

MODULE 10

Making a memory book



Trainer's introduction

This module introduces the idea of a memory book and provides guidelines on how to make one. We have suggested you split the module into two sessions to avoid rushing. The first session covers the purpose and possible content of a memory book. The second shows how to start planning and making one. The module is useful to parents living with HIV who want to make their own memory book, and is highly relevant to future guardians, community workers and carers who can provide support and guidance to help others create a lasting record for their children.

Approximate length of module: 2 hours 10 minutes (Part 1) plus 3 hours 50 minutes (Part 2)

Aims

Both parts of this module aim to:

- provide an understanding of the purpose of a memory book
- explore where to get support to make a memory book
- think about what a memory book might contain
- help participants start planning a memory book
- help participants start writing a memory book

Key learning outcomes

By the end of this module participants will:

- have improved their understanding of the purpose of a memory book
- recognise a memory book as part of a range of memory work activities that combine to meet children's needs
- recognise the importance of open and appropriate communication within families to prepare for the future
- have explored possible sources of support
- have an increased understanding of the value of recording histories and experiences, and of recording important information in a child-friendly way
- know how to plan and make a memory book

Trainer's preparation

Module plan (with suggested times)

Part 1

- Understanding the purpose and context of a memory book – **30 minutes**
- Thinking about starting a memory book and sources of support – **30 minutes**
- Thinking about what parents and children might want to include in a memory book – **1 hour to 1 hour 10 minutes**

Part 2

- Watching and discussing the video *A River of Hope* – **1 hour 30 minutes**
- Helping participants to start planning their memory books – **30 minutes**
- Helping participants to start writing their memory books – **1 hour 40 minutes**
- Reflection – **10 minutes**



Materials you will need

Copies of the *Memory Book for Africa* (see Appendix 1: Key course materials, page 123)
 Four sets of sample pages of completed memory books and magazines, if available
 Examples of different books and files that can be used to make a memory book
 Video: *A River of Hope* (see Appendix 1: Key course materials, page 123)
 One mango tree outline for each participant (page 124). Enough copies of family trees and maps to allow one for each child of each participant (page 125-6).
 Overhead/flipchart 1: Outline of Part 1, Module 10
 Overhead/flipchart 2: Preparing yourself to start a memory book
 Overhead/flipchart 3: Outline of Part 2, Module 10
 Overhead/flipchart 4: Sources of help and information

Trainer's notes

Please make sure you read the trainer's notes at the end of this module (page 101). They give you useful background on making memory books.

Trainer's guidance

Before you start this module please be aware that participants may become sad and emotional at times. Give them space to observe without speaking and to participate when they are ready.

Part 1

Introduction

Start the module by explaining to participants that it will be split into two parts. The first part looks at the purpose and importance of a memory book and how it fits into memory work. It explores what a memory book might contain. In the second part, participants will plan and start making their memory books.

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

Overhead/flipchart 1: Outline of Part 1, Module 10

Please use the list in the Module plan on page 89, but without the suggested times.

Remind the group of the group agreement at the start of the course. Say that the module is likely to contain confidential information and that all participants have agreed not to share outside the group what they hear about others on the course.

Understanding the purpose and context of a memory book

Activity 1 Trainer's presentation on memory books

Suggested time: 30 minutes

Please use the trainer's notes (page 101) and the *Memory Book for Africa* to plan this presentation. As you talk to the group, explain about memory books as if it is the first time they have heard about it. This will help you include all the important points and avoid making assumptions about what participants might already know.

Explain that the aim of this activity is to introduce the idea of a memory book and see how it fits into what participants have learned about memory work so far.

You can use the following presentation as a framework. Add extra information from the trainer's notes (page 101), or from your own knowledge of the local area.

Presentation

An introduction to memory books

All participants know that one of the outcomes of the course is to learn how to make a memory book. It is easy to think the memory book is the main purpose of the course. But everything we have learned together in all the other modules about disclosing HIV status, understanding and communicating with children, and planning for the future, is just as important. The memory book is one part of a whole package.

