I: Um, okay. In this interview I will ask you to talk about AIDS and I want you to know that you don't have to answer all my questions. And also if you want to stop the interview at any time just tell me. I'm not going to force you to do anything or answer any questions that you don't want to answer.

S: Okay.

I: And um, I will ask first to talk about AIDS. Just tell me the things you know and then I will ask you some questions about the things you told me. Um, and I will some times ask the same question several times. And I do that to make sure that I understand what you are saying. So don't worry about that.

S: Okay.

I: Um, also uh don't worry about giving me um or don't worry about whether your answers are right or wrong because I want to know what you know about AIDS so there is not really any problem. Right. Um, what else? Um, you don't have to talk about your about yourself or your behavior, except I just want to know what you know about AIDS. And another thing is no one will hear the tape except for the people at CMU who are working on this project. I will not put your name on it so...

S: Okay.

I: It's all confidential. Okay, so first question is: Please tell me everything you know about AIDS.

(Note: conversation/introduction was interrupted by 'yes', 'okay', and 'uh-huh' by subject as acknowledgment of points discussed by interviewer.)

S: Okay, um, I know that it um starts with the HIV virus and it's um passed um to another person through bodily fluids like blood, and semen and um it's was first thought to be common only among homosexual men and now the highest um raise or the highest rise in um percentages is among heterosexual teenage women? I believe and um I know that um you can't get it from like coughing or sneezing or and um some people never actually develop AIDS, they live with HIV their whole lives. And it can be in incubation for like up to ten years, even longer. And I know that um once you have AIDS your immune system deteriorates and you a lot of times you don't die actually from having AIDS you die from getting something else like pneumonia and your body can't fight the the illness or the disease. Um...and it's not common to get AIDS from blood transfusions now. I know um it's easier for women to contract AIDS then it is for men. Um, that's about the extent of my knowledge.

I: Okay. Do you know how um the AIDS virus can be passed on from one person to the other?

S: How how can it be passed? Through sexual intercourse, through oral sex, through um sharing a needle, um from drugs or medical anything. Um from blood from blood from one person to another in any form. Um...that's all I know. (Laughs)

I: Okay. Um, so you told me that um the AIDS virus can be passed on when you share needles. Can you tell me more about that?
S: Um, if um someone who has used um heroin in a needle, and put it inside their own vein and then um passed the rest of the heroin to another person and they used the same needle, it can be passed on that way. And the blood would be contained in the needle. And not exposed to air.

I: Um, so does it matter how often a person shares needles?

S: You can get it from one time from, from using it one time...

I: But um imagine that um uh a person uses shares needles one time and then uh how do you think this personís risk of getting the AIDS virus would change if they um share needles more often?

S: It would increase if they would share them more often...

I: Okay.

S: ...I would think.

I: Okay. Um. Can you tell me how a person can prevent getting the AIDS virus if they share needles?

S: Um, they would not share needles...

I: Okay.

S: ...I mean by by not using the same same needle you could um just drug use you mean?

I: Yeah.

S: or, I'm trying to think of something else.

I: Drug use.

S: Yeah, um not I mean not sharing needles or not um not passing needles from one person to the next. Or blood, you know any kind of...

I: Okay. Um, how well do you think this would protect a person from getting the AIDS virus, if they what am I saying if they...

S: ...didn't use the same needles?

I: Right.

S: Probably protect them completely if they didn't share any more, you know, pass the needle back and forth.

I: Okay. Uh, what do you think may lead a person to share needles?

S: (silence) Not thinking before, before they use the same needle I guess or just not realizing what what they could be, could be doing.

I: What do you mean by not thinking?
S: Not stopping and realizing there, there's a possible they're taking a chance of communicating diseases from one person to another.

I: Um, okay. Imagine a person goes out planning not to share needles. What do you think may mess their plans?

S: (silence) Um, if they didn't have another needle or if they didn't have another way of getting the drugs inside of their body, they would probably just use the same needle.

I: Are there any other things?

S: No. (laughs).

I: Um, you also said that um the AIDS virus can be passed on when people have sex. Can you tell me more about that?

S: Um, well it's a lot easier for a woman to contract AIDS that way because um the um the semen isn't exposed to air before comes in contact with um a mucus membrane...

I: Right.

