

BONGA'S LESSONS AND QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Lessons

1. It's so easy to let life's big challenges pile up and pull you down through their combined weight – for me, it was the double burden of searching for my family and getting used to living with HIV.
2. My faith, self-belief and positive mindset moved me from ignorance, fear, denial and surrender to knowledge, hope, acceptance and survival.
3. Being in a support group and a supportive home or work environment helped me heal and become motivated enough to start making other people aware.
4. When you disclose your HIV status to people close to you, you need to prepare them, and also follow up to reassure them and check on them.
5. HIV does not define who I am or all of me: I decided that HIV was like a pothole, and that it was possible to move around it as you travel ahead.
6. Taking ARV treatment is about taking control of your life and your health – don't give up and give yourself time to adjust to the treatment.

Questions

1. Do you know other friends or peers living with HIV that you can talk to or look up to if you are facing similar challenges?
2. How can you make other young people aware of the importance of safer sex and regular HIV testing?
3. How can you get family members or other people close to you to be more supportive about you going public with your HIV status?
4. Have you come up with a plan for how you will try to fulfil your dreams in life? And how you will overcome things that may block the way to reaching those dreams?
5. What else can you do to live positively and healthily – as a person living with HIV, or someone affected by HIV, or even if you are HIV negative?