

You thought it
might be love.

Now you
know it is...

if he doesn't
reach for a condom  will you?



between the sheets

Why the
gay scene
is like TV's
survivor

**same same
but different:**
When one of you
is positive

The stages of
lerv

**crouching tigers,
hidden thoughts:**
What we're really thinking
when we pick up

**how safe is
your relationship?**



napwa



from the editor



It's so simple. Boy meets boy. Boy falls in love with boy. Boys move into committed cottage surrounded by same-sexed white picket fence-age.

If only! Relationships are a pain in the arse and we all know it.

The constant renegotiation, the making and breaking of petty rules, the stress of maintaining your own life in a nervous tango with the boyfriend.

Then there's the endless compromising which you always seem to do more of than your partner.

And yet we really can't get enough of these arrangements, even though they're not getting any easier. We might be more sexually liberated than ever before – but having that extra freedom doesn't mean we're any less anxious.

Take sex for instance. If you're monogamous, then good luck to you, but if you're polygamous it can get really complicated.

For instance: Do you both fool around? Can you stay over at a fling's house? Do you only do threesomes? Can you play around only at sex-on-premises venues? What if one of you brings home a sexually transmitted infection?

Add condoms and yes, HIV to the mix, and it can get truly messy.

Do you know if your partner's HIV positive? Should you both get tested, especially if you decide to throw away the condoms? Do you have unsafe sex with other people?

The bedroom, especially when it reeks with the fresh smell of new romance, can seem like the last place where HIV should enter the equation. Where is there room for a virus with all these pink fluffy clouds and fat-arsed cupids?

And yet some new HIV infections are happening in new relationships, when the rubbers get tossed out the window before –

Before what? A frank chat about HIV? Joint HIV testing?

It's up to you, and it's one of the issues that this magazine is all about.

One thing is certain: times have changed. HIV is less of a deadly threat than it once was, so our relationship with it has changed.

Things aren't as simple as they once were, even though we know that regardless of the decisions we make in our various relationships, using condoms and water-based lube is still the most effective way of preventing HIV infection.

Our relationship with HIV it seems, has become as complicated as our relationships with each other.

The virus isn't going away. But neither are we. So perhaps it's time for a rethink about what goes on between the sheets.

Tim Benzie

Contacts

For more information concerning HIV/AIDS, or on any other topic covered in this resource please refer the AIDS Council or PLWHA organisation in your State or Territory.

Australian Capital Territory

AIDS Action Council of the ACT (AACACT) (02) 6257 2855
Website: www.aidsaction.org.au
Email: enquiries@aidaction.org.au
PLWHA ACT (02) 6257 4985
Website: www.aidsaction.org.au/plwha
Email: plwha.act@aidaction.org.au

New South Wales

AIDS Council of NSW (ACON)
Sydney (02) 9206 2000
Western Sydney (02) 9204 2400
Northern Rivers (02) 6622 1555
Hunter (02) 4929 3464
Illawarra(02) 4226 1163
Mid-North Coast (02) 6584 0943
Website: www.acon.org.au
Email: acon@acon.org.au
FreeCall 1800 063 060
PLWHA NSW (02) 9361 6011
Website: www.plwha.org.au
Email: admin@plwha.org.au
FreeCall: 1800 245 677

Northern Territory

Northern Territory AIDS and Hepatitis Council (NTAHC) (08) 8941 1711
Website: www.ntahc.org.au
Email: info@ntahc.org.au
PLWHA NT (08) 8941 1711

Queensland

Queensland AIDS Council (QuAC)
Brisbane (07) 3017 1777
Sunshine Coast (07) 5452 9805
Gold Coast (07) 5572 8739
Townsville (07) 4729 2263
Cairns (07) 4041 5451
Rockhampton (07) xxx TBC
Website: www.quac.org.au
Email: info@quac.org.au
Queensland Positive People (QPP)
Brisbane/Statewide (07) 3013 5555
Cairns (07) TBC
Gold Coast (07) TBC
Sunshine Coast (07) TBC
Rockhampton (07) TBC
Mackay (07) TBC
Townsville (07) TBC
Men's Sexual Health Line
FreeCall 1800 155 141
Statewide Education
FreeCall 1800 177 434

South Australia

AIDS Council of South Australia/
Gay Men's Health Centre (ACSA/GMHC)
(08) 8362 1611
Website: www.acsa.org.au
Email: information@acsa.org.au
PLWHA SA (08) 8293 3700
Website: www.hivsa.org.au

Tasmania

Tasmanian Council on AIDS,
Hepatitis & Related Diseases (TasCAHRD)
(03) 6234 1342
Website: www.tascahrd.org.au
Email: mail@tascahrd.org.au

Victoria

Victorian AIDS Council/Gay Men's Health Centre (VAC/GMHC) (03) 9865 6700
Website: www.vicaids.asn.au
Email: enquiries@vicaids.asn.au
PLWHA Vic (03) 9865 6722
Website: www.gaynet.com.au/plwha
Email: plwhavic@netspace.net.au

Western Australia

Western Australian AIDS Council
(08) 9482 0000
Website: www.waaid.com
Email: waac@waaid.com

Disclaimer

Models pictured do not represent actual couples, and are not necessarily indicative of the models' sexuality, HIV status, or sexual practice.

contents

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 1

4 can we talk?

