

Emergency contact information

Free numbers that you can phone anytime you need help:

ChildLine	08000 55 555
LifeLine	0861 322 322
AIDS Helpline	0800 012 322
AIDS Law Project (office hours only)	011 356 4100

All copyright © rests with the Children's Rights Centre, 2007.
Any part of this book can be reproduced for the same purposes
but it may not be reproduced for profit.

We hope that you will be in touch with any questions, comments,
suggestions and stories:



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS CENTRE

Children's Rights Centre
1st Floor, 480 Smith Street,
Durban, South Africa 4001
Tel: (031) 307-6075;
Fax: (031) 307-6074
Email: info@crc-sa.co.za
Web: www.crc-sa.co.za

Acknowledgements

This book is written by Sarah Leeper and Noreen Ramsden, in collaboration with Meera Doranna LeVine and Cati Vawda. The CRC would like to thank all who made this publication possible, especially the following:



Aids & Child

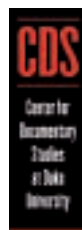


Save the Children
Sweden

Bernard van Leer Foundation



SOUTH AFRICA
DEVELOPMENT FUND



Helping Children living with HIV

A companion book to use with the children's book,
My Living Positively Handbook

For parents, caregivers, social workers,
health workers and others



Designed and published by Jacana Media (011) 628-3200

1st edition 2007 ISBN 978-1-77009-326-3



000298

Helping Children living with HIV

How to use this book

These are guidelines for adults to use with the children's book *My Living Positively Handbook*. Both books will help the reader to care for a child with HIV.

Read the book *Helping Children living with HIV* together with the children's book (see below). It is full of helpful advice, answers to questions and suggestions for different groups of helpers.

The children's book *My Living Positively Handbook* is a book for young children who are HIV positive. It was made by children, families, doctors, nurses and teachers. Pictures, activities and simple information help the child to find out many ways to live positively.

On some pages you will find these characters who will help to guide you through the book.

We have also underlined some of the more difficult words. These are explained at the bottom of the page like this:

DIFFICULT WORDS

virus:
a type of germ that gets into your body

Contents

PART 1

Welcome to readers.....	2
Parents, grandparents and caregivers.....	3
Nurses, doctors and other health workers	4
Social workers, counsellors and community care workers.....	7
Everyone! Choose for yourself how to read the Handbook.....	8
What you can do when you are reading the Handbook with a child	9

PART 2

Talking with children about health and HIV	10
Why talk to children about health and HIV?.....	11
Where do you start your journey?.....	13
Step-by-step when you start to talk about HIV	15
Talking to children of different ages	16
Questions and answers	17
Starting conversations about HIV	20
Disclosure (naming HIV).....	21
Brothers, sisters and cousins	23

PART 3

Extra information and suggestions.....	24
Counsellors, community workers and support group leaders	25
Trainers of adult leaders	29

This booklet is to help you care for children living with HIV. It cannot replace medical advice and treatment. We hope that it will help support you and also help children living with HIV to be partners in their own healthcare.

Welcome to readers

Welcome to your book!



Welcome to this book

We first put together a children's book called *My Living Positively Handbook* to help children who are living with HIV. Then we wrote this book to help you use the *My Living Positively Handbook* with your child, because we know that children need love and support from their family.

We hope that both books will help you with caring for your child with HIV. They have been prepared for you by families, health workers and counsellors. The children's book tells stories and gives children games and interesting things to do.

- From an early age children can start to learn about health, illness and treatment, and they can start to learn to share in their own health care. We believe that this partnership makes children healthier and happier!
- We hope the books will help you to share ideas about health with children in your family.
- Please choose what you are happy to read with your child and then talk about this with him or her.

We are happy to be able to share our lives, stories and advice with you. See how children tell their own stories in the book.

Look at page 4 of the children's book. All the people shown in that book are caring for children with HIV.



DIFFICULT WORDS

partnership:
a relationship between two or more people doing something together

Nurses, doctors and other health workers

Welcome to this book

It is a book to be read with the children's book called *My Living Positively Handbook*. This is written for children infected or affected by HIV and AIDS. Both books will help you with your child patients. It can help you to communicate better with both children and the adults who care for them. You or a counsellor may need to explain to the child and his or her caregiver how to use the book.

