

GETTING READY

A photograph of two men smiling and looking at each other. The man on the left is of Asian descent with a shaved head, wearing a dark polo shirt. The man on the right is Black with dreadlocks, wearing a dark polo shirt. They are positioned in front of a green background with a white splatter pattern.

Improving your self-esteem and
getting ready for relationships

A PACE workbook for gay and bisexual men

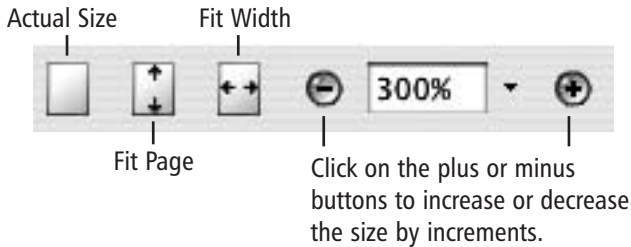
Welcome

Welcome to the web version of Getting Ready.

PACE and Camden Primary Care Trust's Good Sexual Health Team jointly published Getting Ready in 2005, in printed form, for gay and bi men in London. It was funded by the health services in London as part of the London Gay Men's HIV Prevention Partnership.

We have now made this web version to enable it to be used by a wider audience.

You can adjust the size of the document on your screen by clicking on these buttons in the top menu bar.



For the exercises that involve writing, we suggest you print off the relevant pages or make notes on paper or in a journal. There is more advice about how to use the workbook in the introduction on the next page.

We welcome any feedback you have about this version of GWYW. Please email us at: groupwork@pace.dircon.co.uk

Introduction

Welcome to Getting Ready, a PACE workbook that aims to help you improve your self-esteem and get yourself ready to make relationships.

Getting Ready contains information and exercises developed during eleven years of running workshops with over 3,000 gay and bisexual men – men who wanted to make fulfilling friendships and relationships with other men.

You can either work through the workbook from start to finish or just dip into it, doing the exercises that seem most useful. And you can work on your own, or with a friend or a group of friends.

Some of the exercises may seem a bit odd to you – and often, when things are unfamiliar, we resist them. Why not give them a try and stretch your comfort zone a bit? You'll get much more out of the workbook if you do.

Having said that, not every exercise in this workbook will be right for you. If something doesn't feel right, ask yourself why that might be. Don't proceed with something if it is causing you a lot of distress. Talk to a friend or counsellor instead.

Many people find it helpful to keep a journal when they are doing personal development work. If you do this, you'll have a handy record of the progress you're making. You might want to keep both your journal and this workbook somewhere secure. What you write in them is personal and private unless you choose to share it.

You may find it helpful to talk to someone else about what you find out about yourself in the process of doing the exercises. This could be a friend, a lover or a counsellor.

Suggestions for further reading, as well as a list of organisations that can offer different kinds of help, are at the back of the workbook.

SUCK IT & SEE

These Suck It & See boxes appear throughout the workbook and contain suggestions for developing your learning and skills. Try them and see what happens!

Getting Ready

Improving Your Self-Esteem and Getting Ready for Relationships



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All photographs were posed by models. Thanks to all who took part.

Disclaimer

The material in this workbook aims to provide an introduction to personal development. The information and exercises are not tailored to your individual circumstances and do not constitute psychological advice to you as an individual. If you are in doubt about the suitability for you of an exercise or suggestion, we recommend you seek professional advice.

LONDON GAY MEN'S
HIV Prevention Partnership

Camden 
Primary Care Trust

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Part One:

Knowing & accepting yourself

Some people say that you have to love yourself before you can love somebody else. And in order to love yourself, you need to *understand* and *accept* yourself.

This section introduces you to your *relationship with yourself*, which is a crucial aspect of your self-esteem. It provides a variety of exercises that will help you understand and accept yourself more, and thus build your self-esteem.



Who do you think you are?

EXERCISE

This is a simple exercise that helps you to think about who you really are. It might confirm some things you already know about yourself, as well as suggest some things of which you were unaware.

Fill in **Section A**, and then turn over the page and read **Section B**. **Don't read B until you have completed A**, or the exercise won't work!



Section A: Your favourite animals

My favourite animal is: _____

Three qualities I like about this animal:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

My second favourite animal is: _____


Three qualities I like about this animal:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Finally, my third favourite animal is: _____

Three qualities I like about this animal:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Section B There are two ways of thinking about the animals you chose.

OPTION 1

On one level, this is a simple party game. According to the folk wisdom that's passed on with this exercise:

Animal 1 = How you see yourself

Animal 2 = How other people see you

Animal 3 = Forget the other two, this is who you really are...

You'll probably find it easy to recognise yourself in some of your chosen animals/qualities, while others will be less obvious – ask friends what they think.

OPTION 2

On another level, this can be a light-hearted introduction to thinking about yourself in a deeper way.

You can think of the animals and qualities you chose as reflecting different aspects of your personality.

They came from inside *your* imagination, so they probably do reflect something about *you*. You can probably identify with some of them straight away, while others might feel more alien to you.

Before dismissing the animals or qualities that you don't relate to, think about whether they might be qualities that are lying hidden within you – new or undeveloped parts of your personality waiting to come out.

For example, there's the sociable gym guy (1. Rabbit, 2. Labrador, 3. Heron) who can't understand people who don't go out every night. Thinking about his third choice of a heron, a solitary bird, helped him acknowledge his own need for solitude sometimes, to balance his sociability.

If you do find some less-well-known aspects of yourself through doing this exercise, think about whether you want to develop and support these aspects of your personality.



SUCK IT & SEE

Using your imagination, experiment with taking on some of the qualities of your third animal occasionally. Notice the effect this has on you and others around you.





Self-acceptance: It's a love/hate relationship

Most of us have a running commentary in our minds – about how we look, what we are like as a person, and what (we think) other people think about us. This commentary includes all the positive and negative thoughts, beliefs and feelings we have about ourselves. You can call this your relationship with yourself.

For some people, this internal dialogue is supportive and affectionate. For others, it can be more critical and unkind. The impact of these different ways of relating to yourself can be significant. If you generally feel good about yourself as a person, your self-esteem is likely to be high. If your relationship with yourself is more critical, mean or bullying, your self-esteem will probably be low.

EXERCISE

This two-part exercise will help you learn more about the relationship you have with yourself. When you've finished Section A, turn over the page and do Section B.

Section A Think of 10 things you like about yourself – qualities, strengths, achievements, personality traits and physical characteristics. They can be big or small things. They might be things you've identified for yourself or things others have told you. Write them in the table opposite.




Section A: Things I like about myself

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

If you are finding it difficult to think of 10 positive things, try some of these:

- Take a risk – dare to write things down that might feel embarrassing or boastful.
- Imagine what friends would say they like about you, if you asked them.
- If you still can't come up with 10, *ask* friends what they like about you. Keep trying till you've got all 10.



Section B Now think of 10 things you don't like about yourself – negatives, weaknesses, failings, unhelpful or unattractive personality traits. Again, they might be things you've identified for yourself or things others have told you. Include at least some of the most critical things you say to yourself when you're giving yourself a really hard time.

Section B: Things I don't like about myself

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

QUESTIONS

Look at your two lists and ask yourself these questions:

- Which list did you find easier to do?
- How do they compare? Is there a balance between your lists, or is one weighted more heavily than the other?
- Why do you think it's usually so easy for us to name our faults and so hard to know and appreciate our strengths?

REFLECTION

Many people find it hard to focus on their positive attributes. Well done if you managed it. Keep it up by regularly acknowledging things you like about yourself.

Now let's revisit your negative list. Some of the things on this list may not be true. They are probably part of your running commentary, which is like a tape you continually play to yourself. Sometimes the tape is a recording of critical things other people have said to you – a teacher or a parent, for instance.

