The Four Ds and Ps

September 5, 2016 By Benjamin Ryan

Christopher Murray, LCSW-R, is a psychotherapist with considerable experience helping people with HIV live better lives. He's also a long-term survivor of the virus. He has distilled four major life challenges (the four Ds) that many people with HIV may face. Murray calls the solutions to these challenges the four Ps.

The Four Ds:

Disclosure

Telling people you're HIV positive can be difficult because it may result in rejection, stigmatization or discrimination.

Dating

Murray says that in the age of meeting people on apps and online, "Having a bit of a rhinoceros hide is important and is something you can develop."

Depression

People with HIV have high rates of this form of mental illness. Seeking mental health support can help treat the condition.

Drugs

Substance abuse is common among people living with HIV and can have negative effects on physical and emotional health.

The Four Ps:

Patience

This means having patience with yourself and with the everyday realities and challenges of your life and acknowledging that change comes over time—it's a process.

Power

Find sources of personal empowerment and develop a sense of control over outcomes that affect you in life. You may find such power through your relationships, through professional sources of support such as a social worker or through your community as a whole.

People

Social isolation can be a big problem for people living with HIV. It’s important to stay connected and have a support system through friends or family, a support group or other forms of social connection.

Purpose

It’s also important to have a sense of drive and mission about your life—whether through your work, taking care of your family, volunteer work or other purposeful endeavors.

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