

HIV, stigma and discrimination

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This booklet is for people living with HIV and is about stigma and discrimination. The booklet explains what stigma and discrimination are, makes some suggestions for how to deal with these problems and gives information about your legal rights.

Throughout the booklet are short quotes from real people living with HIV about their experiences of stigma and discrimination and the way that they've responded. You may find them useful, but people respond to situations in different ways, so don't think that you have to react in the way suggested by these examples.

Some of the quotes were collected from feedback to NAM, others by the People Living with HIV Stigma Index (www.stigmaindex.org) during their research in the UK. NAM is grateful to Stigma Index for permission to reproduce these quotes.

- [HIV in the UK today](#)

Living with HIV now is a very different experience to living with HIV ten or twenty years ago. And living with HIV in the UK is...

- [What is stigma?](#)

Stigma means different things to different people. This is one dictionary's definition: "The shame or disgrace attached to something regarded as socially unacceptable. There may be a..."

- [What is discrimination?](#)

While stigma is sometimes hard to pin down (it may be found in people's attitudes or beliefs), discrimination is a little easier to describe. It's about actual...

- [Myths and facts](#)

When thinking about stigma and discrimination, a good place to start might be to consider how irrational and wrong they are. Stigma and discrimination are usually based...

- [What people think about HIV](#)

This booklet focuses on problems. But it's worth knowing that the majority of adults living in the UK say that people with HIV should be treated with...

- [Your own feelings about having HIV](#)

Stigma is one of the reasons that some people end up having quite negative feelings about themselves and about having HIV. In society, a lot of...

- [Connecting with others](#)

You don't need to deal with problems on your own. Talking to someone close to you about how you feel about HIV and its effect on...

- [Other people's stories](#)

There are also some websites in which people with HIV have written first-hand accounts of their experiences and feelings. On other websites, you can watch videos of...

- [Deciding whether to tell people that you have HIV](#)

Because of stigma, many people with HIV think quite carefully about whether to tell people that they have HIV or not. One way that some people avoid...

- [Telling people you are close to](#)

The thought of facing HIV alone is daunting. People often look first to their partner, family members or friends for support. In a 2010 survey, over two-thirds...

- [Dealing with stigma and discrimination](#)

Experiencing stigma and discrimination can be very painful. Try not to bottle up your feelings about these experiences. First of all, don't blame yourself. Remind yourself that...

- [Your rights in health care](#)

Everybody with HIV needs to go to a specialist HIV clinic to get the best possible treatment and care. It's also important to have a GP...

- [Your rights at work](#)

Most people with HIV will never experience any problems at work because they have HIV. But stigma and discrimination can occur in the forms of breaches of confidentiality,...

- [Your rights with insurance companies](#)

Unfortunately, some personal finance products are not available to people who know they have HIV. This includes most life insurance policies, private medical insurance, critical illness cover...

- [Your rights in housing, shops and services](#)

The Equality Act also makes it illegal to discriminate against people with HIV in the provision of goods and services, such as when finding housing or when...

- [Your rights with the media](#)

HIV sometimes gets good coverage in the media. At other times the media uses clichés, is inaccurate and expresses prejudice. It can be annoying to find HIV...

- [Getting support and championing your rights](#)

"There are some times when it's difficult to cope. But knowing I'm not alone, that there are other people with HIV with similar experiences, and people who'll...

- [Religion and faith](#)

Some faith groups have responded excellently to HIV and provide an important source of comfort, friendship and practical support. However, some faith leaders and faith groups can themselves...

- [Making a complaint](#)

Most of the organisations listed in these pages can help you complain if you encounter stigma and discrimination. Before you make a complaint, it's worth thinking about what you'd...

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This content was checked for accuracy at the time it was written. It may have been superseded by more recent developments. NAM recommends checking whether this is the most current information when making decisions that may affect your health.

NAM's information is intended to support, rather than replace, consultation with a healthcare professional. Talk to your doctor or another member of your healthcare team for advice tailored to your situation.