

**In forthcoming issues:**

- New sexual health advice and support service for gay men to be launched
- The condom debate—continuing controversy
- Treatment updates digest—ongoing
- Sexual health promotion toolkit



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**Working with People with HIV (PWHIV):  
A review of recent research and policy reports**

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***Keeping it to Ourselves: strategic directions in sexual health promotion and HIV prevention for people with HIV***

**Terrence Higgins Trust, Jack Summerside and Mark Davis (ed. Andy Cooper), October 2002**

This is a wide ranging document which essentially picks up from and expands upon *Making It Better*\* in that it provides guidelines and principles for professionals at all levels working with PWHIV. It uses a literature review and synthesis method to collate current thinking in the field.

Part One of the document provides a comprehensive rationale for the document, locating it within the context of HIV prevention strategies for gay men and African communities. It is not in itself a strategy, but a set of principles to be incorporated into existing strategies, on the basis that PWHIV do not suddenly become a community in their own right upon diagnosis, separate from the communities in which they functioned beforehand.

Part Two, the section on HIV prevention and sexual health promotion practice, discusses changes in approach over the period of the epidemic and how these reflect the agendas of those in the field. It also examines the involvement of PWHIV and their representation in HIV prevention and sexual health promotion work. There is a summary of commonly held views and assumptions about life with the virus, both those of practitioners and of PWHIV themselves, which is very informative and essential reading for professionals as it allows for greater reflexivity about their own practice, as well as enlightening them on where PWHIV they encounter may be coming from in their own thinking. This is accompanied by a digest of the most salient issues for clinical services, support settings, and commissioning and funding bodies.

Part Three attempts a broad overview of the research currently being used to develop work with PWHIV and covers diverse topics such as:

- biomedical perspectives
- treatment expectations and issues
- issues of risk as perceived by PWHIV and service providers, specifically
  - the 'bareback' debate
  - the superinfection/reinfection debate
- disclosure issues
- relationships
- intervention models and design

The appendices provide greater detail on the process used in the creation of the document such as search strategies and literature review method, as well as a report from the THT's November 1999 seminar on PWHIV and Sex, and the THT Policy on HIV status disclosure.

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### ***Living Well with HIV 2002 Seminar Series – Summaries and Reports***

#### **Terrence Higgins Trust, Jo Robinson, March 2003**

This is, as the title suggests, a digest of the last series of seminars and workshops held by the THT Living Well team in November and December 2002. For each event the session outline, a summary of the speakers' notes and any notes from the workshops, and a synthesis of the participants' evaluations is provided. The four seminars covered are:

- NHS Pilot Programmes – Are we getting it right for people with HIV?
- Developing health outcomes for people with HIV
- Adherence support in perspective: managing uncertainty
- Sharing good practice in working with people with HIV around sex and relationships.

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### ***Training & Support for People with HIV around Sex and Relationships***

#### **Terrence Higgins Trust, December 2002**

This is a manual for professionals intending to work with people with HIV in the area of sex and relationships. It provides a comprehensive dis-

cussion of the rationale for such work and covers areas such as:

- definitions, principles and values
- standards expected by PWHIV from sexual health and HIV prevention services
- a digest of the main principles of *Making It Better* \*
- points to consider for facilitators before starting out on this sort of work

It is accompanied by a selection of exercises for use in workshops with PWHIV containing the aim, resources, process and tips for each. The exercises range from simple icebreakers to major issues such as behaviour change, communication and negotiation skills. A particularly useful exercise on disclosure contains a number of well thought out scenarios for discussion—a boon to those trainers who find it difficult to come up with similar scenarios when planning a training session.

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### **Recommendations:**

The three documents reviewed here are very different in scope and nature, but all contain elements which professionals might find helpful. In particular, a very thorough section on good practice when dealing with issues around sex with PWHIV is to be found in the appendices to *Keeping it to Ourselves*, rather than in *Training and Support* as might have been expected.

In all, the three documents taken together provide a comprehensive overview of the issues for providers working with PWHIV and offer a number of approaches which are practical and useful.

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### **References:**

\*Ward M (March 2001) *Making It Better*, Network of Self Help HIV & AIDS Groups/CHAPS Development Project, London

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