The 7,000

Some featured responses and reactions to Mark S. King's essay in our June issue.

June 25, 2018 By Joe Mejía

As POZ contributor Mark S. King noted in "The Truth About the 7,000" in the April/May 2018 issue of the magazine, AIDS-related complications extend beyond the physical. King's essay, inspired by the death of his friend and fellow HIV advocate Reshaud Olukayode, at age 33, from AIDS-related illness in November 2017, struck a chord. Many readers saw something of themselves in the 7,000 people who die of causes attributable to HIV every year despite living in an era of effective treatment for the virus. Citing depression and shame as barriers to adherence to meds, a majority of online readers sympathized with the emotional exhaustion they suspect might have contributed to Olukayode's decision to stop taking his meds. But some commenters bemoaned the fact that someone with both awareness and access on his side couldn't see his way to adherence and viral suppression. Whatever side you're on, though, one thing remains clear: Fighting HIV globally and individually requires a holistic approach.

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