Four couples share the rules that keep them happy and content. But how safe are their decisions?

6 surviving the scene

Cartoonist Jeff Allan takes a satirical look at the complex world of gay singledom.

8 ask the hairdresser

Sage advice from the resident agony aunt and stylist Miss Snippy.

9 lerv story

Tim Denoon on tackling the perfect boyfriend (and keeping him).

10 words unspoken

The assumptions we make when we decide things are better left unsaid.

12 domestic violence

Spotting the telltale signs.

13 between ourselves

A pos/neg couple tell their story.

14 online but way off

Internet profiles and first impressions.



Editor

Tim Benzie

Art Direction and Design

Jamie Carroll Graphic Design
www.jcgd.com.au

Contributors

Tim Denoon, Tim Benzie,
Meg Price

Illustrator

Jeff Allan

Photographer

John McRae
www.johnmcr-ae-art.com

Models

Chris, Hans, Moe, Oren, Rob, Rob,
Roma & Scott.

Thanks to

Brad Gray, Karl O'Farrell,
Sydney Star Observer,
The Piccadilly Hotel, Kings Cross,
and Garrett Prestage, AIDS Council
of NSW (ACON)

Produced by

The Australian Federation of AIDS
Organisations/National People Living
With HIV/AIDS (ANET) Education Team:
Phillip Keen, Ross Duffin, Simon
Donohoe; Dion Butler; Julie Wylie.
www.afao.org.au

Funding line – TBC by DHA

can we talk?



Craig



Barry

GAY RELATIONSHIPS CAN BE COMPLICATED ANIMALS: EVERY COUPLE SEEMS TO HAVE DIFFERENT RULES ABOUT WHO THEY CAN HAVE SEX WITH AND HOW. BUT WHAT HAPPENS IF WE BREAK THE RULES?

THESE FOUR COUPLES ALL HAVE ARRANGEMENTS AIMED AT PROTECTING THEIR HEARTS AND THEIR HEALTH - BUT HOW SAFE ARE THEY? SEE HOW YOU RATE CRAIG & BARRY, JUSTIN & TOBY, RICHARD & CHRIS AND MARK & PATRICK.



Patrick



Mark



Justin



Toby

Q. How long have you guys been a couple?

Patrick: Three years

Mark: And living together for two years and 10 months. We're very lesbian.

Q. So do you use condoms with each other?

Mark: Oh God.

Patrick: It's okay Mark. We started fucking without condoms a couple of months into our relationship and then got tested. And I turned out to be HIV positive, but not Mark.

Q. That must have been difficult.

Patrick: Difficult, but looking back now we were lucky – well Mark was at least! We were just so in love we thought, I don't know –

Mark: That love was our condom?

Patrick: We must have been crazy.

Mark: We use condoms now all the time and it's fine.

Q. Do you see other people?

Patrick: Just threesomes. I'm a shocking exhibitionist and Mark loves to watch.

Mark: So it's perfect!

Q. How long have you guys been together?

Justin: About a year.

Q. So do you use condoms?

Justin: Yes.

Toby: It's just easier.

Q. Have you had an HIV test recently?

Justin: We had one just after we started going out, and had another one recently and we're both negative.

Toby: We just figure if we just use condoms all the time we don't put each other at risk.

Q. Have there been any hiccups along the way?

Justin: No – not that I know of. It's a little weird, and maybe we're both in denial, but I just hate talking about this stuff. I'd almost rather not know – almost.

Toby: I definitely would like to know mister! But seriously, if you ever cheat on me I want that conversation to be about our relationship and trust – not 'I'm now positive and I've infected you as well.' It's too horrible and too complicated.

Justin: Condoms are better than the stress.

SOMETHING TO CONSIDER:

The honeymoon period is a blissful time, but recent studies suggest HIV infections are more likely to occur in new relationships than in long-term relationships.

SOMETHING TO CONSIDER:

More than 70% of gay men surveyed recently said they found it easy to discuss with their partners the sex they have together, but not necessarily sex in general*. But Toby and Justin's ability to talk about condoms – and their decision to keep using them – means they don't need to worry about HIV.

can we talk?

Q: How long have you guys been seeing each other?

Craig: About three months.

Barry: Three months exactly. You forgot!

Q: So are you positive or negative?

Craig: We're both negative, because we went and had HIV tests about two months ago. We'd both been safe for ages before that.

Q. Do you use condoms with each other?

Barry: No, which is why we took the test. That night after we got the results was wild.

Q. So do you see other people?

Craig: I've always been keen to, but Barry's a little reluctant.

Barry: It's fine. I just wish I'd known you wanted to have sex with other people before we started throwing away the condoms.

Q. But Craig, will you use condoms with other people?

Craig: Always.

SOMETHING TO CONSIDER:

30% of guys in a 2003 survey said they didn't have a clear agreement about sex outside the relationship*. It's a big issue to be shy about! It seems Barry didn't know Craig as well as he thought – even though he agreed to have unprotected sex with him.



