

## **Respect and non-judgement: Discrimination-free treatment of people living with HIV in the workplace**

**Today people with HIV can live and work like everyone else. With this declaration we wish to make clear that we welcome HIV-positive employees. We will intervene in cases of discrimination and promote open and respectful cooperation.**

With timely diagnosis and treatment, living with HIV no longer entails any limitations in people's work, partnerships or their free time. People with HIV can also do any job. They are just as capable as any other person. Transmitting HIV in everyday working life is impossible, and in general HIV can no longer be passed on if a person is under treatment. HIV-positive employees are like all other colleagues.

### **Countering discrimination**

HIV-positive people still constantly experience discrimination, from disparaging comments to losing their jobs.

Employers sometimes fear that HIV-positive workers are not up to the challenges of the job. This concern simply has no basis in fact. HIV affects neither talent nor ability.

Others fear unease among staff or prejudice from customers if an infection is revealed. The solution to this is knowledge and direct conversations, which can clear up misunderstandings.

HIV tests during recruitment or company medical examinations are discriminatory. HIV status is entirely irrelevant to professional duties\*. "Voluntary" tests are not acceptable either as they create stigma as soon as someone decides against taking such a test.

Work is a central, purpose-giving part of life. Professional discrimination violates human dignity, leads to psychological pressure and creates fear. Discrimination weakens both employees and companies.

The destructive consequences of discrimination also reach far beyond the working environment: fear of rejection at work can lead people to avoid HIV tests and therefore not get treatment.



### **Setting the right example**

Germany's General Act on Equal Treatment is only the starting point of our support for the freedom from discrimination.

- We support active, respectful cooperation in the workplace. We stand up for people with HIV and other chronic illnesses. We absolutely reject discrimination.
- In our company we make clear that employees with HIV are welcome and can be open about the fact if they choose to be.
- In cases of discrimination, our employees may turn to complaint centers or trained advisers.
  - We will ensure that our personnel managers and employee representative organizations acquire up-to-date knowledge about living with HIV.
    - We will not demand an HIV test either on recruitment or during company medical examinations, and will not ask whether an employee has HIV.
    - We will publicly declare that we have addressed the issue of HIV and will publish this declaration and other material on dealing with HIV, including within our company.

Our company signs this declaration in full acknowledgement of our responsibility to the dignity of our employees. Marginalization makes people sick. Respect contributes to quality of life and a productive working environment.

We are committed to active diversity and inclusion.