



# *Pursuing Meaning and Purpose in Life Among Thai Adolescents Living With HIV: A Grounded Theory Study*

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*This grounded theory study aimed to understand how Thai adolescents living with HIV pursued meaning and purpose in life. Data were gathered from 11 adolescents in southern Thailand who were between ages 18 and 20 years, and who had lived with HIV for 2 or more years. Purposive and theoretical sampling techniques were used to recruit the participants. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observations, and field notes. Strauss and Corbin's (1998) grounded theory method guided data analysis. The core category of "pursuing meaning and purpose in life among Thai adolescents living with HIV" emerged out of a recursive process of uncertainty, inferiority, self-realization, and growth that comprised three categories: (a) condition: realizing self-value, (b) strategy: being connected to prolonging life, and (c) consequence: achieving peace and calm. The findings enhance knowledge that would benefit nurses helping adolescents living with HIV find meaning and purpose in life.*

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**Key words:** adolescent, HIV, life meaning, life purpose, prolonging life, self-value

**H**IV continues to spread among diverse population groups, including young people (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS [UNAIDS] & World Health Organization, 2008). The key modes of HIV transmission in young people are unprotected sex and injecting drugs (United Nations Children's

Fund, 2010). Many adolescents begin having sexual intercourse at an early age (Murphy, Brecht, Herbeck, & Huang, 2009). In 2010, there were 2.7 million new HIV infections worldwide, including an estimated 390,000 infections in children. While the numbers of people becoming infected with HIV are continuing to fall, in some countries more rapidly than others (UNAIDS, 2011a), young people ages 15–24 years accounted for 42% of new HIV infections in people ages 15 years and older. In youth, risk behavior data show an increase in sex-partner mixing without condom use (UNAIDS, 2011b). Among young people living with HIV, nearly 80% (4 million) live in sub-Saharan Africa (UNAIDS, 2011b). In 2009 in the United States, an estimated 8,294 young persons were diagnosed with HIV infection, with 75% (6,237) of these diagnoses occurring in people ages 20–24 years (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011).

Although Thailand has made significant progress in reducing the prevalence of HIV, the spread of HIV has continued since the first AIDS case report in 1984 (UNAIDS, 2012), and the incidence rate of persons newly infected with HIV, particularly among adolescents, has also continued to increase. The Ministry of Public Health (2012a) reported that by

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