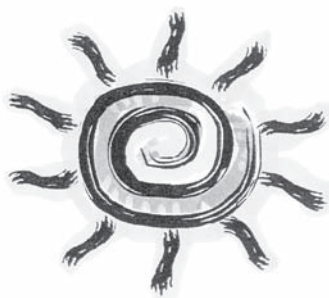
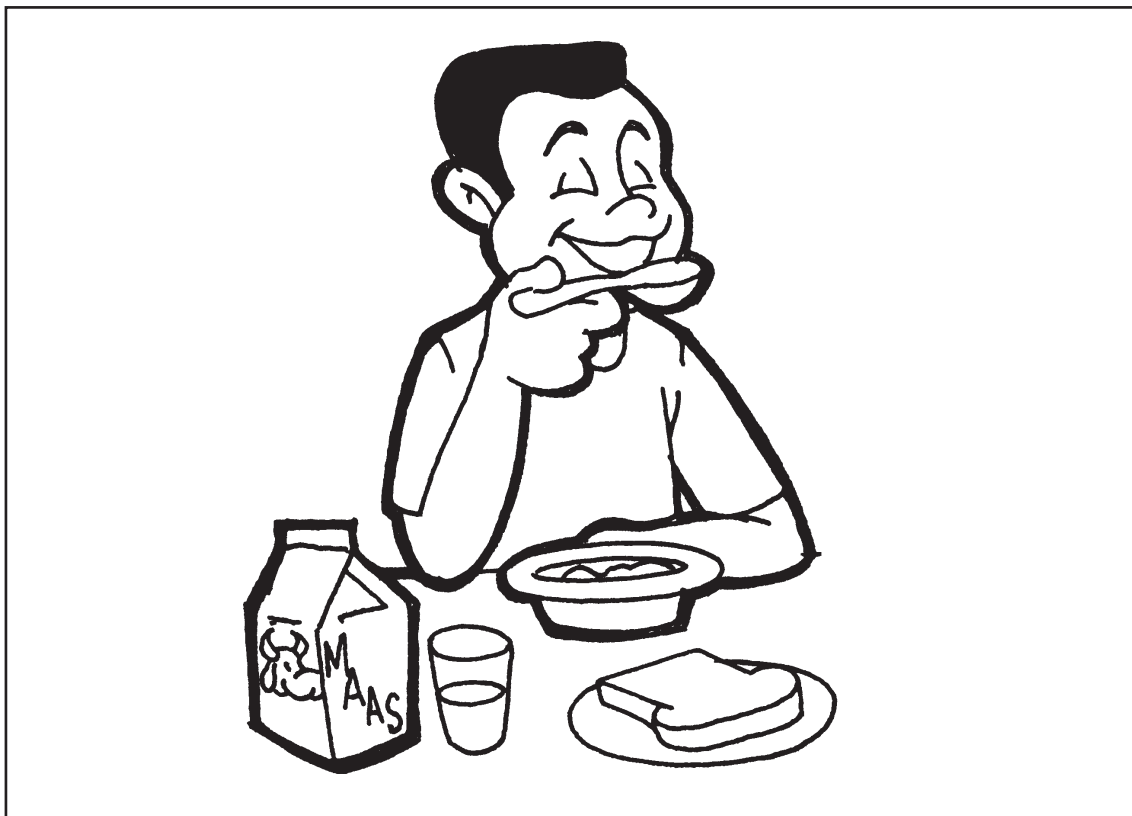


# Hope Is Vital

A Wellness Course



Living Positively  
with HIV and AIDS



Programmes of Hope

ACAT

*The HIV and AIDS Series*

Module 4

# HOPE IS VITAL

## – Living positively with HIV and Aids

### COURSE MAP

### COURSE CONTENT

M1

HIV and AIDS Health and Healing



M2

Christian counselling skills



M3

A biblical approach to health, healing and counselling



M4

Hope Is Vital –  
Living positively with HIV and AIDS.



