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November 2013 by Robert Brandon Sandor, HIV+ 1983, FOUNDER: Brandon's POZ Party - NYC, Brandon's POZ Socials and Boy Toys - NYC (1996-2009)

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## be the one who brings pleasure to others. get tested for HIV and STDs regularly.

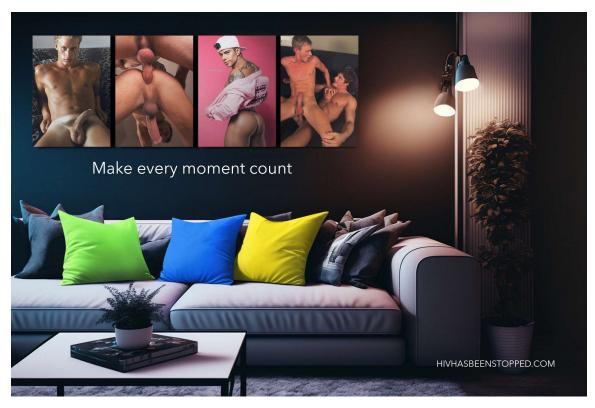


### **SUMMARY:**

Free and open discussion leads to better public decisions and a deeper understanding of cause-and-effect relationships regardless of sexual orientation, race, age or educational background - to name a few. HIV Status Disclosure is now a given and has become a part of our identity. In HIV Prevention, appeals to cultural identity and behavior can be an effective communication tool and can help us appreciate who we are as a people.

This understanding promotes consistency between cultural values and public policy, leading to changes in our views and behaviors to meet our current needs. What was once taboo in the mid-1990s is now accepted with respect and hope. Sex venues and hooking up online are not for everyone, and the only way to know if they are right for you is to visit one or try it. This MSM Sex Venue Etiquette and Resource Guide can help make your next sexual encounter enjoyable and confident.

American sex venues and online hookups have a unique subculture that is specific to MSM (*men who have sex with men*) in America, and visiting one abroad can be a learning experience. Watch what's happening, try new activities, relax, and have fun!





### **FORWARD**

This MSM Sex Venue Etiquette and Resource Guide will be the foundational document for all sex venue etiquette resource guides across the United States, with the aim to ensure consistency between our self-perception, conduct, and external feedback. By actively engaging in learning and striving to enhance our actions, we can transform our perception of ourselves and our behavior. It is imperative for us to step outside our comfort zone and challenge ourselves to approach situations from a different perspective.

The time has arrived to fulfill our commitment and prioritize HIV Prevention. In order to remain relevant and impactful, HIV Prevention messages in the United States must adapt to the specific requirements of today's gay and bisexual (MSM) young adults.

The moment we have been waiting for is now upon us. It is time to take action and address the pressing issues at hand.

### Introduction:

Rationale for the Creation of this Guide

Given the widespread utilization of the internet, the ease of connecting with other young gay men online, and the varying preferences for engaging in sexual activities with or without HIV, the landscape of sex venues, private parties, and one-on-one encounters in America has undergone significant changes. Consequently, there is a pressing need for a comprehensive MSM Sex Venue Etiquette Resource Guide tailored specifically for sexually active young gay and bisexual men in America. For instance, opting to meet individuals at private parties or larger sex venues can provide a more comfortable and safer alternative for those who feel uneasy about hosting at their own residences.

The more one immerses themselves in a subject they are passionate about, the more self-assured they become. This principle holds true for sports, music, and life skills. Similarly, the relationship between sexual knowledge, practice, confidence, and HIV Prevention follows the same pattern. The more one comprehends this connection, the more confident they will be in their role in preventing HIV transmission. This is precisely why this resource guide is of utmost importance, as it aims to equip individuals with a fundamental understanding of sex venues, online hookups, HIV Prevention, and how they can foster a more fulfilling sexual experience for themselves and their partners with unwavering confidence.

### **How Will This Guide Facilitate?**

Motivation serves as the psychological catalyst that propels individuals into action and shapes their behavior toward specific objectives. Understanding the underlying motivations behind people's actions is crucial in effectively conveying an HIV Prevention message. People will only listen, learn, and retain such a message if it resonates with their needs, desires, or aspirations. Behavioral change will only occur if individuals are genuinely motivated and possess the desire to do so. Therefore, by comprehending an individual's motivation and their determination to remain HIV-negative (or halt the progression of HIV if they are already infected), the HIV Prevention message can appeal to the universal humanity that transcends cultural boundaries worldwide.

The significance of desires and motives varies depending on the individual, circumstances, and local culture. Individuals who possess a desire and are motivated to maintain their HIV-negative status (or halt the progression of HIV if they are already infected) are driven by their needs and wants. Even after fulfilling their needs, individuals continue to respond to their wants. We need to eradicate HIV, hence we want to remain HIV-negative, and we need to take all necessary measures to achieve this goal or want to contribute to the efforts of stopping HIV if we are already infected.

### Outlined below are some key motivating factors:

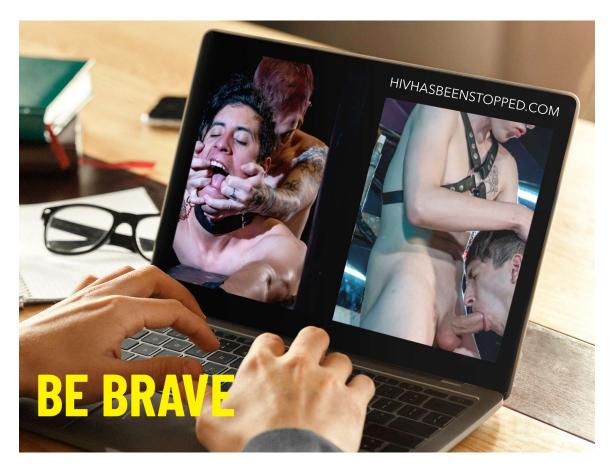
- **Comfort:** The need for comfort encompasses aspects such as having access to sufficient food and drink, maintaining optimal temperature conditions, and being free from pain and harm. Remaining HIV-negative helps fulfill some of these needs by eliminating the need for frequent doctor or hospital visits, adhering to multiple daily HIV medication dosages, and avoiding the detrimental side effects associated with such treatments.
- **Safety:** Everyone yearns for a sense of security, and appeals to this need are often rooted in instilling a sense of fear. For instance, consider the "No Smoking" advertisements on television and in print years ago. This is precisely why HIV medication advertisements refrain from showcasing images of hospitals, laboratory tests, dietary restrictions, or the adverse effects of HIV. Instead, they depict individuals scaling mountains, participating in marathons, and exuding happiness.
- **Belonging:** People require social connections that provide acceptance, affection, companionship, approval, and support. Our family and friends contribute to shaping our identity and creating an environment that alleviates loneliness. By regularly getting tested for HIV alongside family, friends, or loved ones, (<a href="www.hivhasbeenstopped.com/why-get-tested-for-hiv">www.hivhasbeenstopped.com/why-get-tested-for-hiv</a>) we can foster a sense of belonging. In this resource guide, I will briefly explore and provide

examples of HIV Prevention within the context of sexual groups, highlighting how our need for belonging elucidates our desire to join or establish social or sexual groups. For instance, a simple search using the keyword "POZ" on platforms like Google, Facebook, YouTube, or Twitter will reveal the ongoing transformation in social and sexual behavior, as individuals form groups based on their HIV-positive status.

