

EMMA'S STORY

"My name is Emma and I'm 15. I've had HIV since I was born but no-one told me about it until I was 10. I take medication daily for my condition but other than that I'm fit and well. I will have to take the tablets every day for the rest of my life.

None of my friends know I'm HIV positive and I don't want them to know. I'm scared they will not want to know me or will bully me.

I'm getting really depressed and anxious because of this secrecy. I have to take my tablets at particular times of the day and they sometimes make me feel sick so it would be hard to hide it if I was at a sleepover. My pals keep asking me why I won't stay over. It's hard to keep thinking up excuses.

It's my secret and I have to live with it on my own. I find it hard to be positive about the future when I feel so alone and so different from everyone else.

Last year my doctor referred me to Waverley Care as there was a new project being set up for young people with HIV. I met the worker on the project and at last I could talk about how I was feeling. She suggested I went on a residential weekend with a group of other HIV+ young people. I was nervous about it, not knowing anyone, and what if I was ill while we were away?

Well I did go and it was a lot of fun. I was able to talk to other young people who faced the same issues as me. We talked loads about how we cope with our treatment, our friends, challenges with relationships and we could all be really honest about what was going on in our lives.

I got their email addresses and am looking forward to another opportunity like this".



I'm scared they will not want to know me.

1. Why do you think Emma doesn't want to tell her friends about the fact that she is HIV positive? Do you think that Emma should tell any of her friends? What do you think you would do if you were in Emma's position?
2. How might you react if you found out your best friend was HIV positive? Would it affect the way that you behaved towards them?
3. Why might Emma have been suffering from anxiety and depression? What are some of the things she might have been worried about?
4. What are the practical things Emma might have to think about as an HIV+ young person?
5. Why do you think Emma was nervous about meeting other HIV+ young people?
6. What do you think Emma gained from a weekend away?
7. What might have happened to Emma if she hadn't been referred to Waverley Care by her doctor?

NOMUSA'S STORY

"My name is Nomusa. I am 38 and came to Scotland from Zimbabwe in 2005 on a two year work visa. While working here I was taken ill and went for an HIV test. It was positive. I started taking treatments which might not have been available to me back home.

My son Eli, who is 15, is also HIV+. He has just come to join me in Scotland after living with our relations in Zimbabwe while I was working here.

When my work visa ran out in 2007 it was a hard time for me. I wanted to go back to see Eli but the political situation in Zimbabwe and the possibility of not being able to continue getting the treatments made it a difficult choice. Fortunately I was granted permanency so I could stay here, but Eli was still in Africa and I missed him very much. I felt very alone.

Marion, Waverley Care's Spiritual and Pastoral Care Co-ordinator helped me find better accommodation and introduced me to other people who use Waverley Care's services. Suddenly I realised I was not the only one in this situation and it really helped. Marion supported me through the long process of applying to bring Eli to Scotland and now he is here.

We have time now to get to know each other again and can adjust to our lives together. We are working together towards a positive future".



I felt very alone.

1. What might have been the emotions which Nomusa experienced when she tested positive for HIV.
2. What were the issues which faced Nomusa when she was considering whether or not to return to Zimbabwe.
3. Why might Nomusa have been feeling isolated?
4. What do you think Eli's feelings might have been about moving to Scotland?
5. What might the issues be for Nomusa and Eli as mother and son now they are reunited?
6. Are there specific issues which Eli will face as an HIV positive teenager?