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MINURCAT HIV/AIDS UNIT

Stigma & Discrimination

Because of its association with behavior that may be considered socially unacceptable by many people, HIV infection is widely stigmatized.

People living with the virus are frequently subject to discrimination and human rights abuses: many have been thrown out of jobs and homes, rejected by family and friends, and some have even been killed.

Together, stigma and discrimination constitute one of the greatest barriers to dealing effectively with the epidemic. They discourage governments from acknowledging or taking timely action against AIDS. They deter individuals from finding out about their HIV status.

And they inhibit those who know they are infected from sharing their diagnosis and taking action to protect others and from seeking treatment and care for themselves. Experience teaches that a strong movement of people living with HIV that affords mutual support and a voice at local and national levels is particularly effective in tackling stigma.

Moreover, the presence of treatment makes this task easier too: where there is hope, people are less afraid of AIDS; they are more willing to be tested for HIV, to disclose their status, and to seek care if necessary. (UNAIDS)

The UN system –wide workplace programme on HIV has 10 Minimum standards and two of them are:

- 1) learning and training activities on stigma and discrimination
- 2) confidential handling of personal information

Please complete the following questionnaire:

1. What is the meaning of STIGMA?
2. HOW do people stigmatize people living with HIV? What are the FORMS of stigma?
3. WHY do people stigmatize people living with HIV?
4. How does it FEEL to be stigmatized?
5. What are the EFFECTS of stigma on people living with HIV and their families?
6. What are the EFFECTS of stigma on the HIV EPIDEMIC- and WHY?
7. How have HEALTH WORKERS been stigmatizing people living with or suspected of having HIV and AIDS?
8. How can we STOP stigma in our HEALTH PRACTICE?
9. How can we STOP stigma in our Families and Community?
10. Why does AIDS have a much stronger stigma than cancer or Tuberculosis?



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