



Community Diffusion Guide for Facilitators

Guidance on how to deliver community conversations,
to support the structured diffusion of the Toose model
and messages to the wider community



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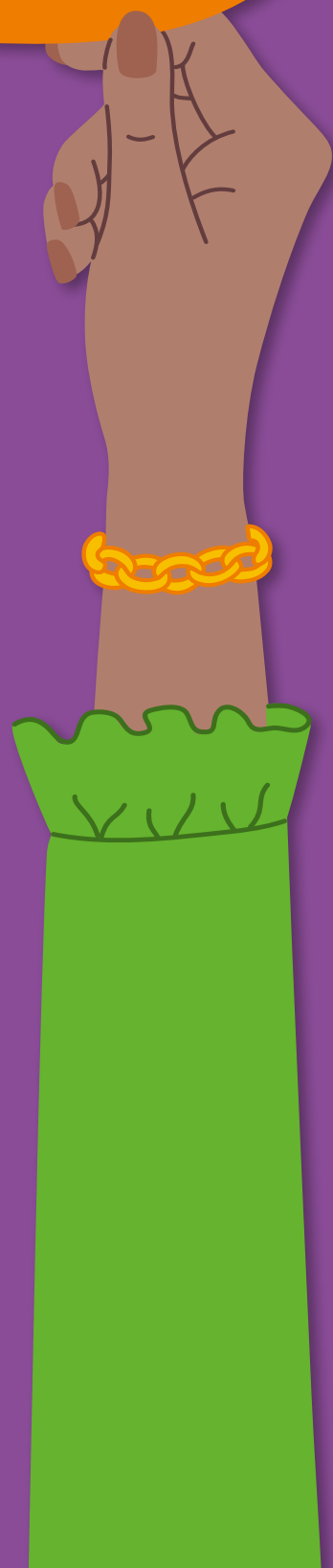
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**WORKING
TOGETHER**

Introduction

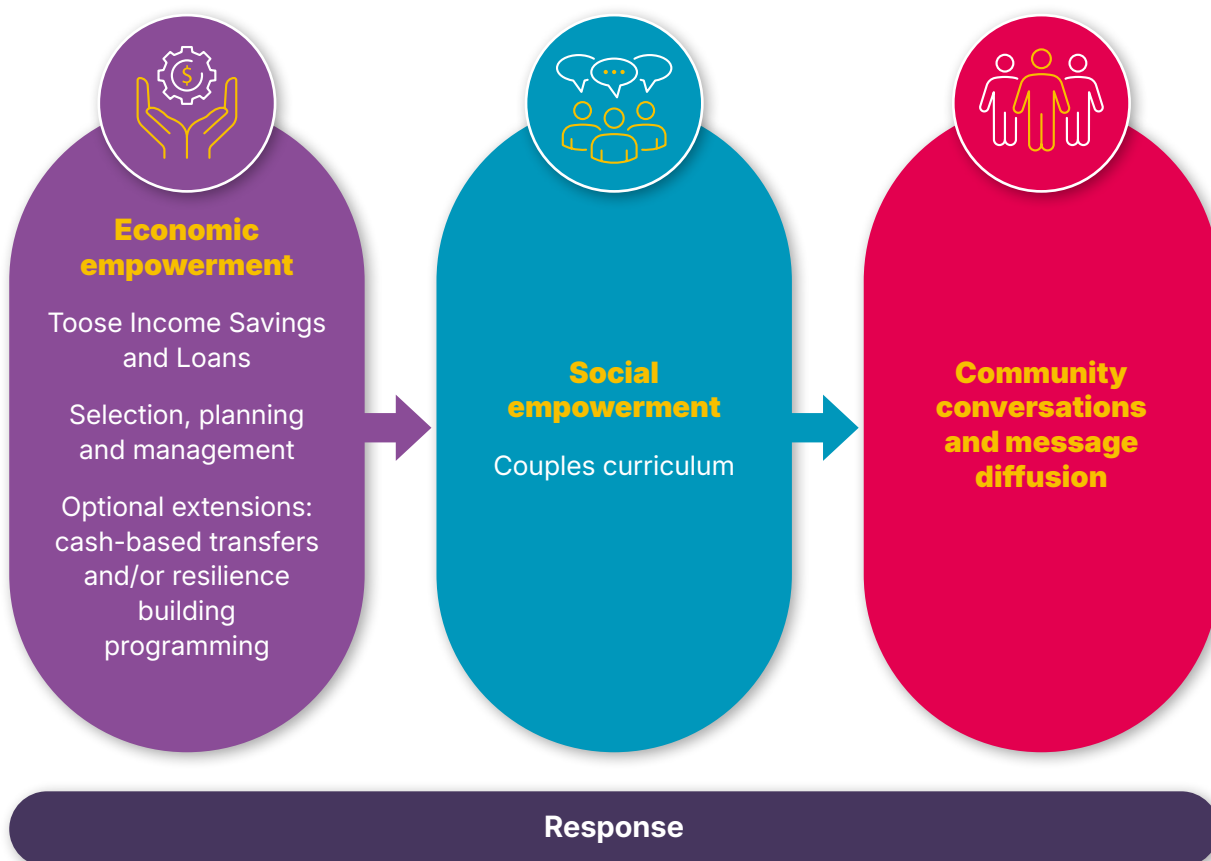


The Stopping Abuse and Female Exploitation (SAFE) programme

SAFE is a five-year programme funded by the UK government in Zimbabwe to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV) with a particular focus on intimate partner violence. Framed as a family wellbeing programme, SAFE adopts an economic and social empowerment approach to GBV prevention, and works at individual, relationship, and community levels to achieve its objectives.

