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## **A Girl Like Me LIVE**

Submitted on Oct 4, 2023

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Check out The Well Project's [A Girl Like Me LIVE!](#), an interactive, livestreaming series created to advance health and wellness education among women living with and vulnerable to HIV. The Well Project program manager [Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin](#) partners with a variety of co-hosts to chat about key topics in our communities. Each episode is broadcast live to The Well Project's [Facebook page](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

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**Upcoming Episodes**

## Future dates and topics of future episodes to be posted here soon. Check back often!

### Past Episodes

#### Episode 30: [Lifetime Survivors](#) – October 4, 2023

There are several terms with similar meanings that are used to describe HIV transmission at birth or early in life, and those who acquired HIV this way. Some terms come from the community itself, while others are more clinical – and some may be considered stigmatizing.

It may be confusing for those who do not share this experience to know what term they ought to use. Many who were in attendance at the 2023 US Conference on HIV/AIDS were able to witness a historical moment where the community itself identified that they are to be referred to as "Lifetime Survivors" and/or "Dandelions". More listening, more opportunities and spaces for women who acquired HIV early to connect – and more following the lead of women who have spent a lifetime figuring out, with few models is essential.

On Wednesday October 4, 2023, The Well Project held its 30th episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE* where Ci Ci was joined by three dynamic women: Kim Canady and Dandelions, Inc. Co-Executive Directors Antoinette Jones and Derinthia Williams to discuss the importance of identity, language, The Dandelions Movement, the US Conference on HIV/AIDS recap, and more!

#### Episode 29: [Women, Sexuality, and HIV](#) – June 28, 2023

Human sexuality exists on a dazzling spectrum. There are many ways that individuals express, and describe, their romantic, physical, and/or emotional attractions to other people. While everyone is unique in the way they experience (or do not experience) attraction, there are groupings within the spectrum of sexuality that people may use to label that aspect of their identity. Labels can be awkward – though they can also help people find others who identify in similar ways, to find community or intimate partnership.

On Wednesday, June 28, 2023, The Well Project held the 29th episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE* for a discussion on women, sexuality, and HIV co-hosted by Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin and community advisory board member Marnina Miller. These two powerful advocates engaged in a lively discussion on points related to how sexuality is defined, sexuality and stigma, steps that one can take to find a community of support, and so much more! You are not going to want to miss this powerful discussion as The Well Project celebrates Pride Month!

#### Episode 28: [Combatting Loneliness and Isolation with HIV - Building A Village](#) – April 27, 2023

Image



Research shows that loneliness is a factor in how well people age. When you add the feelings of stigma and shame that sometimes accompany life with HIV, these feelings can be magnified and may also bring a sense of isolation. Quality of life and the desire to engage in care may be negatively impacted when one is experiencing loneliness related to their HIV diagnosis.

On Thursday, April 27th at 12pm ET, The Well Project streamed the first *Women Like Us - Aging Positively* episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE* where The Well Project's stakeholder liaison, Bridgette Picou, LVN, ACLPN was joined by long-time The Well Project collaborator and fierce advocate, Gina Brown, RSW as they discussed the different types of loneliness, factors unique to women that can increase these feelings, and the importance of building community as we age with HIV.

This interactive discussion explores what contributes to loneliness, how women's experiences of living with HIV can compound the problem, and what women can do to balance these feelings and learn to age positively! The dynamic conversation between these two advocates is one you won't want to miss.

### **Episode 27: [HIV, Women, and Sexual Pleasure](#) – March 29, 2023**

On Wednesday, March 29th, 12pm ET, The Well Project held its 27th episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE* where Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin was joined by community advisory board member Kim Canady to discuss the topic of HIV, women, and sexual pleasure.

The discussion includes highlights from The Well Project's poster presentation "Facilitating Engagement about Sex and Pleasure Between Providers and Women Living With HIV" at the 2023 International workshop on HIV and Women in Seattle, Washington, as well as presentations at USCHA and SisterSong's "Let's Talk About Sex" conferences in 2022. Ci Ci and Kim discussed some key takeaways from the presentations, reactions from health care providers and community members, and some of The Well Project's SHE/HER/THEY educational resources. Don't miss this interactive and candid conversation as we continue to advocate for advancing HIV programming and care that is inclusive of the "whole woman".

