I: All right. Uh. In this interview I will ask you to talk about AIDS. I want you to know that you don't have to answer all my questions. If you don't want to answer a question, just let me know and I will go on with the next one. You can also ask me to stop the interview at any time.

In this interview you will be asked to talk about everything you know about AIDS. I will first ask you to tell me everything you know about AIDS. Then I will ask you some more specific questions. I may ask the same question more than once. I do this to make sure that you tell me everything you know and that I understand everything you say. Please don't worry about whether your answers are right or not, just tell me everything that comes to mind. You don't have to talk about your about yourself or your behavior. No one else will hear the tape but me and I'm not going to report to people to any other people here what you said.

Um, my first question is: Please tell me everything you know about AIDS. And if you could just you know speak to the tape.

S: Well.....I know it's a disease that's sexual transmitted or transmitted through the blood and it can get through your body in different ways. It goes through sexual intercourse. It goes through breast milk. It goes through IV needles. It goes through any thing, a sore, a cut, anything where your bloodstream is like mainly exposed. I know it's starts off as HIV virus and then it progresses on to AIDS which is like a deadly disease. And you can live with it for many years and then you could also live with it for just a few months. And um it doesn't attack like any special race or color or female or male, it's just a disease that everybody...and that's about it.

I: Okay. Um. Can you tell me more about how AIDS uh HIV is passed on from one person to another?

S: Well.....I know it's a disease that's sexual transmitted or transmitted through the blood and it can get through your body in different ways. It goes through sexual intercourse. It goes through breast milk. It goes through IV needles. It goes through any thing, a sore, a cut, anything where your bloodstream is like mainly exposed. I know it's starts off as HIV virus and then it progresses on to AIDS which is like a deadly disease. And you can live with it for many years and then you could also live with it for just a few months. And um it doesn't attack like any special race or color or female or male, it's just a disease that everybody...and that's about it.

I: Okay. You told me that AIDS is passed on when you um uh through a mothers' breast milk, breast milk. Can you tell me more about that?

S: Cause your mothers' the body is formed up by all the uh genes and chemicals that's in the body, and AIDS is through the most main chemical in your bloodstream and it gets in through the blood and the milk and everything it's all attached to your body.

I: Mum-hum.

S: And so once it comes out of your body [inaudible] your bodys' fluids, that's how the AIDS virus gets in your blood and it comes through that and once the child consumes it, it gets into the childs' system and it goes like that.

I: Okay.......Does it matter how often a person um engages in um say unprotected sex or uh or how often a chur a mother may nurse a child in terms of uh the uh risk of AIDS?
S: No. [Inaudible] You can get it your first time. You can get it, you might not even get it after awhile. It's just all different times for different people.

I: Mm-hum. Can you tell me how a person can prevent getting uh AIDS if they're sharing needles or having unprotected sex or nursing a child?

S: Making sure that your needle is clean, making sure that there's not no after blood in it. Basically use your own needle if if you can. Make sure you got a brand new needle, a clean needle, and if you don't trust that person, I suggest you use the needle first. And then the you should always have protected sex or be in a monogamous relationship where as to you don't have to worry about the other person and you should have had AIDS checks, check up for AIDS before you begin to have sex. And as far as um breast feeding, the mother should have to make that decision whether her baby if her child has already conceived AIDS whatever to see where it could I mean you know the syndrome progressed faster whether she should do it or not.

I: Mm-hum.

S: So that's a decision up to her.

I: Do you think that um um it would make the um the disease progress faster if uh the mother continued to nurse the child if the child had AIDS?

S: I think it would because by while she's while she's giving the child milk and whatever it's like bringing more of the AIDS virus in the body. And a child a childs' immune system aren't really built up yet and so it's like attacking immune system more it's depreciating faster than a full grown adult would be.

I: Okay. Is there anything that a uh a person who is uh having unprotected self sex can do to protect themselves from AIDS?

S: Yeah, like I said before have a monogamous relationship or practice abstinence or you have use a condom yet protect yourself if you're not going to be [inaudible] if you're not doing that you just [inaudible] [inaudible] and there's no other way [inaudible].

I: How well do you think uh this would really protect a person from getting AIDS?

S: I think it would [inaudible] real good. You know, a condom's not 100% but it would cut down that risk factor and [inaudible] abstinence and monogamy, it would be you know, cut down that risk totally.

I: Mm-hum. Okay. Um...what do you think may lead a person to uh have unprotected sex or not be monogamous um or to uh uh how would this uh make it more likely that they will uh do it? What do you think may lead a person to uh to do that kind of thing?

S: Peer pressure.

I: Peer pressure?

S: Yeah. Or it it would be either it could be guy or girl pressuring the other partner to have sex and you know you wanna say, whoa. I don't feel the same or it's not right or I can't wait cause really you gotta make your own decision if you have low self-esteem and have poor decision making skills that's what will make you make that decision, the wrong decision. If
you can stand your ground and know what you want to do, they shouldn't be able to uh you know turn out that way.

I: Mm-hum....Imagine that a person goes out planning not to have unprotected sex or not to uh share needles. What do you think may mess up these plans?

S: Or they might go to a party or anything. They're around the wrong crowd and just you know don't wanna be outcast, they'll just do it to fit in.

I: Mm-hum.

S: Or just do it because they say they're bored or don't have anything else to do.

I: Mm-hum. Um, what effect does alcohol have on people?

S: Alcohol it like it changes a person it makes them the alcohol [inaudible] chemical effect it has on a person but when a person the way their actions are they change. They like more more outgoing and they just go for it you know. It makes them feel like it gives them a rush. Makes them feels as if they could do whatever they want and anything they couldn't do or say they could say it now cause they don't have any fear in their heart.

I: Mm-hum. Does drinking make much of a difference in a persons' risk of getting AIDS?

S: Yes, cause when you drink you're not in a right state of mind and you're not capable of making right decisions. You might make that wrong decision and sleep with somebody or their sharing needles or do drugs with somebody and that could contract and come back and be the way you caught AIDS or can catch it.

I: Is this risk different for people who drink a little bit everyday compared to people who drink a lot every weekend?

S: No. It's basically the same. No matter whether you drink a little bit every day cause after a while that little bit ain't gonna be enough and you're gonna start drinking a lot or you drink a lot every weekend after a while you're gonna want to drink a lot every day so it would be about the same perspective when you get to the end.

I: Mm-hum. Okay. Does it matter how often a person is exposed to AIDS?

S: It depends on whether they have already contracted the virus or not. And if they're exposed to AIDS a lot and they're not [inaudible] to the virus they should just frequently get theirselves checked and may it doesn't matter if you get it the first time you come in contact with it or maybe after the twelfth time, you should always [inaudible] get yourself checked and you might not never just get it, so [inaudible] person has a chemical balance in their metabolism and everything else you know the way a person is.

I: Can you tell me what happens when a person gets infected with the AIDS virus?

S: Well first they go through the stage and have HIV and that's like do um virus [inaudible] but it's not dead it's not to the terminal point. And then after a while your system is just breakin' down, your immune system. And once it actually have full-blown AIDS they start bein' able to ease their contract diseases and get viruses and different things like the flu or different things that normally wouldn't have and then slowly but surely your body is deteriorating and then after awhile you just die.
I: Can you tell me more about the time between when a person gets AIDS and when he or she...........................mmm.............let's see..........................well okay. Um, can you tell me more about the time between when a person uh is exposed to the AIDS virus and when he or she gets AIDS?

S: Well well when a person is exposed to the AIDS virus, they um like I said before they get HIV and that's just the beginning to the where [inaudible] leads up to AIDS full-blown AIDS. They can live with that disease which a process of the way your immune system is breaking down. It can break down over a period of months, it can break down over a period of years, long time of years. And that through that period you'll you'll live a normal life. You take medication to stabilize your conditions, the things you go through silk sick spells and you go through times where you're just real tired and times you're real up, until you get AIDS and that's when you're real then you start to care.

I: Mm-hum. Does it take longer for some people than for others?

S: Yeah.

I: Okay. Um. How can someone learn whether he or she has AIDS?

S: Go to the hospital and get tested. But you should always have a second opinion.

I: What does this test test for? Do you know how it works?

S: I think it tests how many t-cells or red blood cells [inaudible] you have in your body and how your immune system will be able to react to the diseases. [Inaudible] [inaudible] say you have the flu or or a common cold or how it reacts to it and how they and how um how many white cells you have left in your blood stream and how fast they're deteriorating and how fast they build back up. Things like that.

I: Okay. Why would someone decide to be tested?

S: Make sure they might have [inaudible] unprotected sex or they had that one time in their life use IV drugs or that one time in their life you know the earlier years, the early eighties they may have had a blood transfusion and they're not sure and they might they may be gonna through sick spells or may have nausea or anything and they don't know what it is [inaudible] if they think it's something else it may be another thing so better off if you don't know, just get tested for AIDS and see what it is if you're at risk.

I: Mm-hum. Uh, what would make you think that a person has AIDS or HIV?

S: Well for me if HIV I wouldn't really know unless I knew that persons' past. And then, maybe I base my fact upon that my opinion on that, but if I knew a person that was always sick and couldn't you know couldn't function normally as a person they always was on in a hospital, out the hospital I'd suspect something [inaudible] like AIDS.

I: Mm-hum. What kinds of people have a lot to worry about from HIV?

S: What do you mean, like if they have it what kind would they have to worry or people that could get it?

I: Uh, what kinds of people um um um should worry about AIDS?

S: Well people well I think homosexuals and transvestites should worry about it. Um, people that are having unprotected sex. People that are having more than one sex sexual
partner period whether it's protected or unprotected. People that are IV drug users. And people that [inaudible] um work on construction or in different things where they come in contact with their blood or they're gettin' cut a lot anything like that and surgeons should worry about it cause they're always in surgery and blood's here and there. People that have their hands on things.

I: Mm-hum. When can people stop worrying about uh AIDS?

