

One + One

Study Guide



"It gives us a glimpse of people who have chosen to love in spite of fear. Painfully human, wondrous and inspiring, the film forces viewers to examine their own misconceptions of what it is like living with HIV...As an educator, I highly recommend this film for social work, psychology and other human services curricula."

*- Phil Meyer, M.S.W., L.C.S.W.
School of Public Policy and Social Research
University of California, Los Angeles*

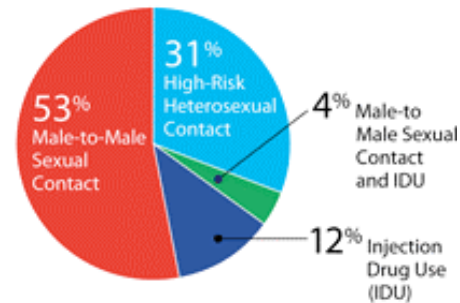
Introduction

One + One is a powerful 27-minute documentary by S. Leo Chiang about serodiscordant couples (of mixed HIV status) living with HIV/AIDS. John and Noel are in a panic; the condom broke during sex, and John is HIV-positive. Joanne breaks down when the counselor asks about her HIV-positive husband Robert. In their six-year marriage, Joanne has been tested twice a year, each time more stressful than the last.

One + One takes an unflinching look at the lives of these two couples of mixed HIV status—one straight, one gay—as they navigate the physical and emotional minefield inherent in every serodiscordant relationship. This poignant film gives insights into how serodiscordant couples cope with the difficult task of living with HIV on a daily basis, and the deep bond they share because of it.

HIV/AIDS Background

ESTIMATED NEW HIV INFECTIONS,
BY TRANSMISSION CATEGORY, 2006



- Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention

HIV is a virus that causes AIDS. HIV stands for Human Immuno-deficiency Virus - the virus can only infect human beings and the virus causes deficiency in the immune system of the human body. Because it is a virus, it is incapable of reproducing by itself; it reproduces by taking over the machinery of the human cell.

AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. It is an acquired condition because it is not transmitted through the genes. The condition is called syndrome because someone with AIDS may experience a wide range of different diseases and opportunistic infections.

*In the United States, more than 980,000 cases of AIDS have been reported to the government. About 40,000 men and women in the U.S. get HIV each year. HIV is transmitted through blood, semen, vaginal fluids, and breast milk. It is *not* transmitted by simple casual contact such as kissing, sharing drinking glasses and hugging, or through the following bodily fluids: saliva, tears, sweat, feces, or urine.*

Through the use of HIV medicines, cesarean delivery, and refraining from breastfeeding, an infected pregnant woman can reduce the chance of her baby contracting HIV from about 25% to 2%.

HIV tests are available at Planned Parenthood health centers and most hospitals and health clinics. In addition, local, state, and federal health departments offer free testing. HIV home test kits can be purchased in drugstores or at Home Access (www.homeaccess.com).

- Sources: Planned Parenthood and the SF Aids Foundation, acquired November 2008

The Age of AIDS

A great resource for your unit on HIV/AIDS might be the PBS-created interactive timeline that illustrates the science, politics, activism, cultural milestones and spread of the AIDS pandemic:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/aids/cron/>

Serodiscordant Q&A

1) *What brings about discordant status where a sexually active couple may have one negative and the other positive? Is the negative partner truly negative?*

Response from Dr. Remien

Transmission of HIV is dependent on numerous factors (e.g., the strain of virus, the general health of both people, the sex behaviors that take place, genetic factors, etc. etc.). Transmission of HIV does not occur every time there is exposure to the virus. It is possible that someone can be infected with HIV for awhile before they develop antibodies and test HIV+ on an antibody test. However, in general, after a few months of having been exposed to the virus, if the test is negative, that person can consider his or herself to be HIV-.

2) *How is it possible that my sister got pregnant by her hiv/aids husband and she and the baby tested negative? Is it that the sperm does not carry the hiv virus? Please give me a good explanation on this.*

Response from Dr. Remien

HIV is mostly carried in other cells of the seminal fluid, not the sperm itself. The transmission of HIV is dependent on many factors and it does not happen every time that an infected person has unprotected sex with and uninfected person. However, it always "possible" when there is unprotected intercourse within a mixed status couple. A baby can only be born HIV+ if the mother is HIV+ herself. Your sister has thus far been lucky but cannot count on that to continue if unprotected intercourse continues with her HIV+ husband.

3) *I am an internist and frequently confronted with a situation where one spouse is HIV infected. They need advice on how safe it is to have sex if they follow advice on condoms etc. In some situations the non-infected partner insists on abstinence and seeks sexual pleasure elsewhere leading to breakup of marriages. What advice can be given?*

Response from Dr. Remien

While it is not fool-proof, consistent and correct condom use in HIV serodiscordant couples is a highly effective strategy for reducing risk of HIV transmission. Of course, both members of such couples need to feel comfortable about sexual intimacy. Besides having the basic information which health care providers can give them, I suggest that couples trying to cope with all of the issues related to being a "Serodiscordant Couple" seek couples counseling from a therapist who is familiar with the issues.

