

# Stigma among HIV-positive women complex and overlapping

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In this week's *PLoS Medicine*, Mona Loutfy of the University of Toronto, Canada and colleagues report their study examining experiences of stigma and coping strategies among HIV-positive women in Ontario, Canada.

Using focus groups, the researchers found that women attributed their experiences of stigma and discrimination to HIV-related stigma, sexism and [gender discrimination](#), racism, homophobia and transphobia, and involvement in sex work. The coping strategies they used included resilience (at a micro level), social networks and support groups (at a meso level), and challenging stigma (at a macro level).

The authors state that: "Overall, this investigation highlights a complex system of intersectional stigma that necessitates multifaceted strategies to promote health equity for HIV-positive women. Findings can inform treatment, care, and support guidelines and practice recommendations for health care practitioners, social workers, [HIV prevention](#) and support workers, and mental health specialists working with HIV-positive women."

**More information:** Logie CH, James L, Tharao W, Loutfy MR (2011) HIV, Gender, Race, Sexual Orientation, and Sex Work: A Qualitative Study of Intersectional Stigma Experienced by HIV-Positive Women in Ontario, Canada. *PLoS Med* 8(11): e1001124.

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