

Structural Interventions: Examples from the Field

Dan Wohlfeiler

CA STD Control Branch

September 11, 2008

Our success and our challenge

- We've been very successful at taking people away from their environments and reducing their risk.
- Too often, however, we return people back to environments which don't support our interventions.
- We need to change the environments as well.

Structural interventions

- Change political, physical, environmental structure to reduce transmission
- Self-sustaining without ongoing public health resources
- Complement our behavioral interventions
 - Smoking bans, taxes
 - Banks in freeway curves

The range of interventions

Individual

Dyad

Group

Community

Structural interventions

The first problem with structural interventions



“Structural interventions may be too broad a concept. They encompass everything from a bathhouse regulation to undoing racism.”

Jim Curran, 1997

The second problem with structural interventions



“...the benefits may not be seen within the same generation in which they are implemented.”

Kevin Fenton, 2005

The third problem with structural interventions

They make a lot of people really mad.

The problems we hoped to *help* solve with the Venues Project

- STD/HIV infections correlated with meeting partners in bathhouses/internet
- Frustration from some STD/HIV directors
 - Lack of clarity regarding public health's role
 - Lack of data on what to do
- Lack of coordinated approach
 - Public health efforts undercut each other across jurisdictions
 - Venues face multiple and contradictory requests

The range of interventions

Individual

Dyad

Group

Community

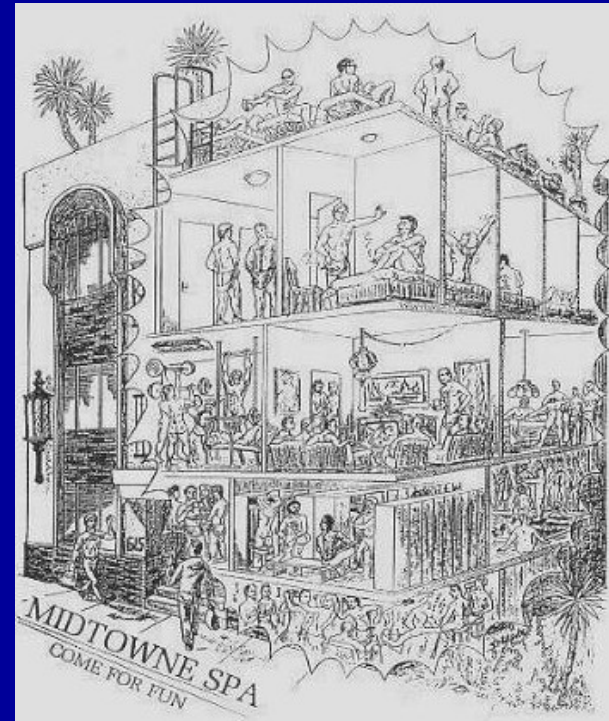
Network level interventions

Structural interventions

Bathhouses and Sex Clubs (CSV's)

Bathhouses and sex clubs – also known as commercial sex venues - provide a space for men to meet for sex.

They charge admission and/or membership fee for entry.



Eros

CSVs may have:

- Gyms
- Private rooms
- Pools
- Jacuzzis
- Saunas
- Steam rooms
- Showers

Internet Sites

- Ways of meeting people online include:

