



HIV/AIDS MODEL POLICY FOR THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

1. Introduction:

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is currently one of the most critical global socio – economic and development problems. Young people have a high risk to be infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. Therefore it is the responsibility of the training institutions to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS. The fight against HIV/AIDS requires the adoption of collective strategies in the education, prevention and care support of those who are infected and/or affected.

The implementation of the VET HIV/AIDS policy and programmes will be carried out in collaboration with national initiatives and structures, in particular in line with the Botswana National Policy on HIV/AIDS.

This policy is a model for policies to be developed by individual training institutions for use in their own context. Training institutions are free to add, delete and borrow from this draft policy, or to adapt it, as in line with their own policy and procedures.

2. Preamble:

The training institution acknowledges the seriousness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Botswana and its significant impact on the training sector. The training institution shares the understanding of AIDS as a chronic, life threatening disease with social, economic and human rights implications.

The training institution recognises that the HIV/AIDS epidemic poses one of the greatest challenges to education development and that some of the staff, trainers and trainees could be affected by this disease.

Each of the training institutions seeks to minimise the spread of this disease through comprehensive active HIV/AIDS programmes in education, prevention and care and support.

3. Scope:

The policy covers all staff and trainees in the vocational education and training institution. The vocational training and education institution is required to integrate the HIV/AIDS programmes in their ongoing activities.

4. Objectives:

- a) The policy articulates the VET institution position and practise as it relates to staff and trainees who are infected or affected by HIV/AIDS.
- b) The policy assists those uninfected to remain free of HIV.
- c) The policy provides a foundation for HIV/AIDS education programme. It includes HIV/AIDS programmes regarding prevention and positive behavioural change.

5. General principles:

5.1 Equity: Infected staff and trainees have the same rights and obligations as all other staff members and trainees and they will be protected against all form of discrimination and stigmatisation based on their HIV/AIDS status.

5.2 Integration: Trainers and trainees who have or are perceived as having HIV or AIDS are entitled to attend the training institution in a regular classroom and shall be afforded opportunities on an equal basis with all trainers and trainees. No HIV/AIDS positive applicant should be denied the training and no trainee should be prevented from continuing the training regardless of her/his HIV status.

5.3 Recruitment: The recruitment of an employee or of trainees should be not based on HIV/AIDS screening.

5.4 Confidentiality: All information and test results of trainees or staff concerning HIV and AIDS should be kept confidential unless information will been given by them.

5.5 Rights and competence: Staff and trainees living with HIV/AIDS are entitled to the same rights, privileges and service accorded to staff and trainees generally, including benefits provided to such persons with long-term diseases or disabling conditions.

6. Basic information on HIV/AIDS

6.1 What is HIV?

The virus called HIV, which stands for Human Immuno - Deficiency Virus, causes the disease. This virus slowly weakens a person's ability to fight off other diseases, by attaching itself to and destroying important cells that control and support the human immune system. After a person is infected, he or she, although infectious to others, can look and feel comfortable for many years before AIDS is developed.

6.2 HIV causes AIDS

The average period between getting infected with HIV and developing AIDS is approximate 5 to 7 years in the absence of treatment. AIDS is an abbreviation for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, which is a term to describe a set of opportunistic infections and cancers, which would not be life – threatening, if HIV had not destroyed the body's immune system in the first place.

6.3 Transmission

The virus must gain entrance into a person's blood stream. There are a limited number of modes of transmission. The modes of transmission in order of importance are:

- ◆ Unprotected sex with an HIV infected person
- ◆ From an infected mother to her child during pregnancy, birth or breast feeding
- ◆ By sharing needles/syringes with someone who is infected with the virus
- ◆ Transfusion with infected blood and blood products
- ◆ Unsafe, unprotected contact with infected blood and the bleeding wounds of an infected person

Regarding the universal precautions all blood contacts are treated as if it is infected with HIV.

