

# CHALLENGING STIGMA IN OUR FAMILIES

## 12 EXERCISE



### OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to:  
Identify two or three things they  
can do to overcome stigma at  
home



### TIME

1 hour

### ACTIVITIES

#### Story

#### **STIGMA IN THE FAMILY**

Read and discuss the following story.

#### **Story from Zambia**

The family did nothing at first. They were in denial. No one talked about their relatives who had HIV. They just wanted to keep everything quiet to bury their heads in the sand and stop the neighbors talking. Raising the issue would just bring shame on their heads. So they kept their heads down and did nothing!

But when three uncles died within one month, the senior brother was deeply affected. He called the family together and raised the issue of AIDS for the first time. “My brothers and sisters, we can no longer continue like this in silence. We have to do something.” At first others resisted but he wouldn’t let them off the hook. He said, “If we do nothing, this thing will come along and kill us all. Let’s **DO** something!”

So they started to plan and look at how they could support each other especially those with HIV. They set up a family fund to provide funds to deal with crises. They made plans to support the children of those who were dying. And they worked out a system for caring for and counseling those already infected.

Discuss:

- What did you learn from the story?
- What made a difference? How did the family begin to change?

- What can you do in your own homes to change attitudes and promote a more open, caring attitude towards PLHAs?

### **Summary**

Acting against stigma in our own families starts when family members begin to personalize the issue for themselves, to see that they have to do something to change things. Breaking the silence and getting people talking openly is the first big step. After that point, it is a matter of talking about what can be done and helping people learn the skills of caring for PLHAs (see Module D).