HIV FUN FACT! More than 330 million people are living in America today, less than 5 million Americans with HIV and less than 1 million Americans currently taking PrEP. The numbers do not lie, ask the experts. Therefore, about 324 million (330-5-1= 324) Americans are HIV-negative today not because of abstinence, increased condom usage (safe sex), Strategic Positioning or PrEP. The Sexual Behavioral Change called HIV-negative Serosorting is the driving force behind the elimination of HIV in America today.

Just because there is no research about HIV-negative Serosorting does not mean that it did not or is not happening (2007, Edge Media article). The numbers do not lie, ask the HIV Researchers. In conclusion: Since the mid 1990's we disclosed our HIV status and as a result, we stopped HIV. Together. (www.hivhasbeenstopped.com)



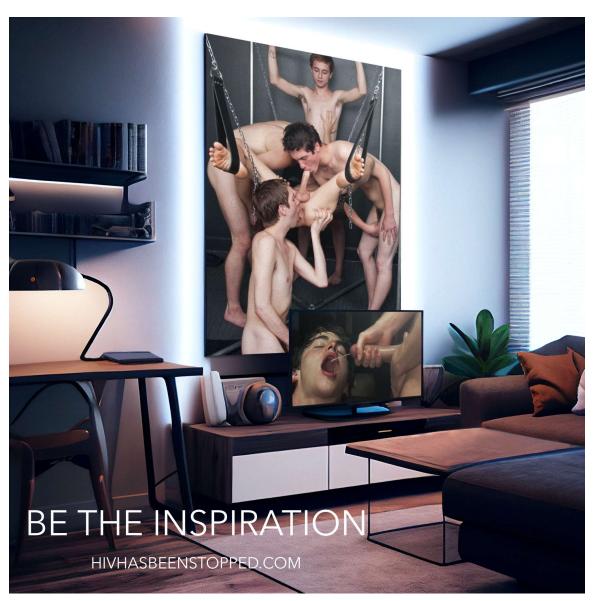


- **Independence:** While we rely on others, we also cherish our independence and the belief that "*I can handle this on my own*." Historically, HIV Prevention has been driven and guided by the general public rather than HIV agencies or organizations. Even if the most reputable HIV agency boasts an exceptional board of directors, a stellar staff, and ample financial support, their efforts would be futile if the community fails to respond to their HIV Prevention messages. We can effectively combat HIV only if we genuinely desire to do so.
- **Variety:** Excessive exposure to anything, regardless of its quality, eventually becomes monotonous and uninteresting. Thirty years of repeatedly disseminating the same HIV Prevention messages have proven ineffective in reaching target audiences, regardless of the funding allocated. Consequently, I have chosen to deviate from the conventional approach of collaborating with HIV agencies and organizations to introduce a novel approach to HIV Prevention *SEROSORTING* the Hybrid HIV Prevention Strategy.

(www.hivhasbeenstopped.com/what-is-serosorting) This innovative strategy is designed to cater to the diverse needs of all individuals. It is imperative to note that your personal desire and motivation to remain HIV-negative are the fundamental pillars that bind all other HIV Prevention messages together. This driving force is what propels local and global cultures to continue supporting HIV Prevention efforts.

I kindly request that you take a moment to reflect on how this information relates to you personally. Consider how it influences your choices to remain HIV-negative, the individuals you form relationships with (both sexually and socially), and the crucial role you play in upholding the promise of HIV Prevention. It is crucial to note that contracting HIV is not a "rite of passage" to adulthood. Neglecting your role in HIV Prevention renders all funding and political support to stop HIV futile.

Thank you for your attention and unwavering commitment to HIV Prevention.



### ABOUT THE INFORMATION COVERED HERE

The information provided in this document aims to enhance your experience during your next visit to any sex venue or online hook-up. Additionally, it will provide you with access to valuable HIV/STD information, resources, and facilities that you may not be familiar with. This MSM Sex Venue Etiquette and Resource Guide will comprehensively cover various aspects such as the appearance and operation of venues, as well as strategies for using them safely or with reduced risk. By expanding your knowledge of venues and online sexual hookups, you will gain confidence and a desire to adopt effective methods and strategies that suit your preferences, enabling you to engage in venues and online hookups with assurance.

A significant focus of this guide is cruising techniques, which serve as the primary form of communication within venues and typically precede sexual encounters. Understanding cruising will empower sex venue users to exert greater control over their experiences in venues, private parties, clothing-optional resorts, and online hookups. This guide is designed to cater to individuals interested in visiting sex venues, regardless of their level of experience, ranging from first-timers to seasoned attendees. It will provide you with a fundamental understanding of:

- The features and facilities available in venues, private parties, and clothing-optional resorts
- The motivations and methods employed by individuals utilizing these venues
- Tips for effective cruising, handling refusals, and facilitating communication
- Self-care practices, including an understanding of sex, drug use, and alcohol

It is important to note that this guide is a general resource and does not pertain to specific sex venues in particular states. Furthermore, it does not encompass every possible aspect you may encounter in a sex venue. Half the excitement of visiting venues lies in the adventure and anticipation! However, if you are considering attending a sex venue or private party, reading this guide will provide you with a glimpse of what to expect.





### **GETTING STARTED**

Sex venues, including clubs, saunas, clothing-optional resorts, private parties, and bathhouses, are privately owned businesses that offer a space for gay and bisexual men to engage in sexual activities with other men. Admission to these venues requires payment of a one-time fee, a donation at the door, or an annual membership fee. These venues have developed a unique culture within the gay community and serve as a neutral zone for meeting new people. Communication within these venues is often non-verbal, allowing for a sense of anonymity and freedom of conversation.

Reasons for using sex venues vary and include casual sex, relaxation, socialization, meeting new people, exploring different sexual scenes, and having a safe and legal space for sexual activities. These venues also provide access to resources such as condoms, lube, and HIV/STD information.

It is important to note that private sex parties are not commercial businesses. Sex venues offer a safe and convenient alternative to meeting people in bars or dance clubs and provide a discreet space for those who are not "out" to engage in sexual activities. Understanding the etiquette of sex venues is crucial for a positive and respectful experience.



