Fighting Stigma In Our Own Words! Video Transcript

White letters on a black screen read:

Facing Stigma in Our Own Words!

These are the testimonies of African immigrant women living with HIV.

This film was created under their leadership.

Their identities have been concealed at their request.

[Note: quotes from the women are interspersed with each other. Each new paragraph is a different speaker than the one before it, going back and forth between 5 different speakers throughout the video. The women's faces are not visible in the video, but rather a silhouette of the speaker. In some cases, the video image shows silhouetted figures acting out the scenarios that the speaker is describing.]

"My name is Bosey. I'm an immigrant from Africa that lives with HIV. Before I moved to, to Canada, I was expecting more welcoming environment, people who understood more kind of zero stigma, no judgment."

"When I come to this country, my expectations were like, there is fairness, there is a straight line, but I was very disappointed. It's like you have a paint on your face, "I'm HIV positive!" Within even my community here, a woman is being looked at as a bad guy. They, they think the only way to contract it, it's through prostitution, so there is name calling."

"I completely avoid being with my community, because of stigma."

"Oftentimes when people hear about hospitals, cleaning, doctors, what comes in their mind is a safe place. Your health is in their hand. But it's, it's different."

"My first child I have C-section. I need hope, home support, I call family service. I am just honest, I just say I have HIV, and okay. I'll send you somebody. And then first didn't, she didn't told me she used gloves, after that, I, I lost my confidence. My second child I have, I don't know whose gonna again hurt me. I don't wanna, I need help, but I don't."

"After my surgery I tried to access handy-transit service. I took my close relative with me as an interpreter. And the clerk asked me what kind of medicine I was taking. I told her, "Just medicine!" And she insisted to know what kind of medication it was. And I told her it was HIV medicine. And the relative that I brought to interpret for me was very shocked and cried! I really didn't want to tell them. And after all that I wasn't even given the service."

"It's really trouble and people who never went to school, people who can't write and read, people are given long papers to sign, you don't even have time to go through some of the things, sometimes you're even signing off, off your life. When things are, have gone wrong, that's when they, they tell you, oh, but you signed, I said, I never understood."

"After my children were taken away, I was in too much pain. And after a while I realized I felt like I was nothing. I couldn't read, write, or speak. Even if CFS gave me my children back, how will we live?"

"There're so many things that have to be put together, in order for the medication to work. Yes, I do need my medication, I do need health services, but I also need compassion. And if you take the medication and there is also that love, it will make it much better."

"The group has helped me in a lot of ways, one was, it's like my family here."

"Being together, people living with HIV, where you feel you are in a safe place, having a safe place, it's a big deal. It just feels great to see that somebody will perceive, will look at you the way you are."

"If people could look at HIV people in that way, it will make a big difference. People will be more open to talk about their statuses, and when people are open, maybe we'll have few cases of HIV. We all need to work together."

Silhouettes fade. White letters on a black screen read:

Racialized immigrant women living with HIV face many stigmas.

Stigma is experienced in many aspects of their lives.

We all have a role to play in addressing stigma!

To find out how you can help, go to serc.mb.ca

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