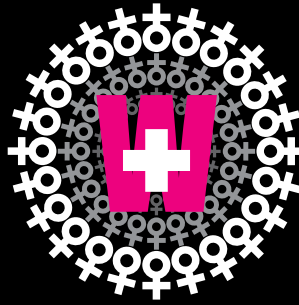


## Discussion Guide



**PWN**  
cares



*Undetectable Equals Untransmittable*

*This discussion guide is designed to be just that--a guide. You don't need to use all of it. As a facilitator, you can pick and choose which questions to ask. Questions are in bold italics, marked "Q". Facilitation notes and suggestions (not necessarily to be read aloud) are in italics.*

**For more information about the PWNCares series and for links to stream or download the PWNCares video, visit [pwn-usa.org/pwncares](http://pwn-usa.org/pwncares).**

## Active Listening Activity

*This can be done either as a large group activity or a partner activity. If as a partner activity, you can use or adapt this script below.*

Turn to the person next to you. We're going to do a short activity. Practice active listening when you're not speaking. That means when you're listening, you're not practicing what you're saying. You are truly listening to your partner. Put your hands together. The partner with larger hands is partner B. Partner A will answer the questions first, and Partner B's job is to actively listen and silently show your partner, with your face and your body, that you are paying attention to what they are sharing with you.

## Let's Get Serious

**B**efore digging into the experiences, thoughts, and feelings the women interviewed shared in the video, let's make sure we are all clear on the science behind U=U.

Undetectable= untransmittable means: A person living with HIV who takes their medications as prescribed can reduce the amount of virus in their body to levels so low they can't be detected in labs, which is called an undetectable viral load.

When a person has an undetectable viral load, they cannot transmit HIV sexually, even without condoms. This means that the same medications that keep you healthy also prevent HIV transmission to partners.

*The following questions should be asked to the full group and answered by facilitator.*

**Q: What questions do you have about the science of U=U or what it means for you as an individual? Have you heard conflicting information?**



## What Does an HIV Diagnosis Mean?

In the video, three women discuss their experiences being diagnosed with HIV, learning more about what it meant to have the virus—including finding out that having an undetectable viral load means you cannot transmit it, even without condoms. Shyronn describes worrying that she would not be around for her son as he grew up, and feeling upset with herself. Tiommi describes not getting much help from the providers who diagnosed her and feeling clueless.



**Q: What were the first thoughts that went through your mind when you were diagnosed?**

Give participants 2-3 minutes to answer this question.

**Q: What did the providers who diagnosed you say or do? Did they offer resources or more information? Did you feel supported?**

Give participants 3-4 minutes to answer this question.

**Q: What do you think the providers who diagnosed you could have done differently or better to make the diagnosis easier for you?**

Give participants 2-3 minutes to answer this question.

## Learning the Truth

A person living with HIV with an undetectable viral load cannot transmit HIV to their sexual partners, even without condoms: undetectable = untransmittable (U=U). While the world's top HIV researchers and scientists have known this for years, most medical providers were not telling their patients living with HIV before the U=U campaign began in 2016. Even today, many providers do not share information about U=U with their patients.

Stacy says that she feels the information should be available everywhere, and points out that many doctors who aren't specialists don't even know about the science or don't fully believe it. Shyronn says she was never told about it by her medical providers and now feels betrayed by them as a result.

Tiommi says she already instinctively knew that she couldn't transmit HIV, so finding out the science was a confirmation that made her feel much better about herself. Stacy describes feeling free and happy after learning about U=U, saying it made her feel hopeful. Both describe feeling the freedom to have healthy sex lives without guilt.

**Q: When was the first time you ever heard about U=U?**

Give participants 2-3 minutes to answer this question.

**Q: Have your doctors or other medical providers shared information about U=U with you? If so, when and how did they do it?**

Give participants 2-3 minutes to answer this question.

**Q: What were your first thoughts or feelings after learning about U=U?**

Give participants 3-5 minutes to answer this question.

**Q: In your opinion, is this information getting out to people living with HIV and to people who are not living with HIV? What more can or should happen?**

Give participants 3-5 minutes to answer this question.



## Resources

There is a ton of information and resources about U=U available from the Prevention Access Campaign on their website. Check out

[uequalsu.org](http://uequalsu.org)

Social support is critical for women living with HIV to thrive and leads to better health outcomes. In-person support groups can be very therapeutic. Your local AIDS service organization or clinic may offer support groups. You can locate local services at

[www.poz.com/directory](http://www.poz.com/directory)

In addition to local in-person services and groups, there are national and international groups that host calls, webinars, videoconferences, and periodic events, as well as sharing information, blogs and other resources for women living with HIV. Here are a few:

**Positive Women's Network - USA**

[www.pwn-usa.org](http://www.pwn-usa.org)

**The Well Project**

[thewellproject.org](http://thewellproject.org)

**The International Community of Women Living with HIV (ICW)**

[www.icwglobal.org](http://www.icwglobal.org)

**Global Network of People Living with HIV**

[www.gnpplus.net](http://www.gnpplus.net)

Make sure you are getting accurate information about HIV, treatment options and issues relevant to people living with HIV! Here are a few good sources of HIV-related information and resources:

[www.thebody.com](http://www.thebody.com)

[www.poz.com](http://www.poz.com)

[www.hivplusmag.com](http://www.hivplusmag.com)

Fear of intimate partner violence may prevent women living with HIV from disclosing their HIV status to their partners. If you are worried about this or about any signs of intimate partner violence, call the

**National Domestic Violence**

**Hotline: 800-799-SAFE (7233)**

[thehotline.org](http://thehotline.org)

Women with HIV suffer from high rates of depression, and many may feel like their alcohol or drug use is out of control. This is nothing to be ashamed of. Help is available. Call

**SAMHSA's National Helpline:**

**800-662-HELP (4357)**

Find more information and resources at

[pwn-usa.org/pwncares](http://pwn-usa.org/pwncares)