

# YouthLens

on Reproductive Health  
and HIV/AIDS

## Resources for Adolescents Living with HIV

Before the widespread availability of antiretroviral therapy (ART) and the development of easy-to-use pediatric drug formulations, many children infected with HIV did not live to adolescence. Today, thanks to widespread HIV care and treatment programs and the availability of services and commodities targeting children, many perinatally infected adolescents are living healthy and productive lives. The same is true for those who are infected as adolescents – young people ages 10 to 19. However, for these adolescents, learning their HIV status is a crucial first step in accessing appropriate services.

According to statistics from the United Nations Children’s Fund and partners, about 2.1 million adolescents were living with HIV at the end of 2012, with approximately two-thirds of new infections being among girls.<sup>1</sup> Many more adolescents may be living with HIV and not yet know. For example, in most African countries, less than 12 percent of youth under age 20 have ever been tested for HIV.<sup>2</sup>

Perinatally infected adolescents and those infected at an older age share the challenges of puberty and developing their sexual identities.<sup>3</sup> As with other adolescents, their bodies are changing and they begin to explore their sexuality. They may be interested in having relationships, and may even want to have children of their own someday. They also face challenges unique to adolescents living with HIV (ALHIV), such as stigma and other barriers to disclosing their HIV status and adhering to ART.

However, not all ALHIV have the information and support they need to address these challenges, which may manifest in different ways depending on when a particular adolescent was infected.

Recent research among 32 ALHIV in Zambia showed that 21 percent of the adolescents had already had sex and that unprotected sex was common. More than 70 percent of the ALHIV said they wanted more information about family planning, and even more said they wanted to know about how to avoid transmission of HIV to a sexual partner. The data also showed that many adolescents were not disclosing their HIV status because of fear of stigma or rejection.<sup>4</sup>

In a small study among perinatally infected ALHIV in Tanzania, some of the adolescents were so worried and fearful about sexual relationships, disclosing their HIV status and transmitting the virus to others that they actually avoided relationships altogether. Their caregivers and home-based care workers, who were also not well informed, reinforced these negative views of sex.<sup>5</sup>

The following resources have become available in the past few years to support communities and health care providers in meeting the unique physical, social and psychosocial needs – including sexual and reproductive health – of ALHIV. By addressing these comprehensive needs, the resources can help ALHIV live positively from adolescence to the time they reach adulthood.





## General Resources

### ***Adolescents Living with HIV (ALHIV) Toolkit***

<http://www.k4health.org/toolkits/alhiv>

This electronic toolkit contains resources to help policymakers, program managers, community health workers, peer educators, communications professionals and trainers improve HIV care and treatment, HIV prevention, and family planning services for ALHIV. Adherence to ART, disclosure of HIV status, human rights of ALHIV, and the transition from adolescent care to adult care are among the many topics covered. The toolkit is managed by the Knowledge for Health (K4Health) project, led by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's Center for Communication Programs. It was created under the Africa's Health in 2010 project, with leadership from the former Academy for Educational Development (AED) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and is regularly updated by a variety of organizations.

### ***HIV and Adolescents: Guidance for HIV Testing and Counselling and Care for Adolescents Living with HIV***

[http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/94334/1/9789241506168\\_eng.pdf](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/94334/1/9789241506168_eng.pdf)

In response to a lack of global guidance to address the needs of ALHIV, the World Health Organization (WHO) has developed new evidence-based guidelines on HIV counseling and testing and care and treatment for ALHIV. Published in 2013 after a systematic review of the literature and community and expert consultations on these topics, the guidelines contain recommendations to increase access to counseling and testing, improve access to and use of HIV care services, and support adherence to ART. The recommendations touch on a variety of issues including disclosure, provider training, age of consent for services, and the integration of HIV care into other health services.

## HIV Counseling and Testing

### ***HIV Counseling and Testing for Youth: A Manual for Providers***

#### ***Training Guide for HIV Counseling and Testing for Youth: A Manual for Providers***

<http://www.fhi360.org/resource/hiv-counseling-and-testing-youth-manual-providers-and-manual-trainers>

FHI 360 developed *HIV Counseling and Testing for Youth: A Manual for Providers* to share best practices for integrating HIV counseling and testing with other reproductive health services for youth and adolescents. The accompanying training guide was subsequently developed by FHI 360, Population Services International and the International Planned Parenthood Federation to train providers to use the manual as a job aid. Information on different models of HIV counseling and testing, key issues to discuss about sexually transmitted infections, and counseling on contraceptive methods for adolescents are included. According to a recent electronic survey and interviews in 15 countries, the manual's impact since its original publication in 2005 has ranged from behavior change at the individual level to changes in national policies.<sup>6</sup>

