

Short dramas and story telling guide

How to use the techniques of short dramas and story telling in your work.
This guide also provides you with examples of stories and short dramas to use in activities with community groups.

A Voice Raised - A Life Saved: Become A Champion for Prevention!

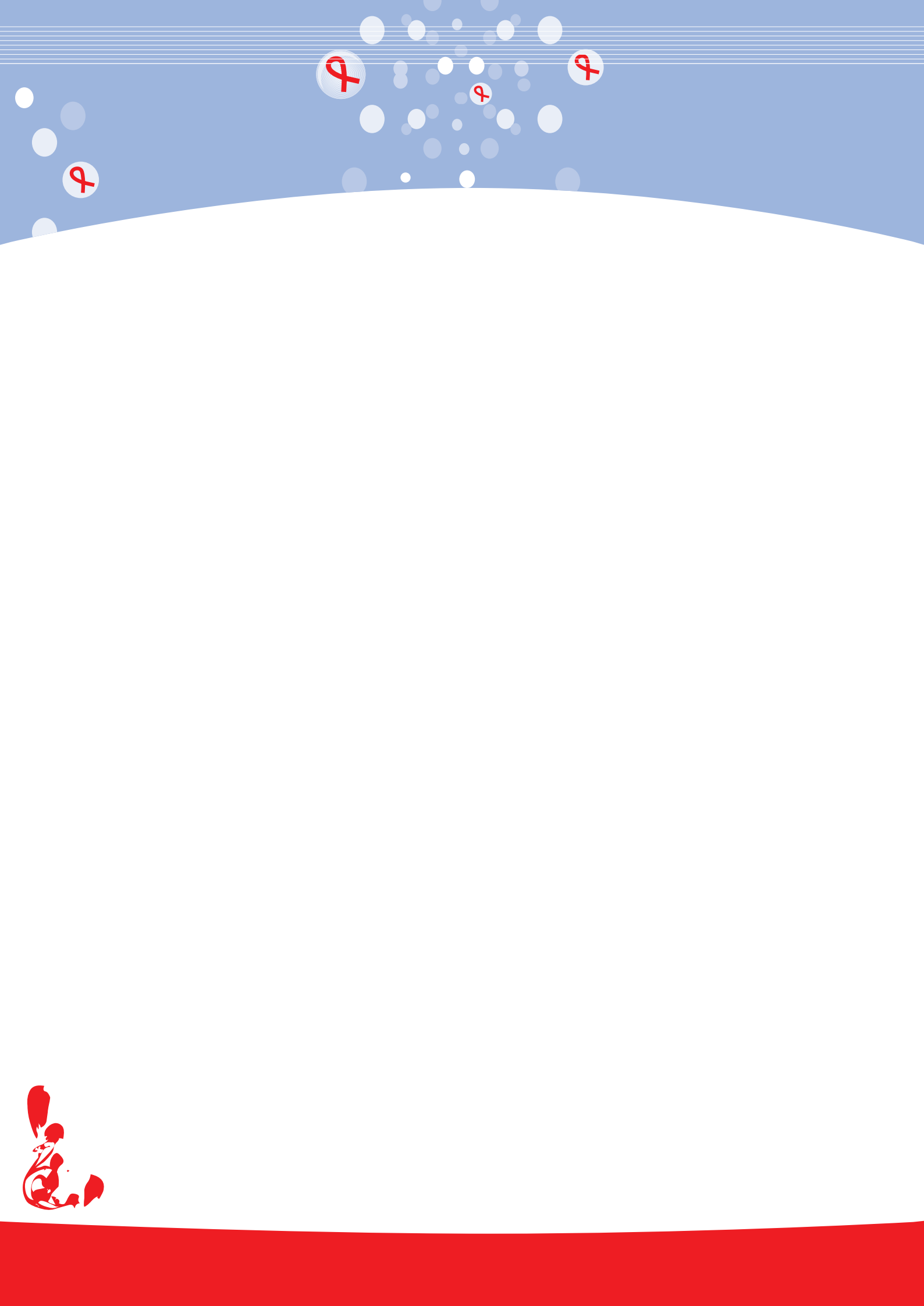
HIV and GBV Prevention Package for Community Based Volunteers (CBVs) and Community Prevention Mobilisers



Contents

When, how and where to use short drama with communities	1
Some ideas for short dramas for you to use	5
How to tell learning stories	6
Four steps in story telling	7
The Story Bank	8
Things to remember when using short dramas, role play and story telling	18





When and how to use short dramas with communities

What is a short drama (sometimes called role play)?

