

## Getting support

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Many positive men and many of their negative partners have found that talking with others is a great way of getting support. And sex is one of the main issues they talk about.

The secret is finding the right support for you.



### Friends and family

Many of us find that those closest to us are the most useful and supportive people to talk with about personal issues. But keep in mind that if you disclose they may need time to come to terms with the information. Often, the closer someone is to us, the more affected they will be by our news. You may find yourself supporting them for a while.

Also, friends and family are not bound by confidentiality and may find the need to talk about your status with others. Is this an issue for you to consider?

### Other people in the same situation

Peers are often the best people to talk to because they have a personal understanding. Look around you for positive friends or their negative partners. AIDS Councils or [PLWHA](#) [1] Person (or People) Living with HIV/AIDS. organisations usually have peer workers who can talk to you or guide you into support groups.

### Counsellors

Many gay men with HIV have found counsellors very useful. Most HIV or sexual health services can refer you to specialised counsellors. You may need to shop around to find a counsellor that meets your needs. Counselling can be short-term and deal with a particular problem or on-going and deal with a number of issues.

### Health care practitioners

Good health care practitioners can be a significant source of support for gay men with HIV. Your doctor should be able to give you information about having sex when you are HIV-positive.

## Services for other particular needs

There are specific services for areas like community care, mental health, drug use issues, financial support and so on. Many people with HIV have found these very useful. A good social worker or your local AIDS Council should be able to tell you how to access these services if you need them.

*"I have two doctors -one for HIV-treatments who wouldn't know a feeling if it jumped out and hit him (but he knows his science) and a female doctor who's great for minor illnesses and for taking the time to talk over important issues and to provide health information in ways that make sense to me."*

*"We were having real problems with sex in our relationship because of our different HIV-status. We went to a counsellor. He made it clear in all sorts of ways that he couldn't understand why my negative partner chose to stay in the relationship. What finally worked for us was my lover going to a support group for negative partners of positive men."*

*"The idea of sitting around in a group with other positive men was terrifying. But I finally relented under pressure from my friends. It was useful sharing information and experiences about HIV treatments. The group also spent a lot of time talking about sex. It gave me the confidence to disclose my HIV-status in sexual situations and realise that any demonstration of bad attitudes was their problem and I probably didn't want to ever know them, let alone have sex with them, anyway."*

[Making sense of it all](#) [2][up](#) [\[3\]The last word - the law and HIV transmission](#) [>](#) [4]

- [Social and emotional support](#)

### Links:

[1] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/119>

[2] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/hiv-gay-sex/making-sense-of-it-all>

[3] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/hiv-gay-sex>

[4] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/hiv-gay-sex/the-last-word-the-law-and-hiv-transmission>