



✦ Can you relate? ✦

**A workshop developed by the creative folks at
AIDS COMMUNITY CARE MONTREAL**



**This workshop is SHAREWARE.
Copy and distribute freely, just cite ACCM.
Let us know how you liked it and what you did with it!**

Summer 2005



A QUICK INTRO NOTE...

AIDS COMMUNITY CARE MONTREAL

ACCM is a community organisation working primarily in the English language to prevent HIV transmission, to promote community awareness and action, and to enhance the quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS.

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND PREVENTION

Health is more than the absence of disease ... health is a lifelong commitment to physical and emotional well-being. Being healthy means being aware of risks and making informed choices. Everyone makes decisions about their health, but some choices are harder than others. Our goal in the Department of Education and prevention is to fight discrimination and to provide individuals with the tools to make informed choices about healthy behaviour. We're empowering individuals and communities to take charge of their health.

OUR WORKSHOPS

Our workshops are built by our team of educators, and are available to anyone who wants to integrate HIV, Hepatitis, and Health Promotion activities into their programming. Our workshops include discussions about biology, law, and the social, political, and economic aspects of HIV, as well as sexuality, identity, self-esteem, sexual orientation, assertiveness and sexual autonomy.

Yes, it's SHAREWARE!! You can download, share, interpret, and use sections of our workshops. All that we ask in return is that you mention ACCM when you use our workshops. We also would appreciate any feedback that you have. We want to know what worked for you, and what didn't! We're also available if you have questions about anything in these workshops.

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FOR THE FACILITATORS

What do we talk about?

This workshop examines the relationships that people are involved in. Whether the relationship is friendship, professional, sexual or otherwise. By highlighting the definition of relationship as: *two or more people who have regular interactions and some sort of exchange*, we hope to make people aware of the varied support networks available in their lives. We will also look into what makes up a healthy and fulfilling relationship.

The workshop also looks at dependency and how it differs from healthy relationships. By thinking about some problems that commonly come up in relationships and brainstorming solutions, we are providing tools for people to use in their real lives.

How do we use this workshop?

This workshop is discussion-driven. The facilitator can use the guidelines to generate discussion and debate within the group. As such, there are not always right/wrong answers to the issues and questions being discussed throughout. The facilitator can steer the workshop by asking questions and following-up on the group's answers.

This workshop works best for groups that already have an established comfort level. If you are facilitating a big group (10+), it may be best to separate it in two or more smaller groups. Each small group can work as a team and then share their answers with the rest of the group afterwards. You can point out the similarities and discrepancies in answers from the groups and question them on how their answer came about. It is very important to give the group the time needed to discuss the issues, within their own groups but more importantly with the whole class as well.

Remember that suggestions, ideas and feedback that come from your own peers are often very relevant. That is why the facilitator should only steer the discussion along without being too involved in the discussion.

Finally, the subject matter may be one that is a sensitive issue for some of your participants. At the beginning of the session it is very important discuss confidentiality and mutual respect of others during the activity.

Our website also has a number of other informative resources for you to check out. Along with our workshop series there are some interesting activities, photos and links that may be beneficial to you and/or your group.

Remember: relax, have fun and stay open!

MATERIALS REQUIRED FOR THIS WORKSHOP

- ⌘ Something to write on and something to write with
- ⌘ The group also needs something to write on and write with
- ⌘ Evaluation Forms and Post Presentation Form
- ⌘ Pamphlets on HIV
- ⌘ Contact information for testing sites and laws specific to your region

RELATIONSHIPS

A) Defining relationships

Activity Summary: *This activity helps the group think about and discuss what they consider to be “relationships” in their lives. Also, that relationships are as diverse as can be.*

Ask the participants to each write down 5 answers to the questions that follow. After you ask the question, wait a few minutes to give them the time to answer. You can let them discuss it amongst themselves. You can then bring back the whole group together and write their responses on the board. It is always a good idea to start by volunteering your own answers. Ask for explanations as responses are volunteered. Use your judgement and rephrase responses if needed to create a respectful environment.

- Who do you have a relationship with?

Possible answers include boy/girlfriend, co-worker, date, doctor, family, friend, fuck buddy, hairdresser, housecleaner, long term romance, lover, one night stand, partner, pet, roommate, spouse, store clerk, team-mate, teacher, therapist, object ...

- What exactly makes something a relationship?

Our definition: **two or more people who have regular interactions and some sort of exchange**, but the group can make up their own. It's very important to highlight that relationships aren't limited to romance/sexual partners, and the mutuality inherent in our definition.

- Which of these people/relationships are the most important to you, and why?

Possible answers include someone you spend lots of time with, someone you really look up to, someone you have a long history with, someone you care about, someone who's had an impact on your life.

B) Healthy Relationships

- What are some of the things people look for in a relationship?

acceptance	confidence	history	power
admiration	connection	honesty	reassurance
affection	control	hope	respect
affirmation	courage	humour	seduction
approval	desire	intelligence	self-confidence
attraction	dependence	independence	sensuality
autonomy	diversion	intimacy	sexuality
balance	encouragement	kindness	sharing
beauty	equality	love	sincerity
caring	excitement	loyalty	spontaneity
charisma	expectation	lust	stability
charm	familiarity	melodrama	strength
closeness	freedom	money	support
comfort	friendship	nurturing	teaching
commitment	fun	openness	temptation
commonality	growth	passion	tenderness
compassion	happiness	pleasure	trust

- Do the things you're looking for in someone change depending on the type of relationship?

