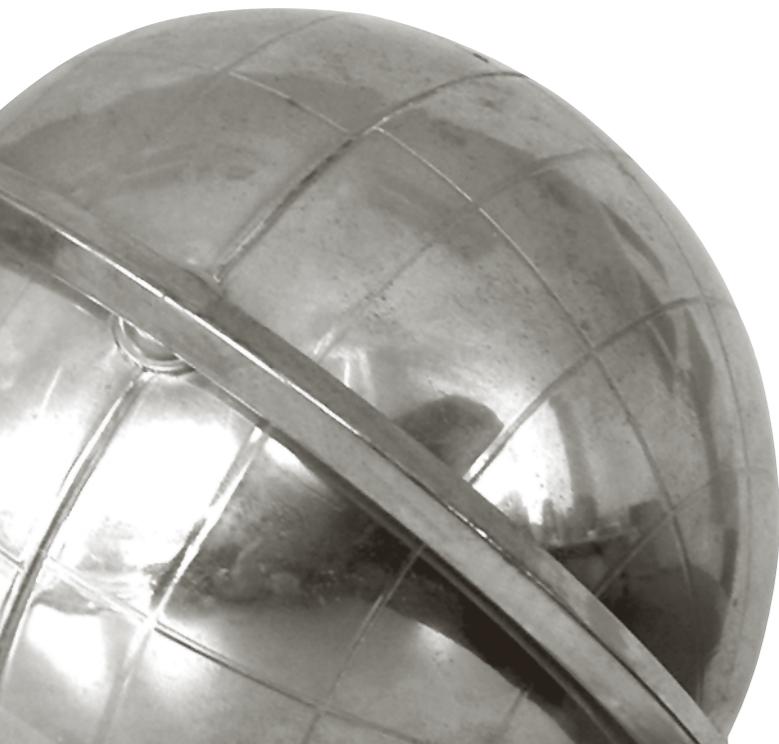




social marketing campaign evaluation report:

DISCLOSE HIV

March 2008





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to access a pdf of this report, go to the campaign website at disclosehiv.org

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents findings from a post campaign evaluation survey and one-on-one interviews used to evaluate the DISCLOSE HIV social marketing campaign. Also included in this report is information about the background, implementation and content of the campaign. The over arching intent of the survey and interviews was to evaluate the campaign's effectiveness for target audience members. The survey and interviews explored message comprehension, effectiveness, campaign reach for those interviewed, attention getting ability of ads and impact. We also asked participants questions regarding personal HIV disclosure patterns, risk behaviors and use of local HIV disclosure services.

This evaluation is not intended to measure the overall reach or population-wide impact of the campaign (due to the sample size and convenience sampling techniques employed), the report does, however, provide important insight into how the campaign was received.

Surveys were administered via a web-based survey from January-April 2007. One-on-one interviews were conducted from June-July of 2007. One hundred twenty-five gay and bisexual men completed the web surveys and twelve members of the target audience (both community members and service providers) were interviewed in greater depth about the campaign. Results from the survey, interviews and campaign information are summarized in the following pages.

Note: In this report results were analyzed based on the total number of valid answers which are often different from the total number of people who completed the survey. Invalid answers are those that were left unanswered or improperly answered. When appropriate, the number of valid answers (denominator) is noted with “n”, the symbol for sample size.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An evaluation of the DISCLOSE HIV social marketing campaign program is summarized in the following report. The San Francisco Department of Public Health championed the rollout of a new HIV prevention campaign which contained three main messages:

1. **Disclosure** is HIV Prevention: If you hook up with guys of a different status, use condoms or have lower risk sex
2. **Status Sorting** is a Prevention Strategy: Every gay man should know his status
3. **HIV Testing, Test & Tell**: Know your status and be honest with your partners

125 members of the target audience provided important feedback to the campaign:

- 80% said the “Disclosure” ad “got my attention right away”
- 23% said the “Disclosure” ad made them more likely to talk about HIV status with sex partners
- 46% said the “Disclosure” ad caused them to think more about HIV prevention
- 72% felt the “Status Sorting” message was appropriate for gay and bisexual men in SF
- 14% didn’t understand the “Status Sorting” message
- 67% felt the “HIV Testing” image was appropriate for gay and bisexual men in SF
- 27% said they were more likely to get tested for HIV or encourage partners to get tested as a result of seeing the “HIV Testing” ad

Some themes emerged in analysis from qualitative interviews with 12 members of the target audience:

- The ads were eye-catching and attention getting
- Concern that the Health Department was inadvertently promoting unprotected sex
- Ads could be divisive to men of varying serostatus
- An appreciation for seeing new “sex positive” prevention messaging
- Ads caused people to think about and discuss their prevention behaviors

Overall, the campaign evaluation demonstrates that the community had a complex response to what is a very complex issue. The overwhelming majority of men felt the campaign messages were appropriate and reported that ads motivated them to rethink their ideas regarding disclosure and HIV prevention; some people were conflicted about the campaign messages.

BACKGROUND

In 2006, the San Francisco Department of Public Health - HIV Prevention Services Branch (SFDPH-HPS) contracted with the social marketing firm, Better World Advertising to create an HIV prevention social marketing campaign. The SFDPH-HPS was in initial phases of launching a city-wide “Disclosure Initiative” training program among HIV testing providers which included a separate marketing campaign, a website (HIVdisclosure.org), trainings for service providers in San Francisco, staff dedicated to counseling and referrals to disclosure assistance services, and educational/promotional materials. It was felt a social marketing campaign could help support the initiative by promoting separate, but complimentary community wide messages encouraging disclosure of HIV status before sex between the populations most impacted by HIV in San Francisco: gay and bisexual men.

Information used to inform the new HIV prevention campaign was gathered through a review of community attitudes and behaviors. Attendance at a community forum, a survey of gay men in SF, and additional literature and local media reports were some resources employed. An informal advisory group of individuals working in a variety of capacities in HIV prevention in San Francisco was also formed to advise the direction of messaging.

Ads were placed in targeted neighborhoods in San Francisco from November 2006-January 2007. Media outlets included billboards, a building wallscape, posters on bus shelters, underground MUNI transit ads, newspaper ads, posters, postcards, magnets and stickers.

The evaluation of the media campaign was initiated in January 2007. The evaluation plan and surveys were drafted through a collaboration of Better World Advertising and the SFDPH-HPS evaluation department. This report presents the findings from this evaluation as well as an overview of the campaign.

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

attitudes and behaviors of the target audience

Better World Advertising, in collaboration with the SFDPH-HPS, conducted research for the new campaign through the following:

1. Focus groups with HIV positive and HIV negative gay and bisexual men in SF
2. A community forum on the topic of HIV disclosure
3. Researching recent community dialogue in SF regarding HIV prevention messaging (through a review of community news reports, op-eds, feedback to DPH, etc.)
4. Looking at existing data regarding attitudes and behaviors of gay/bisexual men in SF
5. Consulting with an informal advisory group of men working and participating in HIV prevention in SF

The following information provides important insight into the climate in which the HIV Disclosure Initiative and subsequent social marketing campaign were developed. This information was used to guide the development of campaign direction and messaging.

Community Forum

A community forum entitled, *“Bareback Mountain: Would you ask and tell before doing Jack Nasty?”* organized by the SFDPH-HPS was held in June 2006. The forum revealed some commonly held beliefs among gay men in SF in regards to HIV status, sex, disclosure and serosorting (selecting partners on the basis of HIV status) as well as the incredible diversity of attitudes. Some participants indicated they felt disclosure was a mute point, since “men lie” and that an inherent fear of rejection discouraged honesty. A few HIV positive men in attendance indicated they chose not to use condoms during sex and that serosorting was their method of preventing HIV transmission. There was a debate about whose responsibility disclosure was: while some felt it was the responsibility of HIV negative men to initiate the conversation and ‘take care of their own health’, others felt strongly that prevention was everyone’s responsibility. A few HIV negative men at the forum expressed frustration at their experience of reverse discrimination in San Francisco through rejection for sex by HIV positive men, as well as at their experiences of the benefits received from being HIV positive (both monetary and otherwise).

It was clear from the conversation generated at the forum that HIV prevention messaging in SF needed to address the many nuances of the sexual experience of gay men by promoting more realistic prevention strategies. Disclosure, strategic positioning and serosorting were all strategies commonly mentioned at the forum. It was felt that to keep prevention messages relevant it would be necessary to acknowledge that the community had already developed their own set of sophisticated prevention techniques, many of which fall outside of the traditional condom messaging.

community data set

A large, existing community data set supported a campaign direction which encouraged open discussion of HIV status. Between 2004 & 2005, the San Francisco Gay Men's Community Initiative hosted online surveys with over 1,000 responses from gay men (HIV positive and negative) on a variety of topics including health, sexuality and feelings about the "gay community" in SF.

GMCI data: 2005 survey

- 92% of men said they needed health messages to help them determine the level of sexual risk they would be comfortable taking.
- 29% felt there were not enough health messages promoting sexual responsibility among gay men.
- 21% of HIV negative men said it was difficult to talk to their sexual partners about being HIV negative.

