

# Internalized HIV-Related Stigma

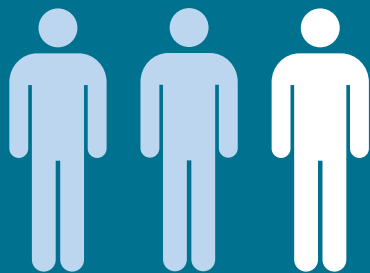
Almost 8 in 10 HIV patients in the United States report feeling internalized HIV-related stigma.

## What is internalized HIV-related stigma?

It is when a person living with HIV experiences negative feelings or thoughts about their HIV status. Here, it is defined as someone agreeing with one or more of the following statements:

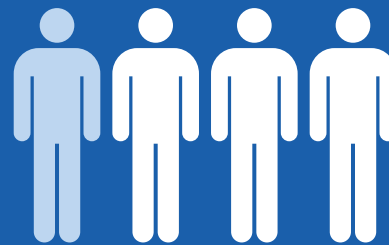


Nearly 2 out of 3 say that it is difficult to tell others about their HIV infection.



Roughly 1 out of 3 report feeling guilty or ashamed of their HIV status.

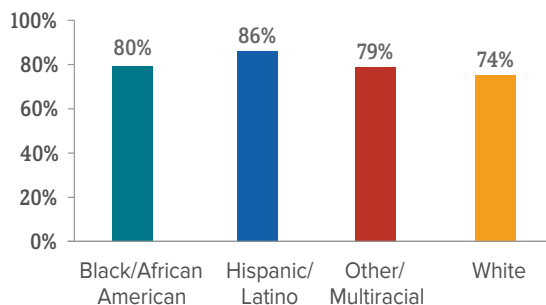
Nearly 1 in 4 say that being HIV-positive makes them feel dirty or worthless.



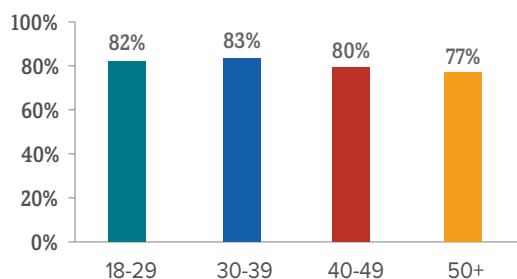
## Which groups are most affected by internalized HIV-related stigma?

### Percentage reporting internalized stigma:

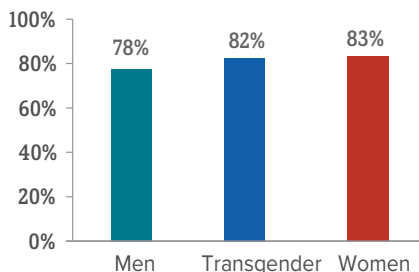
By Race/Ethnicity



By Age



By Gender



Learn more about the Medical Monitoring Project:  
[www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/systems/mmp](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/systems/mmp)

**SOURCE:**  
 Baugher, AR et al. Prevalence of internalized HIV-related stigma among HIV-infected adults in care, United States, 2011–2013. *AIDS Behav* 2017;21(9):2600-2608.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR REDUCING STIGMA:

**Let's Stop HIV Together Campaign**  
[www.cdc.gov/together](http://www.cdc.gov/together)

**National Prevention Information Network (NPIN)**  
<https://npin.cdc.gov/search/all/stigma>

## How can people living with HIV reduce internalized stigma?



Think about the negative beliefs you may have about yourself. Ask yourself if they are really true.



Find a counselor who can help you deal with any negative thoughts and feelings about your HIV status.



Take HIV medicine as prescribed to keep an undetectable viral load—that means the level of HIV in your body is so low that a test can't detect it. Getting and keeping an undetectable viral load can reduce internalized stigma by keeping you healthy and protecting your partner.



Join support groups and organizations that help people living with HIV. These groups offer a safe environment and can help you overcome the challenges of living with HIV.



## Live Well With HIV



Take HIV medicine as prescribed



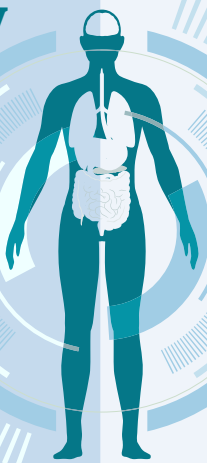
Stay in HIV care



Share your status



Protect your partners



## HIV TREATMENT CAN KEEP YOU HEALTHY AND PROTECT OTHERS

If you are living with HIV, get in care and start treatment as soon as possible. The sooner you start treatment, the more you benefit. Taking HIV medicine as prescribed can make the level of HIV in your blood very low (called *viral suppression*) or even undetectable. Getting and keeping an undetectable viral load is the best thing you can do to stay healthy. Also, if you stay undetectable, you have effectively no risk of transmitting HIV to an HIV-negative partner through sex. Learn more about living with HIV at [www.cdc.gov/hivtreatmentworks](http://www.cdc.gov/hivtreatmentworks).

For More Information

Call 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)  
 Visit [www.cdc.gov/hiv](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv)