

MODULE 7

Planning for your children's futures



Trainer's introduction

This module helps participants consider possible care options for their children after a parent or parents have died. It looks at important factors to take into account and encourages participants to compare the advantages and disadvantages of their options. It is a key module for participants who are parents living with HIV. It is also useful to future guardians and carers who will learn about the factors that parents consider when making these important decisions. The module may also enable participants to support other parents, guardians and carers to plan for the future.

Approximate length of module: 2 hours 5 minutes

Aims

The aims of this module are to:

- help participants consider what factors are most important to parents in choosing care for their children
- explore the different care options for children
- help participants prepare for planning their care arrangements.

Key learning outcomes

By the end of this session participants will:

- have explored criteria for choosing someone to care for children
- have considered different care options and the pros and cons of each
- have looked at how to plan for care options for children
- recognise that different people will have different priorities when choosing care options
- recognise that although parents might choose one carer, that person will need support from others.

Trainer's preparation

Module plan (with suggested times)

- Looking at what is important to parents in arranging the future care of their children – **40 minutes**
- Exploring different care options for children – **1 hour 15 minutes**
- Reflection – **10 minutes**



Materials you will need

Cards for Activity 1: see preparation material, page 71

Overhead/flipchart 1: Outline of Module 7

Overhead/flipchart 2: Looking at care options

Trainer's guidance

Introduction

The activities in this module will help participants explore factors they think are most important in deciding the future care of children of all ages. Care issues and options will vary according to the age of the child because their characteristics and needs are different.

Introduce the module by explaining that its purpose is to help each participant explore what factors are most important to parents when they think about future care options for their children. Say that the session will help them explore the advantages and disadvantages of the different options. It will also help them think about planning their chosen option.

Go through the topics to be covered in the module and how it is structured.

Overhead/flipchart 1: Outline of Module 7

Please use the list in the module plan on page 67, but without the suggested times.

Remind the group that together you looked at stages of child development and children's changing characteristics and needs in Module 2. It may be very helpful to briefly remind the group of the main points of that session. Ask them to keep in mind the different needs of their own children at different ages when doing the following activities.

Activity 1 Looking at what is important to parents in arranging the future care of their children

Suggested time: 40 minutes

See page 71 for instructions on how to make and present the cards for this activity.

Explain that the aim of this activity is to help participants think about what characteristics and qualities parents would look for in a carer or family to look after a young child or teenager.

1. Divide participants into groups of three and give them a full set of the cards you have prepared beforehand. Explain that each card has a different personal quality or characteristic written on it. Ask each group to place the cards into three columns headed important, very important and not important, according to the importance they attach to the quality of the characteristic on each card in a future carer for their child or children. Ask them to come to some agreement if possible. Give them 15 minutes to do this.
2. Next ask participants to walk around to see how the other groups have placed the cards. Give them 10 minutes to do this.
3. Take 10 minutes to discuss how participants found the exercise and summarise the main points. What was easy and challenging about placing the cards? How might the way participants placed the cards affect how or who they choose to look after their child or children? Emphasise there is no one right choice.

Make sure you bring out the following points in your summary:

- It is important to think how each child would deal with a new carer or family situation where there are different rules from those they are used to.
- One way to address this is for a parent to look for a guardian or carer with similar ideas to their own about what is important and appropriate for children of different ages. This is why some parents prefer friends, rather than family, to look after their children.

- Think about how to prepare children for these changes. (This will also be looked at in future modules.)
- It is helpful to make frequent visits to the future carers, or to encourage the children to stay with them from time to time, so that they can get used to them.

Exploring different care options for children

Activity 2 Looking at care options

Suggested time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Explain that the aim of this activity is to help participants identify possible care options, looking at the advantages and disadvantages of each, to help them guide their planning.

