

DIGITAL MESSAGING TOOLKIT



Including resources such as:

Social media templates

WhatsApp sequences

Radio and video scripts

SMS templates

This resource has been developed as part of Sonke Gender Justices' SRHR4All Programme: Toolkit and Digital Platform for Strengthening Accurate, Supportive Information on Age-Appropriate Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Learner Wellbeing.

REACHING YOUNG PEOPLE DIRECTLY: YOUTH AND THE YPAR EVIDENCE

While young people are not the only audience for this Digital Messaging Toolkit, they are the people who built its evidence base through the SRHR4All Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR), which involved close to 1,000 participants across Uganda, Malawi, and Ethiopia. The surveyed participants included out-of-school youth and youth with disabilities who were also involved in the entire research process, from conceptualisation through data collection and analysis to the final write-up of all three country reports. Therefore, the messaging in this Toolkit has been developed to respond to the real-life challenges and barriers facing youth in accessing effective and meaningful CSE.

This Digital Messaging Toolkit should be read alongside the Stakeholder Engagement Toolkit, encompassing individual guides for community and traditional leaders; religious leaders; teachers and school administrators; parent-teacher associations; ministries of education and health; and CSOs and NGOs. While each of these guides aims to develop and facilitate internal dialogue between different groups, the Digital Messaging Toolkit aims to equip stakeholders, particularly youth and their peer networks, with how to engage safely and effectively online in order to champion and access safe CSE information.

Reaching young people with accurate CSE through these online channels is particularly important as:

- Individuals aged 10–35 make up over half of **Malawi's** population and disproportionately experience SRHR challenges, including high rates of HIV, adolescent pregnancy, and unmet contraceptive needs.
- In Uganda, 33% of its population is under the age of 19, with an **estimated** 649,000 adolescent girls aged 15–19 sexually active and not wishing to conceive, yet over 55% report an unmet need for modern contraception.
- In **Ethiopia**, adolescents and youth make up around a third of the population, and 13% of girls aged 15–19 have already begun childbearing.

In addition, while young people access CSE primarily through exposure within the school setting, YPAR findings show that young people are increasingly accessing CSE-related content online. To this end, the report shows that **youth often turned to social media and peer networks** to gain exposure to CSE and knowledge about SRHR. Researchers in all three countries **worried about the reliability and safety** of accessing accurate, reliable sexuality-related information from the internet, because of the lack of regulation of online messaging on popular platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram. These sites were major sources of information for youth in the three countries, which shows that **African youth are actively part of a global youth culture that is expressed, negotiated, and regulated in online communities**. This Digital Messaging Toolkit therefore seeks to ensure that young people, and those who seek to interact with them online, are provided with accurate, safe, and reliable information to do so.

How to use this section

- Use the provided scripts and resources in a manner that allows you to be direct, open, and honest about these topics.
- Do not try to shame or lecture your audience.
- Have young people themselves do the voice-overs for content, rather than only adult narrators, where possible.
- Consider using translators for local languages, where possible.
- Reuse the local terms for CSE already established for each country as indicated in the table below.

Malawi	“Life Skills Education” at primary level; “HIV Education” or “Sexual and Reproductive Health Education” at secondary level.
Uganda	“Sexuality Education” is taught as part of “Life Education”.
Ethiopia	“Sexual education” “AIDS education” or “life-skills education”.

HOW TO SPOT MIS AND DISINFORMATION ONLINE

01

Identify the SOURCE of the information or the account.

A warning sign may be that the account is anonymous or unidentifiable. Where the account is named, check whether the source is a school, a health worker, or a known organisation. Credible information is willing to say where it came from while those who spread mis and disinformation usually hide behind fake or anonymous accounts.

02

Notice the LANGUAGE used.

Mis and disinformation often use absolute, alarming words such as “always,” “never,” “illegal,” “will destroy our children” rather than specific, measured claims. Genuine concerns around CSE, its content or its effects, tend to be specific while manufactured ones tend to be dramatic and fear based.



03

VERIFY the information where possible.

Trustworthy information points to something you can verify. This may include a named study, an official policy or a specific source rather than vague appeals like “everyone knows” or “studies show” without naming the actual study or findings. Another warning signal to look out for when verifying the information is whether the post seems like it is part of a coordinated campaign. If the same message, image, or phrasing is appearing identically across many different social media platforms, pages or accounts, that may be a sign of coordinated campaign instead of an individual concern.

04

DECIDE whether the call to action seems fear based or immediate.

If the content seeks to provoke an emotional reaction with an immediate call to share, it may be a hallmark sign of disinformation. Remember, genuine information can wait for you to think it through and verify it.

BEFORE you share or believe something: Go through the above steps, refer to the Stakeholder Engagement Toolkit and remember that asking a question is always safer than sharing something you haven’t checked.

TIPS FOR STAYING SAFE ONLINE

Protect your personal details

Do not share the your name, school, exact location, or photos with accounts or people you don’t actually know in real life.

Learn to spot the warning signs

If someone online asks you to keep a conversation secret, pressures you to share photos or personal information, or offers something in exchange for anything personal, it is a red flag, and you’re allowed to stop responding or block them.

Know you can always ask for help

If something online makes you uncomfortable, confused, or scared, tell a trusted adult or teacher or reach out through csresources.genderjustice.org.za.



SOCIAL MEDIA TEMPLATES

Twelve customisable Canva templates have been created for the purpose of sharing creative and interactive information on CSE. These templates are meant to encourage open and candid conversation about CSE and to allow users to engage in a meaningful way.

