I: 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.

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 questions 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 yourself or your behavior. No one else will hear the tape but me and I'm not going to report to other people here what you say.

Uh, my first question is: Please tell me everything you know about AIDS.

S: I know that you can get it from sexual contact with somebody that has it. Or from drug use. I don't know where it come from or anything and I know that it can, it kills sometimes. It doesn't also kill the person 'cause some people can be like HIV positive for a long time before they get AIDS or some people can just, they HIV positive and not get AIDS. Annmnd, I know that it breaks down your immune system and it attacks your t-cells, right? I think it is the t-cells. And that's about it.

I: Mm-hum..

S: That's about it that I know.

I: Okay. Can you tell me more about how AIDS or the AIDS virus is passed on from one person to another?

S: Not really besides sex and drug use 'cause I know you can't, well, blood. You can get it from blood, I know that. But I know you can't get it from kissing and hugging like usual, like casual contact like eatin' from somebody that has it, you can't get it like that. You can't get it from shakin' hands and stuff like people, people make more of a deal out of it than they should 'cause they're scared of people that have it when they really shouldn't be. If anything, the person that has it should be scared of you 'cause a common cold can kill them. You can get rid of it real quick with cough syrup or somethin'. That's really all.

I: Okay. (Silence) Okay. Um. You told me that uh AIDS is passed on when you um...uh...okay. We talk about that? (Silence) Okay. Um, does it matter how often a person um uh engages in that activity?

S: No. 'cause you can get it from the first time. If you're unprotected when you have it and that person has it, they can have it without knowin'. So it don't take but one time for you to get it. It don't take a whole lot, just once and you can have it.

I: Mm-hum. Um, can you tell me how a person can prevent getting AIDS if they are um uh having unprotected sex?

S: No. 'cause there's really no way to prevent it unless you're protected. There's no way 'cause sexual intercourse with a AIDS-infected person, you're gonna get it unless you're protected and only you know latex condoms and stuff is gonna help you like with diseases and stuff like AIDS.
I: Alright. (Silence) Is there anything that a person okay, well I want to ask that. Uh, what do you think may lead a person to have unprotected sex?

S: If they’re on a long term relationship, they may feel that the person that they’re with is only with them. And they’re not messin’ with, they feel that since they’re not messin’ with nobody they think that that person is not messin’ with anybody either. So they feel you know that they don’t need to be protected when they should be.

I: Okay. (Silence) Uh, imagine a person goes out planning not to have unprotected sex. What do you think may mess up these plans?

S: Peer pressure. Peer pressure. ’cause somebody like the male could pressure you and then not... ’cause they say like well, we’ve been together for such and such years or months so you know if I’m not messin’ with anybody so why should I be protected or they could use reverse psychology on you and make you think that you’re doin’ something wrong for tellin’ them no. They’ll ask you like are you messin’ with somebody ’cause you want me to use some, do you have something.

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

S: It make you do a lot of things that you normally wouldn’t do. You probably think about doin’ it but I don’t think you really would if you’re in your right mind, but alcohol you’re not thinking it just take over a lot and it could lead to a lot of stuff.

I: Mm-hum. Does drinking make much of a difference in a person’s risk of getting AIDS?

S: (Silence) In a way, I think in a way because if you weren’t drinkin’ maybe you would think about the protection that you should use or maybe you would use that protection that you should but when you’re drinkin’ you’re not thinkin’ about nothin’ but doin’ what you’re tryin’ to do. You’re not thinkin’ about that protection and the risks that you’re takin’, you’re tryin’ to go do what you’re doin’.

I: Mm-hum. Is the risk different for people who drink a little bit everyday compared to people who drink a lot every weekend?

S: No. No I don’t think ’cause alcohol it doesn’t take the same effect on everybody. But everybody goes through different thoughts and things when they’re under the influence, so I don’t think it really makes a difference with the risk on how much you drink or how little you drink.

