

GETTING STARTED



TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED WITH HIV/AIDS AWARENESS

1. **Start where you are in sharing the information you have learned.** Don't feel that you have to be a professional, or go at it full-time. Start with your family, extended family, friends, colleagues, church or company employees.
2. **Neither be afraid of, nor minimise small groups.**
3. **Make goals** for who, where, and when.
 - **Who** - you will share the information with,
 - **Where** – you are going to meet with them,
 - **When** – you are going to meet with them,
 - **Write out your plan and stick with it.**
4. **Network** with another peer educator who is concerned about HIV/AIDS and keep motivated. To keep current contact groups such as “Africa...Operation Whole” and others who are using a moral message for up-to-date information.
5. **Know the material well.** Study it and put it in your own user-friendly language. Be sure it is in sequence.
6. **Don't feel you have to have fancy equipment** to share about HIV/AIDS. Use flip charts for small groups; visuals are **MOST** effective. See Chapter 24.
7. **Present the material in a non-clinical way**...don't just lecture. Don't be threatened if you don't know something...say that! No one knows everything about HIV/AIDS. **YOU ARE A SHARER, NOT AN EXPERT!**
8. **Make a plan for separating small children from adults.** Each age group requires a different approach. Adult groups can be from ages 15 and up.
9. **Be culturally sensitive, yet tell-it-like-it-is!**
10. **Be sensitive of the time** – use the time you are given and don't go over.
11. **Realise people are afraid to even talk about HIV/AIDS.** Dispel that fear so people will not feel threatened. Take a 'linking hands' approach to fight AIDS.
12. **Keep focused.** Allow questions at the end of your talk or presentation. Most questions will have already been answered with continuity, if your talk is thorough. Questions can then be fielded at the end.

13. **Regularly evaluate your efforts with others who hear you.** Always look for ways to improve your presentation. Don't get locked in. There is an evaluation form in Chapter 20 for feedback.

14. **The "best" way to prevent HIV/AIDS is to teach RIGHT MORAL CHOICES.** Therefore, we strongly suggest that this is the more effective approach. Be confident that moral teaching works, because it has been proven where morals are taught, behaviour changes! People will try to tell you that teaching morals does not work. This has been proven incorrect. However, do **NOT** take a defensive, confrontational approach to the condom. Be offensive. Give the facts on the failure rate of the condom, and give people the freedom to make their own **CHOICE** with their eyes open. Don't try to make the choice for people!

15. **Look for people who can give a testimonial** for two to three minutes during the lesson. These can be non-infected persons who share how such seminars have changed or motivated them: HIV+ persons who share their experiences; teenager/parent who has changed his/her behaviour since hearing your presentation.

16. **Realise that the number of lives you will save is not immediately measurable. Don't become discouraged. YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**