We hope you will encourage your patient to bring the completed book to the clinic each month. The Patient File section (on pages 54 to 67) is useful to record information about patient health and to communicate between the home and the clinic. The section contains the following:

1 Everyday colouring book (pages 56 to 61)

Every day the child should mark:

- If he or she took the pills, by making a tick mark in the two top boxes.
- How he or she felt, by drawing on the picture of the wooden doll.

This calendar helps the child to remember to take medicines correctly. If the child uses it to record adherence, it will help you to find out if there are any problems with this. Then you can help with good advice and encouragement. For example: Are there problems over weekends or if the child goes visiting?

The "How do you feel today?" section will help you see if there are side effects from the drugs, or early symptoms of illness and opportunistic infections.



These pages are useful during the first few months of treatment, when the child and caregiver are settling into the regimen.

It can also be useful as the caregiver does not have to rely on memory for what has happened during the month. It is very helpful as a record when the child has several caregivers and a different one brings the child to clinic each month.

2 Records of blood tests (pages 62 to 63)

We suggest you fill in and use these charts to encourage adherence.

Look at the results with the child.

Are the values going up? Ask the child questions like these:

- "Can you say that BIG number in a BIG voice?"
- "Can you say that small number in a tiny voice?"
- "Is that good or bad?"
- "Does it show you are taking the medicines properly?"
- "Do you remember your CD4 count from last time?"

Maybe you can ask the child to try to name all of his or her medicines.



DIFFICULT WORDS

adherence:

to take medicines the right way, at the same time, every day

encouragement:

to help someone in a positive way

opportunistic infections:

illnesses you can get if your immune system is too weak

regimen:

a combination of medicines given by a health worker

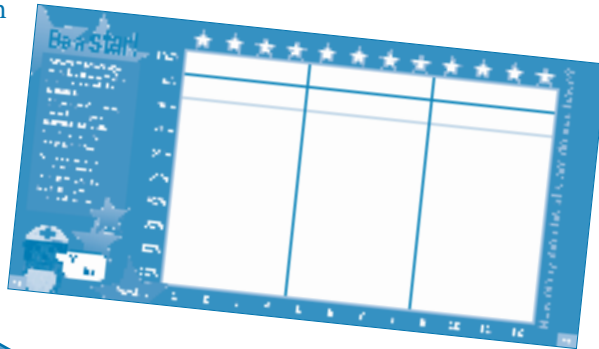
Social workers, counsellors and community care workers

Nurses, doctors and other health workers

3 Adherence star chart (pages 64 to 65)

The child and caregiver will most probably need help with working out the adherence percentage each month.

You can encourage the child to aim at 100% adherence. Perhaps you could award star-stickers for “star” months.



4 Clinic visit record (pages 66 to 67)

There are pages for recording the child's height and weight. You could say: “Look at how you're growing! The ARVs are keeping you strong.”

There is a space if you want to make special notes. You could write down instructions and the date of the next visit.



DIFFICULT WORDS

adherence percentage (%):
a measure of how often you take your medicines (100% means you took all your medicines every day)

Welcome to this book

This book gives adults suggestions on how best to use the children's book, *My Living Positively Handbook*.

Both books have been written to help children who are infected with, or affected by, HIV. They have been prepared by families, health workers and counsellors, with stories and photographs from children living with HIV.

We hope that the children's handbook will help you, as you support families affected by HIV and AIDS.

- We have chosen stories with a happy ending, and also cheerful photos, so that some of the fear and stigma around HIV and AIDS can be lessened.
- But we also have stories that raise unhappy issues such as rape (Babalwa's story on page 47). Please decide carefully if you want to use these, and when. We feel that most children need information like this as it will help protect them. Unhappy stories can also encourage them to tell their own unhappy stories. Then they can get the support and counselling they need.
- We hope that the section on talking to children about HIV and AIDS will help you advise parents on the need to disclose to children, and how best to do it.
- You will find more information to help you run children's support groups on page 25 to 28.



stigma:
judging people and treating them badly because you think they are different

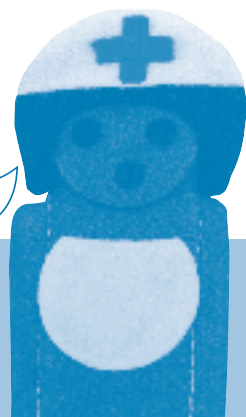
to disclose:
to tell someone something, such as being HIV positive

Everyone! Choose for yourself how to read the book

Adults must choose for themselves how to read this book with children! But here are some ideas.

