



A1 HIDDEN ISSUES – INFORMATION FOR FACILITATORS

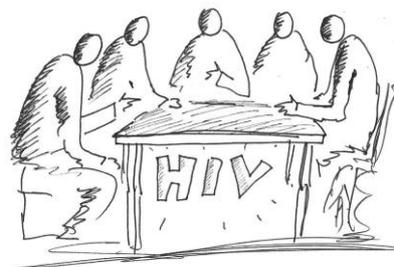
# Revealing HIV: information for facilitators

Tools in this section of *Reveal* provide background information on hidden issues for facilitators. Tools in other sections are designed to be used with communities.

## Questions for a facilitator to consider:

How do the terms ‘HIV’ or ‘AIDS’ make you feel? Are HIV and AIDS spoken about freely in your church and community? Are people living with HIV and AIDS included in community life and respected? Or are they treated differently to other people?

HIV is one of the more difficult issues for churches and communities to identify and prioritise. It is often ‘hidden’ – not spoken about or discussed – even if people in the community are living with or affected by HIV.



The community may not think HIV is an issue that needs addressing. There may be low awareness of HIV, or there may be myths and negative beliefs in the community. If there is some awareness, there may also be **stigma** – when people have negative attitudes towards people living with HIV and AIDS. There may also be **discrimination** – when people are treated differently because they have HIV.

**Stigma and discrimination are the main reasons why people do not want to be tested for HIV, be open about having HIV or take treatment. These factors all contribute to the spread of HIV and a high number of HIV-related deaths.**

- Awareness-raising
- Children & youth
- Climate & environment
- Conflict & peace-building
- Corruption & governance
- Disaster risk management
- Discrimination & inclusion**
- Food & livelihoods
- Gender & sexual violence
- Health & HIV**
- Influencing decision-makers
- Migration & trafficking
- Water, sanitation & hygiene

It is very important that HIV and AIDS become 'revealed' in communities and that stigma and discrimination are addressed. Community members may need your help in speaking to each other about HIV and in knowing how to address stigma and discrimination.

### What does the Bible say?

At its core, Christianity is all about love. The Bible teaches about a God who loves us (John 3:16), and who calls us to love him and to love our neighbour (Mark 12:30–31). The ministry of Jesus was focused on the oppressed and vulnerable (see, for example, Luke 4:18). Christians are called to follow Jesus' example, to love the oppressed and vulnerable and to resist stigma, discrimination and injustice. God loves and cares about people living with HIV, and so must his church.

For Bible studies on this issue, please see **Part B** of *Reveal*.

### Understanding HIV

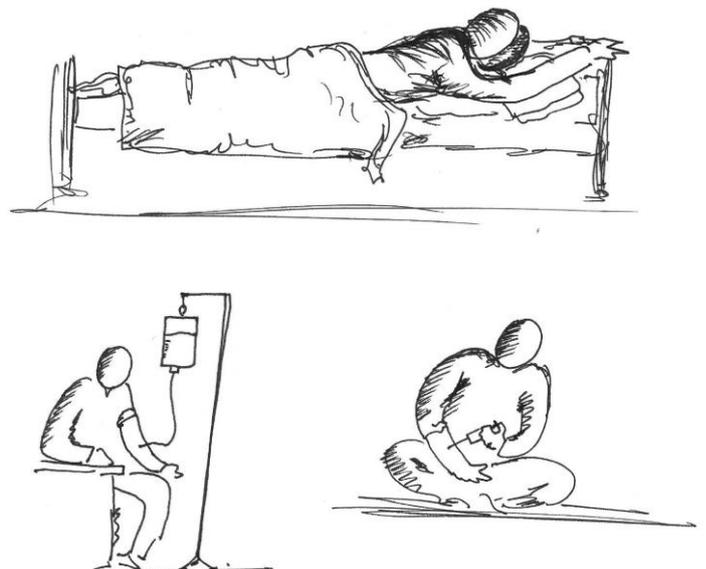
Each of us has an immune system, which is like a shield that protects us from infections and illnesses. HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a virus that damages our immune system so that infections such as tuberculosis and malaria have a greater impact on our body. When HIV first enters the body, the body is still strong, but over time the virus destroys the immune system, causing the body to become weaker and more vulnerable to infections and diseases.

HIV and AIDS are different. Without antiretroviral treatment (ART), the body becomes very weak and it can reach a stage when a collection of diseases affect the body together. This stage is called AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).

ART is a life-long treatment that enables a person to remain healthier for longer and to have a good quality of life. It is freely available in many places.

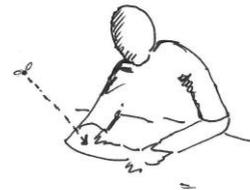
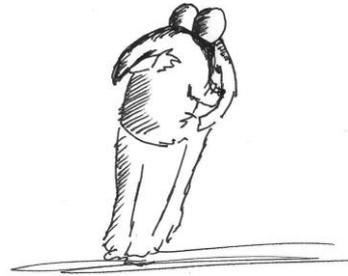
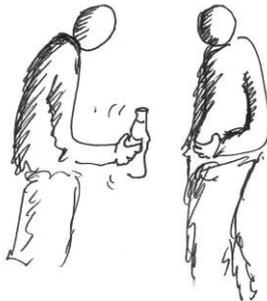
### How is HIV passed on?