Different people fulfill different needs in your life.

I wouldn't have sex with my dentist.

I wouldn't let my partner fix my bike.

One person maintains many different relationships, and they change over time.

As well, different arrangements work for different people.

- What are some traits people look for specifically in their romantic partners?

(i.e. you would only look for these traits in a romantic partner)

Possible answers include good looks, being a popular person, warm, sweet, funny, charitable, dresses well, good personality, respectful, driven...)

- What are some traits people look for specifically in their romantic relationships?

(i.e. you feel they could only be expressed in these types of relationships)

Possible answers include attraction, desire, lust, passion, seduction, sexuality, look like a good couple, good connection, comfort, cultural similarities...

Reminder: Follow-up on the answers given. What makes certain traits more important than others? It is always a matter of personal opinion, but this kind of sharing within the group will only benefit the participants.

- Name some characteristics that make a relationship a healthy one.

Ask the group for a list of 5 items and the group the group some time to answer this question. Again you can start by volunteering one of your own answers. Follow-up each answer with a quick explanation and discussion.

Here are some examples:

1. **Rational, realistic, and healthy expectations.** The other person won't make you better; that's your own responsibility. You can't make someone else change.
2. **Gradual progression of the relationship.** Over time, you can see if the relationship is appropriate and going through a healthy evolution. You meet several times before deciding if you want him to be your partner.
3. **Honesty and openness.** You are accepted for who you actually are and you love the other person for the same reasons. You feel comfortable being yourself with her.
4. **Communication.** You talk about your needs and expectations, and you listen to his.
5. **Equality and voluntary cooperation.** You work together on problems, each doing their part and helping each other. You're not in constant opposition.
6. **Community.** You maintain outside interests and friendships. At the very least, it will give you something to talk about, and it can give you some perspectives on the relationship.
7. **Confidence.** You feel safe and confident that your partner will fulfill your rational expectations. She does what she says she will do, and you work together to meet both people's needs.
8. **Self development.** There are my problems that I deal with, your problems that you deal with, and our problems that we deal with. The relationship is in a constant state of growth.
9. **Conflict Resolution.** You have healthy arguments, where concerns are aired, heard, and resolved. This promotes more happiness and less resentment because problems are dealt with as they come up.

- Name some characteristics that make a relationship an unhealthy one.

Again you can start by volunteering one of your own answers. Follow-up each answer with a quick explanation and discussion.

Here are some examples:

1. **Unrealistic or magic expectations** *"I'll change for him." "If I love her enough, she'll change." "Being with him will change me."*
2. **Instant gratification.** You expect all of your needs to be met immediately.
3. **Dishonesty.** You're afraid that your partner will no longer like you if she knows everything about you. He's in a relationship with someone you're pretending to be.
4. **Control or fear of abandonment.** *"Where are you going?" "Who are you going with?" "Why would you want to spend time with her instead of me?"*
5. **Social isolation.** You are absolutely dependent because you don't see anyone else. We're a single unit, not individuals. *"You're having a party? I'll only come if my partner's free."*
6. **Love the one you've got.** You know that the relationship isn't working, but stay anyway because you don't want to be alone or you're afraid you can't do any better.
7. **Stuck in a rut.** After breaking up with someone, you find a new partner with the same characteristics as the old one. They're familiar and comfortable.
8. **Silence.** You don't talk about what's happening or what you want and need.

Reminder: *At the end of this exercise remind the group that having some characteristics that make a relationship unhealthy does not mean that they must end said relationship. However, they should think about how to improve the relationship.*

They should also keep the list of positive characteristics in mind. It should be important for them to realize what they value in a relationship so that they can assess their relationships properly.

C) Romance High Jinx

Activity Summary: *This next activity is called “Romance High Jinx”. They are scenarios for you to present to the group. Each scenario has a dilemma and 4 ways to respond to it. The groups can discuss the issue and give you their answer as to what they think is the best way to handle it. It is fine if there is more than one answer per group. It is all a matter of personal opinion. However, it is important to discuss how they have come to their conclusion. Discuss the “key issues” and the “optional questions”. This gives the group a chance to discuss relationship issues in a more direct and specific way.*

More scenarios can be found at our website, in the Activities section in the EP department. The facilitator can also come up with his/her own scenarios. How many scenarios the facilitator presents is entirely up to him/her.

- 1) Laura is madly in love with Phil, and she thinks he’s the best thing ever to happen to her. Phil likes Laura and he’s having fun, but he doesn’t see this as a serious relationship.**
- a) They should keep spending time together and see what happens**
 - b) They should break up now since it obviously isn’t going anywhere**
 - c) They should talk about what they each want out of the relationship**
 - d) Laura should sleep with Phil to make him love her**

Key Issues: communication, relationships develop over time, can't force feelings, how to deal with different levels of commitment / interest, sex doesn't equal love

Optional questions:

Q: Does how long they’ve been together make a difference?

