said that there has been a big improvement in young women coming to the clinic. "Young people find it easier to talk to the Social Sisters than the clinic staff."

TRAINING FOR THE SOCIAL SISTERS

The clinic decided to provide in-service training for the Social Sisters. They attended workshops so that they had the right information about safe sexual health practices. The Social Sisters also go off-site to visit schools and communities. They speak about a wide range of subjects including, how to prevent STIs, termination of pregnancy, teenage pregnancy and family planning. They also give information on HIV and the right way to take ARVs.

SOCIAL SISTERS' COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY

The Social Sisters make sure that young people visiting the clinic get the right kind of help. They make sure that the youth do not wait too long to be seen by the clinic staff. Lesego said, "We are at the clinic every Monday and sometimes other days in the week too. We introduce ourselves because there are always new patients. We also get a lot of girls who would like to volunteer with us at the clinic."

Malebo said, "It's very important to teach girls that it's ok to have your own condoms. It's not only the men's job to carry condoms. Condoms protect against pregnancy and STIs."

INVOLVING PARENTS

The Social Sisters say it is important to talk to parents about contraception. Some parents think that if their child is on contraception, they are sleeping around. So they keep the children away from the clinic. Yoneza said, "The children might be having unsafe sex because their parents do not allow them to use contraception."

Some parents find it hard to speak about sex and contraception to their children. So they send their children to the clinic to talk to the Social Sisters.

The proudest moment for the Social Sisters was when a 14-year-old came to the clinic to ask about contraception. The nurses gave the Social Sisters complete control of the consultation. They felt proud that the clinic trusted them to get the job done properly. Malebo said that she felt proud of her club members and herself for being able to help the young woman.



Eric Vuwani Mulaudzi, peer educator and health promoter

Daniel Kabelo Morare, enrolled nurse – coordinator of youth-friendly services

Kgolagano RISE Club

Kgolagano club is in Marikana, Rustenberg. It was started in 2017.

Marikana is surrounded by mines but there is a high percentage of unemployed. There are also multilingual and multicultural challenges because the mine workers come from many different backgrounds. Most Marikana students cannot afford to study further as bursaries are hard to get.

Kgolagano means 'Togetherness' or 'unity'

Most of the club members are unemployed. They wanted to do something to help themselves, so they got together and started the RISE club.

Sive said, "It helps me to have sisters to talk to when I encounter problems." Katlego joined the Kgolagano club for support as she was recovering from alcoholism. "RISE has empowered us with confidence and the ability to make better choices."

Activities

Crèche upgrade

The Kgolagano girls cleaned and painted a crèche in their area. They washed the windows and curtains. "It was fun doing it with everyone involved. We knew we were doing something good for the little ones."

Elder support

They also help an elder by weeding, watering and caring for her vegetable garden.

Future plans

Kgolagano members plan to have their own centre. They also want to recruit more young women in their community to become RISE members. "We want to bring huge change to our community."



Her Story RISE Club

The Her Story club in Matsulu B, Mpumalanga, has made it one of their projects to give sanitary towels to women living with disabilities. This is how unemployed young women in Matsulu show compassion to other women in their community.



The RISE sisters are very close to each other. Each one of them tells a story of hope. They pour that hope into the lives of people living with disabilities.

Love

BREAKS DOWN BARRIERS

Menstruation is a biological process, but it is sometimes hard to speak about.

Adolescent girls living with disabilities struggle to manage the menstruation process. Some women and girls still use old pieces of cloth for sanitary pads. There is a lack of menstrual hygiene awareness. In rural areas, there is also difficulty in getting sanitary pads.

The Her Story club members feel proud that they are able to help. The community of Matsulu B has a centre for people living with disabilities called Masibambisane Disability Centre, where they meet every day for a meal. The club members go there every day to give love and share a smile.



Greater Rape Intervention Project (GRIP) is an NGO based in Mpumalanga. They implement the RISE club programme in the Ehlanzeni district. For more information contact: 013 752 4404

ASEBONISANENG RISE Club

Asebonisaneng was started in 2016 in Mpumalanga. The club has 13 members.

Activities

The club started a vegetable garden because they realised that the community had nowhere close to buy vegetables. **"It was hard on the elderly members of our community who had to travel far to buy food."**

Vegetable garden

"We got seeds and support from our mentor," say the RISE sisters. The club secretary's mother, Mrs Madiba, donated a space to plant the vegetables. They grow sweet potatoes, cabbage, potatoes and beetroot.

Advantages of vegetable gardens

The club members are very proud of what they have achieved with their gardening. **"We sell the vegetables to the community and donate some to the crèches. We also give to the orphans in the community."**

Future plans

"We need to get more seeds, some fertiliser to make the soil rich and we need pipes to water our garden."

The club members want to encourage other RISE clubs to start their own gardens. **"Our kids from the crèches are growing up healthy and strong because of the good food we are able to donate to them."**



Buffelspruit Youth in Action RISE Club

The Youth in Action club was started in 2017 and has 12 members.

They meet after school at the drop-in centre, Ulusito Lwethu. The Buffelspruit community experiences many problems, including sexual abuse and domestic violence. There are many orphans in the community.

Activities

Dance and music for children

The Youth in Action club members spend time with the orphaned children doing activities, dancing and singing with them and teaching them to write poetry.

The club believes that love is like music. It is a language understood by all. **"When we hear children singing together,"** club members say, **"we believe in love."**

Meal preparation

The club also prepares and serves meals to the children after school. A simple meal, kindness and respect from the club members show the children that they have a safe home at Ulusito Lwethu.

Sewing

The RISE girls sew cloth sanitary pads for young girls who cannot afford to buy disposable ones.

The RISE sisters believe that **'it takes a village to raise a child'**.



RISE Club

CARING FOR BABA SHONGWE

The Rise Up club from Matsulu around Gijima RDP settlement, have taken on the task of caring for Baba Shongwe.

The Rise Up sisters from Matsulu Gijima RDP settlement believe that African women are wonderful nurturers. They live by the African proverb: 'When a woman is hungry, she roasts a chicken for the children so that they might eat'.

