



The Guide

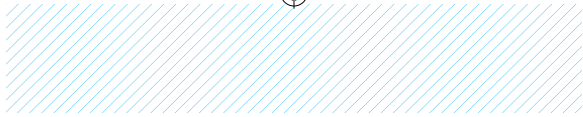
You are here
and we are here
for you.

- Introduction
- Questions you might hear
- Questions you might have
- Glossary



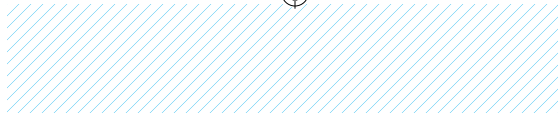


Why you should read this



Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (MSM) come to Canada for a lot of reasons. Some come for an education. Others come because of family. Some want the freedom to express their sexuality or gender. Before we get here, many of us see Canada as a “gay heaven” where we can freely seek out other men. Yet, some of us might experience culture shock for a little while. You may see men holding hands, hugging, or kissing. It can take time to adjust. There’s a lot that you need to know.

It can be difficult to find men for sex or a relationship especially when we are unfamiliar with the way things work in Canada. We can feel sad, lonely and isolated when we are away from friends or family, getting to know a new city, and dealing with immigration. Some of us



cope by having risky sex or using drugs or alcohol and that's why you need to know about HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and how to protect yourself.

We hope that this booklet will help you with some of the challenges of learning to live in Canada. It can help you learn about the gay scene and think about what you need to do to avoid HIV and other STIs. We include questions that men in the community could ask you and questions that you might ask. We also talk about social activities and services. For more information and links to resources, you can check out our website at:

www.new2ontario.ca



www.new2ontario.ca 5

Introduction



Questions You Might Hear

Where are you from?

People who are new to Canada often get asked “where are you from?” People may ask in order to get to know you. This kind of question may also suggest that your name, the way you talk, or the way you look means that you aren’t really Canadian. But, unless Aboriginal, we are all either immigrants or come from families that immigrated to Canada.

Some people in the gay scene are attracted to you because of the colour of your skin or your cultural background. It might be a new experience to have your skin colour and culture be a large part of how people see you. You can go from being you to being the Black guy, the Chinese guy or the Latino guy. This can be uncomfortable. It can make you feel like an outsider. It takes time to get used to the labels people might use to describe you, and to figure out what it means for how you see yourself. As a result, some guys form friendships mainly with other newcomers. Others find it easier to become a part of the mainstream culture by volunteering, or attending social and community events.

What are you into?

Gay men want to find out what type of sexual play or type of guy you're looking for. For example, some guys are into: masculine bottoms, femme tops, Black men, twinks, or hairy men.

Other guys may be looking for: oral sex, 1-on-1, group sex, S&M play, barebacking, sex with dildos, fisting, or water sports (pee play). Whatever you're into, you need to know the risks for HIV or STIs!

Sometimes, men make assumptions about what you are into based on your race or culture. For example, many Asian men are assumed to be "bottoms." They are expected to be passive in sexual play. And, Black men are assumed to be "tops". They are expected to be aggressive in sexual play. These beliefs are racist. They can be hurtful. When you meet someone for a date, tell him what you are looking for and what you are comfortable doing or not doing.

Top or bottom?

You may have been cruising in bars and online on sites like:

- [craigslist](#)
- [adam4adam](#)
- [BGC](#)
- [gay.com](#)
- [manhunt.com](#)
- [squirt.org](#)

Guys on these sites are usually direct. They are often looking for sex. They are not always looking to make friends. They might ask "are you a top or bottom?" They want to know if you prefer to put your penis into his ass (top) or have him put his penis in yours (bottom). Reply 'versatile' if both work for you.

Some guys think that only bottoms are at risk for HIV and other STIs. This is not true. Both partners are at risk for HIV infection. HIV can enter your body through small cuts or through the tip of your penis. STIs like syphilis, herpes, or warts only need skin to skin contact.



