

**MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN****Facing Facts**

Let's face it...

You can't hide from the issue any longer. You can't sweep it under the rug and hope it goes away.

**Men who have sex with men are being infected with HIV in increasing numbers!**

[According to a recent study in seven US cities, one in every three young Black Men who have sex with other men, were HIV infected!](#)

**Beginning The Dialogue**

Part of the problem so far has been that men who have sex with men have been reluctant to engage in any sort of open dialogue, fearing ridicule for what goes on in their bedroom. The truth is you really can't concern yourself with the opinions of other people. Their prejudices and biases are something *they* have to deal with by themselves.

**Big White Lies**

Some of us have our heads stuck way back in the 80's and for some reason still believe that HIV/AIDS is a white, gay man's disease. Well, let's clear this up right now: HIV/AIDS is blind, just like Justice. It doesn't care who it infects, regardless of whether the person is white or black or brown or pink.

And if you think that HIV/AIDS is characteristic of one race in particular, it might surprise you to know that it ravishes more African Americans than any other group of men who have sex with men (MSM). [In fact, in 1989, men of color represented 32% of AIDS cases in MSMs; by 2000, that figured had jumped to almost 46%.](#) Oh, and another thing: you can get HIV/AIDS from oral sex. People infected with HIV carry the virus in their blood and this virus can be passed from person to person by any of the following ways:

1. Through an intravenous injection with a syringe
2. Through a break in the skin (like a cut or sore)
3. And through the linings of the vagina, the rectum and, yes, THE MOUTH. It stands to bear that in a culture where two young people are infected with HIV every hour of every day, it's dangerous to take any chances in our sexual practices. [Protect yourself](#) - even in oral sex and especially in anal sex - by using a condom or a dental dam (a little piece of latex recommended for oral-genital or oral-anal sex).

With HIV/AIDS, as with other deadly things in life, PREVENTION IS DEFINITELY BETTER THAN WAITING FOR A CURE

**Dealing with HOMO-P-H-O-B-I-A**

We understand that there are people in our society that look down upon men who have sex with other men. And like we said before, there is very little that we can do to change the opinions of these people.

We know all the awful names used for men who have sex with other men. These words can hurt, especially when used by family and friends. While some of us have families that are supportive of us being gay, others of us don't. It's unfortunate when sometimes the people whom are supposed to love us, no matter what, turn out to be our harshest judges.

“No son of mine can be gay!”

Comments like these can make some of us afraid to be ourselves. And so we grow silent, not realizing that when it comes to HIV/AIDS, **SILENCE CAN BE DEADLY!**

Black culture places a great value on masculinity and tends to shun anything that seems stereotypically “un-masculine.” So some men who have sex with men can find themselves trying to mesh two worlds, somehow trying to find that ‘comfort zone’ between two seemingly conflicting individualities: being a Black man.

**BECOME COMFORTABLE WITH WHO YOU ARE!**

For the record, **don't go around expecting others to accept who you are if you can't even accept yourself!**

When you are honest with yourself, you find that you worry far less about what others think —And besides, true friends and relatives love us no matter who we are. Sometimes we just have to give them the chance.

There are caring, understanding men and women who have made it their life's work not to judge, BUT TO HELP. [they're out there](#) and we're here to help you find them.

### **Dealing with S-E-X**

We are going to TALK about it.

As tiny as the word sex appears it can cause some BIG problems. But it doesn't have to. It can help if we take the time to look—really look—at the types of people we have sex with:

#### **Sex and the Younger Man**

Let's say you met him [at the club](#) or at a bar, or over at your boy's house after your 3 o'clock class. You two are about the same age and you've gotten to know him better over the past couple of weeks. A little of 'this' leads to more of 'that' - and now you find yourself on the verge of having sex with him.

Stop yourself!

#### **STOP YOURSELF!**

Yes, stop right there, in the heat of that moment.

Slow down ....STOP and THINK.

You **MUST** think about the consequences when sex is involved. Especially when you know HIV/AIDS and other [STDS](#) are out there. Think about the lives (his and your own) that you could be putting at risk, and then ask yourself:

1. Do I really want to have sex with this person?
2. Am I prepared to deal with the consequences, whatever they may be?
3. Are we going to use protection?