Baba Shongwe is 65 and in a wheelchair. He has diabetes and high blood pressure. It is difficult for him to complete simple tasks for himself. The

Rise Up girls keep him company and bring him laughter. They clean his yard and cook for him.

Baba Shongwe says he appreciates the time they spend helping him. He says that the club members give him more than what he can offer himself. The Rise Up girls say it is highly rewarding to know that they have made a big difference to Baba Shongwe's quality of life. The



Our senior citizens are one of the pillars of our society. They have wisdom and valuable life skills which we can all benefit from. It is important to acknowledge our senior citizens and the contributions they make to our society. The Rise Up sisters find pleasure in making a difference in Baba Shongwe's life.

RISE Club Projects

Hanover Park Community, Klipfontein District, Cape Town



Making a difference

Hanover Park Community, Klipfontein District, Cape Town

Pastor Craven Engel, Director of the Community Resource Centre, seen here with RISE club members. The club meets weekly in the community hall.



Community care



RISE club members assisting with the Community Centre holiday programmes by caring for the less fortunate in the community.



The Zimele Project is implementing the RISE Young Women's Club programme in High Schools in the Mitchells Plain/ Klipfontein area in the Western Cape. For more information contact: 021 100 3718

An appreciative **Raghiema Booysen**, pictured with the RISE club members who assisted her with renovations in her home as part of celebrating goodwill in the 2017 festive season.

Gugulethu



Spreading the word

RISE club members proudly displaying their RISE project banner. The banner has assisted the RISE mentor in recruiting more members.

Gugulethu



HIV and AIDS awareness

In 2017, a Desmond Tutu HIV Foundation donor interviewed RISE club members for a documentary raising awareness about HIV and AIDS. Pictured here, are RISE club members giving feedback about the valuable information they gained as part of this experience.

Khayelitsha



Our environment

Soul City in Cape Town implements the RISE Young Women's Clubs in Khayelitsha. This group of RISE young women went to speak to local car washers about using less water in order to raise environmental awareness about the drought in the Western Cape.



If you could broadcast anything to all girls in the country, what would you say?

Some RISE club members in Cape Town share their views

Thabeka Nyamakazi

Always be true yourself. Don't pretend to be another person. Be honest and love yourself so that you can have love for others.

Babalwa Mbaliswana

Love and value who you are and the person that you have become. Being anyone else is not worth it.

Shameezah De Louw

Never be afraid to be daring, confident and yourself. There will be many challenges and remember success starts with you.

Amina Isaacs

Never underestimate your abilities, you are more powerful than you know and know that no matter what... You are beautiful!

Makazi

Being unique is not a disorder. Never live in the shadow of someone else's image. Live out of your shell and the talent you might find within you, could be your breakthrough to a better and brighter tomorrow.

Mishkah Walters

Never rest until your best is better than your last best. Strive for your dreams and jump over all obstacles that come your way, even if you fall. What matters most is how you RISE!

Zmasa Gqola

Take a minute to look at yourself in the mirror and believe in who you are. Put yourself first and remember, what the mind and heart believe, can be achieved.



MULTITALENTED GIRLS RISE Club

The Multitalented Girls club started in 2016 in Ekangala, near Bronkhorstspruit. The club members have done great work and say they have lots of plans for the future.



Activities

#NotUnderMyWatch

The community was shocked when a young girl with albinism was dumped in a field. Her breasts and private parts had been cut off. Even though she was rushed to the hospital, she later died.

The Multitalented Girls were deeply affected. They were scared that this crime might happen again. So they started an anti-stigma and discrimination campaign, #NotUnderMyWatch.

Campaign against Human Trafficking

The club organised a campaign against human trafficking because they wanted this issue to be addressed in their community.

They organised a march and then held a meeting. Representatives from the men's forum, community-based organisations and the South African Police Services spoke at the event. The campaign was a great success. The Multitalented Girls plan more debates and dialogues in the community.

Help Desk

The Multitalented Girls started a help desk in an office provided by the community councillor. The help desk gives information and advice to community members. Social workers and a lawyer also assist.

Dialogue with the community

The Multitalented Girls go door-to-door to speak about community issues. They also share health information from RISE magazines at clinics with young women. The club members give talks at schools. They are supported by their churches, clinic and police station.

Gender issues

The Multitalented Girls often meet the boys' club to discuss gender issues. The boys' club started after the RISE members talked to them about creating their own spaces where they could discuss issues.

Rape Support

The Multitalented Girls also support young women who open rape cases, by going with them to court.

If you reflect back on your most regrettable experience in the past, how do you think you could've handled it better?

Nikitha Hendricks

I regret dropping out of school. Because I didn't matriculate, my life has been limited. But it isn't too late to complete my studies.



Beauty Fumbatha

I regret not being brave enough, not believing in myself and especially, not pushing myself. I need to find people who are a positive force in my life.



Shakierah Williams

I regret not having enough information about teenage pregnancies. I was pregnant at a very young age. I wouldn't change my son for the world but being more prepared would have helped me.



Zikhona Mkups

I regret not staying focused at school. I didn't finish my matric and had a teenage pregnancy.



Shaki Unathi

I don't regret anything in my life. I have used all the good and the bad to learn and survive the challenges.



SISTERHOOD QUIZ

What would you do?

- Noxolo has low self-esteem. Sane tells her that if she lost weight she would feel better. You overhear this. What do you do?**
 - Agree with Sane.
 - Say nothing.
 - Tell Sane that beauty has no size.
- Lerato attends her male teacher's extra lessons. Her classmates start a rumour that she has sex with her teacher to get good grades. What do you do?**
 - Tell Lerato what is being said about her.
 - Ignore it.
 - Confront them. Ask how they know that this is the truth.
- You kissed your best-friend's ex-boyfriend after you promised you wouldn't. Your friend confronts you. What do you do?**
 - Deny it.
 - Lie. Say he forced you.
 - Admit it. Say you are sorry and mean it.
- Thabiso said that Livuwani is ugly and will never find a husband. What should the others in her class do?**
 - Laugh, and avoid Thabiso teasing them next.
 - Tell Thabiso that Livuwani is beautiful even if he cannot see it.
 - Ignore it.
- Onthatile has dated Ashton for 3 years. He has become violent. She says he does not mean to bruise her so much. What advice would you give her?**
 - Dump him.
 - Figure out his problems.
 - Create a safe space for yourself. No man should ever hit a woman.
- Women in the community are being mugged at night. They ask you for a solution.**
 - Let women organise themselves to fight back and change the situation.
 - Women must stop walking at night.
 - It is men who need to change their behaviour.
- Divhani slapped Lindelani's bum. She complained. He claimed it was because she wore a short skirt. You saw this happen.**
 - You ignore it.
 - What are men supposed to do if women provoke them by wearing revealing clothes?
 - Women should be able to wear what they please. Men should be more respectful towards women's bodies.

