

Child Protection for S4T Groups Lesson 4: The Right Time to Get Married

OTHER INFLUENCERS AND DECISION MAKERS TO REACH:

- ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS INCLUDING PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS, AND ADOLESCENTS



- S4T group members will wait until their girls and boys are at least 18 years of age or later to get married or live together.
- S4T group members will keep their girls in school.
- S4T group members will talk about the negative effects of child marriage with their partners and communities.

Materials:

1. Savings Group Attendance Registers
2. Flipchart for the S4T facilitator and for Community Agents (where applicable)

Lesson 4 Summary:

- Game: You can start with an energiser. For example, Stretching for relaxation
- Review commitments from the previous lesson.
- Sessions can be delivered separately, each taking 15-20 minutes.
- Show pictures and share key messages in the Child Protection Lesson 4 Flipcharts:
 - Session 1: Share the story and ask the caregiver's feelings about talking about early marriage
 - Session 2: What is Child Marriage?
 - Session 3: Child Marriage and Health Risks,
 - Session 4: Child Marriage and Trauma, Poverty and Violence.
- Activity: Role Play
- Probe about possible barriers and discuss solutions
- Request commitments



1. Game: Stretching for Relaxation - 10 minutes

1. Ask the participants to stand or sit in a circle.
2. The facilitator holds a ball of string in her hands. She will begin, by telling the group one change (or improvement) she has made in her life since she began learning the child protection lessons.
3. While still holding tightly to one end of the string, the facilitator will toss the ball of string to another participant on the other side of the circle.¹
4. This participant should explain one change (or improvement) they have made since they began attending the group. This participant will hold tightly the string that connects her to the facilitator and toss the ball of string to another participant in the circle.
5. As the participants continue sharing, a web will form. Continue until all of the participants have shared.
6. Then ask, “Why were you able to change? What helped you to change?” Reinforce the positive messages that the women share.

One line of string is not very strong, but when we work together, and encourage one another, we can take the knowledge, skills, and experiences that we have and build a very strong community.



2. Review Commitments – 5-15 minutes

When teaching Savings Group Members:

1. The S4T Facilitator asks the S4T group members to review the key practices from the last session.
2. If this is a new set of sessions, the S4T Facilitator asks the S4T group members about their commitments from the last topic and follows up with those who had difficulty trying out new practices.

¹ This game works best with a ball of string. If you do not have string, the facilitator can reach out and take the hand of a S4T GM and tell her a change she has made. That S4T GM grabs the hand of a different S4T GM and tells her a change she has made, continuing until the whole group is inter-connected.

- ? What was your commitment at the last lesson? Have you been able to keep that commitment?
- ? What did you do?
 - Did anyone (spouse, grandmother or children) interfere or tell you not to follow your commitments? Tell the story of what happened.
 - What factors (people, events or chores) in your life made it difficult to keep your commitments?
 - How were you able to overcome these problems?

3. S4T Facilitator thanks all of the SG S4T group members for their hard work and encourages them to continue.
4. S4T Facilitator encourages S4T group members to have a sense of pride that they are protecting the health of their communities by reinforcing messages and commitments.

Session 1

Story: Are you ready for marriage? (Picture 4.1) – 10 minutes

3. Story

- Read the story “Are you ready for marriage? (Picture 4.1)” in the flipchart.


Hanifa is doing well at school. She wants to finish school and have a career. She dreams of becoming a nurse or a doctor. She wants to help her family and being able to support them in the future. She also would like to have a family one day and be able to provide for their needs and give them the opportunities she never had.

She noticed recently that some of her classmates dropped out of school. Her friends think that they may be getting married even though they are only 14 years old. There are rumours in the village that one of the girls recently died in childbirth. Others say that some boys in the village sexually harass them and that their parents are worried about them leaving the house. Hanifa and her friends worry that this may happen to them.

The other day she overheard her father talking to a man about her. Her father said that she was wasting her time at school and was ‘old enough’ to marry. He said, ‘We can’t afford to keep her at home anymore.’ The man was much older than her and looked at her in a bad way. Hanifa’s parents tell her not to worry. After all, her mother married when she was the same age. ‘We always got married young in this community,’ she told Hanifa, “that’s what everyone expects a girl to do.” She feels confused and scared.

