STOP EVERYTHING & BREATHE

YOU GOT THIS!
Before we get started, let’s stop for a second. Take a deep breath. Finding out you have HIV is a big deal, but guess what? There are a lot of people here to support you and a lot of people who are going through the same thing; everything is going to be alright. This is your journey, and you are in the driver’s seat.

You are a strong person, you have what it takes to keep yourself healthy, and you will get back to your normal life! We promise! This booklet will help connect you to support and services that will help you make choices that are right for your health.

Always remember: You are more than your diagnosis! You have HIV, but HIV doesn’t have you.
You did the right thing by getting tested! That is the first step to living a long, healthy life.

For most people, HIV is just one part of life. It takes some work to control, but if you stay on top of it, it won’t rule your life.

Did you know?

People living with HIV who get medical care and take medications can live long, healthy lives just like people who don’t have HIV.

Lamar was diagnosed with AIDS at age 19. Since then, he earned a high school diploma, became a Special Advisor on HIV to City Council President Ceasar Mitchell, worked to register other young people to vote and started his own organization to help other young people living with HIV.

“Life didn’t stop when I was diagnosed, and it doesn’t have to stop for you either.”

-Lamar, age 24

If you know of anyone else who wants to get tested, you can send them to the Georgia AIDS information line at (404) 870-7700 to find a testing site near them, or they can visit www.gettested.cdc.gov
Know the terms

HIV is short for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. It’s a virus that targets your immune system, making it harder for your body to fight off infections.

Some people call HIV “AIDS” but they aren’t the same thing. AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is when a person has HIV and their body is having trouble fighting off serious infections like pneumonia, so they get sick from those infections. Some people find out they have HIV after they’re already feeling sick, but others might have no symptoms at all.

How HIV is spread, and how it’s not

HIV is contagious, but not like a cold or the flu. People usually get it by having sex (anal, vaginal, and rarely oral sex) with someone who has HIV, but it can also be spread by sharing needles (for drugs, medicines or tattoos), and from a mother with HIV to her baby during birth or breastfeeding if the mother is not taking medication.

HIV can’t be spread through kissing, sharing food, coughing or breathing on someone, or living in the same house as someone.
Staying healthy with HIV

Staying healthy with HIV is a lot like staying healthy without HIV. Good nutrition and exercise, getting enough sleep and reducing stress are important. In fact, these things are even more important for people living with HIV!

Aside from eating well, exercising, sleeping well and stressing less, HIV+ people must do the following to stay healthy:

- **As soon as possible, find a doctor who is an HIV specialist**
- **Go to all of your appointments, but if you can’t make an appointment, it’s okay rescheduling it!**
- **Take the medication your doctor prescribes exactly as they tell you to take it.**
- **Keep learning about HIV.**
- **Don’t be afraid to ask questions!**

When you go to the doctor for the first time, they will ask to test your blood to find out how healthy your immune system is and how much HIV has multiplied in your body. They will measure this by looking for the “CD4 Count” and “Viral Load” in your blood.

**CD4 Count**: CD4 cells (sometimes called “T Cells”) are cells that HIV attacks. These are the same cells that help your body fight off infections. The number of CD4 cells you have tells doctors how healthy your immune system is. The healthy range is between 500-1200. If a person has fewer than 200 CD4 cells it means they are likely to get infections very easily.

**Viral Load**: The “viral load” is measured in the number of copies of the virus you have in your blood. A person who does not have HIV will have a viral load of zero (0). The longer you have HIV and don’t take medication, the more copies of virus you have in your blood.

**Health Goals**: People living with HIV should aim for:
- High CD4: The higher your CD4 count, the healthier your immune system is!
- Low Viral Load: A lower viral load means a healthier immune system going forward.
  - **Long-term goal**: An “Undetectable” viral load means that there are so few copies of the virus in your blood that it can’t be detected in a lab test.
- A good night’s sleep
- Good nutrition
- Exercise
- Low stress
Where does Medication fit in?

There is no cure for HIV, but there are lots of different kinds of medicines that help control HIV in a person’s body and keep them healthy. Another blood test you will get at the doctor will determine what kind of HIV you have and what kinds of medicines will help control that specific kind of virus in your body. These blood tests are called HIV genotype tests.

Most people start medication about a month after their first visit. It’s also possible to start medication right away—talk to your doctor. AIDS Drug Assistance Programs (ADAP) can pay for medication if someone doesn’t have insurance.

