HAJJ: A TIME OF HOPE

A DEVOTIONAL RESOURCE WITH MESSAGES OF HOPE FOR EACH DAY OF HAJJ

FAITH AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVE
HAJJ: THE JOURNEY OF A LIFE TIME

“Proclaim the pilgrimage to the people they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, they shall come from every deep ravine.” (Q22:27)

Hajj is a demonstration of solidarity of the Muslim community and their submission to Allah. It has both religious and social significance. It creates a global Muslim community with no class distinctions. The most critical importance attached to hajj is the annual repeated sermon of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) which he delivered on the top of Mount Arafat. The sermon focused on reforming the social, economic, political and religious elements of the society.

He commanded that men care for women, slaves should be freed, prohibited interest and He preached that all men (people) are equal before the eyes of God. We can now take advantage of the moment to spread the message of HIV in this period of repentance, compassion and forgiveness.

It is imperative that during this season, the Muslim community can open itself to the knowledge of HIV, its mode of transmission, as well as to the means of prevention. Doing so would lead the community to acceptance and people would remain very humble and compassionate.
WE RAISE A VOICE OF HOPE!

“And let there be (arising) from you a nation inviting to (all that is) good enjoying what is right and forbidding what is wrong and those will be the successful.” (Q3:104)

Everyone originates from a community and is identified with the characteristics of the community. HIV is a challenge that many communities face and collectively directs their efforts at prevention. As an essential part of our society, communities help individuals to learn and develop new ideas, create an environment where people’s relationship with each other is direct and personal with mutual bonds of emotions and obligation.

The mosques, churches and individual respected community members have a high potential and legitimacy in preventing HIV in the community. They influence the attitude of the people and share information regarding HIV testing and counseling.

They can create awareness so that people living with HIV should not be discriminated, condemned, avoided, rejected or stigmatized.

These are the voices of reason that lay foundations of value, respect, discipline and responsible sexual behaviour. People living with HIV will always rely on their communities for hope, support and care as their psychological, social and economic well being is looked after.

Photo by Albin Hillert/WCC

FAITH AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVE
HAJJ: A TIME OF HOPE

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CHILDREN CAN GET HIV TOO

Children are a trust given to parents by God. Their physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing are all of equal importance. They are to be well fed, well groomed, properly dressed. Their heart must be filled with faith and their minds entertained with proper guidance, knowledge and wisdom.

Most children who have HIV got it from their HIV-positive mothers during pregnancy, birth or from breast feeding. However women who are tested and then stick with treatment if they are positive, greatly lower the chances of passing the virus to their babies.

A number of children living with or affected by HIV are especially vulnerable to issues of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The most devastating impact of HIV is the loss of whole generations of people in the communities hardest hit by the epidemic. In this regard, it is often the children who feel the greatest impact through the loss of parents or older relatives. In this period, we must work together to spread the good news that, tahnks to HIV treatment, HIV-positive women will not pass on the virus to their babies; and for those babies who are HIV-positive, there are safe HIV medications that will help them growing and developing like all other children!

FAITH AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVE
HAJJ: A TIME OF HOPE
IN THE WAKE OF CHALLENGES: WE STAND TOGETHER

“And certainly we shall test you with something of fear, hunger, some loss in goods or lives or this fruits (of your foil) but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere” (Q2:155)

God the Almighty has different ways of testing his people through calamities and diseases. Sickness is considered as part of trial, just like prophet Ayub was put to test.

“And remember Ayub (job), when he cried to his lord truly affliction has seized me, and you are the most merciful of all those who show mercy (Q21:83)”

He had plenty of livestock cattle and crops, many children and a beautiful house. He was tested in these things losing everything he had; then he was left alone on the edge of the city and there was no one who treated him with compassion apart from his wife who took care of him.

The best time to show solidarity and compassion is when one is sick. Standing together means being there for one another at all times, complementing, supporting and comforting one another. It is also about encouraging each other before and after testing for HIV while giving out messages of hope.

