



Stop Shaming Our Youth With HIV/AIDS

March 15, 2013 By [David Mixner](#)

✖ Over the last several weeks, coming to my attention were stories about people being extremely hard on young LGBT youth who had sero-converted to an HIV/AIDS status. The trauma and fear they must feel has to be overwhelming. Being young and discovering you have a disease is never an easy road. This is the time that any individual needs love, compassion and assistance.

However, increasingly our youth who discover they are HIV positive are finding hostile families and friends who react in horror that they had sero-converted. Often they demand to know how they could have been 'so stupid' and 'why didn't they practice safe sex'. Those individuals filled with indignation and judgement often shame the person receiving the news instead of offering a helping hand.

This has to stop for the well being of individuals but also to continue an effective fight against the epidemic.

First of all, people are human and young people especially feel invincible. Like young people who drink and drive the thought never crosses their mind that they could be the one in an accident. Young people don't think in terms of disease, death and dying. Youthful passion often clouds youthful judgement. Love is literally blind at times and creates situations where missteps simply take place.

Second, by shaming our young for contracting HIV/AIDS in this age of massive information about safe sex forces HIV/AIDS back into the closet. They keep secret about sero-converting and often are too ashamed to share with future partners or friends. As a result, many people feel they don't know anyone with HIV and that is no longer a priority. The fact of the matter is that because of retroviral drugs it is quite possible to close that closet door around having HIV.

Third, the shaming is stopping young people from getting tested and receiving early treatment which will increase their odds of a long protective life. They live in fear of being discovered as having made a mistake, a mishap taking place or using poor judgement. They stay silent and avoid any information that they desperately need at such a time.

The LGBT community has not only pioneered the major reforms, medical break through's and treatment and care around HIV/AIDS. Our journey with HIV/AIDS, while filled with tears, has been one of compassion, knowledge and courage. Now is not the time to forget those qualities as the infection rates increase among your young.

Hold your judgement and don't shame anyone. Simply put 'shit happens'. Instead smile, give a hug, extend a hand of assistance and show love and compassion. Our young in these situations will need us more than ever.

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<http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/stop-shaming-our-youth>