

## Talking to Your Partner

Safer sex depends on the ability to convince partners that it is in their mutual best interest to use a condom, without changing the basis of the relationship or the intimacy of the moment. Negotiation for safer sex is not always easy. Because it may be difficult to discuss the subject, practising safer sex may be very limited or just not done. Some lessons learned about training to negotiate safer sex include:

- Role plays and real-life testimonials successfully incorporated into counseling, along with printed materials, videos, face-to-face education, peer education and promotional events, can help women and men negotiate FC use.
- Cultural norms can be used to help with promotion and persuasion. For example, women in Senegal are sometimes able to work together with their husband's other wives to persuade men to use FC.
- In some cases it can be useful to incorporate FC into sexual play by allowing the male partner to insert the device.
- To encourage continued use, many women who had problems with insertion asked their partners to help.
- In places of strong community spirit, women often negotiated FC by arguing that most local women now use the device. Partners felt, more often than not, obliged to comply.
- In South Africa and Zimbabwe brochures were developed that women could give to their partners that could be used as a "discussion starter" for women and men. It emphasized the novelty of the new product and the key attributes that other men really liked about FC.
- In Birmingham, Alabama, USA, a video for male partners was used as a motivation strategy.
- Some sex workers do not even tell their client that they are wearing FC prior to sex and find that either men do not notice or they are happy not to use the male condom. Others feel more confident about introducing and persuading clients to use FC after the client had refused to use the male condom.