Standing Against Stigma

A new global network seeks best practices for reducing HIV-related stigma.

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Stigma often stops people from getting tested for HIV. It hinders prevention and education efforts, undermines the health of people living with HIV, and fuels mother-to-child transmission. In short, stigma contributes to the global pandemic. It would make sense, then, that reducing stigma would help fight AIDS.

That's the thinking behind the Stigma Action Network (SAN), which was launched in July during the XVIII International AIDS Conference in Vienna by the International Center for Research on Women with a start-up grant from the M A C AIDS Fund.

In its first year, SAN will develop an interactive website where advocates, researchers and policy makers can share ideas and best practices about reducing HIV-related stigma and discrimination.

"[This network will] enable people involved in program design, research, development and advocacy [around reducing] HIV stigma to share information, tools and experiences," says SAN coordinator Anne Stangl, PhD. The site will also allow users to discuss how to respond to research developments and policy gaps and how to coordinate and expand their efforts, she says.

In other words, the Stigma Action Network is a much-needed clearinghouse to clear away stigma.

Go to stigmaactionnetwork.org *for more information.*

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