

JEAN-CLAUDE'S LESSONS AND QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Lessons

1. I have tried to express my love for other human beings in spite of experiencing humiliation and loss of dignity as a gay man and as a refugee – the day you stop loving, you become bitter and angry.
2. I have overcome and will have to survive the challenges, stigma and discrimination of being gay, foreign, black and living with HIV.
3. My faith, my self-confidence and even my separation from others, have enabled me to overcome the odds, to be true to myself, to open up to others, and to get support.
4. When you are cut off from your home roots, try to find a way to keep in touch with family and friends, and to link up with people, who have been through similar experiences or who have similar backgrounds.
5. Don't delay having an HIV test because you are dealing with other issues in your life or thinking that you cannot be HIV positive.
6. When living with HIV, get information, watch your diet and stress levels, have regular medical check-ups and practise safer sex.

7. Get advice and prepare for going on to antiretroviral (ARV) treatment when you need it by talking to your doctor and other people living with HIV, who have already adjusted to being on ARVs.

Questions

1. Have you also experienced different kinds of stigma and discrimination in your life? And how have you managed to handle these at the same time?
2. What can you do to fight and reduce racism, homophobia, xenophobia and HIV/AIDS phobia in your country?
3. How can you assist refugees or asylum-seekers to secure their residential status or to get proper access to health care?
4. Have you also hesitated to find out your HIV status? And what tips can you give to others to overcome this fear?
5. What other things can you do or would you advise other people to do to live positively and healthily with HIV?