

ABSTRACT

HIV/AIDS has been regarded as one of the most stigmatizing conditions. Despite numerous research studies have been devoted to exploring the impact of self-stigma on well-being among people living with HIV (PLHIV); little do we know about the internalization process of stigma. It was suggested that group identification, a psychological bonding with other devalued group members, shields the individual from the impact of self-stigma. However, its role on self-stigmatization is unclear. The present study attempted to investigate this relationship among 291 PLHIV in Hong Kong. As hypothesized, group identification ameliorates self-stigmatization through its influence on self-conscious moral emotions endorsed and the subsequent coping strategies employed by PLHIV. Findings based on structural equation modeling showed that group identification mitigated self-stigmatization by reducing the endorsement of shameful and guilty emotions and the use of maladaptive coping. This model highlighted the importance of understanding the mechanism of how the HIV community may help to deter the internalization of stigma among PLHIV. According to the current findings, theoretical and practical implications of this self-stigma model were discussed.