Chris



Richard

Q. How long have you guys been seeing each other?

Chris: A year. We're moving in together next month.

Q. So ... are you Mr and Mr Monogamy?

Richard: Not quite!

Chris: We have sex outside of the relationship, but we don't share details – it makes me uncomfortable.

Q. What about condoms?

Richard: We have safe sex with other people –

Chris: So we can ditch the condoms with each other.

Richard: We're both HIV negative.

Chris: Well, as far as we know. I haven't been tested in years.

Q. What if one of you slips up with somebody else?

Chris: We don't have a rule for that. It won't happen.

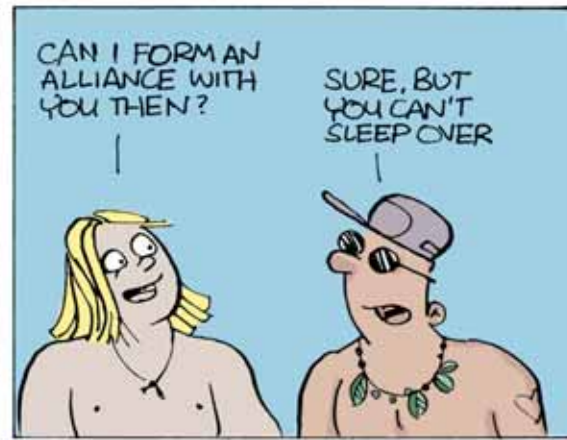
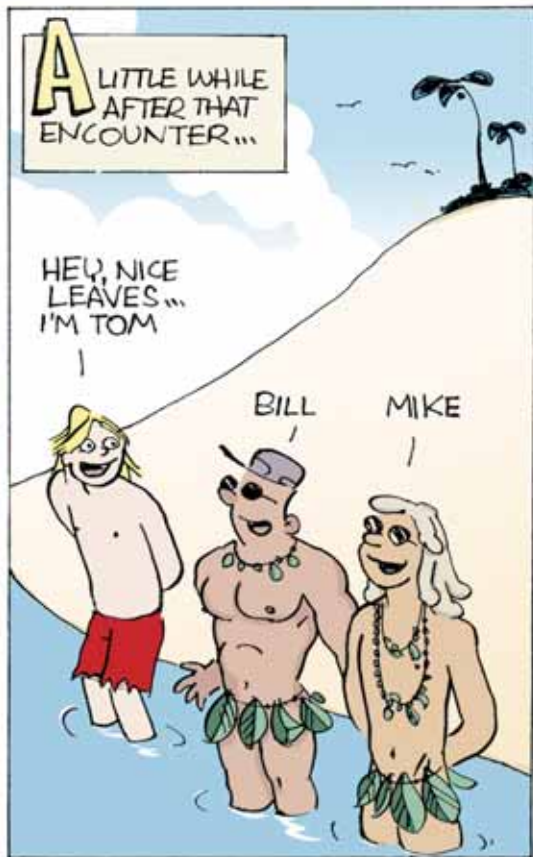
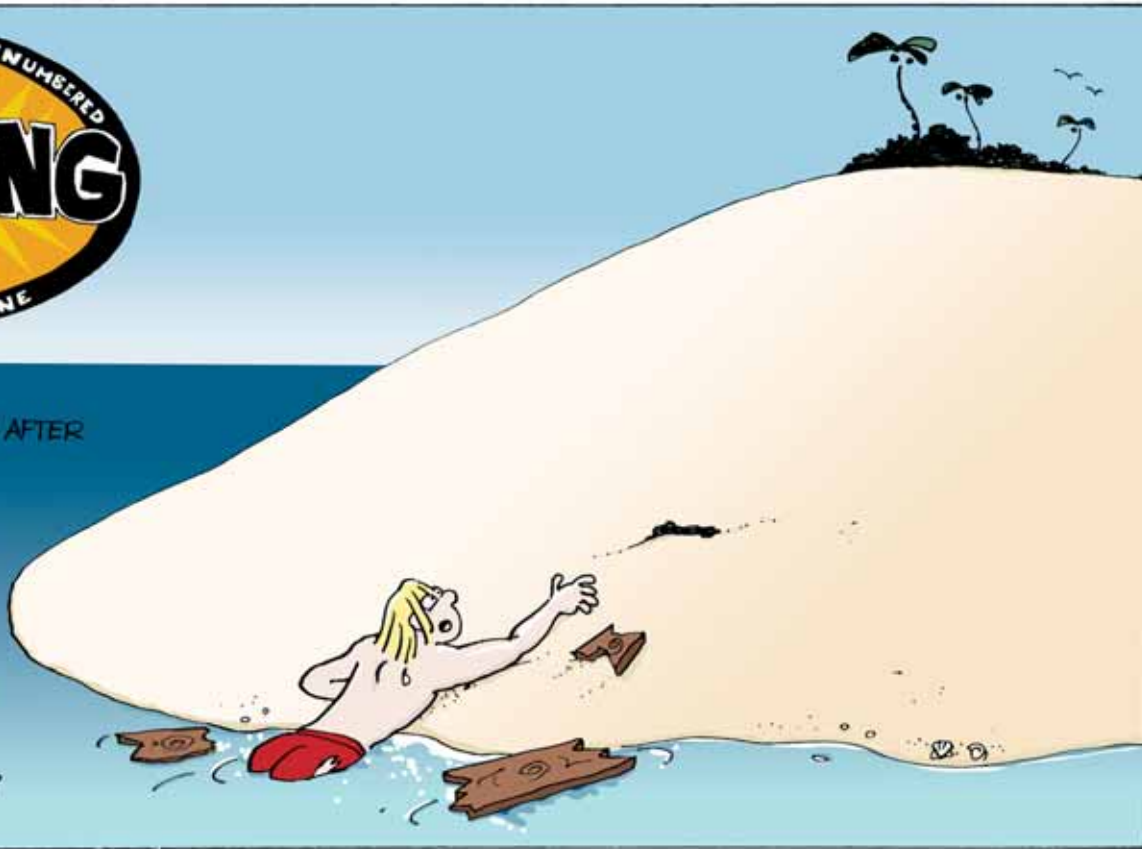
SOMETHING TO CONSIDER:

Over a quarter of guys surveyed last year said they didn't tell their partners when they broke their agreement*. If you're setting up an agreement about sex outside the relationship, make sure you discuss what you'll both do if somebody slips up. If Richard has unsafe sex outside of the relationship, Chris isn't making it easy for him to fess up.

*The Health in Men Study, NCHCR, NCHSR, AFAO, ACON. Sydney 2001-2004.

OUT OF THE LOOP OUTNUMBERED
SURVIVING
 OUT ON THE SCENE

TOM'S SINGLE AGAIN AFTER YEARS IN A COSY RELATIONSHIP ON THE MAINLAND. NOW HE'S WASHED UP ON...
SINGLES ISLAND
 CAN HE SURVIVE?



TOM IS ALMOST READY FOR HIS FIRST TRIBAL COUNCIL ELIMINATION. HE'S FORMED AN ALLIANCE WITH KEN, AARON AND STEVE, AS WELL AS MIKE (BUT NOT BILL)...



ask the hairstresser



**GOT A TRICKY QUESTION AND WANT
A NO-NONSENSE ANSWER? ASK MISS SNIPPY.**

Dear Miss Snippy,

My partner and I love the nightlife and we love to boogie. Over the last few months this has increased after we started using crystal. We finish work on Friday and don't finish partying until late Sunday night – the partying has become the focus point of our life together and we live the week in anticipation of the weekend.

However, I want to stop using. Crystal has started to impact on my work, I have trouble turning up for work on Monday, and my work colleagues avoid me for most of the week, as I am usually irritable and very moody.

At home my partner and I are always arguing and our sex life has turned into a crystal-only event – we never have sex during the week, only on the weekend and crystal is there with us, and usually there are other guys as well.

My partner doesn't want to stop and doesn't see a problem with how crystal is impacting on our lives.

**Signed
Tina – You're Fired**

Dear Tina – You're Fired,

No matter how much fun it was at the disco – and beyond – no one wants to turn up to work (again) feeling like the split ends on an early 80's pop star. As you've discovered crystal doesn't always know when to leave the disco, but it sounds like you do.

One of the consequences of using crystal meth is that it is highly addictive. Quitting, whether it's alcohol, drugs, cigarettes or peroxide is really difficult and takes determination and will power. It can be even more difficult in a relationship when one person wants to stop and the other doesn't.

But you know what? Lifestyle is not about copying each other's hairstyle – it's about doing what suits you. Communicate clearly to your partner what you wish to do and why.

The best piece of advice I can give you is to get support – talk to your friends, join a group or go and see a counsellor. The more support you have the easier it will be, especially in your situation where you have a partner involved.

You also probably need to think about the following:
Be aware that this is your decision. Your quitting may not result in your partner stopping as well – don't go into this thinking you can change him as well. He needs to decide about his own use on his own terms.

Quitting may put a further strain on your relationship and – I hate to say – even end it. Be aware of this possibility but don't use it as a reason not to quit or to start again. It is possible that your partner may try and manipulate you into using crystal again (depending on how strong his reliance on it is). Try to recognise this for what it is and brush it aside as best you can.

Work out a plan for quitting ahead of time – this needs to include eating and sleeping and even time off work to allow you (both physically and emotionally) time to adjust to not using crystal.

Be aware of temptation. Organise some alternative activities. It may be best to avoid (at least at first) situations and times when crystal use is high and feels necessary.

Good luck, Tina. It won't be easy, but I hope you have the courage, will power and energy to stick with your decision. However, a word of warning: you still may not have sex during the week – I mean, who has the time?

Miss Snippy

Dear Miss Snippy,

I am totally bored with all this relationships talk. All my gay friends are getting 'partners'. These 'partnered' people seem to drop the fact they have a 'partner' into the conversation in the first three minutes, as if it makes them more important or something. They get one of these 'partners' and I seem to drop off the dinner party invitation list. The only list I seem to stay on is the wedding invite list – along with the gift suggestions. What about us guys who celebrate singledom?