Background on the Toose model

The name Toose is drawn from the Shona word 'tose' meaning 'together' in Shona. The Toose model was developed under the SAFE Programme in Zimbabwe and was designed to prevent intimate partner violence (IPV) through a combination of social empowerment, economic empowerment, community diffusion and gender-based violence (GBV) response programming. Each of these components has a corresponding Facilitator's Guide, which provides in-depth information of sessions, tools, activity guidance etc. Alongside a longer Implementation Guide, which sets out in full the steps required to successfully adapt and implement Toose in your context. This Guide is focused on the community diffusion component and should be implemented after completion of the economic empowerment and social empowerment components of the programme. The response component should run concurrently with the other components for the entire programme implementation period.



All about Toose community diffusion



What is diffusion?

Diffusion in programming like Toose refers to the spread of positive messages, ideas, norms and behaviours out from a core group of people involved in an intervention, to their wider community. In Toose diffusion happens either through spontaneous conversations between Toose participants and their families and friends (unstructured diffusion) or through community conversations initiated and led by Toose facilitators/Peer Facilitators (structured diffusion). This guide focuses on the latter i.e. structured diffusion.

What is the Toose community diffusion facilitator's guide

The Community Diffusion Facilitators Guide is designed to provide guidance on how to deliver community conversations, to support the **structured diffusion** of the Toose model and messages to the wider community.

Who leads the structured diffusion?

Community Conversations should only be led by a person who has undergone the full Toose Journey, so they are able to draw from their experiences when sharing on Toose. This includes Toose Implementing Partner Facilitators, and Toose Peer Facilitators (a community level facilitator drawn from past Toose graduates who has undergone the full Toose journey, training and is now supporting other groups as a facilitator).

When should the structured diffusion start?

After the Toose Social Empowerment sessions have ended and Toose Peer Facilitators have been selected and trained.

Is there any training on how to conduct community conversations?

Prior to starting on the diffusion component of the Toose journey, all those who will be supporting the diffusion through community conversations should receive a short training on how to conduct the community conversations. The training will draw from this guide and focus on some of the key areas including identifying possible spaces where conversations can take place, what core Toose messages should be shared, key tools and activities to use for facilitating these discussions, and how to handle push back/backlash or difficult questions during the Community Conversation. Facilitators should also be supported throughout the process of conducting the Community Conversations with regular check-ins.

What are the topics we will be talking about?

There are 4 suggested conversation topics at the bottom of this guide, with key messages and tips on how to open and close the discussion. The main thing to remember is that these conversations are about sharing what you have learnt from Toose and how it has positively impacted you, hopefully inspiring others in the community to make changes in their own lives to have happier, healthier families and relationships.

What are the types of conversations that I may want to have?

1. Informal sharing conversation (unstructured diffusion)

This is when you talk spontaneously about Toose with friends, family or neighbours, or have conversations with those close to you about how Toose has impacted your life positively. This guide does not go into any detail on these kind of conversations as they happen spontaneously and do not generally need specific training or preparation.

2. Quick conversations (structured diffusion)

These sessions, led by the Toose peer facilitator, are designed to quickly convey set messages to a group of people. They typically occur in community spaces or events such as prayer groups, savings groups, and other gatherings. Detailed information on the four conversation topics and their key messages are provided below in the guide.

3. Deeper dive conversations (structured diffusion)

These are also led by you, but it is good to have a trained GBV responder with you for the more sensitive conversations (**4 on Happy, healthy, and safe relationships**). These are longer sessions where a group of people (**usually those that have been part of a Quick Conversation**) have shown a particular interest in learning more about the Toose approaches or tools such as visioning. These sessions focus on the tools from the Facilitators Social Empowerment Guide.

Overall, through these different conversations you as the facilitator will help communities develop a shared understanding and actively move towards a vision of a happier, healthier, and more balanced family life – which can be summed up as the Toose way of life. Conversations should not be finger pointing exercises to 'name and shame' anyone but should be spaces where people come together to reflect on better ways of interacting as individuals, couples, families, and communities that will benefit everyone and support the process of transformation that Toose is aiming for.

The aim of all of the Community Conversations is to:

- Promote the core Toose messages and tools from the Toose Social Empowerment manual to support community reflection and creating motivation for change.
- Model the Toose behaviours to inspire other members of the community to want to change and embrace the Toose way of life.
- Promote broad community conversations on gender inequitable behaviours, norms and practices in their communities.

Why should facilitators do community conversations and not general community members or group members?

Toose Facilitators like you have been identified as the key people to support the spread of Toose messages in their communities for the following reasons:

- You have been trained in both the Toose Social Empowerment Curricula and have a high level of understanding of the Toose approach. You also have considerable skills, knowledge and expertise in facilitating conversations around these topics.

- › You are already leaders or change champions in your communities.
- › You have a strong understanding of your communities and contexts.
- › You are used to facilitating these conversations with other groups and are better equipped to handle questions or push back.
- › You have the interest and capacity to model the Toose behaviour in a way that will inspire others to want to change.
- › Whilst you might inspire others in the community to continue these conversations, it is important that the Toose messages are spread through planned and structured community conversations by those who deeply understand Toose and have prior experience with facilitating Toose sessions and using tools like the gender balance tree etc with your own groups.

Note: Leading Community Conversations is voluntary. If you don't feel comfortable or do not want to facilitate these discussions, you have the right not to.

What are the possible spaces and avenues for community conversations?

The key to a successful Community Conversation is to talk formally, informally or spontaneously through everyday opportunities and identified community spaces that are easily accessible, local and that can be used with limited or no cost. These places and avenues could include but are not limited to:

- › Churches, e.g. women and men' conferences, couples' meetings, etc
- › Community/village head meetings
- › Community gatherings/celebrations
- › ISAL groups
- › Community boreholes or wells
- › Community health care centres
- › Community gardens and cooperatives

It is strongly advised that conversations do not take place in locations where there is alcohol or where people have been drinking.

Who are the people taking part in the community conversations?

Conversations could be done with people you know well such as family, neighbours, work colleagues, prayer fellowship groups, and/or saving groups, or they can be done with the broader communities at specific events or moments such as community gatherings, meetings etc.

Note: Participation in Community Conversations is purely voluntary, therefore you must always give people the option not to participate and be clear that there is no financial incentive to participating in these conversations.

What messages are being spread through the community conversations?

The underlying message that is shared through the Community Conversations is around creating **"Happy, healthy families"**. **"Happy, healthy families"** are families where there is improved economic and social relationships and wellbeing within the household. A big part of a healthy, happy family is that all members of the household are treated with respect; and the household is violence free.

There are specific messages aligned to each of the 4 conversation topics, which are detailed more towards the end of this guide.

All Community Conversations should include a focus on the following Toose values:

- › When we have a balanced and equal relationship between partners/couples then everyone benefits, and the family thrives.
- › Arguments/Conflict are a natural part of any relationship, however violence, intimidation or controlling behaviours towards another person (including children) is not. Communicating our feelings to our partner or family members makes it possible to resolve conflict without using violence.
- › Healthy, happy families have respectful and uplifting communication, mutual understanding, respect, and care. Talking and listening to our partners strengthens our relationships and families and helps achieve our visions.
- › Relationships based on shared decision making, mutual consent, and spending positive time together are happy, healthier and better for all.
- › Both partners should have equal opportunity to input into important household decisions, including major purchases; domestic workload should be shared between partners; and consent and respect should be the basis of all relationships, including intimate relationships etc.

Guiding principles for community conversations

- › **Focus on the equal benefits for all:** It is important to emphasise the positive benefits for the entire family and wider community of the Toose messages of collaborative visioning and planning, non-violent conflict resolution, and respectful, polite, kind, and empathetic communication.
- › **Plan and prepare:** The formal conversations (i.e. the Quick Conversation and the Deeper Dive Conversations) need to be planned and prepared for in advance and follow a process (see below for more information). As facilitators, you should receive training from those leading the implementation/implementing partners prior to starting the Community Conversations. You should also receive ongoing mentoring and support from the implementation team/implementing partners to continue to build your skills, allow time for reflection on what is working or not working, connect with other facilitators and provide any assistance needed throughout the process. The training will be based on this Guide, similar to how you received training before rolling out the TISAL, SPM and social empowerment sessions.

- › **Be positive and aspirational:** The messages should be aspirational and motivating. The approach to these conversations is to adopt an open, questioning format to encourage critical reflection from community members addressing any inequitable or harmful views or messages that arise. It is not for shaming or blaming individuals or groups within the community.
- › **Do no harm:** Many of the themes that are covered in Toose such as violence, relationships, transforming gender roles and dynamics are complex and sensitive, and if not approached with careful consideration there is a risk of harm. Identifying potential risks and mitigations is crucial to ensure that Conversations do no harm. It is also important to consider how to manage any backlash from community members and have appropriate referrals (based on the GBV response mapping and referrals developed for the programme) ready for anyone who may disclose or report their experiences of violence because of taking part in a conversation. Be sure to alert your response partner or local services that you are having these conversations and consider having a trained GBV response provider come with you to the conversations that will touch on more sensitive topics, including GBV.
- › **Transform yourself first:** Community Conversations should only be undertaken by facilitators who have undergone their own gender transformational journey and have facilitated the social empowerment sessions with groups already. Ask yourself honestly, do you agree with and try to live by the Toose values laid out in the box above? If not, then you might want to do a bit more work on yourself and your own Toose journey, before engaging in Conversations with others.
- › **Keep it local:** The approach promoted for these conversations should be seen as part of everyday life. Therefore, facilitators are encouraged to conduct their conversations in their local area and use routine activities, events and interactions as the basis.

Additional tips

- › Facilitators are encouraged to engage with women, men and young people from their community and neighbourhoods.
- › The conversations should be informed by real issues happening in the communities but should not focus on personal stories that might compromise confidentiality and safety of anyone in the community.
- › Facilitators are encouraged to use the Toose tools and their core messages as the basis for the conversations.
- › Where possible co-facilitation between men and women is encouraged however there may be good reasons why single sex groups are preferred.
- › Conversations are best held in small groups in public areas.

An illustration of a hand with dark skin, wearing a yellow bracelet and a blue sleeve, holding a dark blue speech bubble. The word "WELLBEING" is written in white, bold, uppercase letters inside the speech bubble.