Illustration by Alice Müller
WE ARE OUR BROTHERS KEEPER

Ibn Rajab al Hambal writes:

“the best deeds is to secure the heart from every type of enemity and the best of it is to be secure from the enemity of the people of desires and heretical innovations that challenges the righteous predecessors of the nation, their hatred and malice towards them and their charges of infidelity, hearsay and misguidance against them. Thereafter following that is to secure the heart from enemity against all Muslims in general, to intend good for them, to give them sincere counsel and to love for them what he loves for himself”.

This is a comprehensive concept that is based upon good character with others, treating others the way we want to be treated and uniting together upon common values. This is stronger in the sense of family, community, friendship or common purpose. At this level, people work together towards fulfilling the goals and objectives of their community.

For HIV it means taking care of everyone around you, prevent them from being infected or affected by HIV by sensitizing them, advocating for testing, care for each other and discouraging stigma. We should love all people as we love ourselves.

FAITH AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVE
HAJJ: A TIME OF HOPE
REAL MEN SHOW REAL STRENGTH

“It is He who has made you (His) agents, inheritors of the earth. He has raised you in ranks, some above others that he may try you in the gifts he has given you: for the Lord is quick in punishment yet He is indeed of forgiving, Most merciful.” (Q6:165)

It is the man who can, through his wisdom, support his family and prepare the grounds for their happiness, and it is he who can turn the house into paradise.

Worldly events are not only reason for our being upset, but rather it is in our nervous system which becomes affected by such events and causes us to experience discomfort. Therefore if a man could control himself when faced with the unhappy events of life, he would not become annoyed or angry.

The strength of a man is known through his courage and ability to lead from the front in testing for HIV, encouraging the affected to be patient, and assist in the affairs of the people living with HIV.

Strong men do not pay attention to slanderous talk of stigmatization but gracefully extend help to those affected.

Photo by Albin Hillert/WCC
NEW FRIENDLY FAITH SAFE SPACES

Courage gives us strength when we feel weak and makes us brave when we are afraid and, most importantly, courage gives us fortitude to speak for justice and be heard.

It takes courage for men to share their stories and experiences so that people can be able to learn and share their perspectives. People living with HIV get courage when they listen to voices of men who put aside biases and decompartment our societies.

Safe space for men entails health facilities where they feel positive experiences such as feeling welcome, understood and empowered.

Negative experiences occur if the services at the facility does not engage with the realities and concerns of the client, and make assumptions rather than ask questions about specific life circumstances.

Having a safe space signifies a commitment to ensuring that everybody is treated with respect and supported regardless of their identity and status.

FAITH AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

HAJJ: A TIME OF HOPE
TESTING CAN IMPROVE COUPLES COMMUNICATION

HIV counseling is voluntary and it is conducted in a way that assures confidentiality, counseling, correct results and linkages. Testing together is encouraged for couples who are in or about to start a sexual relationship. They will benefit immensely from the diagnostic, prevention, care and treatment that will be provided by qualified health workers.

Testing together provides a venue for mutual disclosure of HIV status in an environment where support can be provided. The couple can make decisions about prevention, accessing treatment, care and support as well as other family endeavors.

Through communication the couple can create a safe environment assisted by the counselor in which they can discuss potentially difficult issues.

Under the circumstance they both will understand situation of their HIV infections, and make informed decisions about HIV prevention, reproductive health, including contraception, and conception. They can therefore take measures to reduce their risk of transmitting HIV to others.

Illustration by Alice Müller
REPLACING OLD MESSAGES OF DEATH WITH NEW MESSAGES OF HOPE

“Say, I seek refuge with the Lord of the people. The controller of people. The God of people. Against the harm of the slinking whispers who whispers into the hearts of people. Whether they be jinn or people” (Q144 :1-6)

Words help shape our understanding of the world we live in. They define our experiences and are the foundation of our stories. Words and language describe who we are and how we connect with the world around us, and with ourselves.

The words people use to talk about HIV, affect the way people living with HIV feel about themselves. These words also have an impact on how others perceive people living with HIV.

A positive HIV test results in the 1980’s was not just a painful, ugly death sentence. It branded a person as one of society’s untouchable in the last years of their life.

