



World AIDS Day 2019 Assembly – Speaker's notes

HIV in the UK

NAT (National AIDS Trust) is the UK's HIV policy and campaigning charity. Each year we produce a new school assembly for World AIDS Day (WAD) which aims to inform young people about HIV. This year's assembly covers key facts about HIV, what it's like to live with HIV in the UK and how students can get involved this WAD.

These speaker notes are also included in the 'Notes' section of the powerpoint which is also available to download on our website.

We have also produced a new schools pack that can be used alongside the assembly, which will allow you to explore some of the topics raised in the assembly in more depth. Packed with teaching guidance, lesson plans and classroom materials, the pack provides you with all you need to teach about HIV for key stages 3 and 4. And it's completely free to download from <https://www.nat.org.uk/teachers-resources>.

For more information on HIV and suggested fundraising activities for your pupils please visit www.nat.org.uk and www.worldaidsday.org

Assembly Learning outcomes:

- To understand the history of the HIV epidemic
- To learn key facts about HIV and challenge misinformation
- To recognise the impact of stigma on people living with HIV in the UK
- To take action this World AIDS Day to end stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV.

Age Group

This assembly is appropriate for key stage 3-4 pupils (aged 11-16).

What you will need

- Projector and laptop
- NAT 2019 assembly slides

Section 1: Understanding HIV

Speaker's notes

The aim of slides 3-7 are to give a brief introduction to World AIDS Day and HIV. If you have time you may wish to make the presentation more interactive by asking students the questions in the headings (What is WAD? What is HIV? How many people are living with HIV?) before revealing the answers on the slides.

Slide 3: What is World AIDS Day?

World AIDS Day (WAD) is held every year on 1st December to raise awareness about HIV. It is a day to show support for people living with HIV, remember those who have lost their lives because of HIV, and learn the facts and realities of HIV today, in the UK and worldwide.

Slide 4: What is HIV?

HIV is a virus that attacks the body's immune system. It stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). HIV is not the same as AIDS.

AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome and can develop when HIV damages the immune system to such an extent that it can no longer fight off a range of infections it would normally cope with.

Slide 5: How many people are living with HIV globally?

A: In 2018, there are around 37.9 million people living with HIV globally.¹ In some countries, people can struggle to access testing or treatment.

Slide 6: How many people are living with HIV in the UK?

A: Around 101,600 people are living with HIV in the UK.²

Slide 7: How many people are living with HIV in the UK but don't know that they have it?

A: 1 in 12 people living with HIV in the UK do not know they have it.³

¹ Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Global HIV & AIDS statistics — 2019 fact sheet. 2019. Available from: <https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/fact-sheet>

² Brown AE, Kirwan PD, Chau C, Khawam J, Gill ON, Delpech VC. Towards elimination of HIV transmission, AIDS and HIV-related deaths in the UK – 2017 report. November 2017, Public Health England, London. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hiv-in-the-united-kingdom>

³ *ibid.*

Section 2: Learning the key facts about HIV

Speaker's notes

The aims of slides 6-9 are to make pupils aware of key facts about HIV which may challenge their own assumptions. There are a lot of people who are uninformed about HIV and believing the wrong information can contribute to stigma and discrimination – which are key issues relating to HIV today.

Slide 8: How HIV is passed on

Q: Does anyone know how HIV is passed on to other people?

A: In the UK, the two main routes of getting HIV is by:

- Having sex without condoms
- Sharing needles and injecting equipment

Anyone can get HIV if they are exposed to HIV via these routes.

Elsewhere in the world, there is also a risk for pregnant women passing HIV on to their babies, but this doesn't really happen in the UK because HIV treatment stops this from happening.

These are the only ways HIV can be passed on. There is no risk of passing on HIV through day-to-day contact, touching, kissing or any other way.

Top tip

*Other examples of things you **can't** get HIV from include biting, spitting, sharing cutlery, loo seats or sharing tooth brushes.*

Slide 9: How to prevent HIV

Q: What methods can be used to prevent HIV from being passed on?

