Rapper DaBaby's HIV and Gay Comments Get Slammed for Spreading Ignorance

But DaBaby doubles down on concert comments like, "If you didn't show up with HIV and AIDS...put your cell phone lighter up!" [VIDEOS]

July 27, 2021 By Trent Straube

Rapper DaBaby made a string of controversial comments about HIV and gay men while performing Sunday night at the Rolling Loud 2021 festival in Miami. In response, critics and fans took to social media to share their opinions—and to clarify his ignorant statements about HIV/AIDS.

The next day, via an Instagram story, rather than apologize, DaBaby basically said he has gay fans—but they don't have AIDS because "they got class"—and told those who hadn't attended the concert to "shut the f--- up."

> DaBaby this is weird to say?? Wth.
>
> pic.twitter.com/MDBQEZ2NsA
>
> — NM (@KingSeanSwae) July 26, 2021

According to Billboard, DaBaby sparked the controversy during his set at the three-day festival, which included performances of the hits "Suge" and "Masterpiece." The festival was broadcast on YouTube, and several attendees posted clips, like the one above, that showed the rapper telling the audience: "If you didn't show up today with HIV, AIDS or any of them deadly sexually transmitted diseases that'll make you die in two to three weeks, then put your cell phone lighter up! Ladies, if your p---y smell like water, put your cell phone lighter up! Fellas, if you ain't sucking d--- in the parking lot, put your cell phone lighter up!"

A number of commenters on social media found DaBaby's remarks to be homophobic—for examples, scroll through the comments under the tweet above—while others pushed back against his ridiculous thoughts about HIV/AIDS.



View this post on Instagram

A post shared by Javier Muñoz (Javi) (@javiermofficial)

“You can continue to irresponsibly spread ignorance, fear, & misinformation, or, educate yourself,” wrote Javier Muñoz, the star of the Broadway hit Hamilton. “Either way, I stand here as living proof that all you say AND imply are false. I am LIVING proof. Do better.” (Muñoz is living with HIV and was on the cover of POZ. Read “ In the Spotlight” for an example of a celebrity who can inspire, educate and entertain from center stage.)