## HIV Care and Treatment

### ***Adolescent HIV Care and Treatment: A Training Curriculum for Health Workers***

<http://icap.columbia.edu/resources/detail/adolescent-hiv-care-and-treatment>

Published in 2012 by ICAP at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, this 16-module training curriculum for health workers addresses the comprehensive health care needs of ALHIV. Clinical presentations of HIV and HIV-related conditions, treatment with antiretroviral drugs and other medications, sexual and reproductive health, family planning, prevention of maternal-to-child transmission (PMTCT), and psychological care are

all covered. The curriculum comes with modules for both trainers and trainees and is intended to be adapted as needed at the country, state or provincial, district, and facility levels.

***Improving Adolescent HIV Treatment, Care, Prevention and Family Planning Services: Technical Brief***

[http://aidstarone.com/sites/default/files/ALHIV%20techbrief%202012July10\\_AFR%20bureau.pdf](http://aidstarone.com/sites/default/files/ALHIV%20techbrief%202012July10_AFR%20bureau.pdf)

This 21-page technical brief, published in 2012 under the Africa's Health in 2010 project, summarizes the findings of a multi-country assessment of the needs of ALHIV in sub-Saharan Africa. Program managers and service providers who work with ALHIV can use the information in the technical brief to create a more supportive environment for these adolescents. Through a literature review and interviews with key informants, the assessment investigated the major challenges and successful approaches for supporting ALHIV. The major themes that emerged included access and availability of antiretroviral drugs, nutritional care, psychological support, social support, transition to adult care, and sexual and reproductive health.

***Psychosocial Aspects of HIV/AIDS: Children and Adolescents***

[http://www.aidsdatahub.org/dmdocuments/Psychosocial\\_Aspects\\_of\\_HIVAIDS\\_Children\\_&Adolescents.pdf.pdf](http://www.aidsdatahub.org/dmdocuments/Psychosocial_Aspects_of_HIVAIDS_Children_&Adolescents.pdf.pdf)

The fourth edition of the Baylor International Pediatric AIDS Initiative's (BIPAI's) *HIV Curriculum for the Health Professional* includes this module on the psychosocial aspects of HIV/AIDS for children and adolescents. The 15-page module, which is the third-to-last module after you click on the link above, touches on stigma and discrimination, issues of death and bereavement, and psychosocial and behavioral factors that could put ALHIV at increased risk of transmitting HIV.

***BIPAI Malawi Teen Club Curriculum***

<http://www.k4health.org/toolkits/alhiv/bipai-malawi-teen-club-life-skills-curriculum>

BIPAI has created a network of teen clubs – peer-support and information-sharing groups for teenagers – in Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Uganda,

**POSITIVE CONNECTIONS**

In October 2013, FHI 360, on behalf of the Interagency Youth Working Group, launched *Positive Connections* – the first global guide of its kind for adult facilitators of information and support groups for ALHIV. Despite the relative abundance of HIV care and treatment programs for people living with HIV, long-term supportive counseling for adolescents in particular has been lacking.

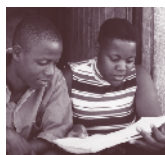
This 194-page guide provides the essential information and support adolescents need as they transition from HIV counseling and testing to HIV care and treatment, and as they transition from childhood to young adulthood. The following topics are covered through group sessions that adults can conduct among ALHIV:

- Understanding HIV
- Disclosure and developing trust in relationships
- Treatment and adherence
- Nutrition and health
- Growing and changing
- Sex and relationships
- Pregnancy planning and prevention
- Sexual health and positive prevention
- Violence and HIV
- Communication and problem-solving skills
- Exploring your feelings
- Handling stigma and discrimination
- Making decisions and planning for the future
- Support networks and next steps

Also included in the guide is information that facilitators will need to know about the needs of ALHIV, a review of counseling and facilitation skills, considerations for starting a new information and support group, and ideas on how the success of a group can be tracked.

Cobranded by WHO, the guide was developed with the help of experts from many organizations including USAID, the United Nations Children's Fund, WHO, and the Botswana-Baylor Children's Clinical Centre of Excellence.

*Positive Connections* is available on the Interagency Youth Working Group website at <http://www.iywg.org/resources/positive-connections-leading-information-and-support-groups-adolescents-living-hiv>. Hard copies maybe ordered by writing to [youthwg@fhi360.org](mailto:youthwg@fhi360.org).



