Number 35

I: In this interview I will ask you to talk the AIDS. And I want you to know that you don't have to answer all my questions. If you feel uncomfortable with a question, just tell me, and I will go on to the next one. I will first ask you some general questions, and then I will ask you some more specific ones. Um, please don't worry the whether your answers are right or wrong, because there are no right or wrong answers. I just want to know what you know. Also, you don't have to talk about yourself or your own behavior. I just want to know what you know. And no one will hear this tape but me, so you don't have to worry about that.

My first question is: Please tell me everything you know about AIDS.

S: Well, when I think of AIDS, well, I think of somebody, well, not somebody, well, not sickly, because I know AIDS is differen from HIV. First you get the HIV and then you get the AIDS. When I think of a person who's got the HIV, well, when people say HIV, well, you know they're not skinny, but you know people can say oh she has AIDS. I think, in my mind, I might not think that they're skinny, but you know, that they're real real sick, you know what I'm saying. And so, when people say HIV, I think of HIV as not being, I mean you have the virus, but you know all that at, like thing. But when they say AIDS, it's like I know when they have AIDS you're going to die, but when you can HIV you can live a long long time before you even get AIDS. I know that, and um... and I know the way um.. you can develop AIDS is taking IV drugs. If you're an IV drug user, or if you um.. you have sex. And um.. if blood is on you or whatever, or someone um, you know if you're hemophelic, whatever they call people, if, you know you get blood, somebody's blood. And I know that um.. anybody can get AIDS, not just homosexuals, or you know, heterosexuals, but anybody can get AIDS. And I know that um you should try not to get like, having sex. If, you know, don't, if you, if you're real scared about getting AIDS, just don't have sex. All right. I mean, truthful, if you're not, if you're scared, do not have sex. You know that condoms don't work all the time, and you know, it's just, all right, OK.

I: Anything else?

S: I know that AIDS stands for acquired immune deficiency syndrome, I know that. And I know that there's no cure to AIDS at this time and point, but they have medicines, so it can calm down the symptoms or whatever. So, that's all.

S: I'm gonna ask you more questions now, and sometimes I may repeat the same question, but that is to... For me to understand what you're trying to say. So don't feel like I'm...

I: OK.

S: Can you tell me more about how HIV is passed on from one person to the other?

I: I know, well like I said, if you have sex and you don't use a condom. Repeat the question again? I'm sorry.

S: How can HIV be transmitted from one person to the other? In what ways?

I: Well, if you get blood on you. If you have like, if you're an IV drug user, and you use the drug - if you use the IV needle, and then just stick it in the person, after right after, you know. You can get it that way because the blood is still in there, so the blood can go to, you know, the blood from the other victim can go into your blood. And I know that
um.. you can get it from um.. getting a blood transfusion, or you know, getting blood on you, or whatever.

S: You told me that AIDS can be passed on when people have sex. Can you tell me more about that?

I: Wait a minute. How?

S: How that works.

I: How it works. Well, how it works is if they have sex vaginally, they can get AIDS. And.. They might get it orally, and anally too, I don't know. But, what I know is that you can get it vaginally. So..

I: Do you think there is a way that a person can protect themselves from getting HIV when they have sex?

S: Use a condom and use like spermicide. I mean, well, you know, you don't know, condoms don't work nowadays.

I: Um.. do you think that um.. using a condom and a spermacide would perfectly protect a person?

S: No, because of, I mean not 100%. I think none is 100% protected then you can get AIDS, even if you did use a condom, or whatever. You still can get AIDS. I mean, that you just don't have, abstinence, that's the thing. If you really don't want to get AIDS, whatever, have abstinence. Because even you're married, and you're having sex with your husband, you don't know what he's doing. I mean, you always got a chance of getting AIDS. You don't know, but just have to watch out, I guess or whatever.

I: Do you think it matters how often a person has sex?

S: Well, no, because you could get it the first time. You could get AIDS or whatever the very first time.

I: What do you think may lead a person to have unprotected sex?

S: May lead a person to have unprotected sex? Well, sometimes you could be easy just be in the situation. I mean, you might not wanna have sex, but you could be in a situation, where you and you're boyfriend or whatever, you know you're sitting down or whatever. I mean, you don't mean it to happen, but then it just happens and.. It just happens. I mean, you know, or they just want to have sex and they don't care, you know but I'm saying?

I: Imagine that a person goes out planning not to have unprotected sex..

S: Planning not to have unprotected sex. They plan not to?

I: They're planning not to have unprotected sex. What do you think they mess up these plans?

