AHF AIDS HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION



Breaking Myths, Building Trust

The Role of Media in Ending HIV Stigma

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What is your role in reducing HIV stigma?

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Outline

Opening: why media language matters

Ghana media landscape and stigma evidence

Case review: past reportage from Ghana

HIV myth-busting and facts journalists must know

Language clinic and headline rewrite practice

Verification checklist and newsroom commitments

Wrap-up

Why this training matters

Media can either deepen stigma or open the door to testing, care & treatment and builds trust

THE PROBLEM

HIV coverage in Ghana is sometimes largely statistics-heavy and event-driven.

Fear-based framing can make people less willing to test or disclose.

Rumours, cure claims and moral framing travel fast on radio, social media and WhatsApp.

THE MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

Use accurate, people-centered language.

Ask better follow-up questions about the numbers and when sources make unverified claims.

Tell solution-focused stories that protect dignity, privacy and rights.

Note that...

Accurate reporting saves lives and builds trust

Learning objectives

By the end of the session, participants should be able to:

- Identify harmful HIV myths and stigma-reinforcing language in media stories
- Distinguish between HIV facts, opinions, rumours and unverified claims
- Rewrite problematic headlines and scripts using accurate, people-centered language
- Apply a simple verification checklist before publishing HIV-related stories
- Develop story angles that build trust, protect confidentiality and encourage service uptake.



Ghana media landscape: where stigma travels

The same channels can potentially spread myths but can also correct them

Radio



Wide listenership, strong reach

TV



Visual authority and agenda-setting

Online news



Fast-moving policy and public health reporting

Social media



Youth engagement and rapid resharing

WhatsApp



Peer-to-peer sharing, clips and infocards

Implication: prepare different formats for different platforms but keep the same facts and people-centered language.