Countries around the world, including the UK, have pledged to eliminate HIV stigma by 2020. Schools can contribute to these efforts by providing information on HIV and adopting participatory learning approaches that can help students to identify and challenge HIV stigma. Teaching that HIV stigma can manifest at the individual, community and societal level enables students to recognise the multifaceted nature of discrimination and how they, as active citizens, can oppose and reduce HIV stigma.

**TAKING ACTION ON HIV**

**KEY LEARNING AIMS**

- Understand the unacceptability of HIV stigma and discrimination
- Learn the history of HIV activism and recognise their role as active citizens in countering HIV stigma and discrimination
- Recognise the need to challenge stigma and discrimination and know of ways to safely do this when they witness or experience it in their own lives.

**RESOURCES AND LINKS:**

- NAT HIV Activists Network
- HIV Conversations is a website featuring conversations with people living or working with HIV - all of whom work in different ways to improve the lives of people living with HIV
- Youth Stop AIDS are a youth-led movement campaigning for a world without AIDS
- Equality and Human Rights Commission ‘Champions’ – this video features young people who are working with the Commission as equality and human rights champions, pledging to take action to tackle discrimination.

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**Lesson Plan #3**

**TAKING ACTION ON HIV STIGMA**

Lesson plan #3: Taking action on HIV stigma.

**Resources and Links:**

- NAT HIV Activists Network
- HIV Conversations is a website featuring conversations with people living or working with HIV - all of whom work in different ways to improve the lives of people living with HIV
- Youth Stop AIDS are a youth-led movement campaigning for a world without AIDS
- Equality and Human Rights Commission ‘Champions’ – this video features young people who are working with the Commission as equality and human rights champions, pledging to take action to tackle discrimination.
KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS

Write the lesson objectives on the board (without ALL, MOST, SOME) so you can refer to them later:

- **ALL** students will be able to: recognise how other forms of stigma and discrimination, such as homophobia and racism, have influenced attitudes towards people living with HIV.
- **MOST** students will be able to: explain the role of activism in changing attitudes towards people living with HIV within society at large.
- **SOME** students will be able to: act upon this knowledge by engaging in their own HIV activism.

EQUIPMENT

- Video screening equipment
- Print outs of HIV timeline cards (one per group of 4 students)
- Flipchart paper and pens.

TEACHER’S NOTES

- Ensure you have ground rules set up with the class.
- Familiarise yourself with the FAQs on HIV provided in this pack. You can use these as a reference during class in case you’re asked a question that you’re not sure about.
- Be mindful of the possibility that you may have a student living with or affected by HIV in your classroom.
- The aim of this lesson is to enable students to become active citizens in challenging HIV stigma and discrimination.
- Consider including the before/after assessment/evaluation activity.
ACTIVITIES

STARTER

 Aktivity 1: Video Discussion (15-20 MINS)

1. Explain that you are going to be discussing how we, as individuals, can make a difference in the fight against HIV. HIV has a long history of activism, and the following videos give a taste of what that activism has looked like and why it has taken place.

2. Ask students to consider the following questions whilst watching the videos:
   - How do you think people felt at the time when HIV first appeared in the US?
   - Why do you think the US government was so slow to respond to the HIV epidemic?
   - What different tactics can you see the activists using?
   - What impact do you think the activism featured in these videos has had?
   - How do you think activism might have changed since the 1980s?
   - How did the videos make you feel?

3. Play the following videos to the class (they are both around 2 mins long):
   - a. The first is a trailer to the documentary ‘United in Anger’, which highlights the work of activist group ACT UP who demanded access to HIV treatments and protested the inaction of government and pharmaceutical companies in the 1980s and 90s. You can access the video here.
   - b. The second is a clip which showcases the campaign for PrEP by NAT alongside other activists when the NHS refused to fund the drug. This video demonstrates that there are still barriers to ending the HIV epidemic and activism is necessary to overcome these. You can access the video here.

4. Once you have watched the videos, lead a discussion with the class based on the questions posed above.
Activity 2: Timeline sort (10-15 mins)

1. Put students into groups of up to four. Give each group a copy of the HIV timeline in the accompanying handout. If you have time, print them onto card, cut them up and keep each set separate. If you don’t have time to cut them out, just give each group a copy to use as a handout.

2. Explain that each card represents an event in the history of HIV, but the cards aren’t in the right order. The students need to consider what is happening on each card and when they think it may have taken place. Ask them to note a possible year of occurrence on each of their cards.

3. Give them 5 minutes to sort the cards into the right order. You can then ask students to share the order in which they’ve placed cards on the timeline (either by asking a student to come to the front of the class and put them in order by blu-tacking them to the whiteboard, or by doing this yourself and asking students where each card should go).

4. You can then share the correct order (below). You can surprise students with the ‘Yet to happen’ events, emphasising the ongoing need for action on HIV and HIV stigma.

1982 – Within the UK over 100 people are diagnosed with AIDS and scientists identify the virus which will later become known as HIV.

1987 – ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) protests are held across the USA in response to the high cost of HIV treatment.

1987 – Princess Diana opens the first HIV ward in a UK hospital and is pictured holding hands with a man living with HIV.

1991 – The red ribbon is chosen as the symbol of HIV awareness.

1993 – A giant pink condom is placed on the Luxor Obelisk in Paris to raise HIV awareness.