GMCI data: 2004 survey

- Two-thirds said they didn't have enough media and health messages about disclosure of HIV status to partners.
- 42% of HIV negative men surveyed expected that HIV positive male sex partners would disclose their HIV status before they had any kind of sex.
- More than 25% of all surveyed said there were times when it was ok to have sex without a condom with a person whose HIV status is unknown or who is thought to be HIV negative.

focus groups

In August 2006, two focus groups were held to gather information about the media consumption habits of the target audience and to receive input on preliminary ad concepts. Groups were pre-screened and split into HIV positive and HIV negative gay and bisexual men living in San Francisco. Men who worked in HIV prevention or advertising/marketing were excluded. A mix of exclusively non-monogamous men who had three or more sex partners in the past year were sought. Twenty men participated in the two groups.

Although not typical or necessary for a successful social marketing campaign, both groups overwhelmingly preferred the concept which was ultimately used to guide the development of final ads. Participants liked the colors and design, understood the messages and said they would be more likely to stop and read these ads above the others.

language

One crucial aspect of developing a “disclosure” campaign was selecting appropriate language to talk about behaviors that to our knowledge, currently lack common vernacular terms. It was clear from focus group feedback that while some men in SF understand the term “disclosure”, many did not understand or use the term “serosorting” (commonly used by HIV prevention researchers).

This was important information for the development of the ads: it was important to communicate practices that exist without the language to describe them. Through much debate among the informal advisory group the term “status sorting” was selected; although not a term currently employed it was felt this description might be more self-explanatory than “serosorting”, which consistently confused focus group participants.

With this information the next steps were taken to develop a new HIV prevention media campaign.

METHODS & PARTICIPANTS

overview

Several methods were used to evaluate the media campaign:

1. A quantitative web-based survey of target audience members to ascertain their opinions about the campaign ads
2. Qualitative interviews with target audience members to explore their thoughts about and reactions to the ads in depth
3. Website activity was tracked and recorded
4. Media coverage of the campaign was tracked
5. Emails to the website were collected and reviewed

web-based survey

In January 2007, an email was sent to San Francisco Bay Area residents who were likely to be part of the target audience. Our goal was to reach both HIV prevention service providers as well as community members not working or volunteering in HIV prevention. People were directed to an on-line questionnaire about Disclose HIV (survey is provided in Appendix A). As an incentive to complete the survey, the email indicated that participants could be entered into a drawing for \$100 in cash. Participants were not required to provide any identifying information to complete the survey. To be eligible participants needed to be a gay or bisexual man. A total of 125 eligible participants completed the survey. Their demographics appear on page 20.

The following is a list of the agencies/individuals that were sent the survey:

1. People in the “prevention with positives” network in San Francisco
2. The LGBT Community Center in San Francisco
3. The HIV Health Services Planning Council
4. The San Francisco Department of Public Health STD Prevention and Control Services
5. Two local sex clubs
6. Key leaders in segments of the gay community (athlete, photographer, activist)
7. Local university LGBT organizations
8. Participants in the Disclosure training program through the Department of Public Health

Survey data was imported into Excel from Survey Monkey and analyzed using SPSS Statistical Software.

interviews

Twelve one-on-one interviews with members of the target audience were conducted by an outside, experienced interviewer. Interviews lasted anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour. All interviews followed the same structured interview guide. The interviewer was not employed by BWA or the SFPD to reduce bias. People were invited to participate in interviews at the end of the web-based survey as well as through a separate email sent to community members and service providers in San Francisco.

website activity

Activity to the DISCLOSE HIV website (www.DiscloseHIV.org) was tracked and recorded.

media coverage

Media coverage of the campaign is considered “earned media”—a free way to send campaign messages to more people. As much as possible, articles and discussion of the campaign were tracked to help understand who else may have been reached by the campaign, and how the campaign was perceived in the media.

emails

Emails with HIV related questions as well as campaign feedback were sent to the Disclose HIV website. These emails helped to clarify how people were using the website, and to gather more reactions to the campaign.

data limitations

There are some limitations that might affect the results:

- Individuals who participated in the survey and interviews were not randomly selected and therefore the results cannot necessarily be generalized to the larger population of gay and bisexual men. People who had stronger feelings about the campaign (good or bad) may have been more likely to participate than those who held neutral opinions.
- As with all community wide interventions there are numerous external factors that influence people's beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. As a result it is difficult to determine the specific cause of behavior change.
- Knowledge, attitudes and beliefs are all self reported. Self reporting is often influenced by people's desire to produce socially desirable answers (i.e. not admit to unprotected sex, etc). Efforts were made to reduce social desirability bias through the use of an anonymous web-based survey and using an outside party to conduct qualitative interviews.
- Intention to change behavior is different from actually implementing the behavior; this should be kept in mind while reviewing the results.

web survey: advantages and disadvantages

Using the internet to disseminate and conduct surveys is a relatively new research strategy. In the past it has been difficult to gather sufficient number of surveys through street outreach. There are advantages and disadvantages to using web-based surveys as outlined in a 2003 article by Rhodes and colleagues.

Advantages include the ability to:

- Reach disenfranchised groups (like LGBT individuals) who tend to use the web as a 'safe space' for interacting
- Reach respondents in varying geographic and cultural groups
- Gain access to hidden populations not reached through traditional survey methods
- Reduce error
- Provide a good format for asking sensitive questions (reducing social desirability bias)

Disadvantages include:

- No random sampling
- Potential for multiple submissions (although the web survey provider works to reduce this)
- The “digital divide” (some research suggests the internet may actually reach our target audience more effectively)
- Inability to reach people with no/low literacy
- “Survey fatigue” whereby as the survey progresses the number of questions answered decreases

Because of the particular target audience and the overall use and access to the web in San Francisco it was felt a web-based survey may be an improvement over face-to-face surveying which presents a separate set of limitations (including sampling bias, impact of provoking socially desirable responses, and the poor format for asking sensitive questions).

CAMPAIGN DESCRIPTION

campaign goals

The campaign goals were to:

1. Encourage men newly diagnosed with HIV to inform previous partners of sero-conversion
2. Encourage HIV positive and HIV negative men in San Francisco to discuss their HIV status before sex and to negotiate sexual activity that protects against the transmission of HIV
3. Promote HIV testing

campaign messages

There were three main campaign messages and ads used in the campaign (*see pages 12-14 for actual campaign ads*):

1. **Disclosure** is HIV Prevention:
If you hook up with guys of a different status, use condoms or have lower risk sex.
2. **Status Sorting** is a Prevention Strategy:
Every gay man should know his status.
3. **HIV Testing:** Test & Tell:
Know your status and be honest with your partners.

It was important that the campaign be oriented in a “sex-positive” manner, both in message wording and design. It was also important to communicate a non-directive approach to prevention where a variety of methods were offered rather than forced on the viewer. Nowhere in the ads was the audience instructed not to have sex, not to have sex with a person of a different HIV status NOR to have sex only with persons sharing the same serostatus, rather risk reduction was emphasized. The ads also needed to be inclusive of community members of varying ages, ethnicities and HIV status. Finally, the Department of Public Health was keenly aware of the climate in which the ads would arrive. San Francisco residents have been heavily targeted by HIV prevention ads for many years and it was imperative that these ads have a unique feel to best catch people’s attention.

ad 1: *Disclosure*

DISCLOSURE IS HIV PREVENTION

POSITIVE

NEGATIVE

If you hook up with guys of a different status, use condoms or have lower risk sex. **DISCLOSEHIV.org**

Funding: San Francisco Department of Public Health - HIV Prevention Services (HPS) | Design: Better World Advertising (www.socialmarketing.com)

ad 2: *Status Sorting*

STATUS SORTING IS A PREVENTION STRATEGY

Every gay man should know his status. **DISCLOSEHIV.org**

Funding: San Francisco Department of Public Health - HIV Prevention Services (HPS) | Design: Better World Advertising (www.socialmarketing.com)

ad 3: HIV Testing

HIV TESTING TEST & TELL

NEGATIVE

NEGATIVE

Know your status and be honest with your partner. **DISCLOSEHIV.org**

Funding: San Francisco Department of Public Health - HIV Prevention Services (HPS) | Design: Better World Advertising (www.socialmarketing.com)

The advertisement features a close-up of a couple embracing. The man's face is on the left, and the woman's face is on the right. The image is heavily stylized with a vibrant, multi-colored, wavy, liquid-like texture in shades of green, yellow, orange, and purple. Two black rectangular labels with the word "NEGATIVE" in white capital letters are placed on the couple's bodies: one on the man's chest and one on the woman's chest. The background is a solid black.

media strategy

A majority of the budget was devoted to outdoor advertisements that would reach a wide range of individuals of varying socioeconomic status in the target audience as they traveled throughout the city. A smaller portion of the budget was allocated to print ads in a local gay publication. A website was also built to provide additional information and resources.

