

Changing communities

Cultural and Linguistic Diverse communities
and gay men HIV prevention education

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“The term **Post-Aids** is used to describe the current context of the HIV epidemic for gay men as a different experience than that of ‘crisis’. The current context is characterized by a level of acceptance of HIV as part of gay (sexual) life and of safe sex and transmission as ‘constants’ in **gay men cultures**. In this context, there is less of a lived urgency and sense of crisis management for gay men in their sexual lives. The work of education is, therefore, quite a different kind of work than it was even five years ago; messages and promotional activities need to engage men in quite different ways than previous messages of urgency and crisis.”

(Enacting Sexual Contexts: Negotiating the self, sex, and risk in sex on premises venues, by David McInnes, Michael Hurley, Garrett Prestage and Olympia Hendry)

Questions asked to respond from gay men of CALD communities context

1. Are you delivering the right message about HIV/AIDS?
2. Do you need to change your message according to the times?
3. Are you up to date with the new developments in HIV/AIDS?

The statement assumes and suggests that HIV has a place in all gay men's lives. This presentation will explore the relationship between HIV/AIDS prevention education and gay men from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. Crucial questions to be examined are:

- Where / how do gay men from CALD communities situate HIV/AIDS education in their lives?
- How much currency does HIV have in the lives of these men?

Suggested questions to consider

- Does HIV have a place in gay men from CALD lives? Yes/No

If yes, to what degree and where is it situated in these men's lives

- Do other life issues take precedence over HIV?

If so where does HIV rank among life issues?

Gay Asian Proud (GAP)

- Peer based discussion and support group for gay men of all Asian backgrounds
- Aims to affirm cultural and sexual identities
- Diverse presentation of cultural backgrounds
- Structured workshop
- Meet monthly
- Age 20's – 60's
- Various stages of 'coming out'
- Various stages of residency

Life issues faced by gay Asian men

Discrimination

- Racism
- Sexual racism
- Marginalisation
- Alienation

Relationship status

- Single
- In Relationship
- Wanting to be in a relationship
- Love, sex and intimacy are separate from HIV

Continue

Life issues faced by gay Asian men

Security

- Residency status, short term, illegal immigrants, students, on working visa: issue of returning home and wanting to stay here
- Lack of finance
- Accommodation
- Employment/employability/unemployed/low income earners

Lack of education leads to low literacy skill. Hence, inability to comprehend complex HIV prevention education messages

Family (obligation to carry and able to continue on family traditions. Notion of being a man is to be able to 'provide' to family

Continue

Life issues faced by gay Asian men

Cultural

- Different belief system and values
- Religion
- View to sex
- View to health
- View sexual health
- Language: no direct translation of HIV into primary cultural language

Acceptance and place to belong

- A place to express 'gayness' and ethnicity
- A place with their own communities
- Loneliness
- Coming out
- Negotiating 'gay scene'
- Newly arrive

Questions derive from this are

- Other life issues are more tangible and urgent to deal with than HIV?
- Where does HIV sit within these priority list for gay men from CALD backgrounds?
- HIV takes longer to have any impact on individual lives

A profile of participant who attended Gay Asian Proud (GAP)

- South East Asian
- Arrived at 3
- 26 years old
- Lives with family
- One sibling
- Well educated
- High level of social and political awareness
- Visual artist
- Self identification
- Becoming more involved with gay community

“WHAT IS HIV?”

Two key words highlighted earlier ‘Post-Aids’ and ‘gay men cultures’

Questions came out from this case study for me are

- He is not in the ‘post-aids’ context.
- What happen to those who identify themselves as ‘gay’ but are not connected or involved in gay men cultures, how can we reach them?

Questions I want to raise are

- Where has he been?
- Where does he get his information from?
- How does he learn?
- Where have we been?
- How can we get to 'hard to reach' target groups?
- How can we identify their learning source and insert our messages into their live contexts?

Let have a look the questions posed to me earlier

1. Are you delivering the right message about HIV/AIDS?
2. Do you need to change your message according to the times?
3. Are you up to date with the new developments in HIV/AIDS?

How have we changed in message delivering?

Education toll

- Away from structured information session to movies, art exhibitions, performance arts, other gay and lesbian cultural events and social activities

Structure

- Away from structured workshop at AIDS council to more free flowing and woven education messages into everyday living, events and into more lived experience

Potential difficulty

- Makes my role a lot more complex and ambivalent
- Very difficult to predict

Conclusion

In closing lives issues are interconnected. Health is another jigsaw puzzle of life. Health can't be compartmentalised as a stand alone issue. Effective HIV prevention education should be meaningful and have applications within a target group's lived context.