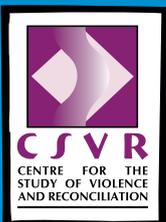


An informed  person is an empowered person!

OUR
JOURNEY
WITH
HIV & AIDS



OUR JOURNEY WITH HIV & AIDS

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Abbreviations used in this booklet

PLWHA - person living with HIV and AIDS
PLWHAs - people living with HIV and AIDS

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Dear Reader,

This booklet aims to discuss some of the challenges of HIV & AIDS that you may face being a teenager. It takes you on a journey of discovery, and will give you a better understanding of yourself and your relationships within the context of the AIDS pandemic in South Africa.

The booklet contains information that is often followed by suggestions that will guide you in reflecting on relevant issues. You will be asked questions that will help you grapple with specific challenges and will allow you to develop your own value system and unique approach to life. You may decide to obtain some writing material to make your personal journal - to record your thoughts, draw/paint illustrations and/or write poems in response to the suggestions.

The booklet provides you with helpful points when making choices about HIV & AIDS. It also contains important information on your rights and responsibilities about the AIDS pandemic.

Enjoy the journey! Remember: An informed person is an empowered person!

Yours sincerely,

Youth Violence Prevention Team,
The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation

P.S.: Remember to refer to page 25 if there is a word or a term that you need more information about.

QUICK QUIZ

Test your knowledge on HIV & AIDS (Answers below)

1. Mention the four main ways that HIV is transmitted.
2. How safe are condoms?
3. Can you get infected with the HIV virus if you are a child?
4. How many people do you estimate became HIV-positive in South Africa during 2006? ___ 1.5 million | ___ 3 million | ___ 5.5 million?
5. Is there a cure for AIDS?
6. How many children do you estimate were orphaned by HIV & AIDS in 2006? ___ 300,000 | ___ 1.2 million | ___ 3 million
7. Who made the following statement?

“Let us not equivocate. AIDS today in Africa is claiming more lives than the sum total of all wars, famines and floods, and the ravages of such deadly diseases as malaria. It is devastating.”

Answers

1. a) Through unprotected sexual intercourse.
b) From a mother to her baby during and after birth.
c) From blood-to-blood contact (when you have an open wound that is bleeding, and the other person is bleeding too and there is an exchange of blood).
d) From sharing the same needles.
2. If you use a *new* condom correctly, *every time* you have sex, they are very safe (as long as they don't break during sex). Remember to check the expiry date of condoms and not to store them in a warm place.
3. Yes. At birth you could have contracted HIV from your mother if she was HIV-positive or had AIDS. Children can also become HIV-positive from sexual violence. Did you know that approximately 240,000 children under 15 years of age had HIV & AIDS in 2006?
4. 5.5 million.
5. No. But there are medicines called anti-retrovirals (ARVs) that attack the virus and can help people to live long, productive lives even if they are HIV-positive.
6. 1.2 million children under 18 years of age.
7. Nelson Mandela





IDENTITY

What are the first things that come into your mind when you hear the word... **identity** ...a little green booklet, a clothing store, a label, passports ...not sure?

We will carefully explain the meaning of this concept and what it means to you. It is a very important concept and requires careful consideration.

You are at a time in your lives when you are feeling unsure and anxious about yourselves and your identity. You look at your culture and your community to draw on new identities. By trying out different roles you start to know who you are and what kind of person you want to be. HIV & AIDS contributes to the make up of your identity, you may want to reject and deny the roles which you have assumed and are having to fulfil but your relationship to HIV & AIDS is part of who you are. This can be difficult for you, as in many situations you have not had a choice, these responsibilities and roles have been forced upon you.

Many of you are moving away from your parents' influence and wanting to make choices and decisions of your own. You are wanting to live a more informed life with HIV & AIDS, making decisions and choices that perhaps your parents were unable to make due to the circumstances they found themselves in. You are also moving towards the influence of your friends and peers. The decisions and choices you make are often strongly affected by the desire to fit in and be accepted by a particular group.

Values

A set of beliefs about ourselves and others. For example, the things that we believe are right or wrong. Values can change over time.

Prejudice

An unfavourable judgment or opinion formed beforehand or without knowledge or examination of the facts. For example, disliking someone because of their race.

Values are very important at this time. The values that you adopt become part of your identity. You need to be aware of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination, and build on the values of equity, justice, freedom in order to develop into a responsible adult.

If you do not find a sense of identity you may withdraw and become isolated from friends and family. You may feel like running away from home, drop out of school, stay out all night, drink or take drugs. It is very important that you build a sense of who you are and set goals for yourself.





REFLECTION TIME

Spend a few minutes thinking about the following questions and what they mean to you. You can either write down or draw your thoughts and feelings in a journal or diary – use plenty of colours and be creative.

Remember there is no right or wrong answer – these are **your** personal thoughts and feelings and no-one else needs to read it.

- What does the word or concept **identity** mean to you?
- How do you see yourself?
- What makes you unique in relation to your peers?
- What or who influences you most in the way you see yourself?
- Write down your three most important values.
- Write down three things that you are really good at.
- How much does image (your outward appearance, intellectual performance or artistic ability) mean to your friends? How much does it mean to you?



