



Discussion Guide

For Adults Working with Teens

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Lesson: Belief in Vulnerability

1. Write the following phrase where everyone can see it: “It will never happen to me.” Use the following questions to guide discussion:
 - Why do you think people believe that nothing bad — like getting in a car accident or getting a disease — will ever happen to them?
 - In what ways does this belief cause people to take risks?
 - Some say teens have a particular tendency to believe that nothing bad will happen to them and to take risks? Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer.
2. Have students read “Living with HIV/AIDS: A Lesson in Protection” on page 4. Use the following questions to guide discussion:
 - Did reading this article increase your belief that you are at risk for contracting HIV/AIDS? Why or why not?
 - Lawrence says that he wishes more people had talked to him about self-worth before he became sexually active. What do you think he means?
 - Why would self-worth have made a difference in terms of his getting a sexually transmitted disease?
 - Do you think the people who have sex with Lawrence now believe that they are at risk for HIV/AIDS?
 - How do you feel about the idea that Lawrence has sex with some partners without ever telling them about his HIV status?
 - Dr. Johnson believes that Lawrence is still fooling himself in believing that he is not taking risks (this time with other people’s lives instead of his own). Do you agree? Why or why not?
 - Why is believing that “it CAN happen to you” important in preventing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases?
3. As a homework assignment, have students work in groups of four. Their task is to create a TV commercial designed to convince viewers that they are at risk for HIV/AIDS. Each group’s commercial will be aimed at a different audience. (They will draw pieces of paper from a hat to determine who is targeting what



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audience). They must use at least one statistic about the spread of HIV/AIDS in their commercial and it must be accurate. Each group will present its commercial during the next class period. Every member of the group must have a role in the commercial. The target audiences are: teen males; teen females; African-American teens; Hispanic teens; Caucasian teens; Homosexual teens;

Heterosexual teens; urban teens; suburban teens; rural teens. (Any of these target audiences can be altered to better reflect your school/organization's teen population.)

This Discussion Guide lesson was written by Nora Gelperin, M.Ed. For additional lessons, go to http://answer.rutgers.edu/page/lesson_plans.

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