- 1** We suggest that you read the *My Living Positively Handbook* first, and get to know it for yourself.
- 2** You will see that it is written about children who know that they are living with HIV.
- 3** But perhaps your child does not yet know that he or she is living with HIV! You will then need to decide whether the book will be a help to your child – now or later.
- 4** Are there some stories or pages you would like to share with your child now? Can you use the book to answer any questions your child may have?
- 5** If you decide to use the book right away, you may need to read it aloud to young children. If children are older and can read well, they can perhaps read it to you. But they may want to read it quietly to themselves, and if they do, you can discuss things with them, afterwards.
- 6** Very young children will enjoy just looking at the pictures and talking about them with you.
- 7** Some of the stories talk about sad things, like Sinazo's story on page 17, and Babalwa's stories on pages 47 and 52 of the children's book. Choose whether you want to share these stories with your child, or not. If your child is worried by a story, be ready to offer comfort and talk about it in the days to come.

We hope you and your child enjoy sharing this book.



What to do when reading the book with a child

Talk about what is in the handbook

Start with what your child can understand now. When you read this book together, your child may ask questions. Use this as a starting point to talk about what is in the book. Allow your child to lead you. You may also want to gently ask a few simple questions like these, and talk about many possible answers:

- “What do you like about this page?”
- “What did you not like?”
- “What did we learn?”
- “In what ways is this child like you?”
- “Do you have any questions or worries?”

Let your child draw and write in the book

We hope your child will draw or write in the spaces that we have left in the book. Do not worry if the pictures are untidy or the words are spelt wrong. The important thing is for the child to express thoughts and feelings.

Encourage your child to talk by saying: “Tell me about your picture” or “Tell me your story.”

Praise his or her efforts.

Bring the book to the clinic

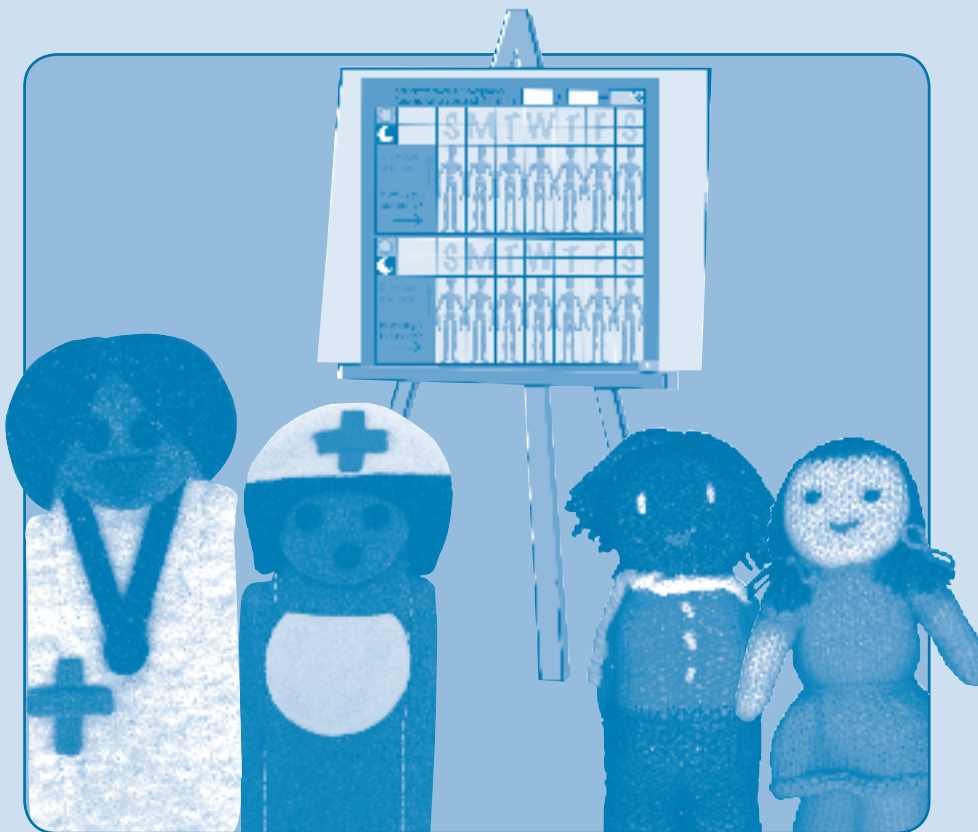
Be sure to bring the book to the clinic whenever you go. You can also read it with your child while you are waiting to see the nurse or doctor.

