You can learn to make responsible life choices and healthy decisions about your reproductive health with complete and correct information, healthy attitudes, good decision-making, communication and life planning skills.

**Life Planning for Adolescents and Youth (LPAY)**

To make responsible and healthy choices about your reproductive health, you need adequate and accurate information about reproductive health. You have the right to be counseled about your reproductive health and to ask questions when necessary. When properly nurtured and guided, you have the capacity to achieve your potentials and grow into a productive adult.

**IMPROVE YOUR SELF-ESTEEM**

Self-esteem is the judgment a person makes about him/herself. It is the recognition of one’s qualities and abilities including values, goals, talents, worth, physical attributes and purpose in live.

Self-esteem is essentially a feeling you have about yourself.

To practise positive self-esteem:

1. Accept yourself the way you are
2. Identify your strengths and weaknesses
3. Identify your values and behave according to them
4. Set realistic goals
5. Develop your abilities and be proud of them
6. Cultivate positive relationships
7. Accept compliments
8. Be pleased with who you are.

**BE ASSERTIVE**

Assertiveness means standing up for what you want or believe in.

It is when you communicate your feelings, and needs without violating the rights of others.

You should:

- Know what you want to say
- Be specific about what you feel and what you need from the other person
- Say exactly what you want without being rude or threatening
- Maintain eye contact, do not look down or away.
- Don’t whine or be sarcastic
- Hold your head up high, do not sag your shoulders or hide your face with your hands.
NEGOTIATE

Negotiation skills help you respond to persuasion so you are not forced to do something you don’t want to do.

To negotiate;
Refuse: Say no clearly and firmly and, if necessary, leave.
“No, no, I really mean no;” “No thank you”, and “No, no, I am leaving” are all examples of refusing.
Delay: Put off a decision until you can think about it.
“I am not ready yet,” “Maybe we can talk later,” and “Maybe another day” are all examples of delaying.
Bargain: Make a decision that both parties can accept.
Examples of bargaining include: “Let’s do… [something else] instead, or “I won’t do that, but maybe we could do… [something else].”

SEXUAL ABSTINENCE

Sexual abstinence means having no sexual intercourse at all. It is a conscious and deliberate decision not to have sex for a certain period or for life. Some people may decide not to have sex or postpone sexual intercourse for moral, religious, ethical, legal or health reasons. Secondary abstinence is where you have already had sex, but choose to stop having sex and wait for a period of time. Choosing to abstain from sex often requires an act of self-control and commitment over the desire to have sex.

The display of the strength of character is sustained during this period when you keep reminding yourself why you choose not to have sex and think about the potential consequences of changing your decision. When you abstain from sex, there is no fear of unplanned pregnancy and contacting sexual transmitted infections including HIV.

Your desire to abstain can be further achieved when you are equipped with skills that will enable you say ‘NO’ to sex until you are fully ready. Remember, it’s okay to say No.

SET YOUR GOALS RIGHT

A goal is something you work to accomplish. It is a proposed achievement or accomplishment towards which efforts are directed.

Long-term Goals: These are goals meant to be accomplished over a long period of time e.g. 6 months, several years or over a lifetime.
Short-term Goals: These are goals you set to accomplish in a short period of time, such as one week, two weeks or a month.

Good goals should be ‘SMART’, that is:

S Specific
Know exactly what you want to achieve.

M Measurable
Be able to measure your progress towards your set goals.

A Achievable
Be sure the goal is something you have the ability to accomplish.

R Realistic
Be sure the goal is something you can do and within the desired time frame.

T Time-bound
Set time limits.

LPAY COUNSELLING

Life planning for adolescents and youth counselling tools and materials are available at NURHI 2 sites to help you make informed and voluntary reproductive health choices. Information about life planning is important whether you are abstaining from sex or not. To know more, visit a trained family planning provider with interpersonal communication and counselling skills today. You will be warmly counselled on any Reproductive Health needs across the different components.

LPAY SUPPORT & REFERRAL

At the facilities, different units work together to provide you with comprehensive health services that meet your needs in a confidential and youth friendly manner. Some of these services include:

- Information on abstinence and pregnancy prevention
- Services for management of post - abortion complications
- Treatment and counseling for menstrual disorders
- STI / HIV prevention and treatment
- Sexual violence support
- Mental health services
- Counseling on substance use and abuse

Where any of these services are not available within the facility, you will be directed to the safest and most convenient facility where you will get the required service.