What is a memory book and why make one?

A memory book is a written record of:

- historical facts about the family
- parents' beliefs and traditions
- parents' hopes for their children's future
- warm memories and messages for the children.

If parents die when children are young, important memories fade away. Children risk growing up without understanding who they are. A memory book provides a way to help parents, family and friends save vital information for the children as they grow up. A memory book cannot protect children from loss and separation, but it can help them understand the past, know that the parent(s) they have lost loved them, and be stronger to face the future. It will give them a sense of belonging.

Also, making a memory book helps parents think about their whole life, including the happy times. The children see that there is more to their family life than HIV and AIDS. Children can also write their own memory books which may be important, for example, for a child who has been orphaned.

There are different ways of making a memory book, which we will look at in Part 2. NACWOLA uses a ready-made book that people can fill in. Other groups have made books from recycled materials (see page 99).

The history of the memory book

Memory books for people affected by HIV and AIDS were first made in England in 1993 by African parents who thought they would die while their children were young. The children were growing up in a foreign country and they risked losing contact with their origins. These parents left their children a legacy of wise words, precious memories and standards to live by.

Since then memory books have been made by many more people. The idea is relevant to people of different cultures and backgrounds. People who cannot write can be helped to make a memory book. In Africa, NACWOLA in Uganda has led the way in spreading the idea of the memory book.

What to include in a memory book

Every memory book is different. Each person includes what he or she thinks his or her children should know. But it is important to remember that the focus is not on death and sadness. The aim is to help children understand who they are, and to give them information to make the best of the future.

Memory books may include:

- information about both parents and the early life of each child – experience shows these are the most important pages in a memory book
- parents' beliefs, ideals and hopes for their children's future

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- traditions and special events of your family and clan
- memories of happy times and jokes
- words of favourite songs, hymns or poems
- knowledge about cooking, cultivation or caring for animals
- details of how to contact close relatives and friends
- a family tree and maps marking important places to the family.

Where to get support to start making a memory book

Anyone who has known the child, the family or the home area might be able to provide stories, information and memories. Others might be able to give practical advice and support and be willing to act as carers, legal guardians or befrienders. All these people can be recorded in the memory book, to inform the children and to provide support while making the book.

If one parent has already died, it is important to collect information about them to put in the memory book.

People who can help with memories and information about a partner include:

- friends from school, work or the community
- religious or community leaders
- health workers, youth club and activity leaders
- family and clan members.

Sources of personal support include:

- self-help groups or HIV and AIDS support groups
- professionals such as health workers, social workers and counsellors
- local religious groups.

Sources of help for planning for the future care of children include:

- self-help groups
- health professionals, social workers and counsellors
- religious and community leaders
- lawyers
- local organisations that work with children
- family and community elders
- PLHA support network for children who are HIV-positive.

Sources of help for older children who live alone

Appoint a legal guardian or befriender. These might include:

- neighbours or parents of school friends
- relatives or friends
- community elders, leaders or other respected community members.

Sometimes older children become responsible for younger brothers and sisters as well as themselves. These young people need extra support from neighbours, friends, relatives and the community. The children heading households may also find that if their parents have not written a memory book, they need help to write one for themselves and their brothers and sisters. These young people carry a lot of responsibility, and need sensitive practical and emotional support.

Here you could read out the words of two children heading households alone:

“Our training at NACWOLA has changed the way I treat my younger sister. Before, I used to make her work hard all the time. Now I understand why she gets angry or upset. She needs time to play with her friends.” Teenage girl living alone with her younger sister in Uganda.

“I have hope for the future, because NACWOLA is building my capacity for the future to enable me to help my siblings. I have hope that NACWOLA will give me the parental love that I have missed and protect me from apathy in the community.” Boy heading household in Uganda.