S: ...and um...I don't know I mean uh it's passed among homosexual and heterosexual people and um it's high among um homosexual men and it was found first in homosexual men and it's believed because um there's a lot of blood when you have um anal sex...

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

S: Um, no. I'm sure you can I mean it's the same as drug use, you can contract it from one time but I think more often you're increasing your chances of contracting the disease.

I: Okay. Um, can you tell me how a person can prevent uh getting the AIDS virus if they are having sex?

S: Um, use a latex condom. You can um use one every time you have sex, that's probably the only, the only thing that's, that's . . .

I: Okay. Um, how well do you think uh this would protect a person from getting the AIDS virus?

S: Um, somebody gave me the analogy once that the size of an AIDS, or the HIV virus there's a hole the size of a pinpoint in a condom...

I: Right.

S: ...it's the same the HIV passing through there is the same would be as easy for the HIV virus to pass through that condom as it is for you to put a quarter through a doorway.

I: Okay.

S: So it would be the same...

I: I've never heard that one.

S: Yeah...
I: Okay. Um, so you’re saying that the risk is...

S: Still there, yeah. I believe so, yeah.

I: Okay. Um, what do you think may lead a person to um have unprotected sex?

S: Not not um having availability you know to have to use condoms and um being embarrassed to ask for condoms or buy condoms, and um thinking they don’t need birth control or or that's really the only reason they would think they would need it would be for birth control so they don't use it.

I: Um, any other things?

S: No. (Laughs)

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

S: Got it (laughs)

I: Yeah. What do you think may mess up these plans?

S: Um...well even if they use a condom thereís always a risk that the condom would break...

I: Mm-hum.

S: Or that um...like I said before there could be a a hole in the condom or um if the condom is um old or has not been stored at like room temperature it can damage the latex of the condom or the spermicide, either way.

I: Um...okay. So the third way you mentioned was um that the HIV virus can be passed on through blood in anybody. Can you tell me more about that?

S: Um, well the one way I know is through blood transfusions which um are very low percentage but um when you donate blood, the blood is only good for 30 I think 28 to 30 days they're only allowed to to store your blood if the bloodís not used within that time then itís discarded and um the AIDS virus or the HIV virus um might not show up in your blood um for that 20 or 30 between 20 and 30 days so thereís a possibility that you can still contract the AIDS HIV virus through um blood transfusions, very small percentage but possible and um through blood you know um...um if you have a cut or an open sore and even in your mouth and someone else has a cut or an open sore on their mouth then you kiss or you exchange blood in some way then you can contract it that way.

I: Yeah. Mmmm...does it matter how often a person um...um is exposed to infected blood?

S: Um. I don't think so. Once is enough.

I: So um well imagine they are are um exposed to it once. How would it affect a personís risk if they are exposed to it um infected blood more often?

S: They would probably contract the disease a lot more quickly if they were exposed...
I: Okay. Um, can you tell me how a person can prevent um being exposed to infected blood in any way?

S: Um, well there really is no well um you can donate your own blood and have them reserve it um if if there's a, especially if you know you're going to have surgery you can donate your own blood ahead of time and use your own blood. Um...um you know I guess you just have to make sure you don't have any person you're kissing doesn't have open sores in their mouth (laughs).

I: Inspect them first.

S: Yeah. 'It's nice meeting you . . .' I don't know.

I: Yeah.

S: Try to not...communicate you know a lot of bodily fluid.

I: Okay. Um...uh how well do you think uh banking your own blood or donating it first uh will protect a person from getting the AIDS virus?

S: Very well. I think it would do very well.

I: Okay.

S: It would probably take all chances of contracting the virus out...

I: Um, okay and and well...how well (laughs) does this maybe...I'll ask the question again. How well do you think it would protect a person if they um check whether their partners or the people they interact with have sores?

S: Mmm...I I guess pretty well I donít I canít imagine that they would...know that there was a small cut or small... and the chances are it's still small that you would contract it from an open sores or things so...pretty well I guess.

I: Okay. Uh...what do you think uh may lead a person to to kiss someone who has a a cut, a small cut or something or um...

S: I'm sure I've done it, I mean you don't you don't know you know...I I you don't think I guess you don't think that the there's any risk involved.

I: Um. Are there any other things?

S: No, I don't think so. I donít think you really take precautions when you kiss someone so...