- There are pages for the doctor, nurse or counsellor to use, if they want to write down important information.
- They may ask you and your child to fill in some parts at home. This will help them to understand your child's health.

PART 2

Why talk to children about health and HIV?

Talking with children about health and HIV



A big worry among parents and caregivers is telling children that they are HIV positive. It will help you if you think of this knowledge as something that children need to take in slowly, bit by bit, as they grow up. Talking about HIV does not happen just once and is then over! It needs to be part of what we do all the time to help children learn about their own health.

Better health

Children who understand something about health and living with HIV will co-operate with adults in taking medicines, having blood tests and also in taking good care of themselves. They will know that they need extra meals and extra rest. They will know to watch out for the first signs of illness.

No hidden worries

Children can tell from a very young age when something is not right in the home or with their health. If they are not told what the problem is, they often make things up that are much worse than the real thing. For example, a child may believe “My blood is poison because I’m bad”. These ideas will make the child worried, and then he or she may not sleep well or eat well. This is bad for them.

If you are open and truthful, your children will find it easier to live with that painful truth, as they can talk about it and discuss it. If you are hopeful and positive, they will learn to be like you.

DIFFICULT WORDS

co-operate:
to act, work or relate with others to get something done

Why talk to children about health and HIV?

Better trust

You want your children to feel they can trust you because you tell them the truth about their health. If you keep secrets from your children, and do not tell the truth, they may stop believing what you say. Many children already know their HIV status but are afraid to speak about it with parents. If you are open and accepting of their status, they feel much happier. Talking openly with them builds their trust.

Getting help

Children may find out their HIV status by accident – and many do. They may find out by looking at their own patient file or by seeing the names of their ARVs on TV or clinic posters. They may also overhear doctors and nurses talking. When they find out in this way, they often have no one to turn to at that moment. They feel very frightened and worried. But if you talk with your child, you can help him or her feel positive about HIV.

Patients have a right to know

All of us, adults and children, have a right to know about our health and how to care for ourselves. The SA Patients' Rights Charter says that *"Every patient has a right to get all information concerning their health in simple and understandable language"*.

As children grow and are able to understand, they should know about their health and what they can do to help take care of themselves.

Children can also join support groups and talk freely with their doctors, nurses and counsellors.



DIFFICULT WORDS

HIV status:
whether you are HIV positive or negative

Where do you start your journey?

Teaching our children is a journey that starts at birth and continues until the end of life. We want to meet you where you are, and support you along the way. Choose from the three starting places which one best matches where you are at the moment.

1 I am not ready to tell my child that he or she is living with HIV

Perhaps you are not sure whether you should tell your child that he or she is living with HIV.

- You may worry about making your child upset and frightened.
- You may worry about him or her telling everyone and so cause trouble among family, friends and community.

But there are many important things you can teach your child about health, illness and care without ever using the words HIV or AIDS. This teaching is a good start. We can give you advice and support as you and your child move towards talking openly about HIV.

We suggest that you at least start thinking about when and how you would like to disclose to your child. Read our suggestions on page 15 on what to say and do. This will help you to believe that you can do it when the time is right!

Read the children's book *My Living Positively Handbook*. Start by looking at the book on your own. Maybe there are some pages you will want to share with your child even now. There are stories of young people living with HIV. There is information on how HIV works in the body. There is also a calendar to colour in, to help a child take his or her medicines every day.



to disclose:
to tell someone something, such as being HIV positive

calendar:
a chart that shows each day of the month

Where do you start your journey?

