How can pregnant women living with HIV make sure their antenatal care is based on what they want and need?

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Developing a National Network of Mentor Mothers to support women living with HIV through pregnancy

Aim: Train 40 women living with HIV as Mentor Mothers, across 8 UK regions in collaboration with HIV specific third-sector organisations

Method

• Innovative two-day training package developed & facilitated by two experienced trainers - one a Mentor Mother herself

• Coaching on clinical and psychosocial aspects of pregnancy and HIV, together with creative writing workshops

• Training sites: Bournemouth, Brighton, Cardiff, Glasgow, Leicester, Leeds, London/Essex and Manchester
Results

• Between April and October 2016, we trained 46 women living with HIV to be Mentor Mothers

• The median age of women completing training was 40.5 years (range 22–67); 40% were of Black African ethnicity

• All rated the different training components as either good or excellent

• Nearly 90% reported improvements in knowledge about HIV and pregnancy and confidence in action planning had improved

• The creative writing component was rated highly

• Stories were collated into a booklet to share with participants, host organisations and healthcare professionals
Discussion

- **Challenges**: recruitment and retention; concerns about confidentiality; host organisation funding cuts
- **Solutions**: targeted advertising; pro-active follow-up of participants; childcare costs; social media campaign
- **Successes**: exceeded target; peer-led evaluation; extra (invited) workshops for healthcare providers; creative writing component

It is very important that women get this type of training and get together more [...] the majority of women are still in the dark about these issues.

Creative writing workshop brought a lot of memories [and is] something that can help others. This is something powerful. Without creative writing it is left hidden, forgotten, or never valued. *It is like a hidden treasure.*
Ensuring that antenatal care for pregnant women living with HIV is based on what they want and need.

Key is their Involvement in:

• Planning
• Delivery
• Evaluation
However...

Model is easily replicable when working with pregnant women from other vulnerable and marginalised communities such as:

- Women with mental health issues
- Women who use drugs
- Migrant women