

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON HIV AND STIGMA

What do we mean by stigma?

Stigma is when people attribute undesirable qualities to those who are perceived as being “shamefully different,” and identifying and labeling them as deviant from the social ideal. Stigma is an attitude that makes a person feel bad or shameful. Stigma towards someone is different from dislike.

Is stigma the same as discrimination?

Discrimination is an action, while stigma is an attitude. Discrimination is treating a person or group differently (usually worse) and unfairly because of who they are. Discrimination comes from stigma. Its purpose is to leave out, restrict or give preference to others based on exclusionary perceptions or structures (e.g., race, beliefs, gender).

How did stigma and discrimination against people with HIV develop?

Although there is no definitive answer to this question, many believe that stigma and discrimination against people with HIV are a result of ignorance about the disease and traditional and religious beliefs about sexuality, sex and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) that portray sex as sinful and STIs as punishment.

What are the possible consequences of stigma related to HIV/AIDS?

Stigma often leads to fear of getting tested for HIV, which worsens the problem. Stigma leads to discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS in the workplace and in communities at large, which contributes to the spread of HIV/AIDS. Due to stigma and HIV/AIDS-related discrimination, the rights of people living with HIV and their families are often violated, simply because they are known or presumed to have HIV/AIDS. The violation of rights increases the negative impact of the epidemic.

Why is it important to reduce stigma and discrimination related to HIV/AIDS?

Addressing the stigma and discrimination related to HIV/AIDS will help to slow the spread of the spread of HIV/AIDS, as more people will get tested and inform their partners/spouses of the results. Their partners will also be more likely to get tested without fearing judgment from others. Reducing stigma and discrimination will hopefully have a positive impact on the epidemic and strengthen human rights thinking and practice..



“SIKIA KENGELE”



COMPASSION, CARE AND SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS AND THEIR FAMILIES

What does compassion mean?

Compassion is having caring feelings about something plus taking action about it. For example, compassion can be having concern for the suffering and distress of others with a desire to alleviate it, moving one to help. Compassion is also a fundamental feature of each religion.

Compassion without action is not compassion. Compassion is feeling plus action.

How is compassion different from sympathy and empathy?

Compassion is more than just having feelings of sympathy or empathy for something. Sympathy is feeling sorrow, pity or regard for distress of another. Empathy is the ability to enter into another person's world, his feelings, thoughts and emotions.

What does compassion have to do with people living with HIV/AIDS and their families?

Compassion a key to reducing stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS. It is important to create a compassionate and supportive response to those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and give them hope by improving care and support to them. That would also help to reduce the numbers of infected individuals who are abandoned by their families, friends, landlords, employers and the like.

Our responsibility as human beings is to reach out to others and help.



“SIKIA KENGELE”



What can we do to care for and support people living with HIV/AIDS?

There are many ways to show compassion, care and support for those living with HIV/AIDS and their families. Some are:

- Spent some time with people living with HIV/AIDS
- Pay attention to the health and overall nutrition status and weight of people living with HIV/AIDS. If there is a drastic weight loss, take them to the health center.
- If they cannot get out of bed, make sure they have something to eat or drink nearby.
- If the person is living alone, have meals together and ask their neighbors to spend some time with them.
- Provide accommodations for people living with HIV/AIDS who have been rejected from their homes
- Provide transportation to the hospital or clinic for checkups.



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