



HIV/AIDS Draft Policy

" AIDS IS NOT A PUNISHMENT FOR THE WICKED.....AIDS IS A DISEASE"

1.0 PREAMBLE

Acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) is a communicable disease that is caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). HIV is spread mainly through heterosexual and homosexual contact. In addition babies born to HIV — infected women will be infected at birth or through breast-feeding. Infection through contact with HIV-infected blood, intravenous drug use constitutes a very small proportion of all infections. People do not develop AIDS as soon as they are infected with HIV. HIV infected people can live for years depending on economic status, proper nutrition and access to available medicine. They can feel well and remain productive members of families, institutions and communities. In this symptomatic period, people who have not been tested can pass their infection on to other people without realising that they are HIV infected. During the symptomatic period, the virus gradually weakens the infected person's immune system, making it increasingly difficult to fight off other infections. Symptoms start to occur and people develop conditions such as skin rashes, chronic diarrhoea, weight loss, fevers, swollen lymph glands and certain cancers. Many of these problems can be prevented or treated. Although these infections can be treated, the underlying HIV infection cannot be cured.

2.0 MISSION STATEMENT

We, as ASF, believe that we are created in the image of God as physical and spiritual beings. We are created to be in relationship to God, the community and ourselves. We believe that we are given the freedom to make choices to love, to celebrate, to live in dignity and to delight to God's creation. We believe that suffering and death are neither punishment from God nor the end of life and that we are called to on eternal union with God. Stigma is a denial that we are created in the image of God. It destroys self-esteem, decimates families, disrupts communities and annihilates hope for future generations. We commit in all our efforts personal and communal, pragmatic and liturgical to confront stigma as sin and work for its end.

3.0 DEFINITION OF TERMS

AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

HIV: Human Immuno-deficiency Virus

Disparity: Inequality

ASF: Anglican Students' Federation

Deplore:

HIV Testing: Testing for HIV infection, which can be done in the following ways;

ELISA — Enzyme-linked immuno-sorbent assay, which checks for antibodies to HIV. This is the fast test used initially to test for HIV and most commonly used.

PCR — Polymerase chain Reaction, which check for the actual virus present in the body. This takes longer and cost more than the ELISA test yet is more specific for HIV, it is a definitive test.

DNA — Deoxyribo-nucleic acid, this can be used to find viral DNA, in this case of HIV.

Culture — Laboratories can grow HIV from blood samples and this prove HIV infection. This however is not commonly used and takes longer to get a result.

Faiths: Religious beliefs

Pre testing test counselling: Counselling before a test is taken, to look at possibilities of infection and what the person if the person is infected.

Epidemic: The occurrence in a community/region of cases of an illness in excess of normal expectancy

Ethos:

Campus: Refers to an institution and its community

CPSA: Church of the Province of Southern Africa

Programme: Refers to the field of study

Counsellors

Annihilate

Decimation

Communities

Institutions

Parishes:

Bigotry

Respite

Embodied

Retegiral

Policy

4.0 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To ensure that the issue of HIV/AIDS becomes a permanent programme of ASF.
2. To co-ordinate strategies for the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and evaluation of the ASF programme.
3. To promote a responsible sexual behaviour.
4. Initiate, participate and encourages HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns or programmes on campus or communities.
5. Educate students about HIV/AIDS prevention and care to increase commitment to serve their institutions and communities and to reduce their personal fear of infection.
6. To ensure that adequate counselling is provided for all those participating in campus and community programmes.
7. To develop internal support systems for those involved in HIV/AIDS work by providing training in stress management.
8. To offer opportunities for open discussions and support as well as respite, reflection and retreat.
9. To promote support and caring for people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.
10. Encourage ASF members, our fellow students and the community to volunteer for HIV testing and counselling.
11. For the further promotion of the integration of HIV/AIDS education into the curriculum of our various institutions.

5.0 ETHOS

We support the A B C idea:

Abstinence

Be Faithful

Condomise

To this we will add education, sex and HIV/AIDS — refer to education section.

ASF strongly encourages ASF members to get involved with HIV/AIDS organisations.

