

# APPENDIX D:

## Teachers' Glossary\*

**Abstinence:** Refraining from an activity, often used in reference to any type of sexual intercourse and/or drug/alcohol use.

**Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS):** The most advanced phase of infection with HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) in which the immune system is weakened. The person becomes more susceptible to a variety of infections (called opportunistic infections) and other conditions such as cancer. A diagnosis of AIDS is made based on clinical criteria and/or the results of blood tests. Specifically, AIDS is diagnosed when a person infected with HIV has a CD4 count less than 200 cells/mm<sup>3</sup> or has an AIDS-defining condition.

**Acute Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) Infection (AHI):** is a highly infectious phase of disease that lasts approximately 2 months after infection, and usually has no identifiable symptoms (although it sometimes causes flu-like symptoms). AHI contributes disproportionately to HIV transmission because rapid HIV replication can create a spike in viral load, increasing infectiousness. During this time, a typical HIV antibody screening test will be negative.

**Addiction:** Habitual/compulsive use of a substance (like prescription or illicit drugs) that continues even though it is causing the addicted person physical, psychological, or social harm.

**AIDS-defining condition/illness:** One of 26 conditions or diseases listed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) whose occurrence, together with evidence of HIV infection, indicates a person has progressed to AIDS (see Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). Among these conditions are certain pneumonias, cancers, brain and nerve diseases, and AIDS wasting syndrome.

**AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP):** Funded by federal grants to the states, it allows people without insurance to afford the most up-to-date drugs to treat HIV infection.

**AIDS wasting syndrome:** The involuntary weight loss of 10 percent of baseline body weight plus either chronic diarrhea (two loose stools per day for more than 30 days) or chronic weakness and documented fever (for 30 days or more, intermittent or constant) when in the absence of a concurrent illness or condition other than HIV infection that would explain the findings. With the advances in medications for HIV/AIDS, AIDS wasting syndrome is not currently common in the United States, but it is still a major concern in developing countries.

**Airborne pathogen:** An infectious agent that is carried by or through the air. Disease transmission occurs through the lungs after breathing in the agent. Examples include measles and tuberculosis.

**Anal sex:** A type of sexual intercourse in which the penis is inserted into the partner's anus. Also see Oral sex and Vaginal sex.

**Anonymous HIV test:** A test for HIV where only a number identifies the person being tested; the person's name is not placed in any records of the test or in any test results, and no one will ever know the name of the person being tested. Most people receive a confidential HIV test.

**Anterograde amnesia:** See Blackout

**Antibodies:** Substances in the blood produced by the body's immune system to identify and protect the body against organisms or toxins that may be harmful to the body. In most cases, a person who is infected with HIV will develop antibodies within twelve weeks of exposure.

**Antigen:** Any molecule that stimulates the production of an immune response (either antibodies, or sensitized cells manufactured as a consequence of the immune response) after it enters the body.

**Antiretroviral therapy (abbreviated as ART):** Treatment with drugs designed to control HIV. Antiretroviral therapy often uses three or more drugs in combination (called HAART, or highly active antiretroviral therapy), each of which has a slightly different action against HIV. This form of treatment has been very successful in preventing opportunistic infections, and enabling people infected with HIV to lead longer, healthier lives in which HIV-infection is a manageable, long-term (chronic) illness. Because ART is successful in reducing the amount of virus in the blood (viral load), it has been successful in reducing the possibility that an infected person will transmit HIV to sexual or drug use partners, or that an HIV-infected pregnant or breastfeeding woman will transmit HIV to her fetus or child.

**Antiretroviral:** Means “against retrovirus”; HIV is a retrovirus. An antiretroviral is a drug that controls the retrovirus.

**Antiviral:** Means “against virus”; drugs that destroy or weaken a virus.

**Asymptomatic:** The condition of having no visible symptoms of an illness (such as HIV infection), even though an individual has that illness. The only way a person who is asymptomatic will know if he or she has HIV is to take an HIV test.