### **Episode 26: [Advancing Meaningful Inclusion of All Women in HIV Research and Clinical Trials](#) – January 25, 2023**

Historically, women across the gender spectrum have been insufficiently included and involved in HIV research. Such exclusion has resulted in limited knowledge about important aspects of women's experiences of HIV that would inform their active participation in decision-making about their health and well-being.

On this special *A Girl Like Me LIVE*, Ci Ci is joined by Women's Research Initiative on HIV/AIDS member Tonia Poteat, PhD, MPH, PA-C to discuss the importance of including all women in HIV research. This interactive discussion explores what contributes to the little knowledge about women's experiences of living with HIV, how women can get involved in clinical trials or research development, and the importance of community engagement in advancing the meaningful inclusion of all women in HIV research, and more! This episode will be one that you don't want to miss!

### **Episode 25: [Coping with Mental Health around the Holidays](#) – December 15, 2022**

While the reasons are unclear, studies have shown that, in the general population, women are two times more likely to experience depression than men. Women living with HIV across the gender spectrum are even more likely than women in the general population to experience mental health challenges. The holiday season can be a tough time for many individuals, for many reasons, and having a community of support may prove to help cope with feelings of loneliness, isolation, and sadness.

Watch the 25th episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE* co-hosted by Ci Ci Covin and community advisory board members Heather O'Connor and Masonia Traylor as we explore ways to cope with mental health around the holidays. You're not going to want to miss this amazing discussion with these amazing women.

### **Episode 24: [Talking to Teens about HIV and HIV Prevention](#) – October 26, 2022**

Talking with adolescents and teens about sex and HIV can be anxiety provoking, but these conversations are so important as we seek to ensure that they are equipped with accurate and up-to-date information about HIV prevention and awareness. It may not be the easiest conversation to have, but there are ways that you can educate yourself and resources to help you!

On October 26th at 12:00 pm ET, Ci Ci was joined by Kimberly Canady and Ieshia Scott, two long-time community advisory board members, for the 24th episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE*. You're not going to want to miss the chance to learn from these advocates about how they have initiated the conversation about HIV prevention and awareness with youth in their communities, tips for when to begin talking with children, and what you can do to create a supportive and loving environment in which adolescents and teens will feel comfortable asking questions and empowered to make healthy life choices.

### **Episode 23: [Honoring National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day #NHAAD](#) – September 21, 2022**

September is recognized as Healthy Aging Month. On September 18, The Well Project held a special episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE* in honor of National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day (#NHAAD).

In the US, the first cases of HIV emerged among young men, but today we know that the epidemic affects both women and men of all ages, including older women. Despite the tremendous improvements in HIV drugs that now enable many people to live long and healthy lives with HIV, there are ways that living and aging with HIV is different from aging while HIV-negative.

In the 23rd episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE*, Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin was joined by The Well Project founder Dawn Averitt for a powerful discussion about aging and HIV. Dawn, who was diagnosed with HIV in 1988, shared her experience as a woman who is aging while living HIV/AIDS, the importance of taking care of oneself, the need for research in women who are aging with HIV, and much more!

## **Episode 22: [Improving Patient-Provider Communication](#) – August 31, 2022**

The patient-provider relationship is established when a provider provides the medical needs of a patient. This dynamic can have both positive and negative effects on the person who is receiving care. Strong patient-provider relationships established on trust, shared-decision making, and effective communication can have a positive impact on people living with HIV, as these relationships often prove to have an impact on their overall health outcomes.

On Wednesday August 31, 2022, Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin and The Well Project Medical Editor, Theresa Mack, MD, MPH took part in an insightful conversation on the importance of patient-provider relationships for women living with HIV, suggestions for overcoming barriers that may exist in this context, and much, much more!

## **Episode 21: [Health Disparities, Health Inequities, and HIV](#) – July 21, 2022**

Health disparities are differences in health that are linked to unjust social conditions (income inequality, racism, gender bias, and many more). A health disparity can be a higher rate of a disease among certain groups than others – even, in many cases, despite ongoing prevention efforts. HIV is just one example of an epidemic that is made worse by health disparities.