REMEMBER

You need to believe in yourself and continually clarify and build on the values that are important to you and that guide you. It is easy to be influenced by those around you – take the good and leave the bad. We all live by different value systems, choose the values that work for you. Once you are confident about what is important to you, what your values are and what you want to achieve in your lifetime, you will find it easier to make responsible decisions.



How to build your self-confidence as the 'new' head of the family

-  **Do not be fooled by the media.** There is a general fascination with the lives of the rich and the famous. There is a tendency for these people to be portrayed in a glamorous way. Most people in real life do not look or act like glamorous TV stars in soaps or music videos. The media uses lots of clever tricks to make people and events look desirable and glamorous.
-  **Do not let people make you feel as if you are not good enough to take on this role.** You are. Choose friends who will not pull you down. Surround yourself with people who have a positive and affirming attitude to life, and who support you and your choices.
-  **Accept your body.** People are of different sizes, shapes and colours. Tell yourself what you like best about your body and appreciate it. Not everybody is stunningly beautiful or very well built and attractive. Each individual is unique and we must celebrate our uniqueness. Resist negative self-talk.
-  **Exercise and eat well.** It is very important to have a fit body and a healthy attitude to life. Eat healthily and do not engage in harmful practices like smoking and taking drugs; you will feel good about yourself and other people will notice your approach to healthy living.
-  **Believe in yourself.** Celebrate your talents. Set goals that you can achieve. Celebrate all your achievements – whether big or small.
-  **Do not be hard on yourself.** Everyone makes mistakes. If you make a mistake, that's okay. However, it is important to take responsibility for your actions because your actions have consequences. Apologise where appropriate and learn from what went wrong. Experience is the best teacher.

Strengths

The things you are good at, the positive things people say about you.

Weaknesses

The things you do not like about yourself. The areas of growth that you see in yourself.

-  **Know your strengths and weaknesses.** We are all special in different ways. Make a list of your strengths, talents and weaknesses. Go over this list regularly and reinforce your abilities.
-  **Think about the things you are good at.** Work on the things you are good at and improve and expand on them all the time.
-  **Stand for what you believe in.** Believe in yourself and do not let peers or friends run your life. Learn to be assertive. Make your views clear without being arrogant and rude. People who take a stand on what is close to their hearts, earn respect and admiration from others.



YOUR HOME AND FAMILY

It is important to understand that the words 'home' and 'family' do not necessarily mean 'related by blood'. In this booklet these words are used to describe the source from which one receives support and experiences a strong sense of belonging, for example, youth and religious groups, close friends, supportive neighbours, caregivers and organisations etc.

Many of you are between the ages of 14 and 16 years: You are perhaps heading households, or have had to move from your home to stay with relatives, neighbours or at orphanages. These are the people or institutions that are now taking care of you and possibly your brothers and sisters too. The move from one home to another can be traumatic and extremely stressful. Some of you have been forced to assume new responsibilities due to the loss of your parents or caregivers. This may be due to HIV & AIDS. Heading the home can become more complicated and challenging when community members or friends exclude you and your family or treat you differently, as they lack understanding and knowledge of the pandemic. However, these challenges are not impossible to overcome.



REFLECTION TIME

- What responsibilities do you have in the home?
- Who helps you with these responsibilities?
- What emotions do you experience when you think about your home?
- Identify possible reasons or causes for these feelings.
- Write down all the positive and negative things about your home.
- What makes the positive things good and worth holding onto?
- What strategies do you have to deal with the negative aspects?



Good and honest communication, self-management, asking for help and resisting negative social influences are important when dealing with everyday problems, as well as with stressful and traumatic life experiences.

Everyone has some experience in problem solving, we all know how to put matters in order of importance and urgency in order to solve a problem. If you feel respected, valued and supported, you will be able to have a sense of hope about the future and a desire to solve daily problems. Listen to your feelings and speak to someone you can trust who will be able to provide you with support and guidance in making responsible choices. If there isn't a person you can speak to, contact an organisation such as Childline or speak to a social worker or teacher. Useful numbers are listed at the back of this booklet.

How to deal with a difficult or traumatic event

For example: the death of a parent, unruly siblings, failing a school exam due to the many responsibilities you have, moving from one home to another, being rejected from peers and people in the community.

-  **Try to accept the feeling.** It is okay to be angry or sad. Do not pretend you are okay when you are not.
-  **Think about why you are feeling this way.** Try to understand the underlying causes or reasons for feeling this way. Say to yourself, 'I am angry because...'
-  **Take action.** Think about how to deal with the feeling. Will it help to talk to someone? Is there someone who can help you if a situation or individual makes you angry? Do you need to find a quiet place to calm down?
-  **Get some exercise.** It is a great way to work off anger and relieve tension.
-  **Talk about your worries.** Talk to a friend or your caregiver. It can make you feel better. It is not a weakness to share your sadness or pain with someone. Both girls and boys need to express their feelings.
-  **Get help.** If you feel so bad that you are distracted at school or uncomfortable being around other people, get outside help. Speak to a teacher you trust or a professional person at your local clinic who will be able to refer you to an appropriate organisation that helps teenagers in your situation.





