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Theme: **"Positive People Making a Positive Change in the Prevention Efforts"**

Speakers: Tony Miles, Ph.D. Licensed Psychologist  
The Positive Project

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Dr. Miles received his BA in Clinical Psychology from San Francisco State University and his PhD from the California School of Professional Psychology in Alameda, California. He has a diverse range of clinical experience including work in a nonprofit outpatient family clinic, a federal prison for women, a city/county hospital (inpatient and outpatient), community mental health centers, and various AIDS service organizations. His doctoral research examined the correlation between Quality of Life and Fear of Death for persons living with HIV/AIDS in San Francisco. Dr. Miles has been involved in HIV-related volunteerism or direct service for 20+ years.

**Q.** “Let’s not just talk about people living with HIV, let’s listen to them!” What do you mean by this?

**A.** While counseling people living with HIV, I was hearing a lot of wisdom about the things people were figuring out, like diminishing their own sense of shame, building a positive sense of self esteem, learning how to disclose their status to other people. I thought this is remarkable that people are figuring this by themselves. There is a wealth of knowledge here.

**Q.** What is the Positive Project?

**A.** We find people that are HIV positive and are out about their status. We’ve developed a standard interview, with about 60 questions, about all the topics that could be really useful in a range of application; whether it’s somebody trying to increase testing in their community, someone working in the prevention arena, maybe it’s about disclosure, how do people negotiate sex, how do people that are positive tell their children they are positive. What we do is sit people in front of the camera and film their interview. We have 150 interviews on film of people from around the country who have been infected through a variety of ways; birth, injection drug use, sex. People from all around have reported to have seen these videos; from Argentina, Africa, India, Canada, Ireland, Scotland, all around the US. All reporting that when they see people speak out about their status, they report a sense of hope.

**Q.** How do you select the people that you interview?

**A.** We interview everyone that wants to participate. We do make it clear that we do not know who will see this video. If someone is out and comfortable at that level, we would love the opportunity to add their story. We do not have any conditions or expectations. This is not scripted. People talk about their life. As an example, we ask “Is there anything about your life that is better as a result of this struggle?” One man said, “That’s a ridiculous question! No, there is nothing better about my life.”

To people, that man's honesty, regardless of his attitude, was enough to engage people in listening to everything he said.

**Q.** How do people access these videos?

**A.** If you go to [www.thepositiveproject.org](http://www.thepositiveproject.org) to access the videos. You can register as a member, which is free, and start to develop your own play list. Let's say you work in a testing center, or doing outreach encouraging people to get tested, you can go to the website and find videos of people who resemble your target population. You can save the playlist.

**Q.** Can you download them into your computer if you don't have internet access?

**A.** Yes, you can download them. You can access them through a small fee, but if you really want we can allow you to download them for free, and you can download them onto your computer.

### **Videos are played.**

**A.** Do you have videos in other languages other than English?

**Q.** We mostly have interviews with English speaking people, but we do have some Spanish interviews and once we have more help with this endeavor we will have more.

**Q.** What if I am an organization and have people that would like to be part of the interviews?

**A.** When we are contacted by someone in another state, it's a big effort to travel there with the cameras and equipment. What we do is ask them if they can find 8 total people that would like to participate we would commit to come and interview them.

**Q.** How are videos categorized on the website?

**A.** They are categorized by the questions asked and by geographical area. You can search by both.

**Q.** How long have you been doing this?

**A.** We've been doing this for about 7 years now. Our challenge is funding. We've had funding support from private sources, individual donors, and family foundations, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, especially at interviewing rural individuals. We have videos of a wide variety of people, i.e. people with HIV coming out of prison, kids with HIV, etc. People have put our link on the website of community organizations and others have actually put the videos of the interviews on their websites, even on PowerPoint presentations.

**Q.** Do you have videos of people that have gone through interventions?

**A.** I'm sure some of the people interviewed have gone through interventions, but we don't ask that question directly. We ask what has been helpful in dealing with this experience.

**Q.** Would I be able to put a link of the PositiveProject.com on my Facebook page?

**A.** Yes, of course. We already have a page on Facebook.

**Q.** Are you tracking the uses people are giving your videos?

**A.** Yes. Are we tracking it as clearly or thoroughly, no. Since it's just two of us, it's a challenge.

**Q.** Are there different media tools other than the website to access your videos, especially for rural communities.

**A.** We do have a DVD that we have created specifically for the rural community. We also have two DVD that are a compilation of interviews.

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