

Welcome

It is with great pleasure that we welcome the Durban University of Technology (DUT) community to the first edition of Izwi Lakho Newsletter.



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Izwi lakho means "Your Voice" which is a true reflection of what this newsletter hopes to be. This monthly newsletter's objective is to share information about what the HIV and AIDS Centre is doing, whilst at the same time serve as a communication tool that will engage the DUT community on issues relating to HIV and AIDS.

Through this publication, we hope to contribute to building a better understanding and appreciation of the work done in the HIV and AIDS Centre and the many faces behind its successes. On behalf of the HIV and AIDS Centre Team, I hope you enjoy the newsletter and we are looking forward to your contributions.

Thank you
Thobile Zulu
Specialist HIV/AIDS Co-ordinator

ABOUT US

Vision

- To transform the DUT community into an AIDS competent community through effective knowledge and skills.
- To create a supportive and caring environment for people infected and or affected by HIV.
- To develop an HIV/AIDS policy which addresses the human rights and dignity of people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

Objectives

- To review and lead policy implementation and development.
- To organise public events on campus to raise awareness on issues relating to HIV/AIDS.
- To provide expert knowledge, information and advise on HIV/AIDS issues to the DUT community through consultation.
- To communicate key issues to the DUT community, utilizing existing social marketing peer educators.



Meet the DUT HIV/AIDS Centre team!



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FACTS ABOUT HIV

- If left untreated, HIV will almost deplete the immune system. This leaves the body vulnerable to opportunistic infections (OI)'s, which eventually progresses to Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS).
- The more the immune system is compromised, the greater the risk of death from opportunistic infections.
- The human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, is a virus that attacks the body's immune system.
- HIV is infectious, which means it can be transmitted from one person to another.
- The virus weakens the body's defense system against diseases making the body vulnerable to a number of opportunistic infections like TB, meningitis, pneumonia, etc.



Five Minute Interview

Interview with Thobile Zulu from DUT's Student Counselling and Health Department – Specialist HIV/AIDS Co-ordinator



What do you do at DUT?

I am a Specialist HIV/AIDS Co-ordinator and my duties here include reviewing and developing an HIV/AIDS policy for the institution. At the moment I am working on a two year plan integrating HIV and AIDS into the curriculum. To achieve that objective, I appeal to the university community to give me support and to be available when I need to discuss the plan with them.

Where did you study, and what are your qualifications?

I studied at the University of KwaZulu-Natal before the merger. I have a Bachelor's Degree in Social Sciences, a Post Graduate Diploma in Human Resources Management, a Diploma in Applied Social Sciences and a Masters in Social Sciences.

South Africa has one of the highest HIV infection rates world-wide. Do you have any comment on this?

South Africa faces one of the biggest challenges with regard to HIV and AIDS. We also know that fear and taboo surrounding sexuality, and HIV/AIDS in particular, undermines efforts to ensure that people have factual information and the necessary skills to protect themselves and others from HIV infection.

HIV/AIDS related stigma and discrimination prevents people from being tested for HIV, disclosing their status and receiving care and treatment. I think universities are well positioned to address HIV related stigma through the courses they offer and to create an environment where staff and students affected and/ or infected with HIV are assured of their rights.

How should South Africa deal with the current HIV/AIDS situation?

I believe that the most effective way is to support successful prevention efforts and secure access to effective, comprehensive treatment in vulnerable and marginalized sectors of society. In order to achieve this, South Africa needs to work in partnership with local Community-Based Organisations (CBOs).

I strongly believe that people affected should be participants in programmes that are addressing their needs instead of treating them as objects of charity. Universities, together with the CBOs, are well placed and have a strategic role to play through research that can feed into interventions and being close to the community affected.

What do you do to unwind after a hectic day?

I watch TV, soaps are a favourite!

Tell us about your family?

I am married with three kids - two girls and a boy who was born in October just before I joined DUT in November 2007.

What inspires you?

The will to succeed in whatever I do.

What advice can you give to students?

Studies have shown that young people are at the epicenter of the HIV/AIDS pandemic but they are also our hope in the struggle against the pandemic. There is a lot that students can do to fight this, for instance by delaying sexual initiation - and those already involved in sexual activities should use condoms to protect themselves. Knowing your status in order to take necessary precautions, reducing the number of partners you have and gathering all the information available will equip you with life-saving skills.

Parting words ...

