



# How to tell a child or teenager they have HIV?



**Dr Julia Turner**

Paediatric and Adolescent Technical Adviser  
Right to Care

**Disclosure Guidelines for Children  
and Adolescents in the context of  
HIV, TB and non-communicable  
diseases**

---

NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
SOUTH AFRICA: JULY 2016



**health**

Department:  
Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# Skills Building Session

**When?**

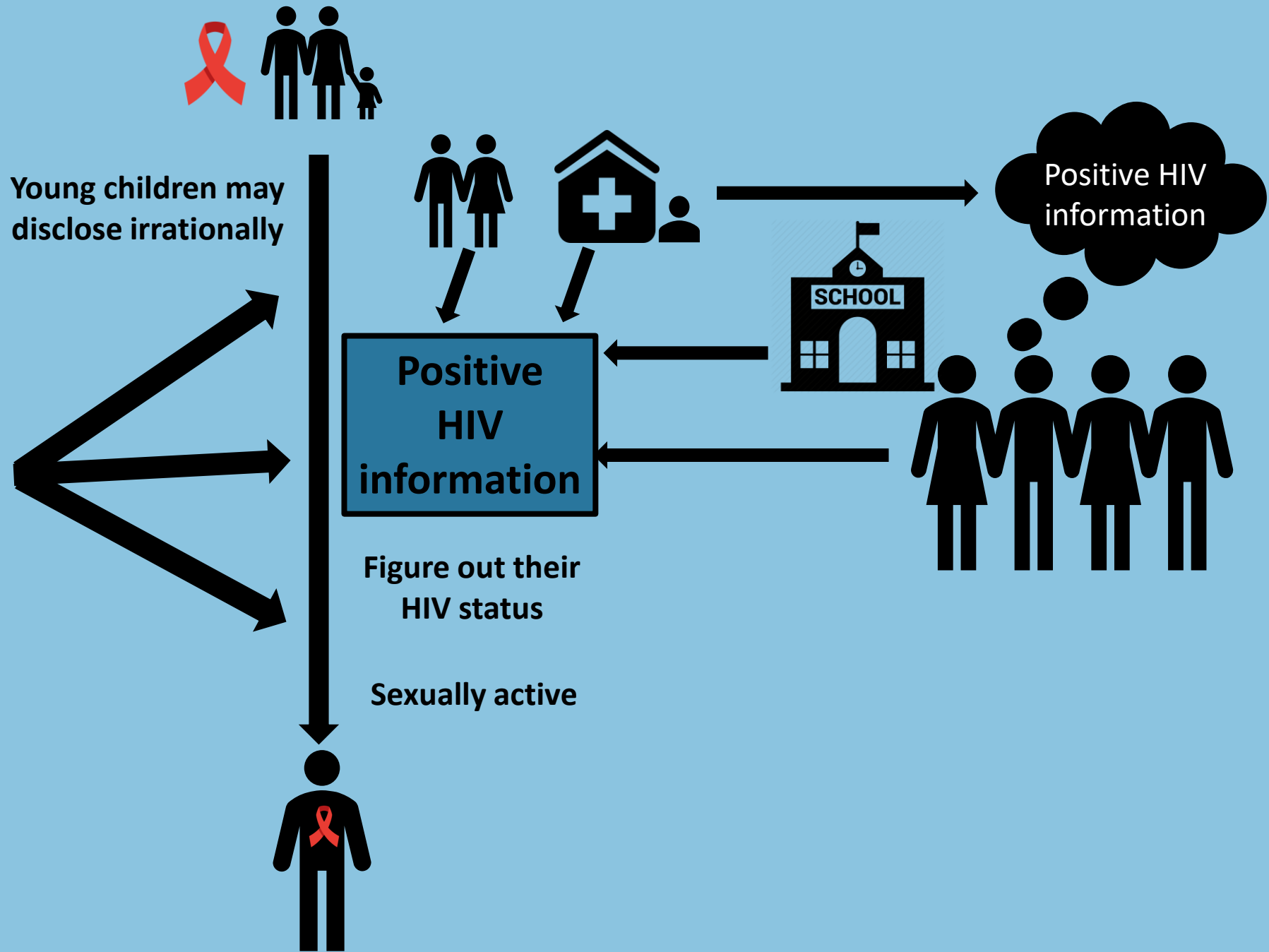
**Who?**

**How?**

**What to say?**

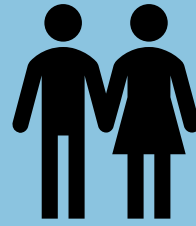


# When ?



# Who

**P&CGs**



- + Ideal according to adolescents
- Scared of blame
- Scared of disclosing their own status
- Scared of making their child sad or depressed
- Don't have all the information
- Can't answer questions
- Can't practice

**HCWs**

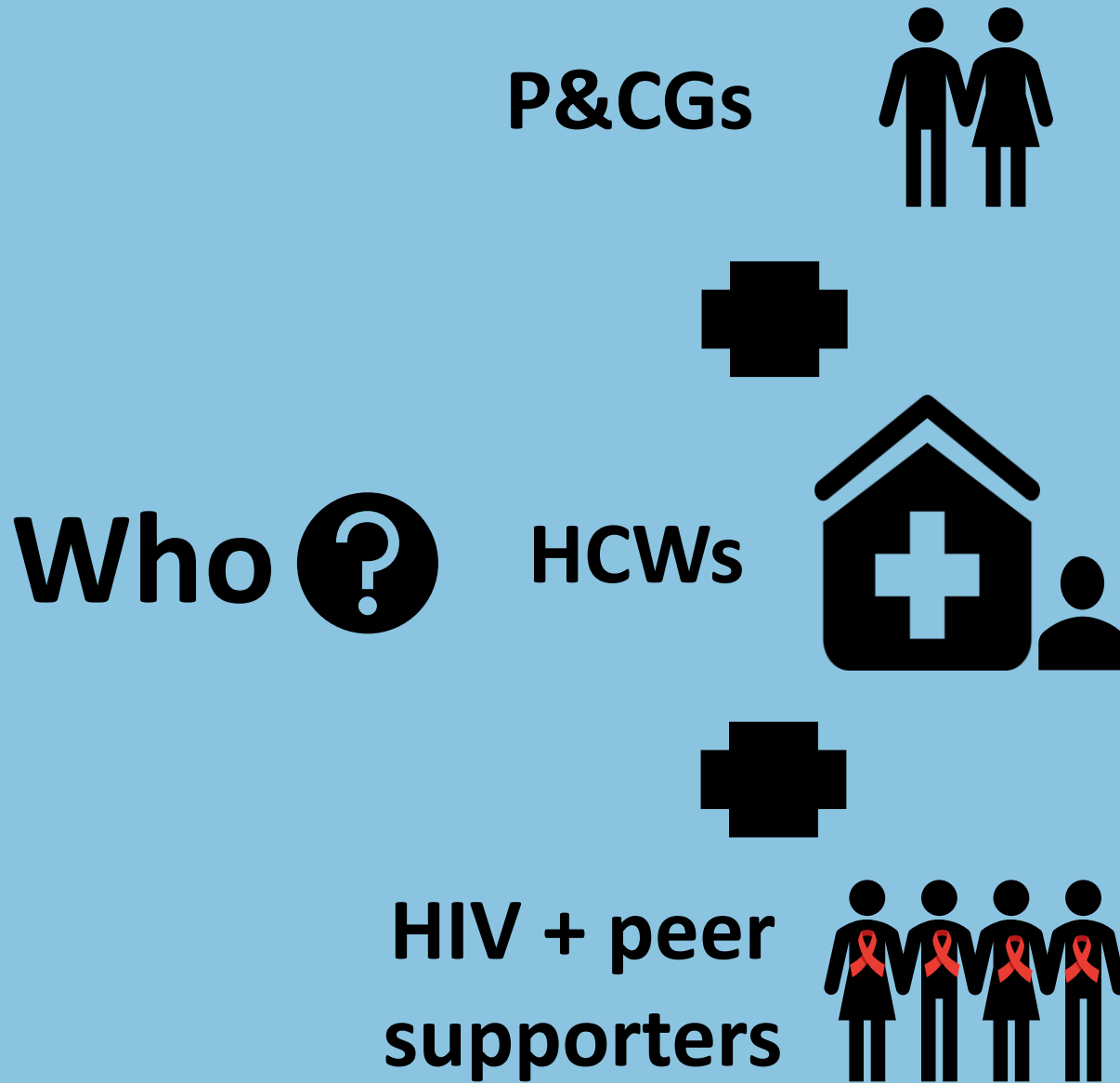


- + Can be trained
- + Should have all the right information
- + Should support the parents
- Can be intimidating
- Adolescents think the HCWs don't know what it's like to be HIV+

**HIV + peer supporters**



- + Can disclose their own status
- + Can be trained
- + Should have all the right information
- Adolescent could be angry about the set up
- ?ethics around telling a peer their status



Ideal

**P&CGs supported by  
HCWs  
And support from  
someone who has  
HIV  
(parent/HCW/peer)**

# How

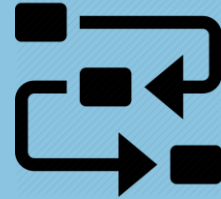


**Counsel  
P&CGs**



- Prepare them for disclosure from the beginning
- Ask about their concerns
- Allay their fears
- Let them talk to other P&CGs who have disclosed
- Get consent
- IEC materials on FAQs

**Process**



- Partial disclosure
- Full disclosure
- Post disclosure
- Ongoing disclosure and support
- Support groups and peer supporters
- Record progress in the file

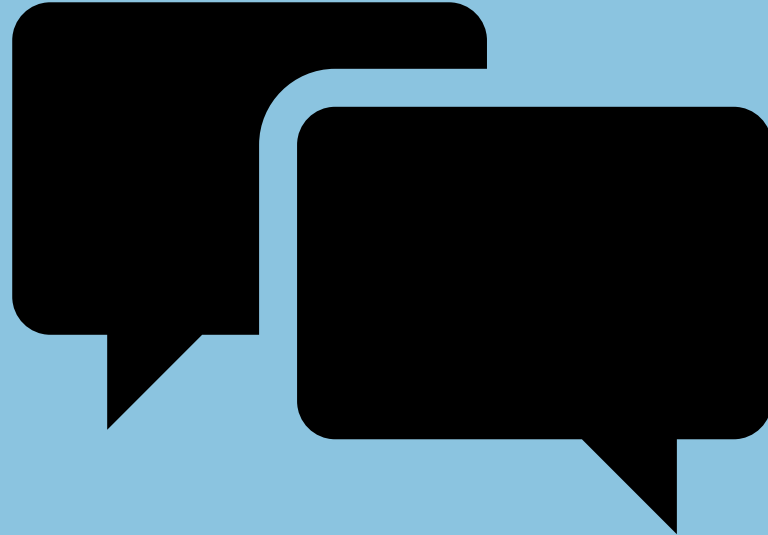
**HCWs**



- Build a trusting relationship
- Private space – confidentiality
- Comfortable room
- Remove physical barriers
- Be confident and make eye-contact
- “Do not disturb” sign on the door
- Can kick the P/CGs out but never the child or adolescent
- Give IEC material to read at home
- Bwise website



# What to say



Young children may disclose irrationally



Learn about HIV at school

HIV myths and stigma

Figure out their HIV status

Sexually active



# Partial Disclosure Example

# White Blood Cells = Soldiers



What does the soldier do if it finds a germ in the body?



Few White Blood Cells = Few Soldiers



Few soldiers = many germs



Many germs = person gets sick



Medicine makes your soldiers strong







## Partial Disclosure

“You were born with a germ that kills your soldiers”

“That germ is a virus”

“Today we’re going to talk about the name of your virus”



**BUT if you suspect they have heard of HIV already  
You need to give positive information to dispel the negative myths and stigma**

## **Play a Game: Guess the infection**

Name an infection

flu

TB

HIV

What do you know about it?

Do you think you have it?

How can people get HIV?

If you have HIV it doesn't mean you were promiscuous

Is there treatment for HIV?

People with HIV can live long healthy lives if they take medicine

What do you want to do when you're older?

People with HIV can do whatever they want

Can you get married and have children?

If you take medicine every day your partner won't get HIV or your baby

It wasn't your mother's fault you got HIV

We didn't have such good medicine in those days

It wasn't your mother's fault that she got HIV

HIV is so common, anyone can get it

# Summary

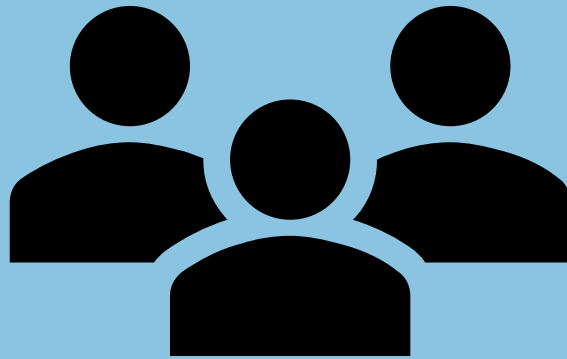
- Important to convey all the positive information about HIV
- Process
- Strive to set up clinics to disclose in an ideal way
- Need to be flexible and adjust the process for non-ideal situations
- Each adolescent and situation is different
- Be brave and spearhead the disclosure process
- Share methods that work

**“I wish I knew earlier...”**

# Thank you

Acknowledgements:

Dr Leon Levin and Marnie Vujovic



juliaturner7@gmail.com