

RICHARD'S LESSONS AND QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Lessons

1. Don't be ashamed of talking about HIV and AIDS in your family and with other people closest to you.
2. The earlier you talk about living with HIV, the earlier your loved ones can give you the support you need.
3. From my experience of coming out as a gay man, I know that self-acceptance is the key to happiness.
4. As a partner, friend or family of a loved one living with HIV, you have no power to change the situation, but you can show that you care.
5. Doctors, nurses and specialists should speak openly to the person living with HIV or AIDS, and also to their loved ones with the person's consent.
6. Don't neglect the kids of people living with HIV or who have passed on – the kids need all the support they can get.
7. It's time to stop stigmatising anyone about HIV, being gay or other issues – we are all human beings.
8. Our attitudes towards HIV, AIDS, and gay or lesbian people, must change – we should be able to talk openly about HIV, AIDS and our sexuality.

Questions

1. Do you speak openly about HIV, sex and sexuality with your family and people close to you? How can you create a more open environment to do this, for example, to encourage siblings to talk about sex and sexuality?
2. How can you support a partner, family member or friend who is living with HIV?
3. What support can you give to parents and grandparents who have lost children and grandchildren to HIV and AIDS?
4. What support can you give to children who have lost parents to HIV and AIDS?
5. How can you encourage doctors and nurses to speak more openly and sensitively with the people they care for?
6. What else can you do to reduce stigma around people being different, for example, living with HIV, or around different family structures, such as being a gay or lesbian parent?