Short dramas (or role plays) are when groups are asked to act out, in a short performance, a topic, a situation or an event. It works best when participants are encouraged to think of a situation of their choice or develop their own idea from a situation or event that is either described to them in words or described through a picture.

Who is short drama for?

It's for everyone, from the young (children love watching and acting in plays) to the elderly (they have lots of experience to share) and everyone in between. The important part is getting the topic and message correct for the group involved.

How is it done?

You as the facilitator of the group decide on a topic. The participants discuss how they are going to show a message about the topic in a performance. Then, each participant who is taking part adopts a different character, so that together they can act out the situation or short story they have chosen.

What they say to each other should be agreed quickly before hand - no need for a written script! What is really important about role play is the free flowing ideas in the performance. The best approach is a very simple one so that what is being communicated is clear. This means body language can often be as important as words in these scenes. It is just like acting in a movie but very short and to the point.



Drama means a performance by a person or group of people !





How do you choose a topic?

This is up to you and the group. If you are talking about a particular issue, such as “Loving relationships are important to prevent GBV in the home,” you can use the same topic for a short drama. Ask the group to act out a scene of how people in a loving relationship deal with a problem, such as a badly cooked meal, when it arises. Some members of the group could act out a scene where there is good communication in the family and others could act out a scene where the communication is not so good. You can also use pictures and ask the group:

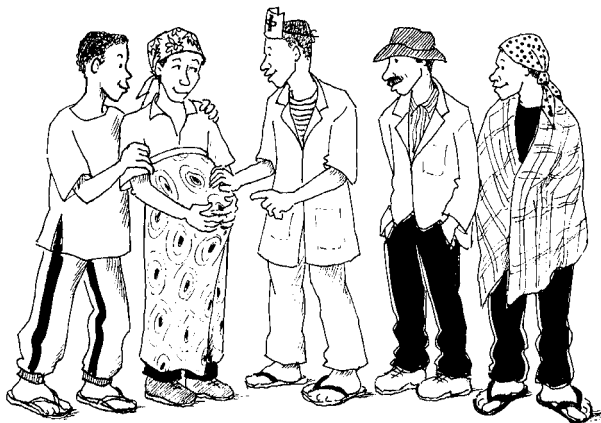
- What is happening here? or
- What happens next?

The pictures on the next page are used as examples. You can use these, as well as the pictures in the toolkits picture flip chart with your groups. Use your own pictures, draw them or ask the group to draw a picture. Get involved!

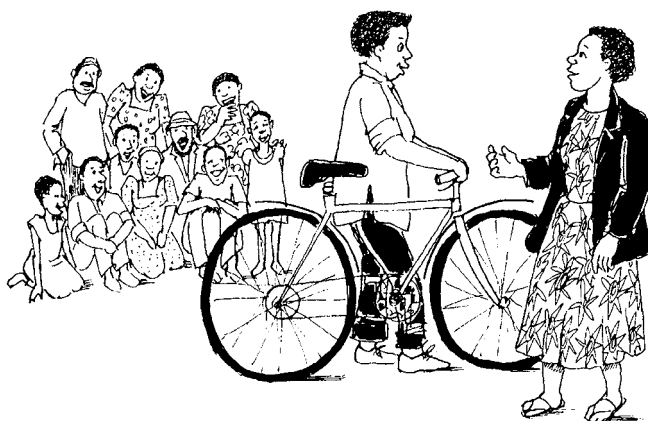




Short drama 1 - what is going on here? What happens next?



Short drama 2 - what is going on here? What happens next?



Short drama 3 - what is going on here? What happens next?



How long should a short drama take?

A short drama is just that - short! It needs only a little time to prepare and to perform. Five to 10 minutes is more than enough for the performance. The shorter and more simple the drama, the clearer the message and the situation. So encourage participants to keep them very short! Preparing a short drama should not take long either. Ideas should not be thought about too much - they should be light and natural. They do not need to be planned too much.