On top of this, most gay men grow up in cultures in which anti-gay prejudice is expressed. It would be surprising if some of that didn't seep into our way of thinking.

There *are* ways of changing or erasing the tape, but the first step is to recognise that you are playing these messages to yourself. Then you can decide whether or not you want to continue.

REALITY CHECK

Go through the list of negatives again and see if the things you've written are actually true. They may be exaggerations, or true in some circumstances but not in all. If there are things that simply aren't true, cross them out. If there are exaggerated or over-blown things, re-write them in a realistic way.

Now go through each point that's left on your negative list and think about whether it's a problem that you want to change, or just something that you need to accept about yourself. We all have downsides (even Brad Pitt). Accepting that there are parts of ourselves that we don't particularly like is part of self-acceptance – warts and all!

Put an A next to the things you want to accept, and a C next to the things you want to change. Some of the exercises in the rest of the workbook will help you start to change these aspects of yourself.

SUCK IT & SEE

Sing your own praises once in a while. Next time you do something well (at college, or work or in a relationship), tell someone what you did, how you did it and why you're pleased with the outcome.



Mirror mirror

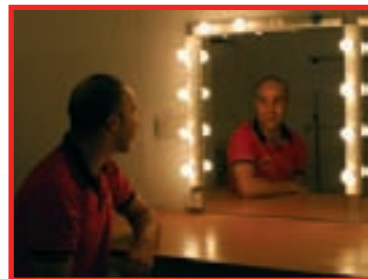
This exercise follows on from the last one and will help you feel positive towards yourself. It may not be easy at first, but with practice it can make a big difference.

EXERCISE

Spend 5 minutes looking in the mirror. Bear the following points in mind:

- Aim to be kind, respectful and caring to yourself.
- Focus your attention on some of the things you like about how you look. There will be something!
- Look into your eyes, and see your internal positive qualities – your personality, values, humanity and soul.
- Acknowledge your positive thoughts and feelings to yourself during the exercise.

Immediately after the 5 minutes, write these positive thoughts and feelings in the space opposite. Then answer the questions overleaf.



Positive thoughts and feelings



QUESTIONS

What was it like to keep your attention on the positives – the things you like about your face, body and personality?

What was the impact on your feelings when you did this?

Are you happy with the way you relate to yourself, or do you want to change it in some way?

OPTIONS

- Try repeating this exercise occasionally, to see how your relationship with yourself changes over time.
- Try repeating some positive messages to yourself, either in your thoughts or aloud, during the exercise. It's best to choose things you can believe are true. Some options are: You've got nice eyes; You're OK; You are worthy of love; Hi gorgeous!
- Do the exercise with a full-length mirror (then do it naked!).

REFLECTION

Well done! If you were able to look at yourself with care, respect and affection, you have found a good level of self-acceptance. Make a mental note of how this feels so you can find your way back here when you're feeling low. If you spent the time telling yourself that you are ugly, boring, stupid etc, your level of self-acceptance is quite low. It's worth considering whether being harsh and self-critical adds anything to your life. In fact, putting

yourself down can be seen as a way of *keeping* yourself down, which doesn't serve anyone.

The old question of whether the glass is half-full or half-empty is relevant here. You can spend all your time and energy obsessing about what's not right with you, or you can focus your attention on what is right and value that. This will mean you actually get to experience what's good about your life right now!

If you found the exercise difficult, you might want to consider changing the way you relate to yourself. See the sections on Tackling Your Top Dog (page 21) and Being a Friend to Yourself (page 24). With time and practice, you can increase your level of self-acceptance and become a good friend to yourself, rather than an unhelpful critic.

Increasing your self-acceptance doesn't just make it easier for *you* to live with yourself – it will impact on others too, making you more attractive all round.

SUCK IT & SEE

Do something nice for yourself or give yourself a treat. For example, buy yourself some flowers, light a candle or cook some nice food – because you're worth it!

Stop beating yourself up

Many of us give ourselves a hard time by continually rewinding and replaying that tape of messages that are critical, unhelpful, bullying or just plain nasty. We call the part of yourself that plays these messages the Top Dog, because it takes a superior position and looks down on the rest of you. Some typical Top Dog messages are:

- I am unattractive.
- Being gay is wrong.
- I am not interesting.
- Gay men never commit.
- I will never have a boyfriend.
- Boys don't cry.
- I am unclean because I am HIV-positive.
- I can't trust anyone.



There are also rose-tinted, over-positive Top Dog messages, such as:

- I don't have to worry about money, everything will be OK.
- I don't use condoms, I trust the universe.
- He only hit me twice, it's no big deal.
- I can trust everyone.

When we repeat these messages to ourselves, often without realising, they can have a negative impact on our lives. They can lead to feelings of depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, isolation and fear. In the case of the rose-tinted ones, they may be reassuring in the short-term, but in the longer term there can be some nasty consequences.

EXERCISE

What are some of the Top Dog messages you tell yourself? Think of both the subtle and the not-so-subtle ones. Include the things you say to yourself when you are feeling really down. Write them in the space overleaf. (To get you started, look back at your negative list in the Self-Acceptance exercise on page 14.)

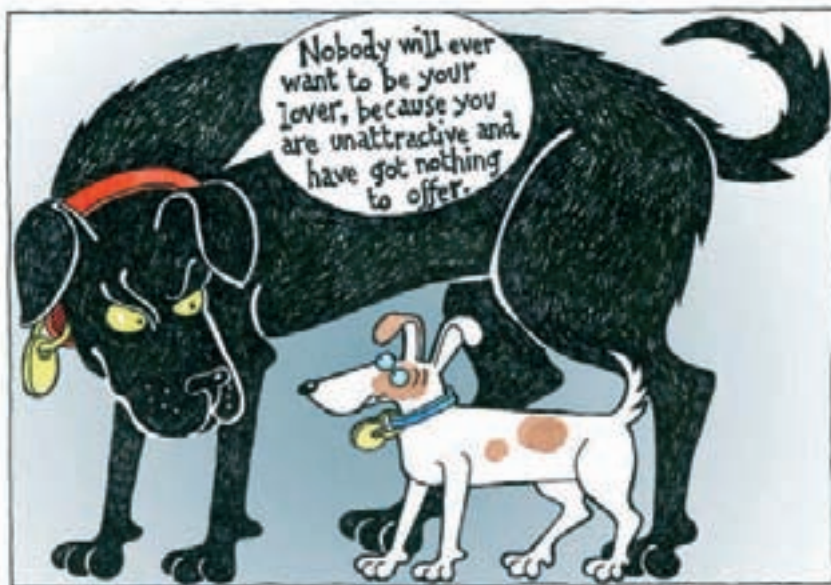


Top Dog messages



Tackling your Top Dog

Top Dog messages have power when there is no resistance or opposition to them from another part of yourself. We call this other part the Bottom Dog, because it often ends up dominated by the Top Dog. When the Top Dog is in charge, the Bottom Dog usually stays silent or agrees with the Top Dog.



Things get better when the Bottom Dog mobilises some energy to fight against the Top Dog. It's like the classic playground bully – until someone stands up to him, he will always hold the power. If you want something to change, you need to get your Bottom Dog to stand up to your Top Dog.

Here are **three** techniques you can use to reduce the power of a Top Dog, or stop him in his tracks:

1. Get Angry with the Top Dog.

For some reason, we seem to get away with saying the most horrible things to ourselves. If you take a moment and think about some of the nastiest things you've ever told yourself and imagine someone else saying them to you, you might find yourself getting angry.

When a message is mainly bullying, the best thing to do is get angry and say Fuck Off! or Stop! to the internal bully – with enough power to send him back to his kennel.

Anger is often seen as a bad emotion. But when it's used appropriately, to tackle a bully, it can be very helpful.

