

# 10 TIPS

NEWLY DIAGNOSED

FOR TRANSGENDER  
PEOPLE TO LIVE WELL  
WITH HIV





## ONE LESS BARRIER

HIV therapy has come so far in the last 20 years. So what may seem impossible now will come together—one strong, smart step at a time. Rely on the same courage that got you here.

**Check the back of this brochure for important resources.**

# 1

## Love yourself.

Don't think for a minute that what you've accomplished in your life is anything "small." **There aren't many who have your kind of strength** to do what you've done. And **it'll only get better from here.**

Over these next pages, you'll learn how to **begin a new Positive Path Forward™ to managing your HIV.** Commit to your HIV treatment and be the very best you can be. Stay in close contact with your health care team. Keep your friends and family by your side as emotional support. **And love yourself.** Love your strength. Love your courage. Love your life.

COMMIT TO  
BEING THE VERY  
BEST YOU  
CAN BE.



## Embrace this challenge— and the people who want to help.

Those people can range anywhere from your closest friends to an AIDS service organization (ASO). **An ASO will get you connected to the people who can help you, no matter what your needs.** They can even link you to other brave transwomen and transmen who took this same first step on their new positive path forward.

Start with these resources. Use them over and over again, whenever you need them.

- Support groups
- AIDS service organizations (ASOs)
- Therapy or counseling
- Friends
- Family
- Partner/Spouse
- Case managers/Social workers
- Religious or spiritual groups
- Health care professionals (HCPs)
- Support programs for substance or alcohol use

# GET CONNECTED TO PEOPLE WHO CAN HELP.



# 3

## Make your HIV a priority.

You may be in such shock over your diagnosis, or there may be so much going on in your life right now, **focusing on your HIV treatment may be the last thing you want to think about.** Make it the first. A strong future can't happen without this very essential starting point.

Once you start treatment, **take your HIV medication exactly as your doctor prescribes** (you don't want the virus to get any harder to treat). Start by **posting little motivating reminders for yourself or keep a pill organizer on your dresser.** There are even programs that will send reminders to your cell phone. The key is to find ways to make it work for you, because sticking to your HIV therapy schedule is one of the best ways to fight the virus.

YOU DON'T  
WANT THE  
VIRUS TO  
GET HARDER  
TO TREAT.



# 4

## Find the health care treatment you deserve.

Ask your AIDS service organization (ASO) for a list of doctors or HCPs familiar with transgender issues, because those doctors do exist. As a matter of fact, **if you are uncomfortable with your doctor because he or she is not responding to your health concerns, find a better fit.** Your doctor or HCP should be someone you trust as part of your inner circle.

Once you do find a doctor or HCP you're happy with, be sure to **talk openly and honestly at all times** about your medical history and what matters most in your daily life. It's how your doctor or HCP can find an HIV therapy that meets your needs.

The more you express yourself, the better your transgender-responsive doctor or HCP can help you.

YOUR  
DOCTOR OR  
HCP SHOULD  
BE SOMEONE  
YOU TRUST.



