

When It's Time to Choose Your Doctor

**Provided by Reverend Deborah Elandus Lake
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Dear Neighbor,

Finding the doctor that is right for you is complicated. With HIV & AIDS, there are many things to consider, and each person's journey is different. I have listed some questions and concerns that are important when looking for and deciding on a doctor.

**Always Remember,
God Is With Us
Rev. Deborah Lake, Executive Director
Sankofa Way Spiritual Services**

Some Questions to Ask Potential Doctors

- How many patients with HIV have you treated?
- How many do you currently see?
- What is your approach to care (do you use conservative methods only, or are you open to new/experimental methods?)
- Are you comfortable with my lifestyle?
- Are you part of a system of overall support for people living with HIV/AIDS?

Some Thoughts About Relationship

You may want to take an active role in planning your healthcare. Or, you may want your doctor to plan without much input from you. Think about which makes sense to you, and be sure to talk about this with your doctor.

Some Thoughts About Communication

Once you decide on a doctor, be sure to share how you feel about taking medication, and about having HIV or AIDS. Expect your doctor to take the time to listen to what you have to say. Tell your doctor about other drugs (legal or not) you are using. Be open and honest about your lifestyle. How you eat, sleep, have sex, and work make a difference in your care. If you feel you cannot talk about something that is important, this may be a sign that you should look for a more compatible doctor.

How to Engage Your Family & Loved Ones

When you are ready to talk with the people who are important to you, *Your Neighbor Has AIDS* will help you find ways to begin a conversation. This book holds information that will help you identify and communicate your needs to your family & loved ones. There are also reflection exercises in the "Make It Real" section that you can do along with someone you want to become involved in your journey. Copies are available at amazon.com, Borders Books, Brush Arbor Press, and other selected bookstores.

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For more information about HIV/AIDS contact these resources

Brush Arbor Press/Consultants (www.brusharborpress.com), Centers for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov/hiv), National HIV and STD Testing Resources (www.hivtest.org), Sankofa Way Spiritual Services (www.sankofaway.org) The Ruth Rothstein CORE Center, (www.corecenter.org), Deborah E. Lake (www.DeborahELake.com)