



OUT AT WORK

INFORMATION FOR HIV-POSITIVE EMPLOYEES



aidshilfe.de

OUT AT WORK ANOTHER SLICE OF FREEDOM, PLEASE!



„NOT UNTIL I HAD COME OUT AS POSITIVE AT WORK, AND DIDN'T HAVE TO KEEP ANY MORE SECRETS, WAS I ABLE TO ENJOY MY LIFE AGAIN AND DO WELL IN MY JOB. TO ALWAYS BE ON GUARD, WAS STRESSFUL FOR ME.“

Christoph, Education Specialist

BEING OPENLY HIV-POSITIVE IN THE WORKPLACE - WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

For example self-confidence, feeling relaxed and being accepted for who you are. Maybe even support – such as more flexible work hours when it comes to keeping medical appointments. And, you can take part in personal conversations among colleagues without worries or fear that something might slip.

„NOT JUST GAY, BUT POSITIVE TOO? I DECIDED TO WAIT UNTIL THE END OF THE PROBATIONARY PERIOD. I WANTED TO CHECK OUT THE PLACE AND THE PEOPLE FIRST. I ENDED UP TELLING THEM AT THE CHRISTMAS PARTY, THAT'S WHEN WE ALL MET ON A MORE HUMAN LEVEL.“

Sven Schröder, Logistics Specialist



Coming out as HIV-positive at work can be a truly liberating act. But, when is the right time? You decide. There's only so much you can do to influence the responses and attitudes of other people. They often turn out better than expected. However, there's no guarantee there won't be negative reactions. Make sure you have the support you need for a positive disclosure experience. What do you need to take this step?

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Most people living with HIV take a step-by-step approach. They first create a safe space for themselves, e.g. in their relationship, a friendship or with family. Then they step out further and further, drawing on positive reactions to their first experiences of disclosing their status. If you proceed this way, you'll have a safe haven where you'll be met with understanding, and where you can talk about what happened. It will give you confidence.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Fairly or unfairly, those who are openly positive often become the go-to people for questions and worries about HIV. It's good to have access to reliable sources when this happens. On the back page, you will find the most important facts on HIV in the workplace, as well as information about your rights. For more detailed information, go to aidshilfe.de.

If unsure, you can come to us for advice – in person, on the phone or online: aidshilfe.de/beratung

More detailed legal information about HIV in the workplace is available from the anti-discrimination bureau at Deutsche Aidshilfe: hiv-diskriminierung.de

STRONGER TOGETHER



„AT FIRST I DIDN'T WANT TO DISCLOSE AT WORK. I WAS THINKING, LIKE, 'NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS'. THEN I REALISED THAT I WAS JUST AFRAID OF GETTING NEGATIVE REACTIONS. SCARED OF BEING EXCLUDED. I FOUND MY COURAGE AT POSITIVE PEOPLE'S WORKSHOPS. THESE DAYS I DISCLOSE WHERE AND WHEN IT MAKES SENSE FOR ME, AND FEEL GOOD ABOUT IT!“

Andreas, HR Manager in the chemical industry

You are not the only person with HIV asking themselves whether to disclose at work. You can benefit from the experiences and knowledge of many others. Community organizations and groups offer support and practical advice. A list of community contacts is available at aidshilfe.de/hiv-selbsthilfegruppen



HIV ISN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE

INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYERS, COLLEAGUES AND SUPERVISORS



aidshilfe.de

HIV ISN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE

Progress in the treatment of HIV infection has been phenomenal – even if it didn't make the headlines:



„THANKS TO MODERN TREATMENTS, PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV CAN NOW GROW OLD - THEY CAN LIVE, LOVE AND WORK LIKE EVERYONE ELSE. WHILE ON TREATMENT, HIV IS NOT TRANSMISSIBLE, EVEN DURING SEX.“

Armin Schafberger, Medical Information Officer at Deutsche Aidshilfe

PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV ARE EVERYWHERE

People with HIV work in all kinds of jobs – performing just as well and being just as successful as anyone else. There are no occupational bans, nor does HIV represent grounds for dismissal.