4. Ask about current Practices


- Read the questions on the same page of the flipchart.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Why is it important for Hanifa to finish school? ? Why do you think girls are being married so young? ? How do you think this impacts their lives and health?
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- **Encourage discussion. Don't correct "wrong answers."** Let everyone give an opinion. This page is for discussion, not for teaching.
- After the participants answer the last question, move to the next flipchart page by saying, "Let's compare your ideas with the messages on the following pages."

Session 2

What is Child Marriage? (Picture 4.2) - 5 minutes

	<p style="text-align: center;">5. Share the Meaning of Each Picture</p>
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- Ask the S4T group members to describe what they see in "What is Child Marriage?" (Picture 4.2).
- Affirm their responses.
- Share the meaning of each picture using the flipcharts pages.
- Use the captions on the flipchart to remind you which images represent each point.

<p>? What do you think these pictures mean?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child marriage is when a girl or boy gets married before the age of 18 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Child marriage is against the law in many countries ○ Most countries set a minimum age of marriage of 18. ○ Marrying girls reduces the potential for growth and development in a community and country. • Reject pressure from the family or community to marry girls early. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some may say that child marriage can be a traditional practice and is accepted as a way of doing things.

- Some families marry off a girl to reduce household expenses or to get a dowry payment to help with family income.
 - Caregivers may even want to marry their daughters to reduce the risk of sexual harassment, prevent shame if they get pregnant outside of marriage or as a coping mechanism to keep their daughters safe during a war or natural disaster.
 - Others believe that girls are not valued as much as boys and seen as a burden to the family.
- Child brides are not physically or emotionally ready to become wives and mothers.
 - 1 in 5 girls are married before the age of 18.
 - Their personal well-being and development is put at risk.
 - With little access to education and economic opportunities their families are more likely to live in poverty.
- ? Do girls get married early in your community? Why is this?

Session 3

The Effects of Child Marriage on Girls (Picture 4.3) - 5 minutes



6. Share the Meaning of Each Picture

- Ask the S4T group members to describe what they see in “The Effects of Child Marriage on Girls (Picture 4.3)”.
- Affirm their responses.
- Share the meaning of each picture using the flipcharts pages.
- Use the captions on the flipchart to remind you which images represent each point.

? What do you think these pictures mean?

? Child marriage is harmful to the health of girls.

- Childbearing is frequently expected after marriage, with early first births being the most risky.
- Adolescent girls are more likely to die during pregnancy and childbirth.
- Adolescent girls have a higher chance of suffering severe damage to her body because she is not fully grown, and her reproductive organs are not fully developed.
- Marrying young can increase the risk of HIV infection in girls.

? Early marriage is harmful to the health of their children.

- Babies born to adolescent girls have a higher risk of being born small (low birth weight), born too early, and having serious health issues.
- Babies born to adolescent girls are more likely to die before their first birthday.
- They are also more likely to be stunted (short for their age) and have weak blood (anemia).

? Marrying later helps girls develop and succeed in life and marriage.

- Girls who marry young are often pulled out of school and miss important years of their education.
- Because of this, as a wife, they will have limited knowledge, skills and experience needed to negotiate adult marital roles.
- With an education, girls are able to earn more money and lift themselves and their families out of poverty.

? Girls who marry too soon face increased risk of violence.

- Girls who marry young are more likely to experience violence from their partner throughout their life.
- Girls who marry young are more likely to believe that a man is justified in beating his wife.
- Girls married before age 14 are often sexually initiated by force, through rape, and many before they begin menstruation.

? What health issues do you see for child brides in your community?

Session 4

How to Stop Child Marriage (Picture 4.4) - 10 minutes



7. Share the Meaning of Each Picture

- Ask the S4T group members to describe what they see in “How to Stop Child Marriage (Picture 4.4)”.
- Affirm their responses.
- Share the meaning of each picture using the flipcharts pages.
- Use the captions on the flipchart to remind you which images represent each point.

