Words have power.

We need to talk about HIV—but we need to do it in a way that protects and respects the humanity and dignity of those living with HIV. Language that implies judgment or shame fuels stigma, which kills people—and keeps the epidemic alive.

**Replace these**

- HIV-infected [person, parent, etc.]
- HIV or AIDS patient
- infected; infect [with HIV]
- died of AIDS
- full-blown AIDS
- risky or unprotected sex

**...with these**

- [person, parent, etc.] living with HIV
- diagnosed with HIV; contracted HIV; acquired HIV; transmit HIV
- died of AIDS-related complications
- This is not a medical condition. Use AIDS or stage 3 HIV.
- Be specific: e.g., condomless sex. See back of card for more
We need to talk about HIV—but we need to do it in a way that educates and encourages understanding. When talking or writing about HIV-related issues or people living with HIV, consider sharing some of these facts.

**Share these facts:**

- A person living with HIV who takes their antiretroviral medications as prescribed can reduce the amount of virus in their blood to an undetectable level, allowing them to live a normal, healthy life.

- **Undetectable=untransmittable:** a person who maintains an undetectable viral load at least 6 months cannot transmit the virus to sexual partners, even without condoms. (For more, see uequalsu.org)

- Though 35 states criminalize people living with HIV for consensual sexual activities, criminalization has never been shown to be effective at preventing transmission. In fact, research shows it to be counterproductive to efforts to end the epidemic, fueling stigma and discouraging testing, treatment, and disclosure.

- Success at reducing new transmissions has been achieved by improving access to care and services needed to stay in care (like housing, mental health, transportation, etc.); by engaging people living with HIV in leadership roles in efforts to end the epidemic; and by addressing factors that make people vulnerable to HIV, like poverty, racism, transphobia, homophobia, and discrimination.

*Learn more at pwn-usa.org*