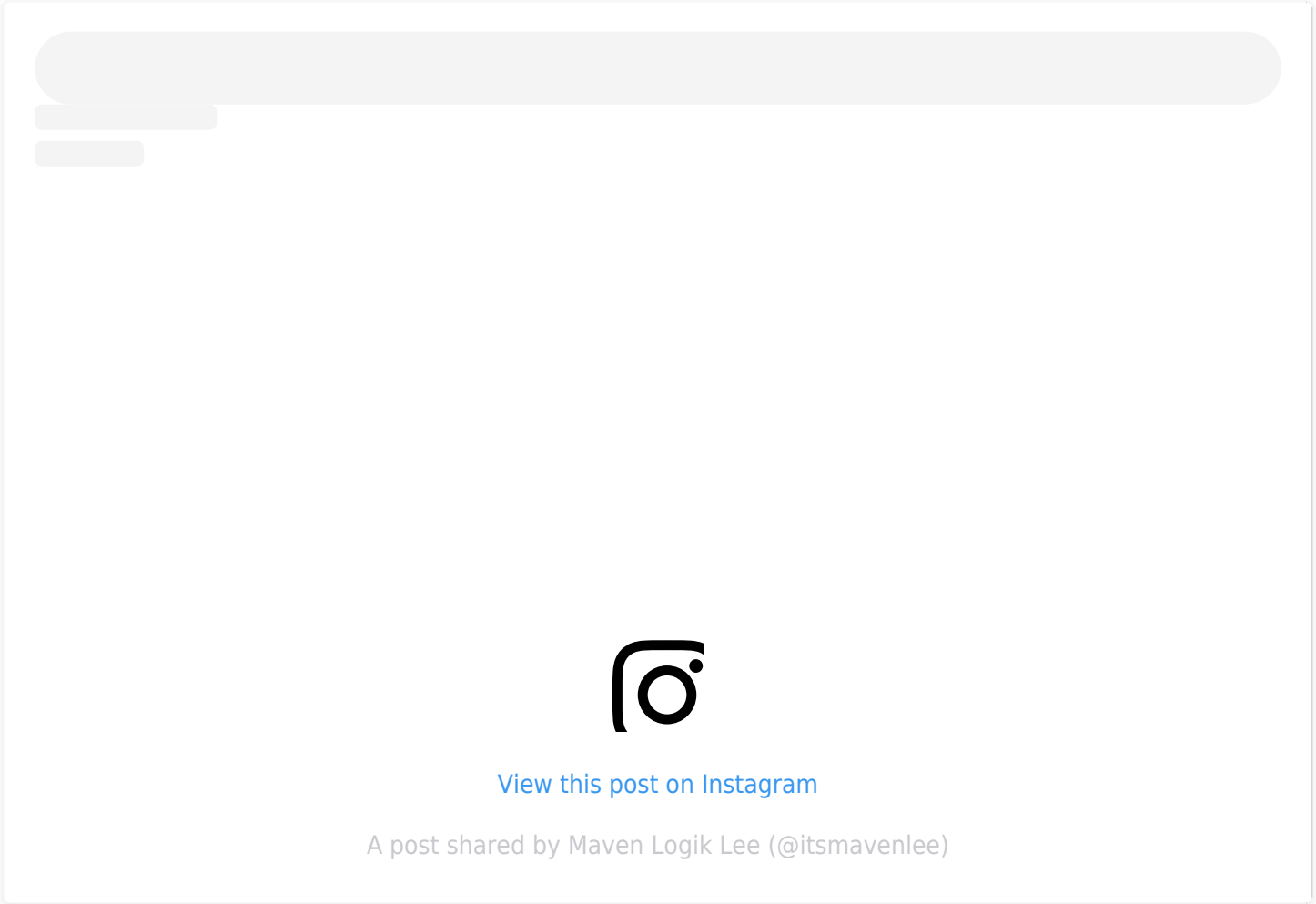
In his post-concert Instagram story, DaBaby revisited the topics of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and gay men. He said that when he told fans to put their cell phone lights on if they met his criteria, that all the lights in the audience went up—including those of his gay fans because they “don’t got f---ing AIDS, stupid a-- n---as. They don’t got AIDS,” reported Billboard in a follow-up article.

“My gay fans, they take care of themselves,” DaBaby continued in the 19-minute video. “They ain’t no nasty gay n---as. See what I’m saying? They ain’t no junkies in the street. The hell you talking about, n---as? Then I said if you ain’t sucking di-- in the parking lot, put your cellphone lighter up. You know what my gay fans did? Put that motherf---ing light up, n---a, ’cause my gay fans ain’t going for that. They got class. They ain’t sucking no di-- in no parking lot. N---a, you gotta get a room. A good one, five-star hotel. Even my gay fans got standards.”

While such comments might be read as proof that DaBaby isn’t homophobic, as many on social media claimed, his explanation does stigmatize anyone living with HIV or an STI as being nasty or dirty or low-class. Unfortunately, it’s not uncommon to hear people with HIV state that dealing with

the stigma is worse than the disease itself. For more insight, see "Dear HIV-Negative Men: Living With HIV Isn't as Bad as You Think" and "New National Challenge to Reduce HIV-Related Stigma and Disparities."

Thankfully, other HIV advocates, including those in the Black gay community, have taken to social media to offer a more enlightened view of life with the virus. Below is an example from Maven Logik Lee of St. Louis, who's also a ballscene legend and appears on the upcoming season 2 of The Kiki Show (it will air later this summer on Amazon Prime).



Then there's DaBaby's completely false statement that HIV or an STI can kill you in a few weeks. For the record, HIV is a virus that attacks the immune system. Over the course of several years, as the immune system breaks down and isn't able to fight off infections and cancers, a person with HIV can develop AIDS. To learn more about the differences, see "What Are HIV and AIDS?" in the POZ Basics.

What's more, both the health and life expectancy of people with HIV have dramatically improved since the early days of the epidemic in the 1980s and '90s. In fact, people with HIV who start antiretroviral treatment now have have a normal life expectancy.

To learn more about HIV/AIDS, check out the POZ Basics, which covers everything from transmission risks to prevention and treatment.

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