Many kinds of HIV medicines are only one pill a day, while some others require more than that.

Every virus is different and every person is different, but almost anyone can find the right medication that works best for them. You and your doctor will discuss how soon you should start taking medications based on several varying factors.
There is a lot of research going on in the field of HIV medication. Doctors, physician assistants, nurses and other members of your clinical care team are required to learn about new medications and treatments for HIV. When new drugs become available, your doctor may talk to you about switching to a more effective regimen, and you should always feel comfortable talking to your doctor about different medication options.

“I use the iCal application on my smart phone to remind myself to take my medication at 2pm every day.”

-Daniel, age 30
Living well with HIV is totally possible, but it’s going to mean making some changes in your life. One of the biggest changes is that you’ll have to start seeing a doctor more often and taking medication every day. This is no different than if were diagnosed with asthma or diabetes. Change is hard, but lots of people do it and you can, too!

Just like with all conditions, sometimes it can be confusing to find the right doctor and figure out a way to remember to take your medication on time. It helps if you have someone to support you through this.

**IMPORTANT QUESTION:**

Do you have someone you can tell about being diagnosed with HIV? Most patients find it comforting to have at least one person they can confide in.
Tips for Disclosing your HIV Status

It’s not easy to tell someone you are living with HIV. People don’t always understand what it means to be HIV+, and there are a lot of myths and misinformation out there. You don’t have to tell anyone, but it helps to have a supportive person on your side. Here are some tips to help you along.

- Educate yourself and be prepared for questions! Visit www.HIV.gov and click on “HIV/AIDS” basics to learn as much as you can about how HIV works and how it is transmitted and treated. You might want to print some information out to give to the people you plan to talk to!
- Go to a support group! Get yourself to a support group as soon as possible and meet other people living with HIV. Practice disclosing your status with them.
- Choose wisely! Think carefully about who needs to know that you have HIV and why you want them to know. Whoever you choose to tell, they should be someone who can keep your personal information private and support you in your journey to stay healthy.
- Practice, practice, practice! You can practice telling people about your HIV status alone in front of a mirror in your own home or even pretend you’re on the phone. You can write down what you want to say. It always helps to be prepared.
- Plan your disclosure. Choose a place that makes you feel comfortable and safe, and that the other person feels comfortable and safe in, too. Come prepared with educational materials and a positive attitude. No matter what happens, make sure you are in control. You can’t control how the other person will react!
- Disclosure takes time. Sometimes the other person will need time to process what you have told them. Some people will react one way “in the moment” then eventually have a change of heart. Know that people process their own feelings in lots of different ways. It might take time for them to accept what you say, and that is out of your control.
- Offer support. Many support groups allow members to bring partners, family members and friends with you as you process your diagnosis. Take advantage of this opportunity to support your loved ones on their own journey of learning about HIV. Be sure to ask in advance if the group allows HIV negative people to attend.

Note: In Georgia, you must disclose your HIV status with a sex or injection drug-using partner before you have sex or share a needle. This is the law.

Speaking of disclosure... if you want to notify your previous sexual or drug-using partners that they also might be at risk for HIV, the Fulton County Department of Health & Wellness offers a free, confidential partner notification service. Call (404) 613-1401 and ask for “HIV partner services.” You can also send anonymous e-cards to partners online with www.inspot.org if you have their email addresses.
How do I Find a Doctor?

*If you don’t have health insurance*

A lot of people don’t have health insurance and healthcare can be very expensive. The good news is, you can get high quality HIV care even if you don’t have insurance or any other way to pay. There are a lot of great doctors in Atlanta who are paid through the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program. That means HIV medical bills are paid for by the federal government, and no one can be denied care. There are a few of these programs to choose from in Atlanta, but only one that specializes in working with children, teens and young adults.
Grady’s Family & Youth Clinic

Grady has a special clinic just for kids, teens and young adults age 24 and under living with HIV. It is a “one stop shop” for all of your needs: medical care, pharmacy, dental care, psychology/psychiatry, therapy, case management, housing help, support groups and even optometry.

How to get there:

On the Bus
The nearest bus (MARTA) stop for this clinic is at North at Hunt Street. Bus 2 and 99 serve this stop.

Parking
Enter the parking lot from North Avenue between Argonne & Hunt. Parking is free.

Getting into the Building
Enter on the side of the building nearest the Burger King. There is no check in when you walk in. Take the long hallway on the right all the way to the end, go through the door and take the elevators on your left down to the “P” floor. The enrollment area, known as the “Education Department” is to the left as you come out of the elevators.

