



Tom Siara / Bears of Poland Association

**Changing the paradigm
of biomedical prevention:**

U=U in Poland

HIV UNDETECTABLE=UNTRANSMITTABLE

UNDETECTABLES

U=U POLAND: HIV SOCIAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

'It's gonna be a very POSITIVE campaign.'

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**'It's gonna be a very POSITIVE
campaign.'**



Tom Siara

Designer (Communication/Branding)

LGBTQ+ Activist

HIV/AIDS Activist

President of Bears of Poland Association

Initiator of U=U Poland campaign.



Facing inner HIV stigma

while supporting others
affected by HIV.

A social-first approach to reduce
HIV stigma among communities
affected by HIV.

—

The year is 2002.
Upon receiving the results of my
anonymous HIV test, I was told:

You are HIV+.

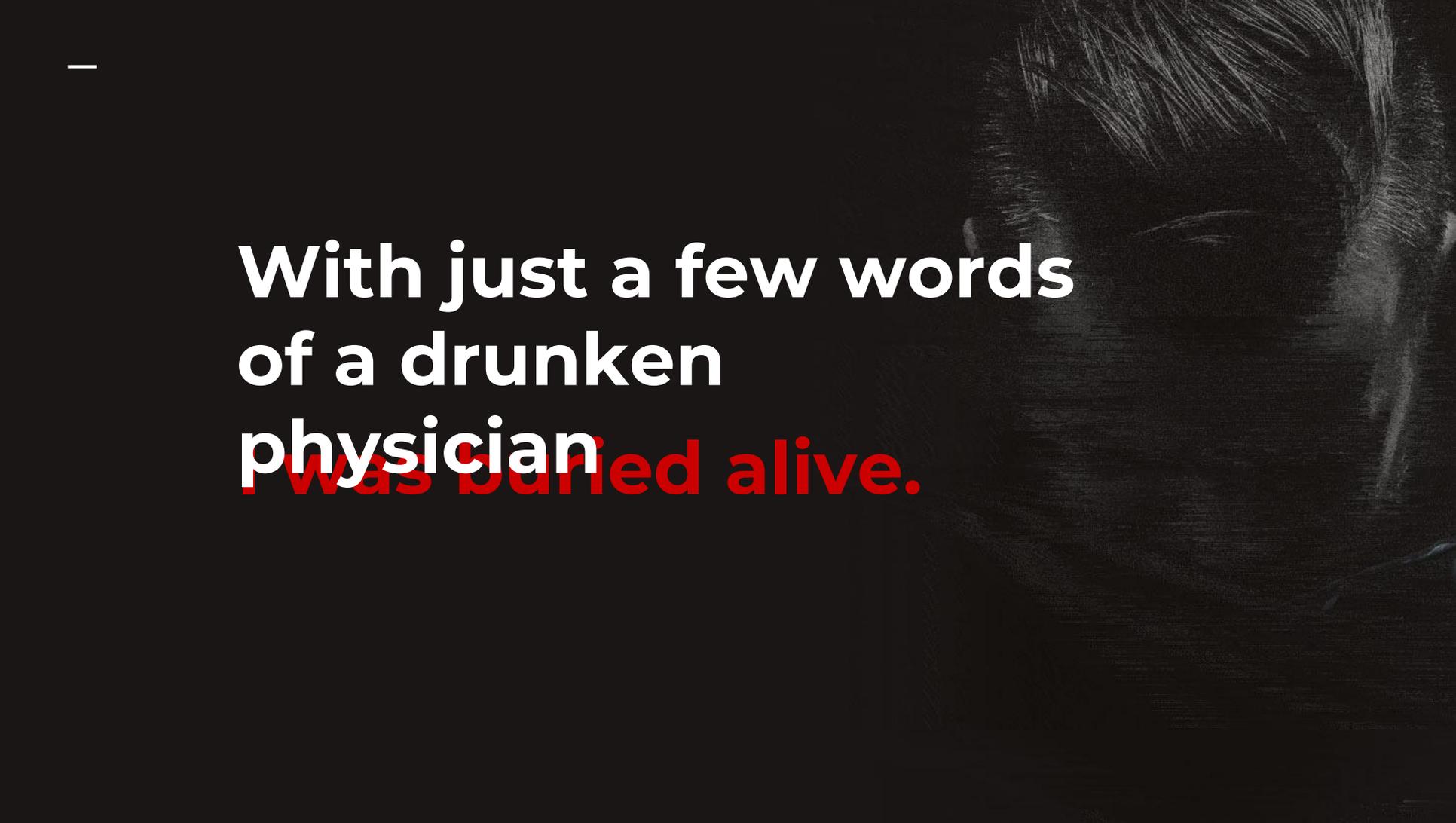
You have 6 months to

live. We are unable to help

you. I'm sorry. Good bye...



