

AIDS and Stigma: 1999 Survey Items

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The following pages report exact wording for some of the items used in a 1999 national telephone survey on AIDS and stigma. Many of the items were also used in previous surveys conducted by the author in 1991 and 1997. Skip patterns and filler items are not included. The surveys were supported by grants from the National Institute of Mental Health (R01 MH55468 and K02 MH01455).

FEELING THERMOMETER

These next questions are about some of the different groups in the United States. I'll read the name of a group and ask you to rate the group on a thermometer that runs from zero (0) to one hundred (100). The higher the number, the warmer or more favorable you feel toward that group. The lower the number, the colder or less favorable you feel. If you feel neither warm nor cold toward them, rate that group a fifty.

.... (How about) People with AIDS? (On a scale from zero to one hundred, how would you rate this group?)

INTERACTIONS WITH PERSONS WITH AIDS: FEELINGS AND INTENTIONS

Suppose you had a young child who was attending school where one of the students was known to have AIDS. How would you feel about that? Would you feel comfortable having your child at that school, or would you feel uncomfortable?

- Would you feel very comfortable or only somewhat comfortable?
- Would you feel very uncomfortable or only somewhat uncomfortable?

What do you think you would actually do if you had a child who was attending school where one of the students had AIDS? Would you send your child to another school, or would you leave your child in the same school?

Would you encourage your child to be especially nice to the student with AIDS, would you discourage your child from having any contact with him or her, or would you encourage your child to treat him or her the same as always?

Suppose you worked in an office where one of the men working with you developed AIDS. How would you feel about that? Would you feel comfortable working with him, or would you feel uncomfortable?

- Would you feel very comfortable or only somewhat comfortable?
- Would you feel very uncomfortable or only somewhat uncomfortable?

What do you think you would actually do if you had an office job where one of the men working with you developed AIDS? Would you still be willing to work with him, would you ask that he be assigned to work someplace else, or would you ask that you yourself be assigned to work with someone else?

Would you go out of your way to help him if he needed help with his work, would you try to avoid contact with him, or would you treat him the same as always?

Suppose that you found out that the owner of a small neighborhood grocery store where you liked

to shop had AIDS. How would you feel about that? Would you feel comfortable shopping at that store, would you feel uncomfortable, or wouldn't it make any difference?

- Would you feel very comfortable or only somewhat comfortable?
- Would you feel very uncomfortable or only somewhat uncomfortable?

What do you think you would actually do if you found out that the owner of a small neighborhood grocery store where you like to shop had AIDS? Would you continue to shop there, or would you probably go someplace else to shop?

Do you think you would shop there more often or less often than you did before you found out the owner had AIDS, or would you continue to shop there as much as you did before you found out?

SYMBOLIC CONTACT

Now we have a couple of questions about how people might act in certain situations.

Suppose you were given a very nice sweater that had been worn once by another person who you didn't know. Before you got the sweater, it was cleaned and sealed in a new plastic package so that it looked like it was brand new. Assuming you liked the sweater, how likely do you think it is that you would wear it — very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?

Thinking of that same sweater, suppose you found out that the person who had worn it the one time before had AIDS. Knowing this, how likely do you think it is that you would wear it — very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?

How would you feel about drinking out of a glass in a restaurant if you knew that a few days earlier someone with AIDS drank out of the same glass? If it was washed and sterilized, would you be very comfortable, somewhat comfortable, not very comfortable, or not at all comfortable drinking out of that glass?

BELIEFS ABOUT HIV TRANSMISSION

These next questions are about the different ways some people think AIDS might be spread. As I read each of the following, please tell me how likely you think it is that a person could get AIDS or AIDS virus infection in that way.

How about sharing a drink out of the same glass with someone who has the AIDS virus? Would you say if someone does that they're very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, very unlikely to get AIDS, or is it impossible to get AIDS from sharing a glass with someone who has the AIDS virus?

How about by using public toilets? (Would you say if someone does that they're very likely,

somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, very unlikely to get AIDS, or is it impossible to get AIDS by using public toilets?)

How about from being coughed on or sneezed on by someone who has the AIDS virus? Would you say if that happens someone is very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, very unlikely to get AIDS, or is it impossible to get AIDS from being coughed on or sneezed on by someone with the AIDS virus?

ATTITUDES TOWARD PEOPLE WITH AIDS

Now I'm going to read a list of statements people have made. As I read each one, please tell me how much you agree or disagree.

How about "People with AIDS should be legally separated from others to protect the public health?" Would you say you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly?

(How about) "The names of people with AIDS should be made public so that others can avoid them?" (Would you say you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly?)

(How about) "Women who are pregnant should be required to be tested for the AIDS virus in order to protect the health of their unborn baby?" (Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly?)

(How about) "Most people with AIDS don't care if they infect other people with the AIDS virus?" (Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly?)

(How about) "Most people with AIDS are responsible for having their illness?" (Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly?)

(How about) "People who got AIDS through sex or drug use have gotten what they deserve?" (Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly?)

TRUST OF AUTHORITIES AND EXPERTS

(How about) "Scientists and doctors can be trusted to tell us the truth about AIDS?" (Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly?)

Many scientists and doctors say AIDS is not spread by casual social contact. Do you think what they're telling us is definitely true, probably true, probably false or definitely false?

HIV MANDATORY TESTING

Do you favor or oppose legally requiring people at risk for getting AIDS to be tested regularly for the AIDS virus?

- Do you strongly favor or only somewhat favor legally requiring people at risk for getting AIDS to be tested regularly for the AIDS virus?
- Do you strongly oppose or only somewhat oppose legally requiring people at risk for getting AIDS to be tested regularly for the AIDS virus?

Do you favor or oppose legally requiring people from other countries who want to live in the United States to first have an AIDS test to prove they are not infected with the AIDS virus?

- Do you strongly favor or only somewhat favor legally requiring people from other countries who want to live in the United States to first have an AIDS test to prove they are not infected with the AIDS virus?
- Do you strongly oppose or only somewhat oppose legally requiring people from other countries who want to live in the United States to first have an AIDS test to prove they are not infected with the AIDS virus?

FEELINGS TOWARD PEOPLE WITH AIDS

People have many different feelings when they think about people who have AIDS. As I read each of the following feelings, please tell me how you personally feel.

How about feeling sympathetic toward them? Would you say you feel very sympathetic, somewhat, a little, or not at all sympathetic when you think about people with AIDS?

How about feeling angry at them? Would you say you feel very angry, somewhat, a little, or not at all angry when you think about people with AIDS?

(How about) afraid of them? Would you say you feel very afraid, somewhat, a little, or not at all afraid of people with AIDS?

(How about) disgusted by them? Would you say you feel very disgusted, somewhat, a little, or not at all disgusted by people with AIDS?

PERCEPTIONS OF PERSECUTION

How much would you say that people with AIDS have been unfairly persecuted over the years? Would you say they have faced a great deal of unfair persecution, some, a little bit, or no unfair persecution at all?

How about these days? Would you say that people with AIDS now face a great deal of unfair

persecution, some, a little bit, or no unfair persecution at all?

HIV TESTING AND CONCERNS ABOUT STIGMA

[SKIP THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IF R HAS AIDS]

If you were going to be tested in the future for some reason, how concerned would you be that you might be treated differently or discriminated against if your test result were to come out positive for the AIDS virus? Would you be very concerned, somewhat concerned, a little concerned, or not at all concerned?

How much would the fact that you would be...[very concerned/somewhat concerned/a little concerned] ...about being treated differently or discriminated against, affect your decision to get tested - a great deal, some, a little, or not at all?

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