**Bacteria:** A group of microscopic organisms that is responsible for decay, fermentation, nitrogen fixation, and many plant and animal diseases. Some opportunistic infections are caused by bacteria.

**B-cells:** White blood cells that produce antibodies.

**Barrier method:** A device that prevents the exchange of body fluids during sexual intercourse. Condoms are a barrier method used to prevent semen from entering the partner’s body and to prevent the partner’s body fluids from entering the penis through the urethra. Condoms, made of latex or polyurethane, and female condoms (FC2), made of synthetic nitrile, are the most effective barriers against HIV. Dental dams are a barrier method for risk associated with cunnilingus.

**Bisexual:** A person who is attracted physically, sexually, romantically, and emotionally to both males and females.

**Blackout (Anterograde amnesia):** An interval of time for which a person cannot recall key details of events, or even entire events. It is a period of amnesia. Large quantities of alcohol, especially when consumed quickly and on an empty stomach, can produce a blackout. Certain drugs can also have this consequence. (See Rohypnol.)

**Bloodborne pathogen:** Microorganisms that are present in human blood and can cause disease in humans. Viruses such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV are examples. Some pathogens can also be transmitted by other body fluids, such as semen and vaginal fluids.

**Body fluids:** Fluids found in the human body, including blood, semen, preseminal fluid (also known by the slang “pre-cum”), vaginal fluids, menstrual blood, breast milk, urine, saliva, sputum, and tears. Blood, semen, preseminal fluid, vaginal fluids, menstrual blood, and breast milk can transmit HIV from an infected person, although they do not always do so. HIV cannot be transmitted through other body fluids such as urine, saliva, sputum, or tears unless they contain blood.

**Bone marrow:** A soft, highly vascular tissue that occupies the cavities of most bones. It occurs in two forms: (a) a whitish or yellowish bone marrow consisting chiefly of fat cells and predominating in the cavities of the long bones; and (b) a reddish bone marrow that is the primary location for red blood cell formation and for the formation of lymphocytes, which are a crucial part of the body’s immune response.

**Carrier:** A person who harbors a specific infectious agent, in the absence of clinical disease (i.e., is not visibly ill with the infection), and who serves as a potential source of infection for other people.

**Casual contact:** The usual daily interaction between people at work, in school, in social situations, or at home. HIV cannot be transmitted through casual contact.

**CD4 cells:** See T-cells.

**CD4 count:** The number of CD4 or T-cells in a cubic millimeter of blood. In healthy people it is usually between 500 and 1500 cells.

**CDC (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention):** A federal agency that is part of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. The CDC develops and applies disease prevention and control, environmental health, and health promotion and education activities designed to improve the health of the people of the United States.

**Cervix:** The narrow lower outer end of the uterus; the upper end of the vagina.

**Cilia:** Tiny hair-like structures that cover some cells. In the nose and ears, cilia catch some pathogens and “sweep” them back out of the body.

**Communicable disease:** A disease that can be transmitted directly or indirectly from one person to another. It is caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi and other organisms.

**Community-based organization (CBO):** A service organization that provides social services at the local level, primarily to members of a specific community. There are many community-based AIDS Service Organizations (ASOs) in New York City.

**Condom:** A barrier device used to cover the penis during sexual intercourse in order to prevent the transmission of preseminal fluid, semen, blood, or vaginal fluids. Use of latex or polyurethane condoms is a method to protect against infection with HIV or other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). They also help to prevent pregnancy. Lambskin condoms should not be used, as the skin has small pores through which HIV or the germs that cause other STIs can pass. Also see Female Condoms (FC2).

**Condom Availability Program:** See Health Resource Room.

**Confidential HIV test:** An HIV test in which a record of the test and of the results is placed in the person’s medical chart. If the test is positive for HIV, then the medical provider must report that case of HIV to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene for surveillance purposes. The identity of all people who test positive for HIV is maintained under strict privacy regulations.