**With just a few words
of a drunken
physician
I was buried alive.**





That 'diagnosis'
broke me for years

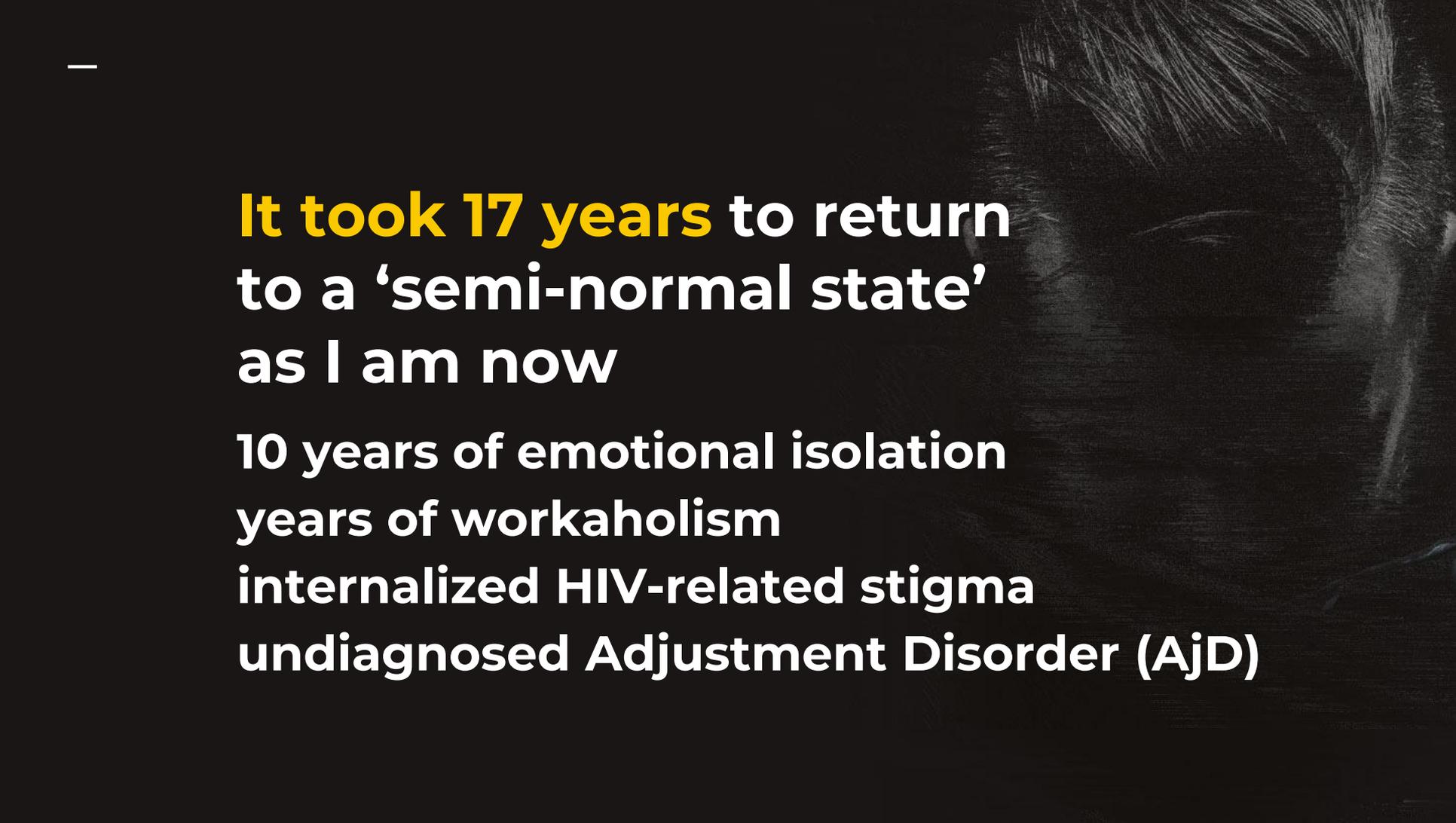
