

REAL LIFE STORY 1

Small things make a huge difference

There's a boy in my class who is HIV-positive. His name is Yohane . He is my age. Other pupils told me he is HIV-positive. They said: 'If we hang out with him, we could get infected.'

One day we had a lesson on HIV/ AIDS in the WSWM curriculum. I learned more about how HIV is transmitted, the symptoms, HIV- medication and living with HIV.

After that class I felt guilty about never talking to Yohane - I realized I've never asked him how he is, I never asked if he wants to play basketball with me and the rest of the class.

The next day I decided to sit next to him, and I apologized for never paying attention to him. I explained to him, that I actually didn't know enough about HIV. I was afraid I could get infected.

These days, Yohane and I talk more often. I told Yohane that I would be there for him if he needs support. What he tells me, stays with me in confidence - I want to be a good friend to him. He told me he is relieved, he can share his struggles with me. It really makes him feel better. Also, we don't focus on his health problems all the time. When he feels good, he told me he doesn't want to be reminded of his health issues.

Apart from talking I offer him practical support. For example, if Yohane has been feeling sick and hasn't been to school, I bring him homework and tell him what we did in school. I tell him the current score for basketball or a joke I heard in school. Last week, I asked the teacher if we could spend some time in class to write a small letter to him, to send him our best wishes. I took the letters to his house. When he saw the letters, he had the biggest smile on his face.

The *small* things I do for Yohane make a *huge* difference in his life. It gives him energy in times he needs it so much. And I feel happy I can give this to him to, it makes me a better person.

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