### **REALITY CHECK:**

The level of enjoyment you experience during your visit to a venue will depend on various factors, particularly your expectations. If you have extremely high expectations that are not met, you may feel disappointed or bitter, especially if this occurs frequently. Conversely, expecting every person in the venue to be attractive, hoping to find your perfect partner, and desiring a deep connection are common expectations that are often unfulfilled.

To avoid disappointment, it is important to take a moment and assess reality. Consider this: if you have a satisfying sexual encounter with someone and feel a connection, but they promptly leave afterward, it is easy to feel let down, disappointed, cynical, or even angry. Take some time to think about why he/they might be there. He/They could be content being single, not open about their sexuality, in a committed relationship, or various other situations. What you anticipate from the encounter may differ greatly from what he/they expected. Not everyone visits a sex venue for the same reasons as you, and if you approach it with realistic expectations, you can avoid disappointment and potentially have an amazing time!

### THINGS YOU MIGHT FIND AT SEX VENUES OR PRIVATE PARTIES:

Sex venues offer a whole range of facilities depending on the location. For example: A clothing-optional resort has more to offer than a private party in a home or apartment. Here are a few you might enjoy:

**BONDAGE ROOM** - A room with cages, a wooden "X" or two, and areas where attendees can be tied to as a Slave / Master role-playing experience.

**CUBICLE** - A small room with a door. Generally, the walls do not reach the ceiling and they range in size from standing room only, to being able to accommodate a vinyl mattress the size of a double bed.

**DARKROOM** - A room that has low-level lighting and no door. It is designed for public or group sex and may have a large mattress or other furniture.

**GLORY HOLE** - A hole between connecting cubicles at about dick height. It is designed for one guy to be standing and his dick through the hole, while a guy (or guys) on the other end sucks him off.

**LUBE, CONDOMS, AND INFORMATION** - Lube, condoms, and HIV / STD information are available at most venues free of charge, and some guys bring their own toys, poppers, and bondage gear. In saunas and sex clubs, condoms and lube will be available in all sex areas. Information on HIV and other STDs can be found on a wall or table and is available free of charge.

**PLAYROOM** - Like the bondage room but with a wider range of equipment like restraints, prison bars, slings, padded saw horses, raised platforms and the like that encourage group or "imaginative" sex. A fun, safe way to explore your comfort zone, try new things and safely explore your limitations with confidence.

**SLINGROOM** - A room containing one or more leather harnesses that are generally hung from the ceiling with chains. A person wanting to be fucked or fisted (FF) lies on his back in the harness, his legs supported in the air by stirrups. The sling makes fucking or fisting easier by exposing his ass for easy penetration.

**STEAM ROOM** - A room that is heated like a sauna, but with water constantly dripping onto a heating element so it is always full of steam. A limited stay is recommended.

**VIDEO BOOTH / ROOM** - A video booth is a private cubicle with a coin-operated TV mounted on the wall. They generally have a selection of channels playing different porn movies, and some might have glory holes. A video room is a public viewing room where seating is available for one-on-one or group action.



### What kinds of venues are there?

A sex venue can include a sex club, backroom, private party, sauna, or clothing-optional resort. Generally, these venues offer private rooms, group play areas, social spaces for relaxation or internet use, TVs showing videos, snack and beverage areas or machines, condoms, lube, HIV/STD information, and bathrooms with showers and lockers. However, the amenities may vary between venues, and not all venues provide freebies.

As the former owner of two sex venues myself (*Brandon's POZ Party NYC and Boy Toys-NY*, 1996-2008), I would like to offer a piece of advice - I believed it was my responsibility to ensure my guests' comfort and safety. Therefore, if you are unsure about a venue and whether you will feel comfortable there, I suggest going anyway to just check it out. Stay for an hour, and if you decide you like the place, you can stay longer. This way, you have a plan and purpose, and if you achieve your goal, enjoy! If not, there is nothing lost, and you will leave with more knowledge.

**SEX CLUBS** - Sex clubs offer a wide range of sexual activities. They generally have playrooms with equipment like slings, as well as public areas and "themed" events such as WS (piss), Fisting (FF), leather night, or jock strap night. They may attract a crowd looking for more adventurous sex than they would get at a sauna or private party. Guys wear towels, jocks, underwear, leather or other attire. At a sex club you'll usually find:

- A sling room, group play area, lockers, bathroom, private rooms,
- Theme areas or playrooms that can be rented out for private use,
- A lounge area with tables and couches
- Other features like beverages, snacks, videos, sex toys, clothing, and STD / HIV information.

**SAUNAS** - The main features of saunas are the wet areas such as the sauna, steam room, and spa. Guys wear towels rather than clothes and you will also get most of the things a sex club has.

**BACKROOMS** - Most backrooms in America are attached to adult bookstores, bars, or the like; however, not all adult bookstores or bars (etc) have backrooms. Backrooms tend to have fewer facilities than sex clubs or saunas and do not have lounge areas where you can sit down and take a break from cruising. This means that guys tend to use backrooms for quick sex, primarily catering to the lunch or dinner crowd, which is offered in backrooms that feature both gay and straight pornography.

**PRIVATE PARTIES** - Private sex parties are exclusive events, not commercial ventures, and are limited to a select number of guests who receive invitations through a mailing list. These parties

are organized by the owner or host, managed by a small staff, and held in private apartments, homes, or hotel suites. Each party may have a specific theme, such as Fisting (FF) or Water Sports (WS or piss). Guests are expected to adhere to the designated theme. The host may provide snacks, beverages, lube, condoms, clothes check, music, and videos, and may request a suggested donation at the door to cover expenses.

Private MSM sex parties vary in nature. For example, Brandon's POZ Party NYC was a monthly private party for HIV+ gay and bisexual men residing in or visiting New York City. On the other hand, Boy Toys - NY was a monthly safe-sex-only party for HIV-negative young men aged 18-28.



Clothing-optional resorts are a safe and comfortable option for those seeking a more openminded vacation experience. These resorts offer private hotel-style rooms and a wide range of services and amenities. In addition to parking for private vehicles, there is a public lobby area for check-in, guest services, and information about local attractions and nightlife. Wi-Fi and internet services are also available for a small fee. If you are not satisfied with the hookup options available, you can easily invite others to your room using online resources. Once checked in, guests can enjoy pools, hot tubs, outdoor lounge areas, non-sexual massage, volleyball courts, fitness areas, and a continental breakfast. Guests are free to come and go as they please.