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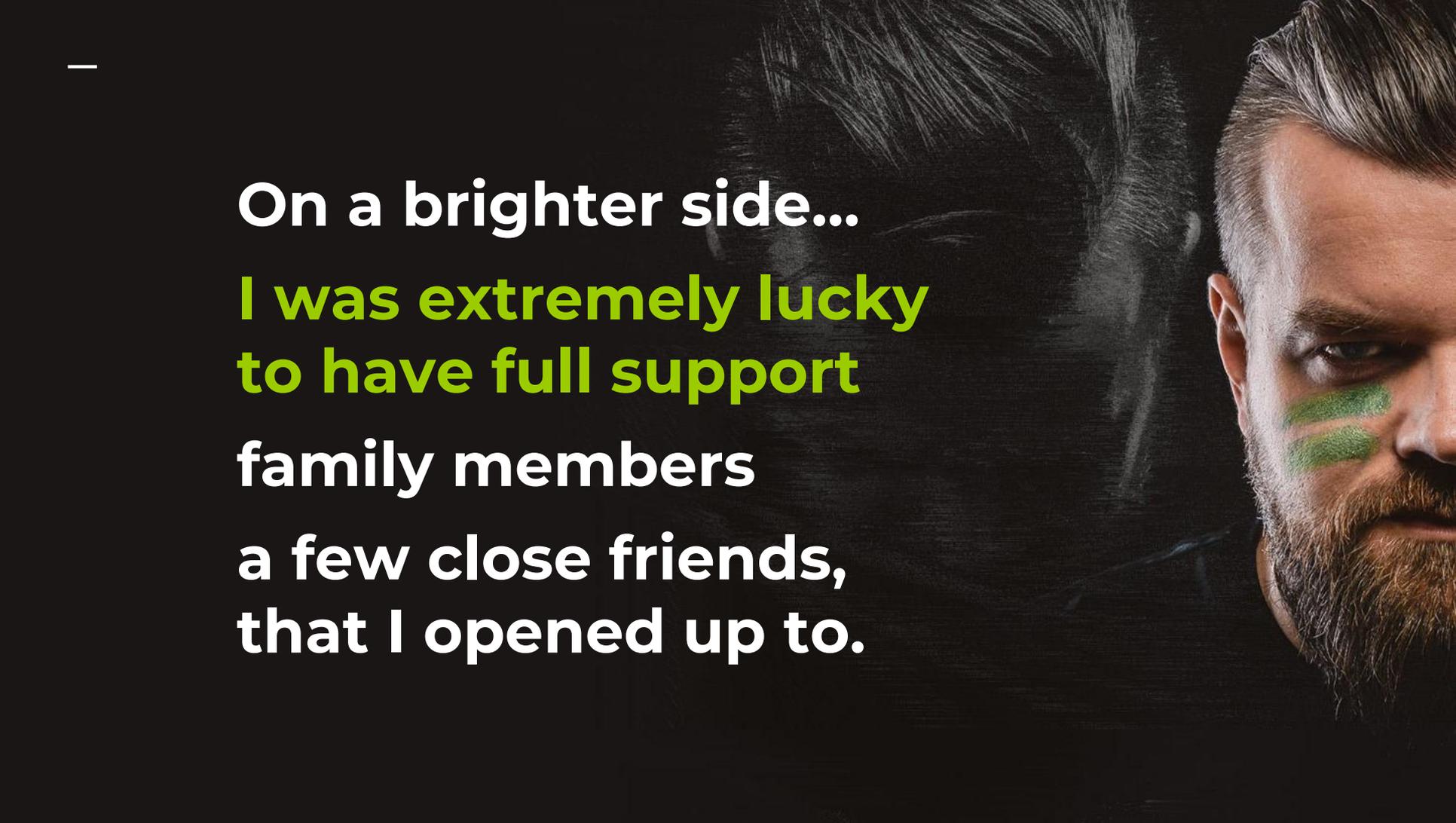
It took 17 years to return
to a 'semi-normal state'
as I am now

10 years of emotional isolation
years of workaholism

internalized HIV-related stigma

undiagnosed Adjustment Disorder (AjD)





On a brighter side...
I was extremely lucky
to have full support
family members
a few close friends,
that I opened up to.

A portrait of a middle-aged man with a full beard and mustache, wearing a green and white checkered button-down shirt. He is gesturing with his hands as if speaking. The background is a plain, light grey. On the left side, there are two horizontal lime green bars. The text on the right is in a clean, sans-serif font.

My archangel

Jacek Gąsiorowski Ph.D.

physician, infectious disease
& internal medicine specialist,
addiction therapy specialist,
certified HIV/AIDS adviser

Stowarzyszenie Podwale 7
/ WCZ SPZOZ / UMED

A man with a full, dark beard and mustache, wearing a black button-down shirt over a dark t-shirt. He is smiling and gesturing with both hands held out, palms up. The background is a plain, light grey. On the left side of the image, there are two horizontal lime green bars. The text is positioned on the right side of the image.

Me: but, I am HIV+...
Adam: So what?

Adam Mikuszewski

LGBTQ+/HIV Activist ✕ VIII Mr Bear Poland
Bears of Poland Association

**The bigger problem is:
17 years later - in 2019,
the situation hasn't
improved that much.**

**The up to date knowledge/awareness related
to HIV/AIDS treatment was scarce at that time.**



**People still think that
'the problem of HIV'
doesn't concern them.**

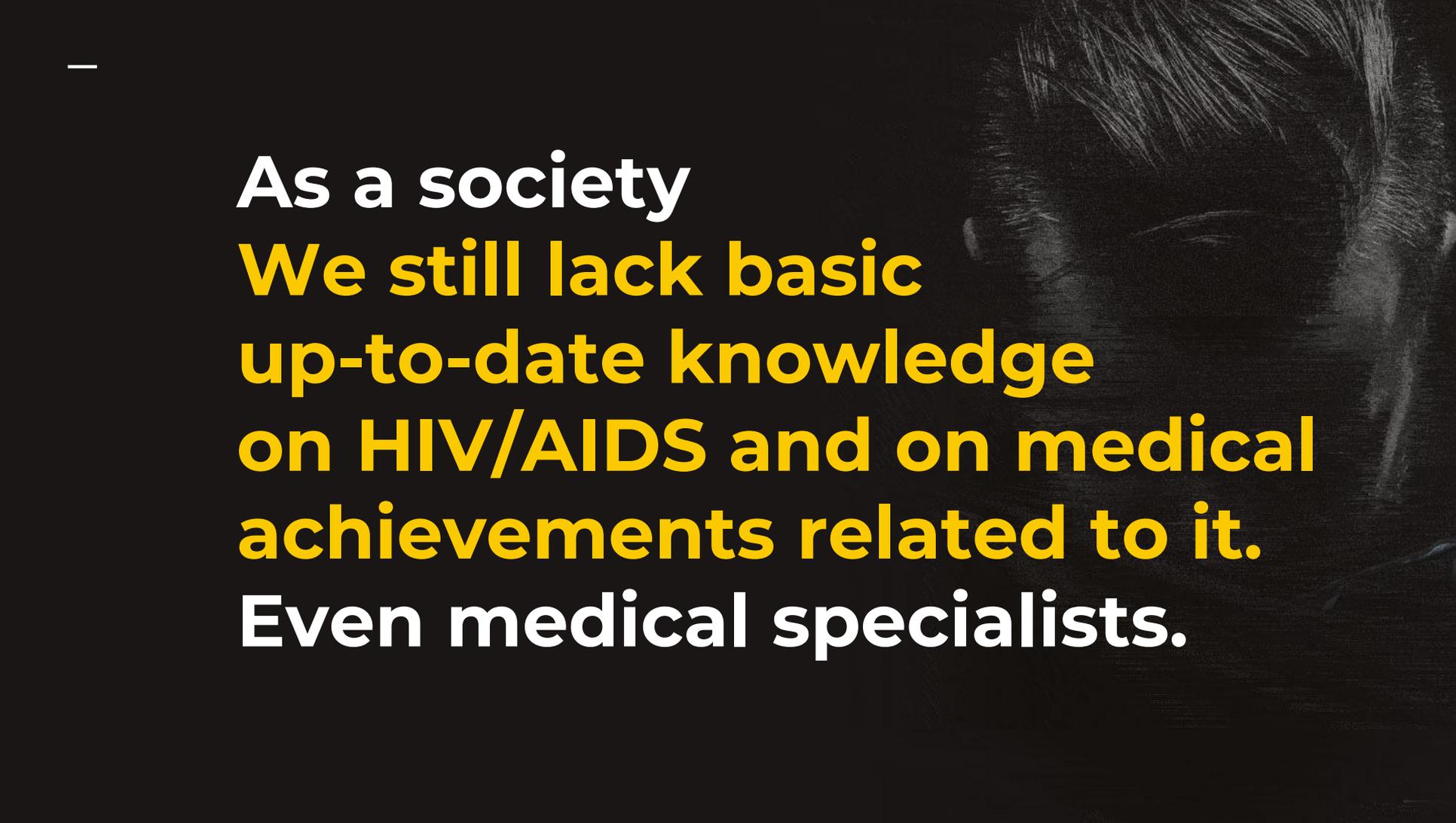
—

People still think that
You can get HIV
through a kiss...



