

# COUNTERING MYTHS ABOUT HIV AND AIDS

## 10 EXERCISE



### OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to:

- Describe a number of myths related to HIV/AIDS
- Develop strategies for countering this kind of misinformation



### TIME

1 hour



### MATERIALS

A set of cards, each with text. One set for each group.

### ACTIVITIES

#### *Pairs*

#### **COUNTERING MYTHS ABOUT HIV/AIDS**

Ask participants to select those myths which are more common in their community or area.

Then divide into pairs and ask each pair to select one of the myths.

#### **Task**

Prepare a presentation to counter this myth, using the information from the Fact Sheets.

#### **Report back**

Ask each pair to make a presentation. Ask other participants to respond as if they don't believe the information given.

#### **Action ideas**

- Ask participants to make up new slogans about HIV and AIDS
- Divide into pairs. Ask each pair to prepare a discussion session on one aspect of basic facts about HIV and AIDS using a code (picture, drama, story) + discussion.

#### **EXPLORING WHAT “LIVING WITH HIV” MEANS**

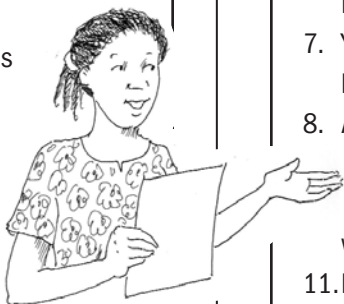
What happens to people after they discover they are HIV positive? Do they die quickly or can they lead long and productive lives?

Many people still assume that an HIV positive test result is an immediate death sentence. They think that PLHAs will get sick and die quickly. And, believing this, they give up on PLHAs, and

## THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT HIV/AIDS

New things to tell people about HIV/AIDS.

- Opportunistic infections are treatable.
- HIV and AIDS are not the same thing.
- PLHAs can lead long lives.
- TB is treatable and curable.
- ARVs are more available and cheaper than ever before. (ARVs—slow down progression of the illness and increase immunity.)
- If you have TB, it does not mean you have AIDS.
- If you are HIV and pregnant, it does not mean your child will get HIV.
- HIV cannot survive outside the body for longer than 3 minutes.
- You need to consume tons of saliva in order to get HIV.



treat them as people who are no longer productive and a drain on the family. This stigmatization—being told you are no longer part of the living—hurts and demoralizes the PLHA, and if not stopped, produces the expected result—PLHAs give up and die, not because of the virus but because of loss of hope.

This section will address this issue and attempt to demonstrate that:

- If the PLHA and his/her family takes good care, the PLHA can lead a long life.
- Most illnesses that comes with HIV and AIDS can be treated and cured.
- PLHAs can lead productive lives.

## TRUE OR FALSE?

1. You can get HIV from not washing after having sex.
2. You cannot get HIV from having sex standing up.
3. You can get HIV from having sex with a woman who has had a miscarriage or abortion.
4. You cannot get HIV from having sex when the woman is having a period.
5. You can get HIV from using a toilet after a PLHA has used it.
6. You can get HIV from getting bitten by a mosquito who has bitten a PLHA.
7. You can get HIV from not putting the condom on properly and having sex.
8. A man can be cured of HIV by having sex with a girl who is a virgin.
9. Special medicines can cure HIV infection.
10. If you stay with only one partner, you cannot become infected with HIV.
11. People with STIs have a higher risk of becoming HIV positive than people who do not have STIs.
12. If I have sex with my partners who are not infected and give them some of my virus, then my own viral load will go down.

Add myths which are common in your area.