Outdoor Media

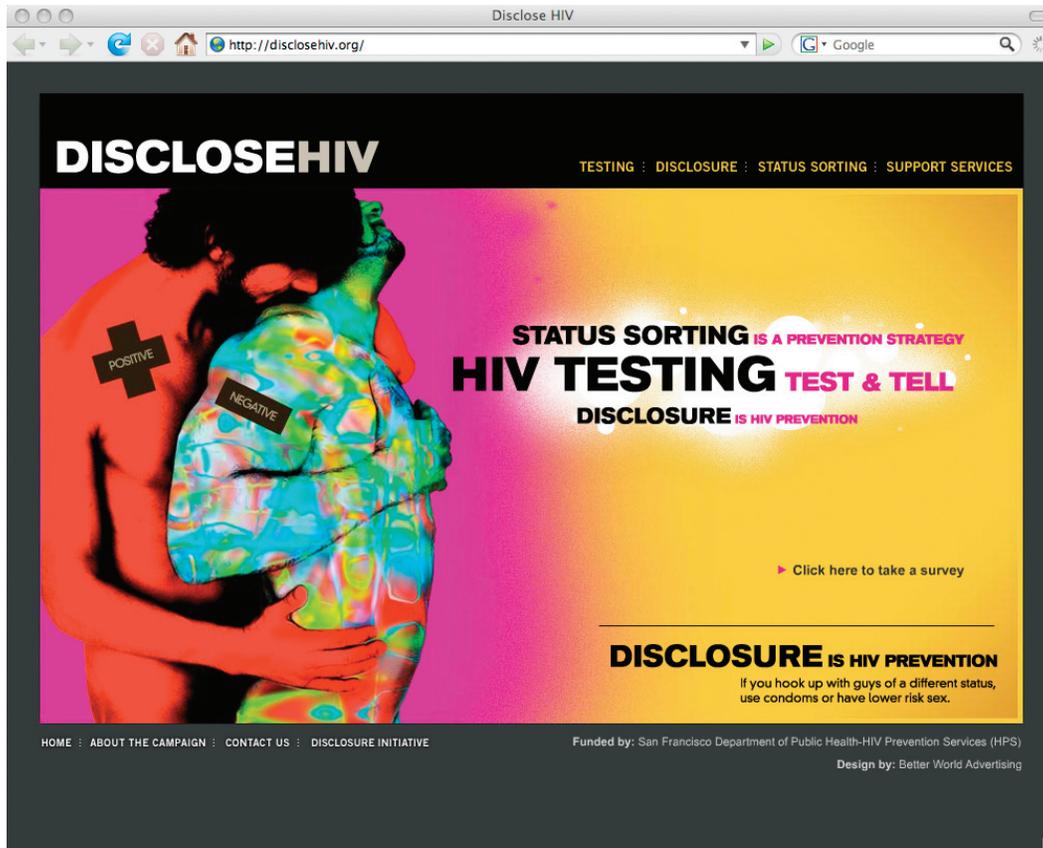
Distribution of various outdoor media components:

<i>month/year</i>	<i>media outlet</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>qty.</i>
November 2006	Wallscape	South of Market (10th & Harrison)	1
December 2006	Wallscape	South of Market (10th & Harrison)	1
January 2007	Wallscape	South of Market (10th & Harrison)	1
December 2006	Billboard	Castro (Sanchez & Market)	1
January 2007	Billboard	Castro (Noe & Market)	1
January 2007	Underground MUNI ad – 2 sheet	Castro Street Station	2
November 2006	Bus Shelter ads	Castro/Church area	6
December 2006	Bus Shelter ads	Castro/Church area	5
January 2007	Bus Shelter ads	Castro/Church area	6

Newspaper Ads

A smaller portion of the budget was dedicated to print advertisements in a free publication widely read by the gay population in San Francisco, *The Bay Area Reporter* (BAR). In focus groups conducted with the target audience many participants indicated they frequently read the BAR. Six full page ads were run in the BAR.

website: *www.disclosehiv.org homepage*



Website

All ads directed the viewer to a website where more information could be found. The following were components of the website:

Information on:

- Basic HIV facts, including definitions and transmission information
- HIV testing information: available testing methods, the meaning of a positive or negative result and testing resources in San Francisco
- How disclosure of HIV status and status sorting can fit into a larger HIV prevention strategy along with explicit warnings about the limitations of such strategies including the possibility for STD transmission

Resource links:

- Services which provide anonymous notification to partners about exposure to HIV and STDs (both through a counselor with “Partner Services” and via the web with Inspot.org)
- Links to additional disclosure services
- Link to information about the Disclosure Initiative
- Prevention resources including counseling and support groups
- Link to the SFPD HIV prevention website

Additional components:

- A “question of the month”
- PDFs of ads
- A “Contact us” email form

Web traffic:

<i>month/year</i>	<i>visitors</i>	<i>hits</i>
November 2006	2401	15,047
December 2006	604	2,593
January 2007	531	2,131
TOTAL	3,536	19,771

Top referring domains:

<i>month/year</i>	<i>top three referring domains</i>
November 2006	1. DiscloseHIV.org 2. Poz.com 3. Ebar.com (Bay Area Reporter)
December 2006	1. DiscloseHIV.org 2. Poz.com 3. Ebar.com
January 2007	1. DiscloseHIV.org 2. Poz.com 3. SFHIV.org

media coverage

The campaign generated some notable press coverage. Although using new prevention messages presents challenges, one of the advantages of using a fresh approach is that the media is more likely to find the campaign press worthy thereby further spreading the prevention messages without additional cost.

Local media coverage of the campaign included a 6pm television news spot covering the launch of the campaign on channel 3 (11). The Bay Area Reporter (local gay newspaper) also ran a large front page article entitled: “*HIV Campaigns Spark Debate*” (November 19, 2007).

The most high profile article was in the Feb/March 2007 edition of Poz magazine (a national magazine widely distributed to people living with HIV). Poz ran a comprehensive six page article on serosorting entitled “Status Seekers”. The article discussed the practice of serosorting and the SF DPH’s reasoning behind developing the first campaign of its type. The article included quotes from prominent San Francisco epidemiologists surmising that HIV incidence has likely dropped as a result of serosorting among HIV positive men. The controversy surrounding the campaign was also discussed at length.

emails to website

Emails to the DiscloseHIV.org website and general feedback was tracked throughout the campaign run. Feedback ranged widely. Many who sent in emails indicated they worked in prevention. Emails could generally be placed in one of four main categories:

1. People emailing requesting materials:

“I was wondering if you happen to have any promotional materials (palm cards, business cards, etc.) associated with the Disclose HIV campaign? I would be interested in having some for use at my agency.”

2. People emailing with concern that the campaign was promoting barebacking among men who may not know their HIV status:

“I worry that a public-health endorsement of serosorting by gay men will, in fact, increase infection, by making it acceptable for two men who believe they are negative to engage in unprotected sex. Serosorting is probably a better prevention skill for HIV-positive men; many gay male PLWHAs will only engage in ‘unsafe’ behavior with other positive people, and when considered in this light, this behavior does greatly reduce the likelihood that a person who is HIV-negative will be exposed to the virus.”

3. Emails thanking the San Francisco Department of Public Health for presenting new prevention strategies:

“After the... tragically insensitive campaign launched by SFISREADY.ORG last year, I am very happy to see what you guys are doing. You appear to offer valid options to help people deal with and understand the astronomical complexities of HIV and social interactions. Thank you. I’ve been positive for 21 years now and have watched everything unfold from my emotionally detached distance, adamantly refusing to become publicly involved in any way. Until now. If I can assist you guys in some way please let me know what you need and I will help out as I can.”

4. Emails expressing concern that the campaign was promoting discrimination against HIV positive men:

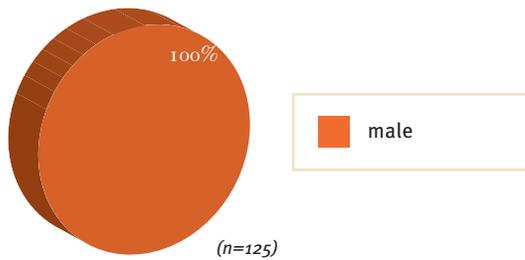
“This advertisement is appalling. It will only add to the stigma and discrimination faced by HIV positive men and encourage men not to get tested for the fear of this stigma and discrimination.”

SURVEY RESULTS

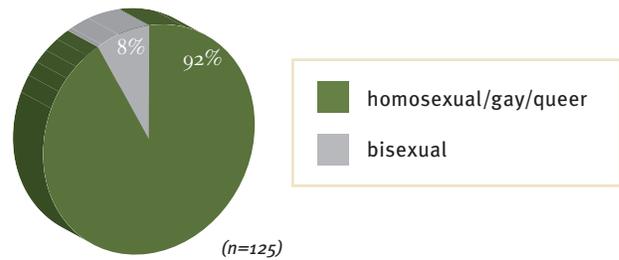
respondent demographics

The following is a demographic breakdown of participants who completed the web-based survey.