A positive HIV diagnosis was not something to be taken lightly but with modern treatment, the diagnosis is no longer a death sentence. Today HIV positive patients can live long and happy lives.

HIV is a virus that can be suppressed by antiretroviral therapy. HIV infection is entirely preventable.
HIV TREATMENT CAN PROTECT YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES

Narretd Abdalla ibn Umar: the messenger of Allah said; “Be mindful of Allah and He will protect you.” (Tirmidhi 2156)

Being diagnosed with HIV is life changing news. It is important to listen to your loved ones and offer your support, give re-assurance to them that HIV is a manageable health condition. There are medicines that can treat HIV and help people to stay healthy.

One must educate himself about HIV. How it is transmitted. How it is treated. How people can stay healthy while living with HIV. Understanding HIV can be a big step forward in supporting your loved ones.

Getting linked to HIV medical care early, starting treatment with HIV medication, adhering to medication and staying in care can keep the virus under control and prevent HIV infection from progressing. Treatment is recommended for all people living with HIV and should be started as soon as possible.

It is important for people living with HIV to take their HIV medication everyday exactly as prescribed. You can now support your loved ones by supporting them in establishing medication routine and sticking to it.

It is good to get tested especially if you are a partner of someone who has been diagnosed with HIV, so that you know your own status and you can prevent the progression of the infection if you are HIV-positive.

FAITH AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVE
HAJJ: A TIME OF HOPE
REAL MEN CELEBRATE HEALTH

PROPHET MUHAMMAD(PBUH) SAID:

“Whenever a Muslim is afflicted by harm from sickness or other matters, God will expiatiate his sins, like leaves drop from a tree” (BUKHARI AND MUSLIM)

Men are mostly known for not taking action when it comes to their health, they need constant reminder to take care of themselves. Lack of awareness, poor health promotion and education as well as an unhealthy work and personal lifestyle has caused a steady decline in the overall well-being of most men. Men are mostly at a risk for cardiovascular disease, influenza and pneumonia infection, HIV and skin cancer.

The real man is a very conscious man who always takes action, stays proactive and remains aware. Real men are dedicated to raising awareness of preventable health problems like HIV, encourage treatment of diseases, and educate young boys and other men on proper exercise routines and healthy eating habits.

There is need to stress the importance of positive male health attitudes and the preventive health practices that can save lives. Every man must focus on the early detection and treatment of diseases that are prevalent among them. It takes some motivation for men to take care of their own health.

Photo by Albin Hillert/WCC
MEN CHOOSE WHERE AND HOW TO TEST

Men lose years of their life due to preventable diseases that can be slowed or even reversed by medical intervention and lifestyle changes.

Society continues to push a variety of expectations onto men: mainly that they must provide for their families and appear strong and fit. As a result of being branded weak, men are slow in going for regular HIV testing.

Another reason why men are reluctant to test is that if their test results positive, they are afraid that people might find out about their HIV-positive status.

In some cases, men would prefer testing without disclosing to their wives for fear of giving rise to conflict due to instability and mistrust in some marriages.

The perceived stigmatizing nature of caregivers and rude attitude among health workers at the health facilities also lead men to view such facilities as unwelcome.

In these challenging circumstances, HIV-self testing could be the ideal option. Men can test in the privacy of their homes, or even with the support of their Faith Leader. The accommodation that a Religious Leader could offer is key to linkage to HIV services, treatment adherence and retention.

Religious Leaders can counter cultural pressures by engaging openly about HIV and by encouraging HIV testing, including HIVST, in their faith community.

FAITH AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVE
HAJJ: A TIME OF HOPE
YOUTH LEADERS STAND STRONG FOR HIV

In many communities, youths constitute a large number of inhabitants. Prevention of HIV is a collective responsibility that requires the effort of individuals, community groups, different government levels and youth organizations.

Youths are at risk of contracting HIV in most communities. Their vulnerability is informed from their behavior patterns, modes of socialization, peer pressure, prevailing concepts of morality, alcohol and drug abuse.

