

Lecture 5: Workplace and HIV/AIDs Scourge

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- Workplace and HIV/AIDs Scourge**
- Covered:
 - Workplace and HIV/AIDs Scourge
 - ILO guideline on HIV/AIDS at workplace
 - Managing HIV/AIDS at workplace
 - Rights of employer and employee
 - Care & support for people living with HIV/AIDs at work place
 - Stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDs at work place
 - Kenya work place policy on HIV/AIDs

Preamble

- Today, organizations have lost top managers, workers have lost colleagues and huge amounts of time, energy and emotion have been spent pre-occupied with issues of illness and loss resulting from the HIV/AIDS scourge
- Whole families have collapsed, while companies struggling against a background of chronic poverty have taken on deeper burdens of dependency
- It is prudent therefore that matter HIV/AIDS are address both at workplace and family level
- ILO has developed guidelines on how to handle the HIV/AID scourge at workplace

International Labour Organization (ILO) Guidelines on HIV/AIDS at Workplace

- ILO has come up with guidelines for prevention and management of HIV/AIDS at workplace
- The objective is to create a favourable working condition for both infected, affected and normal people
- It stresses that each organization should have guidelines for prevention of HIV/AIDS in workplace and outside
- It emphasizes on care & support for workers who are infected/affected by the scourge

International Labour Organization (ILO) Guidelines on HIV/AIDS at Workplace

- It also emphasizes on elimination of stigma & discrimination on the perception that those who are HIV +ve need not be employed and if they are, they need to be separated from others
- Based on this, organizations should develop manuals to guide relationships within the organization to promote respect for the dignity of all the affected and infected

Principles of Managing HIV/AIDS at Workplace

1. HIV/AIDS is an issue affecting all workers in the workplace. Employers and employees should recognize that HIV/AIDS is a permanent condition in the workplace and should be treated like any other disease and special
2. No discrimination of the affected and infected – workers should not be discriminated on the basis of their HIV/AIDS status. There should be no discrimination on perceived status

Principles of Managing HIV/AIDS at Workplace

3. Gender equality – women tend to be more vulnerable to infection because of their biological makeup. This should not be used to see women as weaker than men or should not be used to categorise women as carriers. Women must be empowered to prevent the spread of the virus in the workplaces & outside

4. Healthy working environment – the working environment must be safe and secure

Principles of Managing HIV/AIDS at Workplace

5. Social dialogue – cooperation among members of workers including trust between the employees and employees, employees and employers, employer and employee unions which is indented to create understanding of the social dynamics of HIV/AIDS within the organization

6. Screening of HIV +ve employee by the employer – ILO says that nobody should be screened forcefully by the employer or any other organization. All should access employment opportunities & children should access schooling

Principles of Managing HIV/AIDS at Workplace

7. Confidentiality – You are not required to disclose the HIV status of a colleague to someone else

8. Employment relationships – on continuation of employment, HIV +ve status does not prohibit one from working and must not constitute reason enough to terminate from working

9. Prevention of the spread of HIV – ILO suggests that it can be achieved through changes in behaviour. Knowledge about the virus e.g. how is it gotten, who does not get infected, what are the modes of treatment available in the market?, etc

Principles of Managing HIV/AIDS at Workplace

10. Care & support of the infected & affected workers with HIV & AIDS must access affordable health care services e.g. organization is supposed to offer medical support. Allow the dependents of the infected to access medical support

Role of Government and Employer in Managing HIV/AIDS at Workplaces

1. Workplace policy – employers must consult the workers when they are drawing a workplace policy to ensure that it is not discriminating against those who are HIV +ve

2. Develop national HIV policy in the workplace - government must come up with a national policy on HIV and sectorial policies to govern workers. The policies should be based on what should be done to improve on their lives. Government should come up with laws that protect the infected with HIV/AIDS. Should come up with conditions of employment for the infected

Role of Government and Employer in Managing HIV/AIDS at Workplaces

3. Education and training – employers and employees must be trained on their rights on management of HIV and AIDS. Employees should be helped to initiate welfare associations, should be allowed to inform and educate others, train themselves on HIV/AIDS or bring guest speakers to enlighten them

4. Economic impact of HIV/AIDS – Should develop strategies to monitor economic effects of HIV on the organization e.g. how many

Role of Government and Employer in Managing HIV/AIDS at Workplaces

- 5. Human resources policies – human resource policies must recognize differences in the people in terms of events and must come up with policies that protect the interest of the infected, that outlaw stigmatization, etc
- 6. Grievances and disciplinary procedures – organizations must have a grievance handling process that accommodates the infected. The disciplinary procedures must be flexible and accommodative, must not violate working place policies and must strive to achieve institutional goals. Workload & time schedules for taking drugs must be provided

Role of Government and Employer in Managing HIV/AIDS at Workplaces

- 7. Confidentiality of information about HIV +ve workers – this information must only be kept only in medical files
- 8. Risk reduction and management – ensure safe and healthy working environment use precautions that reduce transmission and use precautions that reduce transmission and provide protective gadgets for anybody relating with or handling HIV +ve persons
- 9. Support for voluntary testing & counseling – employers must have a policy on voluntary counseling & testing and must always encourage the staff for testing

