

NEWS FROM:



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UCT's 5th colloquium on HIV/AIDS to focus on human stories behind the virus

**Narrative and Nostalgia in HIV education and research: 21 September 2011,
09h30-13h30,
Centre for African Studies Gallery, Upper Campus**

The experiences of HIV-positive people who tell their own stories about living with the virus will be the focus at the fifth annual colloquium hosted by the HIV/AIDS Institutional Co-Ordination Unit (HAICU) at the University of Cape Town, on Wednesday, 21 September 2011, 09h30-13h30, at the Centre for African Studies Gallery on Upper Campus. A programme is listed at the end of this release.

Narratives by HIV-positive people about their own lives have been used extensively in HIV education and research, and there is a theory that such narratives can be used for emotional healing. At the same time, people living with HIV often feel reluctant to inform others about their HIV status because of the stigma attached to the virus. The colloquium will examine both the pros and cons for the HIV-positive tellers of the story, and how their experience can be improved.

Topics and speakers include:

- "Cultural nostalgia in the Age of AIDS in South Africa", by Relebohile Moletsane, Professor of Rural Education at the Faculty of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- "Reflections on HIV+ people using their stories in education", by Phindile Sithole Spong and speakers from the Openly Positive Trust.
- "I could tell people, but my problem is that's all they'd see: Reflections on HIV+ people not using their stories in education", by Cal Volks, Director of HAICU.

- “Reflections on taking a sexual history as benefiting the research participant”, by Erin Stern, Research Associate in UCT’s School of Public Health.

HAICU’s website (<http://www.haicu.uct.ac.za/>) gives reasons for encouraging HIV-positive people to tell their own stories. These reasons include:

- Such stories help to reduce stigma and false information about the HI virus.
- Someone who has experienced discrimination due to being infected or affected by HIV or AIDS can feel stronger by telling his or her own story. “If you share your experiences, your story can become a source of inspiration for others,” says the website.
- Such stories can be a source of support, acceptance and openness towards people living with HIV or AIDS, including their families or partners.

Background on HAICU

HAICU aims to transform UCT into an AIDS-competent community that offers a supportive and caring environment for all those who are infected or affected by HIV and AIDS. HAICU’s work includes: co-ordinating HIV/AIDS interventions in UCT’s curriculum development, public activities, student orientation and community partnerships; reviewing and steering policy implementation and development; communicating key issues to the campus community; serving as the university’s quality assurance unit for student awareness interventions, including HIV/ AIDS orientation programmes; organising key public events on UCT campuses to raise awareness of key issues relating to HIV/ AIDS; organising key social responsiveness programmes; and, in partnership with the Centre for Open Learning, developing a practical short course around HIV/AIDS. HAICU uses current research to guide planning, implementation and evaluation.

HAICU Colloquium Programme

10h00 – 10h20 **Cal Volks:** Introduction to the Colloquium

10h20 – 10h30 *Video Input 1*

10h30 – 10h50 **Derrick Fine:** Openly Positive Trust.

Reflections of people living with HIV using their stories in education

10h50 – 11h10 **Phindile Sithole Spong**

Reflections of people living with HIV using their stories in education

11h10 – 11h30 Discussion

11h30 – 11h45 Second video input

11h45 – 12h15 Lunch. Viewing of stories

12h15 – 12h35 **Professor Relebohile Moletsane.** Rural Education at the Faculty of Education UKZN

Cultural Nostalgia in the Age of AIDS in South Africa.

12h35 – 12h50 **Erin Stern,** Research Associate UCT Public Health

Reflections on Taking a Sexual History as benefitting the research participant

12h50 – 13h10 Discussion

13h10 – 13h30 Networking

ENDS

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