**Yours truly,
Sassy and single**

Dear Sassy,

I hear you! This girl knows how you feel.

It's easy for couples to forget to maintain their single friends because they're too busy maintaining each other. Just like a relationship, being single takes work.

What do you want, recognition? From whom? You don't need it. It sounds to me like you have a very strong sense of who you are and your dance card is rarely empty.

Accessories are important but if that is what you think these 'partners' really are then you don't need one.

Adopt a flippant tone, explain to your gay friends that the diversity they stand for could do with some confirmation by your single presence at their dinner tables.

You can have a totally fulfilled life and be single but just remind your friends that you need to be included or you won't read their requests on the bridal registry – and it'll be florid tablecloths from now on!

**Yours always,
Miss Snippy.**



serv story

IT'S ONE THING TO TACKLE THE MAN OF YOUR DREAMS ON THE STREET AND QUITE ANOTHER TO GET HIM TO HELP PICK OUT WALLPAPER.

TIM DENOON OFFERS HIS TIPS ON PROGRESSING FROM ONE-NIGHT SHAG TO SAME-SEX MARRIAGE.

You're single, you're at the pub and you're waiting for your lager to kick in. Oh, to be one of those "married" couples, smugly spouting "We stayed home this weekend," and "The sex just gets better!"

Then you spot him – a spunk in the corner with a broken footy nose. Let's call him Brendan. Would he rather be watching a DVD snuggled on a couch on a Saturday night?

Could he be the one? Sit tight, relax and read, because here's a handy road map to get you to the church on time.

1. Meeting and Greeting

Get the barman to send footy nose man a drink, then deliver a fresh coaster in person. Avoid saying "I loathe a sticky bench top," and instead strike up a conversation about the latest footy results or the high price of rhinoplasty (whichever seems more appropriate). If the guy seems keen and wants to talk more – proceed to the next step. If he sculls his drink in silence and leaves the bar – don't follow him. He's probably a coaster collector who lives with his mother.

2. Getting To Know You

The first date! It's a nice restaurant, somewhere classy that serves sea salt on your french fries. You're nervous, you're hopeful, you want to have sex with him under the table. Brendan says he'd love to blow on your hot potato, but he's been reading this new self-help book that suggests waiting until after the third date. He's pretty convincing. "It's worse in footy," he explains. "You have to wait five tackles for the scrum."

3. The Honeymoon

Three dates? Is he crazy? You tackle him outside the restaurant (literally) and before you know it you've become inseparable. Everything he does is adorable, and everything you say makes him laugh. Can it get any better? It's been almost four months and you're still fucking like Rabbits. It's why they call it a honeymoon – you're high as the sky and your arse is always sore (in a really, really good way).

4. Don't Panic

Does he have to watch another replay of the 1982 Grand Final? Weren't we supposed to visit his family this weekend? Is he ashamed to be seen with me? Is he seeing someone else? Should I wear my lucky jocks for that "oh, so romantic" joint HIV test? Will Madonna ever regain her rightful position as Empress of the Known Universe? Thank Christ for that self-help book. Let's see, Chapter Four – Get Over Yourself Girlfriend. Hmm. Good advice. He's adorable and I love him – just look at the expert way he handles that remote control.

5. Moving In

You've given up the lease on your studio apartment and moved in to his studio cubbyhole. There's a heated argument about who gets the top or bottom drawer, but it's okay – you've both learnt the importance of being versatile. More serious however is who gets to hold the remote – never underestimate this make-or-break stage of a relationship. Communication is the key. If you're forced to watch an episode of *The Footy Show* just remind yourself that compromise is one of the first steps in a mature partnership. Keep a positive attitude – occasionally those boofheads take their pants off.

6. Moving On

With any luck your relationship will continue to grow and evolve. Perhaps you've even thought about adoption – the only tough decision is whether a shitsu or a labradoodle would be best. The subject of threesomes has even come up and to your complete surprise you handled it like a seasoned professional – it helped of course that the third party was a reserve for the Broncos.

7. Popping The Question

He arrives home one day with a bunch of roses and a VB longneck – he's got something important to ask you. It's the same feeling you had that first night in the restaurant. Oh God, is he getting down on his knees? There's a ring! It's got his initials engraved inside a tiny football. It's a big decision, one that will change your life forever. Is he the one? Can you really imagine spending the rest of your life together? Is the Leagues Club available for the reception? What does that self-help book say about indecision? Let's stay home this weekend and think about it. Apparently the sex just gets better.

1. Emotional Abuse

The abusive partner may make his boyfriend feel inadequate, unable to make his own decisions, or humiliate him in public. Research has also shown that in gay relationships, the abuser might threaten to expose the sexuality of his partner against his wishes, and even his HIV status.

2. Economic Abuse

The abusive partner might make his partner feel he cannot financially afford to end the relationship. He may limit spending, or even take control of his finances.