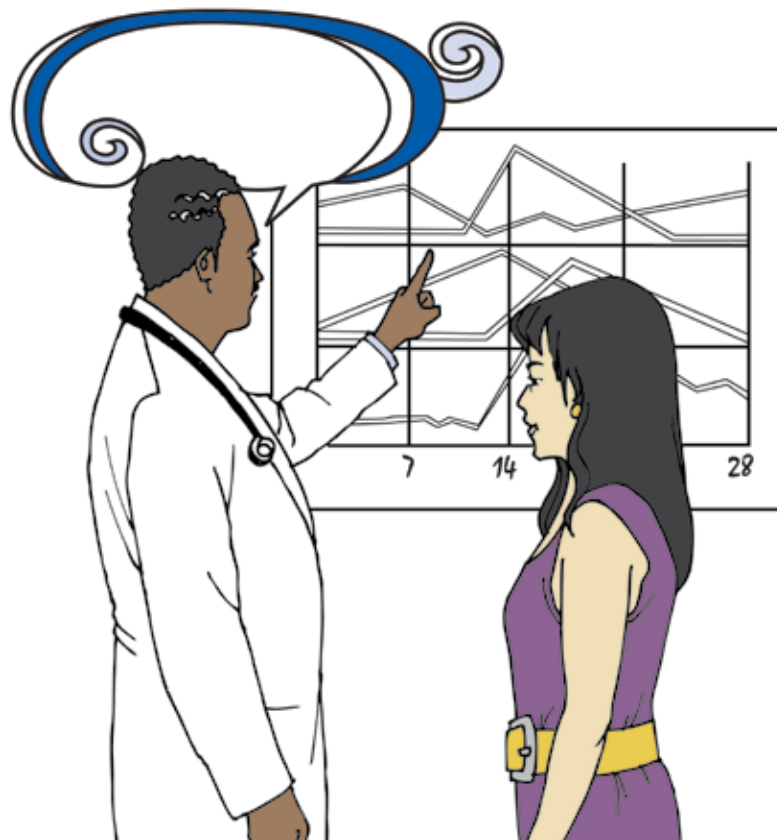
# 5

Give your doctor or HCP a complete overview of your medical history.

It's important that you **let your doctor or HCP know about any other medications you may be taking, like hormone therapy.** A transgender-responsive doctor or HCP may know how to keep multiple therapies in your life.

If you are taking any **over-the-counter or prescription medications** or have a history of drug abuse or sexually transmitted infections (STIs), your doctor should know about that, too. Your doctor or HCP knows how far you've come to take this step in managing your HIV. So **don't worry about anyone placing judgments.** Your doctor or HCP will want to help you find solutions.

# YOUR DOCTOR OR HCP WILL WANT TO HELP YOU FIND SOLUTIONS.



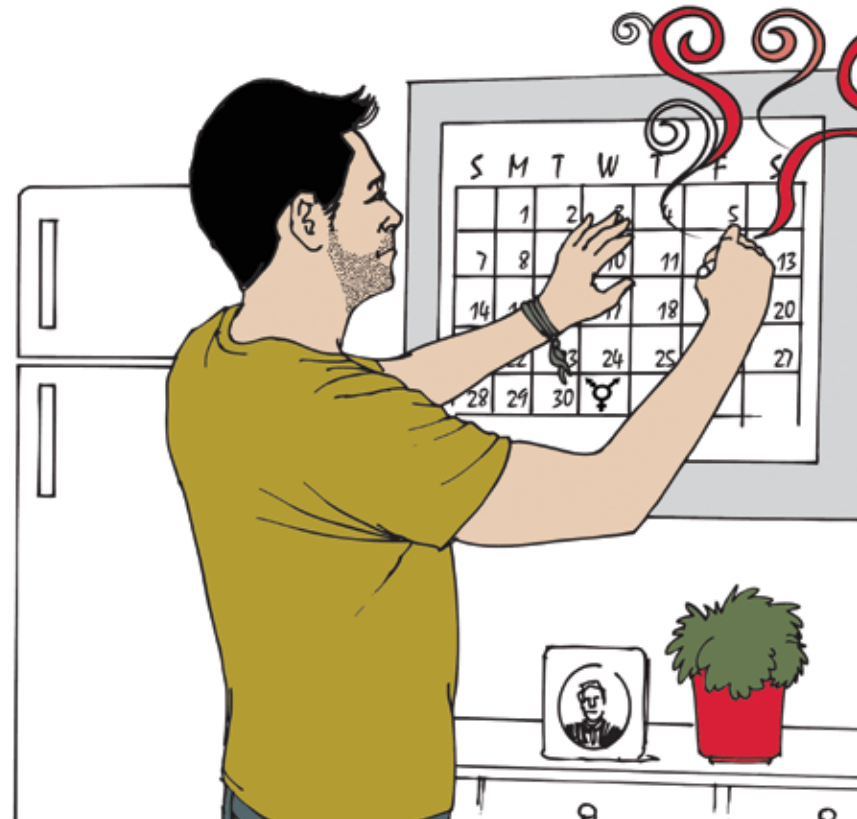
# 6

Set goals and stick with them.

Design a way to fit living well with HIV into your life. And **reward yourself for the little things you do right** along the way.

**Keep a calendar to keep track of important dates** that are significant to you and your HIV treatment. **Go for your regular check-ups** (it'll help your doctor or HCP stay up-to-date on all your health concerns). And **keep track of your lab results**, like your CD4 count (how strong your immune system is) and your viral load (how much HIV is in your blood).

DESIGN A WAY  
TO FIT LIVING  
WELL WITH HIV  
INTO YOUR LIFE.



