

# OP HIV LANGUAGE GUIDE

## Use intentional and thoughtful language when talking about HIV.

The first letter in HIV stands for human. That's exactly how every person living with HIV wants to be treated, like a human. Language matters and using words like 'clean' infers that people with HIV are 'dirty' and this isn't true, but is also disrespectful. This can also be true about asking 'How did you get HIV?'. It's a bit like asking 'Were you a planned child or an accident?'. Sure, we are curious creatures, but often there is a level of social judgement in those kinds of questions. It doesn't matter how someone got HIV, or if you were planned, we are all just humans trying to live our best life.

Stigmatising Language ("Try not to use")	Preferred Language ("Use this instead")
HIV-infected person HIV or AIDS patient, AIDS or HIV carrier Positives or HIVers	Person living with HIV; person with HIV; PLHIV Never use "infected" when referring to a person
Died of AIDS, to die of AIDS	Died of AIDS-related illness, AIDS-related complications, end-stage HIV
AIDS virus	HIV (AIDS is a diagnosis, not a virus; it cannot be transmitted)
Full-blown AIDS	There is no medical definition for this phrase; simply use the term AIDS, or Stage 3 HIV
HIV virus	This is redundant; simply use the term HIV
HIV infected	Living with HIV or diagnosed with HIV
Became infected with HIV	Contracted or acquired HIV; diagnosed with HIV
Victim, innocent victim, sufferer, contaminated, infected	Person living with HIV; survivor; warrior Never use the term "infected" when referring to a person
AIDS test	HIV test (AIDS is a diagnosis; there is no such thing as an AIDS test)
Catch AIDS, contract AIDS, transmit AIDS, catch HIV	AIDS diagnosis; developed AIDS; acquire HIV (AIDS is a diagnosis and cannot be passed from one person to the next)
HIV risk, at risk for HIV	HIV relevance; reasons for HIV prevention; vulnerable to HIV; chance of acquiring HIV; likelihood of acquiring HIV
Unprotected sex	Condomless sex, Sex without barriers or treatment-as-prevention methods,
Death sentence, fatal condition, or life-threatening condition	HIV is a chronic and manageable health condition when people are able to access care and treatment
"Tainted" blood; "dirty" needles Clean, as in "I am clean, are you"	Blood containing HIV; used needles Referring to yourself or others as being "clean" suggests that those living with HIV are dirty. Avoid this term.
A drug that prevents HIV infection	A drug that prevents the transmission or acquisition of HIV