Next, you could read the following words of a community worker who received memory book training and went on to support others:

“After receiving training in memory book writing, I trained women in the community to write memory books. A 30-year-old lawyer returned to Uganda from overseas. I suspected the man had HIV. I approached him and explained the importance of writing a memory book and a will with him. The man wrote the memory book and the will before he died. After his death, the memory book and will were retrieved and this avoided inheritance problems.” COBAP community worker, Uganda

Continue the presentation by showing the group different examples of memory books that others have made. If this is not possible make sure you can show the example of the memory book you have made yourself (see the guidelines in the trainer’s notes on page 103). Allow 10 minutes for participants to look at memory books.

Also introduce the idea of a memory basket or box. Explain that this is a container that holds special objects to keep memories alive and remind children of daily life. The objects are not usually worth much money, but have sentimental value. They could include small domestic objects, favourite books, photographs and other small possessions that belonged to family members. If it is possible to include a tape recording of the parent’s voice or perhaps the parent and child together, this can be a very precious possession.

Close the presentation by saying that the module will enable participants to explore these ideas and issues in greater depth. Each participant will be able to relate these issues to how they want to plan, and what they would want to include in, a memory book.

End this part of the module by emphasising that a memory book is just one part of the memory work process. The aim of memory work as a whole is to:

- open communication in the family
- make plans for the future
- build each child’s sense of identity and self-worth
- help children think to the difficult future and prepare them to cope in the best way
- make sure children have important information about their family and background
- make sure children know who they can trust.

Thinking about starting a memory book and sources of support

Activity 2 Preparing to start a memory book

Suggested time: 30 minutes

Explain that the aim of this activity is to help participants think about whether they are ready to begin work on a memory book, and where they might get support. Ask participants who are not living with HIV to try put themselves in the place of a parent planning a memory book for their children.

1. Ask the participants to work in small groups of four or five people and to consider the following questions for 10 minutes. Ask them to be ready to volunteer feedback.

Overhead/flipchart 2: Preparing to start a memory book

- How will you feel about creating a memory book?
- When should you start working on your memory book?
- What can you do with difficult or sensitive information?
- Who can you ask for support?

2. Next ask for each group to report back the main points of their discussions in five minutes. Summarise these points. Be sensitive if any participants are upset. Make sure you cover the following points:

- Remind the group that it is important to make memory books while the training is fresh in their minds. Say that it is also important to be able to support their children emotionally while making the books.
- There are no rules about when children can be trusted with family secrets. Each family and child is different. It might be better to think about how each child might react to difficult or sensitive information.
- Often children react well when they are trusted with the truth about problems in the family. But if you disclose information that has a negative effect and, for example, children become distressed or react against new responsibilities, be prepared to organise support for yourself and the child. This might be through counselling provided by an HIV and AIDS support group or a community or religious organisation, or just having a valued friend who can listen to you both.
- Remind the group of sources of support you covered in the presentation. At this point you can add other ideas from the trainer's notes (page 101) or from your own knowledge of the local area.

Thinking about what parents and children might want to include in a memory book

Activity 3 What would you want to put in a memory book about yourself?

Suggested time: 30-40 minutes

Explain that the aim of this activity is to give participants a chance to think about the kind of information and memories they want to give their children about themselves. Say that parents can change their minds and put different things in their books from what they say in this activity. This is just to give them a start. Ask participants who are not living with HIV to try to put themselves in the place of a parent planning a memory book for their children.

1. Ask participants to think individually about what they would like to include in a memory book about themselves. If participants can write, ask them to make some notes. You could put people who cannot write in pairs or small groups with others who can. Write down the ideas on separate pieces of paper for each person in the group. Give participants 10 minutes to do this by themselves, or 20 minutes if they are working in pairs or small groups.
2. Next, bring everyone back to the whole group. Allow 10 minutes to discuss how participants found the experience of thinking about things to go in the memory book:
 - What difficulties did they experience?
 - Can they imagine themselves working on this at home?
 - Who would they want to share making a memory book with, if anyone?
3. Summarise the main points and bring out the following:
 - If participants cannot write, they could ask for the help of a trusted friend or relative. Or they could go to an HIV and AIDS support group to ask for help.

