

HIV AND AIDS education.

HIV is the abbreviation for **Human Immunodeficiency Virus**.

It is a disease that affects humans. It attacks their Immune system which is in their blood. As a result they are unable to fight off disease when it enters their body and this eventually results in death.

There is **NO CURE** for HIV and AIDS, but there is treatment. **Anti-Retroviral drugs –known as ARV'S** can be taken to improve an infected person's quality of life. ARV's assist the body in fighting diseases. Once a person starts taking HRV's, they should continue to do so for the rest of their life. They should also try and take them at the same time every day.

Blood tests are done to determine if someone is HIV positive. One cannot say that someone is HIV positive just by looking at them.

People "choose HIV", it does choose people. Anyone can become infected. People generally become infected when they make wrong decisions about their sexual behaviour or sharing of needles by people addicted to drugs.

Unfortunately some children are born being HIV positive, because one or both their parents are infected.

Accidental infections have taken place accidental contact with an infected person's blood and through rape.

The GOLDEN RULE **do not touch another person's blood.**

Symptoms of HIV and AIDS.

Unplanned loss of weight.

Getting sick easily, skin rashes, frequent yeast infections.

Frequent fevers and sweat.

Developing sores in and around the mouth and genital area.

Getting tired quickly. lack of energy.

Short term memory loss.

Dealing with stigma.

What is Stigma?

Stigma is a belief or feeling in society that you should be ashamed.

Why do you think it is wrong to stigmatise?

Many people in South Africa and other parts of the world are infected with HIV and AIDS. South Africa has one of the highest number of HIV infections in the world. Often people with HIV and AIDS do not let others know that they are sick. This is because having HIV and AIDS carries a stigma.

A stigma is a belief or feeling in a society that one should feel ashamed if you have an illness such as HIV.

The stigma also means that other people often have negative attitudes and are unkind to the person who has HIV or AIDS. They may even avoid or exclude that person from society.

Stigmatisation have a number of consequences.

1. A person may be emotionally scared, because:
 - they are feeling ashamed and this causes them to keep their status a secret
 - they lack confidence,
 - shy away from others
 - Keep their illness a secret and this may result in them not getting the necessary medical treatment that is needed or them infecting others.
2. Others may treat them poorly because they are judged because it is believed that they have become ill because of their behaviour and the irresponsible moral choices that they have made.
3. There is a lot of inaccurate information about how HIV is transmitted this can result in:
 - HIV and AIDS can be seen as punishment for immoral behaviour.
 - People believe that they won't become infected.
4. There may be discrimination.

What do you think the effects are on a person's life when they are stigmatised?

The Effects of Stigmatization.

1. Loss of income.
2. Loss of marriage and child bearing options.
3. Poor care within the health sector.
4. Withdrawal of caregiving in the home.
5. Loss of hope and feelings of worthlessness.
6. Loss of reputation
7. Others fearing that they might become infected if they socialise with the infected person, loss of friendships.
8. Fear of rejection which results in avoidance of being tested and this in turn results in others being infected.

Stigma about HIV and AIDS.

There are many Myths and assumptions about HIV and AIDS and as a result people avoid those who are infected and those they assume are infected. Some of the Myths are:

- a. Very thin people all have AIDS.
- b. Only Gay men get HIV and Aids.
- c. If you are poor you will get AIDS.
- d. If I'm friends with someone who has HIV, people will think that I have it too.
- e. People who do not believe in God get AIDS.
- f. Women who are friends with lots of men get HIV and AIDS.
- g. People who are not faithful to their partners will get HIV.
- h. Only certain race groups will get HIV.

How to change attitudes towards people infected with HIV and AIDS.

Think about how one could change that attitudes of people towards those infected with HIV and AIDS.

If a loved one were infected, how would you like people to treat him or her?

Do you think it is a good idea to treat people the way we would like them to treat us and those we love? _____ Explain _____

Always remember everybody is someone else's loved one, a child, a brother or sister, a mother or father. Their families would like us to treat them well.

Our constitution states that everyone must be treated equally. Everyone has the same human right. This means that people who have HIV and AIDS in South Africa have the same right as anyone else in South Africa.

Reading Case Study. Taken from Spot On Life Skills Gr5 pg. 168

Felo's Story. (This will be done at school.)

1. Read the story.
2. Answer the questions neatly in your book.
3. Imagine yourself in Felo's shoes. Imagine how she must have felt. How would you have liked to have been treated? Do you think it was her fault and she deserved to be treated that way?