WELLBEING

Planning and preparation

It is critical to thoroughly prepare for the Community Conversation phase of the programming. This includes attending the brief training, reading this guide, and becoming familiar with the different conversations and key messages. The better prepared you are, the more effective and impactful the conversations will be. Below are some of the steps that form part of the preparation phase (these should be conducted either by or with the leading Toose organisation/implementing organisations).

Preparation before starting the community phase

- › **Ensure you have received a training from the implementing partners/programme leaders.** The training will focus on elements covered in this Guide such as **how to safely mobilise communities**, how to conduct community conversations, key values and principles underpinning Toose Community Conversation, talking points that introduce the discussion and theme, basic dos and don'ts during the discussion, how to handle difficult and sensitive discussions etc
- › **Work with Toose implementing partner organisations and other relevant stakeholders in your community to map key events,** spaces, and people you could leverage on as you plan your community conversations. It is also good to understand if there are other programmes doing similar things that you could work with.
- › **Involve community leaders:** For a community conversation to be effective securing the buy in of community leaders (such as Village Heads, religious leaders, community elders) will be essential. They should be aware that the conversations are happening and ideally collaborate with you to ensure the messages reach and are accepted by community members. You may find that these leaders are the 'gatekeepers' of different community norms and attitudes, including harmful and discriminatory norms and attitudes, which makes having them on board to support what you are saying even more important.
- › **Make sure you are familiar with local and district level GBV referral pathways.** You should be prepared to make any GBV referrals that participants might require. Where referral pathways and services are readily available, information on these should be printed out and shared with participants or displayed on a board for participants to see. Available GBV service support teams should be introduced at the start of the meeting so that participants can feel comfortable to seek their support even during dialogue session if at any point they feel triggered by the discussions. There may be other types of referrals that are required, including related to health, nutrition, social and child protection, if you are not sure where or how to refer anyone it is important you talk to someone senior in the Toose team/ implementing partner organisation for advice and support.
- › **Take part in planning, practice and debrief sessions** the wider Toose team/organisation leading the implementation of Toose should organise and facilitate regular (suggested once a month) planning, practice and debrief sessions for you and others leading on the community conversations in your area. These sessions are important to brief the wider programme team, plan upcoming community conversation and practice how you will conduct yourself during the conversations, as well as giving a space to debrief and share experiences with others on any challenges or successes from past conversations. Practicing conversations is really important to help build your confidence and to build your skills for handling difficult conversations or push back. **Remember you can always conduct the Community Conversations with another Peer Facilitator, and they can also be great to practice these Community Conversations with.** Attending these planning, practice and debrief sessions regularly will also help you to feel supported and ensure you are able to keep learning and sharing how to handle different conversations.

Facilitating conversations



A community conversation is not the same as a full session of Toose, those taking part have not committed to the full programme so may be reluctant to give too much time or attention to what you are asking. It is therefore important to focus on the core messages that can inspire participants and encourage them to think critically and ask questions.

The below are things to think about before, during and after for both a quick conversation and a deeper dive discussion (as described at the top of this Guide).

Preparation before the community conversation

It is important to do some basic preparations before embarking on any community conversations, whether they are the quick conversation or the deeper dives.

- › **Be the change you want to see:** Before you start engaging with communities ensure you have gone through your own personal transformative journey and that you are walking and living the Toose values. This includes ensuring your own relationships are non-violent and respectful, based on shared responsibilities, good communication and a joint vision for the future.
- › **Be prepared to engage and respond to difficult questions**, such as 'why the focus is on violence against women and girls only? Men should not share their power. *Many religious leaders say men should be the head of their families and women should submit – why would you suggest it should be any other way? This talk is all about women – what is our role in the dialogue?*' You can see some suggested answers to these questions in Chapter IV of this guide. Ensure you are well prepared with information and questions that encourage reflection and dialogue. Be respectful of different perspectives and do not engage in arguments but also try to move the conversation on so as not to get stuck in back and forths. Remind and emphasise that the aim of the conversations is to vision happy families and communities based on equal and respectful relationships, and therefore the goal is working together to find ways to achieve this including for example developing community commitments and action plans.
- › **Select your talking points and key messages** and practice these to make sure you understand and are comfortable with these to be able to explain and promote these. At the end of this guide, you will see 4 Community Conversation topics – broken down with guidelines for how to have them as a Quick Conversation or a Deeper Dive Conversation. Make sure you are well versed with all 4 so that you can pick the correct conversation topic for the correct situation. The guidelines below will help you think about what messages, tools and opening/closing to use. Although the guidelines are provided, it is still important to think about the specific words you will use, as words can have different meanings in different contexts.
- › **You can either hold a spontaneous or a pre-planned conversation.** A pre-planned conversation is one where you bring people together for the purpose of the dialogue. They can be held in a hall, church, community meeting place or classroom where participants can comfortably attend and engage. Spontaneous sessions on the other hand tend to happen when a moment arises that suits the discussion, these can be held in a public space where the group you want to speak with usually meets. This could include farmers markets, church groups, family gatherings etc. For any of the conversations below, you should still be picking from and using one of the 4 Community Conversation Topics (detailed below in the guide).
 - **For spontaneous sharing conversation**, you should be aware of the energy/people in the room and if you think this is a good time to start a conversation, make sure you ask the people gathered if they are happy to talk about the topic first. If the request is turned down do not force yourself on the group.