- If they want to share the experience of making the book, children can find this very positive. It could be an experience they will remember and value in later life. Many parents think: “Why am I just writing this down? Why don’t I talk to my children about this as well?” Many children become curious and actively involved in making the memory book. This gives them the chance to talk about the content of the book and other, often sensitive, topics. Children’s questions can lead to more open discussions about family situations.

Allow 10 minutes for this.

Activity 4 Thinking about receiving information as a child

Suggested time: 30 minutes

Explain that the aim of this activity is to help participants reflect on their past and their upbringing. This will help each person to think about how they were treated as a child and how important information was passed on to them. This will guide them to consider what information children might want and how to pass it on in a positive way.

1. In the whole group, ask participants to think for two minutes about how their family life was organised and how they learned important information when they were children.
2. Ask participants to brainstorm for five minutes the following questions:
 - How did you learn about family history, rules and traditions?
 - Who was in charge of different aspects of family life?

Record the ideas on a flipchart.

3. Next, divide participants into groups of five or six people. Ask them to think about their family life today and discuss the following question:
 - How and why have things changed from your own childhood days and experiences?

Allow five minutes for this.

4. Ask the groups to continue the discussion for another five minutes to consider:
 - How can you help children to know who they are, where they belong and who they can trust in the future?

5. After five minutes ask for the groups to volunteer feedback. Record the key points on the flipchart. Summarise the discussion and bring out the following points:

- Making a memory book encourages parents to think about the information children need and want for the future.
- Making the memory book together with children means the book will contain what they want as well as what you want.

Allow 10 minutes for this.

Bring the first part of the module to a close. Say that in the second part participants will start to plan and make their own memory books. Remind participants to bring something that feels emotionally precious to them to the next session.

Part 2 – Making memory books

Introduction

Please note the first activity in this part of the module involves playing a video. You will also need to discuss the video following guidance provided in the booklet that goes with it. You will therefore need to obtain the video and booklet, and organise the video player and TV. You will need to watch the video and familiarise yourself with the booklet before the session.

Because you will be training others to make memory books, it is important to practice making one for yourself. This experience will give you confidence and may enable you to give practical tips to participants.

Start Part 2 by explaining that it carries on directly from Part 1. In this session the group will learn how to plan and start a memory book. It is useful to repeat how this module is relevant to parents living with HIV and carers alike as stated in the introduction to Part 1.

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

Overhead/flipchart 3: Outline of Part 2, Module 10

Please use the list in the module plan on page 89, but without the suggested times.

Before you start the activities, remind the participants about the group agreement and confidentiality.

Watching and discussing the video *A River of Hope*

Activity 5 Video – *A River of Hope*

Suggested time: 1 hour 30 minutes hours for video and discussion

Participants may become upset during this video. Be prepared for some members of the group to stay quiet during the discussion.

Explain that the aim of this activity is to give insight into a number of issues, such as talking to children about memory books, how they can benefit from having one, and seeing children as carers.

1. Show the video (44 minutes).
2. Discuss the video using the guidance in the booklet that goes with the video. Allow approximately 45 minutes for discussion.

Helping participants to start planning their memory books

Activity 6 Planning a memory book

Suggested time: 30 minutes

Explain that the aim of this activity is to help participants think about who holds information that is appropriate for their memory book, and who might support them to make the book and prepare for the future. Ask them to think back to the presentation in Part 1 of the module for ideas. Be prepared to remind the group of the key points. Remind those participants who are not living with HIV to try to put themselves in the place of a parent planning a memory book for a child.