7. Creating a Non-discriminatory and Caring Environment

7.1 Non – discrimination

a. No employee or trainee living with HIV/AIDS should be unfairly discriminated or stigmatised directly or indirectly. The management and the trainers should be alert to unfair attitudes against any person who is infected or affected.

b. Staff and trainees who are infected or affected will be treated in a just, human and life affirming way.

c. Any special measure in respect of an employee or trainee with HIV/AIDS should fair in the light of ethical guidelines, medical facts and conditions of services. This should be conducted in the best interests of the infected individual.

d. The attitude to infected or affected male and female staff or trainees should be with the same respect regarding their equal and fundamental human rights.

e. Female trainees obtain a particular protection as vulnerable persons group. Women are more likely to become infected and are more often adversely affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic than men due to biological, socio – cultural and economic reasons.

7.2 HIV/AIDS Test

a. Testing for HIV/AIDS should remain voluntary and the staff and trainees are not bound to disclose their HIV/AIDS status.

b. The HIV/AIDS status is not be a reason for dismissal of a staff member or trainee nor for refusing to conclude, or continue, or renew the employment contract.

c. Voluntary testing and counselling programmes will be address the importance of testing. Staff and trainees are encouraged to undergo voluntary counselling and testing in order to know their HIV status.

d. Staff and trainees will be given appropriate education and information on the benefits of anti retroviral therapy.

7.3 Confidentiality and Disclosure

- a. No staff or trainee is compelled to disclose her or his status to the institution.
- b. Voluntary disclosure of staff or trainee's HIV/AIDS status should be appreciated in an environment of confidentiality. The institution should ensure a system of care and support, if trainees will disclose their status. Staff should be prepared to handle such disclosures and be given support to handle confidentiality issues as well as be informed about counselling and care support in the community. The institution guarantees that no staff member or trainee will be unfairly discriminated based on their disclosed HIV/AIDS status.
- c. HIV/AIDS infected staff and trainees should have access to appropriate and comprehensive medical and psychological support by institution.

7.4 Prevention:

HIV infection is preventable. The vocational education and training institution promotes prevention efforts particularly in relation to changing attitudes and behaviours through the provision of information and education.

7.5 Care and support:

Solidarity, care and support should guide the health and social support to those who are infected.

8. Education and Awareness programmes

The institution will facilitate continuous HIV/AIDS awareness and education programmes. Continuing HIV/AIDS education and life skill programmes are to be implemented in the institution. This should include the following:

- Basic information on HIV/AIDS and development of life skills to ensure, prevention of HIV transmission and STD's
- To make staff and trainees aware of health care, counselling and support services
- An environment and culture of non – discrimination towards people living HIV/AIDS is cultivated
- Education in parenting and contraception
- Self realisation and respect as well as communication skills

Education and information regarding HIV/AIDS must be given in an accurate and scientific manner and in language that is understandable.

Regarding the sensitive nature of the learning contents, trainers should be specifically trained and supported by the relevant staff or HIV/AIDS committee.

All trainers should be able to give guidance on HIV/AIDS. Trainers shall respect their position of trust and uphold constitutional rights of all trainees in the context of HIV/AIDS.

9. Coordination responsibilities and implementation

- a. To coordinate and implement the HIV/AIDS programmes and the policy, the institution has an HIV/AIDS coordinator. An HIV/AIDS committee has been established as the driving body on HIV/AIDS activities. Trainees should be involved in the HIV/AIDS committee and all HIV/AIDS programmes. All staff and trainees are encouraged to support the HIV/AIDS committee and assist in the implementation of

the programmes and the policy. Trainees, as a high-risk group, should be aware of their responsibility to participate in the implementation.

b. The vocational education and training institution considers community involvement and partnership with other HIV/AIDS organisation as an important approach to reduce the spread of the disease.

c. The policy shall be reviewed and amended in consultation with staff and trainees whenever the need arises.