



AS STIGMA ENDS, PROGRESS CAN BEGIN.

Whether it's related to HIV, your identity, or your feelings, stigma affects our health. This is a space to find support and move forward.

Imagine living in fear

of being judged just for
being yourself.

For many men who have sex
with men across Africa, like
Thabo, this is daily life.

Stigma can be internal:
shame within,
or external - fear of rejection
or harm.

SHAME
FEAR
JUDGMENT
EXCLUSION

Thabo faces
this every
single day.

Self-Stigma

Self-stigma starts when people believe
the negative messages around them.

It grows into **shame**, **guilt**, and **isolation**.

At its worst, it can even lead to
suicidal thoughts.

Some, like **Thabo**, are rejected by their families.

Disowned or
forced into
“**conversion**”
efforts.

The result:
trauma,
homelessness,
and deep
emotional scars.

In communities,
Thabo faces discrimination, harassment, and even arrest.



He's **excluded** from gatherings and
denied services.

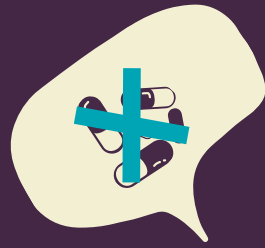


Sometimes
attacked
just for being who he is.

Even in **healthcare**, stigma is real.



People like **Thabo** are judged, refused
treatment, or outed without consent.



Some providers **lack
training** or **fear
arrest** for helping.



This **keeps many away** from the
care they need most.



Legal systems

often **convict** people because of their identities.



These laws **deepen stigma** and
discourage men from seeking help.



But here's the good news:

**change is
happening.**



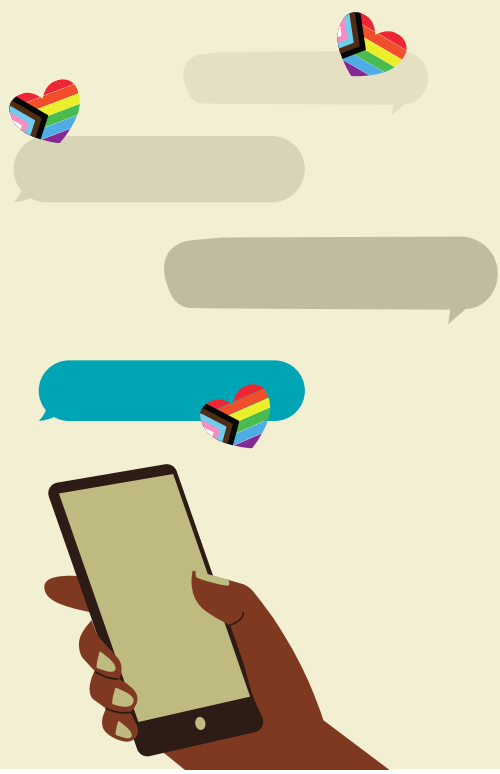
Across Africa, individuals and
organisations are taking action.



They're working to
reduce stigma and
support men like
Thabo.