What will my first appointment be like?

At your first visit to Grady you will:

• Bring your paperwork and ID as described below.
• Get a TB (tuberculosis) test.
• Meet with a health educator who will answer your questions and give you helpful information.
• Receive an appointment date and time with a healthcare provider that will usually happen within the next 3 business days.
• Get your blood work done to find out about what kind of medication you will need.

Note: Grady also has an adult clinic for people older than 25. The enrollment process is very similar!

To find Grady and other HIV clinics that are available for adults without health insurance, visit: www.RyanWhiteATL.org. All of Grady’s HIV clinics also take most kinds of insurance!
Here is all the paperwork you’re going to need to get started with HIV treatment at a Ryan White clinic. (Note: Ryan White clinics do not require a photo ID, but it is still helpful to bring if you have one.)

1. A photo ID. This could be:
   - A Georgia driver’s license or a license from another state
   - A state-issued photo ID
   - A passport
   - A recent college or school ID

2. Proof that you are living with HIV.
   How do I get this?
   - Just bring in a copy of your HIV positive test results. If you have lost that document, you can contact the place you got tested or just get tested again for free. Call (404) 870-7700 if you need to find a new testing site.
   - You can also bring in any records that show you received HIV-related healthcare at another clinic or have that clinic send your records to your new doctor.

3. Proof that you live in Georgia (this is called “proof of residency”) and it can be any of the following:
   - Any apartment/housing lease document with your name on it.
   - Electricity, water, gas or other utility bills with your Georgia address and your name on it.
   - If none of these documents has your name on it, you can have the person whose name is on the lease write a letter saying that you live there with them. This must be notarized. (You can find a notary public at www.notaryrotary.com)
   - Any piece of mail with your name and address on it.

4. Statement of income or no income. This could be:
   - One month’s worth of pay stubs OR
   - A Wage Statement
   How do I get this?
   - You will need to go to the Department of Labor and give them your name and social security number, and they will give you a small slip of paper showing your income for the year. This service is free. The Department of Labor is located at 148 Andrew Young International Blvd NE, Atlanta, GA 30303. It’s open Monday to Friday 8:00am to 4:00pm.
If you already have health insurance or you’re on your parents’ health insurance you can still go to Grady’s Family and Youth Clinic, but will want to contact your insurance company to find an infectious disease doctor specializing in HIV care. Usually these are listed on the insurance company’s website or you can call the 800 number on the back of your insurance card.

A note about confidentiality if you are on your parents’ insurance: Insurance companies send “Explanation of Benefits” to insurance policyholders, which may be a privacy problem for you. Most young people living with HIV find it helpful to tell at least one parent or guardian about their HIV diagnosis for support, but this is not the case for everyone.

Need health insurance? You might qualify for Affordable Care Act (ACA) insurance plans! Call The Health Initiative today at 404-688-2524 to schedule a meeting with a navigator.
Mental Health or Substance Abuse Treatment: Where can I find a therapist or counselor to talk to?

An HIV diagnosis can be a lot to process, and sometimes people living with HIV also have depression, anxiety or other disorders that need to be treated with therapy and/or medication. This could happen after your HIV diagnosis, or you might have had them before. Either way, there are services out there to help you!

Don’t ignore your emotions! Your emotional health and physical health go hand in hand, and you should always talk to your doctor if you are feeling depressed or anxious!

If you become a patient at the Family & Youth Clinic at Grady, you will be able to talk to:

• A counselor (a doctor who can talk to you about your problems),
• A social worker (someone who can help connect you with resources that can help your specific situation) and
• A psychiatrist (a doctor who can diagnose mental health issues and prescribe you with mental health medications).

Your care team at Grady will help link you with mental health and substance abuse treatment services that meet your needs.