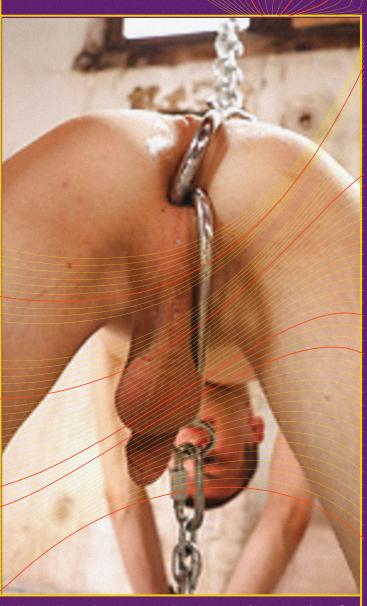




# FACT CHECK NOW

Using your cell and GOOGLE:

# IV TRANSMISSIONS



What is the population of America?

How many are HIV+?

(then subtract)

(explore HIVHASBEENSTOPPED.com for details)

### WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU FIRST ARRIVE AT A VENUE:

Young gay and bisexual men who frequent sex venues have a routine they go through when they first arrive, and this helps them make the switch from the outside world. Here are some basic tips and suggestions to consider:

- **1. TAKE SOME TIME TO RELAX**: Once you have checked in and are ready, take a moment to relax and clear your mind of whatever you were doing before you arrived. You can have a shower, sit in the spa or steam room (if available), or simply unwind in the comfort of your room.
- **2. EXPLORE THE VENUE**: After you have relaxed and are ready, you can walk around the venue to get a sense of the atmosphere, see how busy it is, who is present, and identify potential partners or areas of interest. Take note of the facilities available as well. Once you have an idea of what is happening and what your plans might be, you can approach the individuals you are interested in.
- **3. GET IN THE MOOD**: To enhance your experience and get in the mood for some quality action and cruising, you might consider visiting the public sex areas and observing what is happening, or watching a porn movie in the viewing lounge. Once you are turned on, enjoy the adventure.
- **4. JUMP RIGHT IN**: As the saying goes, "Just do it!" Remember, most guys are there for sex, so don't hesitate to engage in the activities you desire.
- **5. PAY ATTENTION TO LIGHTING:** Allow your eyes to adjust to the lower level of lighting inside the venue. There is nothing more embarrassing than cruising a hot guy and accidentally walking into a wall or tripping down a flight of stairs.



### THE 5 GOLDEN RULES:

The rules or etiquette of sex venues can vary from one venue to another and from one area within the venue to another. However, there are five basic "commonsense golden rules" that pretty much cover all types of venues and activities. These basic rules of sex venue etiquette can help ensure that everyone has a safe, comfortable, and pleasant experience, whether they are attending for the first time or are more experienced attendees.

1) NO STILL MEANS NO: Without question, this is probably the most important rule. You have

the right to say "NO" to anything you do not want to do and to anyone for any reason you wish. It is your responsibility to respect others if they tell you "NO" or "NO THANKS." This includes everything from refusing sexual activities to declining to share personal information. "NO" is not rejection or stigma; it is exercising your freedom of choice and respecting the rights of other individuals. (www.hivhasbeenstopped.com/freedom-of-choice)

Today, "NO" can also mean respecting someone's HIV status and helping to prevent the spread of HIV. Not all young HIV-negative gay men want to be infected with HIV, and not all HIV+ gay men wish to infect an HIV-negative gay man. Therefore, an increasing number of gay men in America are choosing to have sex with partners who share their HIV status - SEROSORTING.

- **2) BE POLITE AND SUBTLE IN YOUR ADVANCES AND REFUSALS**: Unless it is part of a mutual sexual role-playing fantasy, it can be awkward to have someone come on to you aggressively, and it is embarrassing to be turned down publicly. Being polite ensures that no one gets embarrassed, and you can both move on to finding what you want.
- **3)** WAIT TO BE INVITED: Communication often happens without words in sex venues. This may include making eye contact or lightly brushing your hand against someone. If they respond positively to your signals, it is an invitation for you to make an advance. However, under most circumstances, it is best to wait for clear consent before making any advances, unless it is part of a mutual sexual fantasy.
- **4) PRACTICE SAFE SEX AND / OR GET TESTED REGULARY:** This rule cannot be emphasized enough. Consider using condoms and other forms of protection to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV. Prioritize your health and the health of others. (www.hivhasbeenstopped.com/why-get-tested-for-hiv)
- **5) RESPECT PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**: What happens in the sex venue should stay in the sex venue. Please do not share any personal information or details about others without their consent. Respect the privacy and boundaries of everyone involved.



### OTHER CRUISING TECHNIQUES.

Cruising is a way to express interest in engaging in sexual activity with someone, and individuals who frequent sex venues often have their preferred methods of cruising. For many individuals, cruising is part of the enjoyment and a significant reason for visiting such venues. Here are some common cruising techniques that you may find helpful, and remember, you can explore more than just one or two.

**THE LOOK** - Simply make and maintain eye contact for a longer period than usual. You can do this in walkways, changing rooms, spas, lockers, showers while having a beverage, or anywhere with sufficient lighting. This approach allows you to subtly show your interest in someone, and if they are not interested, it won't be noticeable to others.

**THE BRUSH PAST** - If someone you are interested in is standing in a hallway or other public area, you could walk past and lightly brush your hand against them. Aim for their upper leg, arm, or chest, as these are usually the best areas to make contact. Once you make contact, you can either turn to make eye contact or invite them to a private room or public sex area. If they follow, enjoy! If not, respect their freedom of choice, knowing that you're not their type, and move on.

**1, 2, 3 - TURN** - This technique is similar to cruising in bars or on the street. As you walk through the venue and spot someone you are interested in, make eye contact with them. As they pass by, count to three and turn to look back over your shoulder. Are they looking back at you? If they are, you can do several things: stop and lean against the wall, signal for them to follow you, change direction and follow them, or go into a room or public area and have fun. A word of

caution: as you look back, be careful not to walk into a wall or trip down a flight of stairs.

**STANDING IN THE DOORWAY OF YOUR ROOM** - Standing in the doorway of your room is a clear indication that you are ready and interested in having sex. For this to work best, choose a spot in the doorway that allows you to make eye contact with individuals walking past. When you spot someone you like, make eye contact and motion for them to join you. If they're interested, simply allow them to enter the room.

SITTING OR LAYING DOWN IN YOUR ROOM - If your room or area has a bench or vinyl mattress, sit near the doorway so that you can see down the hall. If someone is interested, they will make eye contact with you, and if you are interested, motion for them to join you. If you are not interested, simply turn away or avoid making eye contact. It is your freedom to choose. Another suggestion is to position yourself near the door (if your room has one) and utilize it to your advantage. Sit close enough to easily open or close it with your hand or foot. If you are interested in inviting him (or them) into your room, just open the door. Conversely, if you are not interested, simply close the door. It is a simple, quiet, and direct approach.