When should you introduce short dramas with your groups?

The different sections in this toolkit give you an idea of when to use drama, but you can use it anytime you feel a group needs to understand an issue through experience. If you feel the group needs some energy or would benefit from taking a more active part in the session or meeting, then a short drama activity can be a good idea. You can use short drama and role play in a workshop, in a meeting, in a support group, at schools and in class, at a community gathering, at a traditional event or at a club such as a young farmers' or ladies' sewing club.

Messages seen through drama are often remembered longer than just words and a discussion. Use drama to get key messages across and remembered; keep messages as positive as you can.

Where can you do short dramas and role plays?

Anywhere you have space and will not be interrupted by loud noises, traffic, or other people. You must also be careful your activities do not disrupt others as short drama and role play can get quite noisy! You can meet under a tree, in a homestead, at a public meeting place, in a church hall or community centre.



What resources will you need?

Most short dramas and role plays need very little preparation and if there is a need for someone to dress up or use props there is usually what you need in the group. However, if you are planning the role play ahead of the meeting, think about the topics and bring along a few extras items of clothing, a blanket or some household items such as pots and pans.



Some ideas for short dramas for you to use

When working with groups on short dramas you can suggest a topic or you can ask the group to suggest a topic for them to act out. Sometimes groups find it hard to get going - here are some topics you can use to give them ideas. They focus on GBV, culture, rights and HIV and AIDS issues and topics.

When suggesting or receiving suggestions from groups - remember to show/ask what type of violence this is: emotional, physical, sexual or economic.

Drama has the power to bring about behaviour change. When people see these things with new eyes they can be empowered to take action!

Short drama topics about GBV

Husband and wife scenes

- A drunken husband
- Husband spending all the money from wife's crops on card-playing
- Marital rape
- Discussing condom use
- An uncle and a niece
- Young men harassing a school girl
- Property grabbing from widow

Short drama topics about culture and tradition

- Property grabbing from a widow
- Girl pledging and spirit appeasement
- Girl pledging for marriage
- Lobola/bride price
- Going to see a spiritual healer

Short drama topics about the rights of women and girls

- Women working outside the home
- Women wearing trousers/mini skirts
- Men involved in caring roles (HBC, nursing, child care)

Short drama topics about HIV issues

- A wife going for testing at a VCT centre
- Disclosing a positive status to her husband
- Asking husband to accompany her for testing /go for testing too
- Men having many sexual partners
- After the beer hall

Remember - it doesn't always have to be negative. If a group uses a negative scene, ask another group or the same group to turn it around and show how it could be done differently.

Even if the topic starts with an unhappy theme - when using short drama ALWAYS encourage the group to think about a positive outcome and a SOLUTION to the problem.



How to tell learning stories

Stories are a great way of sharing information. A good descriptive story can share more than a problem, it can highlight the causes and solutions too! This is what we call a learning story. It can make the issue seem more real and more urgent! It can also lead to a change in behaviour and a commitment to action.

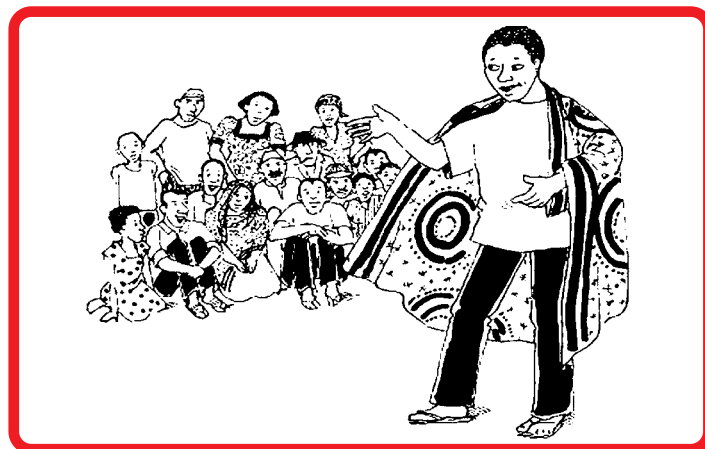
So what are the key things to remember when telling a learning story?