If you are not a patient at Grady’s Family & Youth Clinic, you can connect with these resources for mental health counseling:

Positive Impact: call 404-589-9040 to complete a ten-minute phone screening. Typically you will be able to schedule an intake for the same day or the next day.
• Walk-in screenings are also available from 10-4 at the Decatur Center: 523 Church Street, Decatur, GA, 30030
About:

All-1-Family, Inc.
Counseling Services offered to all and specializing in LGBTQ persons of color. Treatment offered on a sliding scale and most Medicaid CMO insurances. Three mental health groups on the 1st and 3rd Saturday (ages 14-18)
Website: www.all1family.org
Where: 1530 DeKalb Ave. NE
    Suite A
    Atlanta, GA 30307
When: 10AM-10PM Monday-Friday
      10AM-6PM Saturday
      12PM-4PM Sunday
Contact: Abeke Baker, LMFT / 404-454-9805 / abaker@all1familyinc.org

Odyssey Family Counseling Center
Counseling center offering mental health services for ages 3 and up as well as treatment for substance abuse.
Website: www.odyssey.com
Where: 1919 John Wesley Avenue
    College Park, GA 30337
When: 9AM-8PM Monday-Thursday
      9AM-4PM Friday
Contact: Tene’ Rose / 404-762-9190 / trose@odysseycounseling.org
Housing: Where can I find a place to live?

There are a lot of important questions to ask yourself about where you live, especially if you’re living with HIV. Stable housing is an important part of your health. You will need a safe place to stay to get enough rest, nutrition and exercise, and to take your medication and get to the doctor regularly.

Think about where you’re staying.
• Is it safe?
• How long can you stay there? Is it short term or long term?
• Do the people you’re staying with know you are living with HIV?
• Are they willing or able to support you on your journey to stay healthy?
• Can I get to the doctor easily from there?

If your situation is unsafe, unstable or you no longer have a place to stay, there are options for you.

If you are living with HIV and need housing, the first person you should talk to is your social worker at the Grady Family & Youth Clinic. Your social worker will talk to you about your specific situation and help you decide the right housing option.

If you are not a patient at the Grady Family & Youth Clinic, you should visit the Living Room, where you will meet a case manager who will help you complete some paper work. Here is how to contact them:

Address: Living Room
50 Hurt Plaza SE
The Hurt Building #1200
Atlanta, GA 30303

Open Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM
Phone number: 404.600.8081
Appointment Line: 404.382.8991
Fax number: 404.616.8605
E-mail: info@livingroomatl.org

You will need these documents to get started, but these are some of the same ones you needed to enroll in medical care:

Once you complete this process, the Living Room will be able to help you find out if there are housing options that meet your needs.
Peer Support: How can I meet other young people living with HIV?

Grady's Family & Youth Clinic has two support groups for young people living with HIV who are enrolled as patients at the clinic:

**Grady IDP MSM Educational Group**
Open to Gay/Bisexual and other young men who have sex with men who are patients at Grady's Family & Youth Clinic
Meets every other Friday from 1:30pm-3:00pm at the Family & Youth Clinic
Contact Antoine Jones 404-616-9789

**She's Living Positive**
Young Women's Support Group
Open to women ages 16-30 who are patients at Grady's Family & Youth Clinic
Meets twice a month from 1:30pm-3:00pm at the Family & Youth Clinic
Contact: Lisa Curtin 404-616-9795

There are also a lot more support groups for people living with HIV in Atlanta to choose from. Here are some others you might be interested in:

**Together For Life: Peer-Run HIV Support Group**
Open to: all HIV+ individuals, and is set up as a safe space for those dealing with a variety of issues, including HIV.
Where: Fulton County Board of Health, 1st Park Place, Atlanta, GA, 30303
10 Park Place SE, Atlanta, GA 30303
When: Wednesdays 1:30pm-3:00pm
Contact: Margaret Lovelave, 404-613-1595
or Dwight Curry Anderson, 678-886-8418

**Healthy Living / Emotional Wellness Support Group**
Open to: people living with HIV who are 18+ years old. The group offers additional counseling to individuals affected by HIV including couples; new members must complete an intake assessment. Dinner and MARTA card provided.
Where: Aniz, Inc., 236 Forsyth Street Suite 300; Atlanta GA 30303
When: 1st and 3rd Tuesday: 6:00pm-7:30pm; Thursday 12:00pm-1:30pm
Contact: Alyssa Lewis or Malik Shabazz, 404-521-2410

**Healthy Relationships**
Open to: An interactive small-group, skill-based behavioral support group for men and women living with HIV.
When: By appointment via organization
Where: 230 Peachtree St. NW Suite 1800 Atlanta, GA 30303
Contact: Eleanor Hillman, 404-526-1145 EXT 124, Empowerment Resource Center

**The Positive Solutions Group**
Open to: All people living with HIV with an emphasis on heterosexual men and women
Where: Recovery Consultants of Atlanta, Inc- 3423 Covington Dr. Suite B; Decatur GA 30032
When: Every Wednesday 6:00pm-7:00pm
Contact: Adron Shepard 404-289-0313

