



# THE STORY OF THOMAS

## **FACILITATOR READS ALOUD:**

Meet Thomas, an HIV-positive shop owner and single father who recently lost his wife to TB. She left him with baby Nando and their teenage daughter Bella. They all live with his mother, Luisa.

Thomas feels guilty that he never told his wife he was HIV-positive. He fears she may have been HIV-positive too, which could have led to her TB and death. She may have even passed HIV on to their baby, who is not thriving.

### ***SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS***

- **Stigma**
- **Disclosure**
- **Relationship between TB and HIV**
- **PMTCT**



## **FACILITATOR READS ALOUD:**

If only I could turn back time, Thomas thinks, remembering his pregnant wife and her terrible cough. His mother tried taking her to Francisco, the neighborhood healer, where she got herbs and potions, but they never stopped the cough. And even as she was giving birth, she was coughing up blood.

## ***SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS***

- **TB symptoms**
- **Action steps (upon observing symptoms) for family and community**
- **Role of traditional healers**



## **FACILITATOR READS ALOUD:**

Soon after Nando was born, his sister Bella got really frightened about their mother's condition, so she contacted Maria, the local community health worker. Maria visited their home, but by the time she arrived, mama was near death. Maria told the family that she suspected mama had TB and that it was time to say their goodbyes.

### ***SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS***

- **TB detection**
- **Communication between community health workers and families**
- **Advocacy for quality TB treatment**



## **FACILITATOR READS ALOUD:**

After Mama's death, Maria had a heart-to-heart discussion with Thomas. Since he had lost a lot of weight and started to cough, she suggested that he might have TB or be HIV-positive. She also suggested that since the baby was not thriving, he might have TB or HIV, too. Without being judgmental, and in complete confidence, she urged that the whole family get tested for TB.

## ***SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS***

- Reinforce link between HIV and TB
- Care & treatment
- ART for newborns
- TB testing
- Introduce TB treatment (DOTS)
- Preventing the spread of TB
- Stigma



## **FACILITATOR READS ALOUD:**

This presented a huge conflict for Thomas. He felt very guilty about not telling his wife that he was HIV-positive. He blamed himself for his foolish ways, for taking his wife for granted, and for not getting her the medical help she needed sooner. He took full responsibility for his wife's death.

## ***SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS***

- **Disclosure**
- **Gender equity**
- **Care and treatment**
- **Prevention for positives**
- **Male involvement**



## **FACILITATOR READS ALOUD:**

Unable to cope, Thomas goes to Francisco, a healer and long-time family friend, and pours his heart out. Francisco, apologetic that he did not have the power to save Thomas's wife, recommends that he follow Maria's advice and get himself and his family tested for TB. In addition, he tells Thomas to think about disclosing his HIV status, at least to his family, and to get his baby tested for HIV to avoid further pain, sickness, and death.

### ***SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS***

- **Stigma**
- **Disclosure**
- **Role of traditional healer**
- **TB testing**
- **VCT**



## **FACILITATOR READS ALOUD:**

Thomas takes Francisco's advice and visits the local health clinic. He learns that he has TB and begins treatment. That night, Thomas has a dream. In his dream, he has the strength and power to make a huge difference in the future of his family and community. He wakes up with an idea and visits Maria to discuss the idea and get her involved.

### ***SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS***

- **Community mobilization and involvement**
- **Male involvement**



## **FACILITATOR READS ALOUD:**

Thomas shares his idea with his mother and daughter as well. He asks them to extend an invitation to store customers, neighbors, and community leaders to attend a big community meeting at his store.

### ***SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS***

- **Advocacy**
- **Community mobilization**



## **FACILITATOR READS ALOUD:**

With the whole community gathered in front of his store, Thomas shares some of the valuable lessons he's learned. He tells them that TB is contagious and deadly, but when discovered and treated, it is curable. He announces his plan to sponsor a community TB Testing Day at his store, with transportation and refreshments provided. He asks Francisco to say a few words before introducing Maria, who educates the community about TB symptoms, testing, and treatment.

## ***SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS***

- **TB symptoms**
- **TB testing**
- **TB treatment**
- **TB control**



## **FACILITATOR READS ALOUD:**

TB Testing Day was a success. With the support of his family and friends, Thomas is staying on treatment without much difficulty. Baby Nando tested HIV-positive, but has started treatment and is thriving. Bella feels proud that her dad has become a leader in the community and tells him how proud mama would have been. She tells Thomas not to feel guilty for mama's death and that he has taught her some valuable lessons, most importantly, that we all have the ability to learn and change, and truth is the healthy choice.