2. Laugh at the Top Dog.

When you look closely at Top Dog Messages, you can see that a lot of them are ridiculous. Look at your own examples and see if you can see the humour in any of them. Laughing at a ridiculous Top Dog is a very effective way of cutting him down to size.

3. Acknowledge the Grain of Truth.

Sometimes, but by no means always, there's a grain of truth in what the Top Dog is saying. In these cases, the Top

Dog has usually blown something up out of all proportion.

For example, take this message:

"No one will ever want to be your boyfriend, because you're far from perfect, you're unattractive and you've got nothing to offer." The Top Dog is probably right about you not being perfect! The fact that you don't look like Denzel Washington or Keanu Reeves doesn't mean you are unattractive, however. We all have attractive physical and emotional characteristics that we can bring to a relationship.

Acknowledge that you're not Mr Perfect, then remind yourself of the good qualities you bring to friendships and relationships. By facing your over-the-top Top Dog messages, you can bring some realism to the situation.





These three techniques will help you begin to replace your old, critical tape with one that plays more constructive, supportive and accurate messages.

EXERCISE

Go back to your list of Top Dog messages. For each of your messages, decide whether it would be best to 1) laugh, 2) get angry or 3) acknowledge the grain of truth. Put a 1, 2 or 3 next to each message.

If you want to, you can role-play conversations between your Top Dog and Bottom Dog.



SUCK IT & SEE

Write some of your Top Dog messages down on a piece of paper. Then make up a simple ritual that involves burning the paper, as a symbol of stopping the Top Dog in his tracks.

Being a friend to yourself

People who have high self-esteem relate to themselves as if they were a good friend. By becoming a better friend to yourself, you can raise your self-esteem!

Think about some of the qualities a good friend has. For example, they might listen, without judging, while you say what's going on for you. Talking to a good friend, you wouldn't have to censor uncomfortable feelings such as jealousy or anger – and they wouldn't make you feel bad for feeling them. You can do this for yourself, too – for example, make time to listen to yourself about your feelings and thoughts, your dreams and aspirations.

The tables opposite list some things a friend might do for you and suggest ways you can also do them for yourself.

Being a good friend to yourself entails being kind and supportive on the one hand and honest and firm on the other. You need to find a balance, being neither overly kind and generous nor overly critical or harsh. Be firm with yourself from a perspective of wanting the best for yourself, of wanting to be the best you can be.

HERE'S AN EXAMPLE OF HOW IT COULD WORK:

Steve is feeling restless and thinking about going out. He's not very happy about doing this, as he's been out a lot

lately, and is drinking more alcohol than he's happy with. Though some of the time he spends out drinking is enjoyable, a lot of it isn't.

He looks through the lists opposite and instead of going out again, Steve decides to stay with himself through this difficult time and have a look inside at what he's really feeling. He spends 10 minutes lying down doing a relaxation exercise to focus on what he's feeling. Then he takes pen and paper and just lets his hand write whatever comes into his mind.

After 30 minutes writing, he sees that he's feeling a mixture of things, including:

- Anger that his ex didn't send a birthday card
- Frustrated that he isn't in a new relationship
- A bit lonely

When he faces these feelings and writes them down, they are easier to handle than when he tries to get away from them. In trying to understand himself, he sees that his feelings are all normal human emotions. He runs a hot bath, puts on a favourite CD and focuses on feeling good in his own skin. Later, he rings a friend for a chat and they decide to go see a film together at the weekend.

THINGS A GOOD FRIEND MIGHT DO

Listen without judging, doing their best to understand you

Show they care about and appreciate you

Give you constructive feedback when you find something difficult

Stay with you through difficult times

Know how to cheer you up when you're blue

Accept all of who you are – warts and all

REFLECTION

Changing the way you relate to yourself can feel awkward and contrived. The more you do it, the easier it will feel.

Many people take pride in putting others first and themselves last. Of course it's nice to be generous to other people, but whose life are you living? Being generous to yourself makes it easier for you to be generous to others. Likewise, being firm with yourself when it's needed makes it easier for you to be firm with others.

DOING IT FOR YOURSELF

Listen to yourself from time to time, without judging. Make an effort to understand the different parts of yourself, and any conflicts or confusions you have.

Take care of yourself. Give yourself treats, value yourself.

Be supportive and constructive to yourself when you find something difficult, rather than beating yourself up. Support your own development.

Many of us 'leave' ourselves when the going gets tough, and seek alcohol, drugs, overworking or sex. Instead, try spending some time with yourself, facing your feelings rather than running away from them.

Notice what helps when you are down and start doing that for yourself. For instance: see a good movie, go dancing, get a massage, write a journal.

Nobody's perfect. Work (with a counsellor maybe) on accepting all the different parts of yourself. See *Stop Beating Yourself Up*, page 19.

EXERCISE

Think of ways you can be a better friend to yourself. Fill in the table below:

I can be a better friend to myself

Today _____

Next week _____

Next month _____

Over the next six months _____

On my birthday _____

SUCK IT & SEE

Next time you don't do something as well as you'd have liked, don't give yourself a hard time. Try being compassionate with yourself – shrug your shoulders and say, 'Oh well', and then move on.

(But if you feel you always go easy on yourself, try giving yourself some constructive criticism instead.)

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Part Two:

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What do you want in a relationship?

.....

Working out what you want from a relationship isn't always easy. Human beings are complex animals with a variety of different needs and desires.

This section will help you focus on what's important to you and arrive at an overall sense of what you are looking for in a relationship.

.....





Who do you fancy? (and what does that say about you?)

Getting clear about the qualities and characteristics you find attractive can be helpful when you are thinking about how to find a partner – and you might discover something new about yourself too!

EXERCISE

Section A. Write down 10 important qualities or personality traits you like in a man. Think of people you feel attracted to and tease out what it is that you like about them.

If you think of physical characteristics, think about what they symbolise for you in terms of personal qualities and put these down too. For example 'nice eyes' might symbolise 'warm and kind', or 'hunky' might symbolise 'strong'.

When you have completely finished your list, you can turn over and read Section B.

Section A: What I like in a man

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Section B. Now go through your list and tick the qualities or traits that are partly or wholly true about you.

It's interesting to see to what extent you fit the bill yourself. This can give you an idea about whether you are interested in someone similar or different from you.

REFLECTION

There are many factors involved in attraction between people. One of these seems to be that the things you are attracted to in others are sometimes facets of your own personality, which you don't recognise as belonging to you. You see them in others, and are drawn to them, because they reflect a part of yourself that you don't yet 'own', haven't yet expressed in your life or have buried for some reason. These are called *projections*, because they are parts of yourself that you project (as if you were a film projector) onto other people.

Some examples of this are:

- The guy who lives a cautious life but falls for men who have a wild streak.
- The cynical, bitter man who finds himself drawn to people who are open and loving.
- The couch potato who likes athletic men.

People's tendency to do this probably gave rise to the saying "opposites

attract". But, often, it's an unacknowledged similarity that's really doing the attracting. The cautious guy may have a buried wild streak; the couch potato a hidden talent for sport. These men could simply carry on fancying people they think are very different from themselves – but there is another option.

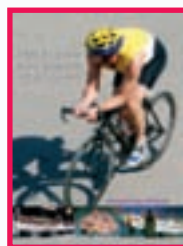
They could recognise and start to "own" the parts of themselves that they project onto people they fancy. If they do this, they will have a more complete understanding of who they actually are – and a richer relationship with themselves.

EXERCISE

Go back to the list of qualities you find attractive in others and see if there are any that could be projections of things that are undeveloped in your own personality.

If there are, then make a plan for how you might develop these qualities in yourself.

