

PROGRAMME OF PRIMARY PREVENTION OF HIV/AIDS AND RISK BEHAVIOUR FOR TEENAGERS

LESSON 13. TOLERANCE. LIFE WITH DISEASE

Statement of the problem. Information for facilitator.

A person suffers from a disease. Let us say he is disabled or HIV positive. This is not a reason for the community and people around the person to reject him. A developed society supports the diseased and helps them. An HIV-positive person, just like a person suffering from an addiction of some kind or of a chronic disease, can learn to live with the disease and to grow, develop and improve oneself by overcoming it.

Goal:

To help participants form responsible attitude towards their health, to develop healthy habits, to be tolerant towards people with diseases, to socially support diseased without any harm to one's own health; reflecting upon experience of interacting with out-groups, to demonstrate negative consequences of stigmatization and positive consequences of tolerant attitude towards representatives of out-groups.

Beginning of work

Option 1. 'Society' exercise

Goal: introduction to the topic

Materials needed: coupons

Description: a volunteer is called for – he goes out of the room. After that the participants of the group are divided into two teams. Facilitator describes the situation that the volunteer is going to think over. While the volunteer is still out of the room one team has to come up with a list of 'pro' arguments and the other team – with a list of 'contra' arguments (5 minutes). When the teams are ready, the volunteer is invited inside. Facilitator repeats the situation for the volunteer and tells him to listen to opinions of both teams attentively and to give one coupon for each, in his opinion, reasonable argument to a respective team. The volunteer has to make a decision to join one of the teams after they express their opinions. After that the coupons are counted.

Questions for discussion:

- Was it hard for the volunteer to make a decision?
- What 'pro' and 'contra' arguments were given?
- What can influence a person's decision (quality of given arguments, his liking, his earlier views)?
- How did the person make his choice?

Situation: *A young man (woman) is thinking, "Shall we have STI testing together before getting married?"*

Option 2. Exercise 'Snowflakes'

Goal: introduction of a topic, creating a working atmosphere

Materials needed: paper

Description: Participants work individually in silence. Everybody is asked to take a sheet of paper, fold it in half and tear off the upper right corner and repeated it twice more and then unfold the sheet of paper and compare it with 'snowflakes' made by other participants. Summing up the facilitator focuses on the question of what the world would be like if we did not differ from one another at all.

Working on the topic

Information for facilitator

“It often happens in life so that we are too indulgent to ourselves while being demanding and rigorous towards our neighbour. Christianity says otherwise. The Lord said, “... why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ... You hypocrite! First take the plant out of your own eye and then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye” (Matthew 7:3-5). The Christian rule of life teaches us in the unfortunate event of life, such as quarrels, troubles, etc. to seek the reason not in others, but in ourselves - in his sinfulness, stubbornness, pride and selfishness ... requires us to forgive others”
Summary of Moral Theology, Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesensky)

Option 1. Exercise ‘Friends and Strangers’

Goal: facilitate the identification of different social out-groups ("other" groups, whose representatives are perceived as significantly different from "our", "us "), recognize feelings towards their representatives.

Materials needed: blackboard and chalk or drawing paper and markers.

Description: the first stage is performed individually. Divide a sheet of paper into three parts: friends, strangers, any. Task: distribute words written on the blackboard into three columns correspondingly.

- | | |
|-------------|---------------------|
| – alertness | – understand |
| – openness | – do not understand |
| – danger | – close |
| – calm | – far |
| – evil | – similar |
| – good | – like |
| | – don’t like |

At the second stage generalized portraits of ‘friends’ and ‘strangers’ are created on the blackboard, for example, using the method of voting on each of the features proposed. At the third stage the participants discuss who are ‘friends’ (e.g. people of our nationality, our religion, our age, our social group, sharing our life principles, healthy, etc.), and who are ‘strangers’. Results of the discussion are recorded on the board in their respective columns.

Facilitator’s conclusion:

People tend to classify other people as friends or strangers. Unfortunately, we think that those whom we consider strangers are worse than ourselves. However, it is not true. You can easily understand that if you think that some people see us as strangers too.

