

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Why Are So Many Persons Living With HIV and AIDS (PLWHA) Under-Represented at Network Level?**

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This qualitative study sought to examine the reasons why persons living with HIV and AIDS do not readily join support groups. Data were collected through the lived experiences of five persons who were members of such groups and five who were not. Findings suggest that: 1) people join support groups depending on their location along the continuum of their chronic illness, and 2) people find alternative sources of support such as a partner, spirituality, or self-belief.

**Keywords:** HIV/AIDS; Support systems; Attitudes; PLHA; Group counselling; Trinidad and Tobago