

A long way from home

The story of one teenager's discovery that he was HIV positive

Five days after my fifteenth birthday I began to feel a little sick, my temperature was very high and I found it difficult to breath. My aunt told me to call an ambulance, but I said, 'I'm OK, I'll walk to hospital'. But I wasn't sure.

When I arrived at the hospital the doctors told me they could not let me go back home on the same day, I should be hospitalised so they could do some routine tests.

I thought the doctors could give me some medicine and let me out the next day. After a few days the doctors came with a diagnosis - I was positive. At that moment they told me that result, my mind went blank.

After a month, I went back to school excited to see my friends. When I arrived at school all my friends welcomed me and asked a lot of questions: 'What happened to you?' and I said, 'I was sick'. So one of my friends said, 'That's right you are skinny like you have HIV!'

At that moment I felt so painful physically and couldn't speak and I went back home and I asked myself a few questions - maybe they knew or heard from someone else that if you have HIV, people will see physical difference, like being skinny?

The next day I felt like stopping going to school and other negative things. As the days passed, I began to look better and usually went to school and the same friend came to me to say a story about another of my friends. He said, 'That friend's dad died of HIV' and told me he doesn't want to touch him any more because you can be affected also. At the same time as he told me that thing, he was touching me, so at the same time I said, 'Look at this stupid thinking.'

My message to people who have HIV is you can be the same as everyone we usually see on the road. However, you need to be confident and also care about others, 'you know what I mean'. Thanks.



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