### WHEN YOU'RE NOT HIS TYPE

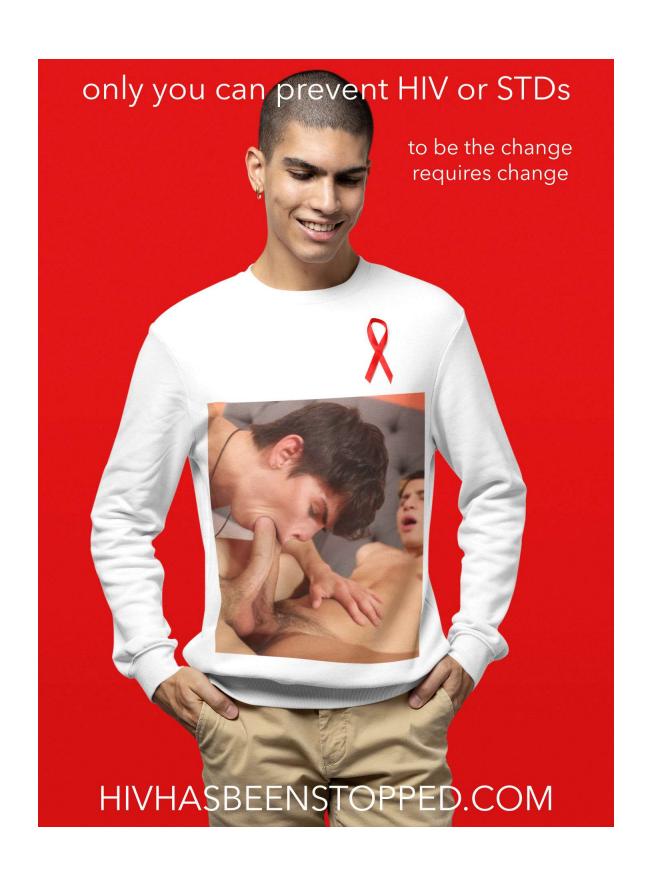
(He's just not interested in you)

**IT IS A FACT OF LIFE:** You are not going to attract every guy you pursue in a sexual setting, and not everyone will be interested in you. So it is important to acknowledge this and learn how to handle it.

### BE AWARE OF THE REASONS WHY HE MIGHT HAVE DECLINED YOU:

- 1. You are simply not his type.
- 2. He may have recently engaged in sexual activity and is taking a break.
- 3. He might be there just to socialize.
- 4. He could be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, making it difficult for him to be in the mood at that time.
- 5. He might be interested in someone else.
- 6. He may be seeking someone with specific preferences, such as someone into leather, sex toys, bondage, or similar interests.
- 7. He might be looking for someone with the same HIV status, choosing not to transmit or contract HIV. This is a matter of personal choice and the desire to prevent the spread of HIV. However, it is important to note that it is not possible to determine someone's HIV status just by looking at them\*.

\*In New York City, some individuals addressed the issue of HIV status disclosure at other sexual venues by asking a simple question: "Have you attended Brandon's party?" By answering "Yes" or "No," individuals could discreetly communicate their HIV status, indicating whether they were HIV+ and aware of Brandon's POZ Party or if they were unaware of it. This method straightforwardly allowed for status disclosure.



### SOME STEPS TO DEAL WITH REFUSALS.

Face the reality: You may not be his type.

Move on to something or someone else. Remember, there are plenty of other guys and activities for you to enjoy and fulfill your sexual desires. Rejections are a part of life, and everyone experiences them sooner or later. If you feel upset or bitter, it's best to leave the venue. You can always return later or find another place to go.

It's important to remember that you have the right to express interest in someone, but they also have the right to say "*No thanks*." *Freedom of choice works both ways* and is a right that everyone has. Be polite and gracious about it because you never know, he might be interested in you later. Treat others as you would like to be treated, as chances are you will also refuse advances from others.

### DEALING WITH AGGRESSIVE OR PERSISTENT INDIVIDUALS.

In most cases, gay and bisexual young men at venues will understand when you are not interested and move on. However, there may be times when you encounter someone who doesn't give up and can't take a hint. Here are a few tips and suggestions:

- Be clear about your freedom to refuse to engage in sexual activities with someone and avoid giving conflicting messages. For example, don't look back to see if he is still following you after you have already said "NO" to him, as this may give him the impression that you are playing hard to get.
- Be assertive without being rude. Examples include moving his hand away from your body, walking away, shaking your head, or simply leaving the area until he is gone.
   Remember, there are other options and people available for you to choose from in a sex venue.
- Use words to communicate your disinterest. If he continues to pursue you, calmly and directly tell him that you are not interested. It's best if others can hear your conversation, as this may discourage him from disrespecting your choice.
- If all else fails, contact the venue staff for assistance. This might be an extreme case, but it does happen occasionally. The staff is there to ensure that you have a comfortable and enjoyable experience, including your sexual desires and pleasures. That's why these venues exist, to cater to your needs.



### **Tips for First-Timers:**

If you have friends who go to sex venues, ask one of them to show you around. Having a friend or two with you can make your first visit less intimidating and more exciting. If you're concerned about being seen entering a venue, try one that is located out of town or away from your usual social circles. Some venues have discreet entrances off the main streets and out of view. It's a good idea to drive by the venue or search for it online beforehand to familiarize yourself with it and determine if it's the right fit for you.

When you arrive at a venue and the staff doesn't recognize you or you appear new, they may ask if you understand that it's a sex venue. This is to ensure that people don't accidentally wander in and they have your best interests in mind. The venue staff is generally friendly and willing to help if you seem unsure, nervous, or inexperienced. Don't hesitate to ask them for advice, directions, or tips.

Remember that most sex venues are businesses providing a service to you. If the staff is unhelpful, or unfriendly, or if you simply don't feel comfortable, try another venue until you find one that you enjoy and have fun at. Sex venues, like men, are different and offer unique experiences that may not be for everyone. Your freedom of choice applies to both men and sex venues and what they offer.

The same rules that apply in public areas also apply at sex venues, such as being cautious of pickpockets and thieves. It's easy for someone to take your wallet when your pants are down,

so consider leaving your valuables in your room or at the front desk if they allow it.

**Watch and learn** to get the hang of cruising in venues or trying new activities for the first time, such as bondage, SM, fisting, water sports, or role-playing. Spend some time observing how others engage in these activities. Keep these tips and suggestions in mind:

- Where is the activity taking place the physical location?
- How do they discreetly or cruise each other?
- Are there any cruising strategies that seem to work better than others?
- How do guys move around the venue area? Is there a natural circuit that most guys follow or do guys move about randomly?
- How do guys communicate with each other and what is the tone of their voices?
- When are the busy times and when are the slower times?
- Is there an obvious dress code like leather, rubber, latex, denim, or is there no dress code? Does the dress code change?

If you do not understand something, do not guess. Ask someone to explain it to you. There are no stupid questions, only mistakes.