M5

Bereavement counselling of children

# LIVING POSITIVELY WITH HIV and AIDS

## A WELLNESS COURSE Hope Is Vital

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Hope  
Is  
Vital

Developed by: Programmes of Hope  
Published by: ACAT  
Artist : Butch Stoltz  
DTP : Manoj Sookai and Philippa Dedekind  
First Edition : 2005, 2010

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**AFRICA CO-OPERATIVE ACTION TRUST**

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# INTRODUCTION : LIVING POSITIVELY WITH HIV AND AIDS

## A WELLNESS COURSE

This course is dedicated to every HIV positive person in South Africa.

### Hope Is Vital

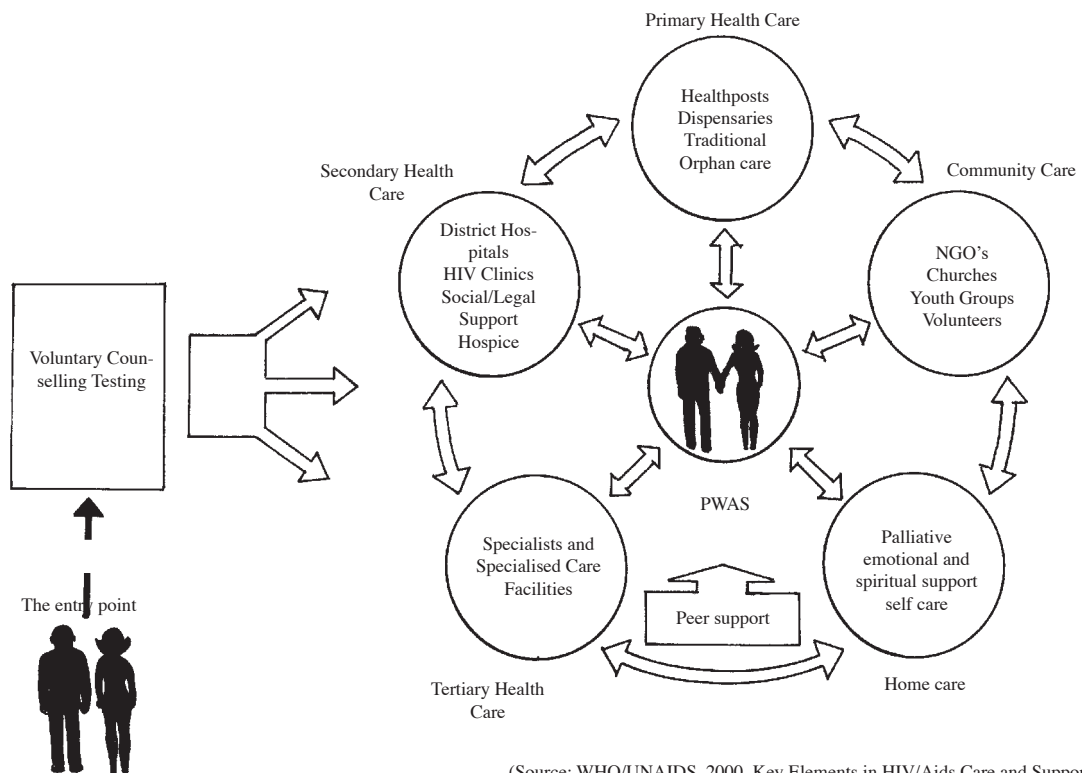
#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Over 5 million people in South Africa are HIV positive. At present only 10 - 20% of these people know what their HIV status is. They are encouraged to find out their status through Voluntary Counselling and Testing. This manual put together by the Programmes of Hope group is intended to help all those people who test HIV positive and those working with them and supporting them, to find a way of living positively with hope for the future.

#### 2. VOLUNTARY COUNSELLING AND TESTING

Voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) is very important to prevent the spread of HIV. VCT should also help HIV positive people to link up with the different kinds of services they need. These services should be linked up to each other to provide a Continuum of Care.