On Thursday, July 21st, The Well Project held the 21st episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE*, where Ci Ci was joined by author, community advocate, and transformational speaker Connie L. Johnson. Connie and Ci Ci discussed health inequities and health disparities faced by Black women and others who are living with HIV. Watch this interactive discussion that explores the root of these disparities and how they impact the daily lives of women living with HIV.

## **Episode 20: [Navigating Mental Health Care](#) – June 29, 2022**

Women living with HIV across the gender spectrum are more likely than women in the general population to experience challenges to their mental health. Among many people, accessing mental health care can carry stigma, and can even be discouraged by some family members and friends. Additionally, women, often primary caregivers, will care for others before caring for themselves.

In the 20th episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE*, Ci Ci is joined by Raenisha Love, LCSW as they discuss mental health care from both the perspective of a therapist who offers non-judgmental, empathic services to individuals across the gender spectrum and a woman living with HIV who sought out mental health care.

You're not going to want to miss this dynamic conversation between two powerful women as it relates to the importance of mental health care (in addition to HIV treatment) for overall well-being for women living with HIV.

## **Episode 19: [Mothers and Daughters: Navigating an HIV Diagnosis](#) – May 25, 2022**

Telling someone you love that you are living with HIV can be really hard. Living with HIV can often impact not just the person who received the diagnosis, but also those around them - including family, friends, and other people they are close with. During the month of May, and beyond, we celebrate the special dynamic of motherhood as it relates to HIV.

In the 19th episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE*, Ci Ci is joined by her own mother, Carol Coleman; Lynette

Trawick and her mother-in-law Karen Trawick; and mother-daughter duo Michelle and Raven Lopez in a heartfelt conversation meant to shed light on these multiple, diverse perspectives of motherhood and HIV. Tune into this enlightening, powerful discussion among women living with HIV and their mothers!

### **Episode 18: [Criminalization and Women Living with HIV](#) – April 13, 2022**

No one should be punished simply because they have a health condition. But in many areas of the world, laws and practices unfairly punish people living with HIV because of their HIV-positive status. In other words, people living with HIV can face criminal charges for engaging in acts that would not be considered criminal if a person who is not living with HIV engaged in them. This is often called HIV criminalization.

Ci Ci chats with Black feminist attorney Mandisa Moore-O'Neal about criminalization and HIV, how HIV-specific laws and policies affect the reproductive rights of Black women, and how all this connects with criminalization of Black women's bodies, including their parenting choices, more broadly. You're not going to want to miss this important discussion during Black Maternal Health Week 2022.

### **Episode 17: [Talking about New HIV Diagnosis](#) – March 23, 2022**

Getting an HIV diagnosis can be life-changing. As with other chronic health conditions, people may have different feelings when they learn they are living with HIV, including anger, confusion, and other uncomfortable emotions. The news may also cause people to wonder what to do next and how this diagnosis will affect future plans. In the 17th episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE*, Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin talks to two women who were recently diagnosed with HIV. Be sure to watch as these three advocates reminisce on their feelings at the time of diagnosis, provide advice to others who are newly diagnosed, and describe the importance of community during this time. You are not going to want to miss the strong, yet vulnerable, voices and experiences of these three remarkable advocates in this episode.

### **Episode 16: [Serodifferent Couples](#) – February 23, 2022**

"Serodifferent relationship" and "mixed-status couple" are terms often used to describe a couple or relationship in which one partner is living with HIV and the other is not.

Romantic and intimate relationships can be challenging for anyone, and differing HIV statuses may be part of that. But nowadays, we have more information and more tools than ever to help serodifferent couples have healthy relationships and great sexual lives with one another, with infinitely less worry about HIV transmission.

In the 16th episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE*, Ci Ci joins Lynette and Daniel Trawick, a married, mixed-status couple as they discuss stigma, how U=U has impacted their relationship, and much more! You're not going to want to miss this very vulnerable and passionate conversation about serodifferent couples.

### **Episode 15: [Self-Stigma and Dating](#) – January 26, 2022**

People living with HIV can hold negative beliefs about HIV that cause them to stigmatize themselves (also known as internalized stigma). For many women living with HIV, the negative stories we tell ourselves have more consequences than the stigma we're subject to from others. Self-stigma can be particularly challenging when it comes to what we believe we deserve when dating.

