KEY FINDINGS

Stigma is lower among those with greater knowledge about HIV and AIDS.

Knowledge is higher and stigma lower among older youth.

Knowledge was higher among those who used computers frequently and lower among those who spent more time in religious organizations and youth centres.

HOW CAN WE REDUCE STIGMA AND IMPROVE KNOWLEDGE?

- Improving knowledge and debunking myths could encourage HIV prevention methods and reduce stigma.
- Increase resources to support culturally competent, comprehensive sexual health education in schools and through other youth-friendly media (e.g., electronic media).
- Partnerships between faith communities, youth service organizations, public health, and the AIDS Committee of Windsor should be sustained to develop and support programmes to increase knowledge about HIV and AIDS and reduce stigma.
- Find ways for PHA to interact with youth.
- Include parents and community leaders in education programmes.

How is HIV transmitted?

- HIV can be found in certain bodily fluids (e.g., blood, semen & pre-ejaculate, vaginal fluids, breast milk).
- HIV can be transmitted through risky activities (e.g., unprotected sex, sharing needles, mother to child transmission) and direct access to the bloodstream through cuts, tears, and IV needles.

REFERENCES AND ELECTRONIC COPIES OF THIS FACT SHEET ARE AVAILABLE AT:

- http://www.aidswindsor.org/Programs-and-Services/african-caribbean-services.html
- http://www.accho.ca/


This project would not have been possible without the work and commitment of Michael Antwi, Danait Asgedom, Lydia Chan, Rebecca Friesen, Tamara Hurst, Tola Mbulaheni, Karen Metcaife, Robert Mihan, Raulangane (David) Mungwete, Pauline Nash, Sanford Tyndale, the Youth Advisory Committee, all the Windsor/Essex youth, community members, and community leaders who participated in the study. Many thanks to Chris Carriere for his graphic design and OHTN for their generous support.

For information on HIV/AIDS and HIV testing, go to:

- AIDS and Sexual Health Infoline (1-800-668-2437 or http://sexualhealthontario.ca/)
- https://as0411.ca/
- http://www.acby.info
- http://www.aidswindsor.org
- http://www.accho.ca

HIV STIGMA & KNOWLEDGE

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), this community-based research project identified factors that (a) contribute to infection with the human immune-deficiency virus (HIV) and other sexual health outcomes among African, Caribbean, Black, and mixed youth, and (b) reduce vulnerability.

WHAT WE DID

- Survey 543 youth
- Focus groups 57 youth 25 adults
- Community mapping 43 youth
- Interview 2 youth 12 adults

Where? Windsor & Essex County, Ontario.
Actually yeah, for the most part it does (have to be through sex) unless they’re born with it…maybe they caught it, I don’t know from somewhere else.

You cannot smoke, share clothes, or even shake hands with someone who has HIV. You can get HIV from sharing cups, cutlery, etc.

You can get HIV even if you’re wearing a condom during sex.

In focus groups, when asked about personal contact with people living with HIV, youth consistently expressed concerns indicative of stigmatizing attitudes:

- They would refuse to sleep in the same bed as someone who is HIV positive.
- Those who would sleep in the same bed would disinfect everything immediately after.
- Some would lend clothes to someone who is HIV positive, but would never wear them again.
- They would not let someone who is HIV positive babysit their children.

Some youth believe that HIV can only be transmitted through sex.

Many youth believe that HIV is transmitted through casual contact:

- “You cannot smoke, share clothes, or even shake hands with someone who has HIV. You can get HIV from sharing cups, cutlery, etc.”

Many youth do not trust that condoms can prevent HIV transmission.

"You can get HIV even if you’re wearing a condom during sex.”