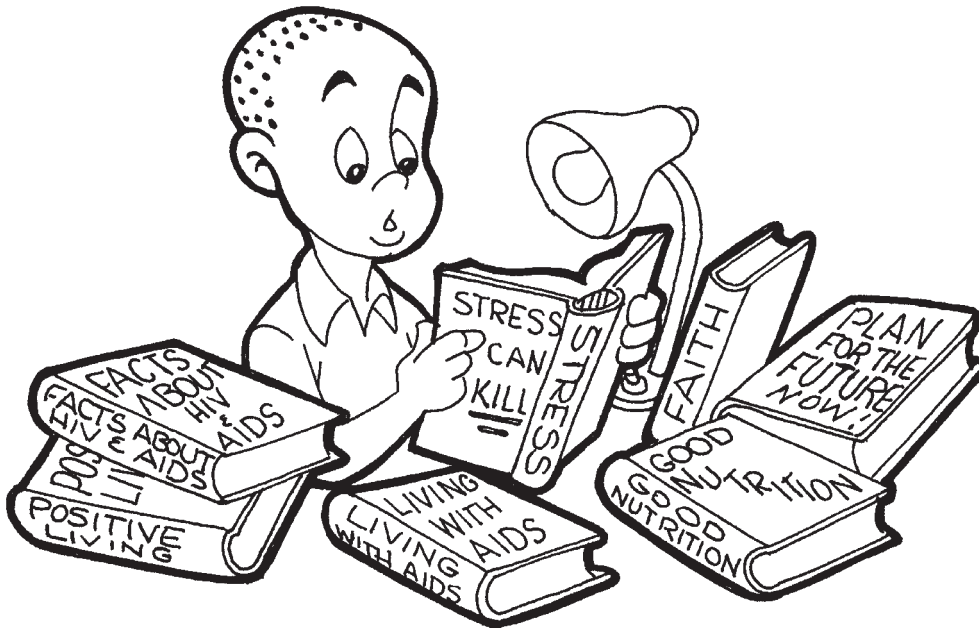
#### The HIV and AIDS Continuum of Care



(Source: WHO/UNAIDS, 2000, Key Elements in HIV/Aids Care and Support.)

## 2.1 HOW DOES KNOWING THEIR HIV STATUS HELP PEOPLE?

- (i) HIV positive people can become aware of Positive Living  
HIV positive people can live a healthy life with HIV. There are many things they can do to stay healthy for a long time. There are many resources in the community that can help them. Everyone should know how to find these resources.



- (ii) The VCT counsellors should provide people with Information  
VCT is an opportunity for everyone to correct wrong ideas about HIV and AIDS and to learn the real facts.
- (iii) Prevents Mother to Child Transmission  
Pregnant women can find out how to protect their babies from getting HIV. The spread of HIV from the mother to the child is called Mother to Child Transmission (MTCT).
- (iv) Stops Stigma and Discrimination  
HIV positive people face stigma and discrimination. If more people know what their own HIV status is and that of their friends and family, they will realize that HIV is something that affects many people in the community.
- (v) Prevents the spread of HIV  
When people have an HIV test it is an opportunity to encourage them to abstain, or to remain faithful to a partner who has also had an HIV test, or to practice safer sex whether they are positive or negative.

*Message of hope*

*I can do all things through him  
who gives me strength  
Phil. 4:13*

## **2.2 DOES KNOWING THAT THEY ARE HIV POSITIVE ALWAYS HELP PEOPLE?**

Learning that you are HIV positive is always a very frightening experience. Although everyone should receive pre- and post-test counselling, they do not always get ongoing support after post-test counselling.

The number of infected people has grown. More VCT and PMTCT programmes have been introduced. Clinics are no longer able to cope. This means that apart from one post-test counselling visit, people who test positive are not always followed up until their appointment at the HIV clinic.

They can go back to their VCT counsellor for ongoing counselling but in practice this seldom happens. In any event, VCT counsellors would not be able to provide ongoing counselling to the large number of people testing positive. Also the needs of HIV positive people are wider than just counselling. They need advice about healthy living, nutrition, social problems and how to access appropriate ongoing medical care and other resources.

Below is the true story of how Musa Njoko found out she was HIV positive. It appeared in the “Children FIRST” journal of June/July 2000. She now co-ordinates an AIDS programme for ESKOM.

