

1. Anyway

Nambeko Mpongo

Who I am

I was born in Qitsi in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, and I am 37. I grew up in different places in the Eastern Cape, and moved to Cape Town to join my mother when I was 15. The events of 16 August 1997 changed my life forever when I was gang-raped in Nyanga. Two painful years later I tested HIV positive and have now been living with HIV for 11 years. Through getting support and expressing myself through my poetry, I gradually became an HIV activist and embraced the spirit of positive living. Today I am an HIV/AIDS Information Officer for the City of Cape Town's Employee Wellness Clinic, and a proud, young grandmother.

Why I am telling my story

After seeing many people struggling to deal with HIV/AIDS-related issues, I decided to stop being seen just as HIV positive or as a rape survivor. I chose to do something about it that will benefit other people. I want each and every individual living with HIV to understand that there is more to live for than mourning forever. HIV will remain in your system for as long as you live – you can try to run away from it or you can consciously live with it. Things happen anyway – we can't change them but we can change ourselves.

