

Headline	Staying positive even with HIV		
MediaTitle	The Star		
Date	17 Sep 2012	Color	Full Color
Section	Nation	Circulation	304,904
Page No	1,3	Readership	1,026,812
Language	English	ArticleSize	458 cm ²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 21,247
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 63,741



STAYING POSITIVE WITH HIV

Several patients with HIV finally took the big step. They revealed their names and are now ready to help others. >3



Staying positive even with HIV

Patients recall heart-breaking episodes

By P. ARUNA
aruna@thestar.com.my



KUALA LUMPUR: It has taken more than two decades for Norazatulshima Nordin to come forward and publicly reveal her HIV+ status.

Although she has spoken to the press in the past, it was always in anonymity.

Yesterday, she finally revealed herself. "I realise that I do not have anything to be ashamed of. I have done nothing wrong. I am not afraid," she said after completing a series of empowerment programmes here.

Relating the stigma and discrimination that she had faced over the years, the most heart-breaking was seeing her children being bullied in school and even picked on by the teachers.

The 38-year-old had contracted the virus from her late husband 22 years ago.

The mother of three has endured years of hardship to raise her children after her husband died of AIDS.

However, the determined woman has now started her own business, baking cakes, and selling beauty products to provide for her family. "I can go on working and doing things like anyone else as long as I take my medication."

Norazatulshima was among 30 people living with HIV/AIDS who attended the Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC) programme.

The workshops are held to empower those

suffering from the disease with confidence and knowledge to be able to speak up about misconceptions and against the discrimination they face.

Former drug user Norasid Md Said, 38, said he wanted to be a positive example to those who were living in fear of rejection, stigma and discrimination.

"I know many others who refuse to seek help. I want them to see that they can get through this," said the father of three from Gemas, who is now a volunteer for an outreach programme.

Sheila, 31, however, is still reluctant to use her real name, but has found the strength to talk about what she had gone through.

When she was diagnosed with HIV five years ago, she thought her life was over.

However, the factory worker, who contracted the virus from her former boyfriend, has her family to thank for her survival.

"They were crushed, but instead of rejecting me, they showed me nothing but love and support. Instead of hiding or remaining silent I decided to get help. I can lead a normal life and even help others," said Sheila, who now works with Community AIDS Service of Penang as a peer educator.

MAC president Datuk Dr Raj Karim said the programme was a step towards "zero discrimination".



Mutual support: Norazatulshima hugging Sheila (back to camera) after completing the programme.