—
As a society

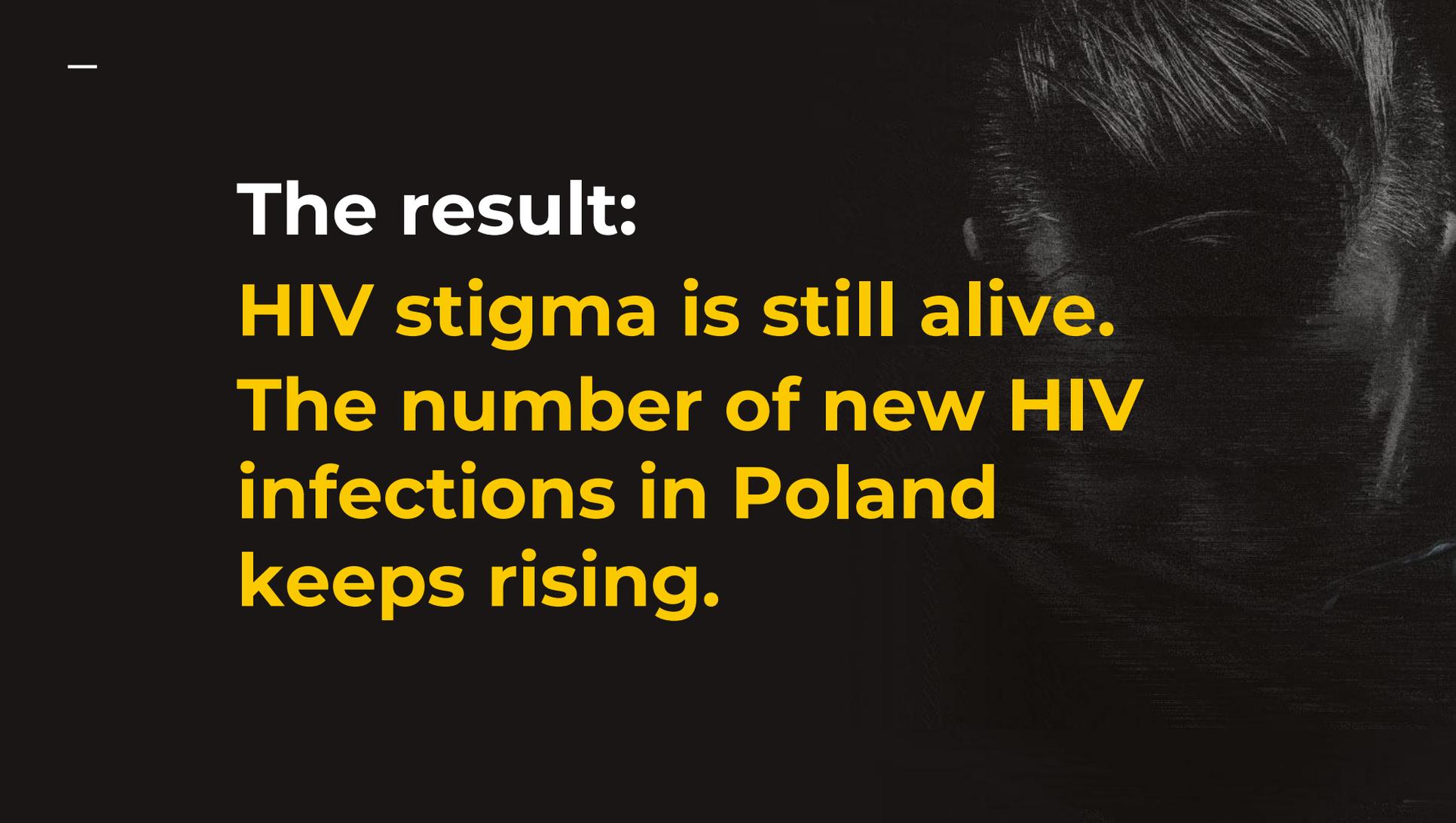
**We still lack basic
up-to-date knowledge
on HIV/AIDS and on medical
achievements related to it.
Even medical specialists.**



The result:

HIV stigma is still alive.