Discuss your answers in your club.

sisterhood

My first period

What is a period?

Your period is a natural part of growing up. Having your first period is an important step to becoming a woman. When you see blood in your panties, it means that the egg made by your ovaries was not fertilised and two weeks later your body realised this and shed the lining of the womb.

When will I get my first period?

Most girls get their period between ages 12-14. It can also start earlier or later – younger or older it is still normal.

My period just started. What should I do?

Don't worry. Tell your mom, teacher or a friend. They will explain and show you how to use a pad, tampon, cloth or menstrual cup.

How long will my period last?

Periods last between two to seven days. Every girl is different, so if your friend is having her period for two days, and your period lasts for a week, don't worry, it's normal.

Am I losing a lot of blood?

It looks like a lot, but it is usually only about three to five tablespoons.

Will others know I'm having my period?

Normally nobody except you knows you are having your period. Once in a while, you may have an accident and stain your clothes. This is completely normal and is nothing to be ashamed of. Mood changes and pimples may happen around your period. Some close family or friends might notice these.

Tell your RISE sisters about your first period. Send us your stories at rise@soulcity.org.za and you might see them in a future edition of RISE magazine.



sisterhood

*Every girl is different.
Every period story is different.
Here are stories from girls around the country.*

Aza is 12. She goes to school in Alexandra. Aza started her period last year. "From when I was 10, my mom told me I would have my period, so I knew what to expect," she says.

When Aza's period started, the female elders in her family gave Aza a 'period party'.

"My mom and her friends, my granny and my aunt gave me gifts of bath salts, some sanitary pads and tampons," she says. "It's not a tradition in my family, but it was so nice to celebrate my change from being a girl to woman in this way," says Aza.

Mitchell is 15. She's at Pholoshlo Secondary School in Alex. She started her period last year. It happened while she was in class.

"I was sitting in class and I felt stomach pains. Then I checked the chair and saw blood. There was blood in my panties," she says.

Mitchell felt scared, but then a teacher helped her – taking her to the toilet to clean herself. "She told me how to use a sanitary pad, and told me I will fall pregnant if I sleep with boys," she says.

Nkosikhona is 15. She started her period last year. She was at home when it happened.

"I live with my aunt. I went to the toilet and my panty was full of blood. I was crying. My aunt asked me what's wrong. Then she explained to me what was happening, and said it's normal."

Nkosi feels pain when she has her period, so her auntie gives her Panado on those days. "My older sister also helps me. She buys me tampons and pads," says Nkosi.

Stories from around the world

CHINA

"When I first got my period, my mom kind of knew, so she took me to buy pads. She didn't say anything the entire time. Every time I had a leaking accident, she'd help me clean it up, but she wouldn't say anything."

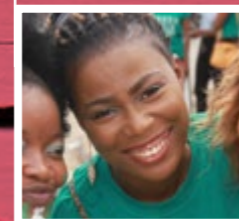
Vicky (23)



NIGERIA

"I grew up in Nigeria, part of the Yoruba tribe. I remember getting embarrassed when my mum told everyone that I had started my period. They were all so excited and congratulated me as though it was something I worked hard on."

Abebi (25)



CANADA

"When a Cree (First Nation) girl gets her first period, there is the rite of passage called a berry fast. My aunties put me through my berry fast. They put you into a lodge and you stay for four days. The grandmothers bring you soup and water. You pray and think about what's happening with your body. You pray for your future as a woman. You create sacred items. When you come out, there's a big feast."

Rosalyn (33)



HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR CONTRACEPTION?



Q | 1 What is the best type of contraceptive to use against pregnancy AND to prevent getting STIs?

A | 1 Condoms protect against HIV, STIs and pregnancy. There are male and female condoms available. Speak to your health care worker to explain the different methods and make an informed choice.

Q | 2 What should you do if the condom breaks during sex?

A | 2 If you still want to continue having sex, you must use a new condom. You will have to take the morning after pill within 3 days to prevent pregnancy. Do an HIV test if you do not know your or your partner's HIV status.

Q | 3 What is the morning after pill and how do you take it?

A | 3 The morning after pill is emergency contraception. The pill should be taken within 72 hours of having unprotected sex or if a condom broke, or a loop (IUD) could be inserted within 5 days of having had unprotected sex. Both the morning after pill and the 'loop' (IUD) are emergency contraception and are meant to prevent pregnancy if unsafe sex has occurred. Both must ideally be used within the first 24 hours to increase the success rate. Remember that the emergency contraception does not prevent HIV. You can ask for post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) if the person is HIV positive or you don't know their status.

Q | 4 Should you clean your vagina with soap?

A | 4 The vagina cleans itself. Soap and other creams disturb the natural state of the vagina and can be harmful. It is always best to only use water to wash your vagina.

Q | 5 Are massage oils or Vaseline useful as lubricants while using a condom?

A | 5 No. Vaseline and massage oils are oil-based lubricants which can cause the condom to break. There are water-based lubricants that are specifically made to be used with a condom.



Q | 6 Does shaving your pubic hair make it more likely for you to get an STI?

A | 6 We don't know for sure, but think it is safe. The problem is, if you have cuts after shaving, this may make it easier to get a STI.

Q | 7 How can you tell the difference between normal vaginal discharge and discharge caused by an STI?