After observing the activity for some time and feeling comfortable, feel free to start exploring and meeting new friends. You can begin by trying out an activity and see what suits you best. Remember, just because you're watching doesn't mean you're missing out. It's an investment in getting what you want in future visits.



### **CRUISING - CRUISING WITH YOUR BODY**

Body language and non-verbal communication are essential for successful cruising. It takes practice to connect with "Mr. Right" or even "Mr. Right Now," and there are three main things you need to be able to do:

### 1. Saying YES to someone who is showing interest in you:

- Maintain eye contact and return it.
- Mirror his body language, such as his movements or gestures.
- Show interest by nodding your head or smiling, indicating your acceptance of his offer or willingness to follow him into a private area.

### 2. Saying NO to someone who is showing interest in you:

- Break eye contact and discreetly shift your focus away from him.
- Use body language to convey disinterest, such as crossing your arms or turning away.
- Stay where you are and continue to avoid eye contact, or move away from his line of sight.
- If necessary, simply walk away to a different area of the venue.

### 3. Actively showing interest in someone:

- Make prolonged eye contact and add a friendly smile.
- Use body language to demonstrate your interest, such as stroking your own body or motioning for him to come closer.
- Walk towards your room or a public sex area, occasionally glancing behind you to see if he is following.

Remember, these are basic guidelines for different situations. It's important to be respectful and aware of the other person's boundaries and consent.



### IF YOU ARE IN A PRIVATE ROOM OR PUBLIC SEX AREA -

### To communicate consent:

- 1. Maintain eye contact and return to it if broken.
- 2. Move closer to the person(s) if comfortable.
- 3. If they reach out to touch you, reciprocate the gesture and touch them back.

### To communicate refusal:

- 1. Break eye contact and shift your line of sight.
- 2. If someone is approaching you, simply move away.
- 3. If they attempt to touch your leg or arm, move that body part away.
- 4. If they persist and touch you, politely remove their hand.

### To initiate interest in someone:

- 1. Make eye contact.
- 2. Move closer to the person(s) if comfortable.
- 3. When close enough, gently place your hand on their leg.
- 4. It can be effective to ask for permission before touching, saying something like "May I?" This can catch them by surprise and elicit a positive response.

# If you believe the person is interested, you can continue exploring their body and consider options such as:

- 1. Staying in the current location for further activities.
- 2. Going to his/their room or yours.
- 3. Moving to another designated sex area.



### CRUISING WITH A PARTNER (BOYFRIEND) OR A FRIEND:

In the 21st century, some gay and bisexual young men in America who are in committed relationships visit sex venues for various reasons. Some may go solely to use the facilities, like slings, without engaging with others sexually. For some, the freedom of their love is enjoyed while others observe. Some couples may invite others to join them, either together or as a fantasy where one partner watches the other.

Visiting sex venues can add excitement and new experiences to the sex lives of some couples, but it can also introduce or exacerbate problems. So before going to a venue with your partner, the two of you should spend some time thinking about what might happen and how you two might deal with it - as a couple. Here are some issues to think about:

- 1. Are you going to cruise together or separately?
- 2. How will you decide who to have sex with?
- 3. What happens if you can't find someone you both agree on?
- 4. What happens if someone likes YOU but not both?
- 5. What if you have different cruising styles?
- 6. If you have sex separately, will you be in the same area?

- 7. If you have sex separately, how much will you tell each other?
- 8. How far will you go when having sex with others? For example, if one of you is uncomfortable seeing someone (singular or plural) have sex with your partner, will you agree to stick around or leave?

One idea is to have a special word or sign to show the other that it is not working out. If either of you says the word or gives the sign, you can politely stop and move to another area or activity. If you are more experienced with sex venues than your partner or friend, share your knowledge **BEFORE** going to the venue. Give them a mental idea of the layout, some idea of the services and facilities offered, some basic cruising tips, and then a guided tour once you arrive there. If it is their first time, give them time to adjust and maybe have them set the pace.

For some couples or friends, using sex venues together is easy; for others, it requires some effort and time. But for some, it just doesn't work out. The two of you will need to be open and honest with each other about your feelings and thoughts about having sex at venues. If it is causing trouble in your relationship, you may want to think about what you are hoping to get from using a venue and if it is worth it.

Above all, your relationship (boyfriend or friend) is a special thing and something to be proud of.

### BREAKING IT OFF - IT'S JUST NOT WORKING OUT.

Occasionally, you will be in the middle of having sex with someone and realize that it is not working out for you. There may be all sorts of reasons for this: he is drunk or "out of it," he wants a different type of sexual scene or something you are uncomfortable with doing, he is unresponsive to your affection, he wants to have unsafe sex (Bareback) or safe sex, or the spark is gone. Whatever the reason, you have the right to stop whenever you want. That is one of the many advantages of going to sex venues - you both can end the encounter and find someone or something else without hurt feelings. It's a freedom of choice issue that protects both of you from rejection. If you do find yourself in this situation, here are a few suggestions:

- You could finish quickly, giving you an excuse to leave.
- If your partner is close to climaxing, help them reach orgasm and then leave.
- If you are in a public sex area, like a video lounge or play area, you can simply walk away or say you need to use the restroom. If you are with a group of people, this is easier because they can continue without you.
- However, if you are in a private room, you could say something like: "I need to take a break for a moment," "I'm feeling dehydrated and need a glass of water," or the direct approach, "I don't

think this is working out."

If it is the sexual compatibility that is not working out between you, then be polite and treat your partner the same way you would want to be treated. It's important to remember that no one is obligated to do anything they do not want to do.

### **GETTING INVOLVED WITH GROUP SCENES:**

If you want to participate in group scenes at sex venues, there are several things you can do. One of the simplest ways is to express your interest and join in the fun. To do this, first, observe the group for a moment, then show your interest by moving closer. You can ask directly, "Can I join in?" or "Is there room for one more?" Another approach is to make eye contact with someone in the group or gently touch someone and wait for them to reciprocate. Take it slow at first to maintain the pace and mood of the group. If you are not invited to join, take the hint and move on.

Another option is to initiate a group scene yourself. You can hang out in areas of the venue where group activity is likely to occur, such as a darkroom or public play area. Look for individuals who are already engaging with each other or start your own scene with a friend or partner. Alternatively, you can sit in a public area and make yourself available to anyone who might be interested, motioning for others to join as they pass by. Additionally, you can go to a private room and leave the door open for others to join or watch. On the flip side, you can walk around the venue and see if anyone has their door open, and if so, join or observe accordingly.

### **PLAN AHEAD:**

Go to the venue during busy times and when themed groups are meeting (*such as leather, jock, or college night*). Utilize local gay press or post online to express your interest in organizing a group scene. In the mid-1990s, I placed a free ad in two of New York City's gay magazines - NEXT and HX. I included my phone number for local guys to contact me and created a special email address specifically for the party. This was a first for the HIV+ community, and guys from around the world contacted me via email.