We urge both students and staff to participate in awareness campaigns run by the HIV/AIDS Centre through peer education programmes because in order to fight this pandemic we need to arm ourselves with all the factual information that will empower us to reduce risky behaviour which exposes us to the virus.



Against the odds

Criselda Kananda is living positively and spreading a message of hope across the world. So what's her secret?

Metro FM talk show host Criselda Kananda was seven months pregnant when she was diagnosed HIV positive in 1998, but this courageous, vibrant woman refused to accept it as a 'death sentence'. Instead, she armed herself with knowledge and the power of positive thinking. Criselda chose to live healthily and fearlessly and it changed her life. She beat the odds and today she gives educational and motivational talks on holistic health to groups of up to 10 000 people through her company, Positive Talk Services. She wears her signature curve of dots with pride, as a reminder that there are always two sides to any story and that where there is pain, there is also possibility. We had some questions for her.

Where were you born?

I was born in Boksburg and raised in five different townships – Daveyton, Lynnville, Sebokeng, Thembisa and Soweto. My parents broke up when I was four, so we moved around a lot. I think growing up in hardship brought out the best in me, though, because when you look back and realise where you've managed to get to today, you have to think, 'If I came through that victoriously, I can achieve anything!'

Would you say you were born with a destiny?

We aren't born with a script that says 'this is how life will be'. We figure it out along the way. When I was a child I dreamed of being a princess. I don't know what that meant but I remember I always had dreams about walking onto a stage and being appreciated and admired. I didn't understand those dreams back then but now it all makes sense.

How have you managed to live so positively with HIV?

When I was diagnosed in 1998, I was told I had two years to live. Looking back at that journey, I'm really grateful that at the time I knew what it meant to be God's child. From the doctor's office I drove straight to church, where the priest spoke to me about God's



love. Knowing there was someone on my side helped me to focus on facts, not fear.

Why the talk show?

I realised I needed to find a way to reach more people and start getting the message out that we need to normalize the way people see HIV. I sent a proposal to Kaya FM and once I had a sponsor on board they picked up my talk show. We soon expanded the show to a complete wellness programme, but we disagreed on the time slot. By then the show was doing so well that Metro FM approached me. I joined the station and I'm still with Metro every Wednesday and Thursday evening from 7pm to 9pm.

Where did you get the name of 'God's favourite daughter'?

I chose it myself. When I look at my life and think that I was almost a street kid, I was a widow at 24, and later I found out I was infected with HIV – but in all that mess, I still managed to go to school, I'm at the prime of my career, and I'm blessed with so much. So there's no way you can deny that God is at work in my life.

How do you feel about fame?

Fame is bittersweet. People often believe they are entitled to your space.

I do understand that. You're on the radio in their lounge every day, so people feel connected to you.

Sometimes, though, I just want some quiet time with my family and someone will come up to me and say, 'I know you! I love your show! I deserve a hug!' [laughs]. Honestly, people sometimes don't realise what they're saying. It can be harsh, though, because you stop being human – you are seen as superhuman. Like you're not supposed to be challenged by life. Like your car never breaks down on the highway. Sometimes you wish you could just go and buy the newspaper without the tabloids needing to know about it!

Tell us about your family.

I am so blessed, sometimes it almost scares me. It does keep me grounded, though. That's why something like my car breaking down doesn't really get to me that much. I have three daughters. Thato is 19, Khosi is 15 and Thando is nine. My girls and I are best friends as well as being mother and daughters. We learn so much from each other. I'm really proud that if someone asks one of them who their role model is, even if she knows I'm not around, she will say, 'my mother.' I think that's the best sign that I'm doing something right as a mom!

Things you didn't know about Criselda

- She got married at 19, and when she wanted to go back to school, her husband stole her daughter and she didn't see her for the next 17 years. Today she lives happily with all her daughters.
- Her second husband died, and she left her third husband after he was violent towards her.
- She believes that abuse has nothing to do with love, and says it's vital that women don't lose their identities.

Article and Pictures: Courtesy of JET Club Magazine – August 2008 issue



Integration of HIV/AIDS into the curriculum

The centre offers the following services:

HEALTH PROMOTION

- Peer education programme
- Support group
- VCT promotion
- HIV/AIDS awareness programme
- Training on HIV/AIDS.

HIV/AIDS INFORMATION

- Marketing HIV/AIDS centre services
- Conducting awareness campaigns
- HIV integration into the curriculum
- Provision of HIV/AIDS information.

VOLUNTARY COUNSELLING & TESTING (VCT)

Voluntary: A client voluntarily requests a test.

