

SMART
CONNECTIONS
Social Media to improve
ART Retention and
Treatment Outcomes
Among Youth Living
with HIV in Nigeria

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SMART Connections

What

- Structured, online support group
- Curriculum adapted from "Positive Connections"



Who

Youth living with HIV, ages 15-24 years, new to ART (<12 month)

Where

14 health facilities in south-central Nigeria







How It Works



Safe Space: YLHIV ages 15 to 24 form "Secret" Facebook groups.



Supportive Adult Role Model: Groups led by trained adult facilitator with lived HIV experience.



11 Key Topics Covered: Understanding HIV; Treatment & Adherence; Disclosure; Exploring Feelings; Nutrition & Health; Reproductive Rights; Positive Health Dignity & Prevention; Stigma, Discrimination & Rights; Violence; Communication & Problem Solving; Planning for your Future.



Interactive Polls and Facilitated Discussions test knowledge and reinforce learning.



Word-of-the-Week and Key Message images provide definitions of core concepts.



Social Activities including riddles, puzzles, and discussion about non-health topics to promote bonding.



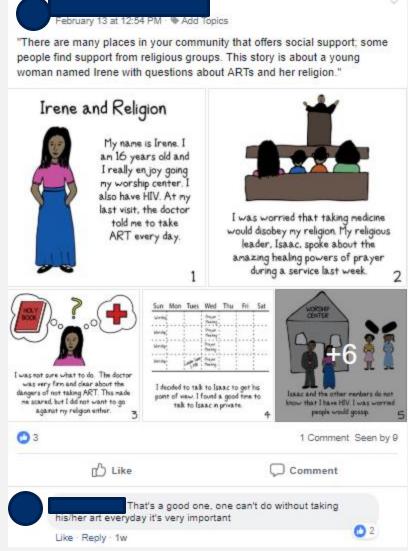




Informational Messaging:













Findings from Feasibility Study

- Facilitators and YLHIV strongly supported and liked the intervention
- Participants:
 - Felt that the intervention was easy to access and useful
 - Reported that they enjoyed taking part in it
 - Felt comfortable with the facilitator and group members
 - Wanted to continue the intervention
 - Would recommend the intervention to other ALHIV
- Facilitators completed most scheduled activities on-time, as intended and felt using Facebook on phones was easy

"I am a very timid and shy person. But the intervention helped me. There are certain things I was able to overcome. I felt so miserable when I found out that I'm positive but after interacting with people, I find out that I don't have to kill myself or die or feel miserable ...So I have decided to open up and feel good about myself." -18-year-old female







Next Steps

- RCT to test effectiveness underway
- 350 youth 15-24 years enrolled
- Primary outcome: Retention in ART services
- Secondary outcomes:
 - Adherence
 - Social Support
- Baseline data collected, endline starting May 2019







