

HIV/AIDS
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HIV@WORK

MORE PEOPLE ARE LIVING AND WORKING WITH HIV THAN EVER

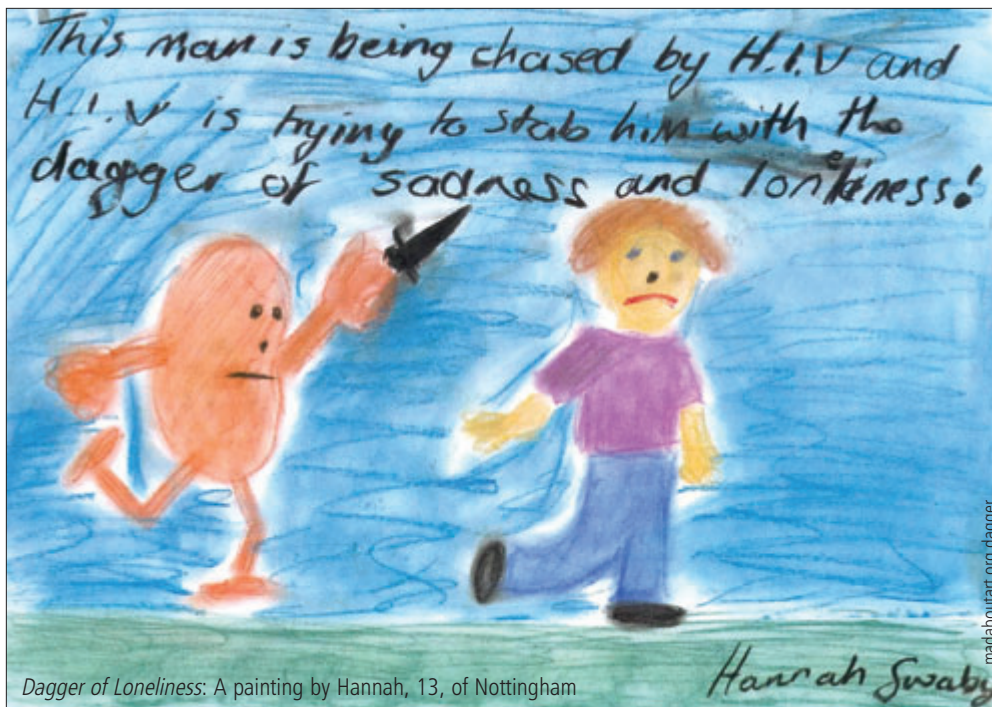
The faces of HIV mirror your workforce. See that you have the HR resources to respond fairly and with compassion. Be ready to address discrimination, return-to-work, and productivity issues. Add HIV/AIDS to your employee health and wellness programs and relevant workplace policies. After all, taking care of people is taking care of business. **Get free workplace policy and education information. Check www.hivatwork.org. Or call 1-800-458-5231.**

HIV IS STILL IN BUSINESS



TELLING

THE STORY



THE canvas of HIV/AIDS lends itself to great stories. That is, once you stop treating it as just a health story. HIV/AIDS not only deals with life and death, and conflict and controversy, it encompasses a host of social, economic, political, and developmental stories. Add to this sexuality, science, psychology, misconceptions, trends, law, industry, and policy, and a heady palette of possibilities emerges.

Unfortunately, in reality, most stories on HIV/AIDS tend to fit into a limited number of neat categories—event coverage, press releases, advocacy, and PLWHA issues. The reason often given is that editors and producers turn down story ideas put forward by reporters.

This chapter presents suggestions on how to generate great story ideas and to get them approved by your editor or

producer. They have been compiled from the experiences of a host of journalists, editors, and producers, The African Women's Media Centre, and speeches and writings on reporting HIV/AIDS.

Story Ideas

■ New Trends in the HIV/AIDS Epidemic

- What population groups are being hit the hardest, why, and who is doing what to respond.

■ Mapping the Epidemic

- How it is moving from one community to another. For example, how the epidemic is moving along truck routes or between migrant workers and their homes;
- How it is being transmitted;

Even after an HIV+ person dies, people are often scared to touch the body, making the last rites a problem.