S: From them having not having unprotected sex? What might mess it up? If they become aware that they can get AIDS. I think that's what the question is asking?
I: Let the phrase it another way: Imagine someone who doesn't want to have unprotected sex.

S: Oh, they don't want to, OK.

I: But then, what do you think may mess up their plans?

S: Well, if he they don't want to have sex, what might mess up their plans is that. They might find that their boyfriend or girlfriend have AIDS or something, and they-they might want to use a condom.

I: Hm-mm. You also told me that AIDS can be passed on-or HIV can be passed on from one person to the other when they share needles. Can you explain me how that works?

S: Did I say that?

I: We talked about it before.

S: Well, see, when people take IV drugs, they take IV drugs, and the blood, you know how the blood just goes up in the thing and then it comes back down, but there's still blood up in there, there's still blood in their. So, when another person takes the needle and puts it in their arm, that blood from the other person is still in there, so when their blood goes up and goes down, that other person's blood is going down with your blood. I think that's how it is.

I: Yeah. Err do you think err a person can err prevent that, when they share needles?

S: Well, first of all, you shouldn't take drugs, but then, if they want to prevent that, just when they use a needle, use a clean needle, a sterilized needle, and throw it away. And you know if they want to keep on using it, just throw it away, get a new one. Don't give it to other people, because you might be giving them AIDS or any other kind of disease.

I: Do you think it matters how often a person shares needles?

S: No, because you can get it the first time. You could do anything the first time you do it, anything could happen. You don't know.

I: Umm.. What do you think may lead a person to share needles?

S: To share needles? Well, if they're like really heavy into drugs, they're not gonna care, I mean, they're not gonna know, if they're, you know, if they just share, just go like " here, take this, take that ". I mean, just pass it around, I mean, you know, I mean, I don't know.

I: That's OK. I want to know your answer. Imagine a person goes out um, same question again as before, imagine a person goes out planning not to share needles. What do you think may mess up their plans?

S: When they become more aware of that, you can get AIDS by sharing needles. And they become aware of that, you know. If you share needles, you're gonna get, I mean, you know, you have a great chance of getting AIDS. Except that, they are drug users. They can have any type of disease, not just AIDS or HIV. They can have any type of
disease. You can get anything. And they might just start using clean needles. I mean that every time they use IV drugs.

I: What you also told me before, in the beginning, um was that, um, HIV can be transmitted from one person to the other if they have a blood transfusion or other contact with

S: Blood.

I: How does that work?

S: Well, that works.. I mean, anything could happen, you could be.. I mean, somebody could have a cut, and, well you try to help, and get it on you or something like that. Or anything you get blood on your body, or you know, or they may touch you, I mean, they may have a sore. I mean, anything. And if you get blood transfusions, you can get it, I mean, well, nowadays they check the blood, but like a long time ago, they would just, after they give the, whoever gives the blood, they would just, you know, put it in another person. But they wouldn't check if they had AIDS, but nowadays it's more special, so..

I: Does it matter how often a person..

S: No, it doesn't matter.

I: Can you tell me how a person can prevent getting HIV if they get into contact with another person's blood?

S: First of all, I don't know, because I mean, anything could happen, it could be an accident, you could be walking down the street, like a fire or something, blood slashes on you, you know you can not prevent that. Blood slashes on you, you can not prevent that from happening. But if you could prevent it, I mean just don't, I mean, I don't know. I don't know, but I'm saying, make sure that you, if somebody do have open sores, then um try not to touch it with your bare hand. I mean, if you do like, get a tissue or something that won't, you know, you get the blood on you.

I: How well do you think this would protect a person from..

S: Well, not.. It will probably protect them like 80%. Not all that much, because I mean, you could still get AIDS from doing anything, I mean anything. I mean you could be drunk one night and you know, have sex, you don't know, but you know, you know what I'm saying? But I mean that, if people become more beware of the situation, more aware of AIDS, they'll get smarter and wiser, and think straight about doing, think twice about doing things that they shouldn't do, you know. You know what I'm saying?

I: Um.. what effect does alcohol have on people?

S: Alcohol? Well, alcohol, you could become an alcoholic, you know what I'm saying? And it just don't affect the person who drinks alcohol. It affects the people who they live with. Because, I mean, to see a person drunk all the time, you're gonna get scared of that person. The effect that it has on you, is that you're drunk and everything and you can't think straight. You could be doing anything, you could.. You're incapable of doing anything. Having sex, you know, taking drugs, or whatever. You're incapable of doing anything. And the people that you hurt is, there's not hurting, you're just hurting people that you love or something, because they're thinking oh well, my daddy by mommy, I
mean, is an alcoholic, you know, we see her, she's drunk all the time, you know she's screaming and hauling, you know it's like you know that.. yeah..