1. Give a copy of the mango tree outline to each participant (see Appendix 1, page 124). Explain that the purpose of the exercise is to think about people or organisations in the community, not just family members, who can help. Ask the group to think about how different people can help with the different pieces of work they need to do for the children. By the end of the exercise, participants should have filled in the leaves of the tree with names of people or organisations that could provide information or support them in a particular way, either to write the book or prepare for the future.
2. Ask the participants to form small groups. Say that the groups will be sharing personal information, so they need to feel comfortable with the other people in their group. Make sure at least one person in each group can write. If some people prefer to work on their own or in pairs, that's fine.
3. Ask participants to think as widely as possible about one or more of the following questions. Say they need not name names, but to think of the kinds of organisations or people that may help. Ask them to start filling in leaves on their mango tree when they have

thought carefully about the questions. Tell them they have 20 minutes to fill in some leaves. Allow five minutes for this introduction and to go through the overhead/flipchart below.

Overhead/flipchart 4: Sources of help and information

- Who has knowledge of the family history? For example, who has memories of a parent who has already passed away, or stories about individual children that can go into the memory book?
- Who can parents rely on for personal support while creating a memory book?
- Who can help parents work out safe plans for their children?
- Who could be asked to act as guardian or to befriend older children when parents have passed away?

As the groups work, go round and look at participants' ideas. Be ready to help people think and make suggestions of useful organisations if anyone is having difficulties.

4. Ask participants to try identify someone, or think how to find someone, who could be their main helper in making a memory book. Allow five minutes for this.

5. Bring the activity to a close by saying that the mango tree does not have to be full. Also, parents do not have to follow up all the ideas they have put down. This activity is just to get people thinking about sources of support beyond the immediate family circle and to learn from other people's ideas. Be ready to share good ideas about organisations from participants' mango trees. Do not mention any person's name, only organisations. Do not break confidentiality. Allow five minutes for summing up.

Helping participants to start writing their memory books

Activity 7 Starting to write a memory book

Suggested time: 1 hour 40 minutes

Please read *Memory Book for Africa* thoroughly before this activity and the trainer's notes (page 101). They will give you lots of ideas and information to guide participants.

Explain that the aim of this activity is to help participants begin to write their books and start tackling some complicated topics in a supportive environment. Remind those participants not living with HIV to try to put themselves in the place of a parent starting to write a memory book for a child.

1. Allow 20 minutes for the following introduction. Start by again showing participants the memory book you prepared and any other examples of memory books you have borrowed. This will give the group ideas for their own memory books. The sort of topics to cover include those in the presentation you gave in Activity 1 (page 91) – be ready to remind the group of these. Suggestions for content that other families have found very useful include:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| ● a title for the book | ● childhood |
| ● who the book belongs to | ● growing up and adult life |
| ● full names of the writer | ● interests and activities |
| ● the story of the family | ● likes and dislikes |
| ● facts about family members | ● special memories |
| ● the family home | ● beliefs and thoughts on life |
| ● the birth of the child/children | ● health |
| ● how they got their name | ● life today |
| ● when they were a baby | ● names and addresses of people |
| ● the first time they... | important to the family, for example, |
| ● their school days and growing up | banker, lawyer, minister or trusted friend |
| ● their interests and activities | ● dates and information about other |
| ● parent's favourite memories of them | important events and people |
| ● hopes for the child's future | |

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- important people in the child's life
- information about the child's health
- mother and/or father
- certificates, bank books, property deeds or a will
- any special memories or messages for the child.

It is important here to say the memory book (or box/basket) should not be used to store legal documents, because the books are for children. It is also vital to say that the memory book is not a legal document, and therefore a will should be made separately. The next module covers making a will. Also, remind participants of the following:

- Often parents do not have photographs of their children. A way to overcome this is to use photographs of babies and children from magazines. Parents should not pretend that the picture is of their own child. They can write something like: "This picture reminds me of you as a baby" or "This is how you looked the first day you went to school."
- By using photographs, pictures from magazines or drawings as well as writing, parents can make the book look more attractive and encourage the child to read it. Pictures can also be used to depict a story.
- Parents who cannot write easily can ask for help from a friend, relative (perhaps their own children) or community worker.
- It is best to write a memory book as if you are talking to the child, using 'I' and 'you'. For example "I remember when you..." This makes the book feel more personal for the child.

