

Opportunities to achieve zero stigma and discrimination in integrated HIV, STIs and Viral Hepatitis responses: the community perspective

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Stigma and discrimination reduction: introduction

- HIV stigma is negative attitudes and beliefs about people with HIV. Is the prejudice that comes with labeling an individual as part of a group that is believed to be socially unacceptable.
 - Believing that only certain groups of people can get HIV.
 - Making moral judgments about people who take steps to prevent HIV transmission.
 - Feeling that people deserve to get HIV because of their choices.
- Discrimination is the behaviors that result from those attitudes or beliefs. HIV discrimination is the act of treating people living with HIV differently than those without HIV.
 - A HCP refusing to provide care or services to a person living with HIV.
 - Refusing casual contact with someone living with HIV.
 - Socially isolating a member of a community because they are HIV +.

Stigma and discrimination reduction: introduction

- HIV stigma and discrimination affect the emotional well-being and mental health of PLHIV. PLHIV often internalize the stigma they experience and begin to develop a negative self-image. They may fear they will be discriminated against or judged negatively if their HIV status is revealed.
- “Internalized stigma” or “self-stigma” happens when a person takes in the negative ideas and stereotypes about PLHIV and start to apply them to themselves. HIV internalized stigma can lead to feelings of shame, fear of disclosure, isolation and despair. These feelings can keep people from getting tested and treated for HIV.

Stigma and discrimination reduction: introduction

- HIV stigma is rooted in a fear of HIV. Many of our ideas about HIV come from the HIV images that first appeared in the early 1980s. There are still misconceptions about how HIV is transmitted and what it means to live with HIV today.
- The lack of information and awareness combined with outdated beliefs lead people to fear getting HIV. Additionally, many people think of HIV as a disease that only certain groups get. This leads to negative value judgments about PLHIV.
- We can all help end HIV stigma through our words and actions in our everyday lives. Talking openly about HIV can help normalize the subject. It also provides opportunities to correct misconceptions and help others learn more about HIV.

Stigma and discrimination reduction: what we offer from the community?


- CESIDA is the most representative entity of the HIV and AIDS citizen movement in Spain, with presence in 17 Autonomous Communities and in Melilla (77 NGOs). Cesida, which in 2022 celebrated 20 years since its foundation, is the organization reference of the associative movement that addresses the reality of HIV and AIDS in Spain.



1. POC network:

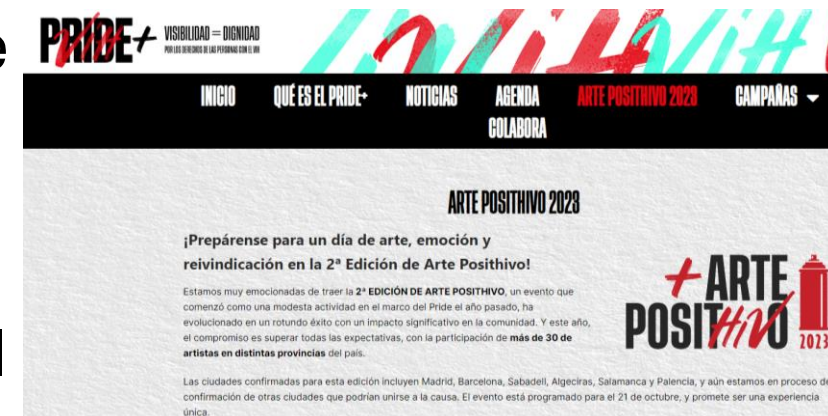
- POC clinics represent a new model to provide sexual health services to the population in a more comprehensive way. Community clinics do not only offer early diagnosis, treatment and linkage to care to most common sexual health issues but also offer most vulnerable populations an opportunity to feel co-participants in their health process by bringing down traditional barriers from regular health facilities, including stigma.
- It is necessary to bring together strategies that tackle all different intersectional stigmas, for example peer driven attention is a community identity sign that has proven essential in bringing the services near the people that need them most. Adequate coordination between health facilities and community entities should be clearly present in every action plan if we want to achieve Unaid goals.

