GROUP MEETING 19.04 96. (6 PARTICIPANTS)

Everyone had heard of the SGHP but were generally unfamiliar with outreach work. Had seen the name on the condoms packs and posters etc.
It was generally felt that sexual practices had changed but that a lot of poeple still to some degree engaged in low risk behaviour. Everyone had seen the leaflets, were aware of the safer-sex guidelines and were making their own choices based on this information, at this point things have reached saturation point. The safer-sex message has come across loud and clear, but we take risks every day of our lives when crossing the road, people are quite prepared to take a calculated risk. Everyone present would never have anal sex with a one night stand anyway regardless of any safer-sex message.
Four of the participants had been to the S.T.D. clinic and were quite happy with the service and did not have any reservations about going there.
Three have had the Hep. B. vaccine, three had not. Everyone was aware of the virus and haw easily it could be transmitted. Those who had the vaccine, two took it because they were travelling abroad.

RE: SHAG PACK

Everyone was familiar with the pack and liked the design, and knew what was inside. The term shag pack was slightly vulgar but nobdy had any real problems with it, some felt it was a fun term to use.

HIV TESTING LEAFLET

Everyone had seen it and had picked it up at some stage. Not everyone were willing to say whether they had been for a HIV test or not.

NEW CONDOM PACK:

Nice design, positive image, good value for money but a bit bulky.

It was felt that there are no new ways of getting the message across, in fact it could at worst backfire and at best be ignored.

CRUISING:

Everyone was quite surprised to hear about FitzGeralds park, and felt that reports from other cruising areas were exaggerated. They felt that people cruise for all sorts of reasons. Some thought that posting stickers was not a good idea as it would draw attention to what was happening and that there was no such thing as a discreet area where stickers could only be seen by people who cruise.
One or two in the group had cruised in the past but no-one admitted to doing it now mainly because they felt that there was nothing happening.

HEALTH WEEKEND:

Interesting idea but would not work, people simply would not be interested. Health workshops aimed at men in general maybe but not gay men. Most present were aware of the healh issues affecting them and did not see any point in organising social events around health issues, even if it was presented in a positive way. They would probably not attend and doubted if anyone else would either.

One or two expressed an interest in going along to discussion groups, but would not have the time or the energy to organise anything themselves.

COMMENTS:

There were no main areas of disagreement, everyone had an opinion to express and seemed to be in broad agreement with each other.

Most present were well travelled, and seemed to be in good well-paid jobs (one was unemployed).

Ages ranged from 23 to 37, and represented a good cross section of the community.

Everyone spent some time bitching about Loafers, no ventilation, cramped conditions, and generally unfriendly staff. Three of the group never go there, the others only to meet friends as it was difficult to meet new people there.

A lot more could be done with the club, the couches and chairs could easily be upholstered at little cost to give a more uniformed look.

Everyone felt that the cafe and bookshop provided a good introduction or stepping-stone before going to the pub and club for someone just coming out.

The range of books and magazines in the bookshop was excellent.

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