BUILDING NEW RELATIONSHIPS

Most of us want good, lasting relationships in our lives. We want to feel loved and cared for by family and friends. We want to be with someone who makes us feel special and happy to be alive.

Occasionally we experience what we regarded as a “perfect” relationship, but it just doesn’t work out. It ends in trouble and heartache. Remember, relationships change all the time. Some can last a whole lifetime, while others serve a purpose for a specific period in your life only, and then you both move on. Forming and maintaining relationships that are important to us are skills that can be strengthened. Strong relationships involve commitment, respect and responsibility.



REFLECTION TIME

Think about a special relationship in your life. It may be a love relationship with a girlfriend or boyfriend, or it may be a friendship. It may be a relationship with a family member or neighbour. It may be a past relationship, or one you enjoy at the moment.

- What is most important to you in this relationship?
- What are the elements of a good relationship for you?
- What makes a relationship special for you?
- What do other people expect of you in a good relationship?





It is sometimes easy to know what we want from someone in a good relationship. However, we often forget that it takes two to make a relationship work. Relationships are not always easy and require hard work, attention and honesty. We often have to put a lot of energy into relationships, solve problems, enjoy fun times and get through difficult times.

You have the **right** to be respected in a relationship, but you also have a responsibility to respect the other person. Rights are always accompanied by responsibilities. For example, you have the right to be heard; but you also have the **responsibility** to listen to someone else's views and respect their needs. Respect does not necessarily mean fulfilling the other person's expectations of the relationship – especially if you think the expectations are unreasonable or go against your values. For example, your boyfriend or girlfriend may expect you to have sex with him/her. If you are uncomfortable with this, then talk to him/her about it and tell him/her how you feel and what you want.

Strategies for a good relationship

-  **Spend time getting to know each other's fears and dreams in relation to how HIV & AIDS has affected you.** Are your fears and dreams similar? Could you help each other to reach your dreams and overcome your fears?
-  **Share stories and emotions with each other.** Laughing and crying makes your relationship stronger, as it builds trust and shows the other person that you feel confident in the relationship.
-  **Listen.** Listen carefully to the person you are talking to. This means showing that you are interested in what they are saying through your body language and your responses.
-  **Be honest.** Respond to questions as honestly as possible, and do not pretend to be strong when you are feeling weak and lonely inside. These feelings are important to share with those you have a relationship with.
-  **Ask for help and support** If you need help or someone who will listen, ask the other person to assist. Next time, when they are feeling down, you can do the same for them.



REMEMBER

You may have many friends who are supportive of your situation. However in most communities there are some people who are ignorant and live in denial about HIV & AIDS. They show this in many ways, either by not having protected sex, blaming others or treating PLWHAs or those affected by HIV & AIDS in a discriminatory way. The next section explores the negativity that continues to exist around HIV & AIDS.

STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION

HIV & AIDS affects all of us. It is all around us. Many people ignore the reality of the AIDS pandemic. Many people ignore the rights of PLWHAs, and discriminate against them in terrible ways.

PLWHAs have the same human rights as any other individual. They have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. PLWHAs are sometimes treated badly – this often happens because of fear and misunderstanding about the pandemic and its effects. We need to speak out when we see others treating PLWHAs in a disrespectful way.

HIV & AIDS can also cause people from families and communities to show kindness, unity and support. This should be supported and encouraged.

HIV & AIDS is unfortunately often linked to stigma and discrimination. This means that people who are affected by or infected with HIV & AIDS are often rejected by their families, loved ones and their communities. This occurs often in times when they are in need of support and love the most.



The following terms are **IMPORTANT**

In the context of this booklet, stigma and discrimination mean the following:

Stigma A person does not feel accepted or is treated unfairly by others in the community because s/he is living with HIV.

People and friends think there is something wrong with a PLWHA (for example, that s/he is cursed) and they believe they are better than the PLWHA. This may be the reason for her/him being pushed aside at school, made to feel that there is something wrong with her/him and that s/he is not a valuable human being or member of the community. This is wrong!

Discrimination This is to think that you are better than someone else because you are not infected with HIV, and you actively do things to disadvantage the PLWHA.

“No person shall be discriminated against because of his or her race, gender, sex, origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, belief, culture or language.”
(South African Constitution)



REFLECTION TIME

- Why is there a stigma around HIV & AIDS?
- What things have you heard people say about HIV that could increase the stigma in your school, family and community?
- What are your friends, your school and your religious institution doing to prevent the stigmatisation of PLWHAs in your community?
- What can you do?

Read the following case study

I am too afraid to admit to my peers that I am HIV-positive. Although we often talk about being tested and practising safe sex I am not sure whether they truly 'walk the talk'. I decided to go for a test as I was concerned and worried about my past sexual relationships. I am 15 years of age and have had unprotected sex several times. After one of the many conversations with my friends I realised that I was at risk, and I have dreams for my future. I want to complete high school and study law. I felt knowing my status would be a step in the right direction. Now I am confused and unsure how to tell my friends. Will they still accept me? I have seen how kids at school who have been infected with or are affected by HIV are pushed aside; teachers do not take them seriously, and other learners tease and harass them.

