

How else can we mitigate stigma and discrimination?

1. Enable people with or affected by HIV to design and deliver programs

- helps create sexual health services and support systems that are stigma-free and which marginalized people feel willing and able to use.

2. Call out stigma whenever we see it (at work, in our communities, in our homes).

- Support public, community-led campaigns that provide information that challenges stigma and shows others that marginalized people are just like everybody else.

3. Provide mental health support

- help people recognize and deal with the effects of stigma
- support PLHIV to understand more about the virus and their treatment. This can help people take a more active role in their care and reduce feelings of self-stigma

SUPPORTING SOMEONE WITH HIV

- ✓ **Listen** to their needs
- ✓ **Learn** about HIV
- ✓ **Encourage** them to start HIV treatment as soon as possible
- ✓ **Support** medication adherence



Join a Support Group Today!

Studies show that joining a support group in the community helps those living with HIV and those affected by HIV to **live positively with HIV**.

In these support groups, there are people who have gone through what you are going through, who will help you overcome your challenges.

Ask the healthcare workers at your clinic to link you up with a support group in your community.



I was bullied, by community members because I was born with HIV. Thanks to the support group members for accepted me in the support group. I am now free, I do not get moved by whatever people say about my status. It is my body, it is my HIV!



'My family members never wanted me to get married when I tested HIV positive. My fellow support group members helped resolve the issue and the family members were sensitized and told that I had the right to marry'



STAND UP TO STIGMA, LET'S EDUCATE OURSELVES



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What is stigma and discrimination?

Stigma is when someone **sees** another in a negative way because of a particular characteristic or attribute (skin, cultural background, disability, HIV status, etc.).

Discrimination is when someone **treats** another in a negative way because of that attribute.

How does this relate to HIV?

People living with HIV (PLHIV) often face stigma and discrimination; they are seen and/or are treated differently because of their status.

1. EXAMPLES OF STIGMA

- believing only certain groups of people can get HIV
- making moral judgments about people who take steps to prevent HIV transmission
- feeling that people deserve to get HIV because of their choices

2. EXAMPLES OF DISCRIMINATION

- healthcare workers refusing to provide care/services to PLHIV
- refusing casual contact with PLHIV
- socially isolating a member of a community because of their HIV status
- referring to people as HIVers or Positives
- refusing a person to join a support group based on their status
- disclosing someone's status without consent
- denying a person from participating in an activity because of their status



Effects of HIV Stigma and Discrimination

HIV stigma and discrimination affect our emotional well-being and mental health.

We, who are living with HIV, often internalize the stigma and develop a negative self-image.

We begin to constantly fear we will be discriminated against or judged negatively if our status is revealed.

"Self-stigma" happens when we take the negative ideas/stereotypes spoken about PLHIV and apply them to ourselves. HIV internalized stigma can lead to shame, fear of disclosure, isolation, and despair. These feelings can keep us from getting tested and treated for HIV.

The Power of Language

Talking openly about HIV can:

- help normalize the subject
- provide opportunities to correct misconceptions
- help others learn more about HIV

What words should we use?

- avoid calling PLHIV as victims, sufferers, contaminated, or sick
- use words like people/person with HIV

Why?

- when talking about HIV, certain words and language may have a negative meaning for people at high risk for HIV or those who have it; they perpetuate stigma and discrimination
- we can do our part to stop HIV stigma by being intentional and thoughtful with our words and choosing supportive---rather than stigmatizing---language when talking about HIV