Option 2. Exercise ‘Label’

Goal: contribute to forming of negative attitude to stigmatization

Materials needed: paper, cards (labels)

Description: Participants draw a clock dial plate and mark the time of meeting their friends on it. When scheduling a meeting they should to keep in mind the following: each person is to meet with everyone, meeting are one by one only, each meeting lasts “an hour”, and there should be a meeting every “hour”. Since due to the number of participants it is usually impossible to comply with all requirements, there is little confusion, after which they can be offered to meet in groups of three, while the third person is to agree not with one person of already formed pairs, but with both.

Once all meeting are scheduled a card with a role from one of out-groups is attached to the back of each participant: “a person of Caucasian ethnicity”, “disabled”, “very old man”, “drug addict”, etc. When handing out the cards the facilitator should be careful not to hurt the feelings of the participants and therefore select labels individually so that they are far from real circumstances. Labels can be repeated.

The facilitator begins to count down time (“an hour” equals to two minutes for these purposes). Every two minutes the facilitator calls "Time!" and loudly announces a subject the partners can discuss (e.g., favourite sweets). The task of each player is to communicate with his partners in accordance with their labels but without mentioning the role on the card, and also guess the role on his own label.

In conclusion the following questions are discussed:

- What feelings did you have during the game?
- What labels were the most difficult to describe? Why?
- How did you guess your own label?
- What is discrimination?
- How is it manifested?
- What are its consequences?

Facilitator’s conclusion:

Although the reasons people discriminate against others are often artificial, misunderstanding and conflicts related to discrimination are always real and they bring a lot of pain. When you communicate it is important to see a person rather than a label associated with him.

Option 3. Exercise ‘Blue eyes and brown eyes’

Goal: forming motivation for cooperation with representatives of out-groups

Materials needed: none

Description: the facilitator gives the participants the following introductory information:

“Aliens arrive on the Earth. Alien scientists discovered the universal law of mind, which covers to the inhabitants of the Earth: it turned out that all people are divided into two groups according to their mental characteristics. A sign of belonging to one group or another is the colour of their eyes. Brown eyes mean that the person is capable only of physical work and has practically zero intellectual and spiritual potential. People with blue eyes are the elite, the cream of mankind, the intellectuals, the creators ... In short, the complete opposite of the brown-eyed.

As the brown-eyed have less brain mass compared to blue-eyed, thicker cranial bones, worse knee-jerk, grasping and swallowing reflexes, lower rate of information remembering, one must seriously consider entrusting the brown-eyed with responsible positions and assignments. Because of the structure of the pupil information is received and transmitted to the nervous system of the brown-eyed almost the same as that of man apes (mostly brown-eyed).

Activity of interneurons of the hypothalamus in individuals with brown eyes is much more primitive than that of the blue-eyed. Consequently, the capacity for intellectual work in the brown-eyed is absent.

Owing to this remarkable discovery aliens improved their society. They invite us to take advantage of their revolutionary scientific achievement and urgently start changing the life on our planet.”

The facilitator divides participants into two groups according to eye colour. All actions of the facilitator should be focused on making as clear as possible for the participants their proposed roles and rights: “blue-eyed” – unrestricted freedom and domination of the “brown-eyed”, “brown-eyed” – low status, powerless. Groups work separately from each other.

The “blue-eyed” should prepare a set of laws for the new society (they should keep in mind that they have the power to invent and enforce all sorts of laws and regulations), while the “brown-eyed” are given a list of professions to choose from. There are no intellectual professions in the

list, which only contains such jobs as ‘assembly line operator’, ‘loader’, ‘painter’, etc. Each occupation requires a particular quality: a loader, for example, must be strong; to work on an assembly line one needs to be accurate and self-possessed. If the “brown-eyed” complete their task before the “blue-eyed”, they can be offered writing tasks requiring mechanical performance of repetitive actions (e.g. drawing and painting of geometric shapes).

The laws prepared by “the blue-eyed” is read out for all participants. The following questions are discussed:

- What feelings did you have during the exercise?
- What laws would the “brown-eyed” create if it appears that a second delegation of aliens suddenly expose the “unscientific” claims of the first delegation? (It will turn out that the “brown-eyed” are intellectuals, and the “blue-eyed” can perform only physical work?)
Why?
- Are the designed laws fair?
- What would sooner or later happen in a country where life is organized in accordance with such discriminatory laws?
- What is discrimination of HIV-infected? What are its causes?
- How should you treat a person if you discover that he is HIV positive?

