



local activism

soap opera discussion groups

Episode 5 & 6

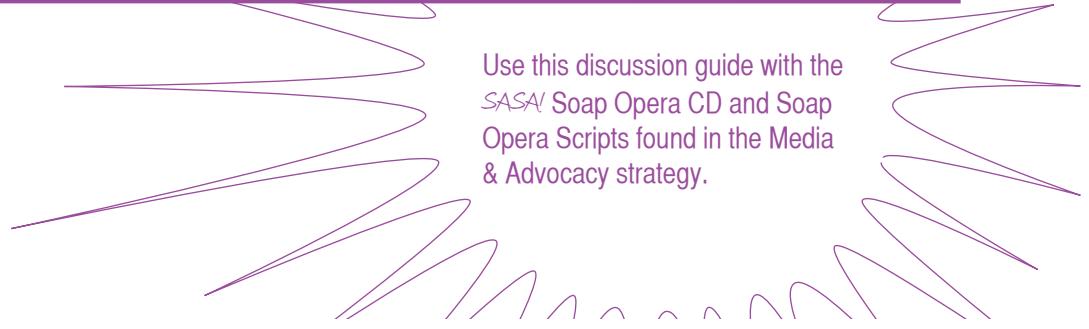
action



take action



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 5

Facilitator's Summary

The Story

Musa and Sara have been slowly trying to change their relationship. We see Kasoa and his wife, Fortuna, taking action to help them when they stop by for a nice visit and dinner. Kasoa helps Musa see that his life is getting better, and the four of them have a really lovely evening. During their visit, Kasoa and Fortuna talk about how they share responsibilities in the home, such as Kasoa cooking and helping in the kitchen. Musa cannot believe this. After Kasoa and Fortuna leave, Musa helps Sara with the dishes—much to her surprise.

In addition, Margaret's school is taking action to address transactional sex and other issues by forming discussion groups for girls and boys. Margaret is excited to be involved and to move forward with her life.

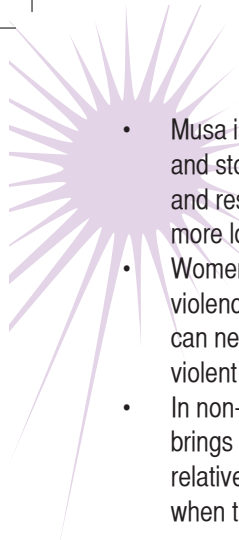
The Talk Show

Our host, Zenya, asks about roles in a relationship. In equal relationships, partners are considerate of each other and help each other, instead of sticking to specific roles that society says women and men should do. In equal relationships, men don't limit themselves to doing "men things" and women do not limit themselves to doing "women things." Everyone helps with everything.

Our guests also discuss the new groups forming at Margaret's school. They agree that although teaching to abstain is a good choice, it is only one option. Young people need to be given all the options for how to make safe choices about their sexual health.

Facilitator's Questions & Discussion Points

1. Sara has started enjoying Musa's company, and they have a lovely evening. What do you think are the benefits of non-violent relationships?

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- Musa is starting to show respect to Sara, to talk with her and stop using his power over her. When people feel safe and respected, they can enjoy their relationships and be more loving with their partners.
 - Women who experience violence often live in fear that the violence will occur without warning. In this situation, they can never truly be themselves or relax when around their violent partners.
 - In non-violent relationships there is less tension, which brings harmony to everyone, including partners, children, relatives and friends. Others enjoy being around a couple when they respect each other.

2. Ksoa said that he would often cook meals with his wife. Do you think men should cook?

- Traditionally, women have the responsibility of caring for the house and the children, while men have the responsibility of earning money. But now, men and women can share roles and responsibilities in the family. Sharing responsibilities is healthy and strengthens relationships and families.
- Helping each other and sharing responsibilities does not make one less of a man or less of a woman. Sharing responsibilities shows strength, not weakness.

- Sharing responsibilities means couples can be flexible according to their own situation and make their own decisions about what works in their family—instead of only conforming to society's expectations.

3. Do you think it is helpful to form discussion groups among young people, like they are doing at Margaret's school? What kinds of things will they talk about and how will it help?

- Many girls experience similar pressures as Margaret did. Often they feel alone and don't know what to do. Sharing experiences helps girls learn from others and this might help them stay safe.
- Many studies have shown that providing information about sex does NOT increase a young person's desire to have sex. In fact, it helps her or him to make positive choices. We all need information to make good choices in our lives. Information and support from others helps us to feel in control of our lives.
- Safe spaces for young people to talk reduces shame and isolation. These opportunities can help girls and boys feel supported.

4. Musa is slowly changing, but it is still difficult. Why?

- Change is not a one-time event, it is a process. This process takes time, and often people can fall back into old habits. Changing takes support and practice!
- Musa sometimes still uses his power over Sara, but he now recognizes this as negative. Even if someone falls back into old habits, it doesn't mean they have failed. It simply means change takes time and that if they are supported and encouraged to change, they will keep trying.
- Anger and frustration are emotions; violence is a choice. We can make different, healthier choices. If we are used to reacting in a certain way when we feel emotions, we can learn new ways of dealing positively with conflict.

5. Which characters in the soap opera do you feel are taking action to prevent violence and HIV? Are any of these actions something you could try?