Thandi (age 15)



Questions to ask yourself

- What did you feel when you read Thandi's story?
- Have you heard or do you know of similar stories within your school, family and community?
- What would you do if you were Thandi?
- Do you think it is important to know your HIV status? Why?
- How do you think we can change people's attitudes towards HIV & AIDS in our schools and communities?



IMPORTANT

We should look hard at ourselves and make sure that we do not judge others unfairly.

How to deal with HIV & AIDS discrimination and stigma

- Know your rights.** Visit an organisation that will give you the correct information about HIV & AIDS and the law.
- Try to tell the person** how their behaviour makes you feel.
- Talk to someone** you can trust about your feelings and problems.
- Find out if there are others who share your experiences.** Talk with your peers, teachers or community leaders about managing/dealing with AIDS discrimination.
- Tell the school or your parents/caregiver/guardian** about what is happening in your life.
- Remember it is your right** to be treated with dignity and respect!

Discrimination divides communities and causes hurt. It makes people live with hate inside themselves and destroys their self confidence.

Fear of discrimination prevents people from seeking treatment for HIV & AIDS or from telling others that they are living with HIV. People with (or suspected of having) HIV may be discriminated against at school, be prevented from working and be excluded from social activities in the community. In some cases, individuals are rejected by their families and friends. This is wrong and is, in many instances, against the law.



UNPACKING SOME MYTHS AROUND HIV & AIDS

People often spread lies or untrue stories (myths) about HIV & AIDS.

Have you heard these myths circulating amongst your peers?

1. If someone insists on using condoms that person is HIV-positive.
2. Girl learners who are HIV-positive spread the virus on purpose.
3. HIV is a form of God's punishment and a PLWHA has sinned, is dirty and brings shame upon his/her school and community.
4. If you have sex with a virgin you will be cured of HIV.
5. Condoms make you sick.
6. Condoms do not have an expiry date.
7. A shower after unprotected sex will prevent you from getting HIV.
8. HIV only happens to some people such as gays and lesbians, migrants and poor people ('other' people).
9. You can become infected with the virus by touching, sharing food or playing with someone who is HIV-positive.

How to care for peers who have been affected by or infected with HIV & AIDS

-  **Be kind and helpful to teenagers who have lost their parents.** They need love, support and friendship. Find practical ways to help. For example, form a study group to do homework together.
-  **Tell a teacher you trust** if you know of someone in your class who has lost his/her parents. Your teacher may not know that there is a learner who needs special care and attention.
-  **Encourage the school as a whole to find ways to support orphaned teenagers.** Talk to the principal, Learner Representative Council (LRA) or a teacher you can trust (i.e. school counsellor).
-  **Talk to an adult you trust and together find ways to provide help.** There may be grants and feeding schemes available for orphaned teenagers.
-  **There are organisations that help and support AIDS orphans.** Contact the **AIDS Helpline** on **0800 012 322** or see the list of organisations listed at the back of the booklet.



True information

1. Insisting on using a condom correctly every time you have sex is the responsible thing to do, whether you are HIV-positive or not.
2. Girls are often scared to insist that their partners use condoms because they may get violent or reject them. Rape contributes to the spread of HIV. Young women are vulnerable to sexual violence in the community, at home, in school and on the way to and from school.

Insensitive comments by some educators, health care workers, parents and other learners can prevent girls from seeking sexual health care and exercising their rights. Remember it is against the law for educators to have sexual relations with learners. (South African Council for Educators (SACE) Act No. 31 of 2000).

Some girls are forced or tricked into having sex with older men in exchange for favours, gifts or money. Girls living in challenging or difficult situations are often more vulnerable to this.
3. HIV is not a punishment. Many religious organisations and schools are active in stopping stigma and discrimination and support people living with HIV.

The support and care of friends and others in the school and community are important to PLWHAs. Stress and emotional pain can weaken a person's ability to fight any illness.

Support, rather than blame or judge PLWHAs. Encourage them to seek medical help early, which can lead to longer healthier lives. Suspicion, gossip and the lack of appropriate education about HIV & AIDS create hurdles to effective prevention and care.
4. There is no cure for HIV & AIDS. However there are medicines, such as anti-retrovirals (ARVs) that treat or prevent the transmission of HIV and help people living with HIV to live healthy and productive lives.
5. Condoms do not make you sick. They are sterilised and packaged in highly sophisticated factories.
6. There is an expiry date on the back of the condom packet or on the condom itself. If the expiry date has passed, do not use the condom. It may tear and break during sexual intercourse, and you will not be protected from STIs or HIV.
7. Taking a shower after unprotected sex will not protect you from the risk of HIV. Using a condom consistently and correctly will help to protect you from STIs, HIV and an unwanted pregnancy.
8. Anyone can get HIV regardless of colour, race, class, age, country of origin or sexual orientation. This mistaken view has led to some children infected with or affected by HIV being stopped from attending school or being separated from other children in schools.
9. You cannot get infected by the spitting, sneezing, or coughing of a PLWHA, nor by her/his tears or sweat. You cannot get HIV from mosquitoes or other insect bites. It is perfectly safe to shake hands or hug a PLWHA, use the same toilets, swim in the same swimming pool and breathe the same air. So, there is no reason not to involve classmates with HIV & AIDS in school activities or inviting them to your home.