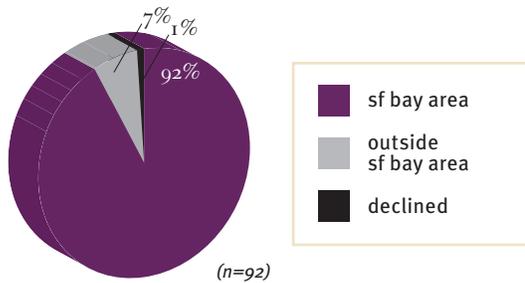
Gender:



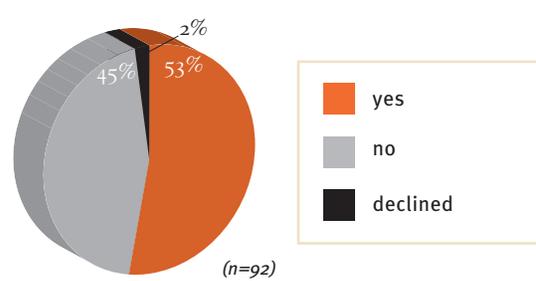
Sexual orientation:



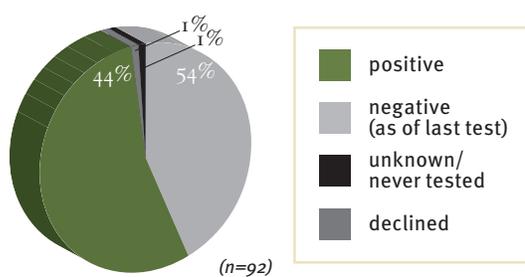
Residence:



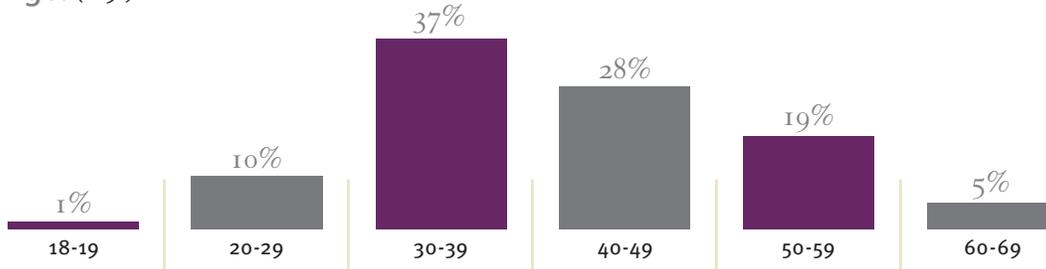
Current HIV prevention work/volunteer:



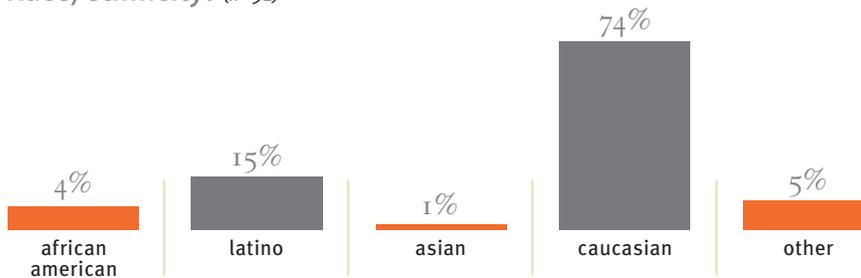
HIV status:



Age: (n=92)



Race/ethnicity: (n=92)



behavior

Participants of the web-based survey were asked a series of questions about their own behavior and the behavior of other gay men in San Francisco in regards to sexual practices. The following are responses these questions.



“Disclosure of HIV status before sex is common among gay/bisexual men in San Francisco.”



“I feel comfortable asking my sex partners what their HIV status is before sex.”





“I feel comfortable telling my sex partners what my HIV status is before sex.”
(n=113)



“I commonly select my sexual partners based on whether they have the same HIV status as I do.”
(n=113)

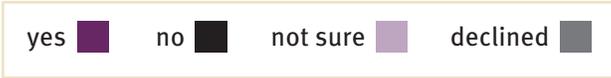


“I frequently ask sex partners who say they are HIV negative when they last tested negative.”
(n=113)



“Asking and telling accurate HIV status to sex partners is an important part of HIV prevention.”
(n=113)





Have you ever talked to a partner about HIV status without prompting from a service provider?



Have you had unprotected anal sex within the past 12 months?

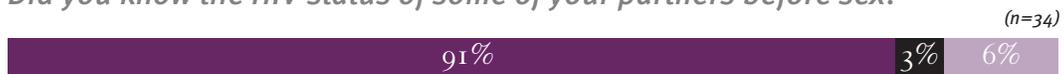


Have you had unprotected anal sex with more than one partner in the past 12 months?



When you had unprotected anal sex in the last 12 months:

Did you know the HIV status of some of your partners before sex?



Did you know the HIV status of all of your partners before sex?



Did some of your partners know your HIV status before sex?



Did all of your partners know your HIV status before sex?



reaction to ads

Message recall

Before participants were shown ads, they were asked to recall if they had seen any HIV prevention campaigns in San Francisco since November 2007. Seventy-eight percent indicated they had. Those who had seen ads were then presented with a list of slogans and then messages and asked to select those they recalled having seen. The list presented to respondents included DISCLOSE HIV campaign slogans/messages alongside fake campaign messages to test the campaign message reach.

Overall, a good number of participants recalled the ad messages when presented with a list of real and fake ad messages. The “Disclosure” message was the most frequently recalled (55%) primary message. The secondary text for the “Status Sorting” and “HIV Testing” ads were most frequently recognized at a 54% recall for each.

Recall of each ad’s headline:

<i>ad headline</i>	<i>% recalled</i>
1. Disclosure Is HIV Prevention	55% (n=43)
2. Status Sorting Is a Prevention Strategy	35% (n=27)
3. HIV Testing: Test and Tell	33% (n=26)

Recall of each ad’s subtext:

<i>ad subtext</i>	<i>% recalled</i>
1: If you hook up with guys of a different status, use condoms or have lower risk sex	28% (n=21)
2: Every gay man should know his status	54% (n=40)
3: Know your status and be honest with your partner	54% (n=40)

Exposure to ads

On the web survey, participants were shown images of each ad and asked if they had seen the ad in San Francisco. Responses indicate that almost half of respondents had seen the ad campaign. “Disclosure” and “Status Sorting” ads were most frequently identified (placed

on billboards/wallscape and in the Muni underground station). The HIV testing ad which was run on bus shelters in the Castro was the least recognized.

Participants who reported having seen the campaign in SF prior to taking the web survey:

ad description	% report seeing
1: Disclosure	45% (n=8)
2: Status Sorting	33% (n=32)
3: HIV testing	26% (n=24)

Media venues where participants saw the ads:

venue	ad 1: Disclosure % saw the ad	ad 2: Status Sorting % saw the ad	ad 3: HIV Testing % saw the ad
Poster on bus shelter	63% (n=30)	50% (n=16)	46% (n=11)
Billboard	21% (n=10)	19% (n=6)	13% (n=3)
Newspaper	23% (n=11)	25% (n=8)	25% (n=6)
Underground MUNI station	48% (n=23)	44% (n=14)	21% (n=5)
Wallscape	13% (n=6)	0%	0%
Postcards	31% (n=15)	34% (n=11)	38% (n=9)
Magnet	21% (n=10)	16% (n=5)	21% (n=5)
Posters	33% (n=16)	34% (n=11)	42% (n=10)

Newspapers

All three ads were run in the local newspaper, *The Bay Area Reporter* (BAR). When people were asked in which newspaper they saw ads the vast majority recalled the BAR: eleven (of 13) saw the “Disclosure” ad in the BAR, eight (of 9) saw the “Status Sorting” ad and three (of 4) respondents recalled seeing the “HIV Testing” ad in the BAR. Poz magazine, which ran an article on the campaign was also mentioned.

MUNI

Many people reported seeing the ads in the MUNI station. Forty-four percent of respondents reported seeing the “Status Sorting” ad in a MUNI station. Forty-eight percent of respondents reported seeing the “Disclosure” ad in the station and 21% reported seeing the “HIV Testing” ad there.

Outdoor (billboards, bus shelters and wallscape)

Many respondents reported having seen ads on either bus shelters or billboards and were able to name locations where they saw the ads. People had a harder time correctly identifying the specific ad, but remembered seeing ads outside. Sixty-three percent reported seeing “Disclosure” ads on bus shelters, 21% on billboards and 13% remember seeing the ad on a wallscape. Fifty percent reported seeing the “Status Sorting” ad on a bus shelter and 19% said they saw it on a billboard. Forty-six percent of participants reported seeing the “HIV Testing” ad on a bus shelter.

Other locations

Participants also reported seeing ads at local community based organizations, at trainings, and at the San Francisco Department of Public Health.

Frequency

Respondents reported seeing the “Disclosure” ad with more frequency than any other ads with 41% reporting having seen the ad five or more times (the “Disclosure” ad was run on prominent billboards and for three months on a wallscape in San Francisco). Thirty-six percent saw the “Status Sorting” ad five or more times and 28% reported seeing the “HIV Testing” ad five or more times.

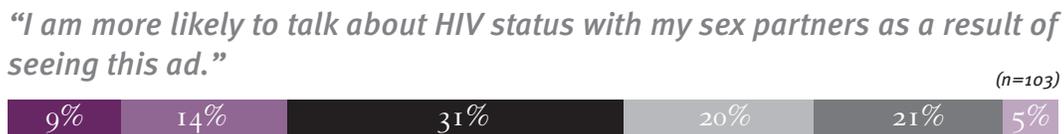
Number of times respondents recalled seeing each ad:

<i>ad description</i>	<i>did not see</i>	<i>1-2 times</i>	<i>3-4 times</i>	<i>5-6 times</i>	<i>7 or more</i>
1. Disclosure	8% (n=4)	24% (n=12)	28% (n=14)	14% (n=7)	28% (n=14)
2. Status Sorting	3% (n=1)	33% (n=11)	27% (n=9)	15% (n=5)	21% (n=7)
3. HIV Testing	0%	52% (n=13)	20% (n=5)	16% (n=4)	12% (n=3)

summary results for each ad

Below are participant reactions after seeing each ad. The questions below explore attention-getting ability of ads, message comprehension, appropriateness for target audience, thought provoking nature of ads and self reported behavior change.

Thinking about the “Disclosure” ad...



Thinking about the “Status Sorting” ad...



Thinking about the “HIV Testing” ad...



“This ad caught my attention right away.”

(n=92)



“I don’t understand this ad.”

(n=92)



“The ad MESSAGE is appropriate for gay & bisexual men in SF.”

(n=92)



“The ad IMAGE is appropriate for gay & bisexual men in SF.”

(n=92)



“The ad causes me to think more about the issue of HIV prevention.”

(n=92)



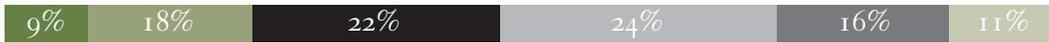
“I am more likely to talk about HIV status with my sex partners as a result of seeing this ad.”

(n=92)



“I am more likely to get tested for HIV or encourage partners to get tested as a result of seeing this ad.”

(n=92)



differences in responses to the campaign

Differences among respondents in their reaction to the campaign based on age, HIV status, and current paid or volunteer work in HIV prevention were explored using data from the web survey. In many cases sample sizes were too small to draw significant conclusions, but results point to possible trends. This section summarizes the findings.

Differences by HIV status

In general there were not major differences between HIV positive and HIV negative participants' reactions or self reported impact of the campaign, with a few notable exceptions. HIV negative men frequently stated they were more likely to seek testing for HIV or encourage partners to get tested after seeing the HIV Testing ad than HIV positive men (36% agreed/strongly agreed compared to 18% of HIV positive respondents). Additionally, more HIV negative men reported being more likely to talk about HIV status with sex partners as a result of seeing the same ad (HIV Testing) than HIV positive men (32% agreed or strongly agreed compared to 20% of HIV positive respondents). It is not surprising that HIV positive respondents had less of a reaction to the testing ad since they wouldn't be seeking an HIV test.

Differences by involvement in HIV prevention work

There was also not a significant difference in the reactions of respondents currently working or volunteering in prevention compared to those not working/volunteering in prevention. One exception was that people working in prevention were slightly more likely to say they agreed with the message in the HIV testing ad (80% agreed or strongly agreed compared to 61% of those not in prevention) as well as the message in the Status Sorting ad (78% in prevention agreed or strongly agreed while 66% not in prevention agreed/strongly agreed).

Differences by age

Respondents were divided into three age categories (19-29; 30-39 and 40 and up). The purpose was to separate out those people who are more likely to have been exposed to prevention messages since the inception of the AIDS epidemic (designated as 40 years old and up), and therefore be more likely to be educated about prevention. Overall, this was the characteristic that seemed most likely to differentiate peoples' reactions to the campaign.

In general, younger men were more likely to say that all three ads caught their attention and that they agreed with messages and images. Also, younger men were more likely to indicate that after seeing the ads they were prompted to talk to sex partners about HIV status before sex with partners, think about prevention and get tested for HIV (or encourage their partners to do so). Overall, differences were found to be most distinct between the age groups of 19-39 and 40 and up.

Because there were more older respondents, there is more data from that group, but it is interesting to note that there was a consistent trend whereby the younger respondents were more likely to report noticing ads, that they were appropriate, and that ads impacted their thinking or behavior.

Thinking about the Disclosure ad: “This ad caught my attention right away.”

<i>age</i>	<i>agree/strongly agree</i>	<i>disagree/strongly disagree</i>
19-29	90% (n=9)	10% (n=1)
30-39	88% (n=30)	12% (n=4)
40+	73% (n=35)	15% (n=7)

Thinking about the Disclosure ad: “I am more likely to talk about HIV status with my sex partners as a result of seeing this ad.”

<i>age</i>	<i>agree/strongly agree</i>	<i>disagree/strongly disagree</i>
19-29	40% (n=4)	30% (n=3)
30-39	21% (n=7)	35% (n=12)
40+	23% (n=11)	52% (n=25)

Thinking about the Status Sorting ad: “This MESSAGE is appropriate for gay and bisexual men in San Francisco.”

<i>age</i>	<i>agree/strongly agree</i>	<i>disagree/strongly disagree</i>
19-29	80% (n=8)	10% (n=1)
30-39	74% (n=25)	9% (n=3)
40+	71% (n=34)	17% (n=8)

written comments from web-based survey

Respondents were given the chance to provide more detailed feedback to ads throughout the survey. Many took this opportunity to delve into their feelings about the campaign and a rich set of comments was collected. Common themes emerged in the data, and responses were grouped according to theme.

Theme 1: Color treatment and design

The colors and design treatment of the ads were frequently commented upon.

All ads contained a mix of ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ nude men presented in a variety of colors and treatments (both solid colors and psychedelic artwork). The issue of color choice was charged for some people and a significant amount of meaning was ascribed to the colors employed. Some respondents consistently objected to the colors, while others indicated it was the color that made the ads compelling. Some indicated that by depicting men of discordant serostatuses in different colors there was an implicit suggestion of separation (note: only one of the three ads included men of sero-discordant status).

The great range in participant feedback demonstrates the extent to which opinions were polarized.

Some respondents objected to the use of the color red on the HIV positive man:

“Choose a different color for the HIV+ character. Red has too many negative connotations. I felt he was emblematic of the devil (given the goatee, etc).”

Another person felt simply having the positive and negative signs would have been sufficient:

“...the different coloring can emphasize to some that there is a separation among positive and negative men. I understand the point of distinguishing between the two HIV status’, but I think that with the simple sign on each guy defining their status is enough. I believe that by having both guys be the same color of red, it demonstrates how although there is a disease that is ‘dividing’ the community – we can still unify as one because the outsider is the disease... not another gay man.”

Other people commented it was the design and colors that drew them to the ads:

“I love how visually appealing these ads are. They grab your attention!”

Theme 2: Disclosure is not effective HIV prevention

Some respondents felt that in general, disclosure of HIV status is not an effective HIV prevention practice.

Several objections were raised: 1) people lie about their status; 2) many men don’t have up to date information about their HIV status; and, 3) HIV testing technology is fallible due to the window period when antibodies are still developing (leaving people to falsely believe they are HIV negative).

In regards to the issue of honesty, one man said:

“The ad is visually strong. I disagree with the idea that talking about status will change anyone’s behavior. Guys, gay and straight, lie where sex is concerned.”

A number of men said that disclosure and subsequent serosorting could be effective for positives but not negatives:

“For poz guys, serosorting makes sense and is effective. For neg guys (like me) it is Russian roulette... there are too many guys who honestly don’t know they are positive. Worse, the recently sero-converted, who are at their most infectious, can’t know they are infected yet due to the nature of standard testing. Maybe RNA testing will change that in the future, but today, the antibody testing wouldn’t detect it until too late.”

Theme 3: Mixed views on serosorting

Reactions to the message in the “Status Sorting” ad focused primarily on feelings regarding the practice of serosorting. Comments varied significantly depending on whether people were considering serosorting with two HIV positive men or two HIV negative men (it should be noted that the serosorting ad depicted two HIV positive men only). Some of the people who objected to elements of the ads seemed pleased that the city was acknowledging existing prevention strategies.

Some respondents were concerned the ads were promoting community divisiveness:

“I think that it’s great for the city to normalize this strategy that gay men have been using for years now. My only concern is that it could be saying to positive men to stay away from even trying to have sex with negative men... Although it doesn’t say ‘you must serosort’, people naturally personalize everything and many will take it that way.”

Once again, the concern that serosorting could only be a safe practice for two HIV positive men was raised:

“It seems to imply that serosorting is a good idea. I think it’s a bad idea. It’s good to know if the other person is positive but it’s stupid to take anyone’s word for it if they say they are negative as often they don’t know themselves. I was infected by a ‘negative’ person”

Others felt that by addressing the practice of serosorting we were promoting prejudice against HIV positive men:

“Sorting as a means of HIV prevention? This ad made me very angry. There is enough bias and prejudice against HIV+ men in the LGBT community. This ad just seems to fuel and validate the fears about getting HIV in HIV negative men.”

While other respondents approved of the serosorting ads and wanted to see more of them:

“I know these ads have been controversial, but I think they speak to a very important reality in our community. Like it or not, serosorting is happening in a big way here in SF... [the campaign] has helped get a rather taboo subject out in the open as a matter of community debate. I think we do not make any progress by pretending that serosorting and barebacking have not become a major modus operandi of gay men in SF. Let’s hope the conversation can continue with a minimum of blaming and shaming.”

