

# JUDGING OTHERS: HOW AND WHY?

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EXERCISE



## OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to:

- Analyze why people judge others
- Recognize that they judge others



## TIME

1 hour



## PREPARATION

Copies of the questionnaire for each participant

## ACTIVITIES

### Warm-up

### HOW CARING AND NON-JUDGEMENTAL ARE YOU?

Ask participants to fill in the questionnaire (at end of the exercise). Explain that it is a light-hearted questionnaire but it can help us to begin thinking about how we judge people.

Review questionnaire in the large group, discussing any controversial answers.

### Task groups

### HOW DO WE JUDGE?

Divide into pairs or threes and discuss: “How are PLHAs judged? What are they blamed for?”

Write on a flipchart. Display flipcharts on wall.

## EXAMPLE

**BLAME:** Promiscuous behavior. Economic decline and poverty. Spread of HIV and AIDS and STDs. Climate of fear. Conflict in the family. Moral decay. Their sickness reflects their sexual past. They look sick. They bring shame on family.



### Buzz Groups

### WHY DO WE JUDGE?

In different pairs ask: “Look at your own judging behavior and ask—”Why do you judge others?””

### WHY DO WE JUDGE OTHERS?

- Helps make me feel better or superior.
- Helps increase my power and control over others.
- Helps to keep me separate from others.
- By judging others I can maintain the status quo in the community.
- Projection of my own fears—I judge in others things I don't like about myself.
- My church teaches me to judge to point out the sin in others.

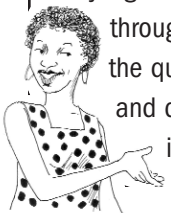
### WHEN DOES JUDGING HURT?

When it:

- demoralizes
- makes them feel small/stupid
- makes them isolate themselves
- destroys their confidence
- reinforces self-stigma

### ACTION IDEAS

Make a note of all the judgments you make throughout one day. Take the questionnaire home and do it with someone in your family.



### Report Back

Round robin

#### *Buzz Trios*

### WHEN DOES JUDGING HURT

Explain that we all judge—it is a normal human activity and it would be hard to stop people judging. We all do it—it is a form of survival. Then divide into buzz trios and ask: “When does judging hurt people?”

### STORY

Read and discuss the following story—either in small groups or read the story to the whole group.

Mary and Grace worked in the same office and were close friends. They were both married. Mary used to talk about Grace's husband to others, saying he was a womanizer and spent little time in the house with Grace. She never talked about her own husband. Then Mary started to get sick. She did not know what was wrong but eventually went for an HIV test. She found she was HIV positive.

### Summary

- Stigmatizing others makes us feel superior to others, more moral than other people. It makes us feel that WE are right and THEY are wrong. Yet we may be in the same boat.
- We should aim to accept rather than to judge or condemn others. For example, you may not agree with the lifestyle of a gay man but you should not condemn, judge or reject him. You may have views about sex before marriage but does this mean condemning all young women who are pregnant before they are married?
- We should promote an attitude of live and let live.