In the 15th episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE*, Ci Ci was joined by Michelle Anderson of The Afiya

Center for a vulnerable conversation about how stigma, especially internalized stigma, can affect the dating choices and experiences of women living with HIV. Check out this powerful conversation about the impact of the stories that we tell ourselves.

### **Episode 14: [Why Language Matters](#) – December 15, 2021**

Throughout their lives, women may experience multiple forms of oppression and discrimination based on gender, race, sexual identity, socioeconomic status, or other factors. The oppression and discrimination are often reinforced through language. Adding an HIV diagnosis can magnify this oppression and affect self-worth, confidence, and self-identity. The words that are used to talk about people living with HIV affect the way people living with HIV feel about themselves.

**In the fourteenth episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE***, Ci Ci joins long-term survivor Vickie Lynn in speaking about the significance of the language we use to talk about HIV. Watch the final discussion of 2021 as these two extraordinary women talk about why the language we use is important, how we can bring awareness to its importance, and what people can do to evoke change.

### **Episode 13: [Transgender Day of Remembrance](#) – November 17, 2021**

People of trans experience, particularly women and femmes of color, endure targeting for horrendous acts of violence and even murder in racist, sexist, transphobic, anti-Black societies around the world, including the US. This terrible fact gave rise to Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR), on which we honor our family of trans experience who have lost their lives to various forms of violence. It has also evolved into a day to honor and lift up the immense power, creativity, collective survival, community healing, and mutual aid that so many individuals and communities of trans experience embody and model.

**For our 13th episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE***, honoring TDOR, Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin is joined by Tiommi Jenae Lockett, an activist and emerita member of The Well Project's CAB, to discuss the importance of remembrance and resilience.

### **Episode 12: [Disclosure to Non-HIV Providers](#) – November 3, 2021**

There is no one "best" way to tell others (disclose) that you are living with HIV. It may be important to share that information with health providers other than your HIV care provider so that you can get the best possible care. But who do you tell; how do you start that conversation; and what is helpful to be prepared for?

**On the 12th episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE***, our host Ciarra "Ci Ci" Covin explores these questions and more along with CAB member Bridgette Picou, a licensed vocational nurse and a woman living with HIV. Bridgette shares her expertise on both sides of the client-provider relationship.

### **Episode 11: [COVID 19 Vaccination, Clinical Trials, and Why They Matter](#) – October 20, 2021**

As we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, staying connected to our community and sharing up-to-date information is key.



**In the 11th episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE***, Ci Ci, Community Advisory Board chair Gina Brown, RSW and Oni Blackstock, MD discuss the COVID-19 vaccine, clinical trials, and more about what you need to know to keep yourself safe. Ms. Brown speaks about her initial hesitancy and ultimate path to getting the vaccine, including the questions she posed to doctors she trusts, which helped her make her decision. Dr. Blackstock provides invaluable provider insights and answer questions you may have about the vaccine – including around the Delta variant and boosters. Check out this very important discussion.

## **Episode 10: Honoring National Latinx AIDS Awareness Day – October 6, 2021**

**In the 10th episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE***, honoring National Latinx AIDS Awareness Day (#NLAAD), which is observed each year on October 15 and aims to increase awareness of the impact of HIV on US Latinx populations, we invited Community Advisory Board member Arianna Lint and Global Ambassador Maria Mejia to join us in leading this conversation about HIV and the Latinx community, including those of trans experience.

## **Episode 9: [Let's Talk about Sex: Sexual Health Month](#) – September 22, 2021**

Let's talk about sex! **The ninth episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE*** was a fun conversation between Kimberly Canady, Aryah Lester, and Olivia G. Ford, in celebration of Sexual Health Month.

Some women may feel that their dating and sexual lives are over once they receive a positive HIV diagnosis and this does not have to be true! While HIV can affect one's self-esteem and confidence, it is important to understand that you deserve love and affection and to know that it is possible to receive it in positive and healthy ways. This is something worth celebrating!

Stop in and listen to this exciting conversation as these women navigate positive sexual health while living with HIV. You're not going to want to miss this one!

