At the end of 2015, 36.7 million people were living with HIV/AIDS worldwide (WHO, 2017). Living with this disease puts individuals at increased risk for mental and physical health complications. Opportunistic infections and increased serious mental health conditions are common (NIH, 2016). Advances in antiretroviral therapies have been made to increase life expectancy but often times can adversely affect the individuals quality of life.

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is one way to help improve quality of life. One form of CAM, massage therapy may offer benefits to PLWHA in terms of ability to cope with stress.

The purpose of this study is to identify how massage therapy affects coping mechanism for individuals living with HIV/AIDS in regards to the Transactional Model. The study was able to identify that with one treatment of massage therapy participants experienced a shared change in emotional well-being and functional status. However, further research should be conducted in attempts to identify if outcomes were long term and added in changes of health behaviors.

Limitations included: only conducting one massage therapy session and one post interview.