A: To prevent HIV being passed on, the following methods can be used:

- **Condoms:** Using condoms when having sex can prevent HIV from being passed on. Condoms have the additional benefit of preventing all other STIs and pregnancy too
- **PEP and PrEP:** PEP can be taken 48 hours after exposure to HIV, for example, when doctors have accidentally stabbed themselves with a needle used on a patient, or in the case of sexual assault. It is prescribed by a GP or in hospital. PrEP is a pill that is taken daily to prevent exposure to HIV. It is not yet routinely available on the NHS – but it is available through a clinical trial.
- **U=U:** U=U means 'Undetectable = Untransmissible'. When someone living with HIV is on treatment and has an undetectable viral load, they can't pass on HIV to their sexual partners.⁴

⁴ For more information on U=U, see <http://i-base.info/htb/32308>

- **Clean needles:** Clean needles are distributed to people who inject drugs to prevent sharing of needles.

Top tip

You might want to mention here where students can access free condoms in your local area (e.g. available from the school nurse, young people's sexual health clinic, etc.) If you're not sure, you can find this information at <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/Sexual-health-services-for-young-people/LocationSearch/735>

Slide 10: Getting tested for HIV

People find out if they have HIV by getting tested for it. An HIV test is usually taken by a finger-prick test. You can get an HIV test at your doctor's or at a sexual health clinic.

If you start having sex, it's important to get tested regularly so you know your status. Do you remember the 1 in 12 people who don't know they have HIV from the previous slide? This is a problem because if someone has HIV, the longer it's left untreated the more ill they can become.

Top tip

You might want to mention here where students can go for an HIV test in your local area. You can find this information at <https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/HIV-testing/LocationSearch/418>

Slide 11: HIV treatment

It's important that people diagnosed with HIV get treated for it. Although we don't have a cure for HIV yet, treatment is so good that most people living with HIV only need to take one pill a day, and they can expect to live a long and healthy life if they're diagnosed in good time. All the people in this picture are living with HIV – and they look pretty happy and healthy don't they?

As I've already mentioned, the other benefit of treatment is that it suppresses HIV so that the person so they can't pass it on to their sexual partners. 96% of people living with HIV who are on treatment in the UK can't pass it on.⁵

⁵ Brown AE, Kirwan PD, Chau C, Khawam J, Gill ON, Delpech VC. Towards elimination of HIV transmission, AIDS and HIV-related deaths in the UK – 2017 report. November 2017, Public Health England, London. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hiv-in-the-united-kingdom>

Section 3: Living with HIV

Speaker's notes

Slides 12-14 give students an insight into the impact that HIV stigma has on people living with HIV. Mary's story is a true account from a woman living with HIV in London. Her story shows that HIV stigma can have on people's experiences of dating and what they tell their family about their condition. Her story also shows how valuable supportive friendships and services are in helping people living with HIV manage their condition. The statistics provided on slide 12 are from the Positive Voices survey, conducted by Public Health England with 4000 people living with HIV from across the UK.

Slide 12: Living with HIV

Although we now have great treatment and people living with HIV can live long and healthy lives, they still experience HIV stigma.

When people living with HIV are judged and treated badly because of prejudice and assumptions about HIV, we call this 'HIV stigma'.

Stigma persists because many people don't understand the reality of HIV and are scared of it.

But people living with HIV deserve our respect and dignity, just like anyone else.

Slide 13: Living with HIV

This is Mary. She is 45 years old and lives in London. This is Mary's story⁶:

I discovered I was positive when I went for a routine test at a charity I wanted to volunteer for. I was devastated. I had the courage to call two friends of mine and one told me she herself was positive. My friends were such a source of support for me during this hard time; another took me for a confirmation test and helped me register with an HIV clinic, all along offering kindness and support.

After my diagnosis, I stopped looking for a relationship because I feared the stigma and discrimination I would face. After about 6 years, I went to a party and met a nice guy that I fancied. I was torn between letting him go or letting him know.

I sent him a message informing him about my status – at first, he thought I was lying. But once I told him it was true, he told me he still wanted me regardless of my status and we dated for over 5 years. I was undetectable for the entire time we were together and was taught at the clinic that there is not risk of HIV transmission if I am undetectable (U=U). He knew that I had an undetectable viral load and never showed any fear of getting infected. Even though we are no longer dating, he has always been supportive.