A | 7 Normal discharge is whitish and does not smell bad. If the discharge smells bad, is yellowish or greenish in colour, and stains your panties, go to your clinic for a check-up and treatment. You need to check your discharge and be able to know what is normal or not. Abnormal discharges should be treated.

Q | 8 If your friend is HIV-positive and is having unprotected sex with her boyfriend without telling him, should you tell him?

A | 8 No, you should not tell him without your friend's consent. You should speak to your friend about it. Assist her to seek counselling so that she is able to disclose her status to her boyfriend.

Q | 9 How do you deal with your boyfriend taking the condom off during sex without telling you?

A | 9 You need to find out why he does it as it exposes you to infection and pregnancy. It is also a form of assault. This should not be happening without your consent. This is not someone to be trusted. If it was taken off, please take emergency contraception and an HIV test.

Q | 10 My boyfriend says I won't fall pregnant if he 'pulls out'? What is the 'pull-out-method'? Does it really work?

A | 10 The pull-out method does not work because you both cannot be sure that no semen has gone inside your vagina by the time you pull out. Men have what is called pre-ejaculate which is a small amount of semen that leaks before their ejaculation. This is NOT a reliable method of contraception.

Do you have questions about contraception? Ask the experts at the Emergency Contraception Hotline on 0800 246 432. Or you could write to us at rise@soulcity.org.za and we could feature them in our RISE Q&A.



Sisterhood

How to *Cope as a young mother* in school

Most young women feel scared when they find out they are pregnant. The most important thing to do is to accept your situation.

The first decision you need to make is whether you will carry on with the pregnancy or not. Talk to someone close to you and discuss your options.

IF YOU DECIDE TO KEEP THE PREGNANCY

1 | Find Emotional Support: Find people you can trust. Talk to a social worker in your community or school.

2 | Diet: Follow a healthy diet. Eat plenty of vegetables and fruit.

Iron is important to make healthy blood. Iron prevents loss of blood during childbirth.

Foods with Iron: Dark green leafy vegetables (pumpkin leaves, spinach, broccoli), nuts, dried fruits, milk and meat.

Vitamin A builds the baby's immune system and helps the development of the baby's eyes. A shortage of vitamin A during pregnancy may increase the risk of illness from childhood infections, including measles.

Foods with Vitamin A: Foods that are yellow in colour; butternut, pumpkin, mango, carrots and peaches.

3 | Back Support: If you are sitting on a school seat, always sit with your back supported (speak to your teacher about taking a pillow to school).

4 | Exercise: Walk around your community or school. Exercise is safe if your clinic says you are healthy.

5 | Clinic Visits: Pregnant mothers should have their first visit to the clinic by 12 weeks, then monthly until 34 weeks. If there is a problem you may need to go more often.

What to expect at a clinic visit:

- counselling on healthy diet
- malaria and HIV prevention
- blood tests and vaccinations
- measurements of the growing baby
- advice on dealing with symptoms such as nausea, back pain and constipation.

Going back to school after giving birth

- Schools are not allowed to stop you from returning to school after having a baby.
- Schools are not allowed to refuse to provide you with homework or tasks while you are away.
- If you do not want to return to your previous school, you could study with schools that offer distance learning. This means that you can study whilst being at home.

Distance Learning Colleges

Intec College
www.intec.edu.za or
0861 173 173

Damelin Correspondence College
www.dcc.edu.za or
0860 61 61 61

Education is a basic human right.

AFTER THE BIRTH

7 | Things we know about breastfeeding

- Breast milk is the best milk for your baby.
- Pumping breast milk can be simple. Pumping equipment must be kept very clean. Sterilise your pumping equipment before and after using it.
- Keep the milk in the fridge for freshness. Expressed milk can be kept in the fridge for up to 5 days. It can be kept in the freezer for up to six months. Store the milk with clear dates written on them.
- Always sterilise the bottles after every feed.

6 | Do not smoke, drink alcohol or do drugs: Smoking, drinking alcohol and drug use can cause miscarriages, stillbirths and lifelong disabilities for your baby.

8 | Attending class during your pregnancy
The law says:

- Schools are not allowed to stop pregnant learners from attending school.
- Schools are also not allowed to stop pregnant learners from writing exams.

Schools cannot punish or place any difficult requirements on a learner because of her pregnancy.

STEPS TO TAKE IF YOU ARE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST AT SCHOOL ON THE BASIS OF PREGNANCY

1 | Write down any conversations with the school principal or teachers.

2 | Tell your parents/guardian. Ask them to come with you to the principal to discuss your education and pregnancy.

3 | If you have problems with the principal, go to your local education district office.

4 | If the district office does not help, you can report your case to the Provincial Education Department.

Department of Basic Education
www.education.gov.za





#NakedTruth

by Lebogang Motsumi

I grew up in the back rooms of Linden, a wealthy suburb in Johannesburg. My mom was a domestic worker. We had a comfortable life. We were not rich but we were not poor. My mom worked hard to make sure there was food on the table and sent us to multiracial schools.

I was not very popular at school because I was a big girl. Being big really played a role in my self-esteem. I would walk around with my head down. My friends were skinnier than I was so I wasn't seen as cool. Somehow, they always got the attention. They got all the invitations to parties while I didn't. The one thing that made me feel better about myself was that I did really well in school.

Careful What You Wish For

My parents got divorced when I was 14. I moved to Mpumalanga to my grandparents' place. My dream of being popular came true because I was from the 'City of Gold', and could speak English with a twang. For once, I was seen as hot and beautiful, something I had never experienced before. I started dating. I basically could have any boy I wanted. I was in Grade 9 dating guys in Grade 12, something my peers only dreamed of. So that led to me dating one boy after the other, going to parties and bashes. But I was not the type that slept around; it was just innocent fun.

I did not understand what I was doing. I just wanted approval from my friends. I had no idea how negatively this would later impact my life. My young experience of sex was because I did not have the knowledge to make different choices. I would not want the same for you.

How My Life Changed

In 2007, after moving back to Johannesburg, I met the man who changed my life forever. I dated a celebrity, a Kwaito star. It felt so good! I thought my dream would come true. I was going to become a famous dancer. At 17 years old, I thought I knew it all, but I was in this relationship for all the wrong reasons.