**The number of new HIV
infections in Poland
keeps rising.**





If it wasn't for HIV stigma.
I could have returned
to living a normal life
within a year...



—

**Despite befriending
with my HIV status
I am still affected by
internal HIV stigma.**

Along with my anxiety disorders
they still impact both my personal
and professional life.

—

But it's OK.
At least NOW I
KNOW what is going
on
with me.

Without proper knowledge the vast majority of people affected with HIV may never get to this point.





**I don't want to let anyone
to experience what I've
been through when U=U
works...**

I am not a medical expert.

I am a designer.

A problem solver.
I solve design problems related to effective communication and creating brands every day.

Thanks to Adam, my long term
HIV- partner I can stand in front
of you.

**Giving my living
testimony regarding
the results of PARTNER
studies.**



A photograph of two men with beards standing back-to-back with their arms crossed. The man on the left has a full, dark beard and is wearing a dark button-down shirt. The man on the right has a shorter, well-groomed beard and is wearing a black t-shirt. They are both smiling slightly and looking towards the right. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Together with Adam,
my long term HIV- partner,
**We are living proofs
that U=U works.**



The Face of AIDS

a photo by
Therese Frare

**“David Kirby was a great help
to make understanding
what AIDS was about.**

”

Oliviero Toscani / Benetton



**I wanted to show on our example
That it's possible to live a 'normal'
fulfilling life as an undetectable
HIV+ person.**

**The goal was also to return the positive
meaning of the expression '(HIV) POSITIVE'.**



The Road to U=U Poland.

A 3-year journey from an idea
to a nationwide coming out
as a HIV+ gay male in Poland.

HIV UNDETECTABLE = UNTRANSMITTABLE

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U=U POLAND: HIV SOCIAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Mental preparation

2 years spent on 'growing into' the idea of coming out as an HIV+ gay male nationwide in Poland.

Nearing the premiere I realized that I stepped on a path of no return.

Milestones (fail-safes)

10/18 Winning the title of Mr Bear Poland 2019

12/18 Coming out within my Bears community

02/19 Coming out to polish LGBTQ+ community

04/19 Coming out nationwide in Poland

Team building

That whole campaign would not happen without the support of many amazing people that I am extremely lucky to have in my life.

IT'S GONNA
BE A VERY
POSITIVE
CAMPAIGN!

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Partner
in crime

lek. Wiktor Łukasik



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Stowarzyszenie Podwale 7
/ W CZ SP ZOZ / U MED

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The Hand (to Jacek)

Bartosz Szetela Ph.D.

physician, infectious disease specialist,
addiction therapy specialist,
certified HIV/AIDS adviser

Stowarzyszenie Podwale 7
/ WCZ SPZOZ / UMED



—

'Make it happen' Guy





U=U Poland: The launch.

POSITIVE reception.