I: That's OK, I want to know what you think about it, so that's..

S: OK, I'm finished.

I: Um.. do you think drinking makes much of a difference in a person's risk of getting AIDS?

S: Well, it could, if they become drunk drunk drunk. They could have, you know, when you become drunk, you don't know what you're doing sometimes. You may be in a haze or something so I mean if you're an alcoholic, that is a real high way of getting AIDS too, because you don't know what you do when you're drunk. You, I mean, you might do - oh what did I do the other night, you know. Don't know! So I think alcohol is one of the factors too.

I: Do you think the risk of getting AIDS is different for people who drink a little bit every day compared to people who drink a lot every weekend?

S: Say that again?

I: OK. Um, two groups of people: One..

S: I know that you're saying that you drink like every once in a while, but people who drink every day..

I: No. OK, imagine two persons: one drinks all the time, but a little bit, you know, one beer every day, and then another person gets really drunk every weekend. Do you think the risk of getting AIDS is different for these people?

S: No, because it's the same, I mean it's not greater or smaller, it's the same. Because, you don't know, just like I said, you could have sex the first time. I mean, this person could have sex 28 times and you don't have one time you could get AIDS. And this person could have sex 28 times and she don't have it yet. I mean, it's not, it's not just because oh well you maybe just drink once a week and this other person drinks all the time every day. It's the same. Every single person can get AIDS. That's what I think.

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

S: The AIDS-virus? Well, first they have the HIV. And then, when a person gets infected wit the AIDS-virus, it's just like, not like, I don't know, it's, well, when a person, well, first I know is you have HIV. Then when the doctors tell them they have AIDS now, whatever, they're, they become real sick.

I: When they have AIDS or HIV?

S: AIDS. I'm talking about AIDS. When they have AIDS, they become real sick. But when they have HIV, then they're not sick. I mean, they're not like <inaudible>, but when they get the AIDS-virus, they get sick, and you know, and start dying, I guess. That's when they start dying, and get real sick and everything.

I: Can you tell me more about the time when the person gets HIV and when they get AIDS?
S: Huh? I mean..

I: No, no, what happens between when they have HIV and when they have AIDS?

S: Well, when they have HIV, they can live forever, and they can not get AIDS ever. I have to say, I'm not saying I have it, but say a person has HIV, and not get the AIDS-virus and they could die naturally, you know, with the HIV-virus. So what you're trying to say is, well, that difference, and the difference is between HIV and AIDS is that, when you have AIDS, I mean, you're, you're not sick. But when you subtract the AIDS-virus, you get real sick and stuff.

I: Do you.. How long do you think that it takes for a person with HIV to develop AIDS?

S: It can take forever. I mean, one person might not.. One person-you might have HIV for one month then get AIDS, but another person may have HIV and not contract AIDS until they're 60-80 years old and die naturally, of natural causes without dying from AIDS. So, that's it.

I: How can someone learn whether they have HIV?

S: Well, how can someone know? Well, they get tested, and wait six months, and go back. And then, they get the results were, if they say negative for positive. But you still should get checked because you might have sex again you know, so you still should get checked. Because once you, like, if you went to the AIDS.. I mean, the clinic, whatever, got checked for the HIV / AIDS um and then go back after 6 months, but before that 6 months was over, you had sex, and you're coming back and they say negative, but you think oh well, I don't have AIDS, but you just had sex a month ago, so..

I: Do you know what the test tests for?

S: What they just for? What they test for, they test for a virus. And that when they take the test or whatever, it's basically they test for some of the.. If like break-down or something of the white blood cells or something. The white blood cells, the T-cells, and if you don't have enough of it.. OK.

I: Why do you think would someone decide to be tested?

S: Well, they probably, they're having sex a lot, and they're scared. And they're thinking wow, I mean, I might got blood spilled on me, or I might have sex without protection, and I want to get tested, I want to know, they'll don't want to be living in fear for themselves. But on the other hand, I mean, I'll go get tested, I don't have to.. You know, I'll go get tested, just to see, you know, I mean, because that's how I am. So I'll go get tested, even though I know I probably don't have it. I'll still get tested. So..

I: What would make you think that a person has HIV?

S: What would make you think that? Well, you can't tell unless they had the AIDS-virus. You can't tell unless they have the AIDS-virus. So I mean, you could have it, I wouldn't know, well, I mean, HIV, I wouldn't know that. I could have HIV, you know, I never got tested, I don't know that. But, so you can't determine a person from having it. Or from not having it. But some people, they think oh well, she's skinny, she's got HIV or whatever, or stuff like that, but it's not true. But..
I: What kinds of people have a lot to worry from HIV?