**Undetectables Atlanta**
Open to: HIV+ Men of Color who identify as gay, bisexual, same-gender loving or Men who have sex with men. This is an online social group with support offered 24hr/7days a week. Prior to engaging in any of the virtual membership activities, participants must contact Daniel Driffin at daniel@thrivess.com
Peer Support cont’d

R.E.A.L. T
Every Monday 4:00pm-5:30pm
Someone Cares, Inc.
236 Forsyth St ste. 204 Atlanta 30303
Open to: Transgender people living with HIV
Contact: Jamie Steger, 678-499-4626 or Naomi Busler, 678-910-9785

TWILLOW
A program of Someone Cares and Positive Impact that helps transgender women live healthier lives and make healthier decisions for themselves Open to Transgender Women living with HIV
Enrolls on a rolling basis
Contact: Tori Cooper at 678-990-6438 Tori.Cooper@PIHCGA.org

ERC for Men
Support group for men living with HIV
When: Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month, 6 pm—7:30pm
Where: 230 Peachtree St. NW Suite 1800 Atlanta, GA 30303
Contact: David Mattison, 404-526-1145 EXT 114, Empowerment Resource Center

T.W.I.S.T.
An intervention for trans women living with HIV.
Contact Someone Care, Inc. for dates
Where: 236 Forsyth St ste. 204 Atlanta, GA 30303
Open to: transgender women living with HIV
Contact: Jamie Steger 678-499-4626

Lost-n-Found Youth Inc.
A non-profit that exists to end homelessness for LGBTQ and all sexual minority youth ages 18-25.
Website: www.lnfy.org
Where: 2585 Chantilly Drive Atlanta, GA 30324
When: 8AM-8PM
Contact: DeAntwayne L. Hall - Outreach Director  470-346-0388

Positive Impact Health Centers
Positive Impact Health Centers provides HIV specialty care and support services, behavioral health including substance abuse treatment, HIV testing and prevention services. Open to all.
Website: positiveimpacthealthcenters.org
When: 9AM-5PM: BH, Substance Abuse Clinic / 10am-530PM: Prevention, PreP
Where: 523 Church Street Decatur, GA 30030
Contact: Gabrielle Hamilton-Brown / 404-977-5121 / gabriellehamilton@PIHCGA.org

Covenant House Georgia
Shelter that uplifts Georgia’s youth experiencing homeless. Offering a safety shelter, youth development, family improvement and child protection, mental health and substance abuse treatment for ages 18-24.
Website: www.covenanthouse.org
When: 24 hour crisis shelter-Drop in Community Service Shelter (ages 16-24) M-F 8AM-3PM
Where: 1559 Johnson Road NW Atlanta, GA 30318
Contact: Dr. Alie Redd / 404-589-0163 / aredd@covenanthouses.org
Taylor Brand / tbrand@covenanthouse.org
Spiritual Support

The Vision Church of Atlanta
African-American, LGBT-led church, all are welcome
Bishop O.C. Allen
704 Ormewood Dr.
Atlanta, GA 30312
(404) 622-9470
Worship & Service Times:
Sunday School & New Members Orientation: 9:00 AM
Sunday Intercessory Prayer: 10:00 AM
Sunday Praise & Worship: 10:30 AM

Restoration Inclusive Ministries
African-American, LGBT-led church, all are welcome
Pastor Sonya E. Williams
1164 Richard Road
Decatur GA 30032
Email: rimatlanta@gmail.com
Telephone: 404-284-3113

Hillside International Truth Center
African-American, LGBT-led church, all are welcome
Bishop Barbara L. King
2450 Cascade Road SW
Atlanta, GA 30311
Sunday Service: 9:30am
Telephone: 404-758-6811
Email: info@hillsidechapels.org

Tabernacle Baptist Church
African-American led, LGBT-inclusive church
Rev. Dennis A. Meredith
1041 Moreland Drive, Atlanta, Georgia 30315
Sunday Worship Services at 9 AM and 11 AM
Telephone: (404) 876-3777

Unity Fellowship Church
African-American, LGBT-led church, all are welcome
Rev. Maressa Pendermon
9 Gammon Avenue SE Atlanta, GA 30315
Phone: 404-599-8243
Email: revmp@unitywideopen.com

