

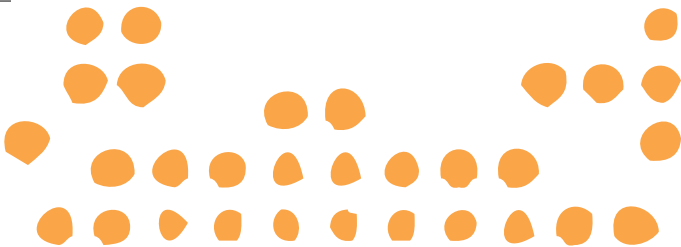




local activism

soap opera discussion groups

Episode 3 & 4



This discussion guide was developed to help you facilitate an active and informative discussion about each episode of the soap opera with small groups of community members. After listening to one program, you could begin the discussion by summarizing the story events and talk show. These summaries are provided for you. After summarizing what your listeners have just heard, pose the questions provided. We have included helpful discussion points for each question, so that you can guide the conversation and get people talking about the issues in a thought-provoking way.

Use this discussion guide with the *SASA!* Soap Opera CD and Soap Opera Scripts found in the Media & Advocacy strategy.

Episode 3

Facilitator's Summary

The Story

Sara and Margaret are reaching out to their friends and family for support—and getting support in return. Sara confides in her friend Amina about Musa's abusive behavior, and together they help Sara decide what she can do. Margaret confides in her friend Zam Zam, and together they decide to tell Margaret's mother and her aunt Sara about Mr. Daudi. The women believe Margaret and encourage her to go to the hospital and the police.

Even Musa is reaching out to others. He talks about some issues with his friend Kasoa. Musa confides that things are tough at home. Kasoa tells him how it used to be like that for him too, but that he has changed and now has peace. Musa doesn't really believe it, but he thinks about it.

The Talk Show

Our guests lead a discussion about what it means to talk about our personal problems with other people. Some women feel unable to talk with anyone, because so many people think violence is normal. If they do talk with someone, they often feel embarrassed or ashamed. Women need to feel believed and supported when they choose to talk about things like violence. Similarly, men need other men to talk to about their relationships and how they could improve them.

Our host, Zenya, says that seeking out and accepting support is hard. And giving support to others is challenging too. It's not easy for someone like Kasoa to share his story and challenge Musa on his behavior. But he does it anyway, because he has experienced a better relationship by eliminating violence.



Facilitator's Questions & Discussion Points

1. If a woman you knew was experiencing violence like Sara, how could you support her?

- You can believe what she says and emphasize that the violence is not her fault.
- You can help her make a safety plan that includes actions such as: (1) identifying a neighbor or relative's home to go to at night if she needs to get away for safety; (2) asking neighbors to come over if they hear violence; and (3) keeping a packed bag with important papers and telephone numbers, keys and a little money in case she needs to leave the house quickly.
- You can go with her to the health center or counselor to get information and support about violence and HIV/AIDS.

2. What are some of the challenges or fears we have when seeking support from others? How can they be overcome?

- Many people feel shame (i.e., feel bad about themselves) when sharing their experiences of violence. They might feel they are responsible for the violence or that the violence is their fault.
- Many people fear stigma (i.e., rejection from others).
- Everyone can provide support. We can assure those we are supporting that the violence is not their fault. We can encourage them and not judge them. Joining our power with others' can help those in difficult situations.

3. Is it common for men to share their problems? Was it easy for Musa to share his problems with Kasoa?

- Often boys are raised with pressure from society to keep their feelings hidden. As a result, as men, they feel isolated and are not comfortable or confident sharing their problems with others.
- We can support men by encouraging them to confide in us, by challenging them when we know they are using violence, and by supporting them in creating healthier relationships.

- It takes courage for men to share their stories and to support other men. By talking about violence and HIV/ AIDS and about power sharing in relationships, men can encourage and create positive change.

4. We know that Margaret and Sara need support. But what kind of support do Zam Zam, Amina and Kasoa need?

- Everyone needs support—those seeking support and also those giving support.
- Often people giving support are not sure they will be able to help, and they worry they will say the wrong thing. If you ask someone who has received support what was the most useful, they often say, “just having someone there who believed me and didn’t judge me.” Listening and believing can be enormously helpful.

