Rise together to End HIV Stigma.

World AIDS Day 2026

Misconception VS Fact

Waverley care

Misconceptions about HIV can fuel stigma, discrimination and fear, affecting how people living with HIV are treated and how they feel about seeking support.

By challenging misconceptions and sharing accurate information, we can break down barriers, encourage understanding and help create a society where everyone affected by HIV feels respected, supported and able to live free from stigma.

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Misconception

"HIV is a death sentence"

Fact

During the 1980s and early 1990s, someone diagnosed with HIV may have only been given a few years to live. However, today, due to medical advances, people living with HIV and on treatment can live long, healthy lives.

Misconception

"HIV and AIDS are the same thing"

Fact

HIV and AIDS are not the same thing. HIV is the name of a virus, and AIDS (what we now call late-stage or advanced stage -HIV) is the name of a collection of illnesses caused by this virus.

You can't get an AIDS diagnosis unless you are HIV positive. Due to advances in HIV treatment, many people who have HIV will never have AIDS, meaning HIV is a now a long-term, manageable condition.

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Misconception

"People with HIV can't have children"

Fact

You can have children if you are living with HIV if you are on effective treatment and have an undetectable viral load. The risk of HIV being passed on to the baby is just 0.1%.

Thanks to antenatal screening, treatment to block transmission and caesarean (C-section) delivery, only 0.3% of people with HIV (including people with a higher viral load) passed on HIV to their babies.

Misconception

"HIV only affects gay men"

Fact

HIV can affect anyone, regardless of age, sexuality, ethnicity or gender.

Challenging misconceptions about who HIV affects helps reduce stigma and encourages testing and prevention.

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Together, we can end HIV stigma and help create a Scotland where people living with HIV feel supported, included and able to live well.

Rethink misconceptions about HIV and challenge the stigma that surrounds it.

Rebuild trust by challenging discrimination, improve understanding and create health and social care services that are more inclusive and accessible.

Rise together to create a future free from HIV stigma, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

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Learn more about HIV, support, and prevention at Waverley Care.
www.waverleycare.org