



# This is my story

I'm only 18, but it's funny how your life can suddenly change. My mom was diagnosed with HIV a few years back. Before her diagnosis, I didn't know anything about HIV or AIDS. I never knew a lot of people had it. If my mom didn't have it, then I wouldn't know or even care. Even though things have been rough, my mom's diagnosis brought the family together. My sister and I can talk to her about anything now.

The media only shows sick people. They don't show **everyday people**. But you can't tell who has HIV. **They're normal people.**

**Alyssa**

I get tested all the time, and now I know a lot. I talk to my friends about it. It is especially important for Black women to get tested because they are the fastest growing population of those affected. I know because I help with my mom's organization, *Open Hearts*, to help spread the word about HIV/AIDS.

National HIV Testing Day

For more stories go to [www.napwa.org](http://www.napwa.org)

A few years ago, my brother was preparing some food for the family and cut himself with a kitchen knife. Immediately, he threw it in the trash; my mother tried to salvage the knife from the trash and wash it. At that point, he told my parents not to touch the knife. When he took the trash out, my parents knew. The color drained from their faces and no one slept that night.

When you hear the news, you can't help but think of the media's portrayal of it as a death sentence. However, he's been **living with it for over 10 years...**

I am 26. When I was 18, I learned that my brother had HIV. I knew before my parents did. He and I sat and talked about it all night, and it was his decision to tell the rest of the family. I respected his privacy, but it was really hard to know that and not be able to vent my feelings and fears to my other siblings.

**Mai**

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25 years of positive leadership.