2 I am ready to tell my child that he or she is living with HIV

Maybe you are ready, but you are not sure how to do it. We can help with advice and support, and on what to say. We can also help with what to do afterwards to follow up.

Read the children's book *My Living Positively Handbook* (pages 47 to 51). Start by looking at the book on your own. Maybe you will want to use the book during the disclosure, to start the conversation. Or you may need to know how to answer questions your child may have. Maybe you want to give the book as a gift when you tell your child about being HIV positive. You can then promise to learn more about HIV by reading the book together.

3 I have already told my child that he or she is living with HIV

Maybe your child already knows his or her HIV status. We can offer you advice and support as you both learn more about health, illness and care together. Use the children's book *My Living Positively Handbook*.

- Start by looking at the book on your own and deciding what would be a good way to use it.
- Maybe you will want to read the book straight through with your child. Or perhaps you will plan to read one page a night, or one page a week.
- Maybe you will want to find the answers to special questions, and so you will read a page here and a page there.

If your child is already using the book with a counsellor or support group at the clinic, he or she can share with you what has been learnt.

DIFFICULT WORDS

conversation:
talk; discussion

HIV status:
whether you are HIV
positive or negative

Step-by-step when you start to talk about HIV

Children have the ability to accept extraordinary events as ordinary, over time. They will follow your lead. If you are able to speak about HIV in a way that is hopeful and calm, it will help your child to feel safe. There are a few important things for you, the adult, to keep in mind when starting to talk to children about HIV:

- Be confident that HIV is a common, treatable illness, like asthma or diabetes. It is not curable but it is not a death sentence. ARVs can help your child lead a full, healthy life for a long, long time.
- Remember that illness is only one part of your child's life, not all of it. Remind yourself of all the good parts, like family and friends, school and playing.
- When children ask about health, tell them that their questions are welcome. For example, you might start off by saying "I'm glad you asked me that!"
- It's all right to say "I don't know". Then you can ask a doctor, nurse, counsellor or friend to teach both you and your child.
- Don't lie! But you do not have to tell the whole truth. Only tell children what they need to know at that time, and things they can understand. For example, you could give a similar response to the one below.



asthma:
a sickness of the lungs
that makes it hard to
breathe

diabetes:
sugar sickness

death sentence:
being told that
you will die

ARVs:
anti-retroviral
medicines

Talking to children of different ages

A **very young child 0 – 4 years** needs comfort and support, and most of all needs to feel safe. Make sure the child understands that health workers are our friends and that treatment and medicine help us.

Young children (pre-school) 5 – 7 years learn from what they see and hear and do. Talk about being “a partner in good health”. This means eating healthy food, keeping clean, exercising, looking after teeth, getting enough rest and so on.

School-going children 8 – 11 years are able to learn new ideas and will try them out in new situations. Talk about a virus and how it works. You will most probably name the virus at this stage as HIV. Make sure you talk about the work of ARVs to help the body keep well, and what children can do to protect their own health. Talk also about “circles of care”. Help children to see who they can go to, for sympathy and support.

Teenagers 12 – 14 years are building a new idea of who they are, as adult people with ideas and values of their own. They like to make decisions on their own, but they may make risky decisions based on the very strong feelings they get. Friends are very important, and they often follow the lead of another young person they admire. As they become sexually mature, they need to understand the responsibilities as well as the pleasures of being an adult.

We need to make sure they understand in a more adult way about health, medicines, sexuality and HIV infection. They need to understand how to practise safe sex, so as not to pass on HIV.

DIFFICULT WORDS

virus:

a type of germ that gets into your body

sympathy:

sharing the feelings of another person

values:

beliefs that affect behaviour

risky:

dangerous

Questions and answers

Expect that your child will have questions for you. Even if the questions feel difficult or uncomfortable, don't run away from them! Questions let you know what the child does not know, and you can then add to what they do know.

We have listed some of the questions children often ask, and some answers that other caregivers, counsellors and health workers have shared. We hope the ideas will be useful, even if the questions children ask, and the words you use to answer them, change over time.

You can use the children's book *My Living Positively Handbook* to help you answer questions. The page numbers are written next to some of the questions.

