

Lifeline Instructions: HIV Negative Participants

Please have your lifeline ready for a debriefing session on:

Introduction

As part of this research project, we are going to use the lifelines as a visual depiction and extension of the interview to explore your nondisclosure story. This involves exploring your emotions and feelings related to your experiences of nondisclosure in the context of the criminalization of HIV nondisclosure in Canada. We are specifically interested in the identity or identities you take up in response to these events. These identities can include being a victim, survivor, or something else that you have identified with your own experiences. Perhaps you don't see your experience as creating an identity, but rather as having led you to have certain feelings, which we would like you to describe. We are also interested in the actions you may or may not have taken as a result of finding out your partner didn't disclose their HIV positive status prior to sex.

Activity Description

You are asked to draw your significant life events onto a “traveling line” or some other shape that you believe represents your feelings about your experiences. You can do this by using various materials such as magazine clippings, pencil crayons, markers, glue, scissors, scrap paper, coloured paper, and sticky notes – anything that you have on hand. It can be as minimal or as extensive as you want it to be. Please use either 8 X 11in or 11 X 16in paper.

Alternatively, you can draw your lifeline using any software that you prefer and have at your disposal such as Microsoft Word.

Each event or milestone should be labelled as a picture, image, symbol, or sign – you should avoid sentences if possible. You are however free to write down words if you believe they add meaning. If you are using Microsoft word or another software, feel free to copy and past pictures from the internet that you feel best symbolize certain events in your life – this will be similar to using cutouts from magazines.

In addition, you are to create a legend (like those found on a map) to describe these visual depictions and to help viewers of your lifeline to better understand your experiences. The legend should include what the different line variations mean (e.g. what do the ascending and descending parts of your line symbolize) and what the symbols you have drawn or pasted signify etc.

Lastly, you should think about how you are going to present your HIV nondisclosure story during the debriefing session. You can write this down on the back of your lifeline to help you discuss your drawings during the debriefing

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session. Think of this part as the short description you see under paintings at a museum or any other gallery – you are the artist and this is what you want to share with whoever will see your work.

Once you have completed your lifeline drawing, please take a picture (if you drew it by hand) or screenshot (if you drew it on your computer) of your drawing and email it to Katarina.bogosavljevic@uottawa.ca. Alternatively, if you drew your lifeline by hand and wish to mail it to the researcher, please email Katarina at the email provided above and she will send you a self-addressed and stamped envelope so you can mail it to her.

Remember, you do not need to be afraid of doing this ‘artistic’ work. This activity is meant to be fun and creative and I am here to help in any way you need. The most important thing is that you enjoy the process!

Step 1: Drawing your line (10 minutes)

The first step in creating your lifeline is to draw the line. Please draw a line or some other shape that best represents your HIV nondisclosure story. For example, it could be a squiggly line, ascending and descending parts, jagged lines, right to left etc. While drawing the line, please consider the following questions:

- How would you describe yourself as a person before you found out that your partner did not disclose their HIV positive status?
- Are you different now? How?
- What has been the biggest change since you found out?
- How do you feel about your HIV nondisclosure story?
- What shape represents your HIV nondisclosure story?
 - Is it a line or is it a circle? Some other shape? Why that shape?
- What kind of line variations symbolize events in your life before, after, and at the time of the nondisclosure experience?
- What kind of line variations symbolize different emotions related to events in your life before, after, and at the time of the nondisclosure experience?
 - How are you going to represent nondisclosure on your line? Squiggly line? Sharp ascending or descending line?
- Where do you want to start drawing your line? Why have you chosen this direction? What does this direction symbolize?
 - Left to right?
 - Right to left?

Step 2: Drawing your Nondisclosure Story (50 min)

Now please summarize key moments in your HIV nondisclosure story. Through this exercise I want you to visually capture significant events in your HIV

nondisclosure story and how they impact your sense of self. This can include important events before finding out that you weren't disclosed to and after you found out, your feelings and emotions when you found out that you were not disclosed to, how disclosure and criminalization impact your sense of self, and the actions you took in response to nondisclosure such as going or not going to the police. Remember that these should be represented as images, symbols, shapes, signs, or pictures and that words are allowed but sentences should be avoided.

While drawing these life events, consider the following questions:

- What symbols come to mind when you think about your emotions and feelings in relation to your nondisclosure experience?
 - How do you identify after this experience?
 - How has it impacted or not the way you understand and/or see yourself and your body?
 - How has it impacted (or not) your relationships?
- What symbols come to mind when you think about your emotions and feelings related to the actions you took in response to your nondisclosure experience?
 - Did you go to the police?
 - If you did, what kinds of symbols or images come to mind that would reference your emotions and feelings related to this experience?
 - How were you treated? What did the room smell like? What did the room feel like?
 - If you didn't, what symbols or images come to mind that would reference your reasons for not going to the police?
- What symbols come to mind when you think about other significant life events before and after your experience of nondisclosure? Your relationships? Work? Family?
- Have you ever faced any challenges in your social or emotional life before and after your nondisclosure experience?
 - What kinds of difficulties/challenges were these? (e.g. gender-based discrimination, racism, exclusion from services, housing, or employment).
 - What kinds of images or symbols represent these challenges?
 - Did some of these change after your experience of nondisclosure?
 - How do these challenges make you feel?
- How did you overcome these challenges?
 - What symbols or images represent your resiliency and coping strategies?
 - If you haven't overcome these challenges, what symbols or images represent this?
 - How did overcoming or not these challenges make you feel?

Examples of Lifelines