Getting the top partner to use a condom can be difficult. Some men are into barebacking (sex without condoms). Often the responsibility to ask for condoms is on the bottom, but the decision to wear a condom is with the top. If you can, talk about it before you get sexual. For example, you may write “condoms only” or “safer sex only” in your online post. A date may agree to use a condom online. However, he may try to have sex without the condom when you meet. You can walk away if he refuses.

Sometimes, guys do not use condoms because they are afraid to bring them up. Some guys fear losing a chance to meet someone or to have sex. Some guys may be living in situations where it is hard to say ‘no’ to a partner because they depend on him for a place to live, food, money or they fear violence. Condoms are the best tool to protect you from HIV when you have sex. If you do not use condoms, it is a good idea to use a lot of lube and to avoid your partner’s cum inside your ass. These strategies will not protect you as well as a condom, but they may

Condoms are the best tool to protect you from HIV.



help if you have no other choice. If you have sex without a condom, look for help to address the issues that are stopping you from having safer sex. Your health is worth it.

If it is hard for you to have sex with condoms you can do things like body rubbing, oral sex, or mutual masturbation instead. These activities are safer for avoiding HIV infection. They do not involve penetration or the exchange of body fluids like cum and blood. But you are still at risk for other STIs like herpes, warts, and syphilis, which can increase your risk of getting HIV. If you are already HIV positive, they can lower your ability to fight illnesses.

Questions you might hear

Can you host?

Do you have a place to have sex?

There are some things to think about before you take someone home. If you meet a guy online, you might want to think of safe ways of hosting. You can let a friend know that you have a date coming over. You can meet your date at a coffee shop first.

Take some time to think about what kind of sex you want to have. What are you going to do if a guy wants to do something like have sex without a condom?

Where else can you go?

If you don't have a place, don't want to take someone home or don't want to go to the home of strangers, you can use a bathhouse. Bathhouses are clubs where men can find sex partners almost 24 hours a day. Most sex takes place in private rooms. There is often a dark room and a steam room where everyone can play. Some guys may offer you drugs to add to the sexual experience. Say 'No thanks' if you're not into it. For more information about these drugs, check the resources listed in the [PnP](#) section of our website.

At the bathhouse, you can have sex with a lot of different guys, groups of guys, or watch other people have sex. Sometimes, men go the bathhouse simply to socialize. For more on bathhouses, check out our website.

There are some things to think about before you take someone home.

Questions you might hear

Do you party and play (PnP)?

Party refers to drug use. Drugs include:

- crystal meth (Tina, ice),
- GHB (g),
- ecstasy (E, ex),
- ketamine (k),
- cocaine (coke, blow, ski, snow).

Play refers to sex. You might meet men who ask you to get high and have sex without using condoms. Many guys feel that using party drugs in the gay scene is an overwhelming experience. And, some feel pressured to take drugs. No matter what anyone says... YOU decide if, and how, you will take a drug and what drugs you're prepared to take.

If you are being offered drugs or if you want to explore them, take the time to learn more about them and their side effects. If you are taking hormones without medical supervision or are taking HIV medications and are using party drugs, talk to your doctor. Find out the affects of mixing.



Keep in mind, many drugs are illegal in Canada.

And, when you have sex while high or drunk, you may be more likely to have sex without a condom. Check out our website for links to more information.

Questions you might hear

Are you clean?

This question is a common way of asking if you have HIV or an STI. The word clean suggests that we are dirty if we have HIV or other STIs. This is hurtful and wrong. Asking this question does not protect you or your partners.

Asking the question does not protect you or your partners.

In online ads you might see “D&D free you be the same.” This means that the person does not take drugs. He is also disease free and expects the same from you. But, stating that you don’t have an STI or HIV is not enough.

HIV is often passed on by people who don’t know they have it. And, a person is most able to infect others when they first get it.

We might answer yes to this question for many reasons. For example, we:

- are really turned on and just want to have sex
- are HIV positive but don’t feel safe to tell anyone
- don’t want to face the rejection

Most of us prefer to tell someone we know well rather than someone we’ve just met. But, if you



might pass on HIV (“significant risk”) to someone during sex, you have a legal duty to tell them first. To learn more, read [HIV Disclosure: Legal Guide for Gay Men in Ontario](#) found on our website.