In conclusion, the facilitator should convey to each participant the message that the proposed difference between the blue-eyed and the brown-eyed in the game is fictional and has no relation to reality.

Facilitator’s conclusion:

Discrimination against some people by other people leads to irreversible consequences for their relationship. People that make up the ‘other’ social groups, including HIV-positive, are people like us in the first place people.

Option 4. Discussion of parable ‘Gratitude’

Goal: understanding that interaction with out-groups is an important source of life experience

Materials needed: none

Description: The following parable is offered to the group:

“In one village a man known for his stinginess was dying. And there was no one around to brighten up his last moments, for he shared neither his money, nor home, nor cordiality with anyone.

But once at his door came a traveller, whose face was shining with wisdom and love.

- I have learned about your illness and have come to say goodbye and thank you, he said to the owner of the hut.

He looked at his visitor in astonishment:

- No person in this world would be grateful to me.

But the traveller continued:

- Many years ago I asked you to borrow money. You were my last hope. And your refusal made me rethink my life. I learned to work, estimate my abilities, and gained confidence. And now I am rich, happy and free owing to you.”

Discussion:

- What is this parable about?
- How do we benefit from communicating with other people, even though they are “strangers” to us?

Facilitator’s conclusion:

If there were no people who are different from us (“strangers”) we would lose a huge layer of life experience allowing us to successfully develop, set goals and achieve them.

Option 5. Analysis of an abstract from a novel by A.N.Komissarov, “Difficult Voyage on ‘Goremyka’ Dinghy” or a novel by A.Cronin “The Keys of the Kingdom”. Mini-lecture.

Goal: forming of the notions of ‘stigma’, ‘tolerance’, ‘compassion’; skills for maintaining health, tolerance towards ill people, providing social support without harming one’s health.

Materials needed: none.

Description: the facilitator reads out the following abstract.

Abstract from a novel by A.N.Komissarov “Difficult Voyage on ‘Goremyka’ Dinghy”:

“Is this a guarded settlement? asked Khludy pensively. And what if we use the old quarry? It's a huge pit with almost vertical walls and with the only road leading to it. Drive all the patients there and put a guard. What do you think, Your Highness?”

- How are they going to live there? Vitseny said.

- And who speaks about living? smiled the adviser.

The doctor snorted indignantly. Khludy thinking that he said what should not be said in public turned to Xant:

- The commander will give us tents and field kitchens. Someone will help with food, an adviser paused and looked impressively at Bubahor. - In the country there are people who recently, in spite of everything, have been earning a lot. What is wrong about this life?

- Well, it's a good idea - agreed Irofam ...

... Archigen and Xant left the ruler's palace together.

- Vitseny told me that lavrian authorities conceal the scale of the epidemic, said Archigen pensively. He said that over half a year one person in twenty died there. And what will happen in a year's time?

- Not every war leads to such loss, said Xant sadly. But during a war people see the enemy and know for what they are going to die. And here is a disease, an invisible and meaningless disease.

- Meaningless? asked the teacher. I would not say so. Everything in this world, Xant, has its meaning and its purpose.

- Well, what is the purpose of the disease?

- I do not know - the old man sighed. - I only know that we always have something to overcome, and doing it, we become stronger.

They walked in silence, then Archigen spoke again:

- The disease is near, it is dangerous. This cannot be denied. But it becomes a thousand times more dangerous because of our irresponsibility. Everyone thinks that others will be sick and dying, that he will not be affected, and therefore why deny pleasures. Many people think, Xant, while the disease is near. Maybe it has already struck. Only the man does not yet know ...

... Soon first settlers came to the quarry. If you cannot hide from the plague, you should hide it, advisor Khludy joked. And many, from Irofam to the most bitter, but not yet ill, drunks approved the fact that now anyone with signs of disease, noticed not by doctors, but even by the city guard, was immediately taken away in the quarry,

Sometimes the poor guy was given an hour or two to gather the most necessary things, and sometimes they would not even hear about it. And around the city from dawn until noon an old, mangy mare with protruding ribs dragged a hysterically creaking wagon. After the wagon walked two scavengers, and people from afar heard the mournful creak of the wheels, frowned and tried to hide so that not to meet with the sad crew. And scavengers lazily looked into the back streets and closes blocked by piles of garbage. And they were not in a hurry. Such work was given to them – to collect those who had nowhere to hurry too.