**Confirmatory test:** A highly specific test that detects the presence of HIV antibodies. It is used to confirm the positive results of a previously administered HIV screening test. The most commonly used confirmatory HIV test is the Western Blot. Now NAAT tests that detect the virus itself (antigen tests) can also be used to confirm the presence of HIV.

**Contagious:** Transmissible by direct or casual contact. Certain viruses (such as the ones that cause the common cold) and most kinds of influenza (the virus that causes the flu) are very contagious. HIV is not very contagious, although it is transmissible under certain specific circumstances.

**Dental Dam:** A thin sheet of latex rubber, originally used in dentistry, which can be placed over the vulva or anus to protect against the transmission of HIV and other STDs. See Oral sex.

**Diabetes:** A condition caused by an imbalance of the hormone insulin which controls body glucose. Type 1 diabetes occurs because the insulin-producing cells of the pancreas are destroyed by the immune system. People with type 1 diabetes produce no insulin and must use insulin injections to control their blood glucose.

**Drugs of abuse:** Substances that are capable of producing addiction. They include both legal drugs (both prescription and over-the-counter medications) and illegal drugs (that cannot be obtained through legal means or for legitimate medical purposes).

**Dual protection:** The NYC Health Department recommends that for maximum protection against unwanted pregnancy, females who have vaginal sex should use a hormonal birth control method in addition to using latex or polyurethane condoms to prevent HIV and other STDs.

**EIA/ELISA test:** The Enzyme Immune Assay/Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay test detects HIV antibodies. This is the most common form of testing for HIV. However, because the EIA/ELISA it is not very specific, a positive result must always be followed by a confirmatory test (most often the Western Blot Test) to ensure that the positive result is not a false positive. Also, because there is usually a three-week to three-month lag time between infection with HIV and the production of HIV antibodies (the “window period”), a person may test negative for HIV antibodies but still be infected with HIV. Therefore, it is strongly urged that a person who obtains a negative EIA/ELISA test result who suspects recent exposure to HIV be tested for acute infection using NAAT, which detects the presence of the virus itself (and not the antibodies produced by the body). If NAAT testing is not possible, the person should avoid risk behaviors and repeat the ELISA test in 3 months.

**Endocytosis:** The process by which the cells of the body engulf and absorb molecules.

**Epidemic:** An outbreak of an infectious disease that spreads widely and rapidly.

**False negative:** A negative result from an HIV antibody test (rapid or EIA/ELISA) that falsely indicates that the person is not HIV-positive when he or she actually is. False negatives are rare, but do occur.

**False positive:** A positive result from the HIV antibody test (rapid or EIA/ELISA) that falsely indicates that the person does have HIV when, in fact, he or she does not. False positives are rare, but do occur, so HIV antibody tests must be confirmed with a Western Blot or other confirmatory test.

**FC2 (Female condom, 2nd generation):** A female condom made of synthetic nitrile, a stronger, less expensive alternative to the original polyurethane female condoms. Female condoms are inserted into the vagina up to 8 hours before vaginal intercourse to help prevent HIV, STIs and pregnancy. They should not be used in combination with a male condom.

**Fetus:** An organism that develops from an embryo (fertilized egg) at the end of about seven weeks of pregnancy and receives nourishment through the placenta (a vascular organ that joins the woman to the fetus and provides oxygen, water, and nutrients from the woman’s blood).

**Flunitrazepam:** See Rohypnol.

**Fourth generation HIV test:** Combination antibody/antigen test approved by the FDA in 2010 that can detect HIV earlier than antibody testing alone.

**Fungus (plural fungi):** A parasitic plant lacking chlorophyll, leaves, true stems, and roots. A fungus reproduces primarily by forming spores. Fungi include molds, mildews, mushrooms, and yeasts.