S: What kinds? Everybody. Everybody. Not just.. Like I said, not just heterosexuals, not just homosexuals, not just whatever kind, whatever. They're all-everybody, everybody is at risk. I mean, like I said, it's not like a balance of scale, like one person is at- one group of people is at greater risk than another group of people. They're all in the same category. Hm..

I: When can people stop worrying about HIV or AIDS at all?

S: When? They can't stop worrying about it, because <inaudible>, I mean it's not <inaudible>. You talk about it every day, I mean, you can not, you can never stop worrying about the HIV-virus, because you die, I mean because when you get AIDS you'll die. You can never stop worrying about it. It will kill you, I mean, you know what I'm saying.

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

S: What? In what respect?

I: Too much talking about it, too much worrying..

S: No, they don't, because a lot of kids-a lot of teenagers say they don't know, I mean, they still have a lot of questions about it. Some kids still don't know everything there is about AIDS. I mean, they still need to task questions and stuff. And I think that demoteyou should be like probably at the age of like what-10 or something you should start-not even, like you know if your mom or dad just tell you a little bit about AIDS. When you're real young and starting to grow up and more and more and get more information about it during the years, I mean, you need that information. I think I have a very good great information on it, because, you know what I'm saying? So..

I: Where have you learned about AIDS?

S: Where I learned about it.. Basically, I learned about it in school, but then, I mean, I guess I'm not gonna say I knew it already, but I mean, I know, just different people talking about it, and from TV and stuff, and school, and my mom. You know, and that's about it. I think I have a very good great information on it, because, you know what I'm saying? So..

I: Why do you think you know more than other people?

S: Why do I think? I don't know. I just <inaudible> all this information all these years, you know.

I: Do you think they skip certain things about AIDS in health classes at school?

S: Well, sometimes they're just talking about you can't get it that way and you can't get it that way. Or, you know, but not really, because nowadays they're talking more about it, but like a long time ago, they weren't giving a lot of detail about it, but I mean, basically they're not, I mean, basically, well, my school, I don't know about the other schools.

I: Is there anything you'd like to know more about?
S: Yeah, about what I not know about AIDS. I mean, I don't think I know, what I would like to know more about, the main question is where did AIDS come from? That's what I want to know. The only question that I want to know is where it came from.

I: But they're not sure..

S: That's what I'm saying is - they're not sure. So I don't know where I can get that information, but I think I know a lot - or some of it, but I still, I still got questions. I don't know of my head what questions, but I still need that information.

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


I: OK. Now I'm gonna ask you about some terms that people use when they talk about AIDS. I want to know whether you ever heard about them and what you think they mean. The first is; AIDS is caused by a virus called HIV. What does it tell you that HIV is a virus?

S: Hm?

I: HIV is a virus.

S: Yeah, I know it's a virus.

I: Does that give you some information about it, or not at all.

S: Well, you just have the virus, it's not sure at all whether you have the AIDS-virus. It's just the HIV. I mean, you can give AIDS, you know, so you've got to protect yourself in that respect. That's all.

I: What do you mean safe sex means?

S: Abstinence, I'm sorry but that's what I say, abstinence. There is no safe sex, there is no type of safe sex. There's safer sex, but there ain't no safe sex.

I: What do you mean safer sex means?

S: Condoms, but I'm saying there's no type of safe sex. So, unless you do abstinence, which is no sex at all, you know what I'm saying. That's all.

I: Can you tell me more about condoms?

S: Condoms? Well, they're supposed to protect you from having babies, and having other sexually transmitted diseases like AIDS, and they say they're 95% I think effective or something like that. You should use the latex condom - that's the better kind. But a lot of times condoms don't work and they're supposed to protect you from diseases and stuff, but in my mind they don't.

I: What does IV drug use mean? Do you know that?

S: IV drug use? It's using drugs through your arm I think, I don't know too much about IV drug use, I just have information people say, but I think it's the drug use that you use in your arm. You should up and stuff.
I: I heard you using the term before, so..

S: Oh yeah, I heard about it, but I think it's shooting up your arm, that's all I know about it, I mean, you can get AIDS from that, but I don't know what the letters mean.

I: Well, some people don't know what it means at all, so..
Do you think used needles can be cleaned?

S: Hm? No, I mean, they could be cleaned, but they can't be like, I mean, you should use, if you wanna do that stuff, use a clean needle all the time you're doing it. Just don't you know try to rinse it out, I mean, that's stupid. It's not like all the blood and germs are gonna wash away; they're not gonna wash away, so.. That's all.