*- Source: The Body's Forum on serodiscordant couples,
<http://www.thebody.com/Forums/AIDS/Couples/index.html>*



"ONE + ONE presents an opportunity to witness the unique psychosocial issues faced by two HIV serodiscordant couples. This compassionate and sensitive documentary would enhance training programs; it is a valuable educational tool. Through the gracious openness of the couples, the viewer learns intellectually and emotionally."

- Mickie Robbins

LMFT - Mental Health Department, AIDS Project Los Angeles

Discussion Questions

Before viewing the film

1. What does serodiscordant mean?
2. What might be the challenges that sero-discordant couples face? How are these challenges different from those that any other couples face? How are they the same?

After viewing the film

1. Noel, fully aware that John was HIV positive, decided to date and be with John. Joanne, too, fell in love with Robert after learning that he was HIV positive. What are your thoughts on Noel and Joanne's decisions? If you fell in love with someone who was HIV positive, what would you do?
2. Challenges, such as stress and anxiety, exist in any relationship, whether straight or gay. But how are these challenges different for couples with mixed HIV statuses? What additional fears do couples with mixed HIV statuses face? Give specific examples from the characters of the film.
3. Joanne's mother doesn't know that Robert is HIV positive (although both Joanne and Robert suspect that she may). Why did Joanne, Robert, and Joanne's sister decide not to tell her? What is Robert's worst fear about telling Joanne's mother about his HIV status?
4. When - in the dating process - do you believe an HIV positive individual should inform his or her date about their HIV status? Explain your answer.
5. Why might a couple with mixed HIV statuses decide not to disclose to the public their HIV statuses to others? What are their fears or worries? How might society view such a couple?

Resources and Useful Links

New Day Films

Visit our distributor, New Day Films, to purchase *One + One* for educational use and to download the study guide:

<http://www.newday.com/films/ToYouSweetheartAloha.html>

New Day Digital site

Go to this site to pay per view *One + One*:

<http://www.newdaydigital.com>

HIV/AIDS Quiz

How much do you really know about HIV/AIDS? This quiz is also included below:

<http://www.thebody.com/content/art33136.html>

HIV, Sex, and Risk among HIV Serodiscordant Heterosexual Couples

A study by UCSF Center for AIDS prevention where researchers followed 175 serodiscordant couples over a 10-year period (1985-1995). Participants received behavioral risk assessments, laboratory tests, and physical exams every 6 months, as well as couple and one-on-one counseling about safer sex practices.

<http://www.caps.ucsf.edu/projects/CApartners/CPSLAposter.php>

FAQs about AIDS - Planned Parenthood

This site provides a list of frequently asked questions about AIDS, such as what HIV/AIDS is, what the symptoms of HIV/AIDS are, how HIV is spread, and what kinds of behaviors are low and high risk.

<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-topics/stds-hiv-safer-sex/hiv-aids-4264.htm>

FAQs about AIDS - The San Francisco AIDS Foundation

Another list of frequently asked questions about AIDS, including what the differences are between HIV and AIDS, how long after a possible exposure should one get tested for HIV, and what it means if one tests positive.

<http://www.thebody.com/content/whatis/art46391.html>

Magnetic Love

A program of STOP AIDS in San Francisco that provides a comfortable space for serodiscordant couples to talk about things:

http://www.stopaids.org/programs/positive_force/maglove/

ASO Finder

Find an AIDS Service Organization near you:

<http://www.asofinder.com/>



*The AIDS red ribbon
campaign began in 1991*

HIV/AIDS Quiz

How Much Do You Know about HIV/AIDS?

*Source: American Association for World Health
(<http://www.thebody.com/content/art33136.html>)*

1. *T or F: AIDS is a disease without a cure spread mainly by unprotected sex or sharing needles with someone who has HIV.*

2. *If you were infected with HIV, you might show symptoms*
 - A. *within a few weeks*
 - B. *within a year*
 - C. *in 10 or more years*
 - D. *any of the above*

3. *T or F: New HIV/AIDS drug treatments have lowered the number of AIDS-related deaths in the United States.*

4. *T or F: If you are HIV positive and pregnant, there are medicines you can take that can greatly decrease the chances of your baby having HIV.*

5. *HIV is not present in:*
 - A. *semen and vaginal secretions*
 - B. *sweat*
 - C. *blood*
 - D. *breast milk*

6. *T or F: Only drug users and gay men need to worry about becoming infected with HIV.*

7. *You can become infected with HIV by:*
 - A. *sharing utensils with or drinking from the same cup as someone with HIV*
 - B. *mosquito bites*
 - C. *hugging someone with HIV*
 - D. *none of the above*

8. *T or F: Using protection such as a latex barrier when performing sex (vaginal, oral or anal) lowers the risk of HIV transmission.*

9. *T or F: Women will not get HIV if they use birth control pills and/or a diaphragm.*

10. *How many people worldwide are newly infected with HIV each day?*
 - A. *fewer than 500*
 - B. *1,000*
 - C. *more than 5,000*
 - D. *more than 15,000*

Answers: 1) T 2) D 3) T 4) T 5) B 6) F 7) D 8) T 9) F 10) D