These include the below social media templates that can be edited for use by different stakeholders:

You can access these Templates here



WHATSAPP SEQUENCES

WhatsApp sequences are a pre-built series of messages sent to one person automatically, spaced over time or triggered by an action such as a signup. Importantly, you must have a WhatsApp Business account to make use of this feature so these are general templates designed for organised groups such as teachers or leaders engaging with community members on CSE related topics who want to follow up on discussions already had.

5 WhatsApp follow-up message templates covering conversations after initial exposure to CSE information.

These messages cover the scenarios that come up most often when following up with community members about CSE. They include an initial follow-up after first exposure, a check-in after a dialogue or meeting, a few-days-later touchpoint, re-engagement after silence, and a reminder before a scheduled conversation. Each template below is written to feel personal rather than automated. It is also important to ensure that you received permission to communicate with the community members and to follow up with them via electronic communication. A simple opt in or out question may be useful for the attendance register as well as an option to stop further communication at any time.

TEMPLATE 1

| Initial follow-up (+- 1 day after first contact) – A short check-in to indicate that the conversation is still open.



Hi [Name], thanks for reaching out about the CSE dialogue/meeting/lesson at [venue name]. I am more than happy to answer any questions that you may still have. What does your week look like for a quick check-in?

TEMPLATE 2

| Post-dialogue check-in (24-48 Hours After a Meeting)



Hi [Name], thank you for joining our conversation about CSE. We know it can be uncomfortable and challenging to be part of these conversations. Thank you for prioritising the care and safety of your child. Did anything stand out as something you'd want to know more about? I would be happy to put together a short summary of what we covered and the answers we gave, if that would help. Just let me know.

TEMPLATE 3

| Three-day check-in



Hi [Name], it's been a few days since we spoke about CSE. One thing [parents/learners/community members/leaders] often find useful at this stage is to connect personally with someone for a check-in on any questions or concerns that you may have. Let me know if any questions have come up and I'll help directly.

TEMPLATE 4

| Re-engagement after 2+ weeks of silence



Hi [Name], it has been great engaging with you on CSE-related topics. However, if this isn't something you want to discuss right now, let me know and we can continue this conversation another time. You can simply respond with "STOP" and I won't reach out unless you do. But if you're still working through questions about keeping young people in this community safe and informed, I'm here for further discussions.

TEMPLATE 5

| Meeting reminder (24 hours before)



Hi [Name], quick reminder about our conversation on CSE tomorrow at [time]. We are looking forward to it. If anything comes up and you need to reschedule, let me know and we'll find another time.

RADIO SCRIPTS

According to [Afrobarometer survey findings](#) across 38 African countries, radio continues to be the most-utilised medium for news, likely due to its broad accessibility across socioeconomic groups. Therefore, using radio to promote accurate CSE information is still an effective way to target certain age groups, especially those in more rural areas with less access to modern technologies.

Script 1: For a 30-second youth PSA

Voice-over (consider using a young, natural, and upbeat tone)



You've got questions about your body, relationships, or staying safe. That's normal because everyone does. The problem isn't asking. The problem is not knowing who to ask. That is why we have developed a website with answers to all of your questions that you can work through in your own time. The website has been designed using internationally approved standards and evidence. Please visit [x]."

– This may also be adapted for other resources or organisations.

Script 2: Engaging with a radio host on a live or pre-recorded show

The below script envisions a youth as the radio host. If the radio host is someone older the script should be slightly adapted.

Youth Radio Host



Today we have [Name] in studio and we are talking about something everyone our age thinks about but almost nobody talks about openly: our bodies, our relationships and staying safe.

Host prompt 1



What is the question you get asked most by people our age?

Host prompt 2



A lot of us end up learning this stuff from TikTok or YouTube instead of at school or at home. Is that a problem?

Host prompt 3



How should we recognise accurate and reliable information versus disinformation?

Host prompt 4



If someone listening right now is too embarrassed to ask anyone, what should they do?

Host (closing)



Send us your question by SMS on [number]. This is anonymous and you don't have to share or say your name.

SHORT VIDEO SCRIPT

Script: 30-45 second relatable script

[Visual]

Two young school friends talking quietly, relatable everyday setting (individuals should not be identifiable).

Friend 1



I have a kind of awkward question.

Friend 2



That's alright. I know exactly where we can find the answer.

[Visual]

Quick, warm exchange implied, not shown in full.

On-screen text

You don't need the "perfect" person to ask. You just need someone who has access to accurate and reliable information.

[End card]

Visit [website] for more information.

SMS TEMPLATES

Tips for effective communication

Keep each message under 160 characters and ensure that the message reads in a more personal manner instead of as a bulk message.

Compliance note: ensure you use an opt-out line where required such as “Reply STOP to opt out”. Consent and opt-out requirements for bulk SMS vary by country and telecom regulator. It would be a good idea to confirm current requirements before sending at scale.

General, judgment-free invitation



Got questions about your body, relationships, or staying safe? Reply INFO for reliable and accurate answers without judgment. Visit [x] for more information.

Confidentiality reassurance



You don't have to give your name. Reply Q + your question and we'll answer directly and privately. Visit [x] for more information.

Peer/social proof



You're not the only one wondering about accessing safe and reliable information about your body and your relationships. It is one of the questions we get asked most. Reply “INFO” to find out. Visit [x] for more information.

Referral pointer



Prefer to talk in person? Ask for the youth-friendly corner at [health facility/youth centre] near you. Visit [x] for more information.

The most powerful messages are those that build trust, invite dialogue, and leave the door open for the next conversation.

