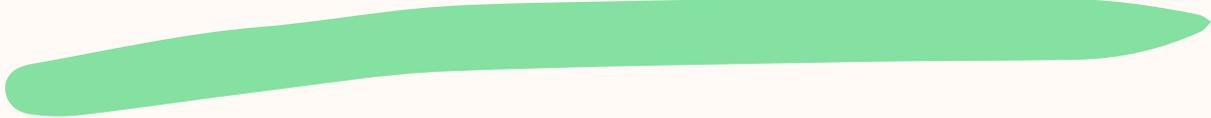


Let's talk **HIV**
and stigma.



HIV stands for **Human Immunodeficiency Virus.**



HIV is a virus that weakens the immune system and its defense against certain illnesses, infections and diseases.

You can have HIV and **not know it.**
That's why it's so important to get tested.

HIV stigma is negative attitudes and beliefs about people living with HIV.

For example, the belief that only certain groups of people can get HIV or the feeling that people deserve to get HIV because of their choices.

One of the main causes of HIV stigma is **fear** of HIV. For some, their ideas of what HIV is comes from images that are from the 1980s. This has changed drastically and we have learned a lot about HIV since then.

There are still many **misconceptions** about how HIV is passed and what it means to live with HIV today.

HIV can be passed through sex, by sharing used needles or other equipment to inject drugs, get tattoos or body piercings, or breastfeeding.

HIV can't be passed by shaking hands, hugs or kisses, coughs or sneezes, toilet seats, or eating food from a person living with HIV. And no, having HIV doesn't mean you have AIDS. These are misconceptions and cause HIV stigma.

HIV stigma is harmful to people living with HIV and prevents people from getting tested and knowing their status.



Anyone can get HIV. The earlier you get tested, the earlier you can get connected to treatment.

Effective treatment exists, making HIV manageable and resulting in a long, healthy life.

Adherence to treatment can bring your HIV viral load (the amount of HIV in the blood) to undetectable.

This means that you can't pass HIV to your sex partner(s).

We call this
Undetectable = Untransmittable
or U=U.

The only way to know if you have HIV is to get tested. Make it part of your routine health care.

To get connected to HIV testing, call ACNL at 709-579-8656, ask your family doctor or nurse practitioner, visit a local sexual health clinic, or proceed to your nearest walk in clinic.