

HIV True myths activity - Facilitators guide.

Learning Outcomes

1. Young people will have increased knowledge of HIV including prevention, transmission and the importance of testing and treatment and how to access services
2. They will have an understanding of how people live with HIV, including healthcare, lifestyle and rights.

How to use the activity resource

This resource can be used at the teacher's discretion and adapted according to time and student need. It does not need to be delivered in a traditional lesson format.

1. Remind young people about ground rules within the session. This should include rights to confidentiality and not sharing personal information within a group setting.
2. The facilitator can choose how best to use the statements depending on their group. For example, a whole class could have the statements read to them, or using the presentation, and raise hands or other engagement method. Alternatively, the statements worksheet could be printed and used as a true or false exercise. **Regardless, the Learner Factsheet should be distributed to learners ahead of the statement activity to provide base knowledge of HIV.**
3. The resource can be used to encourage debate or discussion, this will need to be managed by the facilitator in line with the notes on each statement below.

All statements are true, as we wish to promote positive true facts around HIV.

This session is a short, focused activity on HIV. It is expected that facilitators will have some background knowledge of STIs and condoms in order to confidently promote safer sex with their young people. This activity should not replace work done in school RSE on these subjects but should enhance it.

Further information on statutory RSE in schools can be found at www.letstalkaboutit.nhs.uk/rse

Appropriate language – Terminology guide

Prevention	Action taken to decrease the risk of getting an infection
Confidential	If you're 13 to 17 years old, you have the same rights to confidentiality as an adult. Your information will not be shared with anyone else unless there is a safeguarding risk.
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus is a virus that attacks cells that help the body fight infection, making the person more vulnerable to other infections.
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome is the name used to describe a number of potentially life-threatening infections and illnesses that happen when your immune system has been severely damaged by HIV. AIDS cannot be transmitted from one person to another, the HIV virus can. See below 'why the term AIDS isn't used widely anymore'.
Infection	An infection occurs when another organism enters your body and causes viruses.
Stigma	When a person is labelled by their illness they are no longer seen as an individual but as part of a stereotyped group.
Undetectable	Where treatment reduces the amount of HIV in the blood that a test cannot detect the virus.
Viral Load	The amount of measurable virus in the blood of someone living with HIV.
Transmission	The passing of a virus from an infected individual to a previously uninfected individual.
Immune System	The bodily system that protects the body from infection.
Immunosuppressed	Having a weakened immune system.
Diagnosed	The process of identifying a virus by means of a medical examination.
Late stage HIV infection	When the virus has weakened the body's immune system, at this point they're more likely to get more serious infections, therefore being unable to fight these off.
HIV negative	There are no signs of the HIV found in the blood.
HIV positive	A person who is living with HIV, which is found in the blood.
Effective Treatment	When someone living with HIV is taking treatment, under the care of their HIV doctor, which has suppressed and controlled their HIV infection. People diagnosed as living with HIV are recommended to start treatment immediately to improve their long-term health and manage their HIV.

Why the term AIDS isn't used widely any more

AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. This is the term when HIV infection has damaged the immune system and the body is susceptible. AIDS is more commonly referred to as 'late stage HIV infection'.

The term AIDS is not widely used anymore as it known to be negative and has a lot of stigma attached to it. We focus on HIV prevention, testing and living well with HIV. Most people living with HIV taking effective HIV treatment will not develop late stage HIV infection. This is why testing and being diagnosed early is important. Those who are diagnosed with HIV at late stage infection can start treatment which enables their immune system to repair a lot of the damage the virus has done.

STATEMENTS FROM ACTIVITY – Additional Information for Facilitators

Condoms can reduce the risks of catching or passing on HIV

Condoms a very effective way of reducing the risk of HIV transmission during sex (when used correctly). They are the only method that will protect against pregnancy and STIs. We have top tips for using condoms on our website www.letstalkaboutit.nhs.uk/condoms

HIV testing is free and confidential

Testing for HIV is free and confidential. You can get a test in person through sexual health services or GP at any age or you can order a test online if you are 18 or over. Some services offer a fingerpick test that can give you a result within 60 seconds.