1. POC network:

- No prejudice/ Open minded/Peer led
 - State of the art technology
 - Updated information
 - Targeting most at risk populations 
 - No waiting lists/ Walk in attention
- **Migrant people**
 - **Transgender**
 - **MSM**
 - **Sex workers**
 - **PWID (including Chemsex)**
 - **Social exclusion**
- P.O.C: results in minutes :short time for diagnosis & treatment; Linkage to care HIV+ (less than 24 hours)
 - Holistic attention to sexual health (mental, physical and social)

2. Campaigns and demands: +Pride

- This initiative is bringing focus to the persistence of stigma and discrimination associated with HIV in society after more than four decades of pandemic.
- +Pride puts also into value 40 years of activism and resilience, matching with the 20th anniversary of the founding of CESIDA, more than 20 activities in autumn 2022 and 2023
- +Pride culminated in a march through the streets in the center of Madrid on Nov. 19 2022 and Oct. 21 2023. More than 2,300 participants, meant massive “coming out” of people with HIV and an opportunity to stand in solidarity with different social, political, civil and cultural movements.



2. Campaigns and demands: +Pride

- Cultural activities:
 - Red circle.
Cycle positive cinema.
Positive art. Exhibition: 40 years later.
Women with V.
Meeting of writers and writers.
- Formative activities:
 - Conference “Carrying: an action on AIDS.”
 - Webinar: Stigma and public visibility of the people with HIV.
- Sport activities: healthy workshops

- 10,000 people at the +Pride presentation at the LGBTI+ Pride proclamation.
- 750 people at the works: “Women with V” and “Red Circle”.
- 25 Audiovisual pieces projected in the Film Series



2. Campaigns and demands:

- Promote and give community response to the commitment at several levels (national, regional, intra-regional, etc.)
- From the Community we inform the population through different ways – campaigns, social media, etc.- of the latest advances that contribute to fights against stigma and discrimination:
 - U=U
 - Combined prevention...
- In this sense, there are few campaigns specifically aimed at ending stigma and discrimination by public administrations → Seville as example.



Transmite VIDA
#notransmite VIH

Campana de sensibilización frente al estigma y la discriminación hacia personas con VIH y sida

Transmite vida, transmite tu mensaje
@SevillalibredeestigmaVIH
#SevillaLibreEstigmaVIH

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Las ITS Y TU

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3. Institutional relations:

- Fast track cities (Seville), with the assistance of the Minister of Health, Carolina Darias.
- Meeting with the Minister of Rights. Social and Agenda 2030.
- 10th Public Health Conference on HIV in the Congress of Deputies.
- Special day to present the actions developed within the framework of the #HIVSocialPact.
- PrEP Party. Scientific meeting to talk about PrEP, the combined HIV prevention strategy.
- Cesida meets with the executive director of UNAIDS and the Division of HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Tuberculosis Control.
- Commemorative event for the tenth anniversary of the Third Sector Platform.
- Meeting with Miquel Iceta, Minister of Culture and Sports, on the occasion of Positive Pride

3. Rights and HIV:

- Clínica Legal is a legal service for people with HIV on health issues, labor issues, migration, access to insurance, cases of discrimination and other inquiries. This service aims to empower people with HIV, allowing them generic access to justice to exercise their rights on equal terms with the rest of people: 293 people
 - 40% Discrimination cases
 - 28% Cases of limitation of rights
 - 32% Cases of request for information about access to a benefit or service.
- CESIDA signed of the agreement collaboration with UNESPA, employer of insurers, to improve in the protection of the rights of people with HIV.

4. Other programs that fight against stigma and discrimination:

- **Think tank:** project focuses on working with people in detention.
 - 11 NGOs, 12 centers, 603 people attended.
- **Peer program:** pioneering program in Spain to promote peer education in the hospital setting to provide emotional support to people with HIV.
 - 9 NGOs, 20 hospitals, 2,309 people attended.
- **Training for professionals on intersectional stigma in migrant population:** professional training project directed to professionals who work with the migrant population focusing on HIV, gender and sexual identity. The project aims as well to eliminate myths and false beliefs that sustain the stigma and discrimination associated to racism, as the main axis of discrimination that migrants suffer → 316 people

Stigma and discrimination reduction: what remains to do?

- Continue working against stigma/ discrimination around HIV and **sexual health**.
- A first step would be to get institutional support from the MSCBS with campaigns that spread knowledge about Undetectable=Untransmittable and combined prevention tools.
- End with the message of "the loss of fear", as a cause for new HIV infections.
- Get national campaigns specifically aimed at key populations, with the NGO advice.
- Community should be present from the beginning in the making and developing of every action plan.



Thank You!