1. Keep it short and simple (KISS)!

A good story, for the purposes of learning, is short and direct. There should not be too many characters or people will get lost. Too many issues and people will be confused. Pick one issue or topic and a few people who are involved. Keep the story to a few paragraphs if written and no more than five minutes if you are reading out.

Keep it real!

These may have been personal testimonies or observations from others you know. They are a good source of stories to share with others. We are always curious about how others live so people enjoy listening to stories. When it is hard to talk about your own experiences, it is sometimes easier to tell a story instead. This doesn't feel so personal. Stories can help introduce difficult topics such as sex or cultural taboos.



3. Group participation

You don't have to do everything yourself. Get the group involved in the learning story. Why not try starting a story and then asking the group to finish it. Remember to introduce the topic and key issues first! This is also a way of finding solutions and practical actions to the problem of GBV in communities. Try these starting points yourself, and add your own sad and happy endings. Remember, the stories should be about GBV issues and experiences!

- Once upon a time there was a young couple living positively with HIV. . .
- One day, not long ago, a young girl was walking home alone from school. . .
- After being beaten at school by the other boys, Tendai was himself unhappy and angry when he came across his young sister playing outside the homestead. . .



Four steps in story telling!

Your story should have:
A clear topic
A clear message, and
Relevant issues for discussion

Step 1 Get the right topic for the right audience!

Younger children will want to hear stories about other children, the same with teenagers and youth. Adults will want stories they can relate to so look at the environment around you and bring in some elements of the area. An older audience might appreciate the 'once upon a time' stories or a more traditional setting - older people can enjoy remembering the past.

Step 2 Talk about what you know!

Stories told from the heart can be very effective - there is natural emotion when you tell it. Even if you don't have a personal experience, or one from someone close to you, choose a topic that you feel strongly about. Your enthusiasm and feelings will come across to the listener and make the story more interesting.

Step 3 Use your voice!

When something is serious keep your voice low and gentle. When you want the audience to listen more use short, sharp sentences with a louder voice (never shout - that puts people off!). If you want the listener to feel anxious or as if something is about to happen- take a short pause, look around the group, then carry on.

Step 4 Use your body too!

Emphasise important points with your hands. Lean forward a little when the issue is important. Lean back a little when you tell a joke or are making light of a point. Standing up suddenly can help show shock or surprise!



The Story Bank

Here are some stories you can use when talking with communities. Use them by including them in your meetings. Read them out aloud. Remember the techniques on how to make a story interesting, using body language as well as facial expressions. Pause at serious moments and give people a chance to reflect. All this makes the story come to life!

You can change the names and the circumstances to suit the country/ community you are working with. It is always better when the listener can relate to the story. The titles of these stories are referred to throughout the toolkit, and in the GBV for CBVs booklet. Add your own to this list and make it a practical 'story bank' for you and the community!

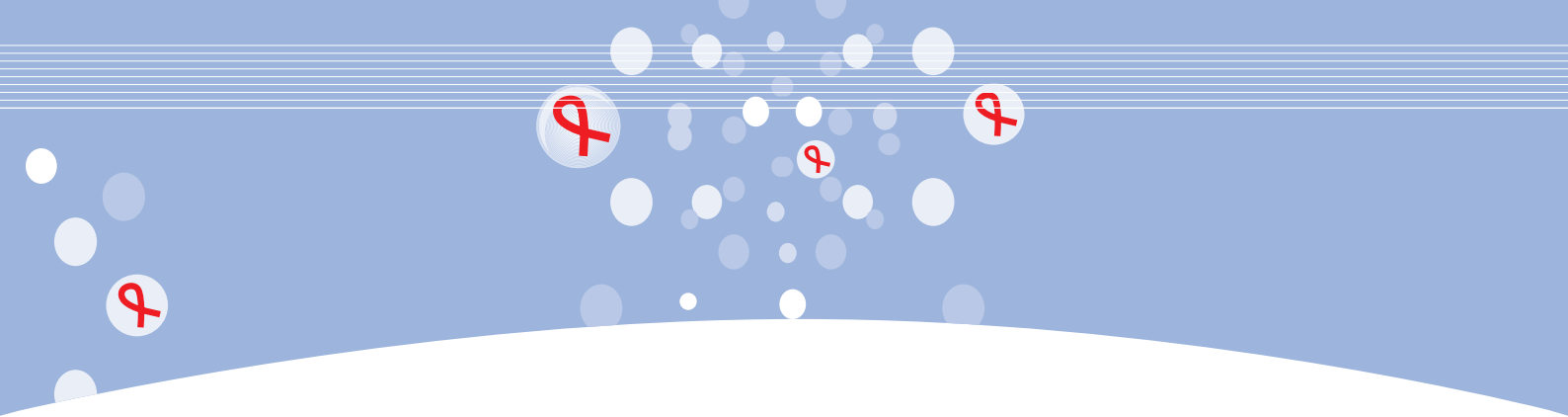
Learning stories about Gender Based Violence

