



discrimination, n. the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex

Why do you think these people might be discriminated against?



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**Why do you think
this person might
be discriminated
against?**

What about things that you can't see?



- In fact, all of these people are HIV positive.
- Because it is less visible than race, gender, age, or physical disability, people can be less aware of HIV than they are of other kinds of discrimination.

Real life story one: Debbie



My foster son, Michael, aged 8, was born HIV positive. At first relations with the local school were wonderful and Michael thrived. Only the head teacher and Michael's personal class assistant knew of his illness. Then someone broke confidentiality and told a parent that Michael had HIV. That parent, of course, told all the others. This caused such panic and hostility that we were forced to move out of the area. Michael was no longer welcome at the school. Other children were not allowed to play with him - instead they jeered and taunted him cruelly. One day a local mother started screaming at us to keep him away from her children and shouting that he should have been put down at birth. Michael heard her. Later Michael said, sadly, 'Mummy, why can't I be human like other children?'

- Why do you think **confidentiality** was so important to Michael's mother?

Can HIV be transmitted by:

- Touching or hugging?
- Kissing?
- Biting?
- Coughing or sneezing on someone?
- Helping someone if they cut their finger?
- Sharing cutlery or a toilet seat?

In fact, HIV **cannot be transmitted** by any of these means. There are no recorded cases of HIV transmission occurring in a school.



However, HIV is something that affects young people in the UK

- Currently, there are around 1,500 young people under the age of 19 accessing treatment for HIV in the UK



**ACT
BE AWARE**



**HIV PREJUDICE IS STILL
AN ISSUE IN THE UK**

Find out the facts at www.worldAIDSday.org

Real life story two: Lewis



Five days after my fifteenth birthday I began to feel a little sick, my temperature was very high and I found it difficult to breathe. My aunt told me to call an ambulance.

I thought the doctors could give me some medicine and let me out the next day. After a few days the doctors came with a diagnosis - I was HIV positive. At that moment when they told me the result, my mind went blank. After a month, I went back to school excited to see my friends. When I arrived at school all my friends welcomed me and asked a lot of questions: 'What happened to you?' and I said, 'I was sick'. So one of my friends said, 'That's right you are skinny like you have HIV!'

The next day I felt like stopping going to school and other negative things. As the days passed, I began to look better and usually went to school and the same friend came to me to say a story about another of my friends. He said, 'That friend's dad died of HIV' and told me he doesn't want to touch him any more because you can be affected also.

Lewis' story highlights how difficult it can be for people with HIV to tell their friends about their HIV status.



- If someone **does** tell you about their HIV status, think very carefully about your reaction.
- It is also important to think carefully about how you talk about HIV in a casual context – Lewis' story shows how offhand comments can be extremely hurtful to people living with HIV.

Some medical facts

Although many people, like Lewis' friend, associate HIV with death, the medical outlook for people with HIV is actually much better than they assume.

- Although there is no cure for HIV, drugs called anti-retrovirals are available which keep people living with HIV healthier for longer. Many people with HIV live normal, healthy, and active lives.
- Recent research states that if a 20 year old starts treatment at the right time they can expect to live to the age of 70.
- Although HIV can be passed from mother to baby, new treatments mean that women with HIV can still have children. Steps such as birth by Caesarean section, anti-retroviral therapy, and not breastfeeding can reduce the chance of transmission to approximately 1%.



Some young people are affected by HIV because a family member is HIV positive.

- An estimated 20,000 children live in a family affected by HIV in the UK.
- Neil's story shows how casual remarks like those made by Lewis' friend can impact very negatively on the lives of people with HIV and their families:



Real life story three: Neil

I was diagnosed only two years ago and due to illness had lost my job and my home within 8 weeks. The whole experience on top of starting treatment was devastating. You can imagine even in today's world how upsetting it is when your child says she can't go to her friend's party because the parents are worried that she will infect them. My daughter at that time didn't even know I was HIV positive.

Words, actions, and attitudes all have consequences, so it's important to