See GMFA's guide to gay sports clubs and social groups, available free in gay venues in London, for groups that could help you develop the new you! Or visit www.gmfa.org.uk/theguide



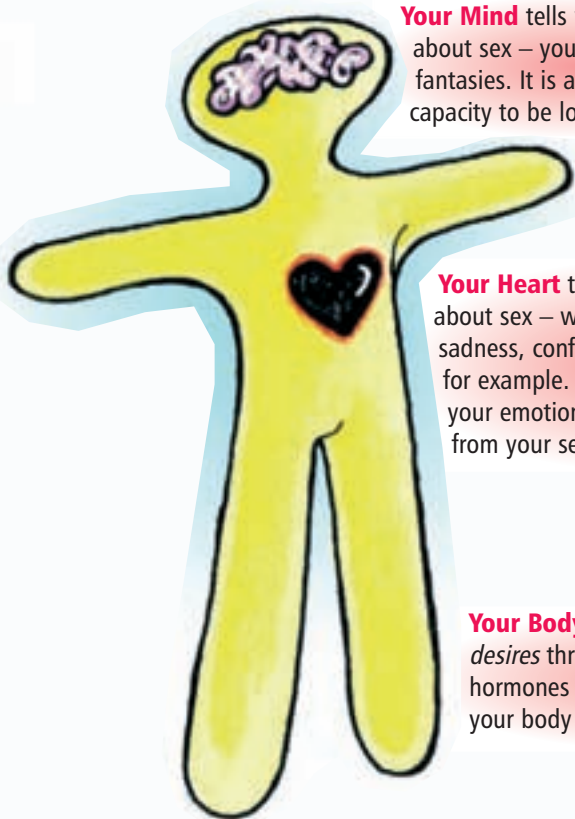


SUCK IT & SEE

Invent a character for yourself who has some of the traits you find attractive in others. Next time you go out, go as this character (take on some of his mannerisms and relate to people in the way he would) and notice the impact this has on you and others.

Sorting out your sexual parts

When it comes to sex, many of us have a confusing range of thoughts, feelings, desires and beliefs about what we really want. It can feel like different parts of us are in conflict with each other. One way to understand this inner conflict is to distinguish between your Mind, Heart and Body.



Your Mind tells you what you *think* about sex – your ideals, morals, fantasies. It is also the source of your capacity to be logical and rational.

Your Heart tells you about your *feelings* about sex – which can include fear, anger, sadness, confusion, happiness and delight, for example. Your heart also tells you about your emotional closeness to or distance from your sexual partner(s).

Your Body tells you about your *physical desires* through physical sensations, arousal, hormones and pheromones (the chemicals your body sprays when you fancy someone).

Sometimes these three strands are in sync, so your thoughts, feelings and actions fit together, which generally feels good. At other times they are at odds with each other, which can be a source of inner conflict. This can lead to guilt, anxiety and feeling bad.

If you separate out what the different parts of you are thinking, feeling and wanting, it helps you see clearly what could be pulling you apart.

EXERCISE Spend some time answering each of the following sets of questions.

MIND Questions: What do you *think* about sex? What do you believe is right, wrong, acceptable and unacceptable for you sexually? What do you think about the sex your body wants or your heart longs for?

A large rectangular box with a red border, intended for writing answers to the 'MIND Questions'. In the top left corner, there is a small, stylized icon of a brain.

HEART Questions: What's happening generally on an *emotional* level in your life? How does this affect you sexually? What do you feel about sex? What does your heart long for? What do you do with your feelings about sex? How do you express or respond to them?

A large rectangular box with a red border, intended for writing answers to the 'HEART Questions'. In the top left corner, there is a small, stylized icon of a heart.

BODY Questions: What turns your *body* on? What are your body's subtle and not-so-subtle preferences when it comes to sex? What gets your body going? For your body to really enjoy sex, what needs to happen when?

A large rectangular box with a red border, intended for writing answers to the 'BODY Questions'. In the top left corner, there is a small, stylized icon of a human figure.

Now have a look at your responses to the Mind, Heart and Body questions on the previous page. Are there any obvious conflicts? If not, lucky you!

But if you can see that your mind, heart and body are not in sync, think about what needs to change to bring them more into line with each other.

Here is an example of how that could work:

George has been single for six months. During that time, he's been using Gaydar to meet men for sex. He spends a lot of time on Gaydar, and meets up with someone at least twice a week. He rarely sees anyone more than once. Afterwards, he often feels down and quite angry with himself for 'wasting' so much time.

After doing this exercise, he realises that his **mind** is judgemental about him using Gaydar and having casual sex, and that his **heart** is still hurting from a break-up six months ago. He decides to stop judging his **body** for having physical needs (a change at the Mind level) and to do some work with a counsellor on the break-up of his last relationship (a change at the Heart level), which he thinks is stopping him getting into a new relationship.



SUCK IT & SEE

Tell a friend about your answers to the questions above and ask him to tell you what he would write. How do your answers compare with each other? Help each other figure out strategies for finding sexual solutions that will work for all three parts of you both.

Mr Right: A person spec

A person spec is a list of the qualities, skills and abilities a person needs to have in order to do a particular job. It helps an interview panel assess who's the best person for the job.

You can use the same idea to help you think about who you'd like to be in a relationship with. Being clear about what you want will help you find a person who fits with you, and stop you wasting time with people who aren't compatible.

Of course, romance and love are rarely straightforward or rational. Emotions, hormones and other mysterious forces are all important in deciding whom you choose as a partner. But you can use

this exercise to balance these other factors in your search for a boyfriend.

EXERCISE

In the space below, write down the things you would like in a boyfriend. Think about all the different aspects of your Mr Right – for example, his qualities, values, leisure pursuits, lifestyle, physical characteristics and sexual interests.

Don't censor, just write anything that comes into your mind. Take your time, make as long a list as you like.

When you've finished, look again at each point and decide in which box of the table overleaf it belongs.

My Mr Right:





ESSENTIAL Things that you couldn't do without in a partner

DESIRABLE Things that would be nice, but that you could manage without

CHERRY ON THE TOP Things you are unlikely to find, but you never know

RECYCLE BIN Things that you now realise you don't actually need/want

REFLECTION

Mr Right probably ain't Mr Perfect. Think about the people you know who are in relationships – Hollywood perfection doesn't happen for many people, does it? The rest of us have to learn how to be with fallible (but loveable) human beings.

Many people have unrealistic expectations about what a relationship can provide, and want their partner to meet all their needs and make them feel 'complete'. It's worth thinking about how well you are able to meet your own needs before expecting a partner to do this for you.

It's also worth thinking about what you have to give in a relationship, as well as what you want to get. Loving someone, after all, is as much about giving as receiving.

EXERCISE

Discuss your person spec with friends and see what they think about the overall balance, and whether or not anything's missing. Keep adjusting it until you are happy with it.

Once you've completed your person spec, have a look at it again, and see how many of the essential and desirable qualities you would say are true about you. If there are qualities on your list that aren't true of you, think about whether you want to develop them in yourself and how you might go about it.



SUCK IT & SEE

When an employer wants to fill a job vacancy, they have to advertise in the right places, send out application forms, shortlist suitable applicants and then interview them. Sometimes there are tests(!). Think about what steps you need to take to recruit Mr Right into your life!

What's your Bottom Line?

Your bottom line is a line you draw on your bottom with a permanent marker, showing what you're into sexually.

Only joking! In this context, your bottom line is your clear understanding of what you're up for when it comes to sex, as well as what you're absolutely not up for. It's well worth writing your bottom line down in the cold light of day, so that you don't have to work it all out in the heat of passion.

When you're clear with yourself about your dos and don'ts, you stand a much better chance of being clear with the people you have sex with – and, therefore, of getting the sort of sex you want.

EXERCISE

In the box below, write a list of all the sexual activities you've ever done. Don't censor, just write it all down. Then add any other activities you'd *like* to do.

Now go through your list and assign each activity to one of the boxes in the table opposite. This is your bottom line.