Episode 4

Facilitator's Summary

The Story

Margaret is taking some important steps to deal with what has happened to her and to get the support she needs. She goes to the health center for an exam and learns about HIV and STIs. She is also referred to a counselor. At the police station, Margaret faces some tough challenges when the police are at first very rude to her. But she tells her story to a sympathetic officer who takes her seriously and promises to pay a visit to Daudi.

Musa is also trying to take some steps to change his life. He talks to his wife, Sara, telling her he wants to try and change, to have more peace at home like his friend Kasoa. They agree to call a family meeting, that Sara should join a women's group, and that they will get tested for HIV.

The Talk Show

Our host, Zenya, explains that seeking out help and support is a good idea, because people have more power when they are together, more power with others than alone.

The guests also have a discussion about whether or not Musa is soft for trying to talk with his wife, Sara. They conclude that couples may play different roles in the family, but that both roles are equally worthwhile. When both people have power in a relationship, it means they are equals—one person is no more powerful than the other and no one has to lose power for the other to gain it.

Finally, the guests argue about whether it was a good idea for Margaret to go to the police. Some guests don't understand why Margaret didn't just say no to sex with Daudi. But can she really say no? Girls feel like they can't walk away, because men like Daudi have power over them. This is the reason why young girls often don't seek out support.

Facilitator's Questions and Discussion Points

1. If you knew someone who, like Margaret, was coerced into sex, how could you help her? What advice would you give her?

- It is important to go to the health center first, before going to the police, to get treatment for injuries. This is especially important for receiving post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), which must be given within 72 hours of the assault, and for collecting evidence of the assault.
- The evidence is the semen of the man, which could be washed away if the girl or woman cleaned herself before getting an exam. That is why a girl or woman is best to come straight to a health centre without bathing or changing clothes, so that a nurse can collect and preserve all evidence for the police. If the girl or woman must change her clothes, she should bring the unwashed clothes worn during the assault to the health center in a paper (not plastic) bag.
- Sometimes, the HIV virus is not seen in the blood until up to three months after having sex, so it is important for

a girl or woman who initially tests negative to go back to the health center in three months and then six months to confirm her negative status.

- Counseling is very important. When people can talk about their problems in confidence with a trained counselor, it can help them sort out their emotions and deal with trauma.

2. Why was it so important for Margaret to go to the police and the health center? Do you think it is difficult for girls and women to do so?

- Many people, even professionals like police and health care providers, may not be sensitive to cases of sexual assault. This can prevent women from accessing services.
- Girls or women who experience sexual assault need support. Accompanying survivors for services can be very helpful to them and can also begin to show professionals that they are accountable for providing quality services.
- Men who coerce girls into sex need to be held accountable. Holding them accountable is the only way to stop the behavior. Community members have an important role to play in this, as do the police.
- Many studies show that the reason many girls and women don't seek help is because they fear no one will believe

them, because they are too embarrassed, or because they feel nothing would happen.

3. Musa finally talks to Sara about his use of violence. Do you think it is difficult to have such conversations?

- Even though society often expects and accepts men being violent and controlling, men can choose to be different.
- Communicating about problems with one's partner does not show weakness. It shows respect and strength.
- Happy, healthy families communicate. It may be difficult at first, but once couples get used to sharing, it becomes easier and the benefits become obvious — more happiness and harmony!

4. Sara feels that Musa doesn't respect her, but Musa says he does and that he shows this by bringing home food and money. What does respect mean to you? How can a man show respect to his partner?

- Respect is about more than providing basic needs for someone. It is about appreciating another person, and valuing them. It is about recognizing that person's dignity and not using your power to control or suppress her or him.

- When you give respect, you get respect.
- Men can show respect to their partners by treating them with the same care, respect and love they wish to receive from their partners.

5. Why does Sara want to join a women's group? How can this help women and their families?

- Both women and men have more power with others than they do alone. By joining together and sharing with others, we build a stronger community.
- Groups help people to feel less alone. In groups, people can start to feel a sense of solidarity and unity with others.
- It is helpful to share problems and joys and to help each other make positive changes in our lives.

6. Why do you think Musa and Sara want to test for HIV? They are a married couple. Do you think they are at risk?

- They are at risk because Musa has had sex with another woman. If Musa is positive and Sara is not, they can take precautions, such as using condoms to ensure that Sara does not get infected. If they are both positive, they still

have reason to practice safe sex, because there is a risk of continuously reinfecting each other, making the virus stronger and possibly more damaging.

- Regardless of their HIV status, good communication and healthy behaviors are important in all relationships. By being honest and talking, they can create a healthier family.