If your answer is "no" to *any* of the questions sex should no longer be a consideration. If, on the other hand, the answer is "yes" to each question, then what you do next is up to you.

#### **Sex and the Older Man**

He approached you while you were waiting at the subway station. He's a big shot lawyer at some downtown firm, and over the past month or so he's taken you to five star restaurants, driven you around in his hot new ride and made you feel like a million bucks! Now, you're lying on his bed in his high-rise condo, getting ready to have sex.

**STOP, AND ASK YOURSELF, "AM I IN CONTROL HERE?"**

When dating older men, you can often feel vulnerable and powerless. WELL, DON'T! JUST BECAUSE HE'S OLDER DOES NOT MEAN HE'S SMARTER! Nor does it mean that he's more knowledgeable, for that matter - especially when it comes to sex.

IT'S UP TO **YOU** TO THINK ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES and to think about:

1. Do I really want to have sex with this person?
2. Am I prepared to deal with the consequences, whatever they may be?
3. Are we going to use protection?

If you answer "no" to any of the above questions, you need to really **RECONSIDER HAVING SEX**. If, however, every answer is a "yes" then what you do next is for you to decide.

Always think of the risks involved and remember that **NO MATTER HOW MUCH OLDER, OR MORE MATURE, MORE WEALTHY OR MORE POWERFUL HE MAY SEEM, IT'S STILL OK FOR YOU TO SAY NO!**

**Sex and the Woman**

Yes, some MSM have sex with women! You meet some beautiful lady and you dance all night with her [at the club](#). Afterwards you take her to your place, you two start 'making out' and before you know it, you think you are ready to have sex.

**STOP YOURSELF!**

Consider the risks and remember to ask yourself:

1. Do I really want to have sex with this person?
2. Am I prepared to deal with the consequences, whatever they may be?
3. Are we going to use protection?

If "no" is the answer to any of question above, then you should not even be considering sex. Make certain that "yes" is the answer to each question, *and then* decide whether or not sex is an option you want to pursue.

## **STOP** The Silence

## Men Who Have Sex With Men

Oh - and another thing: **BE HONEST WITH THE LADIES**. Take a second and put yourself in her shoes. If you were her, you would want to know everything you were getting into.

You may think that your sex life is none of her business, but when you have sex with her, **EVERYONE YOU'VE HAD SEX WITH BECOMES HER BUSINESS. RESPECT HER, RESPECT YOURSELF. USE PROTECTION EVERYTIME**

### **Testing! Testing! 1-2-3**

One of the best things you can do to protect yourself and your partner(s) from HIV and **AIDS is to GET TESTED**.

There are no words to tell you how important it is that you and your partner(s) get tested - **REGULARLY!** And by regularly I mean that you should **GET TESTED AT LEAST ONE TIME EVERY 6 MONTHS**, since six months is about how long it takes HIV to show up in current testing methods.

Don't give yourself any excuses. [Go to a health facility and talk with a counselor](#). Click on [the hook up](#) section and it will connect you the location(s) of the nearest testing facilities. Oh, before we forget, there's one more thing we should tell you about getting tested: **KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!** And, yes, you **DO** have rights when it comes to getting tested for HIV. Get to know them before getting tested.

- **Sources Cited**

**According to a recent study in seven US cities, one in every three young Black Men who have sex with other men, were HIV infected!**

“United States HIV & AIDS Statements: Gay Men.” HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report. December 2001. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Accessed February 10, 2003.

<http://www.avert.org/gaystata.htm>

**In fact, in 1989, men of color represented 32% of AIDS cases in MSMs; by 2000, that figured had jumped to almost 46%.**

“HIV/AIDS and Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM).” March 2000. Whitman-Walker Clinic, Inc. Accessed February 10, 2003.

<http://www.wwc.org/PDF/factsmsm.pdf>

- **Glossary Items**

None

- **STOP The Silence Website Elements**

**THEY'RE OUT THERE**

See STOP The Silence, “The Hook UP”

**AT THE CLUB**

See STOP The Silence, “After Hours”

**STD**

See STOP The Silence, “My Friend, There’s HIV And...”

**THE HOOK UP**

See STOP The Silence, “The Hook UP”

**KNOW YOUR TESTING RIGHTS.**

See STOP The Silence, “Know Your Testing Rights”