- **For a quick (pre-planned) conversation**, you will need to identify and mobilise the group you want to speak with and select the conversation/messages that you think will appeal to them. You will also need to ensure that enough time is given to mobilisation of the groups before the day of the planned conversation.
- **When to move it to a deeper dive conversation**, both the spontaneous and pre-planned conversations should be focused on giving people an insight to Toose and the key messages. This is your chance to see if anyone is interested to learn/discuss more. Those who are interested in knowing more or seeing the tools should be invited to a deeper dive conversation. You will need to select a suitable time and place for this that suit everyone who is interested.
- **Decide on where to hold the conversation where possible:** A lot of the dialogues will take place as part of other activities/community events, and therefore you won't have a chance to choose the location and will have to be ready when opportunities arise. However, when you are able to gather people for the purpose of a conversation, particularly a deeper dive conversation as those is longer and more involved, it is important for these to take place at a location that is close and easy to get to for those you are hoping will attend. Most importantly consider venues and times that are accessible to people living with disabilities and will not pose any risks for participants in particular women and girls (for example don't arrange conversations late in the evening and/or in a remote location).
- **Keep things balanced:** It is important to consider how to create conversations that do not reinforce community power imbalances, for example, don't have some people sitting on the floor whilst others have chairs or have some people at the back with those considered 'more important' are at the front. Ensure that the conversations don't reinforce (even inadvertently) discriminatory norms or unbalanced power, such as between women and men. Toose is about happy, united and equal families.
- **Consider what to discuss in joint or single sex groups:** For example, if you have arranged a dialogue with women only, or you are at an activity that only men are attending, you can discuss more sensitive topics that might not be possible with men and women together. This will give everyone the space and opportunity to discuss issues and concerns in an open and safe environment. Ensure that if you are having a conversation with women only, that the facilitator is a woman. This is the same if you are discussing with a male group – the facilitator needs to be male. Conversation 4 from below which is focused on GBV should only be undertaken in single sex groups.
- **Make sure you can keep to the right length of the conversation:** Each quick conversation should not be more than 30 minutes. If people are interested in a deeper dive, these can go longer but make sure people attending know it will be 1-2 hours so that they come ready to stay for that length of time. Usually, you will hold quick conversations first and only when a group of people show an interest in going further into a particular tool or topic would you arrange a deeper dive conversation.
- **Ensure GBV service providers/counsellors/experts are on sight to accompany the conversation:** This is particularly important during conversations (even quick conversations, but particularly the deep dive conversations) where you are discussing issues of GBV, or other forms of abuse and harm.
- **Do not try to be the expert:** Be confident to explain to participants what you don't know and that your role is to facilitate a conversation and raise awareness but that there are specific channels of support that could provide more detailed information.

During the community conversation

Remember your key skills as a facilitator. All of these are as relevant to facilitating these community conversations as they are to facilitating the Toose economic and social empowerment sessions.

Effective participation guides participants through their own reflection and transformative process. The Toose approach to facilitating community conversations is focused on improving skills which help participants to reflect on their personal stories, fears, experiences and anxieties about the topics being discussed.

Key skills for facilitators

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • Effective communication | • Negotiation and conflict resolution |
| • Group management | • Adaptability and problem solving |
| • Active listening and summarizing | • Creativity |
| • Energy and enthusiasm | • Compassion and empathy |

› Get agreement to start

- Make sure to get agreement from the group prior to commencing a conversation to avoid disruptions of people leaving during the discussion.

› Always be welcoming and energetic

- You will be the one setting the tone for the conversation, so make sure you are welcoming, friendly and energetic. Participants will react to your energy.
- If this is a pre-planned or deeper dive conversation, ensure you follow local rules and customs on welcoming community leaders and chiefs who may have attended. For example, in most communities in Zimbabwe chiefs or headman are acknowledged first using their totems with a young person from their clan leading the greeting ceremony which may include clapping hands, etc. This will be less important if you are having a more spontaneous conversation as part of another gathering or event.
- Take steps to ensure all are welcomed and feel part of the group.

› Introduce yourself and Toose positively

- In all conversations make sure people know who you are (they will likely already know if this is a spontaneous conversation or gathering of people that you are familiar with) and that you are talking about the programme Toose, which you are a part of, and which is currently ongoing in their community. Some short ways to introduce Toose include the following:
 - *Toose is about happy families, and you are going to focus on how the communities can achieve happy families.*
 - *Toose focuses on achieving happy healthy peaceful and respectful families through encouraging couples to communicate better, create a joint vision and work together towards achieving that vision.*
 - If you feel comfortable, it can be nice to start by talking briefly about your experiences with Toose and how it has changed your life/relationship/family dynamics for the better. You may draw from the Toose sessions you have facilitated but do not divulge any personal or identifying information about participants in your groups.
 - If this is a deeper dive conversation, you might want to start the conversation in a more formal way. For example:
 - Start by welcoming participants and thank them for showing interest in and creating more time and space to engage more deeply in a Toose conversation.
 - Talk about how and why you joined Toose.
 - Introduce the tool you will focus on with them and how it links to the overall Toose journey.
 - There are also suggested conversation starters as part of the guidelines to the 4 conversation topics below.
- › **Keep to time:** Ensure that any quick conversations do not last more than 30 minutes. This gives time for people to hear the key Toose messages and begin to understand more about Toose and the Toose values. If anyone is interested in further/deep dive conversations, they can also let you know and you can arrange this at another time.
- › **Be confident, friendly and open while facilitating the conversation:** This will help make the conversation positive and constructive allowing for deeper reflection and action planning.