**Gay:** An acceptable, everyday term used to refer to a person who is physically, emotionally, romantically, and sexually attracted to people of the same sex. “Gay” usually refers to men, but is sometimes used as an umbrella term for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, as in “the gay community.”

**Gender:** An individual’s internal and external sense of him/herself as a male or female. Gender is NOT necessarily the same as “sex” (see below). Man, woman, transgender, boy, and girl are all examples of genders.

**Gender identity:** How one thinks of oneself relative to male or female, which may not correspond to the person's designated sex at birth.

**Gender expression:** A person's presentation of characteristics and behaviors that are socially defined as either masculine, feminine, or neutral, such as dress and mannerisms.

**Gender role:** The collection of social expectations, indicated by such factors as behavior and dress, associated with one's biological sex, sometimes referred to as "masculinity" and "femininity."

**HAART:** Highly active antiretroviral therapy, now commonly referred to as ART (see Antiretroviral therapy).

**Harm reduction:** Actions designed to reduce (rather than eliminate) the harm to oneself or others in health-risk situations, such as substance use or certain sexual behaviors that put someone at risk for possible HIV transmission/acquisition. For example, while it is preferable for injection drug users to enter treatment programs to stop using drugs, needle exchange programs enable injection drug users who have not yet entered treatment programs to avoid sharing needles, thus reducing the harm from their injection drug use. (Sharing needles that contain HIV-infected blood is a highly efficient mode of HIV transmission.)

**Health Resource Room:** High schools in New York State are mandated to make condoms available to students. NYC high school health resource rooms house the Condom Availability Programs, where trained staff makes condoms and condom demonstrations available to students. Students can also receive information about a variety of health issues and request referrals to health care.

**Hepatitis:** Viral infections that affect the liver. See Appendix G: Information on hepatitis A, B, and C.

**Heterosexual:** A term used to refer to a person who is attracted physically, sexually, romantically, and emotionally to people of the opposite sex and/or gender, sometimes referred to as "straight."

**HIV:** Human Immunodeficiency Virus. HIV is a retrovirus that attacks the body's immune system, making infected people potentially vulnerable to other infections and diseases. If untreated with antiretroviral medications, HIV can progress to AIDS (see above). People with either HIV or AIDS can lead healthy lives if they receive ART and appropriate routine medical care.

**HIV antibody test:** The most common test used to diagnose HIV infection. It does not test for the presence of HIV, but for the presence of antibodies against the virus. The test can be conducted with a blood sample or oral fluid (cheek or gum swab). Urine tests are also available but are not as effective at detecting antibodies. Typical antibody test results are available in about a week; rapid HIV antibody test results are available within half an hour. In July 2012, the FDA approved the first over-the-counter home HIV test kit. See also EIA/ELISA.

**HIV antigen test:** (also known as nucleic acid amplification testing (NAAT) or (DNA or RNA tests) are tests that detect the presence of the HIV virus itself. HIV antigen tests can detect the presence of acute HIV infection within days (instead of weeks of infection for antibody testing) See window period, viral load.

**HIV-infected or HIV-positive:** A term used to refer to a person who has contracted HIV and has it present in his/her blood.

**HIV life cycle:** A series of cellular changes that result in new HIV reproduction.

**Homeopathic:** A complementary disease treatment system. Products used in homeopathy treat disease with minute doses of drugs that would produce symptoms in a healthy person similar to those of a disease.

**Homophobia:** Fear and/or hatred of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender people or those who are perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

**Homosexual:** A person who is physically, sexually, romantically, and emotionally attracted to people of the same sex and/or gender. This term is considered clinical; “gay” and “lesbian” are more common and appropriate everyday terms.

**Hormones:** Chemical substances produced in the body and carried by the bloodstream to another part of the body to effect physiological activity, such as growth or metabolism.

**Host:** Any person or other organism in which an infectious agent can live and multiply, whether or not that person shows signs or symptoms of disease associated with that infectious agent.

