

If you can't be a buddy : be a friend / LASS.

Contributors

Leicestershire AIDS Support Services

Publication/Creation

[1992?]

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/baubxd97>

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**IF YOU
CAN'T BE
A BUDDY**



**BE A
FRIEND**

**YOUNG, OLD,
BLACK, WHITE,
STRAIGHT OR
GAY**

WHAT DO WE ALL HAVE IN COMMON?

**WE ALL NEED TO FEEL
CARED FOR**

We also have a common ability to be affected by HIV and AIDS. You think not? In Leicestershire HIV has increased by 120% since 1987. It has the potential to affect **all** our lives. There are approximately 463,000* sexually active people in the county all of whom are at risk, depending on their sexual behaviour. By the end of the decade almost every family in Leicestershire will know someone who has HIV.

SO?

What can be done? On a personal level, be aware of the **facts** about HIV and reduce your risk of becoming infected or infecting others. These facts are set out on the back of this leaflet.

Meanwhile, there are hundreds of families in Leicestershire whose lives are affected by HIV and AIDS, almost all of whom tell no-one and live an isolated existence. People with HIV are ordinary, everyday people, most of whom have no signs of illness and, given the chance, live fulfilling lives. Why then, are many subjected to the anxiety of isolation?

*source: drawn from Health Education Authority/Leicestershire Health Authority figures.

WHY?

Because HIV and AIDS are still surrounded by misunderstanding, fear and prejudice. People with HIV frequently meet abuse and some lose the security of their family and friends, work and housing.

Telling your family, friends and workmates that you are HIV positive is an unnerving business. Think about it. How would you react to being told by someone you are living with, or working with, or simply close to, that they are HIV positive? Hopefully you would be one of the few who say "O.K., tell me about it, how can I help?"

Knowing that you are HIV positive brings its own traumas. Questions like — Why me? How will it effect me? What can I do? How will my life be? Who can I tell? What will they do? Who will tell me the truth? Where do I get help? There are no easy answers but there **are** answers.

LASS

Leicestershire AIDS Support Services is a voluntary organisation providing a range of services relating to HIV and AIDS. **Every single week of the year we respond to new requests for help.** These range from requests for simple practical help to the need for intense emotional support.

Our services are confidential and include advice, befriending, counselling, support and training. In addition, we are actively working to prevent the spread of HIV through health education and awareness. The majority of this work is carried out by our highly trained and carefully supported volunteers.

Not everyone has the time or inclination to become a skilled volunteer and 'buddy' someone. But everyone can help. You can help by becoming more aware of the facts about HIV, by breaking down people's prejudice and by thinking safer about sex.

You could do more.

HOW?

It costs £650 to train a volunteer and once trained, it costs about £15 per week to place and support each one. With a 120% increase in reported cases of HIV in Leicestershire since 1987, the need for skilled volunteers continues to rise.

A subscription to the FRIENDS of LASS costs just £15 per year (£20 per year for two people living at the same address). And, of course, in return for your support we will give you a welcome pack, keep you informed of our work and invite you to take part in our events and activities.

Whether you actively participate or passively support, your contribution will directly help us to reach out and benefit more people.

DON'T FILE US AND FORGET US!

Remember, we are talking about providing practical help and support to people in need. If, instead of talking about faceless, nameless people, we talked about **your** family, **your** friends, **your** loved ones, what would you give to help them? Would £15 be too much?

**COMPLETE THE FORM OVERLEAF.
JOIN THE FRIENDS OF LASS.**

ACT NOW!



Yes! I want to be a FRIEND of LASS.

Name

Address

County

Post Code

1. Here is my subscription to FRIENDS of LASS

Individual — £15 ☐

Two people — £20 ☐

Other* ☐

same address

and/or:

2. Here is my donation of £

3. I enclose total £

cheque/PO made payable to LASS

We need the support of people who care and who want to make a difference

There are several ways in which you can help us further.

Firstly, please tell us where you got this leaflet.

(e.g. bookshop, LASS etc).

Secondly, please give us the names and addresses of any of your friends who might like to hear about FRIENDS of LASS.

Name

Address

County

Post Code

Name

Address

County

Post Code

May we use your name when writing to your friends?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please return this form and your subscription to:
**FRIENDS of LASS, The Michael Wood Centre,
29 New Walk, Leicester LE1 6TE**

***If you are unemployed or cannot afford the subscription,
we still want you as a FRIEND. Please send us what you can.**

WHAT IS AIDS?

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), is the condition which can develop when there is a breakdown of the body's immune system caused by HIV. When this occurs, the body becomes susceptible to infections and diseases it would normally be able to fight off.

WHAT IS HIV?

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. It is the virus which may cause the immune system to be impaired. Not everyone with HIV develops AIDS. Most people with the virus remain well for many years but can pass it on to others.

HOW IS HIV TRANSMITTED?

The most common ways we can become infected with HIV are:

- *Anal sex without a condom:*
between women and men, or men and men.
- *Vaginal sex without a condom:*
between women and men.
- *Sharing injecting equipment.*
- *From infected mother to unborn child.*

HIV is **not** passed on through every day social contact in the family, at school or at work. It cannot be passed on by shaking hands, sharing drinking glasses, knives, forks, sharing toilets, using swimming pools or hugging and kissing. There is no danger in donating blood.

WHO IS AT RISK?

Anybody! HIV has affected all sections of society. It is a myth to assume that gay men and drug users are the only people at risk. **There are no high risk groups, only high risk activities.**

AVOIDING HIV INFECTION

As HIV is passed on through **blood, semen** and **vaginal fluids**, it is important to avoid any activity which allows these fluids into the bloodstream.

If you inject drugs, don't share works. If you have anal or vaginal sex, use a condom and only use water based lubricants. Exploring other safer ways of having sex can be fun.

Remember, it's what you do that counts not who you are.

If you want further information, please contact us by 'phoning Leicester 559995 during office hours, or by writing to us at: **The Michael Wood Centre, 29 New Walk, Leicester LE1 6TE.**