

Guardian Project Curriculum

Group Level HIV & STD Risk Reduction Activities for Young Men Who have Sex with Men ages 18-29.

Healthy Relationships Part II: Dating - Objectives

- ▽ To provide a comfortable environment in which MSM ages 18-29 can share and discuss experiences and opinions regarding dating.
- ▽ To explore the characteristics of both healthy and unhealthy dating relationships.
- ▽ To educate members of the presence of domestic violence in same-sex relationships as well as signs of abuse.
- ▽ To emphasize the relationship between healthy relationships and HIV prevention.
- ▽ To provide members with same sex domestic violence resources.

Dating Instructions

Agenda

Welcome & Check-in
Review of established
Ground Rules
Health Relationships Activity
Last Words / Summary
Announcements

Activity:

- 1) Initiate the conversation on dating through this labeling activity. Prior to beginning the activity, two sheets of poster paper should be placed on the walls of the meeting room. One sheet is to be labeled "Healthy" and the other "Unhealthy."
- 2) Next, members should receive a label (or sticker) identifying a specific characteristic of a relationship. Some characteristics are typical of unhealthy relationships

while others are signs of healthy relationships. Some characteristics may also fall in both categories. Depending upon the size of the group, some members may receive more than one label.

- 3) Ask each participant in turn to share their label with the group. First, ask that participant to explain whether they think it is a healthy relationship characteristic, an unhealthy characteristic, or both. Next, invite other group members to comment. Once the group has discussed, place the label on the sheet of newsprint where the label holder thinks it should go.

- 4) Next, members are asked to share about their dating

experiences, especially any experiences that may relate to the characteristics identified during the labeling activity.

Particular attention should be paid to domestic violence issues in the gay community. It is not recommended to have this conversation with couples in the group.

- 5) Before closing the group, members should be offered a contact sheet for agencies and community resources for domestic violence. Facilitators should also make themselves available to talk one on one to any member who may need to debrief after the conversation.

Last Words / Summary



Supplies:
Markers
Poster paper
Labels/Stickers

Time Requirement:: 1.5–2+ hrs
(depending on group size)

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Key Talking Points / Questions to ask:

What have been your experiences of dating, both positive and negative?

What makes dating difficult or easy/comfortable for us?

Thinking back to the discussion on romance, how can you be romantic and show affection while dating in pub-

lic if you are scared of being harassed or attacked for doing so?

LGBT Same Sex Couples are often ignored by police who fail to acknowledge same sex domestic violence or by Domestic Violence Organizations who are ill equipped to handle LGBT issues. How does this

impact our community? How do we then address domestic violence?

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Healthy Relationship Part II: Dating - Sample Questions heard at Guardian Mpowerment Group 2005

Characteristics used for Labeling Activity:

- I want to be emotionally intimate with someone besides my SO
- I am always busy taking care of my SO
- I follow my SO's advice because he/she knows what is best for me.
- My SO and I don't really hang out with other people because we believe that no one else can understand our relationship.
- When out on a date, my date and I usually end up drinking a lot.
- I meet most of the people I date on the internet
- I disclose my HIV status to the people I date.
- There is mutual respect and support.
- There are rituals and celebrations in the relationship.
- There are a lot of strict rules and expectations.
- There is lots of anger, fear, and jealousy in the relationship.
- We can talk openly about all kinds of feelings
- Only good feelings are okay.
- Rules are reasonable and flexible.
- Everyone in the relationship must think and act alike.
- Me and my SO move in together after dating for one month.
- I date more than one person at a time.
- The relationship is an open relationship.
- There is sex on the first date.
- I don't tell my friends or family about the people I date.
- The partners in the relationship have all the same friends.
- When on a date, my partner and I don't show affection towards each other or do anything to let other people around know that we're together.
- There is a sense of working together.
- My SO and I fight frequently, but we always have great make-up sex.

About the Guardian Project

The Guardian Project is an intensive, coordinated social marketing campaign designed to promote safer sex practices among young men who have sex with men (MSM) and to decrease the spread of HIV and STDs. One component, the **Guardian Mpowerment Groups**, are social discussion groups designed to bring out the best in our community. They provide Guardian Members with quality social events, and the information necessary to keep our minds and bodies healthy, and our sex lives SAFE and ALIVE. The Guardian Project is administered by the AIDS Foundation of St. Louis. Guardian Mpowerment Groups are organized by Project ARK.



CONDOM: TOOL OF MASS PROTECTION

CONSISTANT CONDOM USE PREVENTS HIV AND STDS

guardianproject.org THE AIDS FOUNDATION OF SAINT LOUIS  