Theme 4: Thought provoking ads

Some respondents praised the ads for delivering innovative prevention messages alongside arresting images:

“I think this is a great direction and more needs to be done about this especially helping guys to be comfortable disclosing and help in how and when to do this.”

“Powerful image... Thought provoking.”

Theme 5: Campaign was ‘offensive’

Other respondents disliked the ads altogether:

“I find the ad to be entirely inappropriate and offensive.”

Theme 6: Expand campaign to more locales

Several people said they would like to see the campaign exported to other areas:

“It should be used worldwide; it should have been started 20 years ago.”

“Will you consider spreading these ads to some other areas like Marin County?

Gays not only reside in San Francisco.”

“I’ve seen these often because I work close with the DPH. Not sure if I think that these ads are visible enough in the community. Community is not just the Castro. In fact, that’s an extremely limited pocket of gay life and many people I know never go there. This message needs to be everywhere...”

“I really like them and hope they’ll be seen in other cities too.”

Theme 7: Geared towards young audience or “men in the scene”

Some people felt the ads were geared towards a specific audience which they were not part of:

“Seemed geared to young audience. Did nothing for me as a middle aged man”

“I think they need to be more able to catch the eye of someone like me. I think the play of bodies, words, and the images being distorted is good to a certain degree. At the same time they reflect white men who are into the ‘scene’ it does not really reflect my reality and/or the community that I walk in.”

Theme 8: Wide range of suggestions

An impressive number of respondents posted comments throughout the survey. Contents of the comments varied widely, reflecting the extent to which this campaign generated reactions across the spectrum. The following mix of quotes reflects this variety.

Some people appreciated the nuanced quality of the ads:

“[The ads] are good at promoting dialogue or getting one to reflect on ones’ situations. I believe serosorting for positives is a good idea but when it comes to negatives, how does one truly know they are negative when it comes to HIV? Overall, it’s a good campaign that moves past the ‘wear a condom every time’ message that many gay men have conflicts with.”

Others wanted the ads to be more nuanced, reflecting the complexity of these decisions:

“Although I am pulled by the striking images of the ads it seems to me that a more personal approach might be fitting with the personal issues of disclosure, serosorting and testing. These ads mirror the cold, disjointed aspects of a community, not the private softer musing of a man making difficult choices.”

While other respondents were on the opposite end of the spectrum and wanted to see ads which were more directive:

“The ads are visually colorful and highly suggestive... but as communication tools for an AIDS awareness campaign, they do not work for me. There is no sense of urgency, no message that is clear and straight forward...”

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH SUMMARY

Twelve face-to-face interviews were conducted to compliment the information collected in the web survey. Interview participants were a mix of men of varying ages (all over 18), race/ethnicities and HIV status. Finally, two individuals who had taken part in the San Francisco Department of Public Health Disclosure Initiative training were deliberately included since it was important to collect feedback from providers exposed to the larger project. (*Note: all interviewees were NOT connected to ad development in any capacity*). Recruitment was coordinated by an outside interviewer, men were invited to participate at the end of the web survey, and additional email invitations were sent to community members. Interview participants were recruited on a “first come” basis with consideration to participant demographics.

participant demographics

Eleven participants identified as gay and one as bisexual. Individuals identified as white, Hispanic, African-American, Italian and Lebanese and were between the ages of 23 and 50, with an average age of 36. HIV status was mixed: four were HIV positive men and eight HIV negative.

interview format

All interviews followed the same semi-structured, standard interview guide (see Appendix B). Interviews were qualitative and lasted anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour. They took place at participant’s home, place of work, or in a public meeting space. All were transcribed word-for-word directly to each interview instrument by computer.

Throughout the interview each participant was shown the three campaign ads and were asked to provide reactions. The interviews covered questions regarding campaign awareness, reaction to ads, message interpretation and impact and exposure to campaign. This section is divided into the following subjects (Campaign Awareness, Exposure Arenas, Reaction to Ads: Comprehension/Message effectiveness, Interpretation, Impact, and Summary).

Important limitations

Participants included volunteers who work in prevention and specifically in Disclosure

services. People working in HIV prevention may be both more sophisticated with regard to prevention messages as well as more critical of prevention efforts than people in the general public. It is important to keep in mind that opinions are not necessarily representative views, but rather reflect some important opinions from a select group. There is also a tendency for people to provide “socially desirable” answers which may also impact results.

campaign awareness

Using prompted recall, participants were asked if they had previously seen any of the three ads in San Francisco. The “Status Sorting” ad was the most recognized of the three.

Participants who recalled ads when prompted:

<i>ad description</i>	<i>saw ad previously</i>	<i>had not seen ad</i>	<i>unsure</i>
1. Disclosure	3	7	2
2. Status Sorting	6	5	1
3. HIV Testing	2	7	3

exposure arenas

Many participants reported having seen the ads on Market Street billboards and Castro area bus shelters (five people named locations in the Castro where they remember seeing either a bus shelter or billboard); one person reported having seen the wallscape. Over half reported reading the *Bay Area Reporter*; and one of those seven remembered seeing ads there. Seven of the twelve participants reported using the MUNI underground Castro station (four used MUNI once a week or more and three used it less than once a week) and five said they never used that station. Two of the seven people who use the station reporting seeing ads there. None of the participants had visited the DISCLOSE HIV website.

reaction to ads

Participants were asked to convey their initial reactions to each of the three ads and then

state what it was about the ad that caught their attention. Most of the respondents had a strong initial reaction to the ads. Nearly all initial reactions made mention of the color and sexual content of the ads.

Reactions: “Status Sorting” ad

The images in the ad drew many people to look closer, and some said they liked the design but were conflicted or confused by the message.

One 39 year-old HIV negative community member liked the visuals and colors, but also had a hard time understanding the ads:

“I think the images are eye-catching. The colors are an interesting design element to add new dimension to a tired old marketing image. I hate the text... Especially when the words you’re using aren’t commonly used words and not easily identifiable. It’s a struggle to read let alone comprehend the message.”

Mention made of the text, particularly the words “Status Sorting” was frequently critical. Many HIV positive participants felt that status sorting wasn’t a realistic or effective prevention strategy because in their experience casual sex partners were frequently not truthful about disclosing HIV status if they disclosed at all.

For instance, a 50 year-old HIV positive prevention volunteer community member stated:

“Almost everyone I know who’s living with HIV was infected by a ‘negative’ person. You’re taking the word of a stranger. Safe sex is the only prevention strategy. Serosorting is turning a blind-eye to reality... to say that “Serosorting is a prevention strategy” implies that if positive men only had sex with positive men then nothing would spread but it’s only half of the story... I don’t think it’s an effective prevention strategy because people aren’t always honest with their partners.”

Some, like this HIV negative, 37 year-old service provider were concerned the ads were promoting sex without a condom (barebacking):

“It looks like they’re saying that if you have the same status you can have bareback sex, which isn’t a good idea.”

Others indicated the message may be too sophisticated for people, as one 35 year- old HIV positive service provider (part of the Disclosure Initiative) alluded to:

“I think it’s way beyond the average person who has yet to go and get tested...”

While there were many critiques of the ad, some people felt it worked. One 36 year-old HIV negative community member said the ad prompted him to think more about the issue:

“Very effective. It’s a thought-provoking message for anyone sexually active in the community. It’s important to know the status of the person you’re with or the people you are sleeping with.”

Another 42 year-old HIV positive community member felt honest disclosure of HIV status was an important message to send:

“It’s good because it puts a message out there that if people are honest about their status then it will stop the spread of AIDS.”

Comprehension of term “status sorting”

Because we were aware that “status sorting” would be a new term for our audience, we needed to get a sense of how effectively it communicated the practice otherwise known as “serosorting” by people well versed in the topic. Ten of the 12 people interviewed knew and could accurately summarize what the term referred to, which was encouraging. One person felt the term was ambiguous and another thought was about knowing your HIV status.

One 27 year-old HIV negative community member who was not sure he knew what the term meant made the following educated guess based on the overall ad:

“I don’t know but people who are negative are having sex with partners of whom they know their status so they can negotiate accordingly... There’s a trend towards “fuck buddies” – having ongoing sex whether casual or more intimate sex with a friend instead of with strangers so you’re more familiar with their practices and proclivities and status as opposed to constantly re-negotiating. I think that’s what they’re talking about here.”

Overall message comprehension/effectiveness: Status Sorting

At the end of this discussion participants were told what the actual intent of the ad

was, and were then asked how effectively they felt this was communicated. [For the “Status Sorting” ad, the “actual intent” was *Know your HIV status and negotiate sexual practices accordingly.*]

A few people said the ads were effective in communicating the intended message. Some respondents felt this ad was not effective, a couple of people said it was “very effective” and two more felt it was somewhat effective. Overall, participants seemed to be more critical of this ad than the other two of the series.