Role of Government and Employer in Managing HIV/AIDS at Workplaces

- 10. Use of Information & Education to Reduce HIV Transmission
 - education programmes about HIV/AIDS should be developed
 - The programmes should enable people to see the need to stop the spread, should encourage tolerance for people & support them to live positively
 - They should be developed in consultation with the workers, should be inline with the national policy on HIV/AIDS
 - Training & information should be tailored to cater for different age categories, capture sexual orientation and consider institutional culture

Role of Government and Employer in Managing HIV/AIDS at Workplaces

11. Use of Information and Awareness
- awareness campaigns within the organization to create a broader understanding of HIV/AIDS
 - Use up to date information to enlighten the workers on how HIV is transmitted, managed, support for the infected & affected, resources mobilization to offer welfare support to the members, etc
 - The approach should be consultative
 - The information and awareness programmes cover aspects like health promotion, support for behaviour change, outreach programmes, testing, treatment, etc

Care and Support for those with HIV/AIDS

- The ILO guidelines indicate that there is need to care and support HIV/AIDS infected and affected members in an organization
- To achieve this, organizations/employers should:
 - a) Develop mechanisms to encourage openness
 - b) Encourage members to care for those suffering from various opportunistic infections
 - c) Infected members should be treated favourably, be assured of job security, staff development, promotion and other benefits that accrue from their positions
 - d) Provide counseling services
 - e) Encourage support outside the organization e.g. home based care and support

Care and Support for those with HIV/AIDS

- f) Give time for recuperation and for seeking medical attention, counseling services
- g) Provide support services for antiretroviral therapy, nutritional counseling, avail or provide access to ARVs and provide food supplements
- h) Provide treatment for opportunistic infection, provide medical schemes
- i) Ensure that people living with HIV (PLWHIV) and their families are integrated in protection programmes, social security schemes, institutional welfare programmes and be encouraged to form an assistance network . Resources should be mobilized internally to ensure that these programmes are functional.

Stigma and Discrimination Against PLWHIV

- Stigma refers to a strong feeling of disapproval that most people in a society have about something considered to be against the norm. Stigma revolves around attitude and perception. Stigma take away one’s character and reputation
- Discrimination is the actual behaviour that may lead to internal or external stigma. It is caused by stigma and reinforces stigma.
- HIV/AIDS related stigma and discrimination means prejudice, negative attitudes, abuse and maltreatment directed at people living with HIV and AIDS

Stigma and Discrimination Against PLWHIV

- The epidemic of fear, stigmatization and discrimination has undermined the ability of individuals, families and societies to protect themselves and provide support and reassurance to those affected.
- This hinders, in no small way, efforts at stemming the epidemic
- It complicates decisions about testing, disclosure of status, and ability to negotiate prevention behaviours, including use of family planning services

Causes of Stigma and Discrimination Against PLWHIV

- Stigma is mostly because of the following believes/factors:
 - HIV and AIDS are always associated with death
 - HIV is associated with behaviours that some people disapprove of (such as homosexuality, drug use, sex work or infidelity)
 - HIV is only transmitted through sex, which is a taboo subject in some cultures
 - HIV infection is the result of personal irresponsibility or moral fault (such as infidelity) that deserves to be punished

Causes of Stigma and Discrimination Against PLWHIV

- Inaccurate information about how HIV is transmitted, which creates irrational behaviour and misperceptions of personal risk.
- According to Michel Sidibé (*Executive Director of UNAIDS*), whenever AIDS has won, stigma, shame, distrust, discrimination and apathy was on its side. Every time AIDS has been defeated, it has been because of trust, openness, dialogue between individuals and communities, family support, human solidarity, and the human perseverance to find new paths and solutions.

Consequences of HIV-Related Stigma

- Loss of income and livelihood
- Loss of marriage and childbearing options
- Poor care within the health sector
- Withdrawal of care giving in the home
- Loss of hope and feelings of worthlessness
- Loss of reputation

Forms of HIV stigma and discrimination

- Self-stigma or internalized stigma
- Government Stigma
- Restrictions on entry, travel and stay
- Health care stigma
- Employment/workplace stigma
- Community and household stigma

Reducing/Ending HIV/AIDS Stigma and Discrimination

- Use of specific programmes/campaigns that emphasize the rights of PLWHA
- Adopting a human rights approach to HIV and AIDS is in the public's interest
- Educating PLWHA on HIV/AIDS related stigma and discrimination
- Encouraging openness among PLWHA
- Developing appropriate national and workplace HIV/AIDS policies and enacting relevant laws
- Encouraging PLWHA to form strong support networks
- Training of healthcare workers

Revision Questions

1. Discuss three roles the Government in management of HIV/AIDS scourge in work environments. (6 marks)
2. Discuss the role of employers' and workers' organizations in care and support of HIV/AIDS infected and affected workers.(10 marks)
3. As a manager in an early years education centre, discuss how you would manage stigma and discrimination among learners infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. (15 marks)

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