Moving Forward, Living with HIV: Considering Education or Training

Last updated: October 4, 2023

Together, we can change the course of the HIV epidemic...one woman at a time.

#onewomanatatime #thewellproject
Education empowers women to overcome discrimination … have greater awareness of their rights, and greater confidence and freedom to make decisions that affect their lives, improve their health, and boost their work prospects.

– UNESCO
Women, Education, and Empowerment

• Living with HIV
  - Old days: long-term goals seemed impossible
  - **Now:** same lifespan as rest of population

• Unequal access to education
  - Resources available to help

• Educational credentials needed for opportunities
  - Credential may be required even if these abilities are not relevant to the specific opportunity

• Never too old to learn
Are You Ready and Able?

- Evaluate your health
  - Talk to provider about physical readiness
- Identify barriers to education
  - For example, childcare duties
- Find solutions to barriers
  - For example, swapping childcare with another parent
- Recognize past trauma related to education
  - Research harassment policies and their implementation
  - Find affinity groups, mentorship programs, etc.
  - Make list of what you need to feel safe
Type of Education or Career Path

- **Identify your goals**
  - May want to set goals in steps

- **Get GED or High School Equivalency, if necessary**
  - May be all you need for a job

- **What job/career are you looking for?**
  - Personal values
  - Types of activities and settings you enjoy
  - Organizations can help you identify a career

- **Talk to a counselor at an educational institution**
  - Especially important if (learning) disability is an issue
Educational Settings

- Adult basic education (ABE) – Free
- Community colleges – Affordable
- Universities and colleges

- Vocational/trade schools – Short programs
- Online courses/programs – Some free courses

Beware of scams!

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Identifying Scams

- Similar name to famous university
- Too easy to get degree
- Large flat fee at start
- Degree *mostly* based on experience
- School not in news or on social media
- No student support services
- No physical address
- Institution not accredited
- No “real” professors listed on school website
Paying for Education

• Support is available
• Federal student aid:
  – Grants
  – Work-study
  – Loans
• Generally requires US citizenship or permanent residency
Paying for Training

- Vocational rehabilitation agencies
  - Help people with disabilities

- Workforce development system
  - American Job Centers network
  - Also provides assistance looking for job

- School may also have their own grants, scholarships or fellowships
Grants

• Need-based grants
  – Depend on your income

•Merit-based grants
  – Depend on your grades

• Grants for specific populations
  – People with disabilities
  – Veterans/National Guard members
  – Foster care youth
  – Members of underrepresented groups

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Work-Study and Loans

• **Work-Study:**
  – Part-time employment related to course of study or community service
    • Money earned goes towards education expenses

• **Loans**
  – Provided by government or private organizations
    • Loans may be forgiven under certain circumstances
    • FAFSA application usually required
    • **Explore other options before taking on debt!**
"Education teaches a person to use his or her mind: Learning, thinking, reasoning, solving problems, and so on are mental exercises that may keep the central nervous system in shape the same way that physical exercise keeps the body in shape."

- "The Links Between Education and Health"
Resources

• Scholarships & Grants
  – HIV League Scholarship
  – Scholarships for Women
  – Scholarships for Students Living with HIV/AIDS
  – STDcheck.com HIV-Positive Scholarship Application
  – Grants for Women Going Back to School

• Personal Stories
  – Journey Through Trauma
  – You're not going to die.
  – Just Do It!

• Reports
  – Education First
  – Girls' Education – The Facts
  – Women and Girls
  – Workforce Development in the Community College

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Research

- Vocational Rehabilitation May Help People with HIV or AIDS and Substance Use Disorder Overcome Employment Challenges (National Rehabilitation Information Center)

- Gender and the Health Benefits of Education (Sociological Quarterly)

- Education and Health (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation)

- Is Equal Access to Higher Education in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa Achievable by 2030? (Higher Education)
• To learn more about this topic, please read the full fact sheet:
  – Moving Forward, Living with HIV: Considering Education or Training

• For more fact sheets and to connect to our community of women living with HIV, visit:
  – www.thewellproject.org
  – www.facebook.com/thewellproject
  – www.twitter.com/thewellproject
  – www.instagram.com/thewellprojecthiv