

# Talking books for Aids workers

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**A** TALKING book is the new weapon that is going to be used in the fight against Aids. As part of an initiative to educate home-based care workers and patients about HIV/Aids, the South African Depression and Anxiety Group has developed the new health care tool, a book that can be narrated at the touch of a button.

The talking book, called *Living with HIV and Aids Does Not Mean Depression*, was created for readers with low levels of literacy who need vital health care information about the disease.

The books were distributed to home-based health workers at the KwaMashu municipal hall yesterday as some of the workers are not able to read the health brochures.

Julia Zacharis, the general manager of the group, said the books would help the care workers better understand the problems they deal with on a daily basis and would also inspire them to have a positive outlook on life.

"According to studies, people with HIV/Aids are 36 times more likely to commit suicide, and those who are diagnosed HIV-positive are also more likely to be depressed," she said.

"This book will provide the care workers with vital health care information and this information will now literally be at their fingertips."

Zacharis also said that it was not surprising people became depressed when diagnosed with HIV/Aids.

"Given the enormity of the emotional and psychological impact of finding out you are HIV-positive, it's hardly surprising," she said.

She also said that countrywide, psycho-social services have been among the last to be initiated for HIV and Aids patients, and that this was one of the main reasons the book was being distributed to the caregivers.

Wandia Musomba, corporate affairs manager of the Lilly pharmaceutical company which is distributing the books, said they were delighted to be a part of the programme.

"Psychological support is an area which has a huge gap at the moment for both HIV/Aids patients and their caregivers," she said.

"Being able to distribute these books gives patients with low levels of literacy the opportunity to learn themselves about the help available to them."



New age education ... Zane Wilson, founder of a depression and anxiety group, with the new talking books that are being distributed to home-based health workers around the province PICTURE SUPPLIED