Swaziland and Tanzania. As part of this initiative, the BIPAI Malawi Teen Club Program created this curriculum to help health care workers and community groups guide teen club sessions for ALHIV. Both the content and activities included in the curriculum focus on topics of sexual and reproductive health, adherence to ART, disclosure, stigma and discrimination, nutrition and life skills. Information on how to set up a teen club is also included.

## **Transitioning to Adult Care**

### ***Transitioning of Care, Support, and Treatment Services for Adolescents Living with HIV***

[http://www.aidstar-one.com/focus\\_areas/care\\_and\\_support/resources/technical\\_consultation\\_materials/adolescent\\_transition](http://www.aidstar-one.com/focus_areas/care_and_support/resources/technical_consultation_materials/adolescent_transition)

In February 2012, the USAID Africa Bureau and the PMTCT/Pediatric Technical Working Group of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) hosted a regional consultation in Botswana. Meeting participants highlighted programs in eight African countries that are responding to the needs of ALHIV and discussed how to best care for perinatally infected individuals who have survived to adolescence and adulthood. Presentations from the meeting, a final meeting report, and a related technical brief are available at the link above. The technical brief, which was developed by AIDS Support and Technical Assistance Resources (AIDSTAR)-One as part of the consultation, provides guidance for developing services for ALHIV as they transition from adolescent to adult care.

### ***Toolkit for Transition of Care and Other Services for Adolescents Living with HIV***

[http://www.aidstar-one.com/resources/tools\\_and\\_curricula/alhiv\\_toolkit](http://www.aidstar-one.com/resources/tools_and_curricula/alhiv_toolkit)

AIDSTAR-One has released an updated version of the *Toolkit for Transition of Care and Other Services for Adolescents Living with HIV* to help

adolescents, families and caregivers during the transition from adolescent to adult care. The updates include training on how to use the toolkit and more adolescent-friendly graphics to help adolescents better understand the tools. The updates are based on an evaluation of a pilot program to test the utility of the toolkit in Kenya, which showed that the toolkit's modules on sexual and reproductive health, clinical considerations, and psychosocial development were among the most useful.<sup>7</sup>

## **Resources for Adolescents**

### ***Teen Talk: A Guide for Positive Living***

[http://www.aidstar-one.com/focus\\_areas/treatment/resources/pediatric\\_disclosure\\_materials/teen\\_talk](http://www.aidstar-one.com/focus_areas/treatment/resources/pediatric_disclosure_materials/teen_talk)

Published in 2013, this version of *Teen Talk: A Guide for Positive Living* was specifically designed for ALHIV in sub-Saharan Africa. The guidebook answers common questions adolescents might have about HIV, ART and adherence, sex, HIV prevention, multiple concurrent partnerships, PMTCT and many more topics related to their health and well-being. It was adapted from a country-specific version of the guidebook published in 2010 by the BIPAI Botswana Teen Club Program and an even earlier version published in the United States. The book is available in Portuguese, Xhosa, and French.

### ***Healthy, Happy and Hot: A Young Person's Guide to Their Rights, Sexuality and Living with HIV***

<http://ippf.org/resource/Healthy-Happy-and-Hot-young-peoples-guide-rights>

Published in 2010 by the International Planned Parenthood Federation, this guide explores the sexual and reproductive health rights of young people, including adolescents, who are living with HIV. Young HIV-positive men, women, transgendered people and individuals who are just discov-

ering their sexual identity can find information in the guide on topics such as sexual pleasure and well-being, safe sex, contraception and family planning, and PMTCT.

***HIV Positive? Thinking about Sex? Read This First!***

<http://www.k4health.org/sites/default/files/Adolescent%20Booklet.PDF>

Updated in 2012 by the Uganda Ministry of Health and partners, this booklet answers frequently asked questions for ALHIV ages 15-19 who are sexually active or thinking about becoming sexually active. Many of the questions are related to preventing HIV transmission during sexual intercourse and disclosing HIV status to friends and sexual partners. The Uganda Ministry of Health has included the booklet in its *National Curriculum for Paediatric HIV Counselling*, and other health workers and leaders of adolescent clubs can also use it to encourage discussion among ALHIV. The booklet is based on the experiences of ALHIV, counselors and pediatricians from the Joint Clinical Research Centre in Uganda, Baylor College of Medicine, and the Uganda Network of Young People Living with HIV/AIDS.

—Kerry Aradhya

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