**Immune deficiency:** A breakdown of the body’s immune system or an inability of certain parts of the immune system to function. This breakdown makes a person more susceptible to diseases that a healthy immune system would not allow to develop.

**Immune system:** A body system that helps fight off invading organisms (such as infectious agents) and disease.

**Immunity:** Resistance to a disease because the body has developed defenses against it. Immunity can occur naturally or be acquired through vaccines, exposure to disease, or breast milk. There is no immunity against HIV.

**Immunization:** A method of producing resistance (also called immunity) to an infectious disease, usually by vaccination or inoculation, which puts a small amount of an infectious agent into a person’s body – not enough for the person to get very sick, but enough to cause the development of antibodies that will fight future exposures to that infectious agent.

**Incubation period:** The time period between becoming infected by an infectious agent and appearance of the first visible signs or symptoms of the disease in question.

**Infected partner:** Individual in a sexual relationship who has an illness such as HIV or other STIs, whether or not he or she knows it or is showing visible signs or symptoms of infection. A person who is infected with HIV or another STI who practices risky behaviors may transmit the infection to others.

**Infectious agent:** An organism (virus, bacterium, fungus, etc.) that is capable of producing infection or disease.

**Injection drug user:** An individual who injects drugs intravenously (“into veins”), intramuscularly (“into muscles”), or via skin-popping, which is subcutaneous or placement (“under the skin”).

**Intravenous drugs:** Drugs that are administered through a needle and/or a syringe and injected directly into a vein and thus into the bloodstream.

**Kaposi’s Sarcoma (KS):** A cancer or tumor of the blood and/or lymphatic vessel walls. It usually appears as blue-violet to brownish skin blotches or bumps. It is one of the more common cancers that occur in immunodeficient individuals. KS is considered to be an AIDS defining illness by the CDC, though not all people with AIDS develop KS.

**Langerhans cell:** A type of white blood cell present in the skin and mucous membranes that helps regulate the body’s immune response and fight infections.

**Lesbian:** An acceptable, everyday term used to refer to a woman who is physically, sexually, romantically, and emotionally attracted to other women.

**Lubricants:** Viscous substances used to reduce friction during sexual intercourse, thereby making intercourse more comfortable and reducing the likelihood of breaks or tears in condoms and/or skin (which would increase the likelihood of HIV or other STI transmission). Only water-based lubricants, such as K-Y jelly, should be used with latex condoms. Oil-based lubricants, such as mineral oil, baby oil, vegetable oil, shortening, cold cream, or petroleum jelly, while safe for use with a polyurethane condom, can damage a latex condom, and thus increase the chances of transmission of HIV and other STIs. Lubricants made of silicone can be used with any type of condom.

**Lymph:** An almost colorless fluid that contains mostly white blood cells and circulates through the lymphatic system. Lymph removes bacteria and some proteins from the tissues, transports fat from the small intestine, and supplies mature lymphocytes to the blood.

**Lymph nodes:** Gland-like structures in the lymphatic system that act as filters and help to prevent the spread of infection.

**Lymphatic system:** A system concerned with trapping organisms that have escaped from cells and tissues and returning them to the blood system, where they can be destroyed by white blood cells. It is a crucial part of the body's immune system, and consists primarily of the thymus, spleen, tonsils, lymph, lymph nodes, lymphatic vessels, lymphocytes, and bone marrow.

**Lymphocyte:** A type of white blood cell that is produced in the bone marrow and that fights disease. Lymphocytes include T-cells and B-cells. HIV attacks T-cells and reduces their number, thus limiting the body's ability to fight disease.

**Macrophage:** A large immune cell that acts as a microbe-devouring phagocyte ("cell swallower").

**Method of entry:** Manner in which organisms enter the host's body.

**Mode of transmission:** Manner in which an infectious agent is passed from an infectious source to a susceptible host. In HIV, both the infectious source and the susceptible host are people.