Reactions: “HIV Testing” ad

The “HIV Testing” ad generated similar responses to the “Status Sorting” ad in terms of image and color. Some participants stated confusion about the color upon initial viewing and thought the image distracted from the text. Many people liked the secondary message of “knowing your status”. A few expressed concern about a perceived underlying message that unprotected sex was an option to men who self-segregated into groups with sero-concordant sex partners. A further concern was what some saw as a “segregation” message being promoted between people of different HIV status. Finally, there were several references to the body types in the ad, some men felt the ads were sexy and eye-catching, while others disliked the image of nude men with unattainable bodies.

The symbols indicating HIV status were a common topic in interviews. One 23 year-old HIV negative, African American youth service provider stated:

“...The simpler the message, the more people will respond to it or be able to grasp it. Some people have a third grade reading level. Also, some people are very confused about what ‘positive’ is or what ‘negative’ is. There was a boy I talked to down at Glide who was like ‘I’m positive, that means I don’t have anything!’ and I was like ‘No, positive doesn’t mean a clean test result’...”

Other people felt the symbols promoted divisiveness, like this 43 year-old HIV positive service provider involved in the disclosure initiative:

“The negative & negative, without the rest of the message seems divisive – only negative guys with negative guys – it’s almost not honoring who I am. It’s looking to create a division...”

Several respondents, including this 27 year-old HIV negative community member indicated they liked the tagline and secondary message:

“Test & Tell is a good tagline... It’s a great message. All about being informed. I like that it’s not sex-phobic.”

And, for quite a few people this ad stood out as their favorite. As one 36 year-old HIV negative man stated:

“I’m attracted to the color of the ad. It also has a strong sexual appeal. I like the “test & tell”. I think it’s important that the message be simple and it makes it a lighter subject.”

Overall message comprehension/effectiveness: HIV Testing

At the end of this discussion participants were told what the actual intent of the ad was, and were then asked how effectively they felt this was communicated. [For “HIV Testing” the “actual intent” was *Know your status.*]

Participants were much more receptive to this message than the “Status Sorting” message; several people said they liked the straightforward nature of the message. The vast majority said the ad effectively communicated the intended message, a couple of men felt it did not and a couple others said they felt it communicated the message to a certain degree.

Reactions: “Disclosure” ad

Consistent with the prior two ads, the “Disclosure” ad generated a variety of feedback with the majority of responses being favorable. In general, HIV positive respondents were glad that the “Disclosure” ad depicted a sero-discordant couple who might be engaging in sex, although some HIV negative participants expressed concern over the high-risk potential for such an encounter. Overall, people were complimentary to the design and colors of this ad.

As one 50 year-old HIV positive prevention volunteer stated:

“The image is catching. It’s two people who could be dancing or intimate. It suggests a wide

range of possibilities. It's sexy and loving. The text makes you think: "How is disclosure HIV prevention" and opens up the possibility to talk about concerns."

A couple of people wanted the ads to emphasize disclosure before sex. As one 37 year-old HIV negative service provider said:

"The color captures my attention definitely, and I like that there's a positive and a negative guy. But it's confusing about when they are supposed to disclose. Maybe if they weren't in a sexual position, maybe if they were holding each other instead of being in the middle of sex."

Some stated that they would have liked ad copy to emphasize partner dialogue more, as this 46 year old HIV negative community member suggested:

"I think it should give directions on how and when to talk, because it's jumping from, 'Disclose' to 'Use condoms when having sex with someone of a different status,' but they miss that crucial step of how and when to talk about it..."

One 27 year-old HIV negative community member didn't like the idea of Disclosure being presented as HIV prevention:

"It's not really prevention. Safe sex is prevention. Disclosure is a step, but it's not prevention."

When asked how effectively the message was conveyed, one 26 year-old HIV negative community member said:

"Very effectively. Because Disclosure means "to share the information" and its saying "With that knowledge you can chose how you're going to have sex and prevent HIV from spreading."

Another 35 year-old HIV positive service provider involved in the Disclosure Initiative said he appreciated that the ad presented a realistic option:

"I think this ad has the most "real-life" message. Know your status and negotiate accordingly."

Overall message comprehension/effectiveness: HIV Disclosure

At the end of this discussion participants were told what the actual intent of the ad was

and were then asked how effectively they felt this was communicated [for “Disclosure” the “actual intent” was *HIV Disclosure: Talk to partners about HIV status before sex.*]

Like the “HIV Testing” ad, most participants felt the message was effectively communicated in the ad. A couple of men felt it was “moderately” clear and a few said it was not clear to them.

summary

Interpretation

The practice of serosorting and disclosure within a framework of prevention were probably the most widely discussed elements of the ads.

While some people viewed prevention as a more black and white issue (use a condom or don’t have sex), others suggested the messages could have their place in the right context. The following two quotes reflect this fundamental split in approaches to prevention messaging:

As one 46 year-old HIV negative community member said:

“I think it [the “Status Sorting” ad] gives people the impression that they have an option that shouldn’t exist in the first place. Either you are safe or you are not and regardless of your individual status, you shouldn’t put yourself or their health at risk. We should all be practicing safe sex regardless.”

Another 26 year-old HIV negative community member felt disclosure and serosorting could be useful in a monogamous relationship:

“I don’t think it’s realistic that you’re going to disclose your status to everyone in every situation, but if you’re having an on-going sexual relationship with someone where you know their status and it’s the same as yours then I can see how that would work as a prevention strategy.”

Impact

There were some participants who said they were turned off by either the images or messages

in the ads and as a result felt they had little impact on them. However, despite this the ads seemed to make even the most critical observers think more about prevention practices.

A 50 year-old HIV positive prevention volunteer who was particularly critical of the “Status Sorting” ad commented that his anger at seeing the ads had prompted a conversation about prevention strategies.

He went on to say that more discussion was needed as people become increasingly apathetic about HIV/AIDS:

“[I was] angered and disappointed because there’s a better way to get the message across... the last two [“HIV Testing” and “Disclosure”] are better. I did bring up a conversation with a friend about “what are good prevention strategies”... I’m glad they’re there [the ads] because any discussion is good. AIDS doesn’t have quite the face it did when people were wasted and dying.”

Another 36 year-old HIV negative community member who had been more favorable in his critiques said he had talked to a friend about the ads and felt they effectively encouraged HIV testing:

“I did talk to someone about them. I was with a friend when we saw them. I made the comment that I thought they were sexy but that the message was really cool. I test regularly. I thought it was really cool that the campaign was out prompting people to test. The text makes HIV testing less ominous.”

conclusion

The majority of the participants were able to discern the intended message of the three ads without difficulty.

The color was the first thing that many people commented on both in praising and critical tones. ‘Eye-catching’ versus ‘creepy’ were two comments which reflect this polarity. A few people felt the ads had a ‘party’ feel to them and would appeal to people in the ‘club-scene’. Some felt the prominent image might detract from the message. When discussing the overall message several themes emerged in the interviews:

1. The perception that the ads attempted to segregate gay men into groups of sexual compatibility based on HIV status (and subsequent concern that HIV positive men might feel further separated from the gay community)
2. Concern that unprotected sex was being promoted by the Health Department; some felt the message unintentionally encouraged bareback sex
3. An appreciation for seeing new types of prevention messages more nuanced than those used in the past (particularly a good deal of support for a sero-discordant couple being presented in a ‘sex-positive’ prevention ad)

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Using quantitative and qualitative data we explored reactions to the messages and images presented in the campaign. A significant amount of information was reviewed which indicates that the DISCLOSE HIV campaign had a meaningful and multifaceted impact on the gay and bisexual men who provided feedback.

In addition to promoting positive behavior change, the ads caused considerable debate. The San Francisco Department of Public Health took up controversial topics breaking from the tradition of the past 20 years of HIV prevention messaging which has consistently instructed men to assume with every sexual encounter that each sex partner was HIV positive. Condom message fatigue had been cited time and again in San Francisco's gay community. People have said the same old "use a condom" messages were no longer effective or even noticed. The alternative messaging which typically focuses on prevention with positives (where messages are aimed at people living with HIV) have been critiqued for excluding half of the necessary audience.

To respond to these persistent concerns the question of how to involve and effectively re-engage more gay men in prevention emerged.

The Department of Public Health knew there would be push back. These ads were sending a message that hadn't been employed as an official public health policy anywhere; there wasn't a single Health Department across the country that had endorsed the widely practiced community strategy of serosorting. In championing this campaign the Health Department was following the principles of health education by "meeting people where they are at" with their behaviors. The risk in this approach is in the potential to promote prevention activities that are more nuanced than conventional messages and therefore subject to misinterpretation. *[It is important to note that all forms of HIV prevention (other than abstinence) are "imperfect" as condoms fail and HIV testing is fallible, however, by endorsing new prevention alternatives resistance was expected.]*

Overall, feedback on the ads was consistently mixed, both very positive and very negative.

Some men were quite excited to see new realistic prevention messages, while others felt the ads might inadvertently promote unsafe sex. The major concern here was regarding unprotected sex between two HIV ‘negative’ men due to the potential for misinformation or deception about a positive serostatus. People were not as concerned about the health risks of two positive men serosorting. The second major issue voiced was that the ads were encouraging segregation between positive and negative gay men.