### ***Musa Njoko's story : Part One***

*When I went for an HIV test I did not receive any kind of counselling; my doctor only asked me if I knew what it meant to be HIV positive and I answered "it means you are going to die". She said "Good", and she took my blood and told me to come back the following week for the results.*

*During that week when I was waiting for my results, it felt like I was living in a pit of hell, where there is fire all around you. I didn't know where to go. There was so much going through my head and at some stage I thought I was losing it. I was so scared - I did not want to die so young and leave my cute little boy alone.*

*When the doctor gave me my results, she said, "Musa, I'm sorry to tell you that you are HIV positive. Unfortunately, the disease you have has no cure, so you must go home and get your life right with God, as we cannot help you. If you are lucky you will live for the next three months. You must tell your family about your situation."*

### **3. THE HELEN JOSEPH HOSPITAL EXPERIENCE**

The Helen Joseph Hospital HIV clinic was started in 1992. In 2001 it saw 1,837 patients and the number was growing by 80-90 patients a week. The waiting time for a clinic appointment to see the doctor had grown to at least 6 months after diagnosis. 28% of the patients counselled had a CD4 count of less than 50 and died before the first clinic visit.

In response to this, Sister Sue Roberts introduced the concept of Wellness Courses. This is a course consisting of four 2-hour modules dealing with HIV and the immune system, nutrition, stress and disclosure, and planning for the future. Everyone who tests positive at the hospital is offered an opportunity to attend one of these courses, which serves as a bridge between diagnosis and first HIV clinic visit. Contact with the nursing staff at the clinic where the courses are run, help them to assess patients. Sick patients are given earlier clinic visits. Courses are run by trained facilitators, many of whom are HIV positive themselves.

In addition to the health education modules above, other activities have developed around the clinic. A psychologist runs a support group at the clinic. Once a month there is a legal clinic. Various forms of alternative therapy



# PART 1:

## HIV AND AIDS AND THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

**MODULE OUTCOMES: What you want people to learn :**

- to understand HIV and AIDS.
- to understand the immune system.
- to understand the stages of HIV and AIDS, viral load and CD4 count.
- to see positive living as a way of coping with living with HIV.

Nearly everyone now knows that HIV is a virus that infects the body. It makes the immune system, which protects the body from illnesses, weak. People then get illnesses called opportunistic infections. When the immune system is very weak, people get very serious opportunistic infections which are life threatening. They now have AIDS.

The more people know about HIV, AIDS and the immune system, the more likely they are to do the things they need to keep their immune systems strong. At first it may seem difficult to understand everything, but there are many HIV positive people who know more about their illness than some doctors and nurses. Knowing about HIV, AIDS and the immune system, helps HIV positive people get the correct health care.



### UNIT 1: UNDERSTANDING ABOUT HIV AND AIDS



#### READING FOR FACILITATORS

##### What is HIV and what is AIDS?

Many people talk about “HIV and AIDS” as if it were one thing. This is not true. HIV is the virus that infects people, usually through having sex with an infected person. Over a number of years the virus attacks the immune system. This is the body’s defence system against disease.

When the immune system becomes very weak, the person gets serious illnesses that people with healthy immune systems don't get. These are called opportunistic infections. It is only when the person has one of these serious opportunistic infections that we say they have AIDS.

It is important that people understand the difference. If they think that being HIV positive means that they have AIDS and are going to die soon, they will give up hope. People without hope are not able to fight off disease and they do get ill more quickly than other people.

***Remember H-I-V also stands for Hope Is Vital.***



### **GROUP ACTIVITIES:**

#### **1. Understanding H-I-V and A-I-D-S**

Exercise: Write the letters H-I-V and A-I-D-S on a sheet of paper.

Discuss what each letter means.

<b>H</b>	Human	<i>People like us</i>
<b>I</b>	Immunodeficiency	<i>Breaks down the human immune system which defends our bodies against disease</i>
<b>V</b>	Virus	<i>A very small germ</i>
<b>A</b>	Acquired	<i>Something that you get from someone else</i>
<b>I</b>	Immune	<i>The body's system that fights against infection and disease</i>
<b>D</b>	Deficiency	<i>The immune system becomes weak and lacks the power to fight disease</i>
<b>S</b>	Syndrome	<i>Aids is a syndrome because a whole range of illnesses, referred to as opportunistic infections, are associated with the disease</i>