Shy Temple
Church 2012 Memorial Drive SE Atlanta GA 30317
“Our Stories” a group for young people living with HIV
Every Friday 6:30pm - 8:30pm
Contact: Chrissy Dorsey our.voices.ourstory@gmail.com
or 678-670-4198
Spiritual Support cont’d

Drepung Loseling Monastery, Inc. Center for Tibetan Buddhist Studies, Practice & Culture
1781 Dresden Drive, Atlanta
www.drepung.org

Kadampa Meditation Center Georgia
741 Edgewood Avenue, Atlanta
www.meditationingeorgia.org

SGI-USA Atlanta Buddhist Center
421 17th Street NW, Atlanta
www.sgi-atlanta.org

Shambhala Meditation Center
1447 Church Street, Decatur
www.atlanta.shambhala.org

Catholic Shrine of the Immaculate Conception
48 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive SW, Atlanta
www.catholicshrineatlanta.org

All Saints’ Episcopal Church
634 West Peachtree Street NW, Atlanta
www.allsaintsatlanta.org

The Cathedral of St. Philip
2744 Peachtree Road NW, Atlanta
www.stphilipscathedral.org

Church of the Epiphany
2089 Ponce de Leon Avenue, Atlanta
www.epiphany.org

St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church
17990 LaVista Road, Atlanta
www.stbartsatlanta.org

St. John’s Episcopal Church
3480 East Main Street, College Park
www.stjohnscollegepark.com

St. Luke’s Episcopal Church
435 Peachtree Street NE, Atlanta
www.stlukesatlanta.org

St. Patrick’s Episcopal Church
4755 North Peachtree Road, Atlanta
www.stpat.net

Congregation Bet Haverim
2074 LaVista Road, Atlanta
www.congregationbethaverim.org
The Temple
1589 Peachtree Street NE, Atlanta
www.the-temple.org

St. John’s Lutheran Church
1410 Ponce de Leon Avenue NE, Atlanta
www.stjohnsatlanta.org

St. Luke Lutheran Church
3264 Northside Parkway NW, Atlanta
www.stlukeatlanta.org

Avondale Pattillo United Methodist Church
3260 Covington Highway, Decatur
www.avondalepattilloumc.org

Hapeville First United Methodist Church
3510 Atlanta Avenue, Hapeville
www.hapevilleumc.com

Inman Park United Methodist Church
1015 Edgewood Avenue NE, Atlanta
www.inmanparkumc.org

Saint Mark United Methodist Church
781 Peachtree Street NE, Atlanta
www.stmarkumc.org

Trinity United Methodist Church
265 Washington Street SW, Atlanta
www.atlantatrinity.org

Metropolitan Community Church (MCC)
MCC of Our Redeemer
557 Greene Street, Augusta
www.mccoor.com

Our Hope MCC
160 Tracy Street #4A, Athens
www.ourhopemcc.com

Clifton Sanctuary Ministries
369 Connecticut Avenue NE, Atlanta
www.cliftonsanctuary.com

Druid Hills Presbyterian Church
1026 Ponce de Leon Avenue, Atlanta
www.druidhillspresbyterian.org
Getting Involved in HIV Advocacy

Once you get used to living and thriving with HIV, there are a lot of ways to work with other people living with HIV to make a difference in your community. A lot of people find this to be healing and a great way to meet new people who you have a lot in common with.

Evolution Project – A program of AID Atlanta

The Evolution Project is a drop-in community center for young black gay/bisexual men and transgender individuals between 18 and 28 years of age. This is a safe space that helps young people to connect, develop strengths and skills, support each other, have fun and achieve positive goals. The program staff assists young people to enhance their HIV and STD risk reduction skills by utilizing the will, talent and vision of the members themselves. For more information about the Evolution Project, volunteering and/or program activities, please contact (404) 870-7700.

Youth HIV Policy Advisors Program- A program of Georgia Equality

This program trains HIV+ youth ages 30 and under on policy and advocacy and pairs participants with elected officials to serve as their Special Advisors on HIV. Must be living with HIV, under 30 and willing to speak publicly about your HIV status. *Enrolls in June of every year* 
Contact: Eric Paulk, Coordinator, at 404-523- 3070 ext 3 or Eric@GeorgiaEquality.org
Trans Lifeline (877) 565-8860
This is a FREE helpline staffed by transgender people for transgender people. Volunteers are ready to respond to whatever support needs members of our community might have.