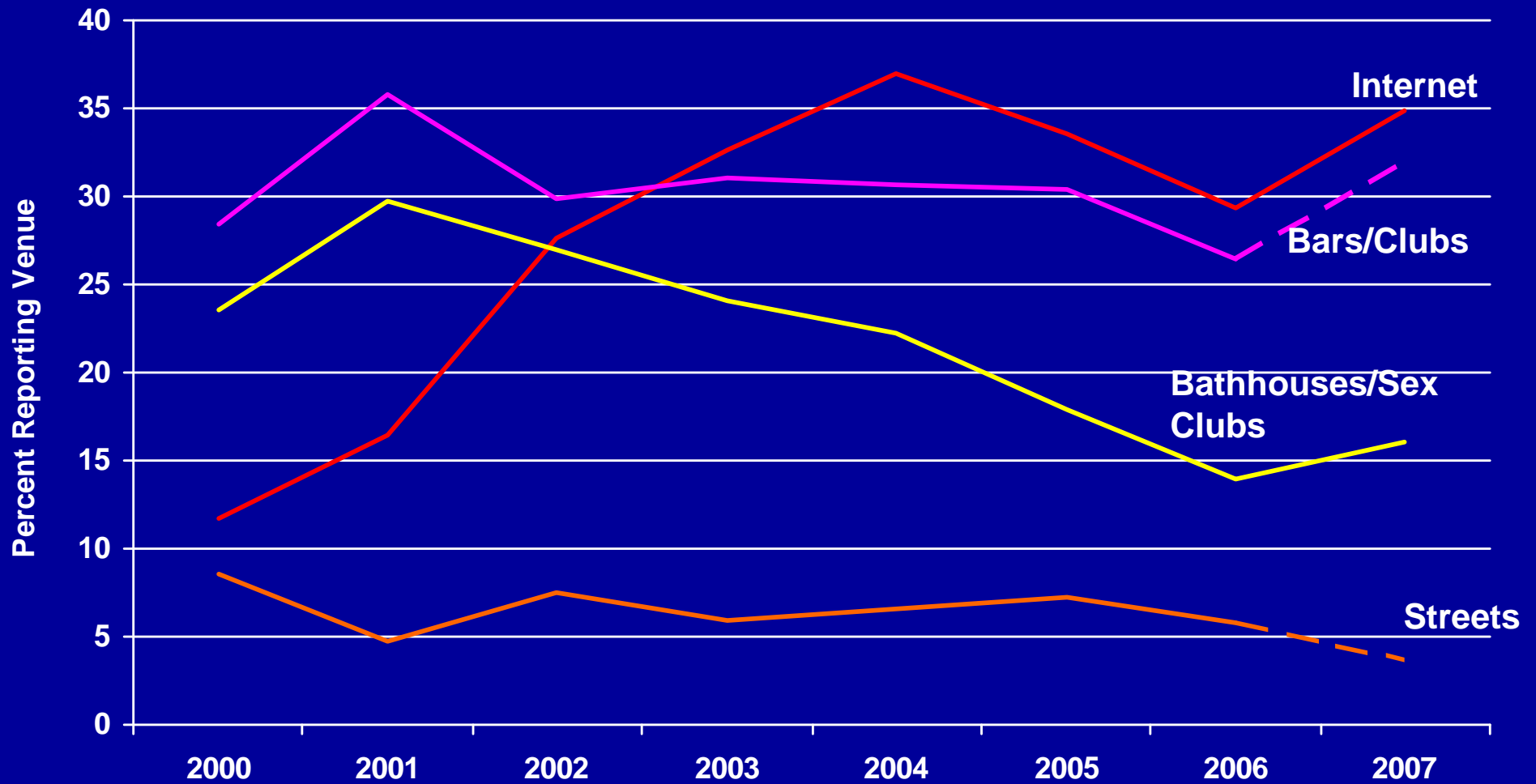
Creating and searching profiles on a dating and hook-up sites (Gay.com, Bareback.com, Manhunt.net)

Posting a personal ad (Craigslist.org, Yahoo personals, Match.com)

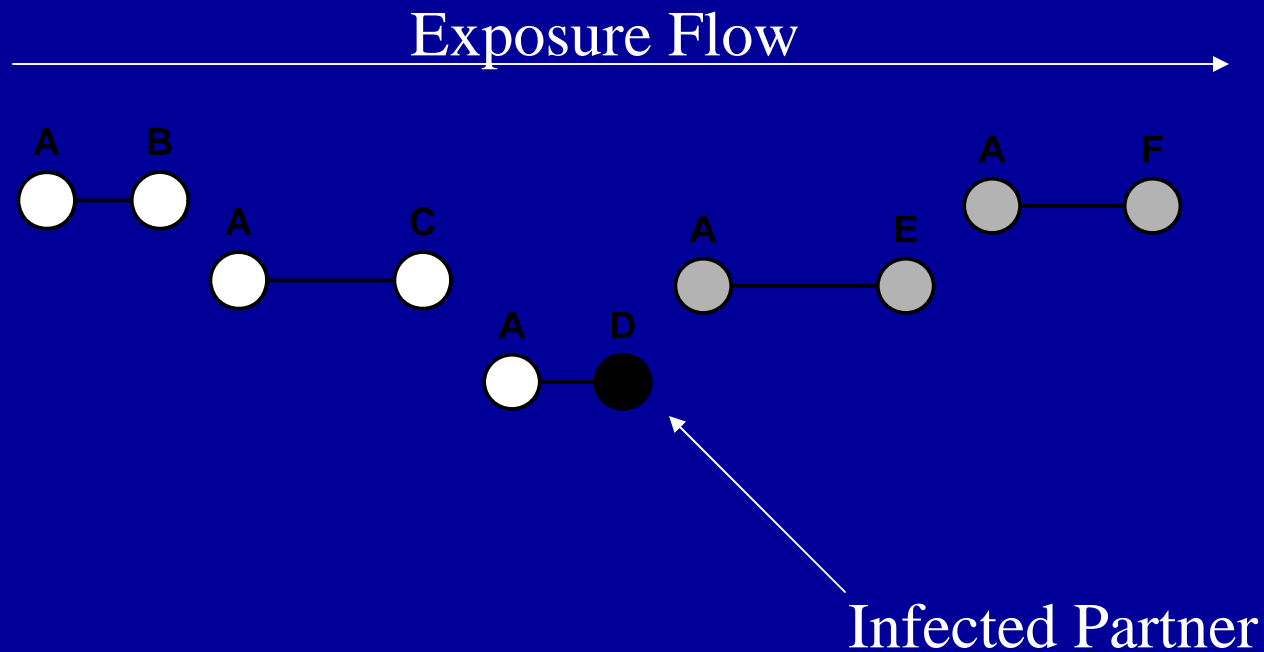
Messaging people on networking sites (Friendster.com, Myspace.com)



Reported venues used to meet sex partners, interviewed MSM P&S syphilis cases, California 2000-2007