However, it was just the beginning, and often the wagon was empty.

Time passed, and now instead of a single wagon with two scavengers, wandering behind it, at first there were two and then three wagons on the streets. Then nobody counted them. They did not differ from that first one in any way. Same horse, same squeaky wheels. Only now, each had a bell that reminded citizens that the death was somewhere close by.

... At first, everything went quietly. The guards went into houses and brought out those with

noticeable first signs of illness. When there were five unfortunate men they were guarded by soldiers to a market square where Anapody decided to bring all who were to be sent to an old quarry. Gradually around forty-fifty people were gathered in the square, and the guards constantly brought new ones.

Having toured the market Xant returned to his original location and began to watch staying in the saddle. He looked at the frightened people surrounded by the guards and suddenly thought: they are all different. There were ragged and drunk, and people with clever and kind faces, men and women, elderly and very young. Now they will be taken to the abandoned quarry as a faceless crowd. And their relatives, friends will remain here and most likely they will never see each other. Yet, who knows? Maybe they will. In the quarry.

By the time in question, the life in the quarry had little resemblance to life. While there were tens of inhabitants Vitseny and his aides somehow coped, but when their number exceeded one thousand, and then they stopped counting people this was no longer possible. There was a time when doctors came to the sick accompanied by the guards, but soon this became too risky. And it was not even fear of the disease that stopped them. Doom sooner or later leads to humility, but this is almost always preceded by a furious attempt to rise and overcome what is impossible to overcome. And anger of the quarry inhabitants poured on those who tried to help them. Then they started to send pots with cooked soup down with the guards and on Vitseny's order add drugs to the food.

Perhaps things might have been different, but, as it often happens, the interests of those who could fix something would not coincide with the interests of those who needed it. Therefore, the sun, looking around the noon in the old quarry, burned the exhausted, desperate people with his indifferent rays, but when it hid, in the night cold streams flowed into the cracks of the huts hastily put together.

By the way, if the foul meat is seasoned well with salt, plenty of pepper and garlic to flavour, to a hungry man it may seem, even delicious. And if someone feels very thirsty, he would probably be delighted with a sip of rotten water. Such was, probably, the thinking of advisor Khludy when he undertook his theft. Was he so heartless? Sure! Power is not compatible with love of mankind. But it is not the point. The advisor was afraid of nobody. And who was there to fear? Those in the pit? They had no one to complain to ...”

An abstract from The Keys of the Kingdom by Archibald Cronin (abridged):

At the Manchu Gate fugitives from stricken provinces were still crowding unhindered into the city. Scores had taken up their lodging beneath the stars. As Francis passes the silent figures he heard the racking sound of coughing. His heart flowed out towards these poor exhausted creatures, many already stricken, and a burning impetuous desire to help them suffused his soul. He saw a dead naked old man. His wrinkled toothless face was turned to Francis.

Spurred by the pity in his breast, Father Chisholm reached the yamen of justice. The passages were deserted, the main chamber a vault of echoing emptiness. A few clerks were scurrying with a furtive air. From one of these he learned that the Chief Magistrate had been called away to the obsequies of a distant relative in Tchienin. It was plain to the harassed priest that all but the lowest court officials had been ‘summoned’. The civil administration of the city had ceased to exist.

Only one course lay open to him now. He made his way rapidly to the cantonment. Now, as Francis reached the barracks, a bare dozen soldiers hung about, conspicuously without arms, in dirty grey-cotton tunics.

They stopped him at the gate. But nothing could withstand the fire that now consumed him. He forced his way to an inner chamber, where a young lieutenant in a clean elegant uniform reflectively polished white teeth with a willow twig. Lieutenant Shon and the priest inspected one another.

“The city is threatened by a great sickness.” Francis spoke with deliberate restraint. “I am seeking for someone with courage and authority to combat the great danger.”

“I have sent for food to Sen-siang for supplies.” Francis spoke more rapidly. “They will arrive soon. But meanwhile we must do all in our command to quarantine the refugees and prevent the pestilence from starting in the city. I am going to aid these people. If you do come, I shall go alone. But I am perfectly assured that you are coming.”

They went out together into the cold grey day ... About thirty soldiers moved towards the teeming warrens of basket-weaver’s quarters by the river. Here, the plague has already settled with the instinct of a dunghill fly. The river dwellings, tiers of cardboard hovels, leaning one on top of another against the high mud bank were festering with dirt, vermin and the disease.

