

# IAMpowerment

Projeto VIHDA (Project Life)

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## IAMpowerment

**IAMpowerment** closely follows the model of the Mpowerment Project which is an intervention model that has proven effective with young gay men ages 18-29. The model will expand on our present Projeto VIHDA program that uses our staff of AIDS educators for group, community and individual interventions by adding a corps of young gay males who have already “graduated” from VIHDA to serve as peer volunteers and support.

**IAMpowerment** will provide four interventions during the year which will include four multi-group sessions, single-session workshops, and a retreat. In addition,

**IAMpowerment** will produce a quarterly newsletter and maintain a website.

The Workshops will include discussion and training regarding unsafe sex and misconceptions regarding safe sex, skill-building exercises and safer sex negotiation practice.

## Projeto VIHDA

**Projeto VIHDA** is an innovative program seeking to prevent HIV/AIDS in the Brazilian community through increased awareness, knowledge and empowerment to reduce risk.

**Projeto VIHDA** was created by Interfaith AIDS Ministry at the request of the Brazilian community to address perceived growing needs for prevention and education.

**Projeto VIHDA** provides HIV/AIDS education, prevention, materials and services in Portuguese specifically for the Brazilian community.

**Projeto VIHDA's** Programs are developed and tailored to meet the specific needs of the Brazilian community. VIHDA's services include but are not limited to; pamphlets, lectures, group workshops, peer training sessions and general discussion groups all lead by our state certified HIV/AIDS Educators.

## Proven and tested

**The Mpowerment Project is a model HIV prevention program** that has been designed specifically to address the needs of young gay and bisexual men.

**The Mpowerment Project** is the first documented HIV prevention intervention for young gay/bisexual men to succeed in reducing sexual risk behavior. The program has been carefully developed, evaluated and continually refined over the course of twelve years by prominent behavioral scientists from the University of California, San Francisco's Center for AIDS Prevention Studies (CAPS), a leading-edge HIV/AIDS research institution.

**The Mpowerment Project** is listed in the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Compendium of HIV Prevention Interventions with Evidence of Effectiveness and it has been named an Exemplary Substance Abuse Prevention Program by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.

## Guiding Principles

- ➔ Personal and community empowerment.
- ➔ Diffusion of new behaviors through social networks.
- ➔ Peer influence.
- ➔ Putting HIV prevention within the context of other compelling issues for young gay/bisexual men (e.g., social issues).
- ➔ Community building.
- ➔ Uses Gay positive approaches.
- ➔ Young men are very concerned with social and self-esteem issues.
- ➔ Peer influences are strong among young Gay/Bisexual men.

## To get connected call: 203.748.4077

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- ➔ Building healthy community among young Gay/Bisexual men.
- ➔ Empowerment promotes more lasting changes in behavior.
- ➔ Community-wide change occurs through interpersonal networks.
- ➔ Gay – Positive and Sex – Positive messages encourage behavior change.

# The Facts of Life Living With HIV/AIDS

Do you know what you think you know about HIV/AIDS?

How much does a visit to see a doctor at the Danbury Hospital clinic cost without health insurance?

**Answer: \$200.**

How much does your mandatory diagnostic quarterly (every three months) blood testing cost?

**Answer: \$850.00**

How much does a month's supply bottle of a popular AIDS drug cost if you can't get it from an AIDS drug assistance program?

**Answer: Retail \$750 x3 (combination therapy requires at least three drugs to work) total = \$2,150**

What is a waiting list and how long is the average wait in some states to receive treatment?

**Answer: A waiting list is what you get put on in 11 states that are not able to provide immediate access to HIV/AIDS drugs. The wait can be as long as one year and in some cases even more.**

Name 3 common side effects of a given popular HIV/AIDS drug?

**Answer: muscle aches, neuropathy, diarrhea, dizziness, weight gain (internal/in-operable), lypodystrophy, diabetes, belly fat, high cholesterol, joint pain, early onset arthritis and diabetes.**

How much money can you earn annually before you are no longer eligible for AIDS drug assistance?