6.0 EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT

ASF deems continuous education of everyone, vitally important. This education would involve:

- What HIV/AIDS is and what it does.
- How HIV/AIDS is transmitted and how one can prevent transmission.
- The truth about HIV/AIDS and to dispel myths of HIV/AIDS. Myths for example is a cure for HIV by having sex with virgins or that life ends once one is found to be positive
- Human rights on HIV/AIDS
- Symptoms of AIDS

- Positive living is one has HIV emphasising that with a healthy lifestyle and faith a good quality of life is possible.
- How to care for people with HIV/AIDS
- Knowledge of treatment of HIV/AIDS
- The importance of knowing one's HIV/AIDS status.
- The knowledge of HIV/AIDS organisations at our disposal.

Through education, ASF hopes to reduce the stigma of HIV/AIDS and to empower people to care for others affected or infected with HIV to be able to talk openly about sex and specifically HIV/AIDS with everyone they are in contact with and to practice the above ethos.

7.0 TRAINING

ASF members and chaplains must be trained as counsellors, specifically regarding HIV/AIDS. These counsellors need to be able to counsel people with regard to the following:

- Education of HIV/AIDS
- Pre — and post — test counselling
- Living with HIV/AIDS
- Coping with others who are HIV positive
- Helping to understand HIV/AIDS in a Christian context.

The counsellors will be used to run workshops on HIV/AIDS awareness. Counsellors must be encouraged to be proactive in their communities and institutions.

Bearing in mind that many institutions and organisations (including our respective diocese) have structures in place to train people to counsel. ASF advisers ASF members and chaplains to make use of existing structures to train our members.

There needs to be continuous training of counsellors to keep up to date with current HIV/AIDS.

Ansocs must appoint a person/s to set up a support group in that Ansoc, for the counsellors.

Interaction with counsellors in our respective diocese and / or parishes needs to also take place.

8.0 HIV TESTING

With reference to the education section, ASF members are encouraged to know their HIV/AIDS status, disclosure is voluntary.

With regard to HIV testing, ASF stipulates that ASF members must follow the guidelines for HIV testing, which are:

- To have voluntary confidential pre-test counselling
- To have reliable testing for HIV
- To have voluntary confidential post test counselling with disclosure, only to the person being tested.

9.0 PROTECTION OF RIGHTS

- No learner or student (a parent on behalf of a learner or student) or educator, is compelled to disclose his or her HIV/AIDS status to the school or institution or employer.
- People who are HIV positive should not be excluded from being occupied from institutions of higher learning and should also not be excluded from getting jobs, on residing places within institutions outside.
- You have the right to be treated in a respectful and human way, and have a right to your privacy and human dignity.
- You have a right to life.
- You have the right to say "YES or "NO.
- You have the right to get results if you do not want it.
- You have the right to have excess to condoms to students (Ansocs decided how)
- If students with HIV/AIDS become incapacitated through illness, the school or institution should make work available for them to study at home and should continue learning where possible.
- Treat all blood and other fluids contaminated blood and take precautions when handling them.

10.0 PLEDGE

As ASF, conscious of our Christian responsibility and recognising the devastating effects of the AIDS pandemic we pledge:

- To love, believing that God does not punish with sickness or disease but is present with us as the source of our strength, courage and hope.
- To give compassionate care, knowing that we must work for the day that all who are affected by the pandemic will have access to compassionate non-judgemental care, respect, support and assistance.
- To witness and to do justice, committing ourselves to transform public attitudes and policies, supporting the enforcement of national laws to protect the civil liberties of all persons with AIDS.
- To promote prevention within the context of our faith, and encourage accurate comprehensive information for the public regarding HIV transmission and means of prevention.
- To deplore sins of intolerance and bigotry, as AIDS affects men, women and all children of all races.
- To challenge our societies to recognise that economic disparity and poverty are major contributing factors to the AIDS pandemic, barriers to prevention and treatment.

11.0 CONCLUSION

As ASF, we believe that we are sustained by God's love and emboldened by the Holy Spirit. We are inspired by the compassionate love of Jesus and efforts of the faithful in attending to those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. We accept our Christian responsibility and invite the wider community into creative life — growing partnership.