

GETTING THE WORD(S) OUT

Ideas for Middle/High Schools

WHY

Among the many difficulties our youth face today are HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). In fact, one in five of all new HIV infections every year is among 13-24 year olds.* Encouraging our youth to protect themselves and to know the facts about HIV prevention and transmission can empower them to help reduce that number. Today, we are hopeful that the information in this toolkit will help you get the word out about a breakthrough in HIV prevention: undetectable equals untransmittable, or U=U.

GOALS

- Create an open dialogue to reduce the shame and stigma surrounding the disease.
- Encourage youth to be aware of the risks of unprotected sex, intravenous drug use, and other activities that could expose them to HIV and other STIs.
- Teach about prevention methods and encourage informed decision making.
- Spread the word that with consistent treatment that fully suppresses HIV to undetectable levels in the blood, HIV cannot be transmitted through sex. HIV is a proven form of HIV prevention.

ACTIVITIES

WHEN COORDINATING ANY OF THE IDEAS THAT FOLLOW, WE SUGGEST YOU ENGAGE EXPERTS TO HELP SHARE THE INFORMATION. Contact the Baltimore City Health Department or connect with a U=U Maryland coalition partner for support, including expert speakers and information about free HIV testing - visit UequalsUMaryland.org/tools-events for more information.

ACTIVITIES DIRECTED TOWARD SCHOOL STAFF

- Host a staff lunch-n-learn to share the facts about U=U.
- Offer an education session during a staff Professional Development day.
- Encourage staff to sign the U=U consensus statement on UequalsUMaryland.org.
- Provide a 'coffee talk' seminar with coffee, tea, and snacks.
- Train school nursing, health, and science teachers on U=U, pre-exposure and post-exposure prophylases (PrEP and PEP respectively), and general HIV transmission and treatment information and encourage them to include the information in relevant curriculum.
- Hang infographic posters and provide printouts of the U=U Talking Points, downloadable on

UequalsUMaryland.org, in the staff lounge.

ACTIVITIES DIRECTED TOWARD PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- Include a rack card in back-to-school mailings.
- Provide an information table at back-to-school night or parent/teacher meetings.
- Add information and a link to the UequalsUMaryland.org campaign site in parent/guardian sections of your website.
- Send information about HIV, U=U, and STIs via school email newsletters or parent emails.
- Offer parents/guardians a free, before or after school class, with coffee and snacks, called *Talking the Talk* and guide them through discussing sex and sexual health information, including HIV, U=U, and STIs, with their children.
- Promote HIV and STI information for parents/guardians in health and counseling communications.

ACTIVITIES DIRECTED TOWARD STUDENTS

- Include U=U as a part of standard health and sex education curriculum.
- Hang U=U infographics or posters and provide rack cards or folded business cards, available on UequalsUMaryland.org, in the nurse’s office and in counseling or teen centers.
- Provide information in student newsletters, school announcements, or through student TV.
- Offer a special breakfast or lunch for students and teach about U=U.
- Have U=U as a topic for a written report or research paper.
- Invite a person living with HIV to talk about U=U at a student assembly.
- Ask the student government or other leadership clubs to host an after school student coffee talk and invite an expert to speak about HIV and U=U.
- Include a U=U information table at back-to-school night.
- Challenge students to create posters about HIV and U=U awareness.
- Use national HIV and AIDS awareness days as opportunities to highlight statistics, real facts, and advances in HIV treatment. Details about the days are available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, CDC.gov. Days include:
 - September 27: National Gay Men’s HIV/AIDS Awareness Day - #NGMHAAD
 - October 15: National Latinx AIDS Awareness Day - #NLAAD
 - December 1: World AIDS Day - #WAD
 - February 7: National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day - #NBHAAD
 - March 10: National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day - #NWGHAAD
 - March 20: National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day - #NNHAAD
 - **April 10: National Youth HIV & AIDS Awareness Day - #NYHAAD**
 - April 18: National Transgender HIV Testing Day - #NTHTD
 - May 19: National Asian & Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day - #NAPIHAAD
 - June 5: HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day - #HLTSAD
 - June 8: National Caribbean American HIV/AIDS Awareness Day - #NCAHAAD
 - June 27: National HIV Testing Day - #NHTD

* <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/group/age/youth/index.html>