

Notes for teachers: Case study 1 - Matty

Below are some of the points that pupils should be able to identify and respond to:

- Matty is a young **man who is attracted to men**. Pupils should be able to recognise this and talk about the associated issues: fear of coming out, LGBT prejudice from friends, and bullying. They may also highlight that men who have sex with men have an increased risk of HIV, and that he has a lack of information about sex and HIV. Pupils should be encouraged to be reassuring to Matty.
- **Myth:** you cannot catch HIV by sitting in the chair of someone who has the virus. Pupils should be able to spot this by remembering that **HIV can't be passed onto someone through touching or everyday interaction**.
- **The rumour that a pupil has HIV because he is gay is unfounded.** It is wrong to assume that someone has HIV because they are gay. Even if pupils know these assumptions are untrue but say them as a joke, you can stress that such statements are wrong, further reinforce homophobic attitudes and the stigma around HIV.
- Matty 'wonders if he will get HIV and maybe die because he's gay'. It's important that pupils recognise that although men who have sex with men are disproportionately affected by HIV, **it is not exclusively a 'gay virus'** and can affect anyone who puts themselves at risk. Being gay also does not mean that Matty will get HIV – Matty can protect himself from HIV by using condoms. HIV is a long term condition and in the UK anyone diagnosed with HIV has access to medication which would mean they can have a normal life expectancy.
- **Matty doesn't find the information he's had about sex helpful** as it doesn't talk about sex between men. The associated problems are that:
 - He doesn't understand how sex works between two men and how safer sex works or if it's relevant to him. Lack of knowledge could have a negative impact on his future sexual relationships and may expose him to risk-taking behaviours such as sex without a condom, putting him at risk of HIV.
 - He is nervous about asking anyone at school about sex in case someone starts a rumour and he doesn't feel comfortable bringing sex up with parents. Despite this he still has questions and worries which go unanswered.
- Matty hopes whoever he has sex with in the future will know what they're doing and will lead the way. However, it may be that **his future sexual partner could also be uninformed or prefers to have sex without a condom**, both of which may put him at risk. It is better that Matty is informed for himself so that he can make informed choices in the future and can think about the type of sex he wants to have and will enjoy.
- There are lots of sources of useful information for Matty and other pupils. You might want to mention a couple of them. For example:
NHS Choices: <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Sexandyoungpeople/Pages/Amlgay.aspx>
Stonewall does a lot of work with schools and has useful advice for young LGBT people: <http://www.youngstonewall.org.uk/get-support/health-and-wellbeing>
- If your school teaches SRE and you want more information on how to make it inclusive you can look at [Sex and Relationships Education for the 21st Century](#).

Note for teachers: Case study 2 - Eunice

Below are the main points that pupils should be able to identify and respond to:

- **Eunice is an asylum seeker** who has HIV. Pupils are likely to highlight the traumatic events that she went through in her home country. They may be **shocked by the way she was treated**.
- Eunice has travelled to the UK to escape the way she is treated in her home country, **she does not know she has HIV until she is in the UK**.
- Eunice falls very unwell when she arrives in the UK – this shows the **importance of getting tested for HIV and knowing your status early**, to avoid any health complications.
- Eunice is worried about getting AIDS and dying – pupils should remember the **fact that by going on to treatment early and keeping to her medication she can remain healthy and have a normal life expectancy**. She will be able to access free treatment in the UK.
- **Myth:** Eunice is also worried that she won't be able to have children in the future – however, this is not true. With access to HIV treatment through pregnancy and birth **the vast majority of children who are born to HIV positive mothers do not have HIV themselves**. In the UK today there is less than a 1% chance of an HIV positive mother passing HIV on to her child if the right steps are taken. Pupils may want to reassure Eunice of this.
- Another issue is that Eunice is scared other people within her community will find out that she has HIV and will shun her. Pupils should be able to recognise that stigma is an important issue and talk about the **impact that stigma and discrimination might have**.
- Pupils might want to think about whether there is **something that can be done to promote understanding and challenge stigma** within Eunice's community.
- She is also worried about her family in her home country finding out about her HIV status. They might have some of the misconceptions that she has about HIV when she was first diagnosed and this could be very distressing for them. Pupils might want to think about why she might not want to tell them and how she might be able to reassure them if they did find out.
- Pupils should be able to identify that Eunice starting treatment is a positive development – pupils may want to suggest that it is **important that Eunice keeps taking her treatment**.
- Eunice needs more information and the support group mentioned by her nurse might be able to provide this. Some students might encourage Eunice to attend the group in order to meet other people living with HIV and to help her to cope with some of the worries she has.

Note for teachers: Case study 3 - Simon

Below are the main points that pupils should be able to identify and respond to:

- Simon is someone living with HIV who is **experiencing stigma and discrimination**.
- Pupils should be able to highlight that Simon has suffered **side-effects from his HIV medication** and recognise that this might have an impact on keeping his condition confidential at work.
- The main issue pupils should notice is the **unfair treatment Simon receives** after disclosing his HIV status:
 - It was wrong of his colleague to tell someone at work that he has HIV when Simon told them in confidence.
 - It was wrong for Simon's managers to say that he should have told them his HIV status – it is not required or necessary. Pupils might want to reassure Simon that he said the right thing to them and didn't need to let his managers know.
 - **Myth:** Simon's managers are wrong to suggest that he would be putting his colleagues at risk of getting HIV. Pupils should remember that **you cannot get HIV through everyday interaction**.
 - The fact that he is being given less important clients is unjust, as having HIV has had no impact on his ability to do his job.
 - It was wrong for his managers to suggest that he is no longer suited to the role. There is no reason why Simon cannot perform his role and this is discrimination. Simon is likely to be in very good health now that he is on medication and is 'feeling great'.
 - Simon could consider taking this further if he wants to and may even wish to seek legal advice. It is illegal to discriminate against a person because they are HIV positive (covered by the Equality Act 2010).
- Pupils could highlight the fact that apart from serving on the front-line in the armed forces, **people living with HIV can do any job**.
- Pupils may want to consider the impact of **stigma**. Why do his managers react so strongly when they know he has HIV? Why might they think Simon should not be working there anymore and why would they worry about giving him important clients?
- In terms of resolving the issue, pupils could think about whether there was **enough awareness of HIV at Simon's workplace**. They can think about ways that his managers could have been supportive.
- In the case study it states that he is looking for a new job. Pupils may wish to consider how this experience might affect how Simon manages his HIV at work in the future.