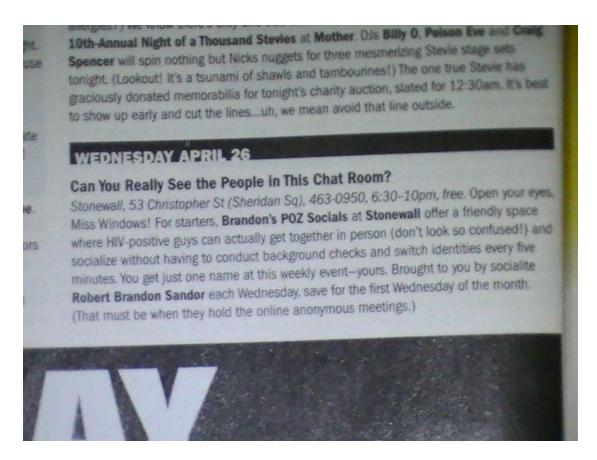
Above all, be flexible because group scenes can change rapidly. Smaller groups may form, pairs or trios may separate, someone may become bored and cause the group to disperse, and additional guys may want to join. When this happens, simply go with the flow. However, one of the many advantages of group sex is that if it becomes too intense, you feel pressured, or you become bored, you can easily leave the group. It's just sex, and they can continue without you.



### MAKING FRIENDS AND SOCIALIZING:

Some guys go to venues for more than just sex; they want to meet others, converse, relax, or potentially find a new boyfriend. The unique outcome of my private HIV+-only sex party (BRANDON'S POZ PARTY - NYC) was that the guys attended not only for the sexual aspect but also for the social empowerment they experienced at the party. Guys openly discussed their HIV medications, exchanged information about healthcare providers, offered housing suggestions, and shared personal health issues that they wouldn't typically discuss in clinical group sessions or with their healthcare providers.

My sex party guests felt safe, comfortable, and confident engaging in sex and being HIV+ together. As a result, **BRANDON'S POZ SOCIALS** was established in 1998. They socialized after sex, and with the help of the internet, later became the foundation of today's worldwide HIV+ online social networking sites. For example, search "POZ," "POZ ONLY," "POZ4POZ," "POZ CAMPING," "POZ RADIO," "POZ RETREATS," "POZ4PLAY," etc. on Google, Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube to witness this growing global social and sexual behavioral change firsthand. The original ad for Brandon's POZ Socials as it was published in HX magazine, in April 1998 below.



There are several strategies you can use to meet others at a venue. For example, choose venues with lounge areas where you can sit and talk, and try chatting with guys sitting in these areas. If you are HIV+, consider attending an HIV+ sex party in your area. Go to the same venue at the same time of the week so people get to know your face. Get to know the staff so they can introduce you to others. Go with a friend(s) or your partner and chat with other couples. Try chatting with the guy(s) you just had sex with.

Since the mid-1990s, there has been a growing number of openly HIV+ and HIV-negative gay and bisexual young men. Across America, HIV-negative gay men are posting "HIV-UB2" (HIV-negative You Be Too) and "D&D FREE" (Disease and Drug-Free) codes in their online profiles, while HIV+ gay men worldwide have been posting their own codes. Within the HIV+ gay community, the two most common codes are the Bio Hazard symbol. Some of us wear t-shirts with messages like P4P, HIV+, POZ, POZ PRIDE, or other HIV+ empowerment messages. (*Status Disclosure video pt.1* https://youtu.be/jDpR8AzaGlk?si=DRvfnDfBFtBzSFzO)

We openly disclose our HIV+ status to empower other HIV+ men to be open and honest about HIV Prevention and to choose not to infect others. If you are HIV-negative and see one of us disclosing our HIV+ status, say hello - we respect your right to remain HIV-negative.

### **Sex Venue Etiquette and Taking Care of Yourself**

### Drugs, Alcohol, Negative Emotions, and Safer Sex

Alcohol and drugs, such as ecstasy, K, Coke, T, meth, poppers, and others, are sometimes used during sex. They can create feelings of euphoria, self-confidence, and intimacy between strangers, as well as provide extra energy and stamina to enhance sexual pleasure. However, engaging in sex while under the influence of drugs can sometimes lead gay and bisexual young men to feel a sense of sexual urgency and may cause them to change their usual behavior or boundaries, even without their knowledge.

### If you plan to use drugs at a sex venue, please keep these health tips in mind:

- 1. Never use Viagra and poppers together! Both medications work by opening blood vessels to allow greater blood flow, and combining them can lead to heart failure, even in men without known heart problems.
- 2. Some venues can be hot and sweaty, especially if you are in a steam room, sauna, hot tub, or crowded playroom. Drugs and alcohol can cause dehydration. Drink plenty of water, take regular breaks, get some fresh air, take a shower, or simply relax a bit to cool your body down. If you are at a clothing-optional resort, consider relaxing in the lounge area or taking a walk outside.
- 3. If you are on HIV medications, talk to your doctor or someone at your local clinic about possible interactions between HIV meds and recreational drugs. (www.hivhasbeenstopped.com/is-prep-right-for-you)
- 4. Drugs can numb your sense of pain, so if you are engaging in anal sex or fisting (FF), be cautious about cuts in or around your ass. Check for any signs of blood periodically and stop if you notice any.
- 5. Sometimes, individuals in sex venues may become disoriented or unable to make decisions for themselves. If you find yourself having sex with someone who is reaching this point, it is your responsibility to ensure the safety of both parties. However, if the person's condition worsens and they require medical assistance, inform the staff so that they can receive the necessary help. It is a good idea to have a friend or partner who does not use drugs accompany you as a "designated driver" and to monitor your behavior, just in case.

**Moderation is key.** If we can have a designated driver for drinking and driving, then having a designated sex partner (*who does not do drugs*) for sex is common sense. It is vitally important that we, the gay community, take care of ourselves. If we do not, the city, state, and federal government may create laws against us. **Drugs and sex are our responsibility, so let us handle it in our own way.** 

**Safer sex in venues, whether you have HIV or not,** means engaging in sexual activities that do not allow semen, blood, or bodily fluids to pass from an HIV-positive person to an HIV-negative person. If you choose to engage in bareback sex (*sex without condoms*), you should be aware of and understand the risks involved. Therefore, you should not be upset if you contract an STD/STI or HIV. However, it is important to note that it is acceptable to **SEROSORT** - have sex with someone who has the same HIV status as you to physically break the cycle of new HIV transmissions and prevent the spread of HIV.

Most sex venues provide free information about HIV, STDs, STIs, and other sexual health issues. This information can be found in the lobby, playroom, locker area, or other public spaces within the facility. If you are unsure about anything, you can pick up the information and view it later at home or the venue if you have time. Online hookup sites also have a health section with helpful information and web links that you can consider viewing.