Although reactions were mixed, our data suggests that the ads were effective. Specifically, the ads caught the attention of target audience members surveyed (whether or not they ‘liked’ them) and caused participants to think more about HIV prevention related issues including testing, disclosure and sexual behavior choices. Furthermore, many men reported that after seeing the ads they were more likely to pursue several HIV prevention related behaviors including seeking an HIV test (if HIV negative), encouraging partners to seek testing and talking to partners about HIV.

The ads’ most successfully appealed to a younger audience of men under 40 who were more likely to have noticed ads, feel they were appropriate and report a positive impact on their behavior. Additionally, men working or volunteering in prevention were slightly more likely to agree with the “HIV testing” and “Status Sorting” ad messages. Finally, HIV negative men were more likely to report talking to partners about HIV status.

It is clear that survey participants noticed the ads and reacted to them. This is an accomplishment in an overly saturated commercial market. The ads made people think more about the increasingly ignored issue of HIV prevention, generating a conversation that continues. Future social marketing efforts can build upon the lessons learned from the DISCLOSE HIV campaign, and continue to encourage HIV prevention by impacting individual and community norms, moving people towards positive behavior change.

APPENDIX A: WEB SURVEY

San Francisco Department of Public Health- HIV Prevention Services (HPS) Disclosure Campaign Web Survey

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. To complete this survey, answer all questions on a page and then click "Next" at the bottom of the page to continue. Do not use the back or forward buttons on your browser.

The survey takes 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Your responses are totally confidential. If you would like to be entered into a drawing to receive a grand prize of \$100 you will be given the option of providing your email address at the end of the survey. Please note your email address will not be attached to your responses.

You will be notified by email by April 30th 2007 if you are a winner. PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR SURVEY BY APRIL 30, 2007, IN ORDER TO BE ENTERED INTO THE GRAND PRIZE DRAWING.

1. How do you identify your gender?

- Male Female [END SURVEY] Transgender (FTM) [END SURVEY]
 Transgender (MTF) [END SURVEY]

2. What is your sexual orientation?

- Gay/Queer
 Bisexual
 Heterosexual [END SURVEY]
 Other [END SURVEY]
 Decline to respond [END SURVEY]

3. Discussing HIV status before sex is common among gay/bisexual men in San Francisco.

- Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. I feel comfortable asking my sex partners what their HIV status is before sex.

- Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. I feel comfortable telling my sex partners what my HIV status is before sex.

- Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. I commonly select my sexual partners based on whether they have the same HIV status as I do.

- Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. I frequently ask sex partners who say they are HIV negative when they last tested negative.

- Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. Asking and telling accurate HIV status to sex partners is an important part of HIV prevention.

- Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. Since November 2006, have you seen any ads in San Francisco about HIV Prevention?

- Yes No[skip to #12] Declined [skip to #12]

10. Which of the following slogans have you seen in San Francisco? (check all that apply)

- Wrap it up!
 HIV Testing, test & tell
 Disclosure is HIV Prevention
 Safe sex is good sex
 Status Sorting is a prevention strategy

11. Which of the following messages have you seen in San Francisco? (check all that apply)

- If you hook up with guys of a different status, use condoms or have lower risk sex
 Every gay man should know his status
 HIV prevention is good for the whole community: have safe sex or no sex
 Wouldn't it be nice if everyone was open about their HIV status?
 Know your status and be honest with your partner

[Questions 12-21 are repeated for each of the three ads. Image of each ad is displayed which questions reference]

12. Have you seen this ad in San Francisco?

- Yes No [skip to #15] Declined [skip to #15]

13. Where in San Francisco did you see this ad? (check all that apply)

- Internet banner ads
 Poster on a bus shelter
 Billboard
 Newspaper
Which newspaper _____
 Underground MUNI stations
Which MUNI station _____
 On outside wall of a building
 TV commercial
 Postcards
 Magnets
 Posters
 Other _____

14. How many separate times have you seen the ad?

- 0 1-2 3-4 5-6 6 or more

15. This ad caught my attention right away.

- Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

16. I don't understand this ad.

- Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

17. The ad MESSAGE is appropriate for gay and bisexual men in San Francisco.

- Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

18. The ad IMAGE is appropriate for gay and bisexual men in San Francisco.

- Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

19. The ad causes me to think more about the issue of HIV prevention.

- Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

20. I am more likely to talk about HIV status with my sex partners as a result of seeing this ad.

- Strongly Agree Agree Not sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

21. Comments about this ad:

[The above section repeats for all three ads]

22. What's your ethnicity? (recruit a mix)

- Black/African American Hispanic/Latino Asian Pacific Islander
 Native American/Alaskan White/Caucasian Other please specify

23. What's your age? (recruit a mix)

24. What is your HIV status? (recruit a mix)

- Positive
 Negative (as of my last test)
 Unknown/never tested
 Decline to Respond

25. Have you ever talked to a partner about your HIV status without promoting from a service provider? (self disclosure)

- Yes
 No (skip to #28)
 Not sure (skip to #28)
 Decline to respond (skip to #28)

26. Has anyone ever counseled you about how to talk to people about your HIV status? (self disclosure)

- Yes

- No
- Not sure
- Decline to respond

27. What agency was this at? (self disclosure)

28. Have you ever asked to have a service provider contact your sex partners regarding a potential exposure to HIV? (Partner services)

- Yes
- No (skip to #30)
- Not sure (skip to #30)
- Decline to respond (skip to #30)

29. What agency was this at? (Partner services)

30. Have you ever had a service provider sit in the room while you told a partner your HIV status? (Dual disclosure)

- Yes
- No (skip to #32)
- Not sure (skip to #32)
- Decline to respond (skip to #32)

31. What agency was this at? (Dual Disclosure)

32. Have you had unprotected anal sex within the past 12 months?

- Yes
- No [skip to #34]
- Declined [skip to #34]

Did you know the HIV status of some of your partner/s before sex?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Did you know the HIV status of all of your partner/s before sex?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Did some of your partner/s know your HIV status before sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Did all of your partner/s know your HIV status before sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Were any of them HIV-negative ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Were any of them HIV-positive ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

33. Have you had unprotected anal sex with more than one partner in the past 12 months?

Yes No [skip to #34] Declined [skip to #34]

Did you know the HIV status of some of your partner/s before sex?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Did you know the HIV status of all of your partner/s before sex?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Did some of your partner/s know your HIV status before sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Did all of your partner/s know your HIV status before sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Were any of them HIV-negative ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Were any of them HIV-positive ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

33. Is there anything else you want to tell us about the posters you viewed in this survey?

35. Please provide your email address if you are interested in being entered into the \$100 drawing. This survey is confidential, and your email address will be separated from your survey when we look at your answers.

36. Please provide your email address if you would be willing to be interviewed further about this campaign.

Thank you for completing the survey! The grand prize drawing for \$100 in cash will be held near the end of April. You will be notified by email if you are a winner.

APPENDIX B: ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW GUIDE

SECTION 1a - Status Sorting Ad

1. Have you seen this image in San Francisco?
2. What was your initial reaction when you saw this ad for the first time?
3. What about the ad captured your attention?
4. What do you think this ad is about?
 - a. What do you think the term Status Sorting means?
 - b. Do you agree with this ad? Why or why not?
5. The intent of this ad was to prompt people to “*Know their HIV status and negotiate sexual practices accordingly*”. How effectively was this message conveyed?

SECTION 1b – HIV Testing Ad

1. Have you seen this image in San Francisco?
2. What was your initial reaction when you saw this ad for the first time?
3. What about the ad captured your attention?
4. What do you think this ad is about?
 - a. Do you agree with the ad? Why or why not?
5. The actual intent of the ad was to prompt people to: “*Know their HIV status.*” How effectively was this message conveyed?

SECTION 1c – Disclosure Ad

1. Have you seen this image in San Francisco?
2. What was your initial reaction when you saw this ad for the first time?
3. What about the ad captured your attention?
4. What do you think this ad is about?
 - a. Do you agree with the ad? Why or why not?
5. The actual intent of the ad was to prompt people to: “*Talk to partners about HIV status before sex.*” How effectively was this message conveyed? Why?

SECTION 2 – All ads at once

1. What effects did these ads have on you in the days/weeks after you saw them?
2. How would you improve the campaign to create the biggest impact?
3. Is there anything else you’d like to tell us about the ads or your opinions of them?

SECTION 3 – Exposure

1. How often do you use the Muni Underground Castro Station?
2. Did you see the Status Sorting Ad there?
3. Have you visited the Disclosure website?
4. Do you read the Bay Area Reporter?
5. Have you seen these ads in the Bay Area Reporter?
6. Did you ever see the Disclosure ad on a Billboard on Market Street?
 - a. Do you remember where specifically?
7. Have you seen the Disclosure ad on the side of a building in South of Market?
 - a. Do you remember where specifically?
8. Have you seen the HIV Testing ad on any posters in bus shelters in San Francisco?

Citations:

- Rhodes SD, Bowie DA, Hergenrather KC, Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health 2003; 57; 68-73
- San Francisco Gay Men's Community Initiative Survey: 2005 (SFGMCI)
http://www.isparksf.com/PDF/2004_survey.pdf
- San Francisco Gay Men's Community Initiative Survey: 2005 (SFGMCI)
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