Francis told Shon as they emerged, bent double, from the end hovel of the row:

We must find some place to house the sick. Shon reflected. He was enjoying himself more than he had expected. This foreign priest had shown much ‘face’ in stooping close to the stricken persons. Shon admired the “face” greatly.

“We shall commandeer the yamen of the imperial recorder.” quickly replied the lieutenant. “I am confident that my absent friend’s abode will make a pleasing hospital.”

They went there immediately. It was large and richly furnished, situated in the best part of the city. Shon effected entry by the simple expedient of breaking down the door. Presently the first cases arrived in litters and were arranged in rows on quilted mats upon the floor.

On this night, as Francis went up the hills towards the mission, tired from his long day’s work, he heard above the faint incessant death music the shouts of wild carousing and sporadic rifle shots. Behind him, Wai-Chu’s irregulars were looting shuttered shops. But presently the city fell again into silence. The bandits were streaming through the Eastern Gates, spurring their stolen ponies across the plains. He was glad to see them go.

At the summit of the hill the moon suddenly was dimmed. It began at last to snow. When Francis drew near the gateway in kaolin fence the air was alive and fluttering. He stood outside. Then he called softly. Immediately Mother Maria-Veronica came to the gate, holding up a lantern which cast a beam of spectral brightness to the snow. Father Chisholm scarcely dared to put the question. “Are you all well?”

“Yes.”

His heart stopped pounding in sheer relief.

“We established a hospital in the town...not much, but the best we could do. If one of the Sisters could be spared... would volunteer to come, to help us with the nursing I should be most grateful. Perhaps the sight of his face, worn, drawn and heavy-eyed, through the maze of snowflakes, restrained her. Maria-Veronica said: “I will come.”

Father Chisholm again experienced tremendous relief.

“It means moving your quarters to the yamen. Wrap up warmly and take all you need.

Ten minutes later he took her bag. They went down to the yamen together in silence. The dark lines of their footprints in the fresh snow were far apart.

Next morning, sixteen of those admitted to the yamen were dead. But three times that number were coming in. It was pneumonic plague and its virulence surpassed the fiercest venom. People dropped with it as if bludgeoned and were dead before the next dawn.

By the end of that week the city was riddled from end to end. A wave of panic struck through the apathy of the people. The southern exits from the city were choked with carts, chairs, overburdened mules and a struggling hysterical populace.

The cold intensified. A great blight seemed to lie on the afflicted land, here and beyond.

Father Chisholm had no news and could not grasp the immensity of the disaster: a hundred thousand miles of territory stricken, and half a million dead beneath the snow. Nor could he know

that the eyes of the civilized world were bent in sympathy on China, that expeditions quickly organized in America and Britain had arrived to combat the disease.

Facilitator's conclusion:

Severely ill people, and especially with noticeable frightening signs of the disease are often subjected to forced isolation. In other words, in addition to physical, moral and psychological sufferings a sick person has a fate of an outcast. People do not always understand correctly the severity of the disease and the possibility of infection, and therefore often go to extreme either underestimating the danger or exaggerating it. Fear to be infected leads to a desire to protect themselves and their loved ones from a possible source of infection. Often this desire reaches frightening proportions and becomes absurd, borders on astonishing cruelty and real discrimination against sick people and their families.

Disease is a special experience of a person, which gives a unique opportunity for the development of spirituality. To resist the onset of the disease is a very important task. It is important for both soul and body. Although it is not easy for friends and relatives, they should not only be always tolerant to terminally ill people but also, maintaining their dignity and richness of spirit, strive to support them psychologically and socially. It is the level of social support to the sick and disabled that demonstrates the level of development of society and its members.

Summing up

Goal: making a conclusion

Materials needed: none

Description: The facilitator stresses the importance of tolerance towards people from different social groups and with different ethical principles. Separately, the facilitator speaks about the importance of tolerance towards HIV positive people and possible ways of its manifestation.

The group discusses the following questions:

- What new happened during the class?
- What surprised you? What was unexpected?

Homework:

Goal: verbalization of lessons learned

Materials needed: workbook

Description: participants write an essay “Who are ‘strangers’ for me? What can I be grateful to them for?”