For HIV related legal advice, contact the HIV/ AIDS Legal Clinic in Ontario (HALCO) at 1-888-705-8889 or (416) 340-7790 in Toronto; TTY 1-866-513-9883. Or, go to our website for more information.

Questions you might hear



Questions You Might Have

What should I expect from the gay scene?

The gay scene in Canada includes bars, restaurants, clubs, parks, bathhouses and an online community.

In large cities like Toronto, you can find areas that have arts, parties, and social groups. These include the Village at Church and Wellesley and Queer West, in the central west area. Some bars and parties provide services to specific groups like bears, twinkles, older men, Spanish speaking men, and Caribbean men.

In smaller cities, there may be fewer choices for meeting people. Smaller centres may have only one gay bar or no venues. Here guys might have to meet each other in more informal places like private house parties, parks or online. You can also check out campus lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans student centres or local AIDS service Organizations (ASO). These places have information on social groups, bars and events.

The gay scene has been described as very sexually open but unfriendly to newcomers. You may find that it is easy to find sex. However, it can be harder



to make friends or find relationships. This can sometimes leave you feeling lonely. Go to our website for links to get you started.

Although some large cities like Toronto are ethnically and racially diverse, the gay scene is mainly white and English speaking and is separated by race, ethnicity or group. This makes it hard for you to feel part of the community.

You will also find that people use a lot of words to describe members of the gay and bisexual community: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, queer, questioning, intersex, and 2-Spirited (LGBTQQI2S).

There are different ways that people express their gender such as drag queens, transwomen and transmen. You will need some time to sort out the language used in the gay community. To help you learn these terms, we have included a list of words and their meanings found on page 37.

Questions you might have

Am I at risk for HIV?

About 1 in 5 gay men in Ontario live with HIV. Even if nobody is talking about it in the community, you are still at risk. Generally, gay and bisexual men get HIV through unprotected anal sex from exchanging semen and anal or vaginal fluids. Sharing needles is also a risk.



As someone new to Canada and new to the scene, you may do things that you would not normally do. You might not insist on condom use for fear of losing the opportunity for sex.

You might cope with stress by using alcohol and drugs. This can make it harder to make safer decisions. People who do not have social support and money or are lonely are also at higher risk for HIV infection.

There are many things you can do to reduce your risk for HIV and other STIs.

1. Get tested. HIV and STI testing is free at Public Health Unit's STI Clinics, community health centres, and some sexual health clinics even if

you are not a Canadian citizen. You can test for HIV at one of Ontario's 50 anonymous testing sites (places where you don't have to give information about yourself). But, STI testing is not anonymous. If you are HIV positive, visit an HIV/AIDS organization (ASO) and connect with social and medical services.

2. Use condoms when you have sex. You can get free condoms at many bars, bathhouses, health centres, ASOs, and many other queer community agencies.
3. Spend some time learning about your local gay scene. Visit community centres, take part in support and social group meetings, go to events, and find ways to stay safe when trying new things.

For free testing sites in Ontario call the AIDS Hotline: 1-800-668-2437 (service available in 17 languages). Or, see our website for more information.

What if I'm HIV positive?

You are not alone. There are about 30,000 people in Ontario who are living with HIV. About half of these are gay, bisexual men or other MSM. In Ontario, you can get access to HIV medications and great health and social services that will help you live a healthier life. AIDS service organizations provide services even if you don't have status. You can find social support groups, one-on-one counseling, and other services to meet your needs.

Having people reject you because you are HIV positive can make it difficult to find sex or relationships. Many guys worry about passing on HIV or becoming re-infected with a different type of HIV. But you can have great sex without passing on HIV or becoming re-infected with HIV. It is important that you use condoms and get regular STI tests. STIs can be very unsafe for people with HIV and can make it easier to give HIV to your partners. Great safer sex starts with an understanding of the risks involved in sex.

Your sex life doesn't have to stop



Sometimes guys say “no” to us when they find out we have HIV. You may want to get some skills to handle saying “no” while staying positive and proud. Life does not stop when we are diagnosed with HIV. And, our sex life doesn’t have to stop either.