**Monogamous:** Having sexual intercourse with the same individual, and no others, over a period of time. Monogamy itself is not sufficient protection from HIV and other STDs since a partner may have been infected by a past partner and not know it. Although monogamous relationships between partners who have both been tested and know and share their status and agree upon consistent and appropriate use of protection can increase the partners' safety, in general, adolescents who have sexual intercourse should use condoms consistently even when in monogamous relationships to help prevent unintended pregnancy as well as HIV and other STDs.

**Mucous membrane:** The lining of the canals and cavities of the body, such as the gastrointestinal tract, the respiratory tract, and the genitourinary tract.

**NAAT (Nucleic Acid Amplification Test):** A test that detects the presence of HIV in the blood, rather than detecting HIV antibodies. One specific technique is called PCR or Polymerase Chain Reaction. (See Facts about HIV Infection, Prevention and Treatment in the Introductory Section of this curriculum.)

**Needles, syringes, and works:** Equipment used to prepare and inject drugs directly into the vein, a muscle, or under the skin and thus into the bloodstream. The sharing of used needles, syringes and works with another person is an efficient method of transmitting HIV and other bloodborne pathogens.

**Night sweats:** Excessive sweating during sleep. A person may develop night sweats upon first becoming HIV-positive or if HIV has progressed to AIDS. Night sweats are not, in and of themselves, indicators of HIV infection; they often accompany a wide variety of infections and conditions and indicate the body is trying to fight illness, at least in part, through fever (raising body temperature).

**Noninfectious or nontransmissible disease:** A disease that cannot be passed from person to person (for example, cancer).

**nPEP (non-occupational post-exposure prophylaxis):** HIV antiretroviral medications taken less than 72 hours after exposure to HIV to reduce the chance of becoming infected. For example, a person who has engaged in a high-risk behavior with an infected person should seek a doctor's advice on whether to take nPEP.

**Opportunistic infection (OI):** An infection in a person with a weakened immune system caused by a microorganism that rarely causes disease in persons with a healthy immune system. (For list of all CDC-defined OIs, go to <http://m.aids.gov/feature/hiv-aids-basics/staying-healthy-with-hiv-aids/potential-related-health-problems/opportunistic-infections/>)

**Oral sex:** A type of sex where the mouth comes into contact with, or stimulates the vagina, the penis or the anus. Also see Vaginal sex and Anal sex.

**Organism:** Any living thing, such as a virus, a bacterium, an animal (including a human), a plant, etc.

**Pandemic:** A widespread outbreak of an infectious disease affecting a large part of the population in several countries or continents.

**Pathogen:** Any disease-producing microorganism.

**Pneumocystis pneumonia:** Also called pneumocystis jiroveci pneumonia and formerly called pneumocystis carinii pneumonia (or PCP). A common, life-threatening opportunistic infection diagnosed in people with HIV, caused by a fungus. It is included in the CDC's list of AIDS-defining illnesses.

**PCR test (Polymerase Chain Reaction test):** See NAAT.

**PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis or occupational post-exposure prophylaxis):** HIV antiretroviral medications taken less than 72 hours after possible exposure to HIV to reduce the chance of infection (becoming HIV positive). For example, a hospital worker who is stuck by a needle should seek a doctor's advice on whether to take PEP.

**Perinatal:** Occurring in the period during pregnancy, during birth, or just after birth. Perinatal transmission of HIV is the transmission of HIV from woman to child during pregnancy, birth, or breastfeeding. It has been largely eliminated via mandatory testing of pregnant women and antiretroviral medications for those who are infected.

**Phagocyte:** A cell (such as a white blood cell) that engulfs and consumes foreign material (such as microorganisms) in the blood system.

**PLWHA:** Person (or People) living with HIV and/or AIDS.

**Polyurethane condom:** A condom made of a plastic product called polyurethane.

**Pregnancy:** The condition of having a developing embryo or fetus in the body.

**PrEP (Pre-exposure prophylaxis):** Medication that is taken to prevent HIV transmission. In July 2012, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the first drug shown to reduce HIV transmission in people at high risk of becoming infected. It is not intended to be used in isolation, but rather in combination with safer sex practices such as consistent and correct condom use. The drug, TRUVADA®, was previously used to treat people already infected with HIV.

