What is ‘Positive Health, Dignity and Prevention’?

‘Positive Health, Dignity and Prevention’ focuses on improving and maintaining the health and well-being of people living with HIV, which, in turn, contributes to the health and well-being of partners, families and communities. This is in direct contrast to previous approaches to ‘positive prevention’, which could be construed as treating people living with HIV as vectors of transmission. By focusing on the journey experienced by people living with HIV from testing to support, care and treatment, ‘Positive Health, Dignity and Prevention’ positions the health and social needs and experiences of people living with HIV within a human rights framework.

UNAIDS and the Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+) are collaborating with relevant partners, including the International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC) and the International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (ICW), to accelerate agreement on the programmatic components of ‘Positive Health, Dignity and Prevention’.

Moving forward with ‘Positive Health, Dignity and Prevention’

UNAIDS+ and the UNAIDS Secretariat will work in partnership with networks of people living with HIV, civil society organizations, faith-based organizations, government agencies, international development agencies, UNAIDS Cosponsors, donor agencies and other partners to achieve the following outputs of the strategy:

- Providing ‘know your legal and human rights and legal responsibilities’ information.
- Improving food security for those in need and facilitating income generation activities.
- Expanding comprehensive health services for people living with HIV, including screening and of treatment for sexually transmitted infections, prevention of mother-to-child transmission, care, treatment and prevention of opportunistic infections, including tuberculosis and viral hepatitis, and provision of harm reduction and other services.
- Improving access to, and understanding of, evidence-informed programmes that suit individual needs and that provide support by giving people choices on how to live healthy lives.
- Scaling up and supporting existing testing, care, support, treatment and prevention programmes that are community-owned and led.
- Expanding comprehensive health services for people living with HIV, including screening and of treatment for sexually transmitted infections, prevention of mother-to-child transmission, care, treatment and prevention of opportunistic infections, including tuberculosis and viral hepatitis, and provision of harm reduction and other services.

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- UNAIDS+ will ensure that networks of people living with HIV are engaged in using the framework for programming and advocacy, including developing operational guidelines.
- UNAIDS will advocate for the endorsement, adoption and implementation of ‘Positive Health, Dignity and Prevention’ by key stakeholders and will integrate the concept into the UNAIDS Partnership Strategy and into regional and country-level missions.
- UNAIDS plans to build capacity to support the implementation of ‘Positive Health, Dignity and Prevention’ across the Joint Programme and by organizations and networks of people living with HIV through regional skills-building workshops and focused support for key organizations of people living with HIV and by mobilizing funding and technical support facilities to support civil society capacity-building.
- UNAIDS and GNP+ will develop monitoring and evaluation indicators for ‘Positive Health, Dignity and Prevention’ and will build the capacity of monitoring and evaluation advisers to work with organizations and networks of people living with HIV on the monitoring and evaluation of ‘Positive Health, Dignity and Prevention’ interventions at the country level.
- UNAIDS will ensure coordination with other initiatives, such as the roll-out of the Agenda for accelerated country action for women, girls, gender equality and HIV.
Uniting the world against HIV.

In April 2009 a technical consultation involving international representatives of people living with HIV, civil society, government agencies, UNAIDS Cosponsors, international donors and development agencies took place in Tunisia. At the consultation, participants moved away from the potentially stigmatizing term ‘positive prevention’, agreeing that the focus of ‘positive prevention’ was too narrow and should be replaced by a broader, more holistic approach. As part of the shift away from the idea that the burden of responsibility for HIV transmission should be placed solely on HIV-positive people aware of their status, the term ‘Positive Health, Dignity and Prevention’ was introduced.

According to Michel Sidibé, UNAIDS Executive Director, “UNAIDS is committed to standing by people living with and affected by HIV and promotes the concept of ‘Positive Health, Dignity and Prevention’. With an approach that is informed by human rights, we must all support countries to achieve their universal access goals towards HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.”

Values and principles

The following principles of ‘Positive Health, Dignity and Prevention’ should be incorporated into all policies and programmes aimed at people living with HIV:

- People living with HIV have a great deal of knowledge, experience and insight and are not just patients. As such, people living with HIV must be leaders in the choice, design, programming, implementation, research, monitoring and evaluation of all programmes and policies affecting them.

- People living with HIV are vectors of transmission. Their human and civil rights must be protected. The focus is why a human rights approach is the foundation of ‘Positive Health, Dignity and Prevention’.

- People living with HIV have dignity and should not be treated as scapegoats to be blamed when HIV transmission occurs.

- Like everyone else, people living with HIV have needs and desires, which is to why sexual and reproductive health and rights, in particular for women and girls, must be recognized and exercised by everyone, regardless of HIV status.

- Preventing HIV transmission is a shared responsibility of all individuals, irrespective of HIV status.

‘Positive Health, Dignity and Prevention’ entails the following key aspects:

- It requires working towards a supportive and protective legal and policy environment that aims for a world free of HIV-related stigma and discrimination.

Programmatic components

The ‘Positive Health, Dignity and Prevention’ concept involves mainstreaming HIV issues, with special emphasis on:

- Health promotion and access.
- Sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Prevention of transmission.
- Human rights, in particular economic, social and cultural rights, including stigma and discrimination reduction.
- HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.
- HIV testing and counseling.
- Gender equality.
- Social and economic support.
- Empowerment.
- Measuring impact.