Closing the conversation

› Summarise the key points of the discussion and re-share key messages

- Always summarise the discussion and highlight the key commitments and actions if any. No dialogue should end without clear take aways, action points or commitment.
- › **Remind people of the important of not sharing other stories** and maintaining confidentiality on whatever is discussed with the group, and asking all participants to do the same
- › **Offer to stay behind** in case some participants need further information or support after the conversation.
- Remind everyone in the discussion of the toll-free numbers for response services or their local counsellor. Remember it is not your role to be a psychologist or counsellor but to refer people to specialised care and support.

› Offer people the opportunity for a follow-up conversation

- If people ask how they can develop their visions or balance their relationships, you may offer to conduct a deeper dive session on the Toose tools at a time that is convenient for all or you can invite them to attend future Toose sessions if these are planned.

› Inform participants of available GBV services and referral pathway

- Pay particular attention to participants' reaction during conversations. The message or content may remind them of the abuse they have suffered and therefore trigger them.
- Ensure that basic counselling and legal support is available to facilitate timely and urgent support and referral.

If a participant discloses something that needs support and referrals, make sure to reassure them that what happened is not their fault and they should not blame themselves before helping them contact the closest GBV response service provider that you have identified and verified. Also see below and refer to the Toose Response Guide for more information on handling disclosures.

Accessibility and inclusion considerations

As part of the preparations mentioned above, it is important to remain aware that your conversations should be open and accessible to those in the community who are living with a disability. Whilst it is harder to do too much preparation for spontaneous conversation, you should whenever possible try to consider some of the following when choosing locations to hold conversations

- › **Before:** Ensure that venues you use are accessible, and you have considered access needs
- › **During:** Speak clearly and slowly during the conversations and check in regularly with those in the room to check they are understanding and following what you are saying
- › **After:** Ask for feedback in relation to accessibility and inclusion and look at what could be improved for next time.

Finally, people with different impairments have different needs so it is important you do not assume what these are, rather ask people first as you open the conversation.

You may also know of venues or gatherings in your community where people living with disabilities often meet, these are good to keep in mind and try to see if people organising these gatherings are happy for you to come along and chat about Toose.

Care and well-being

Facilitators should pay attention to the care and well-being of participants throughout the conversations. It is recommended that facilitators are familiar with signs of stress and trauma, and that they signpost participants to further sources of support when needed.



Facilitator tip sheet 1: How to handle disclosures of gender-based violence (GBV) during community conversations

During the course of conducting community conversations, disclosures of violence may occur. You should always be prepared that the community conversations may lead to people disclosing painful personal experiences of GBV that have happened to them or other members of the community.

If/when this happens, it can be difficult for those that are disclosing the incident as well as other participants and the facilitator themselves.

Where possible, pair with response providers and/or women's rights organisations in their area when delivering sessions to ensure that there is immediate and trained support available for anyone who discloses any incidence of violence, even historic violence.

Listen to the participant for as long as they want to speak. However, avoid pressing anyone to go further or deeper than they are comfortable to.

During the discussion you should ensure the following principles are maintained:

- **Respect:** All actions you should be guided by respect for the survivors' choices, wishes, rights and dignity.
- **Safety:** The safety of the survivor is the number one priority.
- **Confidentiality:** People have the right to choose to whom they will or will not tell their story. Maintaining confidentiality means not sharing any information to anyone.
- **Non-discrimination:** Providing equal and fair treatment to anyone in need of support.

Other key responses may include:

- Acknowledge their experience and show that you believe them. You may wish to say "I am sorry that happened to you, "you are not to blame, and you did nothing wrong" or another phrase that demonstrates empathy.
- Ask them if they would like to speak privately about it. This is particularly important if the person accused of perpetrating the violence is also in the room.
- If they do not wish to speak privately respect their wishes. They may just want to mention it and not say anything further, or they may wish to talk for longer. Maintain a calm and composed demeanour to help the survivor feel more at ease. Demonstrate active listening skills for as long as the survivor wishes to speak.

If a participant brings up an incident of GBV that happened to someone else.

- Step in early and ask the speaker not to share the name or any identifying details of the person they are speaking about, because it is their story to share and might not want everyone in the session to know it.
- If they can anonymise the story (not just changing names, but details as well – for example if everyone knows where the participant lives, saying "my neighbour" is identifying even if the name is changed) and it is relevant then they may wish to share a short version.
- If they cannot anonymise the story then ask them to respect the survivor's privacy but explain to everyone that they are welcome to share overall information about what happens in their community, such as "sometimes husbands hit their wives" "sometimes men harass girls at the market".
- If the conversation becomes harmful (for example tempers are heightened, language used is shaming/victim blaming or aggressive, details are being given publicly that could lead to further risks for the person experiencing violence), then you may need to step in politely but firmly to move the conversation on and check in with the discloser privately afterwards.

Overall remember only trained people should provide counselling or psychological first aid. If you are not trained, do not try to provide counselling or other specialised mental health support. However, even without specialist training facilitators can provide a safe listening ear, as long as they do so in a survivor-centred manner. This means prioritising the rights, needs, wishes, safety, dignity, and well-being of survivors, placing them at the centre of all actions and decisions concerning them and ensuring they are treated with respect and empathy.