3. Social Control

Phone calls may be monitored and the abused partner prevented from seeing friends and family. Visits to gay bars and venues, whether alone or together, might be discouraged or forbidden. The abusive partner might also simply make such visits unpleasant, by causing a scene, becoming jealous and aggressive, or just behaving inappropriately. In these instances, it's the abused partner who might suggest they stop visiting venues – but the resulting isolation is the same.

One situation peculiar to DV in gay partnerships is that the boyfriend may use the fact that it's a first relationship to manipulate the other. "This is just what gay relationships are like," may be used as an excuse for violence and isolation.

Gay communities outside of the big cities can also be fairly small affairs – so it can be easy for the abusive partner to isolate his partner further from people who might offer support.

4. Sexual Abuse

Rape can happen in relationships too. The abuse might also be in sexual acts that the partner does not feel comfortable with (like threesomes, for example).

5. Physical Abuse

Slapping, punching, pushing, shoving: they all qualify as physical abuse. Being abandoned, locked out of the house or threatened with a weapon are also all forms of physical abuse.



domestic violence might take any one of these forms:

domestic violence and gay relationships

THE STEREOTYPE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS DEEPLY HETEROSEXUAL: A BATTERED WIFE AND A BRUTAL HUSBAND. SADLY, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CAN ALSO OCCUR IN OUR PARTNERSHIPS.

When someone has a new boyfriend on the scene, it's easy to nitpick. But if he humiliates his lover in public, or there are signs of physical abuse for instance, then something's clearly wrong.

Domestic Violence (DV) in gay relationships is more common than you might think, in fact some research suggests DV occurs in gay relationships at the same levels as straight ones. DV also isn't just about physical abuse, it's about power and control and can take any of the forms listed left.

Why do people put up with it? Partly because men are often bad at asking for help, or it may be due to DV being something of a taboo subject. It's also because DV is about power, and the abused partner often does not feel they have the power to leave.

Bear in mind too sometimes the abused partner stays in the relationship because they still love their boyfriend, and puts up with the bad

times waiting for the good times to return. Not all abused partners actually want to leave – they just want the violence to stop. Leaving isn't the only option they have or want.

So keep an eye out for your friends, and if you feel it is happening to you, talk to someone – whether it's a family member or close friend. You might also like to contact the AIDS Council in your state or territory, who will direct you to an

appropriate local support service. (See our Contacts on the inside cover for a full list of phone numbers, or for more information visit <http://ssdv.acon.org.au>). And finally, in an emergency call the police on 000.

fact

Someone forcing you to have sex against your will is a crime, whether he's a stranger or your boyfriend or your partner.



between ourselves

BOB AND GARY HAVE HAD THEIR UPS AND DOWNS – NOT SURPRISING GIVEN THEY FLIRTED IN THE SKIES, ROMANCED IN THE SUBWAY AND NESTED DOWN UNDER.

THEY SPOKE WITH *BETWEEN THE SHEETS* ABOUT LOVE, COMPROMISE AND THEIR PESKY "FELLOW TRAVELLER".



bob

My Mum was dying. I was flying home to New Zealand every two or three weeks. There was often the same cabin staff and it was hard not to notice one of them. He was very attentive, very good-looking and had a cute ass.

He was working on the flight home to Mum's funeral and he could tell I was distressed and got me upgraded. He gave me his phone number, but I didn't call.

Six months after Mum died I took a year's job at a hospital in London and standing on Russell Square tube station who should I see but "cute ass". It was so good to see a friendly Australian ... Three minutes later we decided to eat together.

Over dinner, we connected. This wasn't about sexual chemistry and electricity. It was about mutual interest and minds connecting.

The subject of the rest of the evening was hovering and I didn't know how to broach it. I knew this could be the beginning of something important – and I already felt vulnerable and scared about disclosing my HIV status.

Then he lent forward, stroked my arm and said 'I know'. He'd seen me taking my HIV pills on the plane before Auckland a couple of times.

The last six years have been fantastic, although we have had to work out how to negotiate with the third partner in our relationship—HIV.

At first I was suspicious of why Gary wanted to be in a relationship with someone with HIV. The last thing I wanted was a carer. When I finally opened up about HIV, I think it was something that he needed me to do earlier.

At times I want to talk about HIV with Gary. At other times I want HIV not to be present. I try to keep to my long-term goals as if HIV was just a fellow traveller.

But sometimes it can't be ignored. Like any couple we have a constant set of tensions that need a lot of work. It's easy to make HIV both the cause and the explanation.

The longest ongoing issue we've had is sexual practice – and not in relation to HIV transmission. For so long HIV was so present when we were having sex. It was my problem ... I became scared of initiating sex.

Being HIV, rejection took on a totally different meaning. So I stopped initiating – and that meant sex was no longer mutual. My desire became that he would take charge sexually and I was pissed off when he didn't.

But even without HIV, sexual initiation and negotiation can be difficult. HIV just added more layers – that had to be scraped away.

gary

I used to see Bob regularly on my weekend Auckland leg. As a customer he could be demanding and patronising. I used to give him sexual vibrations to put him out of his comfort zone. It has nothing to do with how handsome he is.

