

Talking with Your GSA about HIV/AIDS

- **Most importantly, talk about it, talk about it, talk about it. HIV/AIDS continues to be a major health concern for youth (all youth) and it's completely preventable. Be Smart, Be Safe, Be Tested.**
 - **The number of HIV+ youth is increasing and the only way that this will change is if youth are educated, access HIV testing and take steps to protect themselves.**
 - **Talking about HIV can be a difficult discussion to start. Have a video or article about HIV at a meeting and have a discussion about it. Invite an HIV+ person, and/or professional working in the HIV field, to come talk to your group. Make sure that your GSA knows that HIV is not just a "gay thing" and that HIV does not discriminate (HIV rates are higher amongst men who have sex with men in the US so it's an important issue for GSAs to address.....but infection rates world wide show 50% of those infected are women, and one of the fastest growing infection rates in the US is amongst women).**
- **Encourage your friends/GSA members/fellow students to have HIV Testing done if they are at risk.**
 - **Know where testing sites and when they do testing in your area and have this information available to students. (find this information at the following link <http://www.hivtest.org> in Madison Youth Services of Southern WI also offers free/anonymous HIV testing)**
 - **Don't make accusations about somebody implying they "need" to be tested.....instead encourage everybody to be tested if they have had any risk.**
- **Coordinate an event in your school around a date that is recognized for HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness.**
 - **December 1st is World AIDS Day. Have a panel of professionals and/or HIV+ person do a presentation in your school. Distribute red ribbons to teachers and students with information including local and worldwide statistics of HIV/AIDS.**
 - **June 27th is National HIV Testing Day. Distribute HIV testing information to students. See if you can create posters for the national event and place them around your school.**

- **Be a resource for classmates regarding services for HIV Prevention and Treatment.**
 - **Know where to get information or answers to questions other students might have about HIV. Two good websites to search for basic, and advanced, information are www.aidsinfonet.org and www.thebody.com**
 - **Know organizations in your community that help those living with HIV as well as HIV Prevention services.**

- **Know and encourage risk reduction when it comes to HIV (as well as other STIs and pregnancy prevention).**
 - **Have safer sex materials available to other students (condoms, dental dams, lubrication and female condoms). If you can't distribute or have these in your school, make sure you know community resources where youth can get free supplies.**
 - **Encourage your school to have inclusive sex education instead of abstinence only education. While abstinence is the only 100% way to avoid Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), youth need to know prevention if they are having sex.**

- **Have a fundraiser or volunteer time as a group to your local AIDS Service Organization (AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin or AIDS Network).**
 - **Organize your GSA to have a team in the Madison or Milwaukee AIDS Walk, volunteer for the annual AIDS Network cycles Together (ACT) Ride as crew members/day volunteers or get a team of riders together. (Wisconsin AIDS Service Organizations www.arcw.org and www.aidsnetwork.org)**
 - **Have a baked goods or red ribbon sale or simply ask students to bring in donations, and make a group donation to your local AIDS Service Organization.**
 - **Contact your local AIDS Service Organization and see what your GSA can do to help. Many times they have simple tasks that need to be done like putting together mailings, creating safer sex kits or they may have special needs that a small group of people would be perfect for.**