Nelson & Sylvia

Nelson and Sylvia lived together as husband and wife for five years. They had one child. One day Nelson told Sylvia that he no longer loved her or wanted to live with her because she was ugly and had squint eyes. Sylvia refused to leave their matrimonial home, so Nelson started withholding money for household use. Sylvia and the child had to survive by eating at friends' houses. One day, Sylvia decided to follow Nelson to work to ask for money for food. Nelson said he would bring money home at the close of business. Upon arriving home, he forced Sylvia to have sex with him before throwing her out of the house. Sylvia went to sleep at her sister's house that night. The following day, Sylvia saw Nelson at the local shopping centre with a girlfriend. She approached them to ask for keys to their house. Sylvia was beaten up in front of the girlfriend. Nelson denied knowledge of either Sylvia or the child. Sylvia then reported the matter to the elders. Nelson maintained his stance and eventually Sylvia went to the family she had before her marriage (natal family).

Add your own stories here...





Blank notes for your GBV stories and experiences...

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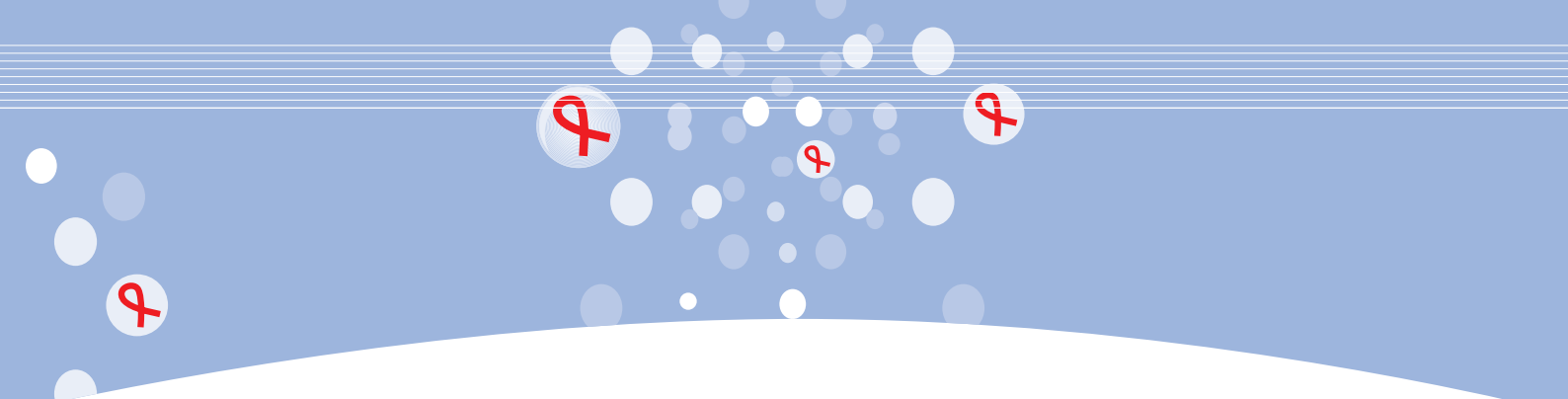
Learning stories about culture and tradition

Male dominance - Chipo and Calvin

Chipo and Calvin lived together as husband and wife for 20 years. They have five children. One day, as they were driving from one town to the other, they were involved in an accident that left Chipo maimed and wheel-chair bound. Calvin started having girlfriends because of Chipo's condition. On several occasions, he brought the girlfriends home and had sex with them in their matrimonial bed while Chipo watched helplessly. Rarely did he have protected sex with Chipo and she did not protest because she had been taught to respect her husband and knew that culturally, male infidelity was tolerated. Besides, her husband had told her that her disability was forcing him into extra-marital affairs. Chipo and Calvin are now living with HIV.

