

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Understanding HIV and AIDS explores the questions students ask about HIV and AIDS by using a discussion group with students, a doctor who specializes in HIV education, and two HIV-infected individuals. Interspersed with the discussion group segments are graphics and narration to reinforce and expand the points made in each segment. Rapper and actor Bow Wow serves as the narrator for the program.

This video begins with students voicing their questions and concerns about HIV and AIDS: *What does HIV stand for? What does AIDS stand for? Can you get it from kissing? I'm not sure how I'd react around someone who is HIV-positive. HIV is scary because you could die from it.*

Bow Wow introduces himself and explains that the video will address fears about HIV and AIDS with information, beginning with the basics. He distinguishes between HIV and AIDS and narrates an animated sequence that shows how the immune system identifies and attacks germs that enter the body. The animation depicts the way that HIV is able to take over T-cells in the immune system and make more copies of itself. Eventually the immune system becomes so weakened that illness results.

The first discussion segment opens with Leslie Hayes McKenzie, MD, Chief of Adolescent Medicine at Brooklyn Hospital Center. She asks the students if they know what HIV means and how it relates to AIDS. After their discussion, Eddie, who is HIV+, asks if they know who is likely to get infected with HIV and makes that point that HIV does not discriminate. Bow Wow then describes how transmission of HIV can occur if blood, semen or vaginal fluid containing the virus comes in contact with blood in mucous membranes of another person. Unprotected sexual contact, sharing needles, and transmission from an infected mother to her child are identified as the ways most HIV transmission occurs. The use of condoms to reduce sexual transmission and the role of other sexually-transmitted diseases in increasing transmission is discussed.

The group then focuses on transmission. Sharing contaminated needles, not only for drugs, but also for tattoos is discussed. One student asks if babies of HIV-infected mothers are always infected. Dr. McKenzie describes the importance of HIV testing for pregnant women so those who are infected can get medications that will reduce HIV transmission to their children. Kelly, who is HIV-positive, describes how she took medicine during her pregnancy and had a daughter who was not infected. Bow Wow explains how needles shared for insulin, steroids, tattoos and piercings can all cause HIV transmission. He reinforces the importance of testing during pregnancy.

Next a student asks how Kelly and Eddie became infected. Kelly shares that she was infected by a boyfriend at 19. Eddie describes his careless approach to using condoms because he felt it couldn't happen to him until he was diagnosed in his late teens. Bow Wow tells viewers they can protect themselves and reminds them that abstinence is the most effective way to prevent HIV infection, other STD infections and pregnancy. He makes