Questions children often ask and some ideas on how you might answer them

Read pages 22 to 25, 34 to 37 and 41 to 47 from the *My Living Positively Handbook*.

Why must I take medicines?

“You take medicines because they help you stay strong and well.”

Why must I keep going to the clinic?

“You have a germ in your blood called a virus. There are different sorts of viruses – even a cold is a virus. But this one stays in your body all the time. If we are not careful, it could make you sick. That's why we have to keep going to clinic and taking medicines, to keep your body strong and this virus weak.”

You could also say: “This virus is called HIV.”

responsibilities:

duties that you need to carry out in the right way

uncomfortable:

not feeling relaxed or happy in yourself

Questions and answers

- **Where did I get HIV?** (pages 18 to 19)

“Let’s read together about the ways children can get HIV, and talk about how you got it.”

- **Do you have it?**

“Yes, I have it too, just like you! I am also taking medicines and looking after my health.”

OR *“No, I do not have HIV.”*

OR *“I am not ready to talk about this with you now.”*

- **Where did you get it from?**

“That’s a private matter and I am not going to talk about it.”

OR you might decide to be open and say something like this, for an older child: *“I got HIV through sex. When you are older, we will talk more about this. But when you are ready to have sex, you must speak to me first so that I can teach you how to keep yourself and your partner safe.”*

- **Does auntie have HIV?** (or other family member)

“HIV is a private matter. Auntie’s status is not something we need to know.”

If family and friends are ready to disclose, you might discuss who will tell the child about HIV in the family, and what to say. It is often a big help for children to share and learn from others living with HIV. Note that you must ask permission from anyone before disclosing their status.



DIFFICULT WORDS

permission:
getting someone’s approval
or consent to do something

Questions and answers

- **Will I be sick forever? Is there a cure?**

“There is no cure yet. HIV will live in your body forever, but this does not mean you will always feel sick. We must help to keep your body strong so that you will feel well most of the time. You can take medicines, visit the clinic, eat healthy foods and keep clean. And remember, we will always love you.”

- **Can I get married and have children? Can I grow up, work and have a family?**

“People with HIV get married and have children, have jobs, and do many, many other things. Having HIV is only one part of your life. It is important to be happy about the other parts, such as school, family, friends, football and so on. These parts don’t change just because of HIV. Enjoy all the good things in your life too!”

- **Who can I tell?** (pages 48 to 49)

“Having HIV is not a bad thing or a shameful thing, but it is a private thing. You can talk to me, your father, nurses, counsellors, and other HIV-positive children at the clinic.”

You can ask your child: *“Have you ever heard other children or grown-ups talking about HIV? What do they say? Have you heard hurtful talk about HIV?”*

Help your child to feel free to talk at any time about any unkindness they may have seen against anyone living with HIV. Ask your child for ideas about what they would do or say if they were treated unkindly: *“Would it be better to take no notice? Maybe you could treat it as a joke? What about finding a good friend to play with?”* (pages 52 to 53 in the *My Living Positively Handbook*).

Make sure your child knows you are there to give love and support.



Starting conversations about HIV

It is important to answer your child's questions, but it is also important to take a turn at starting conversations yourself.

Your child takes medicine every day and goes to the clinic once a month. So you can talk about this.

Look for chances to talk to your child about medicines, health and HIV when you hear about these things on the radio or TV.

You may also see posters or read articles in newspapers, or hear talk about HIV in your community or at school.

This gives your child a chance to tell you how he or she feels and what is understood. Then you can calm any fears or correct any mistakes about HIV. You are also telling your child that it's good to ask questions, and that HIV isn't secret or shameful, it's a part of life.



Let's both draw pictures about how we are feeling today!

Sometimes your child may not know how to talk about his or her feelings. It may help children to draw a story on a piece of paper. Then you can talk about the drawing together.

DIFFICULT WORDS

conversations:
talks; discussions

Disclosure (naming HIV)

Children may ask directly if they have HIV, and you will need to tell the truth! But if they have not asked, and appear not to know the truth, a time will come when you need to talk to your child about having HIV. We call this disclosure or the naming event. This should happen when your child already knows some things about HIV.