Youth leaders play significant roles in the prevention of HIV infection among young people. They relate more effectively with the youths and establish a channel of communication that is understood by the youths.

The youth leadership provides a platform for information sharing on HIV, peer to peer conversations and motivations, assists in data collection, community mobilization through creativity programs like sports. They are assets in HIV prevention because their voice is heard among their peers.

Youth leadership is a good opportunity of involving young people in peer education efforts that allow youths to take charge in the communities and fully comprehend the impact of HIV on their generation.

FAITH AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVE
HAJJ: A TIME OF HOPE
EVERYONE LIVING WITH HIV DESERVES TREATMENT NOW

ABU DAUD narrated that the messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, “Allah has sent down the disease and the cure and has made for every disease a cure. So, treat sickness, but do not use anything haram.” (ABU DAWOOD 3376)

Every patient has the right to be fully informed about medical procedures or treatment that they will receive including on HIV test so that they can give informed consent.

Doctors and other health care workers have a legal duty to keep one's medical information, including his HIV status confidential.

People living with HIV deserve treatment without discrimination or fear. Without treatment they can become ill because of the damage HIV does to the immune system.

Effective treatment means that people living with HIV are achieving an undetectable viral load. This means that the virus exists in such small quantities in their blood that it does not affect their health and there is zero risk of transmitting the virus on to others. If they stop taking their medication, the viral load may go back up again.

The risk of leaving HIV untreated is the rate in which the disease will progress from HIV to AIDS.

FAITH AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVE
HAJJ: A TIME OF HOPE
STRONG MAN IS OPEN ABOUT HIS HIV STATUS

ABU HURAIRA NARRATED: THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH (P.B.U.H) said: “The strong believer is more beloved to Allah than the weak believer, but there is goodness in both of them” (Muslim 2664).

Men like to be secretive in nature and revealing their HIV status is one of their concerns. This is mainly because of the stigma associated to HIV in many communities.

A courageous man will always inform his family and people close to him about his HIV status. This Disclosure makes them stronger and comfortable with positive energy to deal with negative reactions and stigma that comes their way.

Stigma is fueled by ignorance and the more one is able to openly talk about his condition of HIV, the more comfortable he becomes. This open talk releases the burden of keeping secret, falling into depression, low self esteem and one hopefully improves his overall health.

Being open about one’s status allows him to engage in preventive behavior as well as the access of necessary support for coping with illness. This may motivate their partners to seek testing or change behavior and ultimately decrease the transmission of HIV.
**ARVS ARE GOOD FOR YOUR FAMILY**

“Every one of you is a shepherd. And everyone is responsible for whatever falls under his responsibility. A man is like a shepherd of his own family and he is responsible for them”. (AL-BUKHARI & MUSLIM)

Anti Retroviral (ARVs) drugs are pills used to control HIV. These drugs are making it possible for people living with HIV to live a long and full life.

One should not hide from his family or people that he lives with HIV; nor the fact that he is taking ARVs. Our families need to understand why it is important that you take your pills correctly.

If the ARVs medicine is not taken correctly, the level of HIV in the blood may increase and the treatment may stop working. It is important for the family to assist you to adhere to medication correctly.

It is important to take your treatment regularly and correctly because it can make your viral load undetectable, and your body will not become resistance to medications. **ARVs keep your family safe because they make the viral load level in your blood undetectable, therefore you will not transmit HIV to your loved ones.**

Illustration by Alice Müller
“Make things easy and do not make things difficult. Give glad tidings and do not repel people. Co-operate with each other and do not become divided.” (Bukhari 2873)

Communal approaches to health matters are geared towards behavioral change, social change and empowerment of community members with the aim of influencing how they view health matters.

Community participation and ownership of health matters is based on the fact that prevention and the early detection of diseases are much cheaper than treatment of people who have become ill. It costs the community more financially in treatment than in prevention.

Men participation creates relationship, bonds, identities and interests that join people together. Their participation is strongly felt when they stand as a symbol and pillar that encourages both men and women to seek treatment.

Male support includes willingness to be tested for HIV and spousal communication that also increases women’s participation.