Q: Is it possible to be in a relationship where people have different feelings?
How does that work?

Q: Do feelings change over time? How do you know if they will?

Q: Does sleeping with someone always mean you love them?

Q: Is there anything you can do to make someone love you?

3) Luke gets to a party to find the girl he's been hanging out with making out with another guy. They've never talked about monogamy. He should:

- a) Storm out of the house calling her a lying cheating ho
- b) Sit down and join them
- c) Leave the party and then have a chat with the girl the next day
- d) Ignore it because they've never discussed the topic

Key issues: definition of monogamy, expectations, how you know if you're exclusive, trust built based on experience, reactions to feelings of betrayal, consequences of different actions, ideal reaction vs. nasty feelings and how to deal with them

Optional questions:

Q: What does monogamy mean?

Q: Is monogamy something to expect from the get-go in a relationship?

Q: How do you know if you're in a monogamous relationship? How do you know someone who says they're monogamous is keeping their word?

Q: Is there a difference between how you "should" react and how you think you would react? Why? Do you think your non-ideal reaction would be appropriate? (You don't control feelings, but you do control their expression.)

4) Steve has considerably more money than Kevin. He regularly goes to the movies, and would love to have his boyfriend come with him. They should:

- a) Each pay for their own tickets
- b) Have Steve pay for both since he has more money
- c) Alternate paying, but when Kevin pays they rent the movie
- d) Pick an activity that doesn't cost money

Key issues: creating equity, different ways to participate in relationships, working out differences, gay relationships deal with the same issues as straight ones

IMPORTANT: The fact they're gay and together is a given. Address any surprised or homophobic comments by reinforcing that this is a happy, loving relationship, like any other happy, loving relationship, and today we're talking about how they're going to go to the movies. You can also answer any questions or concerns that come up, but don't let the class get bogged down in just this issue.

Optional questions:

Q: How should people work out differences or conflict in their relationship?

Q: Are there ways of being equal participants in a relationship without necessarily doing the same thing?

Q: Would your solution change if the couple were straight?

5) Angela's excited about her boyfriend. She loves the way the two of them talk, the way he looks, and the way they kiss. Lately she's been getting the feeling he wants to go further than kissing. She should:

- a) Make a move so he knows that she's interested
- b) Explain that she loves making out with him, but she's freaked out by the idea of sex right now and really doesn't think she's ready
- c) Explore other ways of being sexual together
- d) Talk about whether they both want this, what they would do if the condom broke, and who's going to get the condoms and lube

Key issues: how you know if you want to have sex, how you know what the other wants, negotiation with a partner, consent / mutuality, strategies to talk about this, sexual responsibility or preparation, diverse ways of being sexual

Optional questions:

Q: Does Angela want to have sex? How does someone figure out if they want to have sex or not? (first time ever, first time with a new person, this time)

Q: Does her boyfriend want to have sex? How do you figure out if you're both interested in the same thing? Does it have to be verbal? Is this easy to do? What makes it easier?

Q: What are the benefits of talking about sexuality and being prepared?

Q: Can you talk about getting condoms and then change your mind?

THAT'S ALL FOLKS!

FINAL QUESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Ask the participants if they have any questions. Answer any questions. Leave them with contact information in case they think of questions later and would like to contact you (you wrote this on the board at the beginning of the workshop.)

Ask the participants to fill out an evaluation form to “let us know what you thought of the workshop”. Tell them to be honest, and that it’s okay if there were things they didn’t like. Tell them not to put their name on it.

If you are distributing condom packs or pamphlets, distribute these at the end, either as they are filling out their form or as they hand in the completed form. Explain what the condom packs are (what is in them) and what information is in the pamphlet(s) you are giving out.

We have included a sample participant evaluation form, as well as a facilitator’s evaluation form to let us know how the workshop went for you.

Evaluation

ACCM Workshop evaluation

Did you learn something new during the workshop? yes no

If so, what did you learn?

Which four body fluids can transmit HIV if they gain access to the bloodstream?

Would you feel more comfortable meeting someone living with HIV after today? yes no

After this workshop, can you see yourself doing anything differently? yes no

If yes, what? If no, why not?

Was the information easy to understand? yes no

Did you feel encouraged to ask questions and participate? yes no

Was the workshop relevant to you? yes no

Why or why not?

What did you enjoy most?

What other topics or information do you think we should cover?

Do you have any other suggestions or comments?

Please tell us about yourself ... Age: _____

Gender: _____



Workshop Evaluation for Facilitators – Please send ACCM your feedback!

Please describe the group you used the workshop with. _____

Did you find the workshop useful? yes no

What did you find most useful? _____

Were the instructions clear? yes no

Was the information easy to understand? yes no

What was your group's response to the workshop? _____

Would you change anything about the workshop? yes no

If yes, what? _____

What other topics or information do you think we should cover? _____

Do you have any other suggestions or comments? _____

Thanks for your feedback! Please fax this form to Education and Prevention at (514) 527-0928.