It is important to recognize that most guys negotiate sex without using words. This can lead to assumptions about each other, and not all assumptions are correct. If two guys end up in a room together and engage in sexual activity without discussing condom use, it would be easy for them to assume that the other person is either HIV-positive or HIV-negative based on their actions. However, this assumption is incorrect. **Do not make assumptions.** It could land you in jail in some states. Discuss your HIV status, ask about theirs, and understand that this is not rejection or hate. It's communication, understanding, respect, and hope. HIV status disclosure is progressing in America, tearing down stigma and making communication easier.

Regarding group sex, it can be tricky, especially in dark rooms where it may be difficult to see what's going on. Some guys may not change condoms or clean themselves between partners, which can lead to the spread of infections like HIV and gonorrhea. If you're bottoming, make sure the top uses a condom or cleans themselves off first.

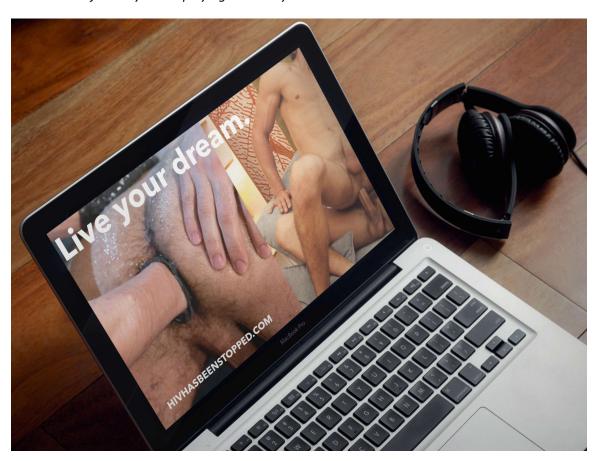
Dealing with refusals and negative emotions is a fact of life. You won't always have fantastic sex every time you visit a sex venue. This could be due to various reasons, such as having sex with someone you wouldn't normally, having expectations that don't work out, or experiencing refusals or embarrassing turn-downs. It's important to be comfortable with yourself and able to move on from these experiences. Being in a sex venue without your boyfriend's knowledge or approval, doing something in the heat of the moment, like having unsafe sex or doing drugs, which you regret later.

### To deal with these, here are some basic tips and suggestions for your consideration:

- Be clear before you go to a venue about what you are prepared to do, what you are prepared NOT to do, and who you are willing to do it with.
- If you are having sex with someone and it doesn't feel right, politely leave and go to another

play area.

- Use the bad experience to your advantage by using it as a learning opportunity. Think about what happened, how it went wrong, and how you might handle it differently next time.
- Remember that not everyone is willing to have unsafe sex or do drugs, so be respectful and considerate of those you are playing with. Play nice with others.





### Some basic commonsense tips and suggestions:

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs and STDs)

There is a wide range of STIs and STDs that you should be aware of if you plan to visit sex venues. These include (but are not limited to) crabs, scabies, gonorrhea, genital warts, herpes, hepatitis, HIV, and others. There is plenty of information about these available free of charge

online, at the venue, at your local clinic, doctor, and elsewhere. Here are some suggestions to consider:

- Thoroughly wash your hands with warm soapy water and, if available, take a good shower before and after you have sex. This helps prevent the spread of easily transmissible infections like gonorrhea and hepatitis A, and it helps make you smell good.
- Get regular checkups for STDs and STIs. A suggestion would be to go once a month (or every other month) with a friend or two, your boyfriend, or a sex buddy because this would be helpful for support and guidance. Remember, when getting a check-up (alone or with others), be open and honest with each other and communicate your feelings and emotions. Talking with them is your first and most powerful resource available.

If you feel like you cannot talk to your doctor or others about going to venues and getting check-ups, find someone you can talk to. One of the greatest advantages of my sex party, Brandon's Poz Party NYC, was that it was the first time in New York City (and the nation) that HIV+ gay men communicated with each other about important health and personal issues with confidence.

Be aware of the obvious signs of STDs and STIs on other guys, such as cold sores, warts, discharge from their penis (besides semen or urine), blood around their anus, and the like. Politely let them know (so as not to create a panic that clears out the room) and inform them to get checked. And maybe you should too, just in case. Remember, sight (seeing the STD or STI) is not a foolproof strategy as many do not have visible signs, and the venue lighting is not always good enough to see fine details.

If you think you have contracted an STD or STI, go to your doctor or clinic the next day or as soon as possible. If you are using venues, drugs, or BB often, get tested every three months (or sooner if possible) for HIV and let others know your HIV status. HIV Testing Kits are free and easy to acquire from your local HIV agency, organization, or clinic. We cannot stop HIV if we do not get tested, and we cannot stop HIV if we do not disclose our HIV status to others. We cannot stop HIV if we do not respect our right to freedom of choice when we choose to have sex with our own HIV status. *This is respect and responsibility, not rejection or stigma*.

Condoms and lube are some of the greatest benefits of going to most sex venues (with friends, boyfriends, someone you met online, or by yourself). In most sex clubs and private parties, condoms and lube are located in the play areas or private rooms. However, it is always a good idea to bring your own just in case.

Condom companies make a wide range of sizes and styles for your pleasures and desires, and lube companies provide lube packets from single-use to extra-large pump sizes. If in doubt, you can always pick them up at your local sex shop, supermarket, clinic, or drug store.

### **Helpful Hint:**

Successful HIV Prevention is the result of engaging in responsible sexual activity, not the amount of money raised through activities such as biking, walking, running, or dancing. - Robert Brandon Sandor, 2013

### **Conclusion:**

This guide highlights the importance of free and open discussion in making better public decisions and understanding cause-and-effect relationships. It mentions that HIV status disclosure has become a part of our identity and that appeals to cultural identity and behavior can be effective in HIV Prevention. The understanding of cultural values and public policy can lead to changes in views and behaviors.

This guide also mentions that what was once taboo is now accepted with respect and hope. It suggests that sex venues and online hookups may not be suitable for everyone and encourages individuals to try them to determine if they are right for them. It also mentions tips and suggestions that can help make sexual encounters enjoyable and confident.

Lastly, this guide mentions that American sex venues and online hookups have a unique subculture specific to men who have sex with men, and visiting one abroad can be a learning experience.

**HELPFUL LINKS:** www.hivhasbeenstopped.com/links

VIDEOS: www.youtube.com/@HIVHasBeenStopped/featured

MORE FUN HIV XXX PIX & VIDEOS: https://twitter.com/HIVPrEPXXX

If you found this guide to be helpful and informative, please consider sharing this link <a href="https://www.hivhasbeenstopped.com/pdf-booklet">www.hivhasbeenstopped.com/pdf-booklet</a> with anyone who might be interested. I welcome anyone to rewrite this for future generations.



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