STIs

Sexually transmitted infections. For example: gonorrhoea, syphilis, herpes, chlamydia and HIV. For treatment and more information contact your local clinic.



VIOLENCE

Violence has become a part of everyday life in South Africa. Children orphaned by HIV & AIDS are often the people who live with the most violence. It is important to understand the many different forms of violence that these children could experience.

Physical violence

- ☹ Many children, who are innocent bystanders are hurt in fights between adults.
- ☹ Many children are beaten by their guardians, neighbours and teachers. Adults often hit children to discipline them.
- ☹ Some people kill themselves – this is called suicide.

Sexual violence

- ☹ Some men sexually abuse or rape women and men.
- ☹ Sometimes adults sexually abuse and rape children.
- ☹ Some girls are sex workers in order to support their siblings and themselves as a means of survival.

Emotional violence

- ☹ This means saying things that hurt another person’s feelings.
- ☹ Threatening to hurt someone else is also emotional abuse.

Violence to property

- ☹ It is also violence if people break or destroy things that do not belong to them. For example your jealous uncle sets fire to your late parent’s house, as he feels he should be living in it and not you and your siblings.

Violence is never acceptable. You need to solve problems with discussion and negotiation. Violent parents *are more likely to* make violent children. Violent children *are more likely to* become violent parents in the future.



REFLECTION TIME

- What do you and your friend/family members argue about?
- How do you solve these difficulties?
- Do you know people who attempt to “solve” their problems through violence? Has this happened to you – were you either a victim of a person’s violence or did you inflict violence on others? How did it make you feel?

Many people live in difficult conditions and do not use violence to solve their problems.

How to solve problems peacefully

(You may need to have a third person present to assist in the process of mediation).

-  **Identify the problem.** Together (as a group) define what the real problem is.
-  **Attack the problem, not the person.** Do not insult or blame someone. State your feelings honestly, say why you are angry.
-  **It takes two to solve a problem.** Both of you must want to share your feelings in order to sort things out.
-  **Listen with an open mind.** Listen to the other person's point of view. Do not interrupt or put them down.
-  **Take time to find a solution.** Think of all possible solutions to the problem. Think of the consequences of each choice.
-  **Reach an agreement that you both accept.**
-  **Take responsibility for your actions.**

When we are arguing, we sometimes do not listen to what the other person is saying. It is important to learn to be a good listener.

We all have experienced violence in our lives, whether at school, in our families or right here amongst our peers. Orphans and girls are often most vulnerable to victimisation (being targeted) and violence.

Up to 30% of women in the world report that their first sexual experience was forced or coerced. That means they have not chosen to lose their virginity. Their first sexual experience occurs in a context of emotional or physical violence and abuse.

In some places more than half of school learners experience sexual or physical violence. Some studies have found that women who experience violence are up to three times more likely to acquire HIV than women who do not. (*Schechtman, L. 2006: Zero Tolerance*)



REFLECTION TIME

- What do you understand by the word 'vulnerable'?
- If you feel comfortable and safe, share a violent sexual encounter. How did you cope with it? Have you been able to speak to someone about it to help you heal?
- What makes orphans the most vulnerable (in danger/at risk) to violence?
- What kinds of violence do AIDS orphans experience?
- How can we protect our peers from violence?

Medical protection for HIV & AIDS after rape or sexual violence

There are anti-retroviral medicines (prophylaxis) that you can take that may reduce the risk of becoming infected with HIV. **You can take these medicines (ARVs) after you have been raped or forced to have anal sex, if:**

HIV testing

Taking a blood or saliva test in order to find out whether one is HIV-positive or HIV-negative.

-  You have been told about how these medicines might stop you from becoming infected with HIV.
-  You have been told about the possible side-effects of these medicines.
-  You have had an HIV test and have tested negative (if you test HIV-positive you will not be given the medicines because they will not work).
-  You have made your own choice to take these medicines.

(Contact the relevant organisation at the back of the booklet for information on how to report the incident and psychological counselling and further support).

How can I get these medicines?

Go to a doctor, clinic or hospital as soon as you can and ask about anti-retroviral medicines that could reduce the risk of getting HIV. These medicines are called “**post-exposure prophylaxis**” or **PEP**. You must start taking the medicine as soon as possible. If more than 72 hours (3 days) have passed since you were raped, it is too late for these medicines to reduce the risk of getting HIV from rape. *(The AIDS Law Project and The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation “Preventing HIV after Rape”).*

How to deal with rape or sexual violence

-  **Talk to someone about your feelings.** Do not bottle it all up inside. Get support from people who care about you.
-  **Tell yourself that feeling angry or sad is normal.**
-  **Be kind to yourself.** Do things that make you feel better about yourself.
-  **Do not be hard on yourself.** True friends will continue to love, respect and support you.
-  **Time heals.** Take it one day at a time. Have courage. The pain will get better after a while.
-  **Be active.** Become a member of a youth group where teenagers discuss their difficulties and dreams.