# 7

## Challenge yourself to make healthier lifestyle choices.

You have real-life sources of strength now to help you. So if you have a history of depression, drugs, or alcohol, don't be afraid to reach out for help. **There are transgender-specific services designed just for you.** Ask your AIDS service organization (ASO) for more information.

You can also rely on simple ways to strengthen your spirit and stay in control of your HIV and possible HIV therapy side effects. **Start an exercise routine.** And **eat healthy.** Your doctor or HCP can help design a plan that works for you.

# YOU HAVE REAL-LIFE SOURCES OF STRENGTH NOW.



# 8

## Use protection. Always.

It can be difficult—or just plain awkward—talking to your sexual partner about using condoms. You may think they'll leave you or stop loving you. But **your safety is a priority**. Ask your AIDS service organization (ASO) for tips on how to practice safer sex. **You're not only looking out for yourself, you are looking out for your loved ones too**—sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are still a concern for everyone.

But remember, **no protective method is 100% effective**. Condom use cannot guarantee absolute protection against any STI.

# ASK YOUR ASO FOR TIPS ON HOW TO PRACTICE SAFER SEX.



# 9 Know that there are legal and health resources just for you.

Finding help when you need it—from transgender-specific mental health services to legal help in changing your name—is not only possible, it's available. **The depth of legal services in particular has grown.** If you have been blocked from getting health coverage in the past because your name or picture didn't match your government ID, contact a transgender-specific legal center. Depending on the state you live in, the center may be able to get the forms you need to get your new, official ID.

Until then, continue getting care at an AIDS service organization (ASO) you trust. And remember, an ASO can also help you find a job and housing.

HELP IS NOT ONLY POSSIBLE, IT'S AVAILABLE.



# Healthy Tip 10

It's OK to tell them.

Learning you have HIV—and talking about it—can be some of the most difficult tasks in your life. Especially when you suspect the person you tell won't be there for you. But **find someone you trust**. You don't have to go through this alone.

As a matter of fact, **you may find new family because of it**. You may connect with and learn from others who've been there. **Think about who should be told (like your sexual partner) and confide in them**. Everyone will react differently. Be prepared. Use all the resources available to make the conversation easier. If you need help starting that conversation, ask your AIDS service organization (ASO).

YOU DON'T  
HAVE TO GO  
THROUGH THIS  
CHALLENGE  
ALONE.





YOU'VE PROVEN THAT NO  
CHALLENGE IS BIGGER THAN  
YOUR SPIRIT. USE THAT TO CARRY  
YOU ON A POSITIVE PATH TO  
MANAGING YOUR HIV.

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## HIV/AIDS INFORMATION

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### **Transcend Empowerment Institute**

1-213-944-1242

E-mail: [transinstitute@aol.com](mailto:transinstitute@aol.com)

### **National AIDS Hotline (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)**

[www.cdc.gov/hiv](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv)

1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)

In English and Spanish.

(For the hearing impaired: 1-888-232-6348)

E-mail: [cdcinfo@cdc.gov](mailto:cdcinfo@cdc.gov)

### **AIDSinfo (National Institutes of Health)**

[www.aidsinfo.nih.gov](http://www.aidsinfo.nih.gov)

1-800-HIV-0400 (1-800-448-0400)

In English and Spanish.

(For the hearing impaired: 1-888-480-3739)

E-mail: [contactus@idsinfo.nih.gov](mailto:contactus@idsinfo.nih.gov)

### **The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center**

[www.gaycenter.org](http://www.gaycenter.org)

1-212-620-7310

(For the hearing impaired: 1-800-662-1220)

### **Planned Parenthood—Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Services**

[www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org)

1-800-230-PLAN

### **EL/LA Program Para TransLatinas**

1-415-864-7278

E-mail: [el.latgprogram@yahoo.com](mailto:el.latgprogram@yahoo.com)

### **Asian Pacific AIDS Intervention Team**

[www.apaitonline.org](http://www.apaitonline.org)

1-213-553-1830 (L.A. County)

1-714-636-1349 (Orange County)

E-mail: [apait@apaitonline.org](mailto:apait@apaitonline.org)

### **Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund (TLDEF)**

[www.transgenderlegal.org](http://www.transgenderlegal.org)

1-646-862-9396

E-mail: [info@transgenderlegal.org](mailto:info@transgenderlegal.org)

To learn more about living well with HIV

visit **[www.HealthyWithHIV.com](http://www.HealthyWithHIV.com)**