Your own stories and experiences about culture and tradition in the community

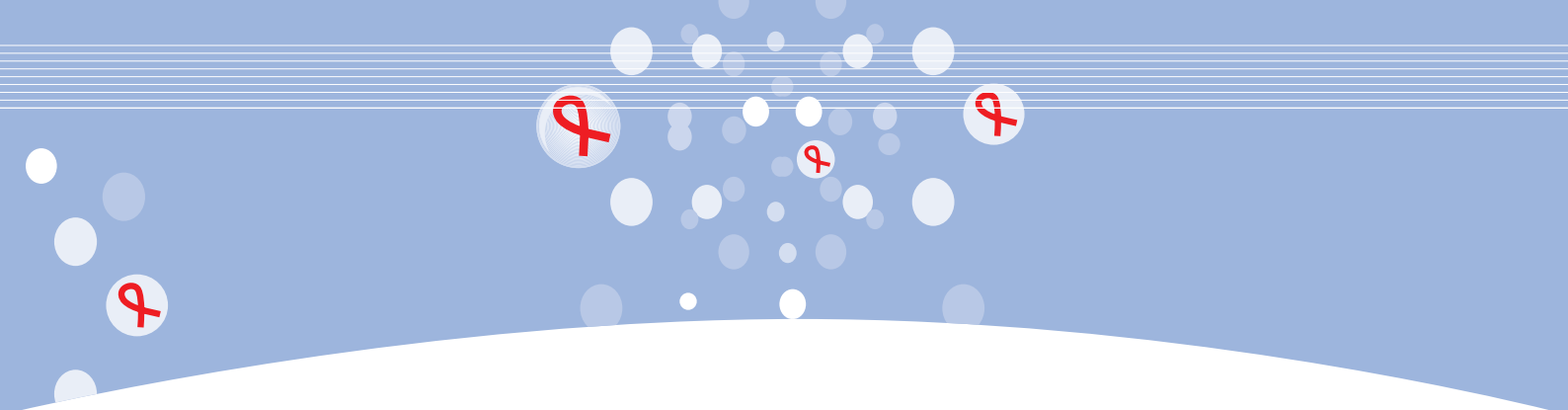




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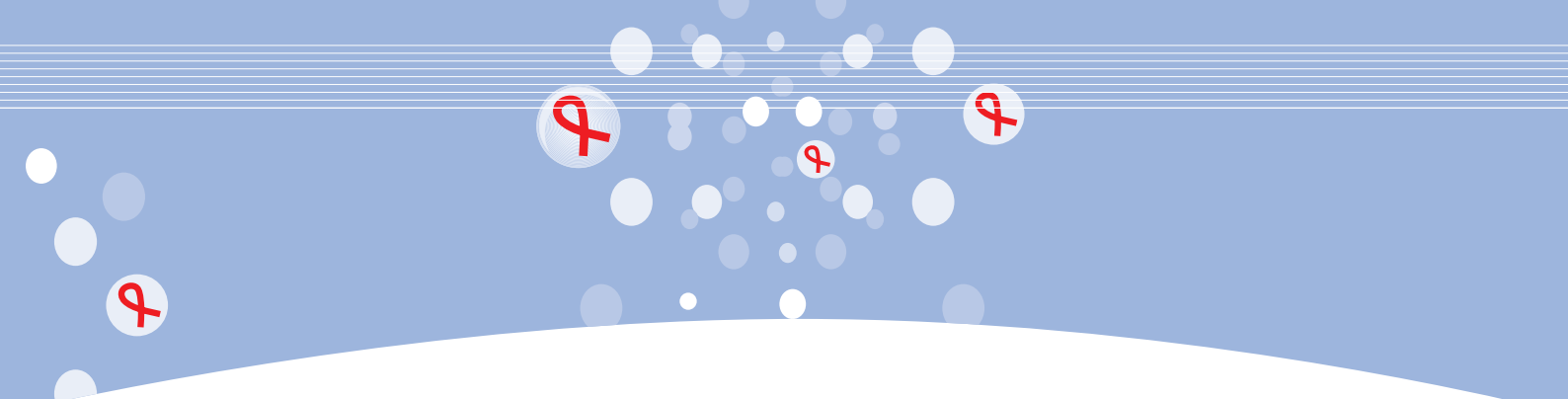




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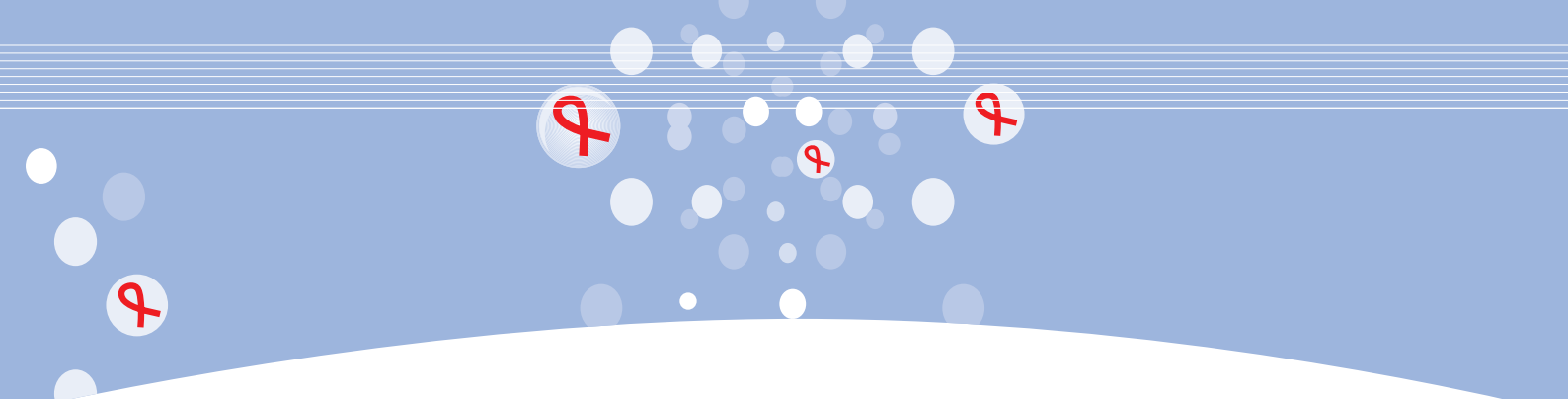




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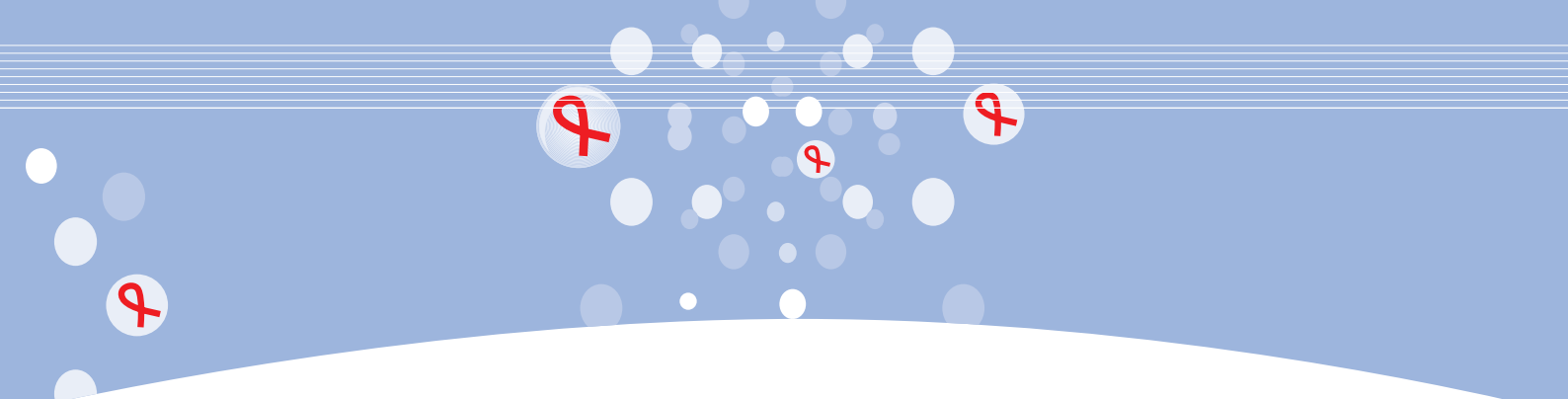