- Awareness & education
- Pre and post counselling
- HIV testing
- Ongoing counselling
- CD4 count testing
- Referrals – internal & external.

HIV/AIDS RESEARCH

- Create research data
- Promote HIV/AIDS research within DUT.

The centre is located at Open House, 1st floor, Steve Biko campus. You are welcome to visit the centre and find out more about the services that we offer.

The HIV/AIDS Centre hosted their workshop aimed at encouraging the integration of HIV/AIDS into the curriculum. There were a number of guest speakers that were invited to present on relevant issues to assist participants on ideas of integration.



Dr Mlisana of CAPRISA presented on HIV/AIDS and its role within the institution sector.



Drama students performed a dance piece about HIV/AIDS.



People from different faculties at DUT attended the workshop.



A poet who performed a piece on HIV/AIDS entertained the participants.



HIV/AIDS team that organised the workshop.



Group sessions were held during the workshop to brainstorm ideas together.



WHAT'S UP??

AIDS week

1st - 5th September 2008

Peer educator workshops

September 2008

Know your status campaign

1st - 5th September 2008

HIV and AIDS workshops

13th - 14th August 2008

ATTENTION!

Infection with HIV and AIDS is a lifelong, chronic condition BUT, with the help of an early diagnosis and healthy lifestyle, you can prolong your life. VCT will help.

WHAT IS VCT?

Voluntary A member voluntarily requests a test

Counselling The person receives counseling on the procedure and the implications of the HIV test results

Testing The results of the HIV antibody test e.g. Elisa is available within a week while the results of the rapid test – e.g. finger prick – will be available within 5-20 minutes.

WHY MUST I KNOW MY HIV STATUS?

Knowing your HIV status will help you make informed decisions about your life.

If you are positive, you can make a commitment to keep yourself as healthy as possible for as long as possible.

WHEN TO TEST?

Today and whenever you are exposed to high risk behaviour or when a work-related incident with possibility of HIV infection occurred.

WHO WILL KNOW MY RESULTS?

- The results are strictly confidential!
- You will be informed in person and receive post-testing counseling
- You can decide with whom you will share the information.

ADVANTAGES OF KNOWING

If the test is **NEGATIVE**

- Relief from uncertainty
- Motivated to remain negative
- Focus on a healthy and risk free life
- Increased awareness of vulnerability
- It will help you stay negative

If the test is **POSITIVE**

- You can do a CD4 count
- You can get early and correct medical treatment
- You can start a healthy life-style
- You can change your behaviour

- You can manage opportunistic infections
- You can focus on good nutrition
- You will get access to support groups
- You will receive counselling.

HOW CAN I GET TO KNOW MY STATUS?

GO FOR TESTING

TIPS BEFORE YOU GO FOR TESTING

- Only qualified professionals are allowed to do the testing and counselling
- It must be voluntary
- It must be in a confidential environment
- It must be accompanied by pre-and post test counselling.

PRE-TEST COUNSELLING CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Discussion of HIV test, basic HIV facts and the implications of knowing your status.
- Establishment of personal history and risk of exposure to HIV
- Assessment of the ability to cope with crisis/stress and available support systems
- Discussion of safer sex and risk reduction
- Decision making as to whether or not to take the test.

POST-TEST COUNSELLING CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING:

- The results of the test will be provided
- The test results will be clarified. Issues that will be dealt with include the window period (6 weeks – 3 months) and the confirmation tests (3, 6 & 12 months)
- Topics that will be discussed include concerns and problems, disclosure, risk reduction and re-infection
- Follow-up intervention and joining a support group will be encouraged.



LETTERS TO SISTA-ZEE

I have been friends with this guy for a while now and he says he would like us to explore the relationship. He's a nice person, if not great. We talk about a lot of things, which is one of the reasons I find him interesting. A while back he disclosed his status to me and I was unsure how to handle this information. As much as I try to be mature about it, I feel like it's way too early to have such a delicate situation weighing so heavy on my soul. I am not sure but the interest I had before I knew about his status is slowly disappearing, and I feel like I am being selfish and inconsiderate.

How can I lose interest when I am in a relationship with this nice, sincere and kind person?

I still want us to continue being friends but beyond that to be honest, I am skeptical. Does this not say I am rejecting him and everything that we could have had? Can you advise me on how to handle this amicably? I have so many mixed feelings about being in this relationship, emotionally I think I am not ready - Anonymous!

