

SPECIFIC CAMPAIGNS AGAINST STIGMA

10 EXERCISE



OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to:
Develop campaigns to stop specific forms of stigma and discrimination against PLHAs or other groups in the community



TIME

2 hours

ACTIVITIES

IDENTIFY THE TARGET

Ask the group to identify specific forms of stigma or discrimination in relation to a specific target group—PLHAs, orphans, widows.

Then ask the group to go through the following process:

- Prioritize, select one form of stigma/discrimination to focus on.
- Describe the stigma/discrimination and do situation analysis - What is happening now? How are people affected? What are obstacles to solution?
- Make an **action plan** to bring about change. Brainstorm practical actions that could solve problem. Select the most feasible actions and develop action plan (What actions? Who will do it? When and where? What action steps?)

Examples of Possible Actions

- Meet with community leaders to win their support for anti-stigma action
- Organize training for community leaders and peer group leaders
- Organize peer group meetings (facilitated by those who have been trained)
- Organize house-to-house visits to raise everyone's awareness
- Organize a Stigma Walk or Community Mapping exercise
- Organize awareness activities in the schools—art or drama competition
- Organize community meetings—ask peer group representatives to attend
- Organize drama at the community meetings to raise the specific form of stigma which the group wants to change such as stigma against widows

- Identify the most vulnerable households (child/orphan headed households, grandparent headed households) and provide support
- Provide exemptions for HIV affected families from water fees, school fees.
- Organize a regular system of visits to HIV affected households
- Donate food, clothing and agricultural inputs to destitute households.
- Provide piece work for adolescent orphans working in others' fields.
- Organize income generating activities to support vulnerable households.
- Facilitate sharing of "AIDS survival knowledge" among community members.

EXAMPLES OF ACTION CAMPAIGNS AGAINST STIGMA

1. STIGMA AGAINST ORPHANS (action ideas from Tanzania)

Situation analysis

Children dumped with relatives. Property grabbing. No/little support for children (both material and psycho-social). Stopped from going to school. Forced to do all the housework. Community members saying that: "If the parents died, the children will die too. Don't play with them - they are getting ready to die."

Action steps

- Change the misperception that if the parents die, then the children will die too.
- Educate families on HIV transmission so they stop stigmatizing out of fear.
- Stop the "dumping" of orphans with relatives who mistreat the children.
- Get youth groups to raise this issue through drama or songs.
- Organize competitions among children to get them to express their ideas through pictures, poetry, stories to give their views

and talk about their feelings.

- Get adults to look at how stigma affects children (See exercises in Module F).
- Get the community to rethink the view that “children should be seen, not heard.”
- Get people to treat children seriously and allow children to talk about their feelings.
- Identify the number of orphans in the community and work out how to support them

2. STIGMA AGAINST WIDOWS (action ideas from Tanzania)

Situation analysis

Widows stigmatized in 3 ways: as wives of men who have died (blamed for death of husbands); as women; and as people suspected to be HIV+. Men stop wives from being friends with widows—widows are viewed as dangerous, the source of evil and trouble. Widows are also stigmatized by other women who assume that widows will steal their husbands. Widows are very isolated, forced to find new friends—they are expected to mix only with other widows. People boycott widows' small businesses out of fear that they will get HIV from the commodities sold.

Action steps

- Build alliances between widows and other poor women in the village.
- Bring widows together to share feelings and problems and discuss what can be done.
- Initiate rotating credit union and other income generating activities.
- Organize meetings with other women's groups to win their support.
- Organize community meetings to raise this problem and get the community to stop

3. PROPERTY GRABBING (action ideas from Tanzania)

Situation analysis

Relatives grab property and use shaming and blaming as a pretext to justify this action.

Action steps

Youth groups identified property grabbing as a major problem in their community. They decided to stop this activity. When a man died, they decided to act quickly. Instead of confronting the dead man's uncle directly, they talked to an elder in the village and told him they were angry about the threat of a property grabbing—and asked him to talk to the uncle. “Go and tell the uncle. He is causing problems.”