HIV is passed on when a person with HIV has unprotected sex with another person, and through blood infected with HIV. For example, through blood transfusion (although hospitals should have checked that the blood is HIV-free), or through using non-sterile injection needles or instruments to cut skin.



**You cannot become infected by:**

- shaking or holding hands, touching or hugging
- normal work or school contact
- using telephones
- sharing cups, glasses, plates and utensils
- insect bites, mosquitoes or bed bugs
- sharing water or foods
- sharing toilets or latrines
- sharing bedding or clothing



**How do HIV and AIDS affect people?**

A person living with HIV can stay healthy for many years as their immune system is still able to fight off infections. To stay healthy, they need to take care of themselves, physically, emotionally and socially. If people know they have HIV, they can protect their family from being infected. They can continue to be involved in their families and communities.

However, in some places, people living with HIV and AIDS face stigma and discrimination. This can lead to many difficulties, shown in the diagram below.

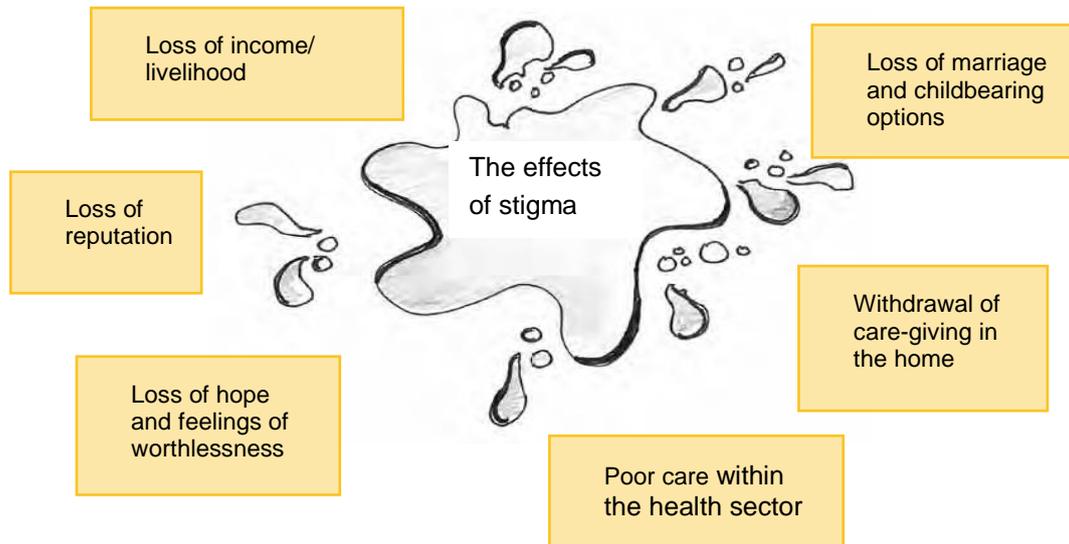
This in itself is wrong, but it also leads to more problems. Because of stigma, people may be too scared to go for testing and access the help that they need. If people with HIV don't know they have it, this can lead to many serious problems:

- increased spread of HIV as people infect others without knowing
- sickness, long-term illness and AIDS-related deaths.

This has many emotional, financial and social impacts on families, and particularly on children.

In many societies women are particularly vulnerable to HIV. This is because they often have little control over decisions relating to sex, and may be exposed to unprotected sex and sexual abuse. Poverty may also force women to make difficult choices, and they may be forced to exchange sex for money or food.

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## Using Reveal

While HIV-related issues may not be talked about openly, you may still be able to identify HIV-related issues which may be hidden. For example, community members may talk about the shortage of labour for farming because of sickness, or the increased number of orphans and single-parent households. If HIV is an issue in the community, it will be important for you as a facilitator to raise awareness of this. It is important that you don't tell the community what the problem is, but help them to discover it themselves through the careful use of questions. There are tools to help you do this, and to support a community in beginning to address HIV, in **Section A2**. You will find Bible studies on this topic in **Section B**.



## Finding out more

- Tearfund (2011) *HIV and your community: A facilitator's supplementary guide to Umoja* - <http://tilz.tearfund.org/en/themes/church/umoja/> (you will need to scroll down to the bottom of the web page)
- PILLARS (2004) *Responding more effectively to HIV and AIDS* [http://tilz.tearfund.org/en/resources/publications/pillars/responding more effectively to hiv and a ids/](http://tilz.tearfund.org/en/resources/publications/pillars/responding%20more%20effectively%20to%20hiv%20and%20aids/)



## Notes

Most of the content in this tool is adapted from Tearfund (2011) *HIV and your community: a facilitator's supplementary guide to Umoja* <http://tilz.tearfund.org/en/themes/church/umoja/>

### Related tools:

- A2 – HIV testing and counselling [A2: Health & HIV-1]
- A2 – How HIV spreads [A2: Health & HIV-2]
- A2 – Tackling HIV stigma [A2: Health & HIV-3]
- A2 – How HIV affects livelihoods [A2: Health & HIV-4]
- B – Attitudes towards disease and difference (Bible study) [B: Discrimination & inclusion-1]
- B – Loving the outcast (Bible study) [B: Discrimination & inclusion-2]
- B – Caring for widows and orphans (Bible study) [B: Discrimination & inclusion -3]
- B – HIV and AIDS and the glory of God (Bible study) [B: Health & HIV-3]