I noticed him taking HIV drugs just before Auckland one flight. I didn't pay much attention to it at the time.

The last time I saw him while I was still working for Qantas he was really distressed. That level of emotional distress brings down the barriers. I felt for him and tried to be supportive.

I almost bumped into him in a London tube station – so I had to say hello. We quickly decided to have dinner – I probably only said yes because I remembered his distress.

It's only the second time in my life this has happened – when you connect with someone and know immediately there's a real potential for more there. I had no expectation this would happen when I said yes to dinner – in fact he was nothing like I expected.

I could see at the end of dinner he was having agony about whether to tell me about his HIV status – so I decided to put him

out of his misery – for me it just didn't seem an issue then. Guess I was a little naïve.

Our relationship now seems permanent and I like it that way. I hate the fact Bob has HIV because it's like this cloud of uncertainty and this place I'm excluded from because I can never 'know'; because for HIV it seems 'knowing' is 'being' – and at times that pisses me off.

He copes differently at different times. Mostly it's not there – like 99% of the time. But then it dives in intensely. I have these fears of him getting sick or dying – but I can't speak that territory with him.

Even writing this seems like a betrayal. And I often feel awkward talking about long-term goals because there's a level of uncertainty.

He'll probably talk about sex and how HIV structures the dynamics and the power. For me I had to make it not about HIV and construct him as a lazy "bottom".

He'll say HIV produces this behaviour. I just think he wants me to take charge. I can get into that. Sometimes I want to feel desired too and to be not "in charge".

HIV is part of the territory of our relationship. Sometimes it's in the front paddock – but a lot of the time it's a tiny dot on the horizon. The big picture is that I'm in this relationship because I love him – and that has nothing to do with HIV.



words

unspoken

THE STRONG SILENT TYPE IS FANTASTIC IN THEORY, AND SO IS SOMEONE "SAYING IT BEST WHEN THEY SAY NOTHING AT ALL". BUT HOW MUCH OF WHAT WE "READ" INTO SOMEONE'S BEHAVIOUR IS BASED ON OUR OWN ASSUMPTIONS? CHECK OUT THE INNER THOUGHTS OF MATT AND AARON: TWO MEN IN SEARCH OF ACTION AND NOT WORDS, WHO MAY BE HEADED FOR TROUBLE.

Aaron (HIV negative, versatile)
Matt (HIV positive, versatile)



Subtext of the bar-side small-talk ...



Back at Aaron's place ...



Getting heavy ...



BODY LANGUAGE, CLUES, SUBTLE HINTS – THEY CAN ALL BE MISINTERPRETED IN THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT. NOT ONLY THAT, BUT YOUR OWN BELIEFS ABOUT WHETHER PEOPLE SHOULD OR SHOULDN'T REVEAL THEIR HIV STATUS AREN'T NECESSARILY SHARED BY EVERYBODY.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING LIST OF WHY POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE GUYS MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT TELL YOU ABOUT THEIR HIV STATUS. THESE ARE ONLY SOME OF THE RATIONALISATIONS OF COURSE AND SOME OF THESE ARE, WELL, A LITTLE PROBLEMATIC.

Why positive guys MIGHT NOT tell you they're positive:

1. It's only casual sex and we're using condoms anyway.
2. If he's negative he'll say so – it's his responsibility to look after himself.
3. It really kills the mood and besides, he might clear off.
4. He might tell other people and my HIV status is a private matter.

Why negative guys MIGHT NOT tell you they're negative:

1. It's only casual sex and we're using condoms anyway.
2. If he's positive he'll tell me – it's every HIV positive person's responsibility.
3. I don't want him to think I'm getting all serious about this fuck, and that I want to get too personal.
4. I've dropped a few subtle hints about being negative and he seems to have picked up on it.

Why positive guys MIGHT tell you they're positive:

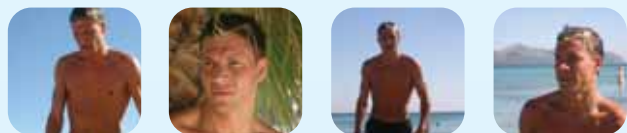
1. I don't want to sleep with someone who has a hang-up about positive guys.
2. I feel more relaxed about the sex, in case anything slips up.
3. I just think it's the right thing to tell.
4. I'd like to know if the other guy's positive, so we can have unprotected sex.

Why negative guys MIGHT tell you they're negative:

1. I don't mind having sex with HIV positive guys and I prefer to have the issue out in the open.
2. I want to know if he's positive so I can make sure the sex is really safe.
3. I want to know if he's positive, because then I'd rather not have sex at all.
4. I want to have unprotected sex if he's negative, and want him to know I'm negative too.

My Handle beachboy **My Age** 29

seeking Single Gay Man **OR** Gay Male Couple
who has Intelligence, SOH, genuine, knows what they want
for a Relationship **OR** Friendship or Sex



Area: Victoria
City: Melbourne
Viewed 7389 Times
Standard Member

Come on in ... the water's fine!!!