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

S: No ’cause you can sit in a room with a thousand people that have the AIDS virus and still not catch it. The only way that you can catch it is through sexual contact and drug, intravenous drug use.

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

S: (Silence) I know that they start to lose weight. There’s... appetites get smaller. Their hair, some people get hair, have hair loss. Weakness, like you have less energy. Uh you get sick like constantly. You’re constantly sick like from little things. That’s all that I know.

I: Mm-hum. Can you tell me about what happens when a person develops AIDS?
S: Nooo. Slowly your immune system starts to shut down. You're in a hospital a lot, you're traveling back and forth to the hospital. I think people that's contact with AIDS, I think they go get under a lot stress 'cause they probably start to worry about when they're gonna die and how they're gonna die. I think they tend to worry more.

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

S: By checkups, goiní to the hospital...um...thatís the only way I can think of, goiní to the hospital, you takiní care of yourself.

I: Mm-hum. What would make you think that a person has AIDS?

S: (Silence) I canít really say what would make me think that 'cause you could be lookiní right at somebody who donít look sick and they could still have AIDS. Letís see, I donít really know.

I: Okay. What kinds of people have a lot to worry about from AIDS?

S: I think any person thatís usiní drugs and any person haviní sex, any sexual act, sexually active person is under the risk of AIDS and any intravenous drug user is under the risk of AIDS.

I: When can people stop worrying about AIDS?

S: Never really 'cause itís always gonna be here. Until they find a cure and even if they find a cure they may be able to stop people from dyiní but they might not be able to stop people from gettiní it. So you I donít think you could ever really stop worryiní about it.

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

S: No. 'cause AIDS thereís a lot of people thatís dyiní from AIDS thatís wipiní out a lot of the population thatís from gays to heterosexual it really doesnít matter, it's a lot, you canít really worry too much about something thatís killiní people. You can never worry too much about that.

I: Mm-hum. Where have you learned about AIDS?

S: In school. At home. From books. From TV shows. Movies. Thatís basically it.

I: What things do they skip about AIDS in health classes at school?

S: The fact that not just...Iím tryiní to think of the word for it...not just people thatís haviní sex with the same sex catch it. Not just the males catch it. Females catch it just as well as males can. Heterosexual can catch it just as well as another another person can. Any any one really usiní any kinda drug can catch it. But they're not like marijuana, you canít catch it from smokiní wití somebody, but that marijuana can influence you to use somethiní else. Or do somethiní else. And theyíre not really sayin'that. Theyíre just more straight to sex and drugs, intravenous drugs, but thereís a lot to it.

I: Do you think you know enough about AIDS to protect yourself from it?

S: (silence) I know enough to protect myself from it, but I donít know enough, you can never know enough about it, I feel you canít, I feel you can never know too much about
AIDS 'cause you're really mainly tryiní to protect you and whoever is around you that you love if you love somebody or you love yourself you'll learn as much as you can.

I: Mm-hum. Is there any thing more you would like to know about AIDS?

S: Only where it came from.

I: Mm-hum. Okay. Uh, AIDS is caused by a virus called HIV. What does that tell you about it?

S: (silence) Ummm. Nothiní really. It doesn't tell me anythiní.

I: Okay. Uh, what does safe sex mean?

S: To me the only sure method of safe sex is abstinence. This is no safe sex. Thereís safer sex, but thereís no safe sex. The only method of safe sex is not haviní it at all.

I: Uh, what does IV drug use mean?

S: That when you inject a needle into your arm to shoot the drug into your vein.

I: What are the safest condoms to use for protection against AIDS?

S: Latex condoms with I think itís nonoxydil...

I: What else does, what else do condoms protect you against?

S: Pregnancy. Unplanned pregnancy. And any other type of disease thatís out there.

I: Do you think that needles can be cleaned?

S: (Silence) Mmm. Only if itís never been used, like if itís fresh out the pack and washed with alcohol, then yes, but if it was used before then I donít think it can be cleaned.

I: Okay. Alright.