Sexual health records are held separately from your usual GP health record and are not shared.

HIV results are also confidential and there is no legal obligation to share your status with anyone. If you tested positive for HIV you will be offered lots of support through sexual health services, including support to inform any sexual partners.

HIV treatment is free and can be as simple as taking one pill a day

Treatment for HIV is lifelong but is managed carefully with your doctors and is reviewed regularly. A complete support package is available for people living with HIV and includes lifestyle and psychological support as well as medical services.

If you are diagnosed as living with HIV, your care and treatment will be individualised with help from health professionals.

People living with HIV can live as long as someone without HIV, if diagnosed and treated in time

Modern treatments help control the condition. This means the life expectancy for someone who is living with HIV, on anti-retroviral treatment and responding to treatment is no different to the general population.

However, if you have HIV, your personal life expectancy will depend on several factors. These include how early the condition was diagnosed, how early treatment began, your gender, and whether you smoke or misuse drugs or alcohol.

Source www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/sexual-health/what-is-the-life-expectancy-for-someone-with-hiv

People living with HIV on effective treatment can't pass it on

Treatment for HIV can now suppress the virus so effectively that it is not possible to detect it in a test (undetectable). If a person is living with HIV and they have an undetectable viral load then they cannot pass on the virus sexually to other people. This is usually after they have been on treatment for a while, often around 6 months.

People living with HIV can have a baby and not pass on HIV to their baby

If a person is living with HIV, they can work with their doctors to ensure that HIV is not transmitted to their baby, by ensuring they are on effective treatment and undetectable.

HIV can be transmitted in breastmilk so mothers would be advised not to breastfeed. All pregnant women in the UK are offered an HIV test during pregnancy.

People living with HIV are not restricted to the type of work they can do.

There are no jobs that anyone can be prevented from doing if they are living with HIV. There is no legal obligation for people living with HIV to inform their employer, but they may wish to do so to get extra support. The Equalities Act 2010 exists to protect people with disabilities (living with HIV is classed as a disability) from discrimination.

HIV infection rates are coming down in the UK

In 2019 there was a 10% drop in new diagnoses from 2018 and a 34% drop compared to 2014.

Of those diagnosed with HIV in 2019, 42% were diagnosed late.

Source www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hiv-annual-data-tables

Information for Teachers

This is for reference and to help with answering student questions - not necessarily to be shared in its entirety.

For example - the information on higher risk groups can be used to confirm bias and increase stigma against particular protected groups.

U=U

Undetectable = Untransmittable

- People with HIV who are on treatment and have an undetectable viral load cannot pass HIV on to their sexual partners.
 - Source www.tht.org.uk/cantpassiton
- Undetectable is where HIV treatment has suppressed the amount of HIV in the blood to a level which cannot be detected by tests.
- This is what is meant by the slogan 'Undetectable equals Untransmittable' ['U=U'].
- Not everyone taking HIV treatment has an undetectable viral load. In 2019 the UK continued to achieve the UNAIDS 90-90-90 target with 94% of those living with HIV being diagnosed, 98% of those on HIV treatment and 97% of them having an undetectable viral load.
 - Source www.tht.org.uk/hiv-and-sexual-health/about-hiv/hiv-statistics