S: Never. I mean if they found a cure for it, they might not be able to cure you until you get the full-blown AIDS or they might not be able to cure you if you're only a certain age you know well if you're only a certain color or some weight or something like that, should always worrying about a disease cause you never know [inaudible] like they have now they haven't found a cure yet. You should always take precautions before you try and take that risk.

I: Do you think people are making too big a deal of AIDS?

S: No.

I: Where have you learned about AIDS?

S: Well I learned about AIDS in school. I learned about AIDS in a church. I learned about AIDS um in different kinds of committees and groups that I'm in and I learned about AIDS at home. Basically, everywhere you can even hear on the streets cause it's so community [inaudible] disease [inaudible] the whole community and your house the people as a whole, so it's always the topic of conversation. It might not be daily conversation but you will hear it around.

I: Mm-hum. What things do they skip about AIDS in health classes at school?

S: About well they tell you about HIV they skip they tell you can actually live long with it but then they don't really tell you that you know that once you live with it, you have to the pressure you go through everyday, the denial stages that you go through when you first contract AIDS or you think you don't have it couldn't be me and how you have to live and how you need to see other people with the disease to make you feel better about it you know. And then how you could go and there's different places you can go to get help, maybe counseling, maybe peer groups and everything. They don't really tell you about that basically, they just tell you well you'll get it, you'll have it for a while, then you'll die.

I: Mm-hum. So they don't talk about the the you said the denial?

S: Yeah. Or they go through like when I'm in a group and we had a speaker and she kinda told us she had AIDS and how she went through denial and how she needed to go through peer counseling, how she needed group so she could see how other people lived with the disease. How she could be able to focus her life and how she'll continue on. And how she can stay with her husband and be able to tell her family you know how to just be able come out of the closet with it. They don't tell about it all though. The personal effects.

I: Mm-hum. Okay. Do you think you know enough about AIDS to protect yourself from it?

S: I think I do.

I: Okay. Is there anything more you would like to know about AIDS?
S: Well there's always more I'd like to know about all subjects, but AIDS in particular I don't really have any specific questions to ask right know but I'm always looking for new things that come up cause there's always something new. And I think in the future they'll be a lot of new things about AIDS and how you can protect yourself and different cures and everything.

I: AIDS is caused by a virus called HIV. What does that tell you about it?

S: That it's a virus and it's not something that you have to go out and actually just you know you could you could get a virus right now, you could get it through anything the air, the the but when they say it's from a virus you think well I could get it here and there and they tell you that and but it's not really right that you know HIV by saying a virus it really is not self-explanatory. And they elaborate on it that. I don't know. They need to change the name or change the way they describe it but cause AIDS is like when you break it down it's difficult to get so they should just change it from being a virus cause you think a virus, that's like a cold, or a flu, or a strep throat and that's just easy to get you can go outside to the water fountain and get it and you can't do that with AIDS.

I: Mm-hum. Okay. So you you don't think AIDS is uh very easy to get...

S: No. Not if you're taking the right precautions.

I: Mm-hum. Alright um, could you tell me what uh HIV means?

S: Mmm...I know it's I can't really I don't really know. (laughs) I know what [inaudible] but I can't remember what HIV means.

I: Okay. Uh, do you know what a t-cell is?

S: Yeah. It's the um it's either the red or white blood cells I know it's one of the blood cells in your body.

I: Mm-hum. Okay. Um, what does safe sex mean?

S: To me it means abstinence until I get married or until I find somebody that I know will be here for the rest of my life and basically that will be marriage. And safe sex, it can mean people being monogamous in a relationship. The safest sex is no sex until you know that you're gonna be with that person and you know everything is all right you know. And you know he's gonna be faithful and you won't have to worry about AIDS. But you should always take that precaution use condoms the kind with spermacide [inaudible] if you go all the way out and you should take every precaution that's out there for you, if you really just have to have sex. But if you don't you should just wait.

I: Mm-hum. Okay. Uh can you tell me more about condoms? What are the safest condoms to use for protection against AIDS?

S: Well, I don't know about protection against AIDS but it's I guess it's just like any other disease sexually transmitted disease, so I mean I know it's just regular just like [inaudible] [inaudible] well I know lambskin and sheepskin [inaudible] not good but it's like the regular kind of condoms latex there latex condoms are the best condoms to use.

I: Uh what else do condoms protect you against?
S: Oh, um from gettin' pregnant and having a sexually transmitted disease like clymadia (spelling?) or gonorrhea and it just protects you from diseases and pregnancy.

I: What does IV drug use mean?

S: It means inserting a needle into your um vein and using a um foreign substance in your body. It could either be to get you high or it could be to down your system or anything. Anything that's goin' through your body through a needle that doesn't belong there basically.

I: Mm-hum. Do you think uh needles can be cleaned?

S: No. Cause like metal I don't know if this this is not it's not air pockets but there's always some where something could get like a small amount can get trapped or something where cause you can't, needles are so thin you can't actually take something in there and wipe it out. You may be running water through it or something but you never know if it's really clean.

I: Mm-hum. Okay. Thank you.

I: You're welcome.