SUPPORTING PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE

Breaking the silence

Many people who have HIV do not tell anyone. They keep the secret inside for a long time. It may be hard to live like this. Other PLWHAs tell a few close friends, a counsellor or an AIDS support group. There are few who publicly disclose that they are HIV-positive. PLWHAs often make a public disclosure to encourage others who are HIV-positive to seek help, and to stop fear and discrimination from spreading.

It is often difficult to tell others that you are HIV-positive. Disclosure is an individual decision, and you will know best when it is a good time to tell others. You may receive support or rejection from your aunts, uncles, grandmothers, teachers, neighbours or a caregiver from a local organisation. You might be surprised at people's warmth and support when you disclose your HIV status.

There are organisations in your community that will be able to provide you with care and support. They may be able to provide counselling, home visits by a caregiver, group meetings, food, clothing, help with looking after your brothers or sisters or sick family members and help to ensure that you are able to attend school. They can also help you to get into contact with health care facilities so that you can access anti-retroviral treatment, if you need it.

Disclosure

To make information (secret or new) known to others.

Confidentiality in disclosure

Information about a person's HIV status must be kept private. When the person decides s/he wants to tell others and does so, it is called voluntary disclosure.



REFLECTION TIME

- Who do you speak to when you are HIV-positive?
- What makes you speak to that person?
- Do you know where to go for support in your community if you want to talk about HIV & AIDS?

Do you know your rights?

The Constitution says everyone has the right to social assistance (such as social grants) if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants.

Social Assistance means that the government assists people who have serious financial problems. Many PLWHAs are able to work and to support themselves. However, some PLWHAs become sick and are unable to support themselves and/or their families.

The **Social Assistance Act of 2004** sets out who qualifies for government support and how to apply for such support. The aim of the act is to: Protect people who cannot work because of old age, illness or physical or mental disability. When people living with HIV or AIDS become unable to support themselves and their families, the Act says that the government should provide support to them.

Types of social grants

Disability Grant

There are two types of grants. *Both were R820 per month in April 2006.*

1. *A permanent disability grant.* This is paid to people with a disability that is likely to last for more than twelve months.
2. *A temporary disability grant.* This grant is paid to people whose disability may exist continuously for a period of six months or less or in intervals for no more than twelve months.

Social Relief or Distress Grant

This grant is given to people who are unable to meet their or their family's most basic needs. The grant is offered in the form of food parcels.

Foster Care Grant

This grant is paid to people who look after children that are not biologically related to them. *It was R590 per month in April, 2006.*

Care Dependency Grant

This grant is aimed at children from birth to their eighteenth year who are either mentally or physically disabled who require 24 hour care. It is paid to parents or caregivers responsible for the children. *It was R820 per month in April, 2006.*

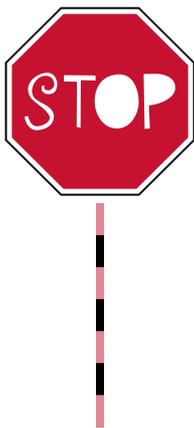
Child Support Grant

This grant is paid to the primary caregiver of a child up to the age of fourteen. A primary caregiver is any person who takes the main responsibility for the daily needs of a child. *It was R190 per month in April, 2006.*



HOW do you qualify for a grant when you are a PLWHA?

- A PLWHA will only get a grant if they become too sick to work.
- If that person is unemployed but still fit to work, they will not get a grant.



IMPORTANT

A grant for a PLWHA depends on that person's CD4 count in some provinces. Different provinces apply different criteria, but all of them basically assess the person's ability to work. A medical report confirming the CD4 count will be needed. A person may lose their grant if they become healthy enough to work.

WHAT do you need to apply for a grant?

(The Social Assistance Act says that you can apply for a grant if you...)

- ...are a South African citizen, or a permanent resident;
- ...are a resident in South Africa at the time of application;
- ...are between 18-59 years of age if a female, and 18-64 years of age if a male;
- ...have submitted a medical/assessment report confirming disability;
- ...and your partner meet the requirements of the means test (a means test is a set of financial requirements that a person applying for the grant has to meet);
- ...are not kept or cared for in a state institution (like a prison or an orphanage);
- ...are not receiving another social grant (such as an old age grant. However as a parent/caregiver of a child, you can still access the child support grant as well as a disability grant);
- ...have submitted a valid identity document.

WHERE do you apply for the grants?

To apply for a grant, contact your nearest Department of Social Development office, or call these numbers for free from a public phone.

- **Social grants toll free: 0800 601 011**
- **AIDS Help line: 0800 012 322**
- **Child line: 0800 055 555**



REACHING YOUR DREAMS

Your life experiences have made you who you are. You will carry on developing in mind and growing in spirit into a responsible adult.

Continue to reflect on the challenges facing you and share your choices with those who you know are able to support, love and listen to you.



REFLECTION TIME

- Write down one of the challenges you are currently experiencing in your life.
- Now, in point form, draw a plan of action for yourself: what steps are you able to take to address this challenge – using the expertise and support from organisations and trusted adults in your community.
- Share this plan with a person who will be able to offer you support and insight.