**Preseminal fluid:** The fluid secreted by the penis prior to secretion of semen. Preseminal fluid can transmit HIV. Also known by the slang "pre-cum."

**Prophylaxis:** A treatment intended to prevent the occurrence of disease.

**Protozoa:** A group of one-celled animals, a few of which cause human disease.

**Rapid HIV test:** A test to detect HIV antibodies that can be collected and processed in a short time (about 20 minutes). Rapid HIV Tests are used in all New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene STI clinics, and do not require the person being tested to return to pick up test results at another time. People learn their test results in as little as 20 minutes. HIV positive results must be confirmed by a Western Blot or IFA test. In July 2012, the FDA approved the first over-the-counter home HIV test kit. See also EIA/ELISA.

**Receptor:** Special molecule located on the surface of cells that serves as a binding site for antibodies or antigens.

**Replication (of viruses):** Unlike a cell that has all the equipment it needs to replicate itself, a virus has to force the cell it infects to replicate the virus. As a result of this replication, many new viruses are made.

**Resistance:** Reduction in a pathogen's sensitivity and/or response to a particular drug.

**Retrovirus:** Viruses that contain RNA and produce a DNA version of their RNA in order to make copies of themselves. HIV is a retrovirus. (See also "Antiretroviral therapy.")

**Risk behavior:** Activity that makes a person more susceptible or more likely to be exposed to harm. Because different activities have different levels of risk, activities are often called either high-risk or low-risk.

**Risk factor:** Characteristic that makes a person more susceptible or more likely to be exposed to harm.

**Rohypnol (flunitrazepam):** Commonly called the date rape drug because it can cause anterograde amnesia or "blackouts"

**Ryan White Care Act:** A federally funded program that provides grants to state and local governments, hospitals, and community-based organizations to provide specialized HIV services (primary healthcare and support services) for those who do not have insurance or do not have other resources. It was named for a child who had been infected with HIV and was a spokesman for HIV research and compassion and understanding.

**Semen:** The fluid containing sperm that is released (or "ejaculated") from the penis during sexual activity. Semen can transmit HIV.

**Seroconversion:** The point at which someone who has been exposed to HIV develops HIV antibodies.

**Sex: (n)** A set of biological, chromosomal, hormonal, and anatomical factors (identified by primary and secondary sex characteristics, such as genitalia and/or distribution of body fat and body hair). Individuals can be male, female or intersex, if there is a discrepancy between the external and internal genitals.

**Sexual abstinence:** Not having sexual intercourse with any person.

**Sexual intercourse:** Physical contact between individuals that involves sexual penetration of a person's body openings. Examples include penile/vaginal intercourse, oral/penile intercourse, oral/vaginal intercourse, and penile/anal intercourse.

**Sexual orientation:** Describes the gender(s) of the person(s) to whom someone is physically, sexually, romantically, and emotionally attracted. This attraction can fall along a continuum from exclusive attraction to a person of the other sex to exclusive attraction to someone of the same sex and is not necessarily the same throughout one's lifetime. Heterosexual, homosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and straight are all examples of sexual orientation.

**Sexuality:** The interplay of gender, sexual attraction, sexual behavior, and social norms, and the identities associated with them.

**Sexually transmitted disease or infection (STD or STI):** Any disease or infection that is transmitted primarily through sexual contact.

**Susceptible host:** A person not possessing sufficient resistance against a particular organism to prevent from contracting an infection when exposed to the organism.

**Syndrome:** A group of related signs and symptoms that occur together and have the same underlying cause. For example, AIDS is not one specific disease, but rather a syndrome (whose underlying cause is infection with HIV).