Finally, tell the group there is no right or wrong way to write a memory book. The parents decide the content and you as the trainer are offering ideas to start people off. Each parent should choose to include what feels right for them and their child.

2. Next, say it is time to start working on the memory books. Ask participants to divide themselves into the same small groups as the previous activity, where they should feel comfortable talking about personal information.

3. Ask each group to choose one of the easy topics, such as: 'Where I grew up' or 'My school days'. Tell participants that there is no fixed order in writing a memory book. It is like a jigsaw. If you like, you can start with the easy pieces first. Ask the groups to talk about what they want to say first and then to start writing down their ideas. Remind participants that they are practising producing a memory book. They are learning by doing. They are not expected to produce a perfect page for a memory book. Ask them to work in groups for about 30 minutes.

4. Bring everyone back to the whole group to discuss:

- how it feels so far
- whether it is better to make one memory book for the whole family to share, or a book for each child
- the problems and benefits of both the above options.

Allow 10 minutes for discussion.

4. Next, share the following advice from parents who have made memory books:

- First write the general pages about family history, clan, your experiences of growing up and family trees. If possible, photocopy these for each child.
- Next, write pages for each child about their birth and early development, likes and dislikes, experiences growing up, and special messages and hopes from the parent.
- Then write a summary about brothers and sisters. Be clear about parentage if they have different fathers. Make a copy of the summary for each child's book.

Finally, say that these are suggestions from people who have faced similar issues.

Participants do not have to do it this way, if they have their own clear idea of how they want to tackle making a memory book. Allow five minutes for this discussion.

5. Next, ask the group to go back to the same small groups. This time ask them to discuss one of the more complicated topics before writing something down. Give them 15 minutes.

6. Next, ask the groups to discuss the following questions. Give them 20 minutes:
- Should we be talking to our children about the sort of information we have been writing down?
 - How much do they already know about these things?
 - Does the age of children matter?
 - How can we explain the memory book ideas to our children?
 - How might the children themselves contribute to the memory book?
 - Is this a good way to encourage discussion about the family situation?
7. Ask for feedback from each group. Record the main points on a flipchart. Make sure the following points are highlighted:
- Difficult or sensitive information, such as details about the cause of death of a parent or break up of a marriage, need not be included in the memory book. One solution is to put a short note in the memory book and leave a letter with a trusted friend until the children are old enough to read it. Make a note in the book about who holds the letter.
 - Ask participants to think back to the Module 4 to help them plan how they will explain the idea of the memory book and what it contains.
 - Many parents say it helps open discussion and understanding if children know that parents are making a memory book and can join in. Allow 10 minutes for discussion.
8. Finally, remind the group that the memory book cannot be written in a day. Parents should not delay the task, but start as soon as possible – before they begin having health problems and while the training is still fresh in their minds. Say also that some people find writing difficult and people might be struggling with illness or painful emotions. These people could ask a friend or older child to help by jotting down what they say.
9. You can pass on ideas from people who have made low-cost memory books. These tips include using pieces of stiff cardboard, cut to the size needed for covers. These can be painted or covered with pictures from magazines to make them attractive. The inside pages can be made from recycled paper. If photographs are not available, pictures can be cut from magazines or newspapers or the parent can draw pictures of the home, family members or simple maps. A thread of string or thick colourful twine can be used through the holes to bind pages and covers, and tie it all tidily together. Participants who are not parents themselves can use this information to support other parents to produce memory books.



Low-cost memory books



Binding of a low-cost memory book



NACWOLA memory book

10. Finally, close the activity by thanking the group for their hard work. Say you hope they have plenty of ideas and feel confident about making a memory book.

Reflection

Activity 8 Closing the session on memory books

Suggested time: 10 minutes

1. Ask participants to talk to a partner about:

- how to make good use of the people named on the mango tree
- how to make time and space to carry on with individual memory books
- how and where to keep their memory books.

Allow five minutes for this.