Male involvement creates a sense of acceptance and increases wider participation of everybody.
ARVS ARE GOOD FOR YOU

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

“The most beloved people to Allah are those who are most beneficial to the people”. (BUKHARI)

Antiretroviral drugs are easier to take, have fewer side effects and can also be used to prevent people from getting infected with HIV. They suppress HIV in your body so well that they restore the immune system. This helps in prolonging life.

Adherence means taking the ARVs drugs at the same time, at the right dose, and following any advice about food restrictions. This is the most important factor under your control in the search of HIV treatment.

ARVs are effective in slowing down the progression of HIV-related illness and deaths. ARVs slow down the speed at which the virus multiplies in the body. Therefore being HIV positive does not mean death sentence.

If one skips doses of the drugs the virus can start copying itself in the body again, this could cause HIV to become resistant to the drugs, if that happens the drug will no longer work which will result in further complications.

Adhering to ARVs helps in reducing HIV infections and hence prolonging and protecting your life.

FAITH AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

HAJJ: A TIME OF HOPE
MAKING IT EASY FOR MEN TO TEST

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: “The strong are not those who defeat people, rather the strong are those who defeat their ego”. (Muslim 1426)

HIV testing is a simple and pain free process. The results are confidential and reliable, but **making the decision to test is the best thing that one can do to his health**. Previously, HIV infection carried such stigma that men justifiably shield away from being tested.

However, with the advent of effective HIV treatment, the usefulness of testing, especially for men, has become evident. Testing is encouraged for men and people whose behavior or demographic characteristic place them at high risk of infection.

Most men consider conventional HIV testing in health centers as invasive and slow, taking long time to run. To ease that, tests are now undertaken with specific consent after counseling as an extra measure of assessment of individual risk and with instant result. Testing centers are easily available.

**HIV self-testing offers the convenience of taking a test in the comfort of one’s own home. This is more convenient for men. Seeing a professional helps in getting immediate support and advice on the next step.**

Illustration by Alice Müller
ARVS ARE GOOD FOR YOUR FAITH

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: “There is no disease that God Almighty has created, except that he also has created its treatment.” (MUSLIM)

“Be mindful of Allah and he will protect you.” (TIRMIDHI 2516)

Our bodies are a trust from God and we are accountable for how we look after our health. Injury and illnesses are trials and testing that we must face with patience, forbearance and above all acceptance.

Accepting a trial does not mean that we do nothing, of course we try to overcome it and learn from it. Accepting means facing the trial patiently armed with the weapons God has provided for us.

Though it is important to seek care and support from the Quran in the manner prescribed by the prophet Mohammed (PBUH). It is equally important to understand that it is permissible and at times obligatory to seek help from medical practitioners.

Our bodies are ours only in trust, we are obligated to treat them with respect and maintain them the best way in accordance with the holistic approach. Islamic approach to health teaches that there is no contradiction in seeking treatment, care and support from both medical science and permissible spiritual means.
WE STAND IN COMPASSION, HOPE AND LOVE

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) Said; “The parable of the believers in their affection, mercy and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb arches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever” (Bukhari 5665)

People should not just blindly accept rumors and hearsay, but should try to verify what they have heard before forming an opinion. If one fails to do this and believes everything, hearing without any investigation leads to a complete breakdown causing fear, panic and possibly suicide.

It is very important to get factual information regarding HIV, its transmission and treatment. People who are affected need love and care more than sympathy. It is these seemingly smaller points that lead to the establishment and creating of a truly harmonious society.

God the Almighty has great love for His creation. One manifestation of His love is that He desires that all people treat one another with mutual love, compassion and respect, so that they can come to attain His blessings and rewards.

“Verily those who love (to see) a very heinous act was spread among people who believe, for them a painful punishment in the world and at the end.” (Q 19:3)

Photo by Albin Hillert/WCC
REALIZE YOUR DREAMS BY TAKING ARVS

‘Say, O my servants who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins) do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Most Merciful’ – (Q 39:53)

Taking ARVS makes you free from new infections and allows you to take care of your health and body. It ensures that your immune system stays stronger and you that you can live a productive life.