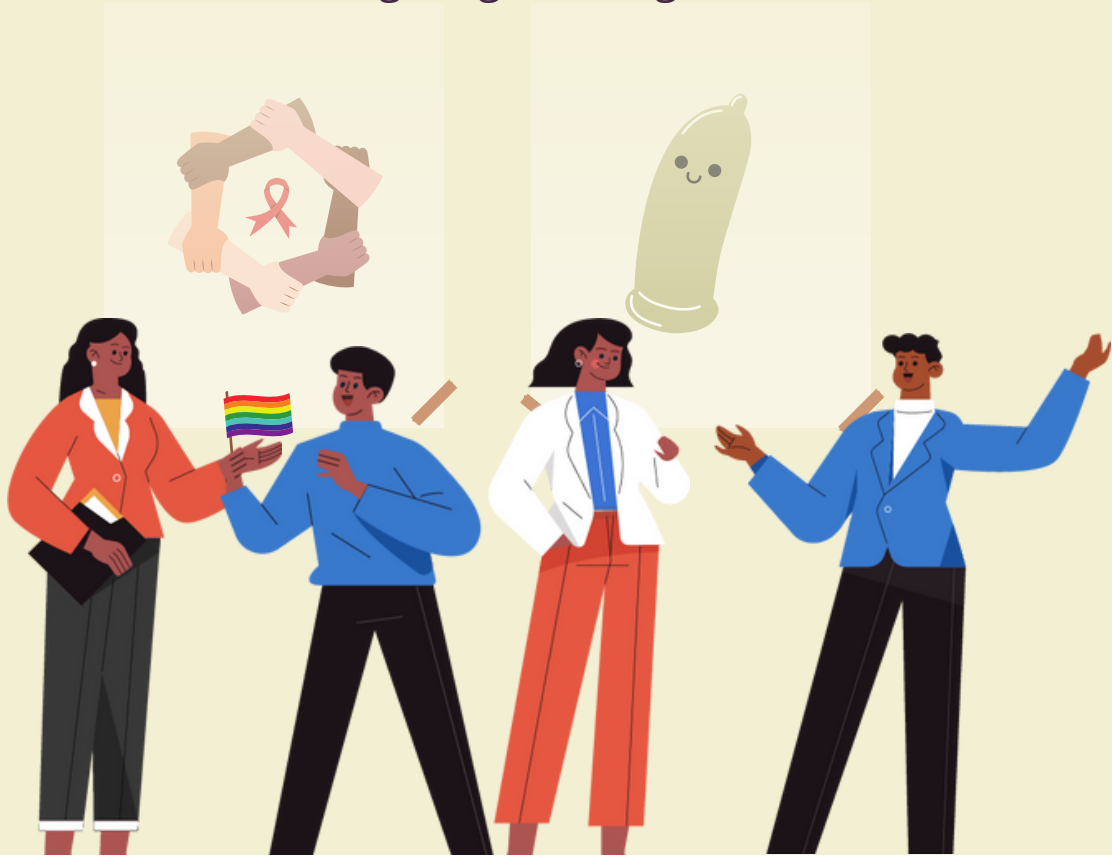
Peer programmes
offer private calls and chat support.



They help **MSM**
embrace their
identity and stay
healthy.



Group sessions build resilience and
strength against stigma.



Family programmes



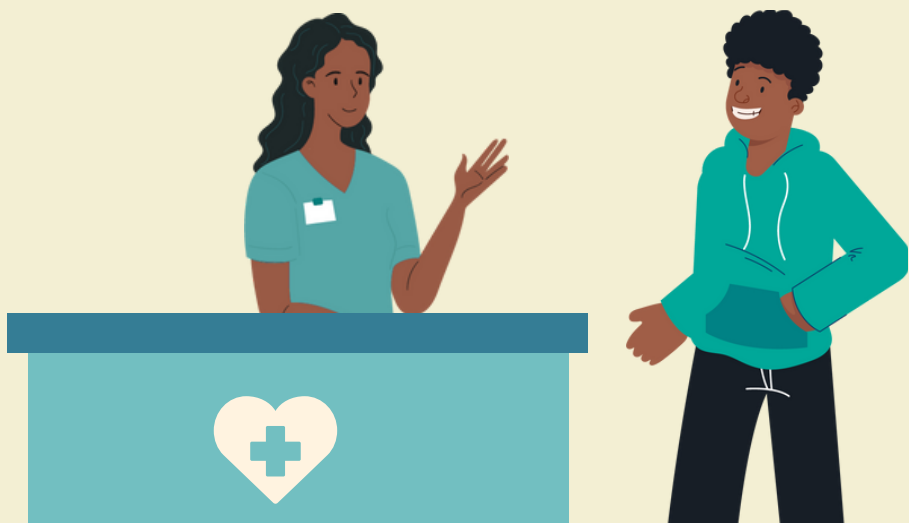
teach acceptance and understanding.

Community theatres



are changing minds and hearts.

Healthcare providers
are being trained to offer stigma-free care.



The goal:



stigma-free, patient-centered **care for everyone.**

Collecting data on stigma
helps us see where change is needed most.



This evidence drives
community-led advocacy and
better programmes.



Stigma isolates,
but **support** connects.

We all have a role to play.



When **stigma** becomes support and silence turns
to solidarity—everyone can live openly, healthily,
and with pride.





Let's keep **learning**, **sharing**, and **taking action**,
because health, dignity, and respect belong to all.



Want to learn more?

A guide to health and well-being
for gay men and other men who
have sex with men in Africa:

[See Guide Here](#)

The SSLN is a space for African
countries to come together and
share best practices in support
of greater HIV prevention
capacity:

[See SSLN Website Here](#)

