

# DESIGNING MESSAGES THAT MATTER

20  
EXERCISE



## OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to:  
Develop simple messages that challenge stigma in innovative ways



## TIME

1-2 hours

## ACTIVITIES

### *Cardstorm*

### **STIGMATIZING MESSAGES**

Divide into pairs and ask pairs to write on cards messages from the media which have promoted stigma.

“AIDS kills.” “AIDS is a death sentence.” “People who get AIDS have nothing to live for.” “PLHAs are promiscuous.” “Youth are the most affected.” “PLHAs are victims.”

Review the list and analyze what is being said through these messages. [Inducing fear. Incorrect. Overly negative, no positive/hopeful images of PLHAs.]

Then get the group to cardstorm new, anti-stigma messages.

### *Cardstorm*

### **MAKING ANTI-STIGMA MESSAGES**

Ask the same pairs to write slogans on cards promoting a new anti-stigma message.

Examples of messages from anti-stigma campaigns in Uganda

- Give love and care to people living with HIV and AIDS.
- Don't point fingers. Anyone can get HIV and AIDS.
- People living with HIV and AIDS need your care and compassion.

Messages from a workshop:

- People living with HIV and AIDS deserve hope. They can live long lives.
- If you care for people living with HIV and AIDS and give them the love they deserve, they will grow in strength.

If you isolate them, they will die.

- We are all HIV affected—AIDS is part of all of our lives.
- Who can cast the first stone. We have all sinned—so we have no right to throw stones at others!

### Summary

The slogans should show that PLHAs' lives are not over—they are not simply waiting to die—they can be just as productive as anyone else.

PLHAs who attended the Stigma Awareness Workshop in Vietnam (September 2002) told media workers: “We deserve a more positive and hopeful image. We are not simply waiting to die. Many of us are living full and productive lives and we want others to know this. We are in good health and living normal lives and we can still make a big contribution to our families and communities. This is the story that we want you to tell people.”