Having HIV does not stop you from realizing your dreams in life. Starting treatment immediately after diagnosis is the first step to taking care of yourself and keeping your immune system strong.

So, as long as you adhere to medication, keep to required diet with a little bit of regular exercise, nothing can stop you from living normal healthy life and successful achieve your career goals and objectives. You can have a family, children and wife. Having HIV is not the end of life and neither is it a death sentence.
ARV'S ARE GOOD FOR YOUR LIFE

Human life is highly valued in Islam; it is considered a gift from Allah. Muslims are not supposed to think that it is their lives which they can do what they want with. Instead, individuals have been entrusted with life by Allah. We are supposed to look after life and not abuse it. A healthy body is a gift from Allah, we are the trustees and therefore we have no right to misuse and abuse it.

Our Prophet Mohammad PBUH has stressed the importance of health at many times. He once said to one of his companions, “O Ibn Abass ask Allah for health in the world and in the next” (Al-Nisai). No supplication is more pleasing to Allah than a request for good health” – (Tirmidh).

The Prophet Dauwud PBUH said “Health is a hidden kingdom” Our bodies are trust from Allah that must be returned one day and we will be asked how we looked after it in this world. Therefore, we should avoid any act which will harm our physical and spiritual health.

Treating HIV with ARV’S is the best way to stay healthy. It helps in stopping new infections and ensures that our normal life continues.
POSITIVE MEDIA MESSAGES ON PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

We cannot slum people living with HIV because of their condition. Any person living with HIV need to be given attention, care, love and affection, so the person can lead their life with dignity. We have no right to judge or condemn them. It does not help to ask if someone is innocent or guilty in this.

People living with HIV need our compassion, our love, and our affection, so we should not be afraid to embrace them.

The Prophet PBUH said: “If you enter the house of a sick person, then only speak good words, for truly the angels will confirm what you say, and they open up the way of heaven to him (Nasai).

Media messages have the potential to reach a large segment of the adolescent population. They can support normative change and also engage the most vulnerable segments of the young people to reduce HIV-associated risk behaviors.

HIV related stigma has harmful effects on people living with HIV and hinders prevention efforts. Large scale media campaign involving faith leaders can be a prevention tool that can assist in stigma reduction.
CARING FOR CHILDREN ORPHANED BY HIV AND AIDS

Prophet PBUH said; “The best house among the Muslims is the house in which orphans are well treated. The worst house among the Muslims is the house in which orphans are ill treated. I and the guardian of the Orphan will be in the Garden like that.” (Indicating his two fingers) – Adab Al-Mufrad

“Therefore, treat not the orphan with oppression” – Q 93:9

Taking care of Orphans has very important place in Islam. Children in communities affected by HIV and who have lost parents and family members are more vulnerable to HIV infections. They lack caregivers, access to school or the ability to stand for their rights.

Children living with or affected by HIV are sometimes also vulnerable to issues of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Children orphaned as a result of HIV should be cared for by their relatives and society as well. Orphans are the responsibility of the society and their basic needs should be fulfilled. It is a moral and religious duty to provide protection for the orphans. The society must ensure that they live their lives happily and rightly, they should have the moral and formal education, and most importantly they should get love and care.

Photo by Albin Hillert/WCC
ADHERENCE IS IMPORTANT FOR ELDERLY MEN LIVING WITH HIV

"And if one of them or both of them reach old age with you, do not say to them a word of disrespect, or scold them but say a generous word to them. And act humbly to them in mercy."

(Q 17: 23-24)

It is important for one to take his HIV medication as prescribed so as to allow treatment to work properly. Treatment with HIV medicine is recommended for everyone living with HIV.

Adherence to medication means taking the drugs at the right times, at the right dose and following any advice about food restrictions. Not taking HIV treatment as required could lead to resistance to drugs which means that the HIV treatment won’t work effectively.

Poor health related behavior among elderly men do put them at risk as well as those of their families. Among the health-related behaviors to be promoted are: keeping all medical appointments and taking prescribed medications.