After we separated, I met another guy, but sadly my HIV status was not as well received this time. This new guy and I were never intimate, we never even kissed or held hands, yet when I

⁶ Account extracted from <https://changingperceptions.co.uk/mary%2C-aged-45>

told him about my status, he was furious I didn't tell him sooner and he never contacted me again. I never told any member of my family and I don't intend to in the near future, not because they will discriminate or stigmatise me, but because they will feel sorry for me and think I will die soon. People are still living in the dark about HIV and don't realise that people living with HIV can live a happy and healthy life.

Slide 14: Living with HIV

People living with HIV are often concerned about other's responses to hearing about their HIV status. In 2018, 1 in 8 people living with HIV said they had not shared their HIV status with anyone other than healthcare professionals.⁷ While some simply may not feel the need to talk to others about HIV, for others this could contribute to significant loneliness and isolation, especially if it is a barrier to forming relationships with others. 1 in 5 people living with HIV said that they needed help with loneliness and isolation in the past year.⁸

Even in the NHS, HIV stigma still exists. One in 3 people living with HIV have been worried that they would be treated differently to other patients.⁹ One in 10 people living with HIV in the UK have been refused healthcare or delayed a treatment because of their HIV status.¹⁰

⁷ Public Health England, NAT, Positively UK and Watipa, *Changing Perceptions: Talking about HIV and attitudes*, November 2018. Available from: <https://changingperceptions.co.uk/attitudes-towards-hiv>

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ *ibid.*

Section 4: What can you do?

Speaker's notes

NAT's World AIDS Day campaign for 2019 is 'Rock the Ribbon Together' and we want to give young people the opportunity to contribute to reducing HIV stigma whilst wearing their ribbon with pride. We hope you will actively encourage pupils to do more to understand HIV, raise awareness and raise money for World AIDS Day.

Slide 15: What can you do?

We can all do our bit to tackle HIV stigma and support people living with HIV.

#RocktheRibbon

The 2019 World AIDS Day campaign is 'Rock the Ribbon Together'.¹¹ We are encouraging everybody to wear their red ribbon with pride, show support for people living with HIV and tackle the life-changing stigma and discrimination that people can face.

Top tip

If you order ribbons from us in advance, you could ask students if they would like to purchase a ribbon as they leave the assembly or during their lunch break. You can order red ribbons for free [here](#).

Challenge HIV stigma

You can also challenge HIV stigma with the key facts you've learned today. If you hear someone saying stigmatising things about HIV, challenge them yourselves or tell an adult. Tell your friends and parents about this assembly and what you have learned. You can learn more HIV facts at www.nat.org.uk

Treat people living with HIV with respect

If someone tells you they have HIV, don't tell anyone else without their permission. Be supportive, respect their confidentiality and treat them like you would treat anyone else.

Organise a fundraiser for an HIV organisation

Organise an event at your school or in your community to raise much-needed funds for HIV organisations in your local area or national organisations like NAT. We've got a list of great ideas for fundraising events at <http://www.worldaidsday.org/fundraising>

Slide 14: Summary

These are the key messages we would like students to take away from this assembly.

- HIV is a virus that attacks the body's immune system. It is not the same as AIDS.

¹¹ See www.worldaidsday.org for more information.

- With effective medication, people living with HIV can't pass on the virus and can live as long as anyone else.
- HIV stigma can make life difficult for people living with HIV.
- You can support World AIDS day by wearing a red ribbon, keeping yourself and others informed about HIV and treating people living with HIV with respect.

Remember:

There may be pupils at your school living with HIV through vertical transmission or who have a family member living with HIV. Please treat the topics covered in the assembly sensitively. There is further information on how to handle teaching about HIV in the FAQs section of our schools pack - <https://www.nat.org.uk/teachers-resources>

For more information about the work of NAT please visit our website or email info@nat.org.uk with your enquiries.

Feedback:

Thank you for choosing to use NAT's WAD assembly – we would greatly appreciate any feedback you are able to give via our quick [online survey](#) or by emailing info@nat.org.uk.

Did your school use the assembly? Let us know via your school's twitter account by mentioning @NAT_AIDS_Trust

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

We have also produced [a timeline of HIV](#) that can be used alongside the assembly, which will help pupils better understand the development of the HIV epidemic and be aware of key milestones over the past decades. You may want to print and display the timeline at your school for WAD or encourage form tutors to go through the timeline during a PSHE lesson, for example.

You can also download our WAD 2019 and Key HIV Facts posters (easy read version available) from the [World AIDS Day website](#) for displaying in your classroom.