

How to avoid putting yourself at risk?

- ▶ Explore other ways of making money. For example, cutting grass, braiding hair, washing cars, making and selling cakes and sweets. When possible, save your money.
- ▶ Make sure you know why an older person is buying you gifts. If they expect sex in return, do not accept the gifts.
- ▶ Know the difference between 'needs' and 'wants' so that you don't feel pressure to buy things that you don't need.
- ▶ Define personal goals and stay focused on reaching them.
- ▶ Date people in your own age group, which can make it easier to negotiate delaying sex and condom use.
- ▶ Make sure you have a 'safety plan' that you can turn to if needed.
- ▶ Have people in your life that you can trust to care for you and who will help protect you.
- ▶ Stay in school and complete your studies.
- ▶ Choose friends and relationships that are based on mutual respect and care.
- ▶ Make choices and decisions that support your goals. You are the only person who can decide what you want to do with your life.
- ▶ If you or a friend are in a difficult situation—ask for help from the people you trust—they can help you work out a solution.

The Vhutshilo curricula have been developed by Health & Education Training and Technical Assistance Services (HETTAS) and are currently being implemented throughout South Africa. For more info, contact HETTAS: info@cspe.org.za



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ASPIRES



when sweet turns sour

A Vhutshilo 2 resource: #4

Exchanging sex for money

As young people we often do not have enough money to buy the things we need like food, clothes, toiletries and school supplies. There is pressure to have the hottest jeans, the best cell phone and the latest shoes. Some of us worry about looking after our brothers or sisters and helping put food on the table. The pressures are different for each of us but the need to succeed is the same.

We often do not have enough savings for daily and monthly expenses. Sometimes exchanging sex for money or gifts seems like the easiest thing to do, but it is not a wise choice. You can find yourself caught up in an unhealthy relationship. Let's look at some of the things we know:

- ▶ A sugar daddy or sugar mommy (also called a blesser) is an older person who has a sexual relationship with a younger boy or girl in exchange for gifts, money and a fancy lifestyle.
- ▶ Older men and women with money use their status to take advantage of young people who do not feel able to refuse an exchange of sex for money.
- ▶ Both boys and girls can experience the same struggle when 'sweet turns sour' and the relationship becomes abusive or harmful in some other ways.

**A BLESSER
IS A
MESSER...**

What are the risks in dating older people?

Dating older people puts young people at greater risk for contracting HIV and other STIs, and falling pregnant, because:

- ▶ Older people have had more exposure to the virus because they have been sexually active for longer than younger people. They are therefore more likely to be HIV-positive.
- ▶ A young person is often not the only partner that the older person has; they might be married or have other relationships.
- ▶ It is harder to negotiate condom use with an older person. Because they have more power, young people will find it difficult to say "no" to unprotected sex.
- ▶ Young people involved with an older person often have much less power and can experience emotional or even physical abuse. This makes it difficult for the young person to escape the control of the "blesser".
- ▶ Being in a relationship that is based on rewards, makes it difficult to walk away, but at the same time often damages your self-worth, your reputation or your ability to see the harmful things clearly.
- ▶ Because the relationship is mostly uneven, it is difficult to feel that your opinion and feelings are equally respected.