My

| | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Profession | Yes |
| Height | 5' 10" (178 cm) |
| Body Type | Defined |
| Ethnic Origins | Caucasian |
| Hair | Brown |
| Eyes | Blue |
| General Attire | Casual |
| Out | Yes |
| Dick Size | Large |
| Cut/Uncut | Cut |
| Body Hair | None/Little |
| Orientation | Gay |
| Role | Active/Versatile |
| Safer Sex | Needs Discussion |
| Smoke | No |
| Drink | Socially |
| Drugs | Socially |

My Profile

Openly gay, single, wide interests, catholic in my tastes. I have a good job, great friends, have worked hard to get where I am. I'm down to earth and take people as they come.

Enjoy a big night out just as much as a night in cuddling on the couch.

My Favourite

| | |
|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Food | French, Italian, Australian |
| Music | Eurotrance |
| Author | Lots |
| Film | Lots |
| Actor | Dad |
| Actress | Mum |
| TV Show | Four Corners |
| Holiday Spot | Spain, Thailand |
| City | London, Paris, Rio |
| Country | Australia, UK |

My Favourite Gear

Boots, Cut, Denim, Jocks, Kilts, Leather, Speedos, Underwear, Uniforms

My Favourite Thangs

Anal, Bondage, Groups, Kissing, Masters & Dogs, Oral, Outdoor, Phone Sex, Rimming, Role Play, S&M, Threesomes, Toys, Vanilla, Verbal/Gob, Wanking, Wrestling

My Types

Bikers, Builders, Clubbers, Farmers, Firemen, Footballers, Geeks, Labourers, Leather Men, Military (Uniforms), Muscle Men, Older Guys, Preppies, Punks, Twinks

My Hobbies

Dogs, Reading, Games, Bush walking, Sex

My Languages

English, Italian, Spanish

My Health Regimen

Gym, Hiking, Jogging, Swimming, Walking

My Religion

Agnostic, Evangelist, Pagan

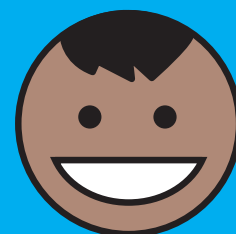
My Downtime

Arts & Crafts, Board Games, Cinema/Movies, Clubbing, Computers, Entertaining, Music, Reading, Strategy Games, Video Games, Walking, Writing

online but way off

WHAT DID WE DO BEFORE THE INTERNET? CHAT ROOMS FROM GAYDAR TO BIGMUSCLEBEARS HAVE PROVEN A GREAT WAY OF PICKING UP, MAKING FRIENDS AND EVEN MEETING THE NEXT BOYFRIEND. BUT CAN WE STILL GET OUR WIRES CROSSED?

CHECK OUT BEACHBOY (PICTURED LEFT) – AND THEN SEE HOW THESE THREE OTHER CHAT DUDES INTERPRET HIS PROFILE.



Comments from 'wantsaboyf'

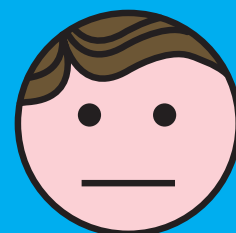
This guy seems really nice. He has great eyes. He wants a relationship and is obviously intelligent – watching *Four Corners*. He also has a sense of humour saying 'yes' to profession and calling himself both 'agnostic' and an 'evangelist'. I like that he says safer sex needs discussion. My guess is that he's ready to settle down and wants a boyfriend to shack up with and ditch the condoms – after discussion. He also looks after himself – good body and doesn't smoke or do a lot of drugs. It's good he knows what he wants – and likes guys who know what they want. He says he prefers to be active – and that suits me fine.



Comments from 'up4itnow'

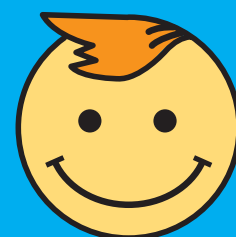
This guy is a total slut – my sort of guy exactly. I like all those things he's into – anal, bondage ... a long list. He says safer sex 'needs discussion' – he is obviously HIV-positive. He is also a joker – I can't imagine he's ever watched *Four Corners* in his life. He says he is active – but his main picture has him throwing his legs in the air.

Talk about mixed signals.



Comments from 'beenthere'

'Good job, great friends, has worked hard,' could mean 'respectable, conservative, rich, (and boring)' – or maybe he's trying to signal 'not needy or desperate'. Safe sex 'needs discussion' – so he's obviously into barebacking – but he doesn't seem the type. He is cuter in some pics than others – maybe some are old pics – that happens all the time.



Reply from 'beachboy'

Too funny. It's like they're talking about three different guys. I can't say I take my profile too seriously – for me I am interested in meeting people in real life – photos and the written word are constructed in certain ways – and people read into them things that aren't there. I actually always practise safe sex – I just got so sick of people who put 'always' and then have pics of them without condoms – or you meet them and they want to ditch the condoms that I decided to change to 'needs discussion'. When I did I suddenly got a whole lot of different people messaging me and found out that people had different interpretations of what 'needs discussion' means. Usually it didn't mean 'discuss'.