Awareness around HIV & AIDS

You have worked through this booklet now and have spent time reflecting on what you have read. How are you feeling? Have you learnt anything new about yourself?

This chapter gives you the opportunity to think about what's been most important for you and how you could share and pass on your knowledge to others. You can use the skills you have developed in many ways, for example: working together in composing and performing a song or poem, writing a play or designing a poster for your school, in order to persuade other learners to take action to prevent the spread of HIV & AIDS. **This is called a campaign.**

A campaign makes people aware of a problem that needs to be dealt with. Below you will find guidelines on how to develop a campaign.

Continue to talk and take responsibility for HIV & AIDS in your community. Good luck!



REMEMBER

To stop HIV & AIDS from spreading you can:

- **Get wise about HIV & AIDS.** Teach others.
- **Give care and support to PLWHAs.**
- **Wait until you are older** before you have sex. Be responsible.
- **If you have sex** use a condom every time and do so correctly.
- **Break the silence.** Talk openly about HIV & AIDS.
- **Respect women.** Speak out about gender-based violence and educate people about human rights, and especially the rights of women.



How to develop an HIV & AIDS campaign at school

- 1. Plan your campaign.** Get a team together. You must include learners in your class. You may also want to include parents, teachers or active community leaders.
- 2. Find out more.** Look through this booklet again. Choose one issue that you think is the most important for your school. Decide what your main message is. For example: 'Do not discriminate against people with HIV & AIDS', or 'My friend with HIV & AIDS is still my friend', or 'Care for orphans affected by HIV & AIDS'.
- 3. Work out a plan of action.** In other words, what activities need to be done to achieve the best way of getting the message across. For example: making posters and/or pamphlets, presenting a school play, setting-up a school meeting and inviting experts, community leaders or learners to speak.
- 4. Decide on who in the team will do what.** Remember, different people have different skills and talents. Give everyone something to do. For example, who will be responsible for doing posters? Who will write the play?
- 5. Check your messages.** When you have performed the play or completed a draft poster, check that the messages are correct. Show it to other learners or teachers. Ask questions like: What do you think the message is? What lessons have you learnt from the play that you could pass on to others? What do you like? What do you not like? Make any necessary changes to improve your pamphlet or play.
- 6. Draw up a timetable of events.** What is going to happen when? Who will organise what?
- 7. Assess the campaign when it is finished.** Did you achieve what you wanted to?

Questions to ask yourself

-  Which aspects of the campaign worked and which didn't?
-  What are the reasons for this?
-  How did you work together as a team?
-  How did you make decisions?
-  What would you do differently next time?
-  What feedback have people given you to show that your message reached them?

It is important that you have information of community organisations working in the field of HIV & AIDS who would be able to support and assist you. You need to be responsible in the way you speak and behave towards orphans in your communities. By doing this you will build strong communities that can work together in supporting and improving children's lives. See the back of the booklet for the contact details of relevant organisations.

CONTACTS

Family issues

● Family and Marriage Society of South Africa (FAMSA)

An organisation that provides support about family issues and concerns. They offer marriage and divorce counselling and support groups. They have a number of offices in Gauteng, which also have satellite programmes.

☎ 011 892 4272/3/6

Gender-based violence

● Stop Gender Violence Helpline

This counselling service is specifically designed to assist with issues around gender based violence. The Helpline also provides free, confidential and multilingual telephone counselling.

☎ 0800 150 150

HIV & AIDS

● Circles of Support Hotline

An information telephone line created to assist communities to address the problems of orphaned or vulnerable children. People can volunteer their time, donate goods or expertise and find out where to go to within their communities for help.

☎ 0860 222 777

● LifeLine

Offers 24 hour telephonic counselling.

☎ 0861 322 322

● loveLife thethajunction

Provides support and advice for teenagers on issues of sexual health and HIV & AIDS.

☎ 0800 121 900

● National AIDS Helpline

Offers multi-lingual 24-hour toll free assistance by trained counsellors. They will be able to refer you to your nearest health care facility that provides Voluntary Testing & Counselling, as well as ARVs.

☎ 0800 012 322

● National Association of People living with AIDS (NAPWA)

☎ 011 872 0975

● Treatment Action Campaign (TAC)

To make affordable anti-retroviral medication available to PLWHAs and to raise awareness about the human rights of PLWHAs.

(National office: Cape Town)

☎ Cape Town 021 788 3507

☎ Durban 031 304 3673

☎ Johannesburg 011 403 2293

☎ Limpopo 015 291 5448

☎ Mpumalanga 013 755 2298

☎ Southernwood 043 722 2645

www.tac.org.za

Human rights

● Centre For Human Rights

University of Pretoria

☎ 012 420 3034

● Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR)

☎ Johannesburg 011 403 56 50

☎ Cape Town 021 422 0258

● Lesbian and Gay Equality Project (LGEF)

☎ 011 487 3810/1

● National Youth Commission

☎ 012 325 3702

● South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC)

☎ 011 484 8300



WORD LIST

Legal advice

● AIDS Law Project (ALP)

Provides free legal advice on issues of AIDS discrimination.