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

S: Alcohol?

I: Or what effect do you think alcohol has on people?

S: With HIV or...?

I: No just in its self.
S: In itself? Oh...I'm...I think it makes them um not able to think clearly or to respond um a way in a way that they would be able to normally respond in a situation where they would need to think clearly.

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

S: Yes. I think that um alcohol can lead to a um unprotected sex often. I think it often does. I think that um if you're not thinking clearly, you're not able um use good judgment when it comes to protecting yourself or someone else especially with sex.

I: Also for the other things, maybe?

S: Yeah. Driving cars or or um I I don't know, you know, things like that.

I: Okay. Um, do you think um the risk of getting AIDS is different for people on the one hand people who drink a little bit everyday compared to people who drink a lot for example every weekend?

S: I think that uh a person who drinks a lot every weekend would probably have a higher risk because um...I would say that they're going to um lose more control or not be as in control of their body or their minds or their functions um. They'll be unable to function as well as someone who is accustomed to drinking a small amount every day.

I: Um, uh does it matter how often a person is exposed to the AIDS virus?

S: (silence). No I don't think so...

I: Um, can you tell me what happens when a person gets infected uh with the AIDS virus?

S: What...? When they get infected with HIV and then develop AIDS?

I: Right.

S: Or before they...

I: No, before they develop AIDS...when they get infected with HIV.

S: Um, nothing. Uh people can go for years without knowing um you can also um develop signs early like um you get symptoms of the flu like um maybe um vomiting or diarrhea or um...you can um you're nauseated a lot and um...I don't really know.

I: That's good. You definitely know something. (laughs) Um, can you tell me about uh what then happens when a person develops AIDS?

S: Um, their immune system shuts down and they're unable to fight off other diseases or um sickness or virus that um you know can um hurt them, like either the common cold is really hard for a person with AIDS to to get over because their body isn't their immune system isn't as strong as they are it isn't able to fight the virus and um... That's basically...

I: Okay. Um, can you tell me more about uh the time between when a person gets HIV and then when they get AIDS the um incubation period. I'm sorry.
S: Um, all I really know is that it can last a long time or it can be shorter it just depends you know on on your body. It's not it's not predetermined how long it's gonna take or incubation before AIDS develops. Um, I mean people can go the incubation period can last you know anywhere from a month to years long time, like 10 years.

I: And you said it depends on their body. What are you . . . ?

S: Oh, I mean it just it it depends on how their body reacts to the HIV virus, like whether it sustains the virus a long time or whether it it evolves into AIDS.

I: Um, uh how can someone learn whether he or she has the AIDS virus?

S: Um, get tested.

I: Mm-hum.

S: There's free AIDS clinics you can um be tested for the HIV virus. Um, there's one in most major cities, I'm sure there's one in Pittsburgh. Um, I know of a few others. I know there's one in Cleveland and I don't know sure there's another one in Ohio somewhere but I'm not sure where. Um, and and they draw your blood and test for the antibodies or HIV virus.

I: Um, I was gonna ask that question.

S: (laughs)

I: Uh, I'll skip that question. Um, why why do you think someone would decide to be tested?

S: Um, if they find out that someone that um they had sexual intercourse with has developed the HIV virus. If they have a close friend or relative who has um the HIV virus or AIDS. Um, or if they're scared about getting the disease even if they're not um involved in a high risk behavior. They might want to get tested just to make sure that they're not HIV positive.

I: Okay. Um, what would make you think uh that the person has that a person has the AIDS virus?

S: You can't tell...?

I: Mm-hum.

S: Um, you can't tell by looking at them or they don't smell funny or talk weird or...(laughs)...um, once they develop AIDS they lose a lot of color and they look pale and they look very weak. A lot of times you know their hair falls out from the chemo therapy and things like that but other than that before they develop the actual AIDS virus, they're not really too different from anybody else.

I: Um, what kinds of people do you think have a lot to worry from the AIDS virus?

S: I think homosexual men. Um, I think people who are engaged in high risk behaviors um often.

I: Mm-hum.
S: Um...I think um...that's I guess that's really high risk any high risk behavior at all. So...

I: And we talked about that before. Um, what uh when do you think can people stop worrying about uh the AIDS virus at all?

S: Never, only when they find a cure.

I: Mm-hum.

