

# Fact sheet

# HIV AND WORK

## KEY FACTS

- People with HIV can grow old and live life like anyone else.
- People with HIV can do any job.
- HIV-positive people are not out sick more than others.
- Transmitting HIV is impossible in everyday working life.
- People with HIV are like any other employee.

In Germany, around 86,000 people are living with HIV.<sup>1</sup>

With timely diagnosis and treatment, they can grow old and live like anyone else. In other words, a normal working life up to retirement age is perfectly possible.

HIV is generally not easy to transmit. When treated – which is normally the case nowadays – the virus can't even be transmitted during sex. There never was a risk in everyday working life, either for colleagues or others. This is also true in areas such as care-work, child-care or gastronomy.

Even in the case of a first-aid emergency, normal protection and hygiene regulations are enough to prevent infection.

## A NORMAL WORKING LIFE

HIV-positive employees are just as resilient and capable as HIV-negative ones.<sup>2</sup> No special precautions need be taken to employ people with HIV.

People with HIV are generally capable of carrying out any professional duty. This is just as true in the medical profession as it is of manual labor, retail, gastronomy and any other industry.<sup>3</sup>

HIV status is therefore irrelevant to professional life.

<sup>1</sup>Robert-Koch-Institut: HIV/AIDS in Deutschland (2017). <https://bit.ly/2MoBw4y>



## NO HIV TEST IN WORKING LIFE

For this reason HIV tests have no place in recruitment or company medical examinations. Even asking about someone's HIV status is discriminatory and should be avoided. "Voluntary" tests are not acceptable either, because deciding not to take one risks raising presumptions.

## COUNTERING DISCRIMINATION

Many people with HIV do not reveal their infection in their working lives for fear of discrimination. This involuntary secrecy inhibits their creativity and performance at work. Stigmatization can make people sick and can create a breeding ground for an intolerable working environment for everyone.

Education can remove irrational fears. HIV/AIDS service organizations are happy to provide support in this area. An open and tolerant approach can help create respectful cooperation in the workplace. This has a positive effect on the entire working atmosphere.

## MODEL EMPLOYERS

Employers can be a model in their treatment of HIV-positive employees and other minorities. Show solidarity when there are signs of discrimination. Commit to active diversity and inclusion.

Please sign the declaration:

**"Respect and non-judgement: Discrimination-free treatment of HIV-positive people in the workplace".**

Further information:

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<sup>2</sup>NAT: Working with HIV (2009). <https://bit.ly/2Slzk0P>

<sup>3</sup>The only exceptions are certain surgical duties, but only in the rare case that the HIV infection is not yet being treated.