

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary Policy on HIV/AIDS

The American College Health Association task force on the Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) proposed that institutional responses to HIV/AIDS be formulated. The task force concluded “HIV infection is potentially lethal, but absolutely preventable.” The task force concluded that, “every institution of higher education must be accountable to its community to do everything possible to prevent people from being infected, to limit the consequences of established infection, and to provide compassionate care for all concerned individuals.”

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary will provide regular educational experiences for members of the community concerning the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). These educational opportunities will occur at least once a semester, which knowledgeable leadership coming from students, faculty, staff, and the Women’s Center at LPTS as well as members of the local community. LPTS HIV/AIDS educational activities will address issues regarding transmission of the virus, intricacies of medical treatment and care, methods of prevention, and how pastors, counselors and educators can effectively minister to those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. In promoting this educational environment, LPTS seeks to encourage community members to:

1. Explore how the spread of HIV relates to issues of self-esteem, gender inequality, sexual abuse, substance abuse, domestic violence, human sexuality, safer-sex, poverty, access to healthcare, racism, and classism.
2. Reflect upon how the stigma, shame and stereotypes often associated with HIV/AIDS can be harmful to those infected and affected as well as harbor a deadly silence that often serves to promote increased infection and further stigmatization.
3. Recognize that the disease often intersects with other complex issues also requiring adequate attention and response.

Our educational activities and curriculum will emphasize that:

1. Even though people may not have symptoms, those with HIV/AIDS may transmit the virus to others through intimate sexual contact, from mother to child during birth or breast-feeding, or exposure to their blood, semen, vaginal secretions and breast milk. Persons living with HIV/AIDS should not donate blood, plasma, organs or tissues.
2. Re-using intravenous needles or syringes for any purpose is dangerous and may place one at risk for contracting HIV or other infectious diseases.
3. Among sexually active people, the consistent and conscientious use of condoms and spermicides containing nonoxynol-9 greatly reduces the chance of transmission of HIV through sexual intercourse.
4. People with HIV/AIDS pose no risk of transmitting the virus to others through ordinary, casual interpersonal touching or contact.

5. The need for compassion and care for those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.
6. Our institutional policies seek to protect the legal rights and integrity of those infected and affected with HIV/AIDS.

It will be the policy of the Louisville Seminary:

1. Not to deny admission, employment, or regular participation in Seminary activities to persons living with HIV/AIDS. For the purpose of academic and employment related requirements, those living with HIV/AIDS are to be considered as equal to those not infected with HIV. In this respect, those living with HIV/AIDS shall not be dismissed from work or the academic program unless they are unable to perform their duties according to the standards for employees and students at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.
2. To seek to provide a learning environment that will be conducive to the education of any persons living with HIV/AIDS.
3. To maintain reasonable standards of confidentiality regarding those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. Members of the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary Community should be warned that sharing information, except in accordance with the confidentiality policy, is not acceptable and that spreading rumors concerning a person with HIV/AIDS is a serious matter which both serves to stigmatize individuals and may under certain aggravated circumstances expose the Seminary to claims in lawsuits. Harassment of those living with HIV/AIDS will be considered intolerable and subject to discipline under the current policy of Rights and Responsibilities of Members of the Louisville Seminary.
4. To assist in providing community members support for testing for HIV/AIDS.

The Seminary expects that these policies be used in a constructive, Christian manner as befits our institutional commitments.

Approved by Board of Trustees, October, 2008 (CM)