



Student Booklet

Introduction.

What will you do if someone your age, who has been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, moves into your neighborhood and attends your school? What will you say to your family, friends and classmates when they begin to discuss the situation? How could you help assure that laws designed to protect people with this illness are understood and followed?

In this task you will learn about HIV/AIDS, including how the disease is transmitted, how to prevent its spread, how the disease progresses and how some laws have been enacted to protect people, including those with HIV/AIDS. You will then write a personal action plan to use in your school, neighborhood and community to help those you know increase their understanding of HIV/AIDS.

Activity 1.

Step A. Think about the red star activity that you just completed. Remember that people who engage in high risk behaviors multiply their chances of becoming infected with the HIV virus. Work with a partner and use the space below to design a graphic organizer which illustrates how the HIV virus is spread.

Step B. Based on what you learned in the red star activity and your classroom discussion, write two conclusions about the transmission of HIV/AIDS.

Conclusion 1: _____

Conclusion 2: _____



Activity 2.

UNAIDS, the United Nations program on HIV/AIDS, estimates that there are already 23 million people worldwide currently living with HIV. You will now read an article about children who get the AIDS virus.

U.N. report: 1,000 kids get AIDS each day

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BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP) At least a thousand children are contracting the AIDS virus each day, according to a U.N. Report that warns of sharp increases in deaths among children unless immediate steps are taken.

There were some 400,000 new HIV cases involving children under 18 last year, and some 350,000 children died of AIDS, the disease caused by HIV, the Geneva-based group UNAIDS said in its report released Friday.

The Report did not supply comparable statistics for previous years, but said people under 18 are one of the fastest-growing groups of AIDS victims.

It warned of big increases in infant mortality due to the disease—or rates of death for children less than 5 years old—especially in developing countries where there is a lack of medicine and health care.

In some regions of the world, those rates would increase by as much as 75 percent by the year 2000 unless there is immediate medical intervention, UNAIDS executive director Peter Plot said.

AIDS is spread most often by sexual contact, by contaminated syringes or exposure to infected blood. But children often contract the disease from their mothers—either in the womb or through breast-feeding, the report said.

Step A. According to the article, which is the fastest growing group of AIDS victims? Explain why this group is increasing in number.

Step B. In developing countries, which of the causes of AIDS identified in the article could best be addressed by health care workers? Explain your choice.

Activity 3.

Read the article below, then complete Steps A and B that follow.

AIDS deaths drop significantly in 1996

Adapted from CDC Materials

The estimated number of deaths among people with AIDS climbed steadily through 1994 and increased slightly in 1995. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently released 1996 January and June statistics which show a first time ever drop in the number of AIDS deaths. This decline was true in each of the four regions of the United States, with the decrease in the number of AIDS deaths ranging from 8% - 16%. Despite these trends, AIDS remained the leading cause of death in persons aged 25-44.

The CDC report of a first ever decline in the United States AIDS death rate was coupled with a substantial increase in the total number of AIDS cases in the United States. The total number of AIDS cases is determined by both the number of new people contracting the disease and the length of the lifespan of those who already have AIDS.

CDC data also noted some changing trends in the spread of the AIDS disease in the United States. Women, non-Hispanic blacks, and Hispanics were increasingly affected by HIV. The only risk of exposure category to increase in 1996 was among persons infected

through heterosexual contact. This is due in large part to transmission from intravenous drug users and their heterosexual partners. People with disadvantaged socioeconomic status continue to have a higher incidence of AIDS.

Step A. According to the article you just read, the Center for Disease Control indicated that the incidence of AIDS deaths in the United States dropped in 1996. Does this contradict the information in the article you read in Activity 2? Explain your answer.

Step B. Draw two conclusions about how the media influences peoples' perceptions of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Conclusion 1: _____

Conclusion 2: _____

Activity 4.

Remember that you are collecting information and completing activities to learn more about HIV/AIDS. Keep in mind that you will need to include information from your readings when you write a plan of action to help people you know increase their understanding of HIV/AIDS.

Use the time line on the following page to complete Steps A and B on page 6.

Step A. How long could a person have the HIV virus without knowing it? Justify your answer with information from the time line.

Step B. Why is the time between being exposed to the AIDS virus and detection of the antibodies a dangerous time for the spread of the disease?

Stop and wait for
directions
from your teacher 

Activity 5.

Work with a partner to complete the following activity.

Based on what you learned from Activities 2, 3 and 4, list below information you could include in your action plan.

**Stop and wait for
directions
from your teacher**



Activity 6.

Your teacher will give you and your partner two cards that describe specific behaviors. Read the cards and decide whether each behavior is SAFE, UNSAFE or QUESTIONABLE. Go to the folders your teacher has prepared and place each card in the one that most accurately describes the level of risk of contracting HIV/AIDS from that activity. Then return to your seat and wait for further instructions.

Activity 7.

Read the article, "The Stigma of AIDS," on the following page. Then complete Steps A and B that follow.

Working Together Against AIDS

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by Barbara Hermie Dramin

The Stigma of AIDS

A stigma is an imagined mark of disgrace. When one places a stigma on another, it is an attempt to make the person feel like an outcast, an outsider. It is designed to make others believe that the target of the stigma is in some way bad or different.