S: And um even then I think you have to worry that not everyone or a vaccine you know that not everyone has been vaccinated or or everyone who, you know, everyone has been tested for it. You have to worry.

I: Um, do you think people are making too big a deal of the AIDS virus?

S: No, I don't. I think it's gonna take over, it's gonna become like um like polio or uh another disease that could wipe out thousands and millions of people, so...I think it's good thing to worry about.

I: Yeah.

S: It's a very serious disease so...

I: So you don't think they make too big a deal...

S: No. (laughs)

I: Okay. Um, where have you learned about the AIDS um about AIDS?

S: Um, I read a lot. I read a lot of um magazines, medical magazines. Um, health class. Health class in school. Um...um...that's really all, you know.

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

S: Um, I think it's uncomfortable so they rush through it and I I think that they try and cover everything but there are times when it's um discussing homosexuality or discussing you know um anal or oral sex is very uncomfortable for teachers, especially to seventh or eighth graders who aren't really ready to to hear about it. So, I think that makes it more uncomfortable for them but I think that they pretty much cover cover every everything that to the best of their abilities.

I: You didn't miss anything when they discussed it in your class?

S: No, I mean I I most of the facts you know you get most of the overall facts but you the little things you learn more on your own I think that you're interested in...learn a lot more outside of class.

I: Yeah.

S: So...

I: Um, do you think you know enough uh about AIDS to protect yourself from it?

S: Um, yes. I think I do. Yeah. (laughs)
I: Um, is there anything you would like to know more about?

S: Um...I think I'd like to know more about like how close they are to cures or how close they are to vaccinations or um finding out what caused or where it originated or...things like that.

I: Yeah.

S: I think I'd like know a lot more about that. That's really it?

I: Yeah. Um, okay. But these things are not known yet so...

S: Yeah.

I: Um, um okay. I also have some questions about terms that people use when they talk about AIDS. Um, do you know what HIV is?

S: Uh, it's the virus?

I: Mm-hum.

S: ...that you're infected with, and um Iím not sure exactly what it does I um...itís an...it stands for Human...something immuno deficiency, but I donít know the...huno, I don't know (laughs). I don't remember the what it stands for but...

I: Um, okay itís itís HIV is a virus. Do you know what what a virus is or...?

S: Um, a virus you canít kill it by like you canít kill a virus with a drug or or if your body has to naturally like a cold it it never you canít take antibiotics donít kill a cold. If you have a common cold you canít nothing stops a common cold. You have to your body has to naturally expel the common cold so itís the same with the HIV virus. Your body has to fight the virus on its own, you can't take drugs to fight it.

I: Are there any other things about viruses that you know that are the same for HIV?

S: Um...no. They're powerful. I they they um they they never go away. They're there even when you they lie dormant and then they're there but they can be active at times and then dormant but they your you always have the virus in your body.

I: Mmm. Okay. What do you think the term safe sex means?

S: Um, using a latex condom every time you have sex?

I: Okay. Um, um what what kind of condoms are the safest or the best ones to use for protection against AIDS?

S: Um, I would definitely say it latex condoms with spermicide, with.... that's the only kind you know that um I animal whatever they make the other ones out of animal skin or they're not suppose to work at all. They don't have any way of protection.

I: Do you know why?

S: Um, they're porous and the HIV can pass though them very easily.
I: Yeah. Um, what else do condoms protect people against?

S: Pregnancy and um some STDs or venereal diseases.

I: Mm-hum.

S: And um...I'm not really sure which ones you know like, like I would guess gonorrhea or clamydia, or things like that.

I: Yeah. Um, do you know what the term IV drug use means?

S: Um, intravenous drug use means inside your vein.

I: Okay. Yeah, that's... Do you think um that needles can be cleaned?

S: Um, I think they can but you should use a new needle each time. It's dangerous no matter what kind of needle.

I: But um... okay if if there's not really a choice if people really have to clean needles, how should they do that?

S: Um uh probably I I would say clean it with something that would sterilize it, alcohol, rubbing alcohol or or um...you know something that would kill all the bacteria and the blood and rinse it and clean it and soak it and whatever. (laughs)

I: Yeah.

S: Expose it to the air so it's able to...be you know even if the AIDS virus was contained in the blood, it's not able to be able to survive in the air.

I: Okay. Yeah. Um...I have more questions.