



Positively Safe:

THE INTERSECTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & HIV/AIDS

STARTING THE CONVERSATION WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVOCATES ON HIV

This document is intended to be used as an introduction to HIV for domestic violence advocates. Tools found at nedv.org/dvhivtoolkit are a great addition to the conversation and serve as additional resources.

INTRODUCTION TO THE INTERSECTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & HIV

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN HIV AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (1:29 MIN)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gn8YMiShbg4>

This is a quick video that can introduce the importance of addressing HIV when working with survivors and victims of domestic violence.

MICHELLE'S STORY, LET'S STOP HIV TOGETHER (2:38 MIN)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZ9vg-RXZUM&index=11&list=PL87B964CE4CF0A98C>

In the video Michelle and her daughter discuss their experiences with domestic violence and HIV. They work to empower and give hope to those living with HIV.

EMPOWERED: GINA'S STORY (1:09 MIN)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MQfAYDmxVMQ>

In this video, Gina tells her story of living with HIV and domestic violence. She discusses the way in which her HIV status further disempowered her within her relationship.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ★ Have you witnessed this connection in your work? Have you felt equipped to handle it?
- ★ How are Michelle's and Gina's stories similar to those you have heard before?
- ★ Do you know what services in your community are available to assist survivors that disclose?
- ★ What questions do you have moving forward about HIV and its connection to domestic violence?
- ★ What issues do you foresee in integrating this into your work? (i.e. asking about HIV status; not knowing community resources; etc.)
- ★ What has your organization done to build and sustain a relationship with the local HIV community based organization?

GETTING COMFORTABLE TALKING ABOUT HIV

HIV ENDS WITH US PSA (1:08 MIN)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHUKbSIGDAI>

This PSA for World AIDS Day describes the way everyone get can get involved and help end HIV.

HIV LOOKS LIKE ME PSA (3:16 MIN)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MnbYtaDrjM8>

This PSA shows the many faces of HIV, highlighting the high rates among women. This is great for staff that may still think of HIV/ AIDS as only a "gay, white man's disease".

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ★ In the first PSA Wendy Williams says "HIV/ AIDS is not the same epidemic it was 30 years ago." What do you remember from this time? In what ways do those experiences influence the way you and others think about / discuss HIV now?
- ★ The PSA encourages people to break the silence around HIV. How have you / would react to a survivor disclosing their positive status? Do you create an environment where a survivor



would feel comfortable disclosing? Do you make assumptions based on survivor's sexuality, gender, or race when asking questions about HIV?

- ★ What policies does your organization have that protect a survivor that discloses their status?
- ★ How can you help survivors be safe even if they do not want to be so forthright about their status?
- ★ What do you know about sexual safety planning and disclosure laws for individuals in new relationships?
- ★ How can you empower survivors living with HIV?
- ★ What challenges do you foresee when working with survivors of domestic violence who are HIV positive or may be at risk?

THE BASICS OF HIV: HELPING SURVIVORS PROTECT THEMSELVES

THE SCIENCE OF HIV (3:42 MIN)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDVNdn0CvKI>

This video gives an easy to understand introduction to the HIV virus and its process within the body. The video also explains how HIV can progress into AIDS. This is a great video for staff looking to learn more about how the HIV virus actually works.

INTRODUCTION TO ANTIRETROVIRAL DRUGS (0:44 MIN)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2pZ0c6x6lY>

This is a quick fun video to explain antiretroviral drugs and what it means to be virally suppressed. This is great for staff that are still learning the basics of having a healthy sex life when HIV positive.

15 WAYS YOU CAN'T GET HIV (1:36 MIN)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqVoXhfGWVU>

This fun video gives the basics of how HIV is transmitted and not transmitted. It's also a very basic introduction to antiretroviral medications. This is a great video for staff that are very new to discussing HIV or those that work with a community which still holds many myths about HIV transmissions.



GETTING TESTED FOR HIV (0:50 MIN)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-jobx1yEzI>

This video discusses how easy and quick it can be to get tested for HIV. This is great for staff with a limited understanding how HIV testing works.

UNDERSTANDING AND RECOMMENDING PREP (2:51 MIN)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TR8-3uAuZGo>

This is a great video for staff members that have a basic understanding of PrEP but are interested in knowing more about how to help survivors who may be at risk for HIV. The video discusses how often one takes PrEP, how to get PrEP from a doctor or clinic, and how to decide if PrEP is right for you.

INTRODUCTION TO PEP (1:02 MIN)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YeHLiJly8DI>

This is a basic introduction to post-conference for those that are not familiar with it.