Pablo was thirteen years old and very thin. He had always been different. The teachers never let him play rough games in the school yard because, they explained, he had a disorder of the blood called hemophilia. His closest friend, Ann, asked if she could catch hemophilia from him. Pablo explained that it affects only males. It is a hereditary condition caused by a genetic disorder, not by any kind of bacterium or virus. Hemophilia interferes with the necessary clotting of the blood. If a hemophiliac receives a cut or a serious bruise, it could cause uncontrollable bleeding. The person might have to be given a blood transfusion. Most hemophiliacs receive many blood transfusions throughout their lives.

Pablo kept getting thinner and thinner. Ann asked him if his blood disease was getting worse.

“Promise that you won’t tell anyone, and I’ll tell you the truth,” he said.

“I’m your best friend. I would never go behind your back,” she said.

“I have AIDS.”

“But I thought that you get AIDS from having sex with someone who has AIDS, or from using contaminated needles,” Anne replied.

“Well, there are two other less common ways to get it. One is if your mother had it when she was pregnant with you. The other is if you got a blood transfusion before 1985 before they were testing the blood for the HIV virus. That’s the way I got it. You know how I have to go to the hospital sometimes to get blood or blood products to give me more strength? Before 1985, they didn’t check the blood of the blood donors for HIV and the hospital was giving out bad blood. I got some. I have AIDS now. But you mustn’t tell anyone. I have been made fun of my whole life for having this blood disease, for being skinny, and staying out of gym class. If anyone finds out I have AIDS, it will be horrible. They will make fun of me even more. Some of the people I know from the clinic have been asked to leave school and be tutored at home. If I had to stay home all day, I’d die of boredom. You have to promise never to tell anyone, no matter what.”

There are more stigmas attached to people with AIDS than to people with any other disease. There are a few reasons for this. First, there are many myths about AIDS, and people are afraid of getting it through casual contact. Second, it is transmitted through unsafe sex and sharing needles when using drugs. Teachers, clergy, and families are not very good at talking about sex and drugs. Many people do not want to think or talk about AIDS because it means talking about sex and drugs.

Activity 8.

You have learned about how HIV/AIDS is transmitted, some reasons why it is transmitted, different ways information about HIV/AIDS is reported in news media, and the time the disease takes to develop. Now you will examine efforts by the state and federal government to protect people, including those with HIV/AIDS.

At the direction of your teacher, each student in your group will read about one of three pieces of legislation below. Together, your group should then discuss each law and answer the questions that follow.

1. Legislation passed by the Maryland General Assembly created a Unique Identifier (UI) system which has been in use since 1994. Instead of reporting the names of individuals tested for HIV, a 12 -digit number code is assigned to each case. The system allows for monitoring of HIV infection trends and for identifying cases of HIV and AIDS while protecting those people tested in Maryland from having their names reported.

2. The Ryan White Care Act, passed by the United States Congress in 1990, provides annual grants to states for treating AIDS patients. Under the act, and an amendment approved in 1996, doctors and health care workers are required to recommend HIV testing to pregnant patients. After a period of time, the Secretary of the Health and Human Services Department will determine how well this counseling has worked to reduce HIV infections in newborns. States may have to mandate testing if the number of newborn HIV infections is not reduced significantly or if the number of pregnant women seeking testing has not increased significantly.

3. The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), passed by the United States Congress in 1990, protects the disabled—including the HIV-infected—from discrimination in the private workplace and in places of public accommodation. Places of public accommodation include the offices of all health care providers; hotels, restaurants, movie theaters, convention centers and health spas; food and clothing stores, and any business that sells or rents items; dry cleaners, banks, travel agencies and any business that provides commercial services; museums, parks and schools; homeless shelters, adoption agencies or programs, and all social service facilities.

Step A. Think about Pablo, the teenager you read about in “The Stigma of AIDS” in Activity 7. Circle the number of the law that would most directly affect Pablo.

1

2

3

On the lines below, explain how he would be affected by the terms of the law you chose.

Step B. Explain how the consequences for a person tested for HIV/AIDS in Maryland might be different than those for a person tested in a state using name reporting.

Step C. What are the benefits and drawbacks of mandatory HIV/AIDS testing of pregnant women, for both the mothers and for their newborn children?

Step D. There has been much discussion in recent years about mandatory HIV/AIDS testing among certain populations, including all newborn children, health care workers, sex offenders, and people who apply for life insurance. What legal means could be used to oppose passage of laws requiring mandatory testing?

Activity 9.

In 1994, Dr. Bragdon, a dentist in Maine, refused to fill a cavity for a patient, Sydney Abbott, who was HIV-positive but had no visible symptoms of AIDS. Although the dentist regularly filled cavities in his office, he insisted that this patient be treated at a distant hospital and pay the increased costs. The patient sued under the 1990 Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), which you read about in Activity 8. Decisions of the federal district court and the First Circuit Court of Appeals supported the patient.

Step A. What part of the ADA supported the patient's case?

In 1998, the case of *Bragdon v. Abbott* went to the Supreme Court, the first case in which the court considered the rights of people with HIV.

According to the ADA, a person with a physical or mental impairment that affects a major system of the human body is disabled.

The dentist's appeal states that people who are HIV-positive but have no symptoms are not disabled according to the ADA definition.

Step B. What principles of American government, stated in the Constitution, have resulted in this case being heard by the Supreme Court?

Step C. Once the Supreme Court makes a decision, what legal options are open to the parties involved in the case?

Step D. If the court rules in favor of the dentist, how might people who have tested positive for HIV be affected?

Activity 12.

Write a personal action plan that you can use in your school, neighborhood and community to help people you know increase their understanding of HIV/AIDS.