

THEORIES ON CAUSES OF STIGMA

10 EXERCISE



OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to:
Analyze some of the root causes of stigma.



TIME

1-2 hours

ACTIVITIES

Presentations

Divide into groups and ask each group to select one of the theories. Ask them to discuss it and prepare a 5 minute presentation to defend or argue against the theory.

Report back

Ask each group to make a presentation. After each presentation ask the group to give feedback on presentation skills—clarity of arguments, voice level, eye contact, body language, clear introduction and conclusion, etc.

EXAMPLES OF THEORIES ABOUT STIGMA

- **Lack of knowledge** leads to fear of contagion—PLHAs are dangerous!
- **Morality**—getting HIV means you have sinned—“HIV/AIDS = SIN!”
- **Burden on family and society**—“A person with HIV/AIDS has nothing useful to contribute and is a big burden on their families and society.”
- **Coping mechanism to deal with grief**—“If I can blame the person, it is easier to deal with illness and death.”
- **Poverty can make people stigmatize**—orphans withdrawn from school
- **Loss of support and status**—“If my children die, I will lose my old age support, proper burial, grandchildren and perpetuation of our family name.”
- **Asserting control**—Attempt to maintain social order in the face of a rapidly changing society where youth and women are gaining access to resources, freedom of movement and sexual behavior.