2. End the module by asking whether anyone would like to share their thoughts with the group. Allow five minutes for this.

Close the module by thanking the participants for their contribution to the day. Say it has been hard work, but you hope they feel prepared to work on their own memory books away from the course. Emphasise that memory books need to be made while parents (or guardians) still have some strength, and can support the children emotionally. Encourage them to get started as soon as possible.

Wish the participants good luck. Say that you look forward to working with them in the next module.

MODULE 10 – Trainer's notes

Please be aware that many parents living with HIV may have high expectations of a memory book as they start the training course. However, a memory book will never be the solution to people's problems. It is a tool to help parents start some important work for the futures of their children. Remember also that the memory book is one part of a whole package.

Encourage parents to look outside the family for support from people in the community, professionals and organisations: they should not feel defeated if there is no relative or neighbour to support them. Add your own ideas to those below, including details about local self-help and other support organisations.

Preparation

- Read the *Memory Book for Africa* carefully so you feel confident to talk about it and answer questions.
- A good guideline to follow as a trainer is to be able to do yourself what you ask participants to do. So, practise writing a memory book for yourself. This will remind you of the pain and pleasure of remembering the past, the difficulty of finding the right words to describe sensitive facts and what to do when you lack accurate information. You do not have to show your personal details to anyone else. This activity is to help you tune into the feelings of people who are being asked to share personal information.
- Before the course, make an example memory book to show participants. This book should be about an imaginary person. You can include drawings or pictures from magazines rather than photographs of people who might be identified. This takes time and thought, but your efforts will be rewarded.

Possible sources of support for families

1. Anyone who has known the child, the family or the home area might have stories, information and memories for the memory book. If one parent has already died, it is important to collect information about him or her.

People who might be appropriate to ask for support include:

- school teachers
- school friends
- parents of school friends
- religious leaders
- members of a religious congregation
- youth club or activity leaders
- sports group leaders and colleagues
- health workers
- community leaders
- employers
- friends from work
- neighbours
- brothers and sisters
- distant relatives
- older members of the community
- clan members.

2. Sources of personal support include:

- a local self-help or HIV and AIDS support group like NACWOLA
- religious leaders or members of a familiar congregation
- local non-governmental organisations

- professionals – for example, health workers, social workers or counsellors, who may provide support directly or advice about where to get support
 - older, respected members of the community.
3. Others who could help make plans for the future care of children include:
- members of self-help or other HIV and AIDS support groups like NACWOLA
 - PLHA groups that provide support and advice for children living with HIV
 - health professionals, social workers, counsellors
 - religious or community leaders
 - lawyers, especially local and/or women's legal services
 - non-governmental organisations that work with children – some of these have school fee schemes, for example
 - family elders and senior members of the village.
4. Legal guardians or befrienders for older children who live alone include:
- neighbours or former neighbours who already know the children
 - parents of school friends
 - relatives or friends, even if they live somewhere else
 - community elders, leaders of support groups or other respected local people who may be willing to oversee older children who live alone.

Benefits of a memory book

- It helps parents think about their whole life, including the happy times and not just present difficulties.
- It helps children see that there is more to their family life than HIV and AIDS.
- Parents begin to think about all the important information children might need or want. The memory book gives them an easy way to start writing it down.
- Communication between children and parents becomes more open and richer. When parents start thinking about memory books, they ask themselves: "Why am I just writing this down? Why don't I talk about this with my children?"
- Many children become curious about, and actively involved with their memory book. They are interested to see parents writing and collecting photos and information. This gives parents the chance to address different, often sensitive topics with them. Children's questions often lead to more open discussion about family situations.
- Children can support parents who have difficulty writing by collecting information and/or writing down a parent's words. In this way a memory book can become a family project.
- Filling in family trees and asking children to name people who are important to the family is a way of checking that children understand the family ties and community networks. This means that they will know which people could help them in the future.
- Many parents are thankful to have a place to write down their hopes for their children's futures. The memory book gives them a way to express these or carry them forward.
- The memory book sections that cover family beliefs and traditions give parents an opening to talk or write about subjects they might have left unsaid.
- The family becomes better informed about their current situation, sources of support and options for the future.
- The family becomes more informed about HIV and AIDS, and its implications.
- Firm plans can be made for uncertain futures. For example, parents can arrange guardians and how to legally deal with property and assets. This ensures improved care and better protection of children. This often increases confidence and makes everyone feel better at a difficult time.
- The more open people are, the more they are able to access support and reduce

their isolation.