For HIV related legal advice, contact the HIV/ AIDS Legal Clinic in Ontario (HALCO) at 1-888-705-8889 or (416) 340-7790 in Toronto; TTY 1-866-513-9883. Or, go to our website for more information.

Questions you might have

Where do I go if I’m looking for more than sex?

You may want to find new friends and take part in events and activities in the gay community.

Volunteering in the community has helped many guys meet new people and become a part of their new community. Some choose to volunteer in cultural organizations and meet people from their own community. However, these organizations might not be gay friendly spaces. Try calling or emailing first. Ask them if they have any gay and bisexual groups or services.

If you want to meet other gay or bisexual men, you can look for gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans (LGBT) organizations in your area. If there aren’t any, try your local AIDS service organization (ASO). ASOs may also provide gay, lesbian and bisexual programming.

If you are a university student you can also check out school LGBT groups.

Check out our website for more information.



Why is finding and holding onto a relationship so difficult?

You may find that many men say that they are looking for a relationship or friendship but they seem happy to just have sex! For men who feel like they've spent a lot of time hiding their sexuality, they often want time to explore the scene and have many partners.

There are many kinds of relationships that you should know about. The most traditional form of relationship is the monogamous relationship, where you have just one partner. There are also casual dating relationships where you might be dating more than one guy. Open-relationships are also common. In an open-relationship, one or both partners may want to date each other while also seeing other people for sex.

Unfortunately, some gay men may have negative ideas about newcomers. They may only be attracted to you because of your skin colour and culture. They may think that you want to date them for help with your immigration process.

Some newcomers have found that talking about some of these negative experiences with other newcomers, counsellors, and other service providers can help them to cope with the feelings that come from this type of discrimination.

There are many kinds of relationships that you should know about

To meet men, you can go to community, arts or sporting events. Some guys have found it helpful joining social groups such as book clubs.

See our website for links that can get you started in negotiating a relationship that works for you.

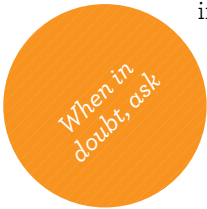
What is trans and why do I need to know?

Transgender or transsexual describes people who change their sex or how they present their gender. Sex and gender are separate but connected. For example, at birth your genitals (penis or vagina) decide your sex (male or female). Your gender is your understanding of yourself as a man or woman.

Transsexual is a medical term for those of us who choose to take hormones and have surgeries to have our bodies match our gender. It is used when we feel that we are men rather than women or women rather than men. Transgender describes anyone who does not fit commonly accepted gender roles and expressions such as drag queens, transsexuals, drag kings and butch lesbians. Some transgendered people take hormones or have surgeries. Not everyone who expresses their gender differently accepts transgender as a label. Trans people use different words to describe themselves such as transman, FTM, transwoman, and MTF. When in doubt, ask.



For some guys who are new to Canada, it is safer to explore their gender expression by cross-dressing or doing drag. Others choose to change from female to male (FTM) or from male to female (MTF). As you cruise



in the scene, you might meet FTMs. If you do, try not to ask questions about body parts. Don't assume that he is a top or bottom. He will tell you what you need to know.