1. To begin the activity write the word 'child' on the flipchart paper and ask the whole group to brainstorm for 10 minutes which people might be suitable carers for their children. Say they can include groups of people, such as the family or local support organisations, as well as individuals. Then write the word 'teenager' on the flipchart paper and repeat the activity.
2. Take about five minutes to go through both lists. Tell the group the options might be different for children of different ages and will also depend upon parents' preferences. Add some options to the list if the group has not suggested them. These might include: member of the extended family, friend's family, legal guardian, foster parent, children's home, child-headed family.
3. Ask participants to choose which option they would like to work on, and to form a group with two or three others who wish to think about the same option in more depth. It could be an option they prefer or one they have not thought much about yet. Encourage participants who will be guardians or carers in the future to choose an option they want to find out more about, and ask them to try put themselves in the place of a parent living with HIV facing this challenge. If too many people choose the same option, direct the participants so that all of the different options are all addressed.
4. Give the participants 15 minutes to think about the *advantages* of the care option they are considering. To guide them, ask them to look at the points on the overhead/flipchart below.

Overhead/flipchart 2: Looking at care options

Advantages – would the carer you are thinking about offer the following things to children?

- familiarity, feeling comfortable and 'at home'
- education
- housing/accommodation/space
- health
- religious and spiritual input
- meeting social needs
- means of dealing with bereavement
- stability and compatibility with existing family circumstances
- understanding of HIV and parents' views on disclosure.

Add your own factors that you think are important.

Now try to answer these questions:

- Do you have the resources (social and financial) to care for the child or teenager?
- Have you disclosed your HIV status to the carer(s)?
- Is your child living with HIV and does your intended carer know?
- What extra support will your child need if he or she is living with HIV?
- Does the child get on with this person or family?
- Do you think your child would like to live with this carer?
- Would your children be able to stay together with this carer?

4. Now ask the small groups to consider the *disadvantages* of their option for 10 minutes. Say that this is important, as any option will bring difficulties and challenges. Ask participants to discuss what they could do about these.

5. Inform participants that the next step is to share ideas in order to learn from each other. Ask each group to work with the other groups in turn, until all groups have worked with each other. Ask the groups to share the main points of their discussions to explore how different solutions might support each other. For example, if one participant felt that a neighbour might be able to help supervising a child at play or meal times, this might support another group's option of giving an older sibling (the main carer) time to study, shop or socialise. Give five minutes for each two-group discussion.

6. When all the groups have had five minutes together, ask everyone to come back to the whole group and share the key points of their discussions. Allowing 15 minutes for this. Guide the discussion by asking the following questions:

- What sorts of advantages and disadvantages came up for different care options?
- What issues and considerations came up for children of different age groups: 0-6; 7-12; and 13-18?
- What have participants learned to help choose a carer?
- What practical steps can they take to help prepare for the care of children?
- Say that it is important to think carefully about arranging support for children who are HIV positive. This does not mean the children could not live with the carer they have in mind; it just means that they will need more support and access to treatment. A self-support group for people living with HIV and AIDS might be helpful for them too.

7. Close the activity by saying that you hope it has helped the group to consider some options they had not thought of before. Say that it is important to consider how a range of different people can contribute to the care of their child or children. This helps to take the pressure off just one carer and will better meet a child's different needs.

Reflection

Activity 3 Reflecting on the module

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Explain that the aim of this activity is to draw the module to a close, help participants reflect on what they have done in this session and share key learning points with each other.

1. Give the group five minutes to work in pairs and discuss how they found the module. Ask them to think about what ideas or thoughts they are taking from the module. How do they feel about the way in which the day was structured and facilitated?
2. End the activity with three or four participants sharing what they have learned and their feelings about the day. Allow five minutes for this.

Close the module by thanking participants for their contribution. Tell the group that the modules that follow will guide them to take these issues forward. Say you look forward to working with the group in the next module.

Trainer's preparation material for Module 7**Cards for Activity 1**

Make a copy of the table below, and cut it up so that each box makes a separate card. Gather the cards into packs before the session. Make sure there are enough packs to give one pack to each small group of three participants. To each pack, add three blank cards to allow participants to add their own ideas.

Trustworthy	Parents in paid work	Similar approach to bringing up children or teenagers
Have teenage son/daughter	A married family	Have time and energy for the children
A stable family (one without too much stress and turmoil)	Good discipline	Patience
Loving	Enough money	Their children go to the same school
Religious and go to the same church as you	Close family relationship	Have child of same age as yours
Your child or teenager is familiar with the family	Has family gatherings – the extended family is actively involved	Live close by
Show affection to their children	Caring	Their children are well behaved
A family active in the village or town	Both parents are living at home	A family with several children of their own
They value education	Welcoming	Open-minded
Traditional		