- Making a memory book usually has a therapeutic effect. Making the book together is rewarding, because everyone can be involved and they can see the outcome.
- Everyone is better prepared for changes to come.

Challenges to consider and be ready to handle

- There may be secret and sensitive family information parents do not know how to explain. For example, children in the same family might have different fathers.
- Explaining the illness and death of another parent, or talking about a parent's own illness, will probably bring out powerful emotions that seem overwhelming to begin with. These might include distress, anger and fear.
- Parents with many children may not have the resources or time to produce a book for each child.
- If there are no photos and little information available about the past, parents can feel inadequate.
- Most parents are keen to start, but it can be difficult to keep working on the memory book without support. How can you help people to achieve their plans? Could an informal parent support group be formed by participants? What other sources of support are there?
- What can you suggest to support parents who cannot read or write, both during and after the course? How can you make sure these parents do not feel inadequate?
- Many parents want to know when children are old enough to be entrusted with family secrets. You must be ready to say that every child and situation is different; there are no rules about this. Try to help parents imagine the effect of giving information to particular people. For example, what effect would revealing their HIV status have upon different children and how does this influence how they would communicate it?
- What support can be given to parents who are worried about the negative outcomes that being open may bring?
- How can you prepare parents to support children who might become very distressed and frightened, or those who react against taking on new responsibilities? Note that many parents report that their children react well when they are trusted with the truth about problems in the family.
- What can you suggest to parents who have no one to name as guardians or supporters for their children? How are they going to deal with this, both in the memory book and in discussions with their children?
- Be prepared to help participants deal with disappointment that the memory book is not a magic solution.
- Think about what you can suggest to parents who cannot afford the material to make a memory book.

Making the memory book

- Remind the parents and other carers on the course that the memory book is a practical tool to guide thinking and planning for the future.
- Remind participants about confidentiality and group rules. What they hear on the course is personal and private. It should never be repeated outside the room. This is true of all the training, but the memory book sessions are particularly sensitive.
- When participants need to talk about things that are usually kept private within the family, make sure they are in a small group where they feel comfortable to talk openly. This applies both to the parents themselves and the carers on the course, who you will ask to try put themselves in the place of parents living with HIV.
- Sometimes people go into details that they might regret afterwards. Be ready to help them stop if you think they are going too far.
- Provide some local magazines or newspapers with pictures of babies and children

that can be used by parents who have no photos.

- If you are aware of participants who have difficulty writing, try to find trustworthy volunteers to help with these sessions. It is important that at the end of the module, everyone has something written down. At least make sure every group includes some individuals who can write.
- When it is time to begin writing, start with a relatively easy, descriptive heading, for example, 'Where I grew up' or 'My schooldays'. More emotional and complex topics can follow when people feel more confident.
- In the training session there will only be time to write a few lines about a few topics.

Memory basket or box

Encourage participants, as they make their memory books, to collect small domestic objects, favourite books, photos and other small possessions that belonged to family members.

These are not usually valuable in monetary terms, but are everyday items that help to keep memories alive and remind children of daily family life. They can put these things in a memory basket or box for their children's futures. In Uganda some parents use specially woven baskets and others decorate tin trunks in which to store their family treasures.

Follow-up

If possible, organise a follow-up session to check on progress and give support. Give people a date to work towards for their memory books and action plans. Remember that in reality most parents will be working alone after the workshop. It is important to guide them to make realistic plans about how, when and where they will carry on their memory work.