PREGNANCY AND HIV (0:52 MIN)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NlsezG4gQ>

This video explores what it means for pregnant women who are HIV positive or may be HIV positive. Staff will learn how a survivor can stay safe and keep their baby safe.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ★ What myths did the videos dispel about how HIV is transmitted? How can you help survivors and the community you work with better understand HIV?



- ★ One of the videos shows how easy and quick it can be to get tested for HIV. While it can be logistically simple for some survivors, it certainly isn't always emotionally easy. In what ways can you emotionally support survivors before being tested for HIV?
- ★ Were you surprised to learn that an HIV positive woman can give birth to a healthy baby? We know that pregnancy is already a high risk time for survivors of domestic violence. How can you better support pregnant survivors living with HIV as they work to stay safe, stay healthy, and keep their baby healthy?
- ★ Are you comfortable discussing this topic with survivors? Why or why not? What would help you be more comfortable?
- ★ Do you know where in the community to direct survivors for HIV related services? What services are missing?
- ★ You may be working with survivors that are at risk for acquiring HIV and PrEP may be an option for them. What factors would you want to explore with a survivor to see if PrEP is right for them? What challenges do you foresee in getting a survivor connected to PrEP? How can you help a survivor maintain their safety while taking PrEP (ex. Storage, taking the medicine, paying for the medicine)?
- ★ What challenges do you anticipate for a survivor that is currently with an abusive partner that is living with HIV?
- ★ What benefits and challenges do you see for survivors of domestic violence when considering PEP? What is your state law on obtaining PEP after possible exposure to HIV?
- ★ How can sharing this information with your survivors empower them?
- ★ What type of resistance do you expect from staff when bringing up this topic or these options? How might you handle or confront this resistance?

DIGGING DEEPER INTO HIV AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

THE SILENT HIV CRISIS SWEEPING THE AMERICAN SOUTH (24:04 MIN)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOSN1bKG3zQ>

This video explores the experience of gay, black, HIV positive men in Jackson, Mississippi. The short film uncovers systematic racial discrimination, poverty, lack of access to health care, and immense stigma around the virus. It highlights the real shame, fear, trauma that HIV positive individuals encounter upon disclosing their status.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ★ Jackson, Mississippi is one of the hardest hit cities in the United States in terms of HIV; however, there are few resources, especially for LGBT+ individuals. How is Jackson similar / different from your community?
- ★ What resources do you have for people living with HIV in your community? What is missing?
- ★ The film discussed the intense stigma of being gay, black and HIV positive in Jackson. Do individuals face these same stigmas in your community? To what level? What additional stigmas might your survivors face? How can your organization work to end the stigma that people living with HIV face?
- ★ The film discussed the many prevalent myths about HIV, such as not letting an HIV positive family member use the same silverware. What general misconceptions about HIV do you see in your community? What is behind this? Religion? Lack of education? Prejudice against LGBTQ individuals? How can your organization work to dismantle the myths behind HIV in your community?
- ★ Is your agency open to LGBT+ individuals? How do you convey this or not? Think of the office atmosphere, décor, policies, language on your website, where you do outreach etc. What can you do to be more welcoming to LGBT+ survivors living with HIV?
- ★ In Mississippi there are no laws to protect LGBT+ individuals from discrimination. What laws in your state protect / hurt LGBT+ individuals or people living with HIV?

CONVERSATIONS WITH FEMALE SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE THAT ARE HIV POSITIVE (22:45 MIN)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uKlfJS_CWWM

This is a discussion with five women who are HIV positive and are survivors of domestic violence. The women discuss their histories of trauma, the difficulties of managing HIV in domestic violence relationship, breaking down the stigma around HIV, and having a relationship when HIV positive.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ★ In what ways do these women's stories reflect the survivors you work with?
- ★ The women discuss the different ways that being in a domestic violence relationship affected their HIV and overall health. They discuss not eating, not taking medications, and stress causing their immune systems to go down. Knowing this dynamic, how might you change the way you create health plans and support survivors living with HIV?



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- ★ The film discusses the way past violence or abuse greatly affects the women now. It affects their relationships and how they make decisions. How can you use this information in your work with survivors? What can you do to better support survivors living with HIV who have experienced trauma around domestic violence and their HIV status? What may stop conversations about trauma, domestic violence, or HIV in your agency?
- ★ There is similar stigma around domestic violence and HIV. How can your agency work to break down that stigma? One on one with survivors? And in the greater community?
- ★ These women discuss finding love again after domestic violence and being HIV positive. How can you support HIV positive survivors in starting new relationships? (i.e. knowing when to disclose, how to disclose, safe sex, trusting a new partner, etc.)

For more information on discussing HIV with survivors of domestic violence visit:

<http://nnedv.org/resources/dv-hiv-aids-toolkit/168-dv-hiv-aids-handouts/4328-hiv-aids-conversation-guide.html>