

GLOBAL MEDICAL MICROBIOLOGY SUMMIT & EXPO

November 28-29, 2016 San Francisco, USA



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HIV disclosure: Say what you need to say!

This is a commentary to be used as a practical guide for persons living with HIV to disclose their status. It provides answers in a non-threatening and thoughtful way to ensure comprehension of the receiver. This can also be used as a form of information sharing to those who may not know the ramifications surrounding not disclosing their HIV status. This oral presentation gives suggested language to use when disclosing leading to the desired outcome. The outcome itself is to promote way of blocking transmission of HIV/AIDS to other persons through the art of conversation involving disclosure. Knowing what to say and how with sexual partners as well as those who make the policies surrounding criminalization are just as important. This is from one man's account of sharing his status with his partner and how the interaction changed both of their lives forever.

Biography

David L. Massey is an internationally published motivational speaker who travels sharing his story of "Life Beyond the Diagnosis." He also works in public health in Atlanta, GA and has been granted a national platform to speak through strategic partnerships with non-profit organizations raising awareness around HIV/AIDS. Through this work he has been part of cutting edge development in the introduction of PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylactics) as well as served as a subject matter expert in workshops surrounding condom distribution and the Fundamentals of HIV/AIDS Prevention training and implementation. As an advocate connected with various audiences he hopes to educate while addressing the stigma still attached to those persons living with HIV/AIDS. By most accounts in the media today, HIV new incidents are alarming. The newly infected persons across the southeastern region of the United States were recently compared to that of a third world country. According to the Centers for Disease Control "Southern states today account for an estimated 44 percent of all people living with an HIV diagnosis in the U.S.,¹ despite having only about one-third (37%) of the overall U.S. population.² Diagnosis rates for people in the South are higher than for Americans overall. Eight of the 10 states with the highest rates of new HIV diagnoses are in the South, as are the 10 metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) with the highest rates" (Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 2016, pp. 1-4). The resources to assist in prevention efforts continue however; most people who are currently infected and living with the virus are still suffering and doing so in silence. Due to the fear, lack of trust, and stigma still attached we live in a world where not only do we not know how to reveal our status, but we also have not been given the proper tools to change the conversation and allow ourselves to be vulnerable. For most of us merely uttering the words "I am HIV Positive" can be the hardest thing we've ever said. This article is designed to answer the questions for those who have not shared their status with those they love and/or want to become intimately involved.

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