

# Living Positively with HIV and AIDS

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Presentation for World Bank HIV and AIDS  
Workplace Event for Staff and Families

By

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# What does living positively mean?

- Making choices in one's life that are good for one's health
- Living as normally as possible
- Looking after one's spiritual and mental health
- Making the best of one's life as a person with HIV or AIDS

# Making choices in one's life that are good for one's health

- Most people can competently argue that life is a precious gift to be protected
- Most people believe that life offers them choices to allow them achieve what they desire and is possible
- Most people are aware of their inalienable Human Rights and Freedoms; and also the correlating duties that go hand in hand with them
- Individuals, families, communities/organizations and governments have the duty and responsibility to inform their members about the importance of good health and help them make good informed choices.

# Living as normally as possible

- Be informed through education and training on issues that affect lives locally & globally
- Participate in socio-economic activities to contribute to national development
- Promote and protect human dignity and its inalienable and pertinent values
- Be a law-abiding citizen, actively fulfilling one's duties and obligations.

# Looking after one's spiritual and mental health

- Most people will agree that there is more to life beyond its physical needs
- Most people are impacted upon by many factors that generate a variety of reactions that draw out energies/resources from their lives
- Life experiences, inevitably, impact greatly upon people's spiritual and mental health, positively or negatively
- Many people possess values and nurture hopes that encourage them to pursue and realize their goals often supported by their spiritual reserves
- Most people will, therefore, find it necessary to care for their spiritual and mental health in ways suitable to them
- Organizations, might lose nothing by informing their employees about the possible values and relevance of spiritual and mental health, which may not be explicitly captured in their Terms of Reference.

# Making the best of one's life as a person living with HIV or AIDS

- Accepting a positive HIV test result or an AIDS case status (facts can often be hard to accept!)
- Willing to proactively do constructive things about one's HIV or AIDS status; like wanting to continue living one is HIV positive
- Planning one's future and that of their spouse, children and relatives/neighbors, etc.
- Complying with personal hygiene and health instructions in receiving medical treatment, care and support

## Making the best of one's life as a person living with HIV or AIDS (Continued ...)

- Being open about one's positive HIV or AIDS status to spouse, family, community, including workplace, etc. (a problem shared is better placed for problem solving than a hidden one)
- Taking part in educating or informing others about the need to prevent HIV transmission
- Helping others to understand that an HIV infected person can still live normally and contribute to personal and national development
- Helping one's organization to plan for HIV and AIDS and prevent further losses (human and material resources)

# Factors that help in Positive Living with HIV or AIDS

- Having hope for the present and future
- Accepting the positive HIV test result
- Sharing positive HIV result with spouse, children, friends, relatives, neighbors, religious leaders, counselors, school/college friends, workplace colleagues, healthy personnel, etc.
- Forgiving the incidence of infection as opposed to blaming
- Having access to adequate HIV and AIDS information
- Access to medical, care and treatment advice.

# Factors that help in Positive Living with HIV or AIDS (Continued ...)

- Recognizing the need and importance of healthy living
- Recognizing the effect of one's mind on one's health
- Providing oneself with adequate and balanced nutritious foods and clean drinking water
- Ensuring one engages themselves in regular physical exercises
- Timely seeking medical services and treatment when ill
- Protecting one self against STIs
- Preventing unwanted/unplanned pregnancies

# Factors that help in Positive Living with HIV or AIDS (Continued ...)

- Breaking the silence on sexual and reproductive health (SRH)
- Taking a voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) for HIV and other STIs or STDs
- Deciding to have 100% compliance in receiving treatment
- Finding time to have adequate rest
- Preventing up-take of drugs and drinks such as alcohol, “chamba,” etc., that affect the normal functioning of the body and mind
- Establishing and/or strengthening a spiritual relationship with God
- Sharing one’s HIV positive sero status with your girl/boy friends, spouse, children, relatives, religious leaders, medical personnel, communities, workplace colleagues, etc.

# Factors that adversely affect Positive Living with HIV or AIDS

- Denial of a positive result of an HIV test
- The feeling of hopelessness and helplessness
- Despair and unwillingness to understand and accept facts about HIV and AIDS
- A feeling of blame and inability to forgive
- A feeling of shame about oneself and the perceived fear to be stigmatized and discriminated against

# Factors that adversely affect Positive Living with HIV or AIDS (Cont. ...)

- Lack of confidence
- Lack of resources; time for rest, knowledge and skills, finances, health and treatment services, etc.
- Lack of love
- Isolation and withdrawal from public engagement
- Misconceptions about HIV and AIDS and PLHIV
- Loss of self esteem
- Lack of openness about one's HIV positive infection

# Realities on the ground about HIV and AIDS

- There is lack of willingness to openly discuss HIV and AIDS
- Existence of swift judgments and misconceptions about PLHIV
- Existence of Stigma, Discrimination and Denial with HIV and AIDS
- There is inadequate awareness and appreciation of Human Rights, Freedoms, responsibilities and duties
- There are cultures/traditions that promote prejudices and inequalities
- There is poverty that predisposes the poor and rich to HIV infection
- There exist power imbalances between men & women; & boys & girls
- There is a drastic growth in the numbers of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC)
- There exist conflicting messages from various quarters on HIV and AIDS

# Why does Stigma and Discrimination arise?

- There is lack of understanding, knowledge and skills about HIV and AIDS
- People have suspicions about others to be HIV infected or being cases of AIDS
- There is fear, hopelessness and helplessness in individuals, families, communities and nations
- There is a tendency in people to externalize HIV and AIDS that results in labeling others known or feared to be HIV positive (leading to discrimination)
- Lack of self confidence

# What can we do about Living Positively with HIV and AIDS?

- Promote greater understanding of HIV prevention and mitigation of the impacts of AIDS
- Promote Voluntary Counseling and Testing for HIV
- Promote awareness and understanding of Human Rights
- Promote gender equality in our communities and institutions
- Raise awareness, knowledge and skills about Living Positively with HIV and AIDS
- Promote dialogue on HIV and AIDS in families, communities, organizations, the National Assembly, etc.
- Promote awareness and enforcement of the National HIV and AIDS Policy
- Promote awareness and enforcement of workplace HIV and AIDS programmes, HIV and AIDS policies and dialogue.

# Of HIV and AIDS Challenges and Hope!

- HIV and AIDS are a terrible human crisis
- HIV and AIDS have challenged human cultures, traditions and customs across the globe
- HIV infection is preventable
- Humanity has capacity to mitigate HIV and AIDS impacts
- Living Positively with HIV and AIDS is one of the ways to help prevent HIV transmission and mitigate AIDS impacts
- Welcome, the World Bank HIV/AIDS in the Workplace Event for Staff and Families

# Vote of thanks

- We thank you for your active attention and participation

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