Your bottom line won't necessarily stay the same forever – as you have new experiences, your idea of what's right for you may change. You can draw up a new bottom line whenever you like.

Sexual activities I have done:

Sexual activities I would like to do:

My Bottom Line:

Sexual activities I am happy to do in most circumstances:

YES

Sexual activities I don't do:

NO

Sexual activities I might do:

MAYBE

In what circumstances:



Hot spots and slip-ups

In the heat of sex, many of us find ourselves taking risks or doing things we regret later, either because we aren't clear with ourselves about what our bottom line is, or because we let it slip during sex.

Let's face it, when all those hormones are rushing round your body, you probably won't be thinking very clearly.

And if alcohol or drugs are involved, your capacity to think clearly will be even more affected.

EXERCISE

What are *your* hot spots – the situations in which you find yourself doing things you regret later? What strategies could you use to help yourself stick to your bottom line in these situations? Fill in the table below.

Hot spots

Strategies

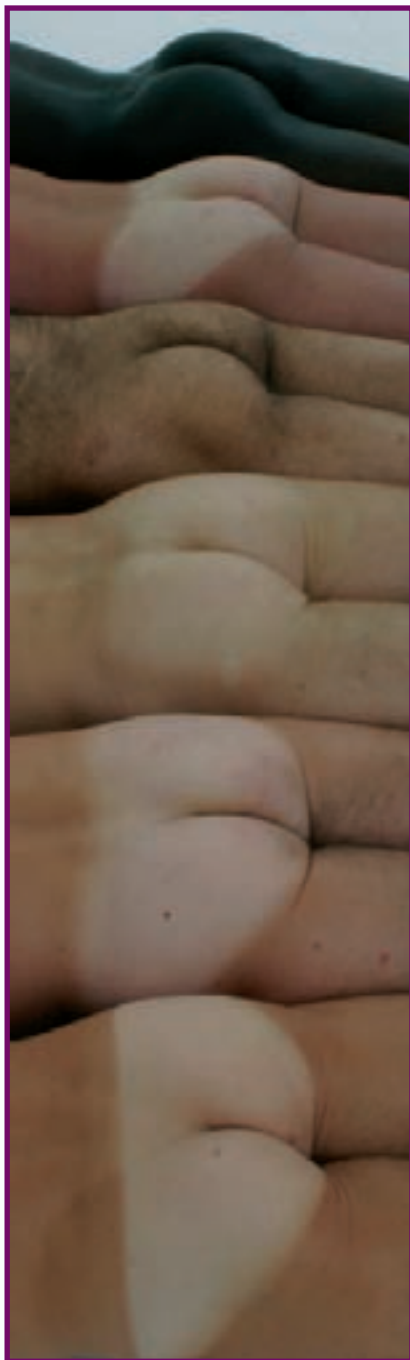
If you find you aren't keeping to your bottom line, then it might be helpful to look at what's going on.

- Perhaps your bottom line isn't realistic.
- Maybe there's a conflict within you about sex (between your Mind, Heart and Body, for example), which is why you break your own rules.
- Maybe you know what your bottom line is, but don't know how to stop people who want to go over it.

Think about what changes, if any, you need to make to your bottom line so that you can stick to it. Talking these things over with a sexual health counsellor or going to a workshop on assertiveness can be very helpful. See the back of this booklet for more information.

SUCK IT & SEE

A lot of sexual negotiation happens without words. Next time you're having sex with someone and you want something different to happen, try using your body to ask for what you want. Be clear, playful and light about it.





Part Three:

Going for it

So you've improved your relationship with yourself and now have a clearer idea about the kind of person you want to have a relationship with. You're ready to go.

This is the point at which some people get stuck. If you think you could be one of them, you might need to do something radical.

You can start by summoning up the courage to get on with the job. This section has some ideas to help you Go For It!

Putting yourself out there is hard work for many of us. Make sure you plan time to rest and enjoy yourself – you needn't work hard all the time!





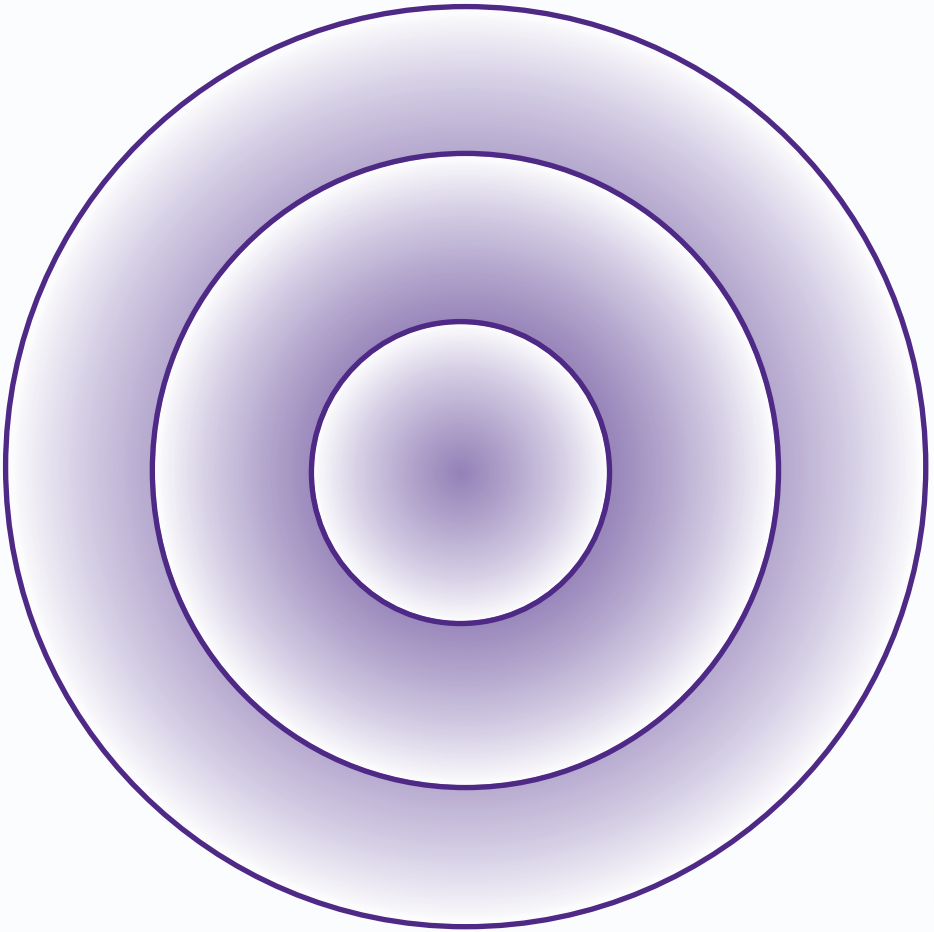
Get a Life

When you're looking for a boyfriend, it can be helpful to reflect on the things you spend time/energy doing. The things you do and the places you go will affect your chances of meeting a compatible partner.

EXERCISE

In the circles opposite, write down the things you spend time/energy on. Put the most important things in the inner circle (the things that you give the highest priority and/or put most effort or time into), and the least important in the outer circle. Include anything and everything you spend time on, for instance people, interests, hobbies, courses, work, organisations and beliefs.





QUESTIONS

- Looking at the overall picture, how do you feel about the things you spend your life doing?
- Have you got the right balance of work, play, study, friendship and love?
- Is there room in your life for a new relationship?
- Is your life full to the brim with diverse activities and things that are important to you, or is it full of things you do to try and find a man?
- How much of your time is spent in situations where you might meet other gay men?



REFLECTION

Some gay men spend all their spare time looking for Mr Right. Then, when they find him, they wonder why they don't have much inside to offer. Life can feel empty when we haven't got satisfying interests and friends – with or without a boyfriend.

