

# CASE DESCRIPTION

## **FEMALE SEX WORKERS COMPLAINS THAT SHE CANNOT USE CONDOMS BECAUSE HER PIMP WON'T LET HER**

Female sex worker, aged 45 from Kiev complained that she is afraid she might have contracted HIV because her pimp forces her to have unprotected sex with him and with her clients if the clients want it. He also forces her to take drugs with clients if they want. Basically anything the client wants, she must do. She wants an HIV test and to know about how she can protect herself.

I asked her why she doesn't leave her pimp, she says she needs him because he gives her roof (protection on the street). She says because of her pimp, the local police don't bother when she is working. She says the pimp pays the police to leave her alone. If she tried to leave her pimp, the police will not do anything because it is bad business for them too, and even the good ones will want to charge her with prostitution, so she does not feel like she has any choice but to stay with her pimp and do what he says. Even if she leaves, she cannot work without a pimp – because the police will harass her so much and extort money out of her that she will not be able to make a living.

But she is afraid for her health and wants advice and wants to have HIV and STI tests. I ask her if she is ready for an HIV test, she says yes, but isn't sure she will be able to take ARVs if it comes to that because of her pimp. She might have to hide her medication from him. She does not want us to say anything to the police and does not want to be contacted as her pimp sometimes takes her phone. She does tell me the area she works in, and says many girls like her need help like this where she works. She says if done properly without intimidating the pimps and interrupting work, she thinks the girls would benefit if someone went to help them there with medical advice.

# CASE DESCRIPTION

## **GAY COUPLE ATTACKED BY COMMUNITY MEMBER ON STREET AND POLICE DO NOTHING**

Two gay men (aged 35 and 38) come to the office complaining that on 15th March 2019 at around 10pm, they were walking through town after a night out at a party and were attacked by a group of men on the street. The attackers approached them and started to insult them, calling them horrible names used to insult gay people and saying that they needed to be taught a lesson. The attackers then punched them to the ground and kicked them everywhere.

They said that they were afraid for their lives because although they didn't know their names, they recognized the attackers from the community and saw them around the community often. They had gone to the police to report the case, but the police had asked a lot of questions about their sexuality that made them feel uncomfortable, and asked why they were out so late at night. Although the police said that they would investigate the case, the men don't think anything was ever done because when they go to check, they are told that the investigating officer is not around and nobody else seems to know where their file is. That was two months ago, and now they are afraid to even go out during the day. They have spotted one of the men who attacked them and they think the attacker recognized them as well.

As a result, one of the men now has had to leave his job, and is hiding out at home. The other man has moved to a new location where he doesn't know anyone, and although there are clinics in his new community, the nearest gay-friendly clinics are far away and he cannot afford the transport fees to get there. He has defaulted on his TB treatment.

# CASE DESCRIPTION

## **HIV POSITIVE PREGNANT WOMAN NOT GETTING PROPER HEALTH SERVICES BECAUSE OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

A woman (aged 27) said that she is afraid that she will transmit HIV to her child because she is not enrolled on ARV treatment. She says that a few months ago she went to the doctor suspecting that she had a sexually transmitted infection and was diagnosed with gonorrhoea. She was also offered an HIV test which she took and was told to return after a week with the results. She says she has only ever had sex with her husband so she knew he had transmitted it to her. She went home and told her husband, and he beat her saying how dare she accuse him of such things, and that if she is sick, it is not his problem, he himself is not sick.

She later returned for her results which were positive. She was offered to enrol on ARV treatment, but she said she was not ready. She said she was afraid of telling her husband for fear that he would beat her, or worse, throw her out of the house. They have never used condoms, and so she has not been able to protect herself from reinfection. She says she cannot leave him because she relies on him to take care of her and the kids, and her family would reject her if she ever tried to leave him because he also sends them money for food in the village.

When she fell pregnant, the clinic nurse offered her to go on ARVs to prevent transmitting HIV to the baby, but she declined, and told the nurse about her situation. The nurse said that although she understands the situation, that she must start treatment, or else she would report her to the police who would charge her with wilful transmission of HIV because she would be knowingly be putting the baby at risk. Since that day, she has not gone back to the clinic.

# CASE DESCRIPTION

## **CHILD REMOVED FROM SCHOOL BECAUSE THEY ARE LIVING WITH HIV**

A woman (28 years old), came to report that her daughter, aged 8 years old, has been kicked out of primary school because the teachers found out that her daughter was living with HIV. The woman had disclosed her daughter's HIV status to the head mistress, in hopes that the headmistress would help ensure that her daughter took her HIV-related treatment on time. The headmistress had seemed supportive at first, giving the medication to the girl in her office herself.

Some weeks later, the mother came to learn that the headmistress had failed to give her daughter the medication on time, and had gone to speak to the headmistress, who responded defensively, saying that she is not responsible for the mother's bad choices having infected her daughter with HIV. The mother tried to explain to her the importance of receiving her medications on time, but the head mistress would not listen, and proceeded to say that the daughter needed special care and would need to be transferred to another school where she can get the necessary care and support. The headmistress said that she would be in touch once she had found a suitable school for her.

The mother had returned to the school to ask about progress on her daughter's transfer, but had been dismissed by the headmistress who said that she had not found a suitable school, and that all the schools she had spoken to about the girl's situation had said that they too were not confident that they could provide the necessary support to the girl, and declined to take her. The headmistress advised the woman to look for schools elsewhere in the country, but not being financial able, the mother cannot afford to move to a more urban community with more school options, and cannot afford to put her child in private school. Her daughter has been at home and not in school for several months now, and the woman does not know what to do.

# CASE DESCRIPTION

## **LGBTQ HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION PROVIDING HIV SERVICES ATTACKED**

A transgender woman (37 years of age) came to report that a few weeks ago, the building of where she works was broken into by thieves. Thankfully, nobody was in the office, but a lot was damaged. The thieves threw their papers on the floor, and overturned the tables and filing cabinets. They also spray painted homophobic insults on the walls. Laptops and other equipment were stolen. She suspects that this attack was related to the death threats that the office staff had been receiving on the main reception phone where several times a day, strangers would call the main line and shout insults at the staff person who answered it, threatening to kill them because they were running an 'immoral, filthy operation with their gay people'. The beneficiary reported the incident to the police, but left out the fact that she suspected that it was a homophobic attack. But the police woman who was helping her looked at her, and asked questions about what her organization does, she was worried she would not get served. The police woman did open a case file, and had come around the office a day later to inspect the scene of the crime. But she said she suspects the police were just curious about the centre and wanted to see the LGBT community who were visiting there in order to later target them. The LGBT individuals visiting when the police were there hid in the back of the office and only came out after the police were gone.

Although the office does not have signage on the front telling the public of what they do, the staff suspect that somehow the community had found out that it was a community-based health centre providing services to the LGBT community. The beneficiary is concerned because since the attack, fewer and fewer members of the community have been visiting the centre of HIV services, and fewer for the social events as well, which are most popular. When she asked some of the visitors where their friends were, they said that people had heard about the attack and were afraid to come to the centre in fear that they would be 'found out' to be gay, and be attacked themselves. The beneficiary wants to find out what other help she can get to help bring her clients back to the centre for HIV services that they need, and which she knows they will not get elsewhere.