

## Church / Faith Community – Short Workshop

Audience: Church members, Parish Council, Deanery Synod members etc

Time: 2 hours

Aims:

- To understand why and how HIV in the UK needs to be a focus for the church
- To understand what might prevent people with HIV making themselves known in church
- To understand how HIV could be talked about openly in churches and welcome created for people living with HIV
- To have an agreed plan of action to enabling the church to be more welcoming and inclusive to people living with HIV

Preparation:

- Create a quiet, reflective and prayerful environment in order to give the viewers space to digest what are powerful and moving videos.
- Be aware that HIV is not visible and often kept a secret, you may not know if someone is affected by HIV. Be prepared to offer support or direct people to support as it might be necessary.
- Identify three videos from Positive Faith (recommendations below),
- Watch the Body and Soul Charity videos if HIV awareness needs updating (you could send the links round to the participants as 'homework' before the training session)
- Have a look through the Positive Faith website with your group in mind – what aspects of the resource would they find useful in their work?
- Check out the prayers in the Resources section to see if any might work within the session.
- Extra questions to have on hand might be:
  - What might be the initial reaction following an HIV diagnosis?
  - Do you think they would be able to approach the church for support?
  - Why is it important for churches to 'show' they are welcome to people with HIV?
  - Why do you think that churches and society in general, have stopped thinking and talking about HIV?
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# POSITIVE FAITH

- What 'signs of welcome' would work in your church? What can you commit to doing?
- Is HIV something that needs a particular focus? What makes it different to other illnesses?
- List the possible responses you could have to a fellow Christian who has told you in a private moment, they have HIV?
- Why would someone living with HIV feel they might have sinned?
- Would God heal someone living with HIV?
- If people with HIV say they feel and experience 'stigma' by the church and society, what do they mean?
- What might make HIV stigma worse for an individual?
- What other aspects to who they are would make them feel like an outsider?

## Suggested ground rules:

- Keep to time
- Respect each other perspectives
- Contribute from your own experiences and observation
- Be prepared to learn something
- Keep confidentiality of what has been shared and within the illustrations that you share
- Mobile phones on silent
- Take turns talking and let people finish what they are saying

## Programme:

Top and tail your workshop in your normal way – i.e welcome and introduction – use the ideas provided as a template that makes sense for your group; it's size and dynamic.

1. Opening prayer
2. Give overview of what you want to achieve today
3. Check in and see if there are any questions arising from the HIV facts – animated videos. If the answers aren't know you can find out between you then and there, or find out separately and get back to the group
4. Show video – Church, Community and HIV – Why is HIV an issue for Christians?

5. Discussion –
  - Have you heard of the phrase 'the Body of Christ has AIDS'? What does this mean to you? Do you agree that HIV in the UK is relevant for the church today?
6. Show video – Showing welcome and acceptance to people living with HIV?
7. Discussion –
  - Philippa talks about Jesus' encounter of people on the margins, how does that relate to this situation? Why does Mark suggest you think about your congregation and their fears, when trying to create welcome?
8. Poem – Coming in from the Wilderness by Cate Jacobs (ask someone to read this out to the group)
9. Create list of actions for group / agreed goals that enable your church (or Deanery or community) to be more welcoming and inclusive to people living with HIV
10. Show video – Living with HIV: Living with HIV : Being diagnosed with HIV – Do not be anxious
11. Time of quiet reflection
12. Ask people to share any final thoughts
13. Closing prayer