Information on HIV testing from Let's Talk About It

www.letstalkaboutit.nhs.uk/hivtest

Information on higher risk of HIV groups, and why they are more at risk

- ANYONE can be affected by HIV.
- Of the 4,139 people diagnosed with HIV in the UK in 2019, 41% were gay or bisexual men.
- Of the 1,559 heterosexual people diagnosed with HIV in 2019, 37% were black African men and women.
 - Source www.gov.uk/government/publications/hiv-in-the-united-kingdom
- “There are groups of people who face a higher risk of getting HIV than others – there are more cases of HIV in some communities of men who have sex with men and black African communities. This is how most STIs work, they affect groups of people, because that group of people have sex with each other. Other illnesses work in the same way – ever wondered why so many people get colds in the first couple of weeks of school, college or uni?”
- “So it makes sense for sexual health organisations to target the groups most affected because if that group gets tested and treated then it can dramatically reduce the overall number of people with an infection. This is actually what has happened in the last couple of years as you can see [in the stats here](#). So that's why we talk about some groups being at higher risk in order to protect those people. Other people stigmatise those groups by saying that AIDS only affects them, or that all members of that group have AIDS, this does the opposite of protecting them and is a way of deliberately hurting them – just like other forms of racism, homophobia and biphobia.”
- “Just because some communities face a higher risk of HIV, doesn't mean that it's **only** those communities that are at risk of HIV, anyone having sex with anyone is at risk of HIV, simply because many people don't know that they have it. For example, in

2019 in England around 38% of new cases of HIV were in straight men and women. Just because some groups are at a higher risk of HIV, doesn't mean that other groups are not at risk at all."

- Source www.bishuk.com/safer-sex/hiv-and-aids

Things to be aware of...

Some learners may be living with HIV or know someone living with HIV

- People living with HIV are more than likely accessing care and treatment and will know about HIV and health outcomes.
- They may have concerns around disclosure, or others finding out about their HIV status
- It is important to recognise that stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV still exists.
- The young person may have questions about HIV due to knowing someone living with HIV. It is important that the young person does not disclose details about the person they know living with HIV in order to protect their confidentiality. It may be necessary to remind young people not to share confidential information about themselves or other people in a group setting.

You may be delivering to learners who fall into higher risk categories.

- The task in question does not highlight which populations are at higher risk, the focus is on prevention and testing.
- Some learners may be aware of higher risk or higher prevalence populations due to pre-existing HIV knowledge and may self-identify as those risk/prevalence populations.
- This is an opportunity to check understanding of what they have learnt from the session, so they know how to look after themselves and access condoms, testing and support.
- Young people can be referred to Sexual Health services for one to one support www.letstalkaboutit.nhs.uk/referrals

Further advice.

- If you need further advice as a facilitator on HIV knowledge or need to speak to a professional about a concern you have, please email snhs.sexualhealthpromotion@nhs.net.
- The National AIDS Trust has produced a HIV School pack available at www.nat.org.uk/teachers-resources

Additional signposting to links on HIV and testing not on the sheet

- www.letstalkaboutit.nhs.uk/test
- www.letstalkaboutit.nhs.uk/clinic-finder
- www.letstalkaboutit.nhs.uk/hivtest

Get It On Condom Card [C Card]

Get it On [GIO] is the condom distribution scheme running across Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. If you are under 25 you can get free condoms from lots of different organisations. Even if you are under 16 years old you can still join the scheme.

A GIO Condom-Card [C-Card] is a 2 sided wallet sized card that looks like this:



Alternatively, if you are based on the Isle of Wight your C-Card may look like this:



Think of your GIO C-Card as a loyalty card that allows you to get free condoms from participating Get It On venues. These venues include Pharmacies, GP surgeries, youth groups and sexual health clinics.

All you need to do is show your GIO C-Card at a GIO venue and you'll be given free condoms. We need to see your GIO C-Card so that we know you have spoken to a trained worker. You can do this 12 times before your card runs out, then you will be given a new card.

How do I get a GIO C-Card?

You will need to visit a GIO C-Card venue where a trained worker will have a confidential chat with you. This will include some personal questions so they can make sure they're giving you the correct information and advice, and they will teach you how to use a condom.

Once that's done, you will be given your GIO C-Card and some free condoms.

You can then use your GIO C-Card in any GIO venue.

www.letstalkaboutit.nhs.uk/getiton

www.letstalkaboutit.nhs.uk/condoms