KAMPANIA SPOŁECZNO-EDUKACYJNA HIV/AIDS

**NIEWYKRYWALNY
NIEZAKAŻAJĄCY**

18:50 21 KWIETNIA
NIEDZIELA



WYDARZENIA



KAMPANIA SPOŁECZNO/EDUKACYJNA HIV/AIDS

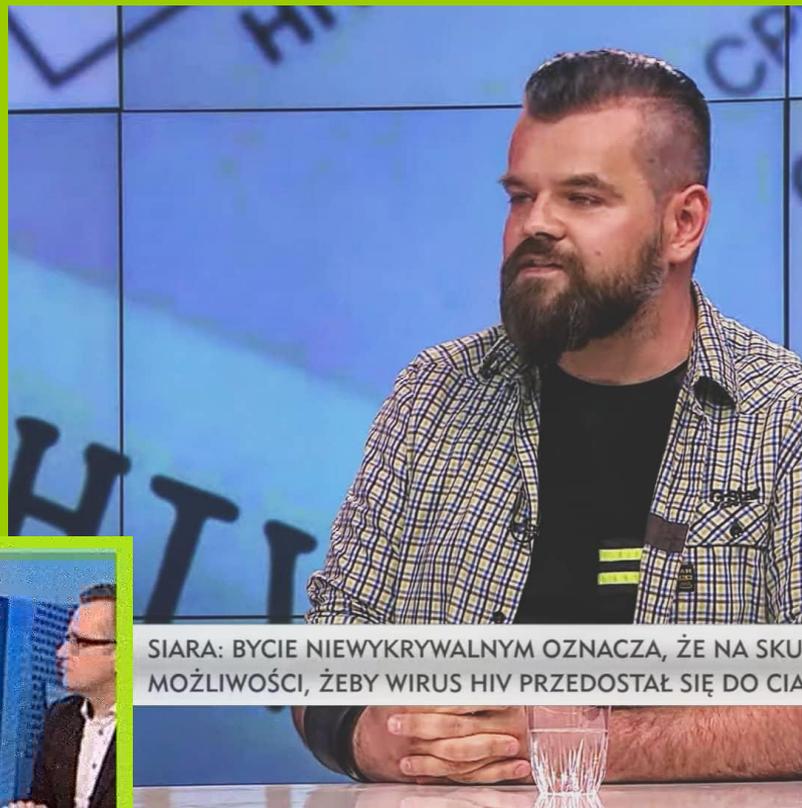
**NIEWYKRYWALNY
NIEZAKAŻAJĄCY**

Życie jest POZYTYWNE.
Twój status HIV tego nie zmienia.



TVP 3

07:15 13 MAJA
PONIEDZIAŁEK



SIARA: BYCIE NIEWYKRYWALNYM OZNACZA, ŻE NA SKUTKACH
MOŻLIWOŚCI, ŻEBY WIRUS HIV PRZEDOSTAŁ SIĘ DO CIAŁA

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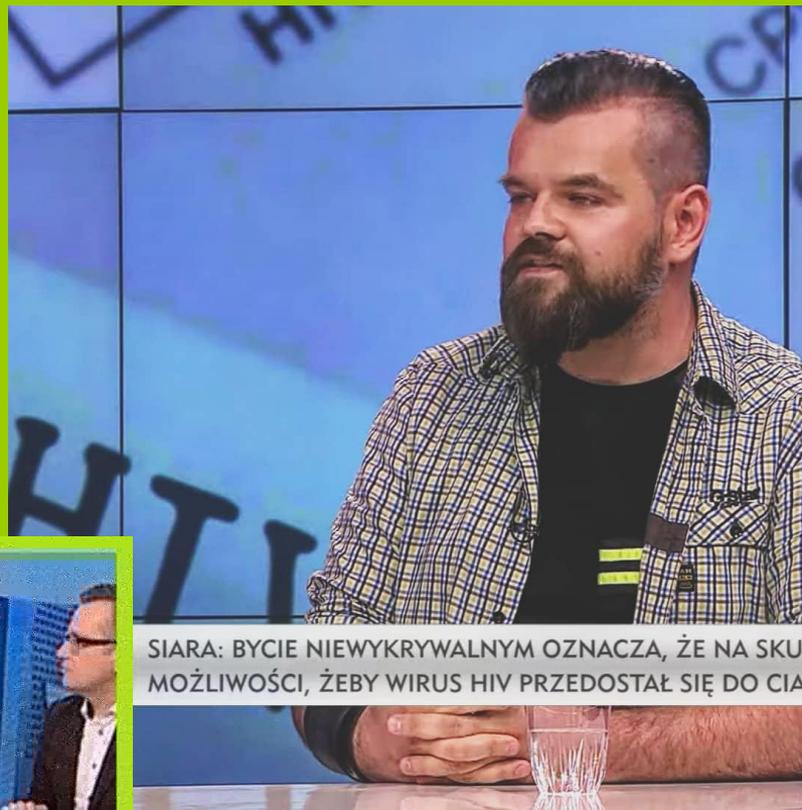
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—

POSITIVE reception.
From media and
communities.
TV+Press Appearances.

—

POSITIVE pieces.
POSITIVE Stories
POSITIVE Talks
POSITIVE Meetups



WORKSHOP ON
SAFER SEX:

