

CHANGING OUR STIGMATIZING HABITS



An optional exercise to get participants thinking about concrete strategies for action



OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to:

- Start thinking about how they will overcome certain habits
- Recognize the difficulties in changing attitudes and behavior



TIME

1 hour

ACTIVITIES

Warm-up

NEW HABITS FOR OLD

Ask trainees to stand up. Give the following instructions:

Fold your arms. How are your arms folded—is your left arm over your right or vice-versa? Now reverse the position of your arms. Was that hard to do? Why? (Likely response—habit)

If a physical habit is hard to break, it will be harder to break an ingrained intellectual or emotional habit. So in trying to change habits (or learned behaviors) of others, be prepared for resistance. People are now doing something which is satisfying to them so why should they change?

Paired Discussion

HOW TO BREAK OUR “SHAME AND BLAME” HABITS

Explain that in earlier exercises the group had recognized we all have a habit of judging others. Divide into pairs to discuss:

- In what situations do you "shame and blame" others?
- What can you do to change this habit?

STIGMATIZATION DISEASES **(Option to Paired Discussion)**

Jonathan Mann described stigma as “one of the three critical AIDS related diseases.” Write different “stigmatization diseases” on cards (blaming PLHAs, name-calling, avoiding touching PLHAs) and tape them on the front wall. Divide into pairs and ask each pair to select one 'stigma disease' which they see in

themselves. Encourage the pairs to select different topics. Tell them they may make up a new disease if it is not listed among the topics.

Ask pairs to discuss:

- What is the disease?
- When does it strike? In what situations?
- What are the symptoms or indicators?
- What can you do to avoid it or to solve it if it appears?