

【AIDS】



[a Talking Points lesson plan for English reading & speaking]

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Introduction

What is HIV or AIDS?

What do you know of these diseases?

Do these diseases exist in your country?

My Son

Read Ella's story below

I lost my son, Michael, in 1989.

I still haven't fully recovered from the loss.

From a very young age, I knew my son was gay. I knew what he was. I didn't care, and I still loved him.

He was my golden boy.

Later, he came out and told me that he thought he might be gay. I hugged him and told him he needed to embrace who he is and not worry about anything.

He told his father, and eventually, he accepted it. He didn't like it at first, but he learned to deal with it and he was there for him.

Michael went to university, and we heard of relationships he had with other men. Then he graduated and got a job in the city. He went there, and he seemed happy.

We didn't think anything was wrong.

We worried about him the same way other parents would worry about their children.

Was he eating enough? Was he happy? Did he have good

friends?

All of these things.

But then one day, he called me and said that he had something to tell me. He said it was very difficult and he would come and visit to explain everything.

He started to cry on the phone, and I was so alarmed, so frightened.

I insisted he tell me what was wrong, but he said he needed to tell us both face to face.

I told my husband, and we didn't know what to think. We tried to call back, but Michael refused to tell us.

Then he came to see us and he told us everything.

He said that he had caught this disease. It was called HIV. And that there was a risk that it could escalate to something called AIDS.

We had no idea what this disease was. We lived in a small town and the people had no idea about this new disease that was affecting so many people around the world.

Michael said he had some more tests to do, but until then we should just hope that things would be alright.

But they were not.

Michael called us and said that there had been further tests and he now had AIDS. He said that things were not looking good.

He came home to stay with us. He was painfully thin.

My husband went to the hospital and asked them about HIV and AIDS. They just gave him some leaflets and nothing else.

We found out that many gay men had this disease. And we saw crazy people on TV saying that HIV was 'The Gay Disease' — a punishment sent by God.

To hear that was so painful, so hurtful.

Michael stayed with us, and we literally saw him waste away.

He got thinner and thinner and his hair fell out. His organs started to fail and in the end, he couldn't eat anything.

After he died, we felt so helpless. There was nothing we could do.

We just had to watch our son die.

Now there are advanced medicines and remedies to help people live a normal life. They could be HIV positive but still live a normal life.

Unfortunately for our son, that medicine came too late.

Reading Comprehension Questions

When did Ella lose her son?

Has she recovered from his death?

Was Ella's son gay?

When did Ella know her son was gay?

When did she find out for sure her son was gay?

Did Ella care that her son was gay? Was she angry about this?

When Michael told Ella he was gay, how did she react?

How did Michael's father react?

Did Michael go to university?

What did he do after university?

Were Michael's parents worried about him?

What kind of things did they worry about?

Why did Michael make a phone call to his parents?

Was he laughing on the phone?

Did Ella try to call Michael back on the phone?

Did Michael go to visit his parents?

What did he tell them?

Did Ella or her husband know about HIV or AIDS?

Did Ella and her husband live in a big city?

What was the next news that Michael gave to his parents?

Did he visit his parents again?

What did he look like?

When Ella's husband went to the hospital, what did they give him?

What did some people on TV call HIV?

What happened to Michael's body? How did his appearance change?

What happened to Michael towards the end of his life?

Is medicine available for people with HIV today?

Essential Vocabulary

fully recovered	the loss	gay
golden	to come out	to hug sb
embrace	eventually	to accept it/smth
to deal with it/smth	relationships	to graduate
to explain	alarmed	frightened
to insist	face to face	disease
HIV	AIDS	risk
to escalate	things not looking good	painfully thin
leaflets	punishment	painful
hurtful	literally	waste away
thinner	fall out	organs
to fail	helpless	advanced medicine
remedies		

Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look in your dictionary and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

Golden — *in the colour of gold, or shining like gold.*

“We got up early and saw a beautiful golden sunrise.”

Discussion Questions

Do you know anything about the diseases HIV or AIDS?

What is the difference between HIV and AIDS?

What do the letters in HIV and AIDS mean?

Do people in your country get this disease?

Is HIV curable? How about AIDS?

How do people get this disease?

What does AIDS do to the human body?

Do they teach students about HIV or AIDS in school in your country?

Is AIDS a serious problem in the world today?

In your country, is talking about HIV or AIDS a taboo subject?

Is it possible for people in your country to have an AIDS test?

Have you had an AIDS test? Why/why not?

Would you have an AIDS test in the future? Why/why not?

How can people protect themselves against AIDS?

Are you worried about AIDS?

Do you think there will be a cure for AIDS in the future?

If you could ask any question to a person suffering from HIV or AIDS what would you ask them?

How do you think Ella felt when she found out her son had HIV?

Why didn't they know anything about HIV/AIDS back then?

Why were people referring to HIV/AIDS as 'The Gay Disease' in the eighties?

Do people refer to it this way today?

What kind of people can get HIV/AIDS today?

Writing

This is a writing exercise.

Imagine you are Ella in the story above.

You are going to write a letter to your son, Michael. He has died, but you want to write down in words how you feel.

You want to express all the emotions you went through when you found out what Michael went through.

Write your letter from your heart.

When you have finished writing your letter, you might want to read it out loud in front of your classmates or teacher.

Or if you prefer, you can just ask your teacher for feedback.

Credits

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