**T-cells:** A class of immune system cells that play a major role in carrying out the activities of the immune system. Some T-cells are called Helper T-cells (or CD4 cells).

**Thymus:** A gland located between the neck and the chest where T-lymphocytes (T-cells) multiply and mature. It is part of the lymphatic system.

**Transgender:** A person whose gender identity, gender expression, or gender attribution (see “Gender”) is different from societal expectations for the person’s biological, chromosomal, and/or physical sex.

**Transmissible or infectious disease:** A disease that can be passed directly or indirectly from one person to another. Airborne diseases are diseases that are easily transmissible. HIV and other bloodborne pathogens are less easily transmissible.

**Transmission:** The spreading or passing of infectious agents from an infectious source to a susceptible host.

**Tuberculosis (TB):** A highly infectious, airborne disease that is caused by the tubercle bacillus (a bacterium) that affects the lungs, but may spread to other areas through the bloodstream (e.g., kidneys, vertebrae). The CDC identifies TB as one of the AIDS-defining opportunistic infections.

**Undetectable viral load:** When there is so little virus in an HIV-infected person’s blood that it cannot be measured by viral load tests. An undetectable viral load is associated with better long-term health. The person is still HIV positive, and although the risk of infection is lower, the person is still capable of transmitting the virus to a sexual or needle sharing partner.

**Ulcerated:** From “ulcer,” a wound or open sore in the skin or other bodily surface area. An ulcerated area has a break or opening that is due to infection or other cause and may further admit infection.

**Universal precautions:** Measures that prevent the transmission of all infectious diseases, including HIV. Protection against infection can be achieved through general infection control methods (e.g., hand washing, sterilization), through use of barriers (e.g., latex gloves), through proper disposal of “sharps” (e.g., syringes), and other methods that prevent the contact of potentially infectious agents from one person with the skin or mucous membranes of another person.

**Urethra:** Duct (or canal) through which urine is discharged in most mammals and that serves as the male genital duct for semen as well.

**Uterus (womb):** Hollow, muscular, pear-shaped organ in females in which the fetus develops.

**Vaccine:** A product that produces immunity therefore protecting the body from the disease. A vaccine can be comprised of the entire infectious agent which has been killed (“inactivated”) or weakened (“attenuated”). It stimulates the immune system to produce antibodies, and thus immunity, against a specific disease.

**Vaginal fluids:** The natural wetness within the vaginal tract.

**Vaginal sex:** A type of sex in which the penis is inserted into the partner’s vagina. See Anal sex, Oral sex.

**Vertical transmission:** In pregnancy, blood transfer occurs between the woman and fetus through maternal/fetal circulation.

**Viral load:** A measure of HIV in the blood. Nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT) tests for viral load, not for the presence of HIV antibodies.

**Virus:** A microscopic organism that can cause infection. A virus has no metabolism and cannot reproduce the way other cells and bacteria can. A virus relies on and destroys its host cell in order to replicate. (See Replication.)

**White blood cells:** Blood cells that are part of the body's immune system and fight off disease. T-cells are one of many types of white blood cells.

**Window period:** The time from exposure to HIV until the production of detectable HIV antibodies. In most cases, an infected person will develop detectable quantities of antibodies within twelve weeks after exposure. A person who is newly infected with HIV may test negative for HIV antibodies with the typical ELISA/Western Blot test during the window period, and still be capable of transmitting the virus to others. The presence of HIV can usually be detected with an NAAT or PCR test within days after infection (see HIV antigen test).

**Western Blot:** The most common test used to confirm the presence of HIV antibodies in blood already deemed HIV-infected by the EIA/ELISA test. The Western Blot test can more effectively distinguish HIV antibodies from other antibodies, and can rule out most false positive ELISA tests.

\* Most definitions were excerpted from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's website, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website, Some definitions that were originally excerpted from the revised HIV/AIDS Instructional Guide, K-12, issued by the New York State Education Department, June 1992 have not changed.