Language of HIV Communications

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Objectives

• Understand how language shapes our world
• Understand the history of language in relation to HIV.
• Explain the differences in stigmatizing and empowering language.
• Identify “people first language” and its importance.
• Explore the use of empowering language when talking or writing about self and others.
“Because reporting on HIV and AIDS ultimately deals with matters of life and death, and because many people will form their understanding of HIV and AIDS through the media, the story must be approached with clarity, precision, and sensitivity”
Language

- Language and the words we use
  - help to shape our world
  - describes and gives meaning to our lives
  - persuades and changes minds
  - It can destroy or empower
• The selective use of language can trivialize an event or render it important; marginalize some groups and empower others; define an issue as an urgent problem or reduce it to a routine one.
HISTORY OF LANGUAGE USED IN THE HIV COMMUNITY
Pneumocystis Pneumonia — Los Angeles

In the period October 1980-May 1981, 5 young men, all active homosexuals, were treated for biopsy-confirmed Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia at 3 different hospitals in Los Angeles, California. Two of the patients died. All 5 patients had laboratory-confirmed previous or current cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection and candidal mucosal infection. Case reports of these patients follow.
Pneumocystis Pneumonia — Los Angeles

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1981

CANCER STUDY

TIME
AIDS
The Growing Threat
What’s Being Done
AIDS fear: dentist ban on gays

SOME DENTISTS in Australia have refused to treat homosexual patients because they fear catching AIDS, according to Melbourne's gay community.

Mr Adam Carr, a spokesman for the new Victorian AIDS action committee, said there had also been cases of homosexual patients being put into hospital isolation wards even though they showed no symptoms of AIDS.

Mr Carr said the aim of the committee was to stop the scapegoating of gay people.

AIDS VIRUS KILLS MAN IN BRITAIN

Patient catches disease after blood transfusion

RARE CANCER SEEN IN 41 HOMOSEXUALS

Doctors in New York and California have found that rare cancer may have killed 41 men.

The number of cases has increased, doctors have said, as a result of AIDS.

Gays indignant over ‘hysteria’ on AIDS

Gays are angry over the media’s coverage of AIDS and gays...

GAYS ‘CONSPRIED TO INFECT SOCIETY’

Call for homosexual to spot gay clients...

GAYS ACCUSED OF SABOTAGE

Crucial discovery on HIV

AIDS IS THE WRATH OF GOD, SAYS VICAR

AIDS is the wrath of God, says vicar...

SA researchers celebrate breakthrough in HIV research
1982

“Gay disease”
“gay cancer”
“gay plague”

“gay-related immune deficiency” (GRID) by health care providers and researchers
AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome)

ARC (AIDS-Related Complex)

HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus
1996

Magic!

He's living with the AIDS virus—and science is offering new hope for others
HIV

Human
HIV

Human Immunodeficiency
HIV
Human Immunodeficiency Virus
AIDS Acquired
AIDS

Acquired Immuno-
Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)
THIS IS FULL-BLOWN. AIDS IS NOT.

FACT: THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS HALF-BLOWN AIDS.
HELP END STIGMA & CONFUSION.
UPDATE THE WAY YOU SPEAK ABOUT HIV & AIDS.
JUST SAY "AIDS"
C.D.C. IS KILLING WOMEN
THIS COULD BE YOU
In October 1990, ACT UP descended upon Washington and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, carrying signs that demanded the formal definition of AIDS change to include women.
1993 Revised Classification System for HIV Infection and Expanded Surveillance Case Definition for AIDS Among Adolescents and Adults

The following CDC staff members prepared this report:

Stages of HIV

Stage 1
Acute Infection
1-2 weeks

Stage 2
Clinical Latency
10-12 years

Stage 3
End stage HIV
Late stage HIV

STREET SLANG
What other words and phrases?
People First Language

• Rather than using labels to define individuals with a health issue, it is more appropriate to use terminology, which describes individuals as being diagnosed with an illness or disorder.
People First Language

- **HIV-infected individuals** can live a normal life.
- **People living with HIV** can live a normal life.
- **HIV infected patients**
- **Patients living with HIV** or **Patients Diagnosed with HIV**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stigmatizing</th>
<th>Preferred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIV patient, AIDS patient</td>
<td>Person living with HIV, person diagnosed with HIV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positives or HIVers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIDS or HIV carrier</td>
<td>Died of AIDS-related illness, died of AIDS-related complications or died of end stage HIV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Died of AIDS, to die of AIDS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stigmatizing</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim</td>
<td>Person living with HIV, person diagnosed with HIV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufferer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contaminated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innocent (victim)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIDS orphans</td>
<td>Children orphaned by loss of parents or guardians who died of AIDS related complications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stigmatizing</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV infected mother</td>
<td>Mother living with HIV, mother diagnosed with HIV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother to child transmission</td>
<td>Vertical transmission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIDS Orphans</td>
<td>Children who lost both their parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stigmatizing</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prostitute or prostitution</td>
<td>Sex worker, sale of sexual services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promiscuous</td>
<td>Use - Having multiple partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stigmatizing</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIDS test</td>
<td>HIV test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To catch HIV or AIDS</td>
<td>To contract HIV, developed AIDS, developed end stage HIV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To contract AIDS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliant</td>
<td>Adherent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Infected
Example

- I was **infected with HIV** when I was a teenager
- I **contracted HIV** when I was a teenager
  or
- I **was diagnosed** with HIV when I was a teenager
Example

• Women are most likely to be infected with HIV through heterosexual contact.

• Women are most likely get (or contract) HIV through heterosexual contact.
Positive
What is Next . . .

• Use appropriate terminology
• Use empowering terminology
• Portray people with HIV living positively
• Use “People first language”
• Empower yourself and others
If we spoke a different language, we would perceive a somewhat different world.

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