? What do you think these pictures mean?

- Wait until girls and boys are at least 18 years of age or later to get married
 - Listen to your daughter and make decisions about her future together.
 - Help your children make good decisions about getting married too soon.
 - Marrying later significantly reduces the harmful effects of child marriage.
 - Your daughters will live a happier and healthier life and thank you for that opportunity.
- Keep your girls in school
 - Discuss with your partner how you can support your children’s education and make a plan for it.
 - Identify who else can support it. Don’t be shy/hesitate to apply to school, social welfare or other service providers in your efforts.
 - Ask for advice from other caregivers – caregiver mutual support is often the most helpful.
 - Help make schools accessible and safe for girls.
- Work with your family and community to prevent child marriage.
 - Talk to leaders and influencers in your community about the harmful effects of child marriage.
 - Talk about why people in your community marry their children and find practical ways to address these reasons in your own home and in the community.
 - Encourage men and boys take action to end child marriage.
 - If many of you decide not to marry your girls, then the rest of the community will change.

? What can be done to help families decide not to marry their girls too young?



8. Activity: Role Play - 15 minutes

1. Tell the S4T group members that we will discuss situations facing 4 different girls.
2. Listen carefully to each story.
3. Ask the S4T group members to discuss the following questions. If the group is big, you can divide them into pairs or small groups.

- ? Which girl is in the best position to get married now?
- ? Which girl should wait?
- ? Who is making good decisions?
- ? Which girl needs help and support in avoiding a marriage decision that could be harmful?
- ? Why would the decision to marry now be harmful?

4. Give them 5 minutes to discuss and be ready to share back their responses.

- Story 1 – 12-year-old Mariam’s father wants her to marry an older man who promised \$100 to the father for the marriage.
- Story 2 – 18-year-old Jamila, who has a healthy relationship with her fiancé, wants to wait until she has finished her studies and has a job before getting married.
- Story 3 – 14-year-old Asmaa, loves her 14-year-old boyfriend who says he will leave her if she does not promise to marry him.
- Story 4 – 20-year-old Najoua just came back from college and her boyfriend of 2 years asks her to marry him.



9. Probe – 15 minutes

- ? What do you think of these ideas?
- ? What challenges do you have talking about child marriage with your partner or leaders in your community?
- ? Is there anything that might prevent you from following the practices we have discussed today? What are the reasons that doing this would be difficult?

Ask the S4T Facilitators to talk to a S4T group member sitting next to them for the next five minutes. They should share any personal concerns that they have with these practices. Together they should try to find solutions to these worries and problems. After five minutes, ask the S4T group members to share what they have discussed.

Help find solutions to their concerns. Encourage them to try these new practices. If a caregiver offers a good solution to another S4T group member's concern, praise her and encourage other mothers to consider using this solution when they talk with others.



10. Request Commitments – 10 minutes

- ? Are you willing to make a commitment to the teachings you have heard today? What is your commitment?

Ask each S4T group member to say out loud a new commitment that she will make today. Each S4T group member can choose the commitment that is most important to him or her.

For example:

- I commit to find a way to talk about the impact of child marriage of adolescent girls with my partner and other community leaders.
- I commit to waiting until my child is at least 18 years old before I permit them to marry



Optional: If the S4T group members can write and have access to a phone with a camera, encourage them to write their commitment down and take a selfie with it. They can refer to the picture in between meetings as a helpful reminder.

Note on using this lesson during the COVID-19 outbreak or at other times when you cannot meet safely with people face-to-face:

Most elements of this lesson can be done in a phone call with the S4T GM. When using this lesson over the phone, the S4T Facilitator can tell the CA which flipchart page to refer to when discussing it. They will probably need to shorten the lesson, as well. However, when CAs call S4T GMs to do the lesson, they will not be able to use the flipchart, but instead will need to explain information that was presented using pictures. When there is not a lock-down in place in a neighbourhood, but COVID-19 is spreading in the area, the S4T Facilitator or CA could also visit homes, but sit outside and keep a 2-meter distance from the caregiver as you go through the lesson.