TRANSMISSION RISKS: NONE TRANSMISSION FEARS: WIDESPREAD

Just as with other types of day-to-day contact, HIV transmission in the workplace is impossible. Even during sex or when planning a pregnancy, there are no longer any restrictions: HIV is not transmissible while on treatment. However, the fear of HIV is still very widespread – although everybody could just relax!

„PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV CAN LIVE AND WORK LIKE EVERYONE ELSE. THIS IS THE GOOD NEWS THAT, UNFORTUNATELY, HASN'T YET REACHED EVERYONE. DISCRIMINATION AND STIGMA STILL EXIST.“

Guido Fuhrmann, HR Director for Germany at Deutsche Bank



WORKING POSITIVELY: RESPECT AND A MATTER OF FACT ATTITUDE

Employers can do a lot for people living with HIV, and thereby promote a respectful environment that benefits everyone. For example, they can educate, model openness and take a stand against discrimination.



„WE BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE ARE MORE MOTIVATED, ABLE TO PERFORM BETTER, AND THAT THEY ARE HAPPIER IF THEY CAN BE THEMSELVES, CONTRIBUTING THEIR WHOLE PERSONALITY AND IDENTITY. RESPECT AND A MATTER OF FACT ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIV DEVELOP WHEN WE ALL TAKE A STAND AGAINST DISCRIMINATION.“

Dr. Dirk Jakobs, Director, Global Diversity Office, Daimler AG

WHAT EMPLOYERS CAN DO

- sign the **#positivarbeiten** declaration about HIV in the workplace! It's a strong statement, and a commitment to supporting people with HIV.
- breathe life into its principles in the workplace: through information materials, in conversations about diversity or through advanced training opportunities on the topic of HIV. Local HIV organizations offer talks, trainings and individualized advice. Find your nearest HIV organization at aidshilfe.de/adressen

- consider the needs of people with chronic illness, e.g. by offering more flexible working conditions and hours, which will make it easier to attend medical appointments or participate in support groups.

The declaration, case studies and suggestions for action are available at www.positiv-arbeiten.de.

„THE PRIMARY PRINCIPLES FOR OUR JOINT ACTIONS ARE RESPECT, MUTUAL APPRECIATION AND EQUALITY ON ALL LEVELS. NATURALLY, THIS ALSO MEANS THAT NO COLLEAGUE WILL BE DISADVANTAGED BECAUSE OF THEIR HEALTH STATUS. THE CITY OF FÜRTH - AND NOT JUST INSIDE ITS COUNCIL OFFICES - STANDS FOR LIVED DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION, CONDEMNING DISCRIMINATION OF ANY KIND.“

Susanne Kramer, Media Spokesperson, City of Fürth



RIGHT IS RIGHT

Not every person with HIV can or wants to be open about their infection. They alone decide where and when they talk about it. All employees have a right to the protection of their privacy. This also applies to personal health information.



„DIVERSITY IS VERY IMPORTANT TO US AS A COMPANY. THIS IS WHY WE ARE STRONGLY COMMITTED TO RESPECT, OPENNESS AND FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE. WE STATE VERY CLEARLY: HIV IS IRRELEVANT HERE AT DEUTSCHE BAHN. WE DON'T ASK ABOUT IT, AND IF A PERSON LIVING WITH HIV DISCLOSES, THEY ARE JUST AS WELCOME AS THOSE WITHOUT HIV.“

Alexandra Schulz, Director of Health and Social Affairs, Deutsche Bahn

HIV tests must not be made compulsory as part of pre-employment medicals. Even offering a 'voluntary' test is out of place here. This is because people – if they return a positive result, or even if they just refuse the test – may be disadvantaged. And, if HIV status is supposedly irrelevant – why test in the first place?

Unfortunately, some countries still maintain entry restrictions for people living with HIV. If travel to such countries is part of a job, it's important to work on creative solutions together.

Information on the entry restrictions of various countries is available at www.hivtravel.org



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