- Kasoa and his wife, Fortuna, not only took action to change their own lives, but they are taking action to help their friends change also. It's critical for those who understand the benefits of non-violence to begin sharing that knowledge with others and helping them to change too!
- Margaret's friends and family also took action to help

her—they believed her and took her to the police and health center. They made sure that she understood that the coerced sex with Daudi was not her fault, and they helped her to obtain accurate information from the police and health care workers.

- The larger community and Margaret's school also took action by forming discussion groups and holding community meetings to raise these issues publicly.

6. Is it only individuals that should take action to create change? What about society as a whole?

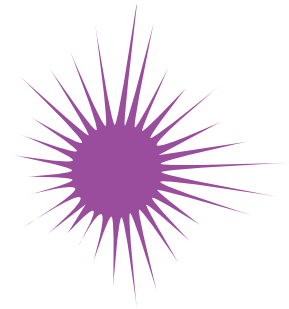
- Change starts with individuals. The more individuals begin seeing things differently, the more society will also change.
- Many people behave according to long-held beliefs within their community. These include the beliefs that men are more important than women and that women have less power and dignity than men. These beliefs have existed for a long time, and it takes time for people and institutions to change. But they can and must change—with our help!
- Changing community norms is a process, not a single event. It is important to work with, guide and support the whole community along a journey of change.

Episode 6

Facilitator's Summary The Story

Our friends attend a community meeting to discuss preventing violence in our homes, and how violence can cause HIV. During a break in the meeting, Musa and Kasoa try to tell their fellow men that it takes a secure and confident man to understand that women and men can balance power in a relationship. Because Musa and Sara are now active and changing, they have become role models and are receiving a lot of respect in the community.

The meeting continues on the topic of how many girls are at risk for HIV because they are being forced or coerced into sex with older men. The community comes up with many things they can do to prevent violence and the HIV infection of girls and young women.



The Talk Show

Musa, Sara and Margaret are guests on the talk show, and they share their experiences. Sara says that she hopes listeners understand that so many things in our lives are connected. She says that while she always felt scared of being infected with HIV, she didn't exactly connect it to the violence or to the lack of respect in her relationship. In response, Zenya says that we must raise awareness about how the imbalance of power between women and men in relationships increases women's risk for HIV.

Margaret said that the most amazing part of her experience was the support of her friends and family. People have more power with others than they do alone. And Musa explained how taking action to change our lives is hard, but that when people take action, when they take responsibility to change, it helps not just them but everyone around them.

Facilitator's Questions & Discussion Points

1. The community meeting raised the idea that the more we speak out about violence, the less it will happen. Do you think this is true?

- In many communities, violence is seen as normal, yet it is hurting women and increasing their risk for HIV infection. Change can only happen if we start to talk about and question attitudes and practices in the community, especially those that accept an imbalance of power between women and men in relationships.
- As individuals and a community, our silence means that we are accepting the violence and injustice.
- Things will not change unless people take an active role to change them. Talking about problems and issues brings them out into the open, forces people to confront their beliefs, and creates possibilities for change.

2. Do you see men in your community changing like Musa? How could we support more men to be non-violent?

- People have been taught to accept societal norms, not to question them, even if they disagree with them. It helps men to change when they have the support and advice from other men who they know and respect.
- People are often afraid to raise new issues or to talk about personal issues. But violence affects all of us, and we need to find the courage to open up and challenge what is unjust and unhealthy.
- When men see the benefits of non-violence in the lives of other men, they can be motivated to change. We can all be role models!
- We have the responsibility to share what we have learned.

3. What could be done to protect girls in our community? What could be done to show men that coercive and transactional sex is not acceptable?

- Community members can watch out for girls: We can encourage health center staff to talk with girls about HIV/ AIDS and violence. We can encourage schools to have policies about sexual harassment. We can report incidents to the police. We as community members can stop ignoring

the problem.

- Local leaders could create bylaws, outlawing coercive sex and sex with minors.
- Every adult can take personal responsibility to challenge men they see with young girls. It won't stop until each of us addresses it when we see it.

4. Why is raising these issues in a community meeting a good idea?

- Community meetings are a wonderful way to bring people together to discuss issues that affect the entire community, including transactional sex, violence and HIV/AIDS.
- Violence against women and HIV/AIDS affects the whole community. They exist because the community allows them to exist. Therefore, we all have to start talking about these issues and taking responsibility to stop them.
- Community meetings provide us with a way to share our experiences and solve our problems. By talking openly about issues that affect us, we can develop strategies and action plans that will work for our community.

www.raisingvoices.org/sasa.php

5. Why is it important that both women and men take action to help their friends, neighbors and relatives who are living with violence?

- Families and communities are made up of both women and men. If a family is to become healthier, both women and men need to talk about these issues, need to support each other and need to take action. In order for real change to happen, everyone must be involved!
- The whole community needs to be engaged for community-wide change to occur.

6. We all have the power to take action. What can you do?

- Even small actions can make a big difference—small or large, just start!
- We all can look at our own lives and our own talents to decide how we can make a contribution. If you are a good public speaker, you may wish to lead a meeting. If you are a singer or dancer, you may wish to share the message of prevention through music and dance. Think about, plan and commit to adding your voice in your own way.
- Start with yourself. Make your relationships non-violent. Live your beliefs about equality and justice.