Some elderly men living with HIV are culturally inclined to some beliefs, or engage in substance abuse, while some are forgetful, these may require regular checking’s by care providers to reinforce positive behaviors, uncover barriers to successful ongoing treatment and facilitate access to services and resources required.
ARVS HELP BUILD MEN’S SELF ESTEEM AND CONFIDENCE

“O my lord, open up my chest (with confidence), and ease my affairs. Untie my tongue so that they may understand me” (Q 20: 25-28)

Self esteem can take a real battering when one sees himself in a negative way and being HIV-positive just adds to that self-image. Low self confidence is directly related to that and it can affect all aspects of life both in public and private.

Self stigma is the main contributor of low self esteem because one stops believing in himself and lowers his confidence level. Sometimes for people living with HIV it is just fear of looking bad infront of people or being judged as an immoral person.

The easiest way of building confidence and improve self esteem is by relying and adhering to the ARVs which will help the body to recover and remain healthy. This ensures the ability to continue normal life routine with confidence.

ARVs builds the mental strength. The minds will stop the negative cycle of thoughts. Continuous use of ARVS helps men build their confidence and self esteem.

FAITH AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVE
HAJJ: A TIME OF HOPE
CAREGIVERS: A SOURCE OF HOPE

“And as for those who strive in our path –we will surely guide them in our ways. And indeed Allah is with those who are of service to others” (Q 29:70)

“Indeed Allah is with those who are righteous and those who do good” (Q 16:129)

Two types of caregivers provide clinical care and supportive services to people living with HIV. Formal caregivers include health professionals, behavioral health specialist and service workers who are trained. Informal caregivers include relatives, spouses/partners and friends who provide in-house care.

While the formal caregivers are trained and compensated for the care giving activities, the informal caregivers perform a variety of roles that help people with HIV adhere to treatment regimens, avoid unnecessary hospital admissions, reduce reliance on formal caregivers, remain at home longer and maintain quality of life.

Traditionally, family members have served as the primary caregivers because HIV care involves more diverse social networks. Many HIV-positive individuals have redefined family boundaries to include lovers, friends, and other chosen kin.

The positive aspects of providing informal HIV care is that it provides the opportunity to experience the positive feelings associated with loving, caring and feeling needed.
MEN HAVE A SPECIAL ROLE IN HIV PREVENTION

“Men are the maintainers of women because Allah has made some of them to excel others and because they spend out of their property” (Q 4:34)

Certain men’s behaviors can put them at risk of HIV, while they are less likely to seek health-care.

When men access HIV prevention and treatment services, there is triple dividend: they protect themselves, they protect their sexual partners and they protect their families.

By enabling men to stay free from HIV, get tested regularly, and start and stay on treatment if HIV-positive, the benefits not only improve male health outcomes, but contribute to declines in new HIV infections.

Men often do not seek health services until it becomes absolutely necessary to do so. Men are important partners in the prevention of HIV and they can largely influence their peers and partners’ behaviors, including promoting access to HIV services.

It is a man who can, through his wisdom, supports his family and prepares the grounds for its happiness. A man can turn the house into a paradise.

FAITH AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVE
HAJJ: A TIME OF HOPE
TESTING TOGETHER PROTECTS FAMILY

“And women shall have rights similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable, but men have a degree (advantage) over them. And Allah is exalted in power, wise” (Q 2:228)

Testing together as a couple helps in many ways. If one partner is HIV positive and the other is not, it opens a discussion about protection and the importance of getting the positive partner on ARV regimen to lower the amount of HIV in his/her body, therefore prevents the risk of transmitting the virus to loved ones.

Testing together is aimed at dispelling dangerous myths and stigma. The couple can deal with the news that either or both are HIV-positive or focus on how to stay safe in future.

Married couples define their lives collectively and have experience in coping together with emerging problems within their marriage.

Pre-testing counseling helps the couple to share out their feelings, anxieties, concerns and worries about HIV infection and disease. This enables them to acknowledge and appreciate each other’s feelings.

Couples and partners living with HIV who are aware of their status can get HIV treatment (ARVs) and remain healthy for many years.

Illustration by Alice Müller