

SO, YOU FOUND OUT YOU'RE HIV POSITIVE

For many, the world changes the moment one receives the information that they are HIV positive.

The way we respond and the stages we go through as we move toward acceptance are entirely our own - no one person is the same.

However, it is important to know that you are not alone in this world. There are those of us who have traveled the same path and have experienced the same wide-range of emotions.

The most important thing is that those of us who are HIV positive begin to take charge of our futures. There are things that we can do, starting today, that can keep us healthy. By taking the right steps, our days can be filled with power, joy and, above all, health!

Click below and find out how.

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Deal With The Emotions!

Before we begin to deal with the physical effects of our HIV status, it is important to address our emotional needs. In fact, doing this is one of the most significant steps you can take as you begin this journey. You may go through many different emotions- denial, anger, depression. Just know that it is normal to experience what you are feeling. However, once you begin to acknowledge them, you will be on the road to acceptance. It is with acceptance that we can begin to cope.

Denial...

“Whatever. It doesn't matter what that test said- I feel fine. There's no way I have it.”

Addressing your emotions might be difficult at first because you might not even want to acknowledge your new status. For many, experiencing *denial* is the first stage. Feeling that the test must be wrong or that there was a mix-up at the lab are common first reactions.

But the more you go on denying your status, the more problematic it can become in the long-run. Waiting to seek medical treatment until you start to exhibit actual symptoms might mean that your health is seriously jeopardized. Working on addressing your fears and your concerns early on in your diagnosis will most likely assure you a longer, healthier life. Furthermore, denying your status and living your life as if you don't have HIV can potentially put others at risk of contracting HIV.

Anger...

“How the hell did this happen to me?! I hate myself for this.”

Feeling anger about your status is normal. But instead of channeling that anger into excessive, harmful behaviors (overeating, indiscriminate sex, impulsive and aggressive behavior towards others), channel that anger into behavior—counseling, medical attention, support group participation, etc.—that helps you to fight the disease.

Depression...

“What's the point? I give up. Who cares?”

There is no doubt that depression will come and go (and come and go again) throughout the course of our battle with HIV. Again, to feel depressed is completely understandable and normal - we've all been there. You need to be proactive in fighting your depression though. Beginning to seek medical attention, attending support groups or individual therapy are ways that depression might be alleviated. Professionals are there to help us address depression before it reaches drastic levels. It might sound strange, but in some cases depression can be a “good” sign, indicating that we are moving towards accepting our HIV status.

Acceptance...

“OK. I have this. Now, how am I going to fight it?”

Acceptance does not mean “giving up,” it means addressing the situation as it is. Once you accept your HIV-positive status, you can deal proactively with the disease. Keep in mind, though, that acceptance may not rid you of anxiety. When you begin to realize your situation, you may start to think of death and this can raise your anxiety level. It is very important to be aware of this, so you don't end up further compromising your medical condition. If you experience anxiety, take steps to address it. In addition to a healthy diet and lifestyle,

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talking about your emotions and your status is a great plan - reaching out really helps.

Rohypnol (Roofies, Rope, Ruffies, R2, Ruffles, Roche, Forget-pill, Micky) It is a potent tranquilizer which produces a sedative affect, amnesia, muscle relaxation, and slowing of the motor (movement) response. **The pill is colorless, odorless, and tasteless and dissolves without leaving any traces.** It takes effect approximately 10-20 minutes after ingestion. Rohypnol can be added to any liquid (effect lasting two to eight hours) but when added to alcohol it produces amnesia (effect lasting 8-24 hours). Some people use Rohypnol an alcohol for a rapid and dramatic high. In social settings, be aware of those individuals who seem extremely intoxicated after consuming only a small amount of alcohol, they might need your help.

GHB (Liquid Ecstasy, Liquid X, Scoop, Easy Lay) It is an odorless, colorless, liquid depressant with anesthetic qualities. GHB is usually distributed as a sodium salt in powder or tablet form commonly dissolved in water. The drug gives the feeling of relaxation, tranquility, sensuality, and loss of inhibitions (especially for women). GHB takes effect 10-15 minutes after ingestion and lasts two to three hours unless combined with alcohol, where effect may last 20-30 hours. Large doses can induce sudden sleep within five to 10 minutes.

Ketamine ("K", Special K, Vitamin K, Ket) It is a new drug that has been added to the predator/Date Rape drug category. It is a powerful anesthetic that is used as an animal tranquilizer. It is available in liquid, powder or pill form. Ketamine causes hallucinations, amnesia and dissociation (a feeling where the mind seems separated from the body) making it attractive for potential date rapists.

The Power of Positive Thinking

All of your feelings, beliefs, and knowledge are based on your internal thoughts, both conscious and subconscious. Whether you exercise them or not, you have choices. You can be positive or negative, enthusiastic or bored, active or passive. Abraham Lincoln wasn't wrong when he said "most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be."

How you deal with your HIV-positive status all depends on your attitude and your approach to this new situation in your life. There is no doubt that dealing with an HIV-positive status requires strength and patience. Remember, reliance on a divine or human power can help center you and allow you to face life's challenges.

Reaching Out

You must be determined to put your emotional well-being first! Seeking emotional support not only helps prevent you from feeling alone, but it also allows you to openly and safely share your feelings and receive practical information that can prolong your life.

There are many different people who you can talk to:

- Friends, family, boyfriends, girlfriends
- Other HIV positive individuals
- [Counselors](#) – (one-on-one)
- **[SUPPORT GROUPS](#)**

There are support groups that meet on a regular basis to talk about common experiences. They can be “closed” (once a group is formed, no new members are accepted), or “open” (new members are allowed to join at any time). Support groups are usually led by a facilitator who may be a professional counselor or a member of the group.

Regardless of where you seek emotional support, know that your ability to talk about your feelings and concerns is an invaluable tool in your fight against HIV. Once you reach a healthy and balanced level of acceptance, you can begin to fully cope with your future.

Furthermore, the earlier you know and accept your status, the faster you can seek the [TREATMENT](#) that can save and better the quality of your life. There are many programs out there that can provide you with the appropriate treatment. In fact, many of these programs are funded by the government and are free-of-charge. Yes, *free*.

You need to constantly remind yourself that staying healthy (mentally and physically) is your most important responsibility as you fight your battle with HIV. Seek out the resources that are out there... Reach for the hand that is ready to help.

- **Sources Cited**

None

- **Glossary Items**

None

- **STOP The Silence Website Elements**

THE HOOK UP

See STOP The Silence, "The Hook UP"