Instead of a dream come true, my worst nightmare began. I had sex without using a condom with this guy, countless times. It was the biggest mistake of my life. I did not become a famous dancer.

Instead, I was infected with HIV.....

To be continued ...

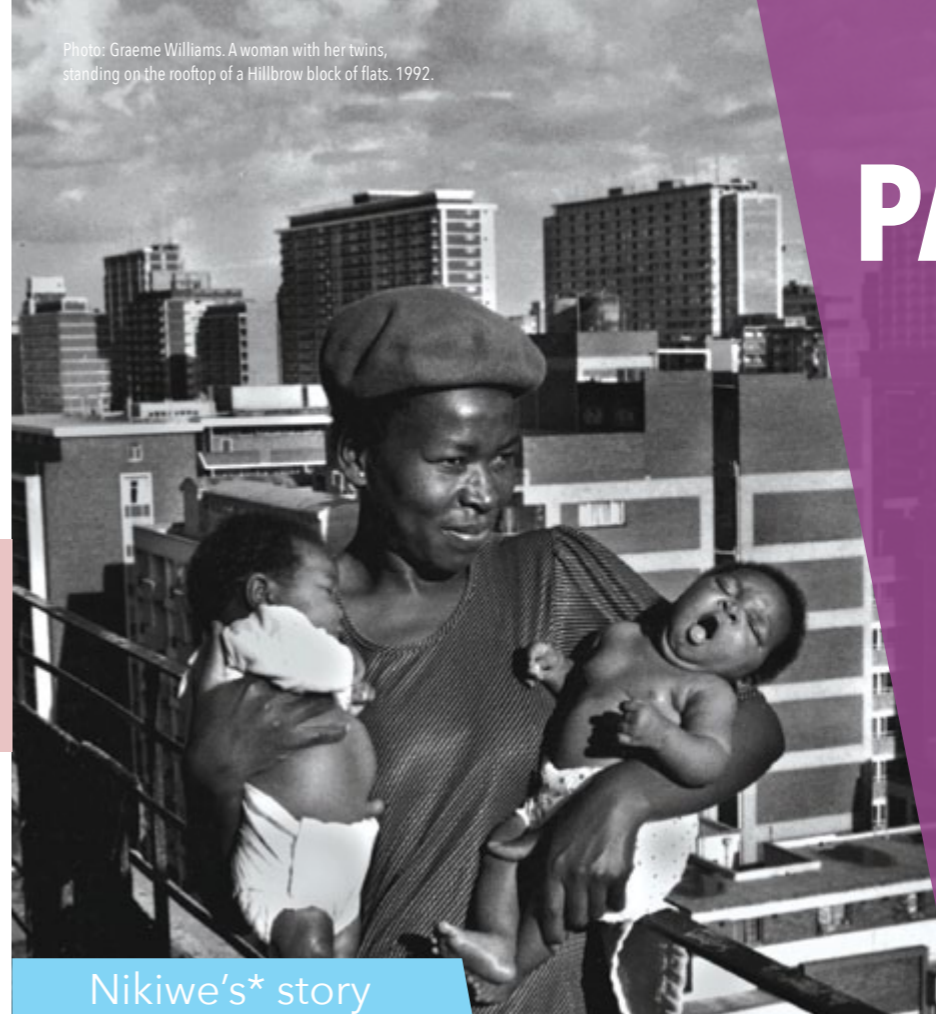


Sisterhood

More on Lebo's story in your next edition of RISE. What do you think will happen next?

National Aids Helpline:
0800 012 322

Photo: Graeme Williams. A woman with her twins, standing on the rooftop of a Hillbrow block of flats. 1992.



Nikiwe's* story

I'm 23. I was 18 when I became pregnant with twins. The father was 19. When I told him, he was calm. I expected him to deny that he was the father. But he accepted the news.

The pregnancy changed the relationship. We separated.

Six months into the pregnancy, I found out that he was back with his first baby mama. When I was about 8 months pregnant, the father of my twins reached out to give our relationship another chance. I accepted this because I believed that he wanted to be with me.

He supported me throughout my pregnancy. We were together when the babies were born.

He visited me at work and bought me food. When the babies were three months old, his family gave the children a lot of clothes

and gifts. But his family have not visited or checked on the children till today. The father would visit when he had the family car. I understood that family finances were difficult but I don't understand how he could support his firstborn's development, but not that of his twins. He is unemployed. His family is supporting him and his first child.

My sons will be 4 in September 2018. He hasn't visited them since the beginning of this year. He is supportive of the mother of his first child and is very involved in that child's life.

I applied for a SASSA support grant but they made things difficult for me. I think about applying again but I'm so busy raising our sons and going to school that I can't seem to find the time.

Find out about child maintenance on the next 2 pages.

PAPGELD

Every child deserves a future



Sisterhood

We would love to hear our RISE Readers' views on Nikiwe's story above.

What should Nikiwe do?

*Not her real name

Another word for maintenance is

PAPERGELD



A | What is maintenance?

- By law, parents must look after a child by giving the child food, clothing, housing, medical attention, education and recreation.
- Both parents must maintain (look after) the baby by sharing the costs of bringing up the child until the child can support him or herself.
- But if a mother is unemployed, or stays at home to take care of the baby or child, then the father must pay 100 % of the maintenance. This is because the mother is 'paying' maintenance by looking after the child.
- If the father doesn't agree to pay, or says the amount to be paid is wrong, then the courts will decide what the right amount of money is that the father must pay.

B | How to prepare to claim maintenance from the father

You will need the following information:

- Proof of your identity; details of your home and work place; phone numbers; full names and dates of birth of your child (children).
- Proof of your expenses (what you pay each month to provide for the child). Keep all your receipts (till slips). Have your rent, electricity and water bills with you.
- The full names of the father; his ID number; his home and work details; telephone numbers.
- Details of his earnings, and the value of his assets (house, car, jewellery, TVs) if you know this.
- Address of the nearest police station to where you live.