### ***SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS***

- **Prevention for positives**
- **ART**
- **PMTCT**
- **Family & community involvement (adherence support)**
- **Patient's right to quality treatment**
- **DOTS**





## Can I take ART and TB treatment at the same time?

*Yes, if you have HIV and TB, you should take both treatments at the same time.*

## Can HIV/AIDS and TB be cured with treatment?

*HIV cannot be cured through ART. But if patients carefully follow their ART regimen, they can prolong and improve their quality of life. TB can be cured in both HIV-positive and HIV-negative persons if the treatment is taken every day, without exception, for 6 to 8 months.*

*Treatment must be completed.*

## Is HIV testing and counseling confidential?

*Yes, only your TB or hospital nurse and counselor will know the results of your test. If you are HIV-positive, they will help you manage both diseases.*

## Where can I get tested and counseled?

*Your TB nurse or other healthcare worker can explain where you can get HIV testing and counseling.*

# What You Need to Know About Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS

Information for TB patients



## Are tuberculosis (TB) and HIV related?

Many people with TB are also infected with HIV. HIV destroys the cells that fight disease in the body. That means people with HIV have a higher risk of getting TB.

TB, although it is curable, is the leading cause of death among people living with HIV.

A person living with HIV and TB can also develop other serious health problems. These problems are often avoidable when people know their HIV status and use care and support services.

**It's important for TB patients to seek HIV testing and counseling to know their status and get the right treatment to stay healthy.**

## Why should I go for HIV testing and counseling?

It's important that you know your HIV status so that you can get health services, especially if you have TB.

### What if the HIV test is negative?

You should continue to practice safe sexual behaviors by limiting the number of sexual partners and using a condom at every sex.

### What if the HIV test is positive?

Talk with your counselor and healthcare provider about how to care for yourself. Recommendations from your healthcare provider will likely include:

- Take cotrimoxazol preventive treatment (CPT) to ward off other infections that can weaken your health
- Know the symptoms of other infections and treat them quickly and correctly
- Use a condom when having sexual relations to prevent spreading HIV
- Seek additional health services if you are pregnant to prevent transmitting HIV to your baby

## What is CPT?

Cotrimoxazol preventive treatment, or CPT, is a daily treatment with medicine that helps prevent infections that people living with HIV often get, including diarrhea, pneumonia, ear infections, and malaria. All patients with TB and HIV, including those who are pregnant, should take CPT as instructed by their healthcare provider.

## What is antiretroviral therapy (ART)?

ART is a combination of medications that stop the HIV virus from multiplying. ART does not cure a person of HIV, but it prolongs and improves quality of life.

Your clinic will decide when you should begin ART. Once you begin ART, you must follow treatment instructions carefully for the rest of your life.

## Is there a connection between TB and HIV?

*It is a very strong connection! A person living with HIV has a high risk of getting TB. TB, although it is curable, is the leading cause of death among people living with HIV. If you are HIV-positive and have symptoms of TB, you should get tested and treated right away.*

## How can I avoid spreading TB?

1. *When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth or nose with a tissue or article of clothing.*
2. *Spit into a can with sand, cover, and bury it deep when full.*
3. *Leave windows open to let in sunlight and keep the house well ventilated.*
4. *Find and treat TB as soon as possible.*

## TB treatment

TB treatment is free and available at public health centers.

TB is almost always curable as long as the patient starts treatment as soon as possible.

Treatment lasts 6 to 8 months.

The patient must take the medication exactly as prescribed by a health professional.

**Treatment should never be interrupted.**

## What are the side effects of TB medication?

*As with all drugs, TB medication can cause side effects:*

- Nausea and vomiting
- Skin itch and rash
- Yellow eyes
- Dizziness
- Pain or burning of the feet
- Vision problems

*If you have any of these problems, go immediately to the health center.*

**Urine and tears may turn orange.  
This is normal and no cause  
for concern.**

# What You Should Know About TB



## What is TB?

*Tuberculosis, also known as TB, is a disease that affects young and old, men and women, rich and poor. It is caused by a bacterium that destroys the lungs, but any organ such as the heart, intestines, liver, or bladder can be affected.*

## How does someone get TB?

*When someone with TB does not get treatment and coughs or spits, he or she sends thousands of germs into the air that are breathed in by other people. That's how the infection can spread.*



## How do I know if I have TB?

*If you have any of these symptoms, go immediately to a health center for a TB test.*

- Cough lasting more than 3 weeks
- Phlegm or phlegm with blood
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pains
- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Night sweats
- Neck or joint stiffness
- Swollen belly (bloating)

## Is there a cure for TB?

*Almost all cases of TB are curable if the disease is discovered early enough and the patient receives regular treatment for 6 to 8 months without interruption. TB treatment is free and available at public health centers.*