ALL ABOUT THAT HOLE



WFW WARSAW
FETISH
WEEKEND

HOSTED BY:
MICHAŁ PAWŁĘGA
& TOM SIARA

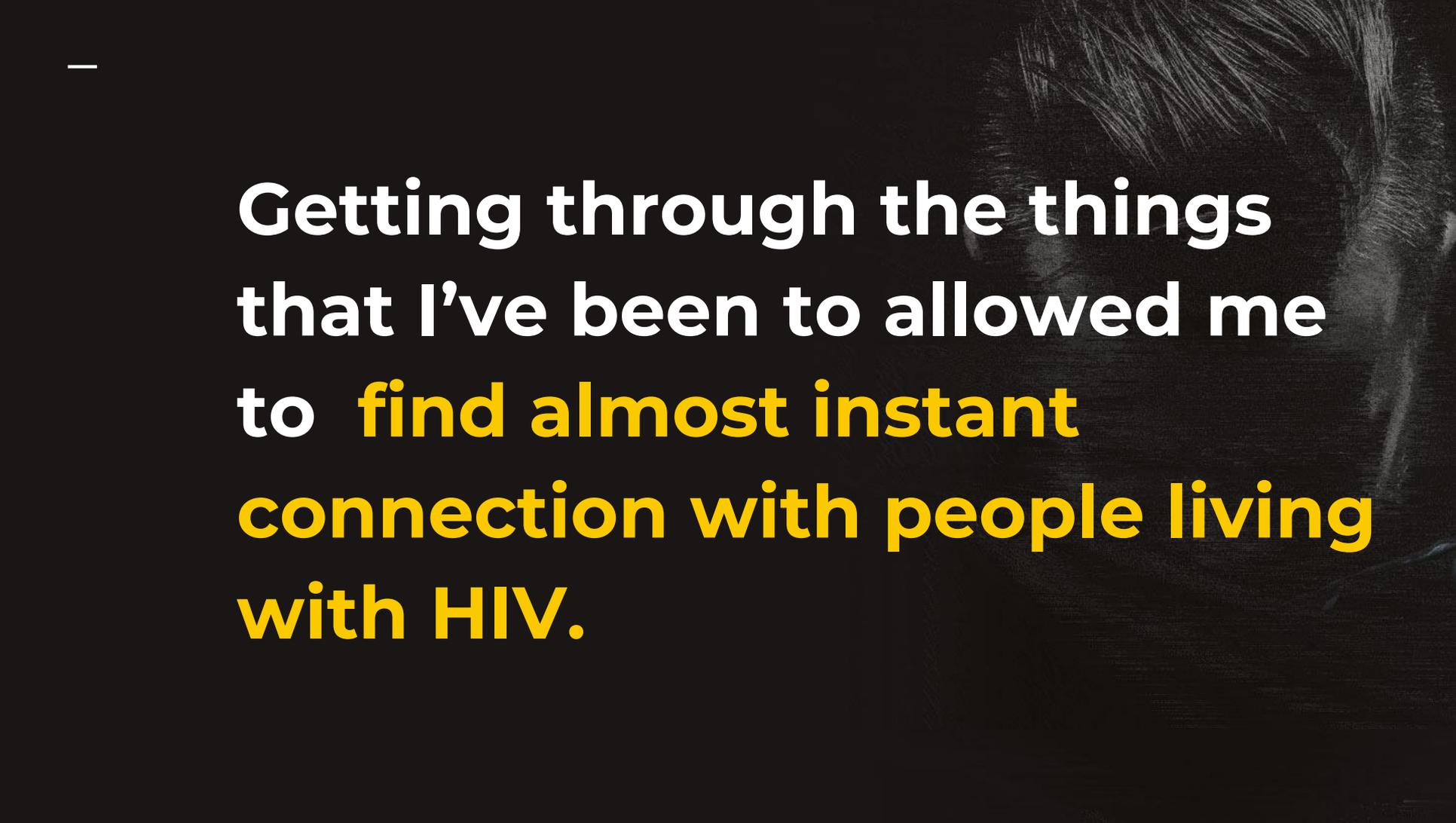


U=U Poland: POSITIVE Results.

Success stories of people
getting out of internal stigma
within 4 months.

KAMPANIA SPOŁECZNO-EDUKACYJNA HIV/AIDS

**NIEWYKRYWALNY
NIEZAKAŻAJĄCY**



—

Getting through the things
that I've been to allowed me
to **find almost instant
connection with people living
with HIV.**



U=U Poland: The future.

4 months of combined
efforts and media interest

KAMPANIA SPOŁECZNO-EDUKACYJNA HIV/AIDS

**NIEWYKRYWALNY
NIEZAKAŻAJĄCY**



The PositHIVes:
Getting
international
ready.

KAMPANIA SPOŁECZNO-EDUKACYJNA HIV/AIDS

**NIETYKRYWALNY
NIEZAKAŻAJĄCY**

—

The PositHIVes vision.
A communication
platform for HIV activists
and physicians.

**Time for excuses is
over.**

Let's talk.