C | Claiming maintenance

- Go to your nearest Magistrate's Court with all the above.
- The Maintenance Court is in the Magistrate's Court.
- Fill in the Application for Maintenance Form A (J101E).
- You, as the mother, are 'the complainant'. The father is 'the defendant'.
- A Maintenance Officer will assist you.
- Be prepared for long queues and a long wait.
- The Maintenance Officer will give you a date to return to court.
- The father will be expected to come to court on the same date.
- The Maintenance Court will not tell the father where you live.
- An agreement needs to be reached on what he should pay. If an agreement cannot be reached, the Court will decide.

D | What if the father doesn't pay even after the court orders him to pay maintenance?

- Go back to the maintenance court.
- Fill in the Complaint of Failure to Comply with a Maintenance Order Form Q (J470E).

E | Maintenance payments + SASSA Child Support Grant

- If you get papgeld of R 3 800 or less per month, you can apply for a SASSA child support grant.
- The SASSA child support grant is R400 per month. On 1 October 2018, it will increase to R410.
- Once this grant is approved, you will be issued with a SASSA payment card.

Social grants number:
0800 601 011

What are 'damages'?

- 'Damages' are not papgeld. It is a type of acknowledgement of responsibility by the father and his family.
- 'Damages' is an amount of money paid by your child's father's family to your family. Your family decides the amount.
- If a man or his family has paid damages, they are saying that he is the baby's father. He is taking responsibility for making you pregnant with his child.
- But you are still the mother of your child. You don't have to give your child to him or his family, even if they ask.
- Even if 'damages' have been paid, the father is still required by law to pay ongoing maintenance (papgeld) for the child.



Sisterhood

How do you and the other girls in your club feel about 'damages'?
Discuss in your club.

GASLIGHTING

A TYPE OF ABUSE

Does your friend or partner sometimes make you question if what you're feeling and thinking is real? They might be gaslighting you.

"My boyfriend gets angry with me and accuses me of flirting. I know I'm not flirting but now I find it easier just to avoid talking to other people when my boyfriend is around."

"My girlfriend makes me doubt myself all the time. I can't seem to do anything right."

What is 'gaslighting'?

A gaslighter wants to control you. They want you to feel dependent on them, powerless, crazy or useless.

Where does the word 'gaslighting' come from?

The term 'gaslighting' comes from a 1944 film called *Gaslight* where a husband slowly tries to make his wife think she is going mad. He would secretly turn the gaslight bright or dark. When, for example, she complained that it was very dark in the house, he told her there was something wrong with her because it wasn't dark at all.

People who gaslight do these types of things:

- They tell lies.
- They blame you for things you didn't do.
- They deny they ever said something, even though you clearly remember it.
- They try to make you doubt yourself.
- They pick on things that they know are important to you and make you feel bad about them.
- Their actions do not match their words.
- They try to isolate you from the people you are close to.
- They withhold information from you.

'Gaslighters' could be anyone:

- an intimate partner
- a family member
- a friend
- someone with authority over you like a teacher or employer.

In a relationship have you ever been told or felt that...?

- You are to blame for things you had nothing to do with
- Your decisions and choices are all wrong
- You can't make decisions easily anymore
- You don't trust your decisions
- You feel insecure relating to other people
- You say 'sorry' very often
- Your self-esteem has gone right down
- You rely on the other person for approval or permission to do things
- You are losing your mind

If you think gaslighting is happening in a relationship, talk to a trusted friend and think carefully about what to do. Gaslighting is extremely harmful to self-esteem and wellbeing generally. It is a type of abuse.



Trust your feelings. When you start to doubt yourself and feel uncomfortable, something wrong is happening.

Tell someone about it. Seek help.

Be aware of people who are in a position of power over you who start to make you feel uncomfortable by what they say or do to you.

Sisterhood

Have you ever experienced gaslighting in a relationship? Discuss in your club.

“ *Differently*
CAPABLE ”

Everyone is different. We all have our gifts and our hang ups. I became sick with TB as a 9-month-old baby. It affected how my spine works. I don't think of myself as 'disabled'. I think of myself as 'differently capable'. Even though I live with a disability, I am very able, just in different ways.

Here's what I want you to know about people like me:

People living with disabilities don't want or need to be pitied.

We want to be treated like human beings. We want to have control over our own lives.

We may need help but give us time to figure things out on our own.

We need to find ways to help people living with disabilities to complete their schooling.

People living with disabilities deserve quality sanitation and facilities that are accessible by wheelchair and easy to use.

Children living with physical disabilities need wheelchairs that are specific for their condition. They need to be fitted for the correct wheelchair at the clinic or hospital. A wheelchair that is the wrong size can worsen their condition.

Women living with disabilities need reproductive health care. We should be treated with dignity at clinics. We should be able to choose whether we get contraception and whether we want to have children.

People living with disabilities, as all people, have a need for intimacy in their lives. We also want to have relationships and make love connections.

People living with disabilities have hopes, dreams and goals just like everyone else.

We need to be protected from abuse. We deserve to feel safe in our communities.

Parents who have children living with disabilities need to be informed about the condition and how best to care for and support their children.

The lives of people living with disabilities matter!



Sisterhood

Do you have people living with disabilities in your community? Talk to your RISE club members about how you can include girls living with disability in your club.



FIGHTING FIRES

Saving Lives

Heroes do not always wear fancy clothes and live in fancy houses. Sometimes our heroes are mothers who live in a small room, but have a big heart for the community.

Smakaleng lives in Tswethla informal settlement in Alexandra. Smakaleng's single mother worked very hard to provide for Smakaleng and her younger sister.

Smakaleng's First Fire

In 2003 Smakaleng's family nearly lost everything in a shack fire. Their next door neighbour had left her children alone in her shack. A candle fell over and set the shack on fire.

'*Ne ke tshogile*'. Smakaleng says she was scared. It was late at night. The children in that shack were screaming. The fire began to burn her shack. The '*setima mollo*' (fire engine) usually took a very long time to reach their area. She knew the mother was at work and that the children were alone.

She knew she had to do something. First she rescued the

children from the shack. Then she took a bucket of water and started pouring water on the fire. Community members helped her.

