

MANY PARTNERS DON'T MAKE THE MAN

*Msizi Mbhele - Stepping Stones participant
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My name is Msizi Mbhele. I was invited to attend Woza Asibonisane's Stepping Stones sessions by one of my neighbours who is a Woza Asibonisane! facilitator. She told me about the programme, about Brothers For Life and Zazi. I attended because I wanted to learn more about how HIV is transmitted and about how to have safer sex. I ended up learning more than I expected. I learned about love, forgiveness, letting go, and how to become a responsible member of the community.

I used to have four girlfriends at the same time. You know, as a man, I thought it was acceptable and common for a guy to have more than one girlfriend. People have this belief that a man doesn't get satisfied. That is how I used to think too.

In life I didn't know where I stood because I couldn't focus on one person. I always had to have back up and not rely on one person. My mind changed when I started attending the sessions. I wouldn't talk about my issue because two of my girlfriends were also participants. I didn't want to expose our issue to everyone. Also, I am a quiet and shy person. So it became a challenge for me to express myself.

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I was encouraged to open up because the Stepping Stones team were so open and friendly. I decided to go back to my girlfriends and break up with them. Things didn't go the way I thought they would. They were really hurt.

Two of them had found out from their neighbours that I was dating both of them at the same time. That didn't



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go down very well. They came to my home and fought right in front of my parents. My elderly father was embarrassed by the chaos I had brought into his home. I was also ashamed that my parents had witnessed everything. I knew I was wrong.

Now I am proud to be a responsible and motivated person who sticks to one partner. I spend most of my time with my nephews at home listening to music. Woza Asibonisane! helped me to change my ways.

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