**Answer: 40-45k or 400% above the poverty line.**

How compliant (in percent) do you have to be to prevent HIV/AIDS from mutating and making your combination therapy ineffective and how compliant on average are most (over 80%) people on any drug regimen?

**Answer: 99.998% to survive HIV/AIDS and usually most people are only ever able to achieve 60% compliance in other drug regimens.**

Which preventative measure is 100% effective in preventing HIV/AIDS infection and which is 98.99% effective?

**Answer: Abstinence and condoms. Abstinence is 100% effective but when it fails its 100% failure. Condoms are a prudent emergency measure that can safeguard your health from a 100% failure in your personal protection.**

Who will take care of you if you become sick and can't work and you have no insurance and you haven't paid much into social security and if your parents throw you out of your house for being HIV+.

**Answer: if you can't answer this question, "see above".**

What states and how many have AIDS drugs assistance waiting lists, right now?

**Answer: 11 states have AIDS drug assistance waiting lists. They are Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Idaho, Kentucky, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, West Virginia, and Wyoming. Moving to these states and being HIV positive can be hazardous to your health.**

What are the two disease vectors that lead inevitably into full blown AIDS and how long do you have before you get them from the time you test positive?

**Answer: PCP Pneumonia, spinal meningitis and between 4-6 years if its not a particularly strong strain, less if so.**

What is the opportunistic infection you get that causes blindness if your HIV goes untreated into AIDS too long and what T-cell count will you be at?

**Answer: Cytomegalovirus (CMV) and under 15T-cells in parts per million in a given sample of your blood. (will vary between individuals)**

Can a separated retina caused by (CMV) be repaired, can you regain your sight?

**Answer: No. There is currently no therapy or even any experimental therapy yet.**

Where can you go get tested?

**Answer: AIDS Project of Greater Danbury (APGD) 30 west ST. Danbury, CT. 06810 (203.778.2437) and Danbury Hospital Adult Health Center 70 Main ST. Danbury, CT. 06810 (203.791.5030)**

If you test positive what human services agencies are ready to help you in Danbury CT?

**Answer: Interfaith AIDS Ministry of Greater Danbury 39 Rose ST. (203.748.2841) and AIDS Project of Greater Danbury 30 West ST. (203.778.2437)**

Let's say you get a job offer in a state that has a waiting list for AIDS Drugs and it takes 6 months to get onto your companies health plan; how much money will you need to save in order to pay for retail doctor visits, blood tests, and AIDS drugs to keep compliant for those 6 months?

**Answer: \$12900+1700+400=\$15,000 Breakdown: Blood tests are needed every 3 months (\$850, CD4 and T-cell). You will need at least 3 separate bottles of AIDS medications, totaling roughly \$2150 per month. You will also need one doctor visit every 3 months (\$200 per visit).**

If your parents find out your HIV+ and are not accepting what will they do? What will you do to support yourself?

**Answer: if you can't answer this question, review the answer about abstinence and condoms.**

What are the two blood tests you must have routinely?

**Answer: CD4 / T-cell count and HIV Viral load. CD4 / T-Cell measures the amount of your immune systems hunter killer cells in your blood. HIV viral measures proteins that are by products HIV spreading through your blood. All measurements are in parts per million.**

What is the "HIV" side effect called that causes you to loose all your body fat reservoirs (buttocks, legs, face, arms)?

**Answer: Lypatrophy. The other side effect is lypodystrophy - Gaining fat in areas you never had it before.**

Why is it necessary to keep taking retroviral drugs for life?

- (A) To continually suppress the HIV in your blood.
- (B) Because HIV remains dormant in your tissue's RNA and can reappear and mutate if not continually suppressed.
- (C) There is no cure or vaccine.
- (D) all of the above.

**Answer: (D) All of the above**