In this case, I can't tell you what to do but to follow your heart!!! Let's do some reality check here, note that this guy has disclosed to you in confidence. It's advisable for you to do an HIV test so that you get counselling, get more information as to how HIV is transmitted.

Reality is, most of sisters/ladies out there fall in love with guys who don't disclose their status up until they engage sexually, most of the time without protection. The difference here is that this guy has disclosed up-front which is subjecting him to discrimination. Please check and research so that you can make informed decisions.

My cousin's husband was cheating with a widow and someone told her that the widow's husband had died because of HIV. So my cousin then went for a test and tested positive. Her husband divorced her, accusing her that she is the one that infected him. She is very frustrated and sick. She doesn't want to accept her status and doesn't want to start treatment (ARV's). Please advice – Carol

Your cousin needs intense ongoing counselling to assist her accept her status.

Starting ARV's - not every HIV positive person needs ARV's. Firstly she needs to do a CD4 count test and only when the CD4 count is less than 200 or/ & she has AIDS - defining symptoms then she can start on ARV's.

In the past two years, I've lost my parents and sister due to HIV & AIDS. My uncle is currently ill and I am struggling to cope with my school work. I am pre-occupied with what is going to happen next. Sista Zee, kindly help me deal with my family deaths as I haven't come to terms with it – Nomsa

We normally say to people that have experienced such multiple deaths in the family due to HIV and AIDS that they been affected by HIV with double trauma. You need to have a support system like a support group of HIV affected people, to share experiences & remember that " a problem shared is a problem halved". Professional counselling does help as well to assist you deal with your trauma.

For more info: don't hesitate to contact Sista Zee -031 373 2320.

Submit your letters in the drop-in box situated in all DUT libraries or at 1st floor Open House, DUT HIV and AIDS Centre or email them to masondoz@dut.ac.za. Fab prizes up for grabs for the winning letter.

KNOW YOUR STATUS!! IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO!!



Speaking Positively

When you are positive in life, you live HAPPILY. See the trick is, how you perceive day to day life's experiences is how you will live your life.

I was a student myself. I went through sleepless nights studying, doing assignments, crying for a lost love, adjusting to knowing I am HIV positive, I hope you are starting to get my point. I have been through it all... and yet I can smile and live life positively. Actually "I AM LIVING MY LIFE LIKE IT'S GOLDEN". It is up to us what we choose to become. I am successful, young, sexy, you name it. This is a message to those who are thinking life is unfair, whether you are HIV positive or negative. Life is a hassle but having a positive status of mind is the cherry on top. Actually, what I am trying to alert you to is "You have a choice". It's your life and there is no one who knows and understands you more than yourself. It is your choice to be anyone you want to be.

At first I was scared to go for a test but it helped me to SCRUTINISE myself, RETHINK and CHOOSE how to live my life. With positively speaking I hope to motivate all those who reading this to have WISE CHOICES for themselves. I can go on and on but all I was trying to say was "YOU HAVE A CHOICE IN LIFE".

WHAT IS YOUR CHOICE?

Anonymous - from my heart to yours.

S- Success
P- Perseverance
E- Enthusiastic
A- Achieving
K- Keen
I- Intelligence
N- Noble
G- Generous

P- Polite
O- Openness
S- Satisfaction
I- Inspirational
T- Tender Care
I- Insightful
V- Virtue
E- Energetic
L- Loving
Y- Youthful



COMPETITION TIME QUIZ

See if you can answer the following questions!

