

DISCLOSURE AS A PROCESS...

At 16-24 years:

Relationships Matter!

- Support young people in their friendships and relationships - making sure to always be available to answer questions and provide advice.
- Be supportive about young people accessing health services available to them, including family planning and contraceptive advice and using dual protection.
- Young people considering starting a family must be informed about, and access, prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) services.
- Young people must know and understand they have a long and healthy future - keep talking about adherence, education and the world of work!
- It is possible to have a healthy relationship with someone who is HIV negative - but open communication is essential!

At 14-16 years:

Staying Safe!

- As young people begin to mature sexually, they may have questions about how they can have a normal relationship, whether they can get married and have children and other issues - be prepared and DO NOT avoid the questions (ALL Young people are curious about things).
- Discuss the importance of choosing a partner carefully and disclosing to an intimate partner.
- Teenagers need to know about the prevention of sexual transmission of HIV, including always using a condom.
- Young women are often very concerned about having a baby - it can show they are okay! PMTCT information is important.
- Talk to them about the future - what work do they want to do and the positive things about them!

At 12-14 years:

Support Stops Stigma!

- Full disclosure should have occurred by now, do not leave it to too late - same as for 8-12 years.
- Encourage young people to join a support group for young people living with HIV.
- Discuss issues around stigma and discrimination and what to do if they experience it.
- Discuss onward disclosure - how best to plan and manage it using this booklet!
- Children may feel angry, scared, confused or depressed to start with. Seek professional support and counselling for the young person.
- Remember that acceptance of HIV positive status is a process - be patient. Set them a good example.

At 8-12 years:

Living Positively!

- Full disclosure, explaining to the child that they are HIV positive and their medicines keep them healthy.
- Explain how they became infected - you must be positive about your own status!
- Talk about all the ways HIV is passed from one person to another and how it can be prevented.
- Tell them that living with HIV is different from having AIDS and does not lead to death.
- Be prepared for a lot of emotions - hurt, anger, confusion. Be understanding - stay calm it is important for them to see you are not worried.
- Make sure young people know that HIV cannot be passed on through being friends with someone, sharing plates and cups, sharing a toilet, etc.
- Be available and prepared to answer questions whenever they are asked.
- Find them a support group.

At 5-8 years:

Everyone is the Same!

- Tell them HIV exists and can make you sick without medicines
- Tell them lots of people take medicines, young and old.
- Tell them we must respect and care for everyone - even if they are different for us.
- People who tease others for being different are not nice.
- Explain universal precautions in very simple terms.

At 3-5 years:

Medicines are Good!

- Tell them they have special medicines to take every day
- Tell them lots of people take medicines, young and old
- Tell them everyone is different and that is okay.

Improved physical, emotional and mental health for a healthier, happy and more positive future

Access to PMTCT services means people living with HIV can have negative babies

HIV prevention services are vital for safer, satisfying and healthy relationships

Understanding the importance of ARVs and reasons for taking them improves adherence and therefore health

Access to HIV treatment, prevention, care and support services for improved health

More likely to disclose to others and gain access to additional help e.g. at school or in the workplace

Better coping skills and strategies

Access to support groups for the people living with HIV which greatly improve positive living and reduces self-stigma

Access to emotional and professional counselling services

More confident about seeking help when needed

Better able to deal with and stand-up to stigma and discrimination

Improved self-esteem and confidence

Supports improved relationships, communication and trust between caregiver and young person

YES

Should I disclose HIV status or not?
This chart can help you at difficult times, but it is not a substitute for your support group or circle of care.

NO

Can lead to depression, anger, hurt, mistrust, confusion and poor caregiver/child relationships

Feeling alone, depressed and without hope for the future - increased self-stigma

Can lead to poor treatment adherence and risky sexual behaviours

Lack of access to support and information services

Lack of knowledge and information

Negative effects on the emotional and physical health of the individual and community as a whole