

## CHALLENGING PREJUDICE WITHIN THE WORKPLACE (POSITIVE FUTURES2)

The Positive Futures DP aimed to challenge the prejudice often found within the workplace and to look at issues of particular relevance for each employer or organisation. The need for training was often justified by presenting a business case on how HIV might affect the organisation now or in future and it did not rely on legal or social arguments alone.

Generally, the work with employers started with a meeting or phone call to establish the culture of the organisations and to identify the focus of the message. For example, the project worked with hospitality organisations whose main concerns were the risk to guests of transmission and the possible loss of business. In a mainly office-based environment, the issues might be related to sickness absence or the legal implications of disability employment regulations whereas in a health care setting, there may be questions about patient confidentiality.

The training generally consisted of a mixture of multi-media presentations, a quiz and discussions in small groups. It ranged from one hour, as part of a regular group or departmental meeting within a company, to a full day with time to look at the issues in more depth. The structure was really dependent on the employer and was affected by the type of staff being trained and the time constraints under which they operated. The sessions allowed delegates to explore their own prejudices and misconceptions in a non-judgmental way and they were able to ask questions and discuss how they might handle different situations. The training not only covered how a member of staff might work with a client or colleague living with HIV but very importantly, it also sent a clear message about how the employer would support them if they themselves were diagnosed as having HIV.

The evaluation was carried out on the basis of participants' course appraisals and also the telephone calls that they made to the DP after the event. The feedback was very positive and many people commented that such training should be part of all managers' development programmes.

HIV, with its many facets, is an ideal subject that can also be used to cover or include training related to other issues such as disability awareness, equal opportunities, sex and race discrimination. Employers saw how this training benefited their workforce even if they had not originally identified HIV as a problem.

### Contact

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