But some of us are so busy that we don't have time for even a date, let alone a relationship. If this is true of you, but you want a boyfriend, something needs to change.

Doing things you really enjoy with other gay men can be fun, and it might also be a way to meet someone you could click with. (Visit www.gmfa.org.uk/theguide for information about gay interest groups you could join.)

Going to a gay social group can be intimidating. There isn't the usual noise

and alcohol, which help some people feel comfortable in bars and clubs. But if you take a deep breath and summon some courage, you should be able to find a friendly face and get chatting.

Dealing with the gay scene as a single man can be hard work. Having access to friends who understand you, encourage you or give you some TLC when you've been knocked back can really help.

SUCK IT & SEE

Put some 'me' time in your diary. Go somewhere you wouldn't normally go, where there are likely to be some other gay men.

Meeting Mr Right – some hints and tips

PACE runs a workshop called Looking for Mr Right. Over the years, several hundred gay men have participated and many good ideas have been shared. Here are some of them:

Currencies

Think about the currency that's used in the places you go to meet other gay men. The currency in saunas, for example, is mostly sexual, and interactions are based mostly on how people look. In contrast, a gay discussion group is more likely to include each person's thoughts and views as part of the currency it uses.

You *might* meet Mr Right in a sauna, but they're not a perfect setting for getting to know people in non-sexual ways. Bars, social groups and workplaces all use different currencies and enable different kinds of interactions. Knowing what currency is in use in different places can be helpful, especially if you are looking for more of a particular kind of currency in your life.

Movers/Waiters

In a bar or other venue where you might meet a gay man, notice whether you wait for people to make a move towards you (in which case you're a 'waiter') or whether you tend to be the one who makes a move towards them (in which case you're a 'mover'). In our experience, about three-quarters of gay men are waiters, and the rest are movers. Unsurprisingly, the movers tend to get more action than the waiters!

If you want to become more of a mover, try these ideas:

- Try making eye contact with someone before you make a move on him. If he doesn't catch your gaze, accept that he might not be interested. It's not inevitable, only more likely.
- In a bar or sauna, choose three men you fancy. Start with the one you like best, and indicate your interest (with eye contact and open body language). If you don't get a response, either make a move anyway and risk getting turned down or move on to Number 2. If he says no too, then move on to Number 3. If you still get a no, then maybe it's time to go home – but keep your dignity intact.
- Acknowledge yourself for putting yourself out there, and reassure yourself that another time it will be different. Learn how to manage your feelings about rejection (see Dealing with Rejection, page 48).

Heartbroken?

If you've had a significant relationship end recently, you may need some time to get over the ending (even if you ended it!). The cycle of loss can take a while to work itself through. If you are feeling stuck on an old love, talk to people about it, even if it was years ago.

Dealing with Rejection

Many gay men play safe and never take the initiative with other gay men because they fear rejection. Others seem to know how to let rejection bounce right off them.

Rejection often hurts, but it hurts more when we tell ourselves that we were rejected because there's something wrong with us. For many people, rejection seems like sliding painfully down a greasy pole – going from feeling 'I'm OK' to 'I'm not OK'.

There may be things about you that led to the rejection – maybe you've got BO or only talk about Star Trek, for instance. But usually it's much more to do with him than with you. When someone has just turned you down, what you really need is to give yourself a bit of TLC.



Here are some ideas about how to get back up to the top of the greasy pole, if you've begun to slide. See what works for you.

- Remind yourself (and get someone close to you to help) of all the things that are good about you.
- Believe that it's his loss.
- Cry, cry, cry and, when you're ready, take a deep breath and start looking for another Mr Right.
- Recognise that he wouldn't have been a good partner for you.
- If you usually collapse in despair when this happens, try getting pissed off instead. Mobilise your anger at being rejected, rather than sliding into a soggy heap.
- Remind yourself that there are plenty more fish in the sea.
- Do something that makes you feel good, like getting a new haircut.
- Be kind and comforting to yourself, rather than harsh and critical.
- After the initial shock and sadness, see what you've learned from the experience. Get some honest feedback from your friends about what they think might have gone wrong.
- Go where it is, not where it isn't. (It = love, affection, compatibility)



SUCK IT & SEE

Make requests of people around you (your friends or people at work/college). Keep asking until you get a 'no' at least a couple of times. Practising getting a 'no' builds up your 'dealing with rejection' muscles, so you can handle being turned down without falling apart.

When Do I Tell Him I'm Negative/Positive/Untested?

Talking about your HIV status with a potential partner isn't always easy.

For example, **positive men** may fear a new sexual partner will react badly if they reveal their status.

Often, **negative men** don't even think about bringing up the subject of HIV in a new relationship.

And **untested men** don't know for sure what their HIV status is. This may also be true for negative men, if they've been at risk since they last tested.

From various pieces of research we know how men in these different groups tend to think and behave. See the table below.

Once you are aware of these tendencies you can see that making assumptions about the HIV status of other men is an unreliable strategy for minimising the transmission of HIV.

The best way to avoid passing on HIV during sex with a new partner is to use condoms for anal sex. This doesn't require a conversation about HIV status.

But talking about your status with someone you are getting involved with can be valuable. Being open about personal information and feelings can lead to an increase in feelings of closeness and trust.

+	-
If nothing's been said, positive men tend to assume that their partners are positive	If nothing's been said, negative and untested men tend to assume that their partners are negative
Positive men tend not to tell new partners that they are positive straight away	Negative and untested men tend to assume that a positive man will tell them he is positive before having sex
Positive men tend to be concerned about their negative partners becoming infected	Negative and untested men tend to leave it to positive men to bring up HIV in a relationship

It's not always easy to talk about HIV. Difficult feelings can be involved, particularly if one of you is positive and the other negative/untested. These conversations work best:

- If there is enough time and space to do them justice (right in the middle of sex may not be the best time!).
- If there is trust, and a rapport has been built up in your relationship.
- If you talk about your own status and your feelings about that (even if you are negative) rather than just ask questions about the other person.
- If you talk openly, respectfully and directly, rather than indirectly. And if you avoid the use of offensive terms such as 'clean' and 'unclean'.

See the booklet, *How Can You Tell?*, available free in gay venues in London or by calling 020 7530 3596.



SUCK IT & SEE

Tell a friend or acquaintance something quite personal about yourself that you don't usually share with people. Notice how you feel about revealing personal things. Afterwards, think about the similarities between this experience and a conversation you might have with a lover about HIV status.

Your support network

Some of us take a lot of pride in our independence, but in fact people rarely function well without help from others. Most of us have a network of social relationships that we give support to and get support from – usually without thinking about it very much.

This exercise gives you an opportunity to map out your support network, see how much support you give and how much you receive, and consider whether you want to make any changes.

EXERCISE

First of all, write your name in the circle in the middle of the page opposite. Then, in the other circles, write the names of people who are important to you – your friends, family, work colleagues and anyone else who supports you. Add as many circles as you need. You can also include other things that you give or get support from, such as pets or groups and organisations.

Once you've drawn your map, think about how much support you give to each of these people/groups/pets etc, and how much you get.

