



## OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to:

- Recognize factors which make PLHAs consider suicide
- Build up their self-esteem to cope with stigma and deal with feelings of suicide



## TIME

2 hours

## ACTIVITIES

### SUICIDE

Ask a participant to read the story from Zambia below.

A private doctor treated many patients who had HIV and was prescribing ARVs to many of them. One day he discovered that he too was HIV positive. He became very demoralized, worried about what others would say once they knew he was HIV positive and worried about the declining health which he had seen his patients go through. He didn't know how to raise this issue with his family and friends and he became paranoid that people were already judging him. He could have taken ARVs to prolong his life but he didn't want to go through the pain and humiliation which his patients had experienced so one day he decided to end his life. People found him dead in bed having overdosed on pills.

### PRESSURES OR FORCES WHICH MIGHT DRIVE PEOPLE TO SUICIDE

Loss of partner. Loss of family respect. Loss of job. Insults and humiliations. Poverty. Everyone is looking at me! Fear of a slow death.

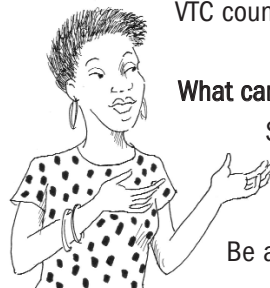
#### Other notes on suicide

Lots of shame around suicide. Common belief that if one family member commits suicide other family members will follow.

VTC counselors tend to avoid the issue of suicide, because it is so painful.

#### What can we do to help?

Stay with someone you are worried about. Seek help from counselors or doctors. Help people talk about how they are feeling. Ask family members to help. Offer lots of reassurance. Be a shoulder to cry on.





**GAME**

A school student who knew he was HIV positive, committed suicide and left a note saying “I can’t bear the way people look at me.”

**Discuss**

- What drove the doctor to suicide?
- What might have been done to stop the doctor taking his life?
- What can we do to support people who feel really low?

**Tell participants that if they ever feel suicidal, they should seek help.**