Letters—January/February 2009

January 1, 2009

Encore! Encore!

In the profile "Coming Out Again" (October 2008), POZ's deputy editor Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr. wrote about coming out to his beloved Latino family—the first time as gay and the second time as HIV positive. His courage touched many of you:

Your story captured [such] true emotion. Not many people realize the mental aspect of the disease. For me, the worst part has been the fear of people finding out. Thanks for sharing—it makes me (and many others I am sure) feel less "frustrated," for lack of a better word.

Privateguyatl
City Withheld

"Coming Out Again" was a powerful and well-written personal essay. It took a lot of courage for Mr. Gutierrez to bare his heart and soul to the world. I commend him for accepting his situation and moving forward.

Montell
New Jersey

Oriol, your courage is inspiring. We've known each other since graduate school, and I've always considered you a friend, someone I respect. I had no idea—none of us did—and I can only imagine the pain you felt keeping this inside. I admire you for having the courage to come out twice, for taking that "risk."

Neil
City Withheld

Golden Girls

"Greying the Blues" (October 2008), Josh Sparber's article about depression in the aging HIV community, sparked similar sufferers to write in:

The article "Greying the Blues" was very good to read. I'm also HIV positive and over 50, and sometimes I go through depression too. Reading articles about women like me really helps me get through my life. I also find that listening to music and meditating [work] too.

Brenda Turner
New York

I have been HIV positive since 2003, and depression is one of the things I deal with. The therapy I get at [my local ASO] Iris House is very important to me because I can come every time [to the groups] and vent with the ladies. My therapist Dr. Melendez [mentioned in the article] is always a big help to me. Where would I be today if I didn't know about Iris House? Where would I go to talk to people who understand?

Esther Solis
New York

I can personally relate to this article because I have anxiety as well as depression. I was diagnosed with HIV in 1995, and since then the depression has kicked in. I didn't want medication [because of] the stereotype of being crazy, but now I know depression is common. What helps me is the buddy plan [described in the article], getting out and going to groups, talking among others in the same boat as myself. Just talking about whatever the problem may be is helpful; it helps a great deal. I will probably still be depressed from time to time, but at least I have tools to deal with the depression. And today, I feel good.

Debra McMikle
New York

Warrior Fighter
"Tribal Council" (September 2008)—a call for readers to apply to be contestants on CBS's competition reality show Survivor*—shows how great minds think alike:*

I recently picked up your magazine and was thrilled to see "Tribal Council." [It really] hit home. I thought about submitting an application to *Survivor 17* but wasn't sure if I should. Well, *Survivor 18* will cast sometime in the future, and I would love to apply then. I will also be celebrating 18 years of being HIV positive, happy, healthy and full of life. I want to get the message out: Being positive is not an end—you still can win.

C.L.
Chicago

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/Letters-Jan-Feb-2009-15865-9963