Facilitator tip sheet 2: Dealing with difficult questions



Community conversations are usually associated with a lot very difficult questions from participants which often relate to culture, traditions, religions and related social norms. Below are some examples of difficult questions

As a facilitator, it will be important to try and practice how you might answer some of these questions, so you are not caught off guard and get flustered. Remember try not to be impatient or irritated if participants keep raising difficult and challenging issues – this is part of the critical reflection process for everyone!

Please note these examples are drawn from working in a predominantly Christian community in Zimbabwe. They should be adapted for other religious/cultural contexts.

Question:

The bible says that men must be the head of the household and women should submit to their husbands. The reason why there is so much violence in the home is because women and not submissive to their husbands?

- **Response:** The same verse obliges husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church or refer to Colossians 3:19 which says 'husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh to them' Mutual submission is a biblical principle: Ephesians 5:21 states: "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." This means that submission is not one-sided. Husbands and wives are called to love, honour, and serve each other, reflecting Christ's humility (Philippians 2:3-4).

Question:

Women are not as strong and intelligent as men and therefore cannot be trusted with decision making?

- **Response:** Try to find a cultural reference that might resonate, for example in Zimbabwe the saying musha mukadzi means both men and women are strong and intelligent. You can add that a lot of the domestic and care work – whether it's bearing children or fetching water – requires a lot of physical as well as mental strength and physical strength should not be as a basis for comparison – Toose is about families drawing on each other's strength in order to achieve a joint vision that benefits everyone.

Question:

Rape cases are on the rise because women and girls are walking alone and wearing miniskirts thereby inviting rape to themselves.

- **Response:** Rape is a serious abuse of power and a criminal offence. It should not be for the woman or the girl to change the way she dresses; it is up to men to control their behaviour and not commit crimes by forcing themselves on someone who has not given their consent. There is never any justification for forcing another person to have sex.

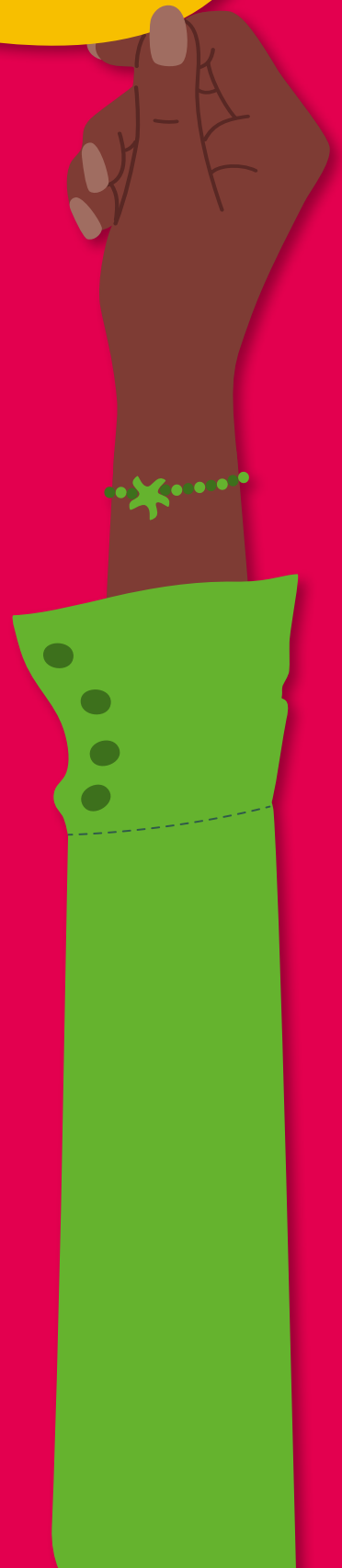
Question:

In our culture boys and men cannot show weaknesses or cry?

- **Response:** Boys and men are also human beings with emotions and crying is a normal, and healthy, way to release those emotions. Therefore, it is acceptable for everyone to cry, including men and boys. We should support and encourage men and boys to acknowledge their feelings rather than suppress them, as this can lead to anger, hatred, violence, and illness.

POSITIVITY

**Quick
conversation
topics and
guidelines**



Quick community conversations are discussions usually lasting 30 minutes or less with a selected group of people about a particular topic that has been chosen by the community or by the facilitator prior to the discussion. These can be pre-arranged or can occur during an event if the people present are interested in having such a conversation.

Whilst these conversations are different from the structured Toose sessions they build on the same messages used in the group sessions. Facilitators can select a Community Conversations topic and key messages from those listed below according to which topics feel appropriate to talk about.

These conversations should be no more than 30 minutes and are designed to get people interested in the Toose messages, and encourage them to want to learn more, perhaps through a deep dive conversation later.

Toose has 4 Community Conversation topics that you can choose from, below is the Quick Conversation guidelines.

Community Conversation 1: Quick conversation on visioning and planning together as a family

Main idea participants should walk away from the conversation with: Happy families are families that have one, joint family vision that benefits everyone. A happy family is one that creates visions and plans together.

Opening: Open the conversation by sharing how Toose uses visioning and helps families to develop and achieve a shared vision for the future.

Key Messages to share during the discussion:

- › Toose brings together the whole family (husband, wife, children etc).
- › Toose is about understanding the needs and priorities of all the individual family members, not just some of them. Bringing the whole family to vision and plan together, like they do in Toose, creates positive benefits for all. Because when families vision and plan together, everyone is invested in and works together to bring that vision to life.
- › Happy families are families that work towards one vision that benefits everyone.
- › To achieve your vision all members, need to equally believe in, contribute to and benefit from the success of that vision.
- › Planning and visioning together involves making decisions about finances, income generating projects, purchasing of household assets, children' education etc together. Joint decision-making benefits everyone.

