Serodiscordant Relationships

"Serodiscordant" carries the thorniest set of issues, because they must face major concerns about both relationship and HIV status. The challenges are based in a serodiscordant relationship may not have terms are:

• mixed status
• mixed sero-status
• magnetic
• health issues and illness
• practising safer sex
• losing your partner
• rejection or abandonment

The term serodiscordant originates from the word "seroconversion", which is the medical term for becoming HIV positive, and the word "discordant", which means "at odds". Some people don’t like the term serodiscordant and may use other permutations to describe their relationship. Some of these terms may include:

• magnetic
• inter-realtor
• positive-negative
• outlier
• mismatched

The challenges that you may experience while in a serodiscordant relationship may not have much to do with HIV infection and health with HIV. The challenges are based on the fact that life is present in your relationship.

"ACCEPt THE REALITY THAT YOUR RELATIONSHIP IS 'OPPONENT' AND TALK ABOUT WHAT A PROPERLY NEGATIVE ATTITUDE MEANS TO YOU. BEHAVIOURAL EXPERIENCE IS MUCH MORE."

Try to be open about your feelings with your partner:

- Talk about your HIV status, and whatever feelings you have about it.
- Share your fears and concerns about your relationship, and whatever feelings you have about it.
- Share your concerns about your partner’s health and well-being.
- Seek support from others who are dealing with similar issues.

All couples face conflict and compromise – issues about friends, family, financial matters, and family dynamics are common. Because of HIV, serodiscordant couples face added stress and anxiety. For example, worries about transmitting the disease to the HIV-negative partner can lead to sexual problems. Transferring the disease to the other partner can cause problems in the relationship.

Communication is the key to resolving conflict, reducing stress and increasing your relationship. It is essential to discuss any concerns that you may have about your relationship.

"POINts OF DOCCOUCence FOR SERODISCORDANT COUPLeS... Glance and secrecy in any relationship can be disastrous. In serodiscordant relationships, not discussing things can lead to missteps. When people tell others about being HIV-positive, it is important to discuss any concerns that you may have about your relationship.

Emotional health. Talk about your fears of illness and death. Discuss the feelings you have about grief and death, and explore how you can help each other through this difficult time.

Emotional health and disclosure. Talk about the option of disclosure in order to gain emotional support. Share your concerns. It is important to talk about all aspects of your relationship. Talk about the decision-making process, and the possibility of not disclosing your HIV status. You also need to talk about the need for more support or information.

Social health. Ask your partner about their social relationships, and what their feelings are about being HIV-positive in society. Talk about the decision-making process, and the possibility of not disclosing your HIV status. You also need to talk about the need for more support or information.

Medical treatments. Be open about your feelings about medical treatments. Talk about the possibility of being treated, and the possibility of not disclosing your HIV status. You also need to talk about the need for more support or information.

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GETTING ON WITH LIVING... Serodiscordant couples, like all couples, deal with a variety of challenges. Some community health or AIDS service organizations provide services for people living with HIV/AIDS and their partners. You may find it helpful to seek professional support for serodiscordant couples. Some community health or AIDS service organizations provide services for people living with HIV/AIDS and their partners. You may find it helpful to seek professional support for serodiscordant couples.

For information in your area, contact:

Canadian HIV/AIDS Information Centre (800-663-4872) 1-877-999-7740
www.aidssida.cpha.ca

or 613 725-3433 www.cphaweb.ca

Canadian Health Access Information Centre (800-667-7907)
1-877-999-7740
www.infohealth.ca

Canadian AIDS Society
1-877-999-7740
www.cassida.ca