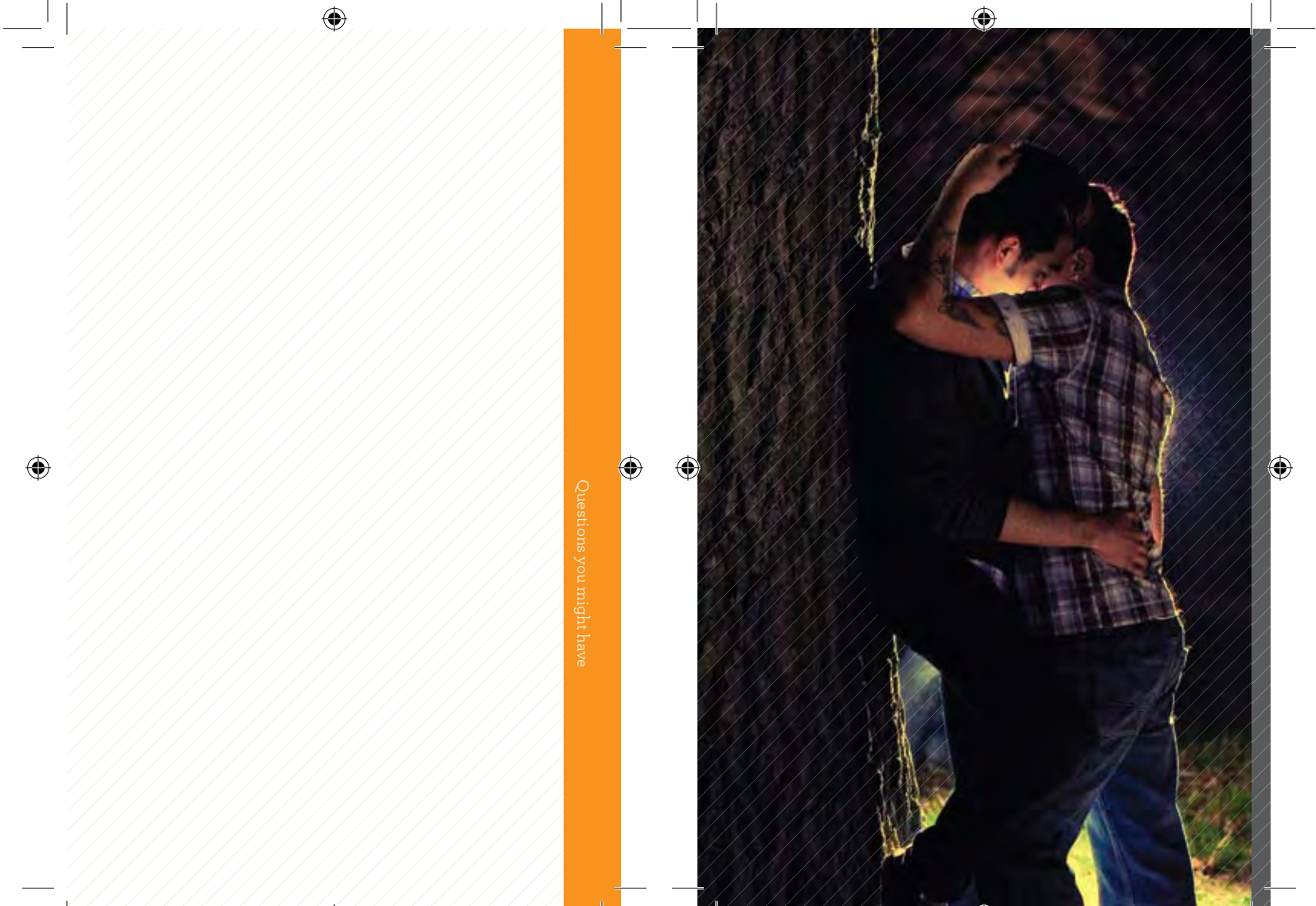
If you are questioning or exploring your gender, please go to our website for more information.

Questions you might have

Where do I go for my health, social and immigration needs?

Immigrating to Canada and adjusting to a new community creates a lot of stress. This can put you at risk for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Go to our website for links to resources covering immigration, housing, legal services, employment, education, health and places of worship. There is a lot of work being done in the community to make social, health and legal services more gay friendly. However, there is still a lot of work to do. We cannot guarantee that the services listed are the most informed about gay, bisexual or transgender issues.



Questions you might have

Glossary

A

Anonymous Sex: Sex with men you don't know at parks, bathhouses, and public washrooms.

B

Barebacking: Sex without condoms.

Bottom: The partner who is penetrated during anal sex.

Butch: A gay man that has a masculine appearance or mannerisms.

C

Circle Jerk: A group of men touching their penises together

Closeted: A man who is attracted to other men who may not admit it to themselves or others. Closeted men have not yet “come out of the closet”. They have not told anyone that they are gay or bisexual.

Coming Out: Telling friends, family or co-workers that you are attracted to men. Some people choose



not to tell anyone about their sexual or romantic relationships with other men because they do not want to be rejected by their family and community.

Crystal Meth: Also known as Tina or Ice. Crystal is a type of methamphetamine (speed). It is snorted (sniffed), eaten or smoked out of a glass pipe. It is highly addictive.