Smakaleng the Hero

Smakaleng never thought she would be called a fire fighter because firefighters are people who have special training. Smakaleng has never been to school.

Smakaleng says, "I don't know why people started calling me when there is a fire or a problem, I guess it's because they see that I care." She says that experience has taught her how to deal with fires.

"You don't just pour water anywhere. You have to come up with a plan otherwise you'll make the fire worse."

Smakaleng bought a hosepipe with donations from the community. They use this hosepipe when they are waiting for the fire engine. Sometimes they cannot use it because the shack that is on fire is too far from the community tap. So she always keeps filled buckets of water in her shack.

Smakaleng says, "It is always the poor that lose their things."

She encourages women to take leadership in their communities, and not only when there is a fire.



"I don't know why people started calling me when there is a fire or a problem, I guess it's because they see that I care."



Sisterhood

What can you and your RISE club do to add value to your community? Send us your ideas at rise@soulcity.org.za



“ I am a lesbian

Busisiwe's Story

When I was younger, I couldn't connect with the straight couples on TV.

I tried hard to avoid the attraction I felt for women. I spoke a lot about boys to my female friends. I never wanted them to question my sexuality. I tried to act straight.

At 18, I was in denial. But lying to myself was getting harder. Everyone around me was dating boys. So I dated boys, even though I was never really interested.

My last boyfriend broke up with me two days before my 19th birthday. I was so relieved I started to cry! No more pretending.

No More Lies

I was finally ready to admit who I was to myself. "I'm a lesbian."

Accepting who I was, was the first step to living my truth. I spent time reading blogs and watching YouTube videos dedicated to lesbian women. I wanted to know all about my people.

Organisations like OUT and GALA showed me the history I was part of. I wanted to embrace it.

Coming Out

I still didn't know how to tell my parents. After much practice, I sat my parents down and came out. My mom squeezed my hand and said, "Thank you for finally telling us. Thank you for trusting us." They'd known all along and were waiting for me to feel comfortable to tell them. Not everyone has accepting family and friends. I'm fortunate that I do.

Read more at: za.heyspringster.com

Busisiwe's tips about coming out:

It isn't always a safe option for the LGBTQI community. If you believe that coming out will endanger your safety, or leave you homeless, then you need to think carefully.

Make sure you feel comfortable and confident before coming out to your family. It's a process. They may not take the news in the way you want.

If you need someone to speak to

Childline at 0800 55 555.

Contact LGBTQI organisations as long as you feel safe. Speaking to someone who understands your struggles is always good.

OUT: www.out.org.za or
066 190 5812

GALA: +27 11 717 4239

PO Box 31719, Braamfontein,
2017, South Africa



Sisterhood

10 Ways to a Beautiful & Healthy Skin

1 | Wash your face first thing in the morning

This will take away any sweat and oil that has built up over the night. Use a mild soap like the green bar Sunlight soap or just water and a clean cloth.

2 | Moisturise

Using a moisturiser will help keep your skin from getting dry and flaky.

3 | Protect your skin from the sun

The sun can damage your skin. Wear a sunhat or a cap when out during the day.

4 | Drink water

Drinking water helps to clean out any toxins that may be found in our bodies, including our skin. It also hydrates the skin. Throughout the day, make it your goal to drink two litres or more.

5 | Eat right

Try to eat more vegetables. Cut down on sugar and fast foods. Healthy oily foods, like avocado and nuts, are good for the skin.

6 | Exercise

Take a jog or fast walk with friends at least once or twice a week around your neighbourhood.

7 | Always wash your face before bed

Follow your morning routine in the evening. Remove make up thoroughly.

8 | Don't pop your pimples

This can spread infection or make dark marks and scratches.

9 | Steaming your face

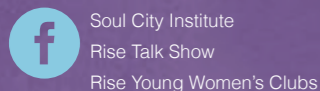
Steaming helps unclog pores by clearing away the dead skin cells that are closing them up. It helps remove toxins.

10 | Face Mask

An inexpensive way to treat your skin is by making a face mask. Use a mashed banana or avocado. Apply it once a week for 15 minutes before washing it off.

Ask the experts

The experts answer your health and relationship questions. Get in touch with us.



Soul City Institute
Rise Talk Show
Rise Young Women's Clubs



@soulcity_sa
@RiseTalkShow



VIRGINITY

I am a virgin. Is it true that if you delay having sex until age 30 that your bones will be stiff, and this might cause serious injuries?

Concerned

Dear Concerned,

It is not true. A person chooses to have sex when, and only when they feel ready to do so. There are no side effects to delaying a first sexual encounter.

Dr Sue



DRY SKIN

I am a 17-year-old girl. I have dry skin on an area of my vagina. After washing, I apply Vaseline but after a few hours, it becomes dry and itchy again. It is dry and itchy even when I avoid using soap. Why is this happening?

Ashamed

Dear Dry Skin,

What you are calling dryness might be thrush. Thrush is caused by a fungus and is very common. It is nothing to be ashamed of. Please go to a local clinic or doctor to get it checked as it is easily treated. I would avoid Vaseline and other creams as they may be causing the rash.

Dr Sue



CHRONIC MEDS

I'm 22 and have a chronic illness. The medication costs my family a lot of money. Is it possible to stop the medication as the cost is causing stress in my family? I also want to know if there are alternatives to the medication.

Distressed

Dear Distressed,

It is very important that you stay on your medication. Have you tried a government clinic? You should be able to get the medication cheaper or even free. Sometimes there are 'generics' which are cheaper versions of the same medicine. You can ask for the generic instead. I might be able to help if you send me more detail.

Dr Sue



CRAZY IN LOVE

I have a boyfriend but I'm not sure if he really loves me. How can I be sure that he really does?

Love in the Air

Dear Love in the Air,

It is difficult to know if a person loves you or not. One of the things that can help you decide is how they treat you. Does he respect you? Does he allow you to be who you are without fear? The best thing is to love ourselves enough to know that we are worthwhile, regardless of who loves us or who is in our lives.

