

## PEER SUPPORT

**You are the one person who knows your own HIV-related needs, but other people with HIV can relate to you and your feelings in a way that a person who is not HIV positive may not.**

Many service organizations that were established by and for HIV-infected people continue to this day. Being Alive: People with HIV/AIDS Action Coalition, in particular, has a long tradition of providing peer support to people living with HIV.

Joining a peer support program is one way that you may find support. You can also help others who are living with HIV through your participation.

Thousands of people live with HIV in Los Angeles County. They are as diverse as the county itself. By asking for help and reviewing services provided by AIDS-service organizations, you can find the right peer support for you.

### **What Kinds of Services Are Available?**

Peer support programs in Los Angeles County vary, but they can all help you manage living with HIV more successfully by learning from others and sharing experiences.

*Peer support programs may include:*

- > One-on-one peer counseling
- > Face to face assessment of needs in the HIV care system
- > Action plan to set up and accomplish goals
- > Weekly interactive educational/informational group sessions
- > Workshops and forums on relevant topics
- > Activities and events with other peers

*Specific areas addressed by peer support programs include:*

- > Self esteem
- > Body image
- > Adherence to your HIV medicines
- > Programs for youth
- > Programs for women
- > Programs for men
- > Programs for transgender persons
- > Programs for African-Americans, Latinos, Asian-Pacific Islanders, or another ethnic group
- > Long-term survivors and newly diagnosed peer support groups

### **How Can You Access Peer Support Services?**

Your case manager or another staff member at an AIDS-service organization can help you find a peer support program that fits your needs.

Visit [www.hivla.org](http://www.hivla.org) for the most up-to-date Support Groups listing.

**If support group services are not delivered appropriately, please contact OAPP's warmline @ (800) 260-8787.**