Close the discussion by:

- › Asking participants why they think families may find it hard to plan and vision together?
- › What the potential impact of not planning together is? What is the benefit of planning and visioning together as a family?
- › Asking participants if they would like to know more about visioning and planning together or if they have any other questions.

Community Conversation 2: Communicating and listening to each other

Main idea participants should walk away from the conversation with: Happy, healthy families are families that communicate well, listen to each other and spend positive time together. This is also vital in achieving our family visions.

Opening: Open the conversation by sharing how Toose focuses on building good communication between couples, and why this is so important for happy, healthy families.

Key Messages:

- › Toose is about good communication that strengthens trust, mutual respect, enables visioning and planning together as a family.
- › Toose is about learning how to communicate respectfully and effectively as couples.
- › Communicating our feelings to our partner/family members makes it possible to resolve conflict without using violence.
- › Toose is about learning how to listen to our partners in a way that strengthens our relationships and families.
- › Happy families have respectful and uplifting communication.
- › Happy families have mutual understanding, respect, and care.

Close the discussion by asking:

- › What they have observed as barriers to communication they have observed in their families and communities.
- › How families can improve their communication to facilitate planning and visioning together.
- › If participants would like to know more about how to have mutually respectful communication or if they have any other questions.

Community Conversation 3: Happy families support and help each other

Main idea participants should walk away from the conversation with: Toose is about building happy families that support and help each to achieve their visions.

Key Messages:

- › Toose is about working together to create happy families that support each other, distribute domestic workloads, and share finances and financial decision-making among household members fairly and equally.
- › Sharing household labour improves our relationships as a family as it means we all have more time to spend together, and everyone shares the burden of household labour.
- › Making decisions together also helps us husbands and wives to understand each other, as well as make decisions together in a way that nurtures their relationship
- › Working together and spending quality time together enables bonding as a couple and improves sexual intimacy and relationships.
- › Happy families are those that work together and distribute domestic workloads among household members fairly and equally.
- › Happy families are supportive families.
- › There is a tool we use as part of Toose to reflect on how balanced our family is and how we might be more balanced and happier.

Close the discussion by asking:

- › For their own observations in their families and communities about who is most burdened by household labour.
- › What families can do to redistribute labour amongst family members in a way that is fairer.
- › If participants would like to know more about how to create happy families that support and help each other (and try the Gender Balance Tool) or if they have any other questions.

Community Conversation 4: Happy, healthy, and safe relationships

Note: This conversation should be in single sex groups and ideally should include a co-facilitator who has experience of GBV referrals and support provision**.

Main idea participants should walk away from the conversation with: Safe and healthy relationships are possible and are key to achieving family visions

Opening: Open the discussion by letting people know that this conversation will touch on violence in the home and could be challenging for some people as it is a difficult topic to discuss. Highlight that there may be people in the group who are facing similar issues or know someone who is and that if anyone needs to leave the conversation at any point they can. Add that if anyone wants more support on what is being discussed (including GBV services) they can come and find you after the Conversation. Move on to say how Toose is about creating families that are happy and a key part of that is families that are violence free. This means not only physical violence, but also sexual violence, social-economic violence (controlling someone's access to money or services) and emotional violence (including verbal abuse and controlling behaviours)

Key Messages to share during the discussion:

- › Toose is about acknowledging that conflict amongst couples and families is normal and inevitable, but that violence is never acceptable
- › Using violent means to resolve conflict damages families and all family members – in particular women and children
- › Toose is about learning how to resolve conflict peacefully and respectfully in a way that builds and nurtures healthy relationships
- › Toose is about creating safe and happy families where partners and children feel valued and included.
- › Toose is about Zero tolerance to violence amongst couples and between family members
- › Violence is never the fault of the person who is experiencing it and people who are experiencing it should be supported to seek help.
- › Seek protective services like counselling, shelters, couple counselling where violence happens.
- › Listening and accepting when your partner says NO is a great sign of respect, care, love, and responsibility.

Close the discussion by asking:

- › What are the causes of violence in families.
- › How is intimate partner violence being resolved in families and communities?
- › How violence within families might affect children and the general family wellbeing.
- › If participants would like to know more about how to create happy, healthy, and safe relationships in their families then to let you know and you can arrange a longer conversation on this.

Share details of GBV response/service providers (used in the social empowerment sessions) with audience in case any member of the audience requires support or knows someone who may need the same.

Using the Toose tools for deeper dive community conversations



As explained above deeper dive conversations can be arranged when community members who have interacted with a quick conversation (or have heard about Toose some other way) and want to go more in depth into a particular topic or tool used by Toose. These sessions should therefore be requested by community members and are likely to be run over 1-2 hours, as part of a pre-arrangement meeting with a selected community group who have shown interest.

Facilitators should ideally use the Toose tools in the Toose Social Empowerment Manual to support these longer conversations and facilitate a richer, more participatory discussion. It is important to note that these deep dive conversations are not Toose social empowerment sessions. The target group is not necessary couples, have not been selected as Toose participants and will not be part of all the sessions. Rather, participants have simply shown an interest in learning more about 1 or 2 tools. If there is lots of interest in the deeper dive conversations and the tools in general, this could be fed back to the Toose programme team who can use this information to advocate for additional funding to run the full Toose programme again.



Contact details

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Website: