

Dear Friend, if you were diagnosed with a life threatening illness, who would you tell? / Lyndall Stein.

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Dear Friend

If you were to be diagnosed with a life threatening illness, who would you tell?

Would you tell all your family? Or just some of them? And if your illness were so misunderstood and had social stigma attached, would that alter your decisions? I hope I haven't offended you, but such stark questions are having to be faced by ever greater numbers of people as HIV and AIDS continue their advance. When someone is diagnosed as HIV positive or having AIDS, there are such dilemmas to be resolved - all often made worse by ignorance and downright bigotry.

If you had to break such bad news to someone close to you, they would need help coming to terms with it, wouldn't they? Could they get such help easily? And could they continue to get help for as long as they needed it...?

On behalf of the Trust I attend many events which have a memorial aspect to them. I recently attended a candlelight vigil where I noticed a man standing near me who, I guessed, was in his fifties and a girl probably in her late teens. They were there together, united in remembrance, because someone - his son? her brother? - was now missing from their lives. As I looked around I contemplated that probably everyone there had some sort of emptiness in their lives because of AIDS. I know I have.

At that moment, it brought home to me once again just how important the Trust's Family Support Network is. From coming to terms with a diagnosis... through to coping with bereavement, awful pressures are put on families.

The leaflet with this letter tells about Eva Heymann, who will probably mind me describing her as remarkable - but that is not going to stop me! She works with our Family Support Network supporting mothers, fathers, partners, children, and grandparents of people who have a positive diagnosis.

Once you've read about the vital work that she does, I'm sure that you will want to make sure that everyone who needs support can get it. By sending a donation to the Trust, you can help that happen.

Thank you.

Lyndall Stein
Fundraiser