Someone Cares
Someone Cares is the largest Transgender service organization in the southeastern United States. They offer programs for HIV prevention and HIV support services specifically for Transgender people, including the R.E.A.L. T program, which meets every Monday from 4pm to 5:30pm.

Address:
Downtown Atlanta Office
Garnett Station Place
236 Forsyth St, SW, Ste. 204
Atlanta, GA 30303
Main Phone Number:
(470) 355-0256

Seeds 4 Self Esteem
A support group for Trans men
236 Forsyth Street, NW Suite 204
Atlanta, GA 30303
678-812-9184

Trans Housing Atlanta Programs (T.H.A.P.)
THAP’s mission is to provide safe housing and appropriate supportive services to transgender and gender nonconforming (defined as any personal gender identity different or from the sex assigned at birth) individuals who are homeless to facilitate movement to independent living and promote productive employment and reduction of risky behaviors, or who seek intermediate or long-term housing that’s centered on the needs of transgender and gender nonconforming people.

THAP’s phone number is 404.458.7948. They are staffed completely by volunteers, so please leave a message if no reply. Their email address is transhousingatlanta@gmail.com.

Lagenda, Inc.
Open to all Transgender youth adults providing housing, peer and spiritual support, HIV advocacy resources for trans or non-gender conforming youth living with HIV, and name change assistance.
Where: 2861 East Point Street East Point Atlanta, GA 30344 (blue house on the corner)
When: 10AM-3:30PM
Contact: Pearl Styles / 404-914-2948 - call any time for appointments
Email: pearllashae@gmail.com
How do I get the name and gender markers on my ID changed to my correct gender (instead of the gender I was assigned at birth)?

A good first step: Visit www.TransGeorgiaLegal.org to access many of the forms discussed below. This is a website created by transgender attorneys for transgender people!

**Georgia Name Change Laws**

To obtain a legal name change in Georgia, you will need to submit a petition to the court. Within seven days of filing the petition, you must publish notice of the name change in the county’s “official legal organ” once a week for four weeks. (Ga. Code Ann. § 19-12-1).

(Source: National Center for Transgender Equality)

**How do I update the name on my Georgia Driver’s License?**

After going through the process of changing your name (above), you must submit a court order certifying the name change. You have to change the name on your Georgia ID within 60 days of a legal name change.

**How do I update the gender marker on my Georgia ID?**

Unfortunately, Georgia law requires transgender people to have gender reassignment surgery (bottom surgery) in order for their gender marker to be legally changed on an ID or birth certificate.

If you decide to have surgery, you will have to submit either a court order or a physician’s letter certifying the gender change to update your gender on a Georgia ID. The letter or court order must state your name, date of birth, date of gender reassignment operation and other identifying information. The Georgia Department of Driver Services addresses name and gender change.

**How do I change the sex and name on my birth certificate?**

Georgia will change the name and sex on a birth certificate “upon receipt of a certified copy of a court order indicating the sex of an individual born in this state has been changed by surgical procedure and that such individual’s name has been changed.” Ga. Code Ann. § 31-10-23(e). Such birth certificates will be issued as new and not marked as changed.

To apply for an amended birth certificate, you will have to submit a notarized letter requesting that a change be made on the original record (this letter must contain the detailed information from the original birth certificate, including parents’ names, etc. and state what changes are to be made), a certified copy of the court order changing name and sex, a medical certification from the physician’s office with the physician’s original signature, a copy of valid government issued photo ID, and a money order or cashier’s check with the associated fees. Submit the documents to Vital Records, Amendment Unit, 2600 Skyland Drive NE, Atlanta, GA 30319.
How can I get a passport with my correct gender on it?
It might actually be easier for you to get a valid US passport with your correct gender identity on it than to get a Georgia ID. This is because Georgia requires sex reassignment surgery to change your gender marker, but the federal government just requires a doctor to send a letter certifying that you are transgender.

The US Government provides this sample of a letter that you will need to provide with your application, and your HIV doctor can help with this! (See sample letter below)

PHYSICIAN LETTERHEAD

I, (Physician’s Full Name), (Physician’s medical license or certificate number, Issuing U.S. State/Foreign Country of medical license/certificate), am the physician of (Name of Patient), with whom I have a doctor/patient relationship and whom I have treated (or with whom I have a doctor/patient relationship and whose medical history I have reviewed and evaluated). (Name of Patient) has had appropriate clinical treatment for gender transition to the new gender (specify new gender male or female). I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that the foregoing is true and correct.