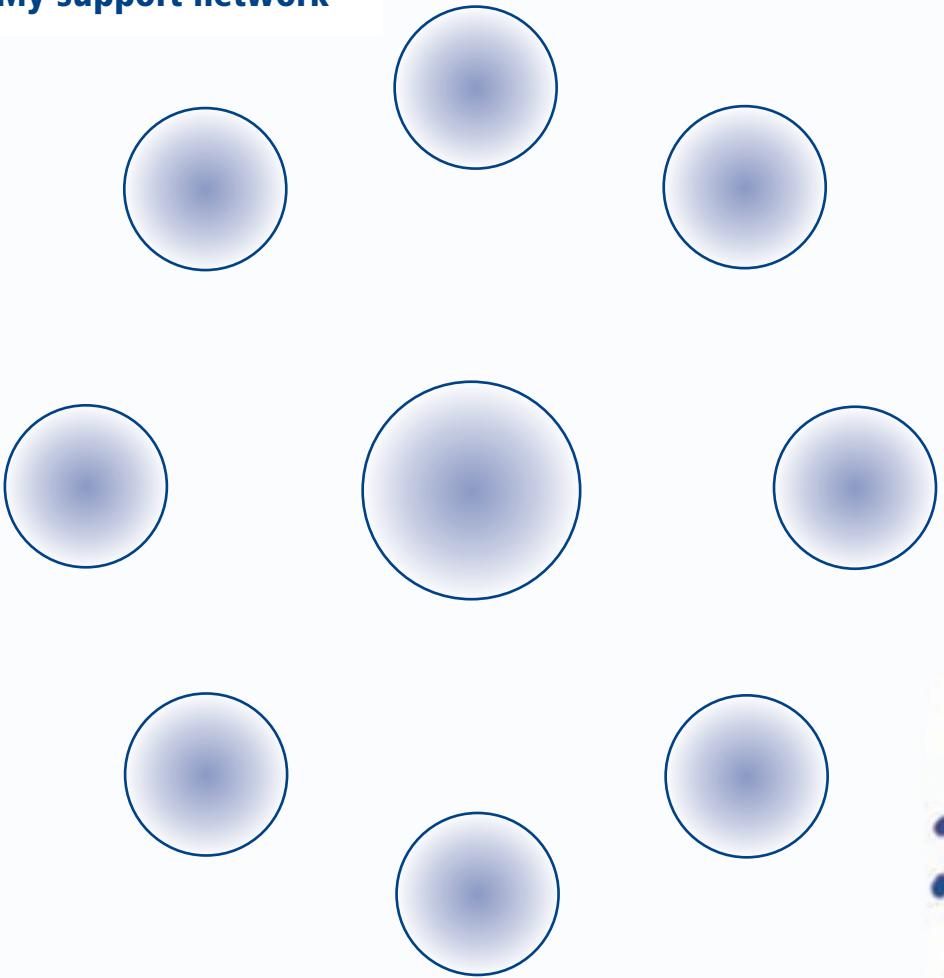
'Support' means anything that helps you in your life, or anything you do to help others, including:

- giving time and energy to someone
- encouraging someone to talk, and then listening to them
- sharing your thoughts and reactions to their situation
- offering reassurance
- cheering someone up when they're down
- volunteering for a group
- providing practical help with tasks or problems
- stroking your cat

Now draw arrows from your circle to each outer circle, showing how much support you give to each. Vary the thickness of the arrow to show how much support you give. If you give a lot of support to someone, draw a very thick arrow from your circle to theirs. If you give a little support, draw a thin arrow.

Finally, draw thin/thick arrows from the outer circles to your circle, showing how much support you get from them.

My support network



QUESTIONS

Looking at your map, how do you feel about the overall balance? Do you give more than you get? Get more than you give? Or is it quite balanced? Do you want to make any changes to your support network?

REFLECTION

Good friendships and relationships don't always have to be completely equal. There are usually times when one person leans more on the other. Or there may be aspects of the relationship that are unequal, but overall there's a sense of balance.

If you want your support map to look different, here are some ideas for making changes:

REALITY CHECK

Before you set about making any changes, ask a couple of friends if they agree with the overall picture you've painted. It's worth doing this even if it's a bit uncomfortable, because no one can see everything from one point of view.

If you give more support than you get:

You probably need to be more active in asking for the support you want.

Tell some of your friends about this exercise and say that you'd like to receive more support from them sometimes. Be specific about what this would mean in practice, for example: "I'd like you to listen to me more." "Will you help me fix my shower?"

If you raise your concerns and ask for changes and yet nothing changes, you might need to be even more assertive. If you still don't get what you ask for, maybe it's time to make some new friends.

If you get more support than you give:

If it's true that you give less than you get, consider what impact this has on the quality of your relationships. You might find that your friendships stay superficial rather than deepen, or that you get through friends quite quickly, as people realise you don't give so much back and move on.

If you want to balance things up, try some of these ideas:

- Take time to listen to others, ask them about their lives, their concerns.
- Offer to help with something.
- Buy someone a present and say thanks for how much they help you.

SUCK IT & SEE

If you suspect that you're not a great listener, make a decision to keep your attention on the other person for at least 10 minutes in a conversation and see what the impact is on your time together.

If you're always listening to others, take the floor yourself. Don't wait to be asked. Talk about your day, how you're feeling, what you're excited about, etc. If people interrupt you, interrupt them back and say you haven't finished what you were saying.

.....

Part Four:

.....

Making changes

.....

“If you always do what you’ve always done, you’ll always get what you’ve always got.” Susan Jeffers

Having got this far, you have probably found things you want to change in your life. This section contains various suggestions to help you think through the changes you want to make and then put them into action.

.....

Taking Steps

These questions will help you make changes in your life. They use the idea of making a journey by taking steps from where you are now to the place you want to go. Choose a goal, big or small, that you would like to achieve and then answer the questions step-by-step. Some of the questions may not be relevant to you. Just use the ones that are. You can come back to this exercise whenever you want to make a change.

**What's your goal?
Where do you want to
get to on this journey?**

I WANT TO:



**What's your greatest
fear about setting out?**

I FEAR:



**What help or resources do
you need from other people?**

FROM OTHERS I NEED:



**What do you need to leave
behind or let go of in order
to get to your destination?**

I NEED TO:



**What personal qualities do
you already have that will
help you along the way?**

I AM:



**Who will you ask for this?
(Think of more than one person)**

I COULD ASK:

How will you celebrate?

I WILL CELEBRATE:



Which part of the journey will you have to do on your own – because only you can do it?

ONLY I CAN:



How will you know when you've arrived at your destination?

I'LL KNOW BECAUSE:



How are you likely to sabotage yourself or trip yourself up along the way?

I MIGHT:



If you do sabotage yourself, how will you get yourself back on track?

I WILL:



Making Changes

Making lasting changes often requires hard work. Here are some tips:

- Think about your goal carefully before you set out. Is it really what you want? Many of us set ourselves up to fail by trying to achieve goals that aren't right for us. Think about the pros and cons of different options, and then talk about them with friends or a counsellor to check if they're really right for you.
- Learning something new or different often feels awkward and contrived. Remember what it was like when you started riding a bike or learning a new language.
- Practice makes perfect. Have a go at doing something different, and keep at it for a while. Let yourself feel clumsy – it will change.
- Stretch your comfort zone. If you stay really comfy, not a lot will change. If you turn your whole life upside down in one week, you'll probably end up back where you started (and a bit freaked out). Find the balance between doing too much and too little, and take it one step at a time.
- Get help and assistance when you need it. The best athletes and performers all have coaches. "If you don't squeak, you don't get oil." (Dennis Carney's mum).



- Keep your eye on your destination. Airline pilots spend 95% of the time off course – and they still get to their destination. They accept that there isn't a perfect way to stay on course and put their energy into moving back on course every time they drift off.
- Go cosmic. Carl Rogers wrote: "The more we accept the things about ourselves that we want to change, the more change seems to come about, almost unnoticed."

Counselling and Therapy

You can do a lot of useful work on your own or with friends. Many people, however, find it helpful to do personal development work with a trained counsellor, therapist or life-coach, either one-to-one or in a group.

Working with a counsellor or therapist may mean you achieve longer-lasting results over a shorter time. A qualified person will help you work out what's right for you.

These days there's less of a taboo about getting support. It's like using a personal trainer or coach, but for your personal and emotional life.

For **free** short-term counselling on sexual health matters contact PACE, NAZ or THT, who offer this and other counselling services in London. (See the back of this booklet for contact information.)