☎ 011 356 4100

● Lawyers for Human Rights

☎ Durban 031 301 0531

☎ Johannesburg 011 339 1960/2

☎ Pietermaritzburg 033 342 1130

☎ Port Elizabeth 041 487 0881/2

☎ Pretoria 012 320 2943

☎ Stellenbosch 021 887 1003

☎ Upington 054 331 2200

● Legal Aid Board

Offers assistance with legal representation, access to justice and access to information and resources. They assist with divorce, maintenance and child custody problems.

☎ 0861 053 425

● Legal Resource Centre

☎ Cape Town 021 423 8285

☎ Durban 031 301 7572

☎ Grahamstown 046 622 9230

☎ Johannesburg 011 836 9831

School fees

● Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS) Education Rights Project

Advice on the exemption of school fees.

☎ 011 717 8621

● Department of Education's Bana Pele Programme

Bana Pele ("Children First") Call Centre.

☎ 011 376 8007

Useful government offices

● Department of Home Affairs

If you have any questions about identification documents and birth, marriage, death etc. certificates.

☎ 0800 601 190

● Department of Social Development Hotline

☎ 0800 601 011

AIDS

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. HIV infection can develop to a point where the body cannot protect itself from diseases that it would normally fight off. When a person's natural defences against disease collapse and become weakened by diseases, then the person is said to have AIDS.

Anti-retrovirals (ARVs)

Medicines used to treat HIV & AIDS. ARVs do not cure a person of HIV & AIDS but control the virus, and can delay or stop the progression of the disease.

CD4 Cells or T4 cells

White blood cells that protect the body from disease.

CD4 Count

The number of CD4 cells in the body. The higher the CD4 count of a person, the stronger the person's immune system (the body's natural defence system against illness) will be.

Discrimination

Treating someone or a group of people differently from others. For example, to treat someone badly on the basis of looks, gender, place where they live or HIV status.

HIV

Human Immunodeficiency Virus. Being HIV-positive does not necessarily mean that you have AIDS. HIV is transmitted through blood, semen and vaginal fluids. Once in the body, the virus uses the CD4 cells of the body's system to make copies of itself, and over a period of time destroys the CD4 cells. CD4 cells are important because they protect us from illness. As the number of HIV cells in the body increase, the CD4 cells decrease.

Pandemic

A disease that affects the whole country or the world and doesn't go away quickly.

Sexual orientation

A person's sexual interest in a member of the same sex, the opposite sex or both sexes.

Stigma

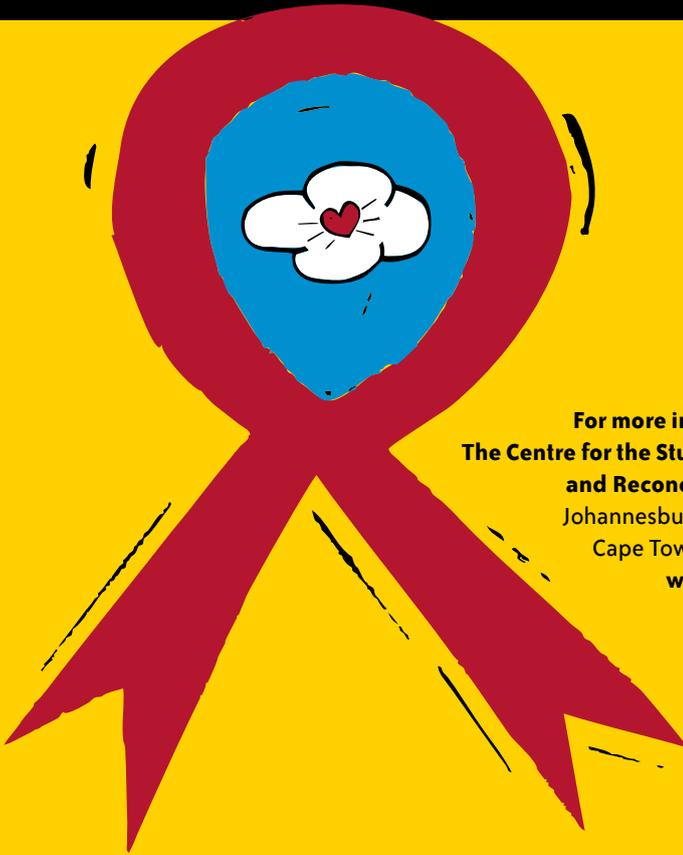
Negative feelings or sentiment towards another person or a group of persons. For example, HIV is often seen as a mark of shame and disgrace and is a highly stigmatised disease in South Africa.

Vulnerable

In danger of, or at high risk of, being economically, physically and emotionally hurt.

Our Journey with HIV & AIDS provides information for teenagers between the ages of 14-16 years old who are affected by and/or infected with HIV & AIDS. It is also useful for friends, family, teachers and concerned community members.

A range of issues are unpacked and explained that assist and support the reader in understanding the challenges of HIV & AIDS, and elaborate on the rights and responsibilities of people regarding the AIDS pandemic. The reader is also given the opportunity to process information in areas called "Reflection Time".



For more information call
**The Centre for the Study of Violence
and Reconciliation (CSV)**
Johannesburg: 011 403 5650
Cape Town: 021 422 0258
www.csvr.org.za



CSV
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