Sis Lebo



FAVOURITISM

I live with my parents and my younger brother. I have a problem with my brother who is 2 years younger than me. He always gets what he wants from my parents. When I ask for something, I am told there is no money or they have to buy other things. My younger brother is treated differently; he gets what he wants every time. I feel like my parents prefer him to me. I am told boys are not like girls. I wish I could disappear one day. Maybe they would appreciate me then, because they don't appreciate me now.

Upset

Dear Upset,

I am sorry to hear about how you feel. Our parents grew up in a different time that, unfortunately, favoured boy children over girl children. Have you told your parents how you feel? It may help to speak to another relative that your parents respect and tell him/her how you feel. Ask them to mediate a meeting between you and your parents.

Sis Lebo



LUST

I'm a teenage girl. I see men looking at woman and girls with lust. I feel that when men look at us like that, they see something edible and that might lead to rape? Am I worrying over nothing?

Unsafe

Dear Unsafe,

It is really unfortunate how some men treat women in South Africa. I do not think that you are worrying over nothing. It is bad enough that the way they look at you makes you feel uncomfortable. Rape and violence against women are huge problems in South Africa and are unacceptable. We all need to stand up to protect women and girls in this country.

Sis Lebo



DRUG TAKEOVER

My community has many problems with alcohol and drugs. This causes school dropouts, crime and health issues. How can we deal with the drug and alcohol problems because it is costing the community a lot?

Worried

Dear Worried,

Drugs and alcohol abuse are a big problem in many communities. Try to get involved with these community structures. Bring in experts like nurses and the police to come and talk to you about alcohol and drug abuse and discuss what you all can do in your community to address these problems.

Sis Lebo

LIFE LINE

lifelinesa.co.za
Email: safetalking@lifeline.org.za
Phone: (011) 715 2000
Tollfree: 0800 150 150
National Aids helpline: 0800 0123 22

POWA

People Opposing Women Abuse
Website: www.powa.co.za
Email: info@powa.co.za
Phone: 0115916803

JUDGEMENTAL FRIEND

I'm 17 and in Grade 11. I have a guy friend who is very judgmental around girls. This irritates me because he does not want to be judged if he makes mistakes. We have been friends for a while. Should I continue being friends with him?

Irritated friend

Dear Irritated Friend,

Have you spoken to your friend and expressed your concerns? Remember that communication is also about listening and trying to understand where he is coming from. If after this, he still behaves the same way, perhaps it is time to move away from the relationship.

♥ Sis Thembi

PREGNANCY

We experience many unplanned pregnancies in our community.

This is affecting many young women who want to complete their Grade 12. How can we deal with unplanned pregnancies in our communities?

Unplanned

Dear Unplanned,

Many young girls are not using contraception and are not having protected sex. There are numerous reasons for this. RISE club girls can encourage each other to go to clinics to get contraception. Remember that protection has to be 'dual' to help prevent HIV and other STIs too. Maybe you can find organisations you can work with in your area to help young women access information and contraception.

♥ Sis Thembi

SAME-SEX

My community shuns same sex relationships. Do all communities stigmatise same-sex relationships? I think it is unfair to persecute people because of their personal choices. How can we make society understand same-sex relationships better?

Not fair

Dear Not Fair,

Not all but many communities are negative towards same-sex relationships. You can help by preventing the use of hurtful labels in everyday conversations. It is the right of people living in South Africa to be gay without persecution. If there are people in same-sex relationships that you know, ask them how you can be supportive.

GALA supports same sex couples relationships. Contact them at <https://gala.co.za/> or 011- 717 4239.

♥ Sis Thembi

CONFIDENCE BOOST

I have low self-esteem and am very shy. Many people don't like me because I keep to myself. I do not talk a lot. I find it hard to be around people who I think are different from me. How can I fit in easily? Can I build friendships without having to impress first?

Shy and Worried

Dear Shy and Worried,

Many people are shy and find it hard to speak out. Some people feel more comfortable in a one-to-one situation and not in groups. If you have low self-esteem there are some tricks you can practise: 1. Every day look into a mirror and tell yourself you are beautiful and you are worthwhile. 2. Every day make a list of things to be grateful for. 3. Practise what you might say in a social situation in front of a mirror. When you go into a social situation, look for someone who might be shy or quiet and start a conversation with that person. Be genuine about who you are.

♥ Sis Thembi

I AM A BLACK WOMAN

What does self-care mean to me?



Malebo Sephodi, author of *Miss Behave*

When I was growing up, I used to think that Black Women were superwomen. My mother, grandmother and great-grandmother were my heroes. There was nothing they could not do. Every time there were problems they always 'made a plan', even when everyone else had given up. Being a Black Woman meant being an *imbokodo* and go *tshwara thipa ka mo bogaleng*.

Imbokodo means to be a rock. A rock is strong, cold and it does not bleed. That means that Black Women have always been expected to be strong, cold and not feel pain, no matter what happens in our lives. It means that we must hide our pain and not complain.

I AM NOT A SUPERWOMAN

Although being a rock is necessary to survive the many harsh realities of society, I learned that I cannot be a superwoman all the time. I learned that being strong, hiding my pain and taking care of everyone else except myself can cause problems for me. If I want to live a full life, filled with happiness, it is important that I take care of myself. When I take care of myself, I can live longer and make a bigger difference in whatever I choose to do.

'HOW YOU GONNA WIN, WHEN YOU AIN'T RIGHT WITHIN?'

Lauryn Hill sings, 'how you gonna win, when you ain't right within?'. To me, these words say that if I want to win in life, I must take care of myself. We must always try, even when it is difficult, to take care of ourselves. Everyone is different. We are not going to take care of ourselves in the same way. My friend likes to garden so she plants vegetables. She says that working in her vegetable garden soothes her soul and provides her with healthy food. I like to go for long walks as they keep my heart fit and give me glowing skin. Taking a break from social media on a regular basis is also good for my emotional wellbeing because reading about the world's problems can be stressful. There are many ways that we can take care of ourselves. What is it that you like doing that makes you feel better?

CHOOSE YOU

Remember, you do not have to be strong for everyone. It is okay to cry when you feel pain, and to laugh when you feel joy. Do not feel guilty when you take care of yourself. The greatest gift you can give yourself in this life is to care for yourself.



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