

Uncovering RSE and Exposing Harms

The Sexy Stuff: Guide for Guys who like Guys

Website: https://www.rainbowbournemouth.co.uk/pdf/sexy_stuff_guys.pdf

Aims: “[T]his guide aims to discuss some of the issues you might be too embarrassed to talk about. It doesn’t matter if you’re not sexually active and reading this guide; it’s putting you in the know, which may come in handy one day.”¹

Age/Audience: understood as being for boys aged 13-19 who “like guys”. This is not actually stated in the document, (though an earlier version stipulated this minimum age on the cover. It is clear though that the document’s authors intend to target boys from 13 years and above:

- there is a reminder about reminder about age of consent;²
- the fact that “Over the Rainbow”, included as one of the document’s supporters, is a support group for gay males from 13-25 years of age;
- that “Young Rainbows” (peer-led LGBT sexual health project) works with 13-25 age group – is another supporting group. Their logo is shown alongside the NHS etc on the last page. The Young Rainbow Project is stated as for guys in and around the Dorset area.³

Production: Sponsored by the National Lottery & supported by the NHS, Terence Higgins Trust (charity) & Over the Rainbow.⁴

Year of publication: 2008 – appears to still be in use.

Main concerns & highlights:

1. Section on use of lube and condom checklist.⁵
2. Among the things highlighted as being a problem for “safer sex” are: religion and parents.⁶
3. “Tongues and Bums”.⁷
4. Rimming.⁸
5. “Something to get anal about...”⁹
6. Top, Bottom & Versatile.¹⁰

Harmful Messages

Scientific facts from some of the highest health authorities are clear that anal sex is a medically risky activity.¹¹ Oral-anal contact is also a medically risky activity.¹² Public health messages directed at children already include the dangers of obesity,

Uncovering RSE and Exposing Harms

smoking and drugs. Promoting anal sex to children should, in line with all other medically harmful practices, be treated as a safeguarding issue with public health implications.

Anal penetration for the receptive person is especially hazardous physically, making the anus an open channel to infection and tissue damage.¹³ The more frequent the penetration, the greater the risks of long-term harm. As is widely accepted, HIV transmission is more easily enabled through anal sex.¹⁴

References

¹ p. 4.

² p. 5.

³ p. 31

⁴ Over the Rainbow is a part social, part support group for young people aged 13-25 years who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Trans, questioning or unsure of their sexuality or gender identity. <https://www.sthelensgateway.info/organisations/over-the-rainbow/>

⁵ p. 8.

⁶ pp 10-11.

⁷ pp. 12-13.

⁸ p. 14.

⁹ p. 15.

¹⁰ pp. 16-17.

¹¹ According to the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), anal sex “carries the highest risk of transmitting HIV if either partner is HIV-positive.” For male and female risks of contracting HIV: “The vast majority of men who get HIV get it through anal sex. However, anal sex is also one of the ways women can get HIV.” The receptive partner in anal sex is at the most risk of HIV: “Receptive anal sex is much riskier for getting HIV. The bottom partner is 13 times more likely to get infected than the top...Using condoms or medicines to protect against transmission can decrease this risk.” Apart from HIV, “a person can get other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) like chlamydia and gonorrhoea from anal sex without condoms. Even if a condom is used, some STDs can still be transmitted through skin-to-skin contact (like syphilis or herpes). One can also get hepatitis A, B, and C; parasites like *Giardia* and intestinal amoebas; and bacteria like *Shigella*, *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, and *E. coli* from anal sex without a condom because they’re transmitted through feces.” <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/analsex.html> (Accessed 21 September 2020).

The American Cancer Society, “Receptive anal sex also increases the risk of anal cancer in both men and women. Because of this, men who have sex with men have a high risk of this cancer.” <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/anal-cancer/causes-risks-prevention/risk-factors.html> (Accessed 21 September 2020).

The NHS advises that “Penetrative anal sex has a higher risk of spreading STIs than many other types of sexual activity.” It explains: “This is because the lining of the anus is thin and can be easily

Uncovering RSE and Exposing Harms

damaged, which makes it more vulnerable to infection.” The STIs listed by the NHS that can be passed on through anal sex are: chlamydia, genital herpes, genital warts, gonorrhoea, hepatitis B, HIV and syphilis. <https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/sexual-health/does-anal-sex-have-any-health-risks/> (Accessed 21 September 2020)

¹² The NHS states that: “Some infections caused by bacteria or viruses can be passed on through oral-anal sex, such as hepatitis or E. coli.” It is further explained that: “It’s also possible to pass on an STI by inserting a finger into someone’s anus.” <https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/sexual-health/does-anal-sex-have-any-health-risks/> (Accessed 21 September 2020).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.