Cum: Describes an orgasm or a man's semen (the thick white fluid that comes out of the penis).

D

Daddy: An older gay man who often seeks younger men.

Down Low (DL): Men who secretly have sex with other men while in sexual relationships with women are said to be on the "down low" (or "dl" for short).

Drag Queen: Men who assume the appearance of women. Drag queens, or "queens" for short, are mostly entertainers who dance, sing, lip sync and perform in costume at drag shows.

E

Ethnicity: A group of people whose members identify with each other through a common heritage such as Italian or Korean.

F

Femme: The term femme or queen often refers to a gay man that has either a feminine appearance or mannerisms.

Fisting: Placing the hand into the anus (ass).

G

Gay: Having an emotional and physical attraction to the same sex.

H

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus that causes AIDS by attacking the T-cells (white blood cells) within the body, weakening the immune system.

HIV is spread through exposure to bodily fluids such as blood and semen.

Homeroetic: Term used to describe same-sex sensuality, sex and desire in cinema, poetry, literature, theatre or art.

Homophobia: A fear of gay men or gay lifestyle and culture which can lead to violence.

I

Immune System: The body system, which is made up of many organs and cells. These defend the body against infection and disease.

J

Jerking Off: Describes masturbation (touching your penis).

M

MSM: Describes gay, bisexual or curious men who have sex with other men.

N

NSA: This means 'no strings attached' which refers to having sex with no commitments.

O

Oral Sex: putting your mouth on a partner's penis.

P

Partner: Describes a gay man's lover.

Poppers: Also known as Amyl Nitrate poppers come in a small, usually brown bottle of liquid (solvent), which are usually sniffed during sex. Amyl Nitrate boosts blood pressure, relaxing the anus and making anal sex more comfortable.

Pride: A feeling of strength and unity among gay and bisexual men.

Q

Queen: A man who dresses in female attire. Or



a man who has what is considered feminine qualities.

Queer: Originally negative word for gay. It has been reclaimed by some gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered persons as a self-affirming term to include gay and bisexual people. It is used by younger people. It is still offensive to some older people in the community.

Questioning: A person unsure of their sexuality or their gender.

R

Race: The categorization of people into groups (such as, black, Asian, white) based on characteristics such as skin colour, hair texture, or facial features. It is different from ethnicity which refers to people with a shared sense of culture and history.

Rice Queen: A gay non-Asian man who is mostly attracted to Asian men, regardless of their age. Usually, it refers to an older man who prefers younger Asian men.

Rimming: licking someone’s anus (bum).

S

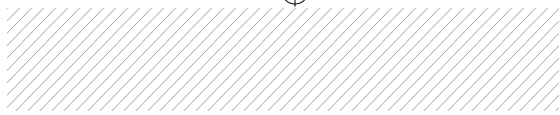
S&M: Stands for sadism (like to give pain or control) and masochism (like to receive pain or be controlled). Sadistic and masochistic activities can include bondage, nipple play, blindfolds, handcuffs, spanking, etc.

Seroconversion: Becoming HIV positive. Seroconversion usually happens a few weeks or months after you’ve been exposed to HIV.

Serosorting: Serosorting is choosing social and sexual partners based on their HIV status.

Sex: Sex between men can include a range of activities such as anal sex, oral sex, mutual masturbation (jerking off) and frottage (rubbing or grinding against each other).

Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS): Sex or gender reassignment is a surgical procedure that alters genital and other physical characteristics. Some transsexual and intersex people choose surgery to make their bodies match gender.



Status: The state of your health, meaning whether or not you have HIV or other STIs.

Substances: Drugs and alcohol. A term used by services providers or harm reduction workers to talk about drug and alcohol use.

T

Transphobia: A dislike or hostility towards transgender people that can lead to violence or discrimination.

Twink: An attractive, boyish-looking, young gay man. A twink is usually 18-25, slender with little or no body hair.

Two-spirit (2-Spirit): An Aboriginal and Native American term to describe a person who embraces both a male and female spirit.

U

Undocumented: A person living in Canada without immigration papers.

Acknowledgments

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Your Notes

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