## **Episode 8: [Honoring National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day](#) – September 8, 2021**

National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day is honored on September 18th of each year to bring attention to the many, many people who are living long and fulfilling lives with HIV and to also highlight their distinct needs.

**The eighth episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE*** was a dialogue between Ci Ci, Gina Brown, and Porchia Dees, during which they discussed the unique experiences of women who have been living with HIV over the course of many years. Two different perspectives were highlighted in this conversation – long-term survivors who were diagnosed as adults and those who were diagnosed as babies.

In a space created to listen to voices of women living with HIV as they express their needs and describe how they think those needs should be addressed, they cover topics including the dramatic impact of HIV treatment, important social issues that don't always get enough attention in the conversation around HIV/AIDS, and what aging truly means to them.

## **Episode 7: [Parenting and Sharing Your HIV Status with Your Kids](#) – August 25, 2021**

**In our seventh episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE***, Ci Ci talked with Community Advisory Board Members Ieshia Scott and Destiny Smith about parenting and [sharing your HIV status with your kids](#).

Living with HIV has its challenges and so does parenting. This discussion highlights how these mothers have managed their HIV diagnoses while parenting, how they talk to their children about HIV, and tips they have for other parents living with the diagnosis.

No approach is one-size-fits-all and this is part of what we explore during our conversation. Learn tips on how to talk to your children about HIV and gain support from our diverse community with these wonderful mothers during this episode.

Make sure to check out this amazing and vulnerable conversation!

### **Episode 6: [Breastfeeding and HIV](#) – August 11, 2021**

In this episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE*, Ci Ci talked with Heather O'Connor of International Community of Women Living With HIV North America about [Breastfeeding and HIV](#), in honor of National Breastfeeding Awareness Month.

As mothers, these two amazing advocates discussed their personal experiences around the information they received from providers concerning their ability to breastfeed, how they have chosen to make informed decisions to feed their children, and the work that they have done to assist other parents to make the best choices for them and their families.

You do not want to miss this informative discussion between two mothers fighting for the right to feed their children as they choose.

### **Episode 5: [Pregnancy and HIV](#) – July 28, 2021**

In this episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE*, Ci Ci talked with Community Advisory Board member [Masonia Traylor](#) about [pregnancy and HIV](#). These two powerful advocates dispelled the myths and misinformation that continue today despite decades of science and evidence proving that women living with HIV can have healthy pregnancies. Ci Ci and Masonia shared their personal experiences being pregnant while living with HIV—including Ci Ci's current pregnancy!

### **Episode 4: [U = U](#) – July 14, 2021**

In the fourth episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE*, Ci Ci talked with Community Advisory Board member [Katie Willingham](#) about [U=U \(Undetectable = Untransmittable\)](#). These amazing leaders talked about what U=U means to them and the impact that learning about it has had on their lives. They also discussed their experiences sharing the message with others in the community, including providers!

### **Episode 3: [COVID-19 Vaccination](#) – June 30, 2021**

In the third episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE*, Ci Ci talked with Community Advisory Board Chair [Gina Brown, RSW](#) about COVID-19 vaccination. These two inspiring women discussed Gina's personal experience with the COVID-19 vaccine, clinical trials, vaccine hesitancy, and more.

### **Episode 2: [Dating and Disclosure](#) – June 16, 2021**

In the second episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE*, Ci Ci talked with Community Advisory Board Member [Marissa Gonzalez](#) about Dating and Disclosure. These two phenomenal leaders described their

personal experiences with disclosure along their journeys living with HIV, offered tips for others, and discussed challenges they have faced.

## **Episode 1: [Honoring Long Term Survivors on the 40th Anniversary of HIV/AIDS](#) – June 2, 2021**

**The first episode of *A Girl Like Me LIVE*** commemorated both the 40th anniversary of the first reports of what would come to be known as HIV and honor HIV Long-Term Survivors' Day (they share the date of June 5). In our premiere episode, Ci Ci moderated an important conversation among four long-term survivors from our community advisory board (current and emerita): [Porchia Dees](#), [Vickie Lynn](#), [Maria Mejia](#), and [Ieshia Scott](#).



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