(Signature of Physician)

(Typed Name)

(Date)

How do I get a passport?
If you are applying to change your gender marker, submitting a passport application for the first time, or applying for a passport when your old passport has expired, you must apply in person.

You will need to complete and submit:
Application for U.S. Passport (Form DS-11);

Proof of U.S. Citizenship (such as a previous U.S. Passport, certified Birth Certificate, Certificate of Naturalization, or Report of Birth Abroad);

Proof of Identity that contains your signature and photograph that is “a good likeness to you” (such as a previous U.S. Passport, a Driver’s License, a Certificate of Naturalization, Military Identification, or a Government Employee Identification Card);

A recent color photograph 2x2 inches in size; If you are changing your name on your passport, an Order for Name Change (certified copy showing a seal and officiate/judge signature);

A letter from your Physician confirming your gender transition (see the example above); and

Fee (See the Department of State fee schedule for costs: http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/passports/information/fees.html).

Take these documents and fees in person to any Passport Acceptance Facility. There is one very close to the Grady Family & Youth Clinic at 1072 W. Peachtree St. NW, Atlanta, GA 30309

To find a facility closest to you, call the National Passport Information Center at 1-877- 487-2778.

How do I get medical care related to my gender transition?
The good news is that your doctor at the Grady Family & Youth Clinic can either prescribe you hormones or can work with you to find a doctor who specializes in gender-affirming medical care. Be sure to ask your doctor about starting hormones if you haven’t started yet or about continuing any hormones you’re already taking!
If you have issues finding a doctor who can help with both hormones and HIV medicine, contact the Health Initiative at 404-688-2524. They can help you find a doctor or talk to your current doctor about how better to meet your needs.

How do I get connected to other transgender people in Atlanta?

Transgender Individuals Living Their Truth (T.I.L.T.T.)
A support group for all transgender and gender non-conforming people in Metro Atlanta. Members also organize social events and community advocacy projects.
• Where: The Phillip Rush Center (1530 Dekalb Ave NE Atlanta, GA 30307)- go to the building behind the main building and enter in the doors next to the CrossFit.
• When: 2nd & 4th Tuesday (7-9 PM) of each month
• Contact: Ms. Cheryl Courtney-Evans activetiltt@yahoo.com or 678-754-3506

Solutions Not Punishment Coalition
SNaP Coalition is working to build power among those who are targeted by the Atlanta Police Department – especially Trans and gender non conforming folks of color, current and former street level sex workers and formerly incarcerated people – and transform the way the City of Atlanta crafts and implements its policies, practices and laws related to street level sex work. To get involved, email thompson@rjactioncenter.org.

Southerners on New Ground
Southerners On New Ground (SONG) is a regional Queer Liberation organization made up of people of color, immigrants, undocumented people, people with disabilities, working class and rural and small town, LGBTQ people in the South. We believe that we are bound together by a shared desire for ourselves, each other, and our communities to survive and thrive. We believe that Community Organizing is the best way for us to build collective power and transform the South. Out of this belief we are committed to building freedom movements rooted in southern traditions like community organizing, political education, storytelling, music, breaking bread, resistance, humor, performance, critical thinking, and celebration.
• Website: http://southernersonnewground.org/
• Contact info: kindred@southernersonnewground.org or 404.549.8628

Atlanta Queer and Trans People of Color Facebook Group
Description: “This group is meant to be a virtual meetup to share info and community with other queer and/or trans people of color with ties to Atlanta. Lets post our radical lives, lets support each other, challenge each other, and post selfies in a shade free space.

This group is open to anyone who identifies as queer, trans, or gender nonconforming, and a person of color. While this group will be bringing together many people with varying experiences, it will center the experiences of the marginalized. This means there will be no tolerance for ableism, transmisogyny, colorism, misogyny, transphobia, etc...”
Facebook Group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/644660058927502/

Trans Housing Atlanta
To provide safe housing and appropriate supportive services to transgender and gender nonconforming (defined as any personal gender identity different or transgressive from the sex assigned at birth) individuals who are homeless to facilitate movement to independent living and promote productive employment and reduction of risky behaviors, or who seek intermediate or long-term housing that’s centered on the needs of transgender and gender nonconforming people
• Facebook Group: https://www.facebook.com/THAPhouse/
• Website: http://transhousingatlanta.org/
• Contact: 404.458.7948/transhousingatlanta@gmail.com
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Contact the author of this directory at eric@GeorgiaEquality.org or 404-523-3070 ext. 3