Teacher’s notes

The discussion should highlight that the slow response to the HIV epidemic was largely due to who HIV predominantly affected - gay and bisexual men, black Africans and people who inject drugs - people who are already marginalised in society. Discuss how historical, cultural and religious attitudes towards sex and LGBT people influenced the response to the HIV epidemic and enabled stigma to flourish.

Consider how these attitudes persist today and may have influenced the controversy around PrEP. Students may also highlight how the current economic climate and public service cuts have influenced funding decisions by the Government and the NHS.

HIV activists have used a range of tactics to achieve their goals. ACT UP used protest, direct action (such as ‘die-ins’, roadblocks and banner drops) and taught themselves about the latest scientific developments around HIV so they could challenge pharmaceutical companies and the medical community. In the fight for PrEP, activists bought PrEP online and doctors supported them to take it safely, NAT took the NHS to court, and people protested in the streets. Changes in technology have influenced how activism is carried out, with many HIV activists utilising social media to call for PrEP on the NHS and challenge HIV stigma.

HIV activists have played a crucial role in holding governments to account over their response to the HIV epidemic. The work of ACT UP and other activists in the 1980s and 1990s meant that people knew how they could protect themselves from acquiring HIV, those living with HIV could access treatments more quickly, and they knew about the latest developments in treatment and testing. This work continues today with activists and patient advocates working alongside clinicians and NGOs to promote the best possible care for people living with HIV and the elimination of HIV acquisition.
2010 – The Equality Act is passed and gives further legal protection against discrimination for people living with HIV.

2016 – The National AIDS Trust successfully challenges NHS England in the courts, overturning their decision not to consider providing the HIV prevention pill, PrEP.

2017 – For the first time, London clinics report a drop in new cases of HIV. The success is put down to increases in testing and treatment and people buying PrEP online.

Yet to happen – New HIV treatment options are developed so people living with HIV don’t have to take medication every day.

Yet to happen – HIV transmission is eliminated in the UK.

**ACTIVITY 3: ACTIONS AGAINST HIV STIGMA (20-25 MINS)**

1. Place three large pieces of flipchart paper around the classroom (either stuck on the wall or on different tables). One should have ‘What can you do?’ written at the top, the next ‘What can you ask your community to do? E.g. churches, schools, local businesses’, and the third ‘What can you ask your government to do?’
2. Still in their groups, ask students to go to each piece of paper in turn and answer the question at the top of the paper by writing at least one thing that could be done to take action on HIV and HIV stigma.
3. Make sure groups spend an equal amount of time at each sheet of paper. At first, they might struggle to come up with ideas so give them some prompts:
   - Teaching their friends and parents about HIV
   - Using social media to educate others
   - Challenging HIV stigma when they see it in person or online
   - Creating a campaign or fundraising activity for World AIDS Day
   - Supporting local HIV organisations by fundraising or volunteering
   - Asking their school to become an ‘HIV-Friendly School’
   - Writing to their MP about the need to address HIV stigma and discrimination
   - Signing online petitions about HIV related issues
   - Going on a protest
   - Joining in hashtag campaigns against HIV stigma – you can suggest they go away and research #LetsEndIt, #ItsAintOver, etc.
   - Challenge other forms of prejudice linked to HIV stigma, like homophobia and racism, when they come across it
   - You can also find other ideas and national days of action in the ‘Get Involved!’ section of the pack.

HIV activism over the years has stood out because of its creativity. You can inspire students by sharing with them examples of [ACT UP posters](#), the work of artist [Keith Haring](#), the [AIDS memorial quilt](#), amongst many others. It’s easy to find images online, and you might even be able to find an exhibition of HIV activist art which you could visit on a school trip.
PLENARY

**Activity 4: Becoming an HIV Activist (10 mins)**

1. Display the flipchart paper in front of the class and ask students to read out the actions they have suggested.
2. Ask the students to each choose their favourite action from the three sheets of paper that they think they would like to do as an individual, for their community and government.
3. In groups of four, students should then discuss the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and obstacles for each action (see diagram below for how they can record this discussion for each action). Each group should then vote on which action they should take forward.
4. Encourage students to share the actions they have voted for and the key points from their discussion with the rest of the class.

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ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION IDEAS

ASSESSMENT:
Ask the students to complete the following sentence: ‘If someone asked my advice on how to take action on HIV and HIV stigma, I would tell them…’

EVALUATION:4
Create a diagram or poster of a scale from 1-10. Ask students to rate their experience of the lesson by placing different coloured stickers on the scale. For example, they could rate how likely they are to take action on HIV and HIV stigma as a result of the lesson. You could also ask them to do the same at the beginning of the lesson, and then see if they feel differently at the end of the lesson.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Ask students to research and write a profile on an HIV activist or activist group who has achieved change at the individual, community or societal level. You could let them choose anyone they want or suggest the activists below and ask them to choose one:

   ▶ Mercy Ngulube
   ▶ ACT UP
   ▶ Sir Elton John
   ▶ Prudence Nobantu Mabele
   ▶ Treatment Action Campaign
   ▶ Marsha P Johnson
   ▶ Magic Johnson
   ▶ Diana, Princess of Wales
   ▶ Annie Lennox
   ▶ NAT (National AIDS Trust)
   ▶ Keith Haring
   ▶ Elizabeth Taylor

2. If students identify a campaign or activity they would like to do to take action on HIV stigma, encourage them and provide support to facilitate this. For example, you could help them to write to their MP, speak to the school governors or present an assembly to the wider school.

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4 With thanks to Alice Hoyle and Esther McGeeney for allowing us to adapt this activity from their forthcoming book Great Relationship and Sex Education (2019).