PACE and a number of other agencies in London also offer general counselling for lesbians, gay men and bisexuals (including those with low incomes).

If you are looking for a private counsellor or therapist, try meeting a few practitioners. Ask them about how they work, and check that they have a gay-friendly approach. For more advice on choosing a therapist, see the following links:
www.pinktherapy.com/pagesource/resources/choosing.a.therapist.htm
www.bacp.co.uk/information/expect.html



About PACE

The Project for Advocacy, Counselling and Education (PACE) is London's leading voluntary agency promoting the mental health and well-being of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. It was established in 1985 in response to a need within the lesbian and gay communities for a counselling and training agency that was genuinely understanding of the needs of lesbians and gay men. Since then, PACE has grown in size and now provides the following range of services:

- Groups and workshops for gay men
- Sexual health counselling for gay men
- General counselling for lesbians, gay men and bisexual people
- Lesbian and gay parenting groups
- Mental health advocacy
- LGBT youthwork
- Training for staff and organisations on HIV, sexuality and diversity

The Groupwork and Sexual Health Counselling services are provided as part of the London Gay Men's HIV Prevention Partnership.

GROUPS & WORKSHOPS: PACE has provided workshops and groups for gay men since 1989. These workshops address psychological and emotional factors contributing to gay men's sexual health.

PACE workshops explore the areas of self-esteem, communication, assertiveness, relationships, sex and HIV. They offer opportunities for gay and bisexual men to talk about issues and concerns with others, take time to consider personal implications, gain insight and information about factors affecting their lives and develop communication and other inter-personal skills to improve the quality of their relationships.

The workshops are facilitated by qualified and experienced groupworkers and are run in a relaxed, friendly and participative style. Workshops usually take place over a weekend or once a week for eight weeks.

SEXUAL HEALTH COUNSELLING:

The PACE gay men's sexual health counselling service is for individuals and couples who want to explore sexual health concerns over 6 sessions.

For information about any of these services, ring **020 7700 1323** or email us at **info@pace.dircon.co.uk**.

www.pacehealth.org.uk

Listings

BOOKS

Self-Esteem & Personal Development – Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual

Assertively Gay:

Terry Sanderson, The Other Way Press

Coming Out of Shame:

Transforming Gay and Lesbian Lives:

Gershon Kaufman, Lev Raphael, Doubleday

How to be a Happy Homosexual:

Terry Sanderson, The Other Way Press

Self-Esteem & Personal Development – General

Families and How To Survive Them:

Robin Skynner & John Cleese, Mandarin

Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway:

Susan Jeffers, Rider

Intimacy and Solitude:

Stephanie Dowrick, Norton

Life and How To Survive It:

Robin Skynner & John Cleese, Mandarin

The Successful Self:

Dorothy Rowe, HarperCollins

The Universal Heart:

Stephanie Dowrick, Penguin Books

Looking for Mr Right

10 Smart Things Gay Men

Can Do To Improve Their Lives:

Joe Kort, Alyson Books

Affirmative Gay Relationships;

Key Steps to Finding a Life Partner:

Neil Kaminsky, Haworth

Finding the Boyfriend Within:

Brad Gooch, Simon & Schuster Inc

Making Gay Relationships Work:

Terry Sanderson, The Other Way Press

Counselling & Therapy

Counselling for Toads:

Robert de Board, Routledge

Love's Executioner: Irvine Yalom, Penguin

Pink Therapy Vols 1, 2 & 3:

Dominic Davies & Charles Neal (Eds),
Open University Press

BOOKSHOP

Gay's The Word, 66 Marchmont Street, WC1.

020 7278 7654

www.gaystheword.co.uk

COUNSELLING AND THERAPY AGENCIES

PACE, North London

020 7700 1323

www.pacehealth.org.uk

Pink Therapy

020 7291 4480

www.pinktherapy.com

Kairos, London

020 7437 6063

www.kairosinsoho.org.uk

Spectrum Therapy, London

020 8341 2277

www.spectrumtherapy.co.uk

Metanoia, West London

020 8571 2400

www.metanoia.ac.uk

Gestalt Centre, London

020 7613 4480

www.gestaltcentre.co.uk

WORKSHOPS AND GROUPS

PACE 020 7700 1323

www.metromate.org.uk

(go to 'workshops & courses')

GMFA 020 7738 6872

www.metromate.org.uk

(go to 'workshops & courses')

Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed to the development of this workbook, some of them knowingly, many of them not. The participants in PACE workshops over the last 11 years have shared their lives, dilemmas and humanity with other gay/bi men and with the facilitator team at PACE. This contribution has, above all else, enabled us to develop models and ideas that have assisted many men in the complex process of building fulfilling friendships, relationships and lives.

Similarly, many people have contributed to making PACE what it is today – board members, volunteers, staff and service users. Julianne Dickey (Director of PACE until 2001) played a crucial role in establishing the need for gay men's workshops on sexual health during the early years of the HIV epidemic, securing funding and ensuring the development of the service.

Alfred Hurst has been my right-hand man in developing the groupwork programme since 1995, and has contributed a unique tone and flavour to our work that has been central to its popularity and on-going success. He has taught me and the others in the team a great deal about effective and humane groupwork.

Dennis Carney has been my left-hand man since 2001 and has made his own unique contribution to the programme, in particular the workshops for Black and Asian men.

The other members of the facilitator team – Anthony Johnson, Bill Gleave, Kam Dhillon, Micheal O'Ruiarc and Werner Valentin – have given generously of themselves in their work and their continuing commitment to providing quality groupwork.

Our trainers and supervisors have been crucial in helping us develop our practice in ways that serve our group participants and also work for us. Gaie Houston has provided clinical guidance with great wisdom and a lightness and strength of touch that we've greatly valued, enjoyed and learned from.

The staff at Spectrum psychotherapy centre have also made a big contribution to the personal and professional development of Dennis Carney and myself and, through us, of the programme.

Ford Hickson challenged us to think big and make this workbook accessible to as wide a gay audience as possible. Charles Neal gave valuable editorial support and David Shenton created the beautiful, funny and poignant cartoons.

Finally, Camden and Islington Gay Men's Team members Rachel Black, Carolyn Partrick and Colin Richardson have advised, supported, designed and passionately cajoled this booklet into a readable form.

**Thank you one and all.
Tim Foskett, March 2005**

How was it for you?

We'd really like your feedback on this workbook:

What did you like and not like?

Which sections were most useful?

Where did you get lost, stuck, confused?

What would you have liked more of or less of?

Please email us at info@pace.dircon.co.uk and let us know. Or write to us at Getting Ready, PACE, 34 Hartham Road, London N7 9JL.

Need a hand...?



This workbook aims to help you increase your self-esteem and get ready for relationships. If you get stuck, or come across ideas that leave you confused or unsure, or if you want to go further than you have so far, we're here to help.

Counselling

Talk to a counsellor for up to 12 sessions on any aspect of sex or sexuality – whether you're brand new to it all or have been around the block more times than you care to remember, talking things through with someone can help. All these agencies provide professional counselling around sexual health.

PACE 020 7700 1323

NAZ 020 8741 1879

THT counselling 020 7812 1777

Workshops and Courses

GMFA and PACE offer a programme of workshops and courses on self-esteem, relationships, assertiveness and sex. Talking to other gay men in a group helps you realise that you're not the only one dealing with a particular issue or problem. The workshops are relaxed, fun, informative and run by experienced facilitators.

PACE 020 7700 1323

GMFA 020 7738 6872

'Spending time with gay men in a non-scene environment was great.'

'It has given me confidence in negotiating and talking about sex before getting into it.'

'My communication with my partner has improved.'

'Being guided to look under the surface of a problem was helpful.'

LONDON GAY MEN'S
HIV Prevention Partnership