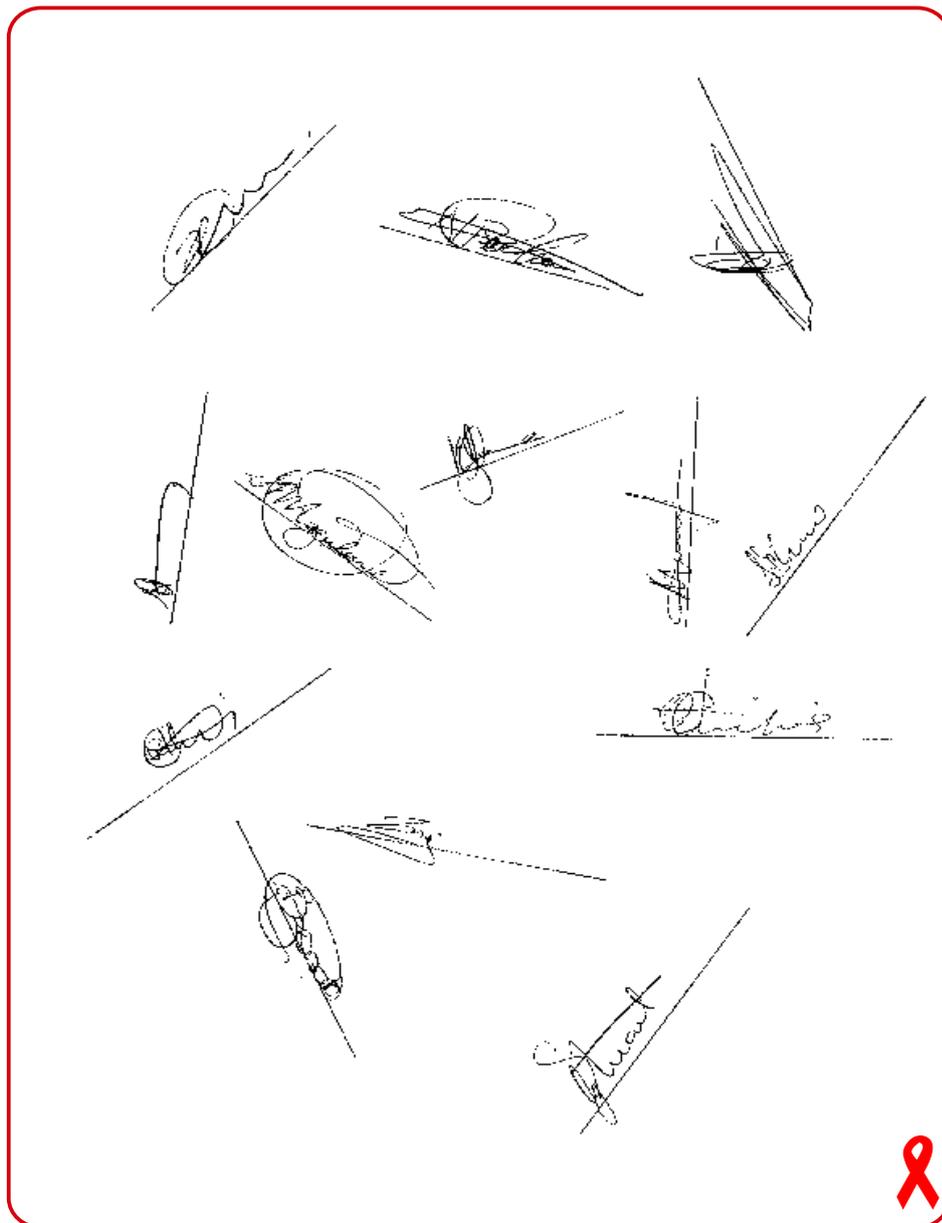
Fabulous prizes up for grabs for the winning entry. All submissions must be forwarded before 15 September. Submit your answers in the drop-box situated at all DUT libraries or at 1st floor Open House, DUT HIV and AIDS Centre or email to masondoz@dut.ac.za. Winners will be published in the next issue.

Questions

- Test for your body soldiers?
- Disease caused by HIV?
- Test to know your status?
- Treatment that slows down the progress of the virus?
- For safe sex use ...?
- Test for virus in blood?
- Three months waiting time after negative results?
- HIV is a transmitted disease?



OUR PLEDGE
We solemnly pledge to provide a highly professional, confidential and efficient service to the DUT community. So help us God!



GUESS WHO WAS BORN THIS MONTH???

HAAA!! Miss Jabu Zondo
Astro Star: Leo
Character: Mature & Assertive,
Hey don't mess around with her!!
Availability: Single & ready to
mingle, check this: she knows
her status.

DID YOU KNOW?

When you do a rapid
HIV test, the results
only take
5 – 10 minutes.



Risk Reduction Menu

<p><i>Eliminate a high-risk partner</i></p>  <p><i>Stop going to high-risk venue (bar, club)</i></p>  <p><i>Ask partner to be tested</i></p>  <p><i>Communicate with partner about being faithful</i></p>  <p><i>Abstain until you know the status of your partner</i></p> 	<p><i>Carry a condom while travelling for work</i></p>  <p><i>Drink less alcohol when going out with friends</i></p>  <p><i>Participate in new low risk activities (participate in sports)</i></p>  <p><i>Attend a support group (post-test club)</i></p>  <p><i>Speak with a friend about my HIV issues/concerns</i></p> 
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