— **SOCIAL WORKER IN KARNATAKA**





- How it could be stopped; and
- Trends in other countries.

■ Social Attitudes and Cultural Norms

- Attitudes to sex and sexuality;
- Attitudes as reflected in governmental policy;
- Fears of various kinds; and
- Trends.

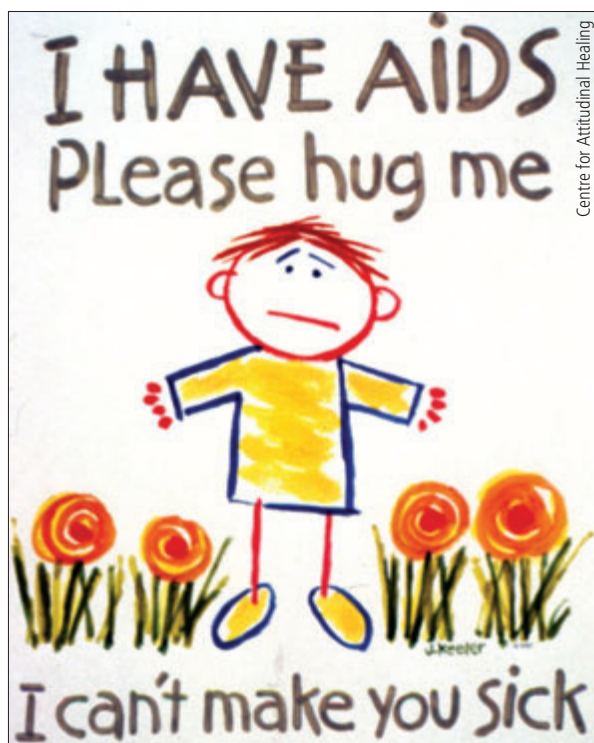
■ Issues of Confidentiality and Disclosure

■ Traditional Gender Roles and Relationships and HIV/AIDS

- How being a wife puts a woman at risk for HIV/AIDS;
- How gender affects care for women; and
- How empowering women can prevent HIV/AIDS.

■ HIV/AIDS, Human Rights, and Justice

- Rights of people with HIV/AIDS



and the legal protections for people with HIV/AIDS;

- How people with HIV/AIDS are treated and how they should be treated; and

- International conventions/plans of action related to human rights, reproductive health, gender equality, children's rights, etc., and the status of their implementation.

■ Adolescents or Young Adults and Their Risk for HIV/AIDS

■ The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Schools and Universities

- The impact on teachers and students; and
- The role of teachers in overcoming the epidemic, and examples of what is being done.

■ The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Family Structures and Relationships

■ HIV/AIDS and Children

- Maternal transmission of HIV and its prevention;
- AIDS orphans—the extent of the problem and the impact on older generations;
- The changing roles of older generations in the face of HIV/AIDS; and
- Strategies to care for AIDS orphans and others affected by HIV/AIDS.

■ The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Different Sectors of the Economy

- For example, its impact on different businesses, industries, agriculture, or in particular areas; and
- What this impact means for economic and social development.

■ **Sex Work**

- What health services and governments are doing—or could do—to make sex work safer for workers, clients, and their families;
- Programmes for sex workers and their clients—what works and what doesn't; examples of empowered sex workers and leaders in the workers' communities;
- Economic conditions and gender disparities that fuel the sex industry; and
- Viable economic alternatives to sex work (e.g. micro-credit programmes).

■ **The Response of Religious Leaders and Communities to HIV/AIDS**

■ **The Healthcare System in India**

- Delivery of free anti-retroviral drugs;
- Testing;
- Counselling;
- Care; and
- Attitudes towards patients within the healthcare system.

■ **Treatment and Care of People with HIV/AIDS**

- AIDS therapies/medicines, including their availability;
- Government policy; and
- Costs and challenges surrounding AIDS therapies.

■ **Drug Resistance and Its Implications**

■ **Research into HIV/AIDS Vaccines; Vaccine Trials**

■ **Misconceptions about HIV/AIDS or Fraudulent Claims of Cures**

■ **The Pharmaceutical Industry**

- Processes and patents;
- Costs of drugs;
- Research;
- Financial provisions for research; and
- The export of ARV drugs.

■ **Legal Issues**

- Rights;
- Patents; and
- Discrimination.

■ **Statistics and Their Correspondence with Reality**

- Methods of collecting nationwide figures and statistics;



AIDS crosses: From the Siyazama Project (1999-02) by Zach Goldman

- Conflicting and inconsistent figures or findings; and
- Projections.

■ **Human Interest**

- The lives of people connected with HIV/AIDS by profession, relationship, or health;
- Experiences of those to whom the audience can relate; and
- The stories of achievers.

■ **Movies and the Media**



■ **Policy Issues**

- International action plans and concerns;
- Governmental policies, including those of donor nations, and their effect;
- Consultations on future initiatives; and

- How policies are developed, whose voice is heard, and who remains unheard.

■ **The Role of Institutions**

- Are governments and institutions implementing their plans?
- Are they implementing their plans on schedule?
- Are they achieving their objectives? What evidence is there?
- Who benefits from the plan?

■ **The Flow of Money**

- Are the funds getting to the people they are supposed to benefit?
- Are the funds being used effectively?
- Are the funds being used efficiently?
- Are funds lying unused? ●



Overcoming Editorial Barriers

One of the greatest challenges in covering HIV/AIDS issues is selling story ideas to editors and senior producers who decide which stories make it and which don't, and which should get prominent space or air-time.

Some of the barriers are:

- Editors are tired of covering HIV/AIDS. They say that they have "been there, done that", and that it is not news any more;

- They may be under the impression that their audience is already adequately informed about HIV/AIDS; and
- There can be stiff competition for print space or airtime, making it difficult to slot in substantial stories on HIV/AIDS, or to do so on a regular basis.

Here are some simple strategies that have been used successfully by journalists from different regions of the world:

Editorial Barriers

Editors consider topics dealing with health, science, or social trends as "soft", and not newsworthy.

Strategies for Overcoming Obstacles

General strategy: Package the stories well. Be creative. A brilliant story about a topic that may have sounded dull to an editor will sell.

Find a new hook/peg for the story. Link the HIV/AIDS story with some current event(s) or with policy/politics.

Work with information sources, such as non-governmental organizations, to get useful and timely information on

	<p>a regular basis.</p> <p>Delve into the topic, and cover it in greater depth than has been done before.</p> <p>Plan stories for idle news days when they are more likely to get print space or airtime.</p> <p>Point out coverage of HIV/AIDS in competitors or other media to your bosses</p>
<p>Editors think that HIV/AIDS is an old story.</p>	<p>HIV/AIDS is no more an old story than politics is a tired story.</p> <p>Investigate the myriad aspects of HIV/AIDS.</p> <p>Take a different approach to reporting on HIV/AIDS. Often, coverage of HIV/AIDS is sensationalist, alarmist, and gloomy. Change this. Look at promising initiatives, success stories, acts of courage, and people who are making positive changes.</p> <p>In preparing or proposing a story, think about why and how this particular aspect of HIV/AIDS is newsworthy.</p> <p>Identify what is new, such as new studies or data, developments in programmes fighting HIV/AIDS, social changes brought about by HIV/AIDS, progress in the pharmaceutical industry.</p>
<p>Certain aspects of HIV/AIDS, including some of the language, may be culturally shocking.</p>	<p>Survey audiences to find out what they are really interested in, and what they are willing to hear or read.</p>
<p>Editors and managers—possibly reflecting an important segment of the public—may be afraid to deal with a particular issue.</p>	<p>When covering a controversial issue or a harmful practice that is traditional, listen to all sides. Make sure the coverage is balanced.</p> <p>Use ethics, judgement, and common sense as a guide.</p> <p>Use non-judgemental, clear, concise language. Use the terms recommended by those working in the HIV/AIDS field.</p>
<p>Editors and managers have a formula that works for them in making editorial decisions, and new HIV/AIDS stories may not appear to fit into that formula.</p>	<p>Find a news angle that will justify using the story.</p>
<p>Source: <i>The African Women's Media Centre</i></p>	