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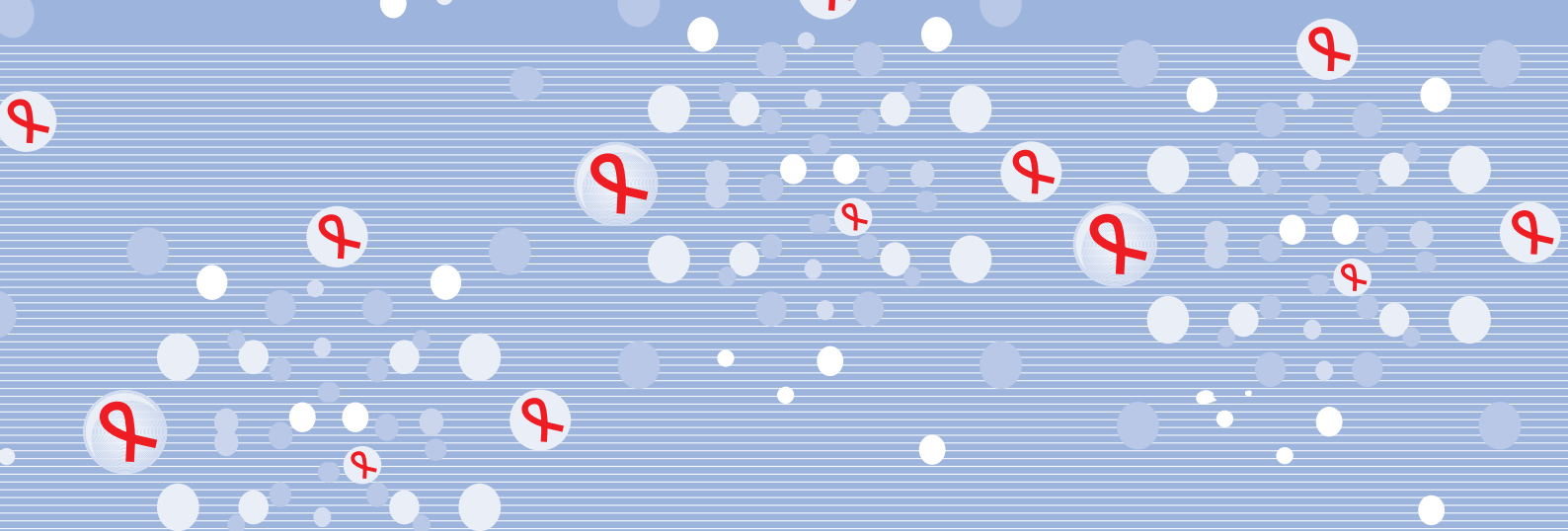


Things to remember when using short dramas, role play and story telling

1. There should be an objective and purpose in mind - what is the message you want to share, what should be achieved at the end? Those organising, acting or reading should know this from the start!
2. How will the group which is listening/watching be drawn in and involved? Even if it is a short drama, the wider group can be further encouraged by getting them involved too - stop the play and say 'what happens next? stop the story and ask 'what happens next?' and see where the group suggestions take you...
3. What will the ending of the drama, role play or story be? This is an important issue. You should aim for a clear message to be reinforced. Short drama and role play group can do this effectively by ending with slogans or poster and hand written notices. This will also help make the task clearer if they have a message to put across at the end.
4. Discussion should always follow a good story, drama or role play. What discussions will be opened up or triggered? If people don't raise the hoped for points, how will you introduce them into the discussion?

The end!





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