- Choose a time and a place where you and your child are alone and have time to talk.
- Think for a while about what you would like to say and do.
- You might want to practise with a counsellor or friend so that when the time comes, you are confident and positive.

How to begin talking about HIV

You might start by reminding them of a question they asked, or an explanation you gave in the past.

"Do you remember when you asked why you take medicines every day, and I said you had a virus living in your blood? Well, the name of that virus is HIV."

If you like, you can use this as a good time to talk about your own status.

"I'm also HIV positive, just like you. We are in this together. We can support each other, and remind each other to take our medicines."

You can gently encourage the child to keep this information private, but give suggestions for people he or she can talk to. Then they can ask questions and share feelings and support each other.

disclosure:
being told your HIV status, or telling other people your status

confident:
you believe in yourself

encourage:
give support and help

Disclosure (naming HIV)

Don't be in a hurry

Give them a chance to ask questions or share their feelings, but only if they wish. It may take a while for them to accept what you have told them. You will find that they will ask many more questions in the days to come. You could say: *"Is there anything you want to ask or tell me right now?"*

You might want to use this as a chance to give them the children's book *My Living Positively Handbook*. You can say: *"This is a book that will help us learn together about HIV. It may answer some of the questions you have. Shall we read a little bit right now?"*

End positively!

End your talk together in a positive way. You might say something like this: *"HIV isn't anyone's fault. It doesn't mean that you have done anything wrong. Nothing has changed. I have only told you the name of this illness. I love you very much, and I'm going to do my best to take care of you no matter what."*

Plan something pleasant to do after this. Ask the child to join you in singing a song, playing a game or telling a favourite story.

Remember that naming HIV is only one step on the journey. Continue to encourage your child to share thoughts and feelings with you often.



Brothers, sisters and cousins

The other children in your home will also benefit greatly from open discussions about health, HIV, treatment and care. It will give them a chance to learn the truth about the illness, and to discuss any concerns they may have. It will also help them to understand how to support the family members living with HIV. Sometimes you will need to talk together as a family. Sometimes you will need to talk to one child at a time.

- When the time comes to disclose to your child, think about disclosing to the other brothers and sisters as well. But only do this if they are of an age to understand. If the whole family knows, you can talk openly within your own home and care for each other in positive ways.
- Many parents tell the HIV-positive child first. They may let the child choose how the others are told. You might ask your child: *"Shall we tell them together, or would you like me to tell them? Is there anything special you'd like me to say?"*

If the brothers and sisters are much older than the infected child, you might choose to disclose to them first. This should be done only after the young person has some understanding of HIV.

DIFFICULT WORDS concerns: worries

PART 3

Counsellors, community workers and support group leaders

Extra information and suggestions

Go well – as you continue your journey!



Counsellors and community workers

We hope that the children's book, *My Living Positively Handbook*, will help you to encourage children and families to live positively with HIV through its stories and photos. It can also help you to discuss with children and their caregivers important information such as: What is HIV? What are ARVs? Why is adherence important?

Leaders of children's support groups

We would like to help those running children's support groups, and to encourage more leaders of support groups! The children's book *My Living Positively Handbook* can help children to support each other as they learn to understand and accept HIV and its treatment in their lives. They can also learn what they can do to stay healthy and hopeful. Contact Children's Rights Centre for more information on running support groups for children.

We suggest the following themes for group-work, based on the *My Living Positively Handbook*:

- Introduction: Be one of the Great People
- What is HIV?
- Visiting the clinic
- How you get HIV
- Discrimination – what to do?
- Telling others about my status
- Keeping myself healthy
- ARVs – how they work



DIFFICULT WORDS

adherence:
to take medicines the right way, at the same time, every day

themes:
different ideas or messages

discrimination:
when people or groups of people are treated unfairly because they are different

Counsellors, community workers and support group leaders

- Adherence and resistance
- My challenges and my goals
- Bookmaking for extra space to write and draw
- Celebration of life for family and friends

Suggested one hour session

1. Introductions and welcome (2 minutes)
2. Songs and games that children enjoy (10 minutes)
3. Short input from group leader on the theme. This could be reading from the book, a short talk, a demonstration or a story (5 - 10 minutes)
4. Activities and discussions on the themes (20 - 30 minutes)
5. Conclusion and planning activities for follow-up (5 - 10 minutes)
6. Happy ending – final song and goodbyes (3 minutes)

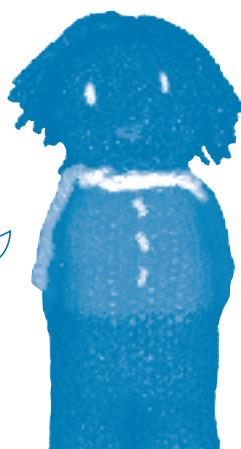
Example of a session:

Theme: Be one of the GREAT PEOPLE

1 Introductions and welcome (2 minutes)

Let each child say or sing his or her name.
Everyone claps.

Hello, my
name is
Sipho.



DIFFICULT WORDS

resistance:
when ARVs no longer
stop HIV from growing
in your body

challenges:
hard things you
need to do

goals:
what you can
achieve

2 Songs and games that children enjoy (10 minutes)

- Give them each sheets of newspaper to crumple up into balls.
- Put all the paper balls together into a large plastic bag. Tie the bag to make one big ball.
- Ask the children to stand up and throw the ball from one to another, calling the name of the person they are throwing to.
- Then get one to stand in the middle of the circle, and they throw the ball trying to hit him or her. If it falls, someone picks it up and throws it again. Keep it lively.
- If the bag breaks, ask them to stuff the crumpled newspaper into their clothes, to look fatter! This causes great laughter!
- If it does NOT break, you can break it yourself. The children enjoy making themselves large bellies, bottoms and boobs from the newspaper! Let the children dance past in a line, clapping and singing, showing off their “*new bodies*”.
- They then throw all the paper into a bin or bag.

3 Short input from group leader (5 - 10 minutes)

Call them to come and sit down. Ask children one at a time to stand up and say what they are good at, and everyone claps.

Input – Tell the group that they have seen that everyone in this group is a special person, with special gifts or talents. This means that he or she helps to make the group **GREAT**. Because they are all living positively with HIV, they also all belong to another **GREAT GROUP** – the many people who are doing the same!

Counsellors, community workers and support group leaders

4 Activities and discussions (20 - 30 minutes)

In the *My Living Positively Handbook* they can look at the photographs on pages 4 to 5.

- Ask them to find a young child, an old person, a girl, a boy, someone who could be a teacher, people of different cultures and so on. Why are all these people “great”?
- Encourage the children to talk about living positively and being brave and helping others.

Note: no-one is “great” all the time and that is all right! But it is good to try to be great, and to grow in greatness as you grow bigger physically!

Children enjoy making themselves a badge or medal to wear to show they are special. They can do this from card or strong paper. Let them choose what they want to write or draw such as “*Thabo – good friend*” or even just a star, a smiling face or the sun.

5 Conclusion and planning activities for follow-up (10 minutes)

The children choose a name for their group.

6 Happy ending – final song and goodbyes (3 minutes)

Goodbye

DIFFICULT WORDS

physically:
taller; stronger; in terms of your body

Trainers of adult leaders

Introducing the books to trainers of adult leaders

- Play one of the children’s games with them as an ice-breaker.
- Discuss the value of children being partners in their own health care. What sort of facts do children need to know and what good attitudes do they need to have?
- Look together at the contents of the *My Living Positively Handbook* and see what it has about positive living.
- What support do children and families need? How will the book help? For example, what does it say about HIV? Does it help families affected by HIV not to feel alone?
- Go through some of the pages of the children’s book with them, as if they were children. Discuss how a child would feel about the page, and what they might learn from it.

Let the adults also enjoy drawing or writing their own story. They can draw on separate sheets of blank paper like “*All about me*” (pages 2 to 3) or “*How I live positively*” (page 21).

Discuss how they feel when they have drawn or written about their own lives?

Discuss how children would feel. Why is it good for children to express their feelings? How else can they be made to feel valuable? How can life-stories be part of helping children heal from sad experiences? Ask if there are other ways they would use the book.



ice-breaker:
something you do or say to make others feel relaxed

attitudes:
ways you view some things and behave towards them

valuable:
special; important

experiences:
things that happened