

Mbabane, Swaziland

Gardner

(multiple voices talking over each other, in English and Swazi)

My name is (?), I live in the Mbabane community. I am a father of 6, 3 boys, 3 girls.

I discovered in 2005 that I was HIV positive

I discovered I was positive in 2006 because I was ill, bad stomach, injuries that wouldn't heal. I decided I should go for the testing.

I had a boyfriend who would go and come back and when he would come back home he would beat me. We ended up having a baby together.

In 1999 I had another baby, my baby was not well, getting well for two years and he died. And I suspected that I was positive, I have to test myself.

When I found out I was HIV positive, they took our baby to live in Johannesburg.

I prayed that I might as well die as early as possible. I had already seen people die and I was afraid my kids also, I didn't know when did I acquire this

I felt sick and I was hospitalized. When I felt better, I went home. When I told my family that I had HIV, I was the laughing stock in the community. And my sister actually beat me up. People in the community also made fun of me.

I was afraid of the victimization by the community members and my friends. I was so stressed that I felt I was so lonely.

Life became unbearable.

Even if I'm happy then it always comes back. I am positive, I may die at any time.

On my good days, it takes me away. I am living in my brother's house they told me that I am HIV positive. My husband just died because of HIV, I must move away from his home, from his house. And he beat me up.

I was wrought with anger and wanted to make a successful revenge to the lady who did this to me, only to find that I didn't know her. So I had to revenge to anybody else.

I felt as if I wanted to die because there was something in my heart but I didn't know where I could get any help.

I felt so weak and so sick and they tell me the baby is having pneumonia and I have to go get tested.

Even though my boyfriend never told me, I found out my child was sick. So I went to fetch the child and found my baby was skin and bones. I took her to the government hospital where they tested her blood but no one ever said what was wrong with her. Thereafter, my child died.

Most of the time, I wouldn't approach a lady because I love her. It was because I wanted to use her sexually.

After the death of my child, there were more problems at home. Even my father tried to protect me but my sister continued to hit and insult both of us.

Many many people were sexually victimized. It's like I was revenging for myself. It's like it was them that did this to me. I suspected that that lady knew her well, that she's positive and she didn't inform me. I was ignorant. So I felt I was being victimized myself, that person used me.

It's when I joined the support group that I found I was more capable of coping with my HIV.

Now, whenever I have any problems, I go for counseling. And immediately feel better.

Both the counseling and the support group make me feel like I am not alone and that I have sisters to rely on.

I started taking my medications as per the advice of the doctor now, because now I have the hope that I will live.

I know that this is a mortal body, it will die like any other bodies. So I have an immortal one that god will give me.

I am brave. And I do not think there is anything that can move me from the stone I am sitting on.

(many voices singing)