

Telling your partner

Think about your relationship and ask yourself the following questions:

- Do we communicate well?
- Do I trust my partner, are we honest with each other?
- Is there respect between us?
- Do we make decisions together?
- Would I survive without my partner's financial support?

Telling your health worker

This is important so that he or she can:

- Be prepared to look for any early HIV symptoms.
- Decide on the best treatment for you.

If the answer is **NO** to any of these questions, then you must prepare yourself for a difficult task. A counselor, your support group or an understanding friend can help you.

If you think your partner will be violent or will try to chase you a way from home, then following could be done:

- Tell a family member about your HIV so that he/she can support you.
- Find out about shelters for abused persons like you and your partner
- Seek help from a support group in your area.

- Remember also that if you are very worried about your partners response, you can tell him/her in a letter first.
- Try to give your partner “clues” about what you want to say, this helps to test his/her reaction (eg. Talk about an AIDS programme on radio)
- Offer support to your partner. Refer him/her to a friend counsellor or family member who knows that they are HIV positive.

Be encouraged! Many people have faced the fears of telling other people. They have found that telling was a lot easier than they imagined. For many, their fears did not come true.

If you plan and think carefully about telling others, you are more in control of your life and therefore more in control of your HIV.

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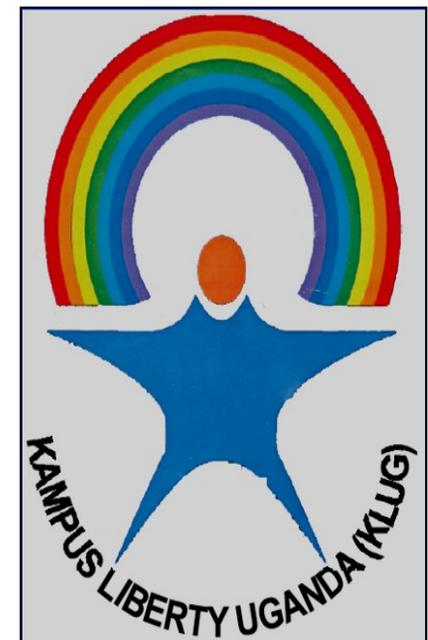
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Disclosure of HIV Status

HEALTH DESK

SEXUAL HEALTH AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

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Disclosure of HIV status (Telling your HIV status)

You have received the news that you are HIV positive .

What about telling other people?

Why should I tell someone?

- Sharing your status can make you feel less lonely.
- Telling some one may help you cope better with your HIV.
- You can join a support group where meeting other HIV positive people can give you hope and support.
- Other people may help you think about the future and make positive plans.
- To protect your partner from being infected with HIV during sex.

Possible problems with telling other people:

- There are still people who do not know facts about HIV/AIDS. They may blame you for being HIV positive.
- The person you tell may reject you and say things that can hurt you.
- The person you tell may tell other without your permission.
- The person you tell may become violent.
- The person you tell may be sad and frightened.

Telling some one so you can get support:

Who should I tell?

- A close friend, sister or brother, your mother or father, colleagues at work, your nurse or Doctor, a priest, your child/children who are grown ups.
- Some one from your church, counselor, a teacher.

Try to choose some one you can trust and who will support you.

How can I prepare myself to tell other people?

- Give yourself time to accept your HIV status (keep this waiting time as short as possible).
- Make sure that you feel ready and comfortable to disclose.

Practice breaking the news about your HIV status in your head:

- What will you say?
- How will he/she respond?
- Plan your answers too.

When you tell other people, do the following:

- Choose a place which is comfortable and private. It helps to choose a time that suits you, when you are more relaxed.
- Choose a time and ensure that the person you tell also has enough time to listen and is in good mood.
- Speak calmly and clearly. Talk to other HIV positive people. How did they handle telling another person?

Telling other people to protect themselves

Your partner:

- When you have sex you have a responsibility to protect your partner from getting infected with HIV. Even if you think that person has infected you, they have a right to know that they may be HIV positive so that they can make decisions about their health and their future.
- Understanding and getting support from your partner can help you to deal better with your HIV.
- Both of you can get educated about HIV. This will relieve the stress of keeping a secret and help to make HIV a more open condition in society.

Your caregiver (person looking after you):

- You can not infect your caregiver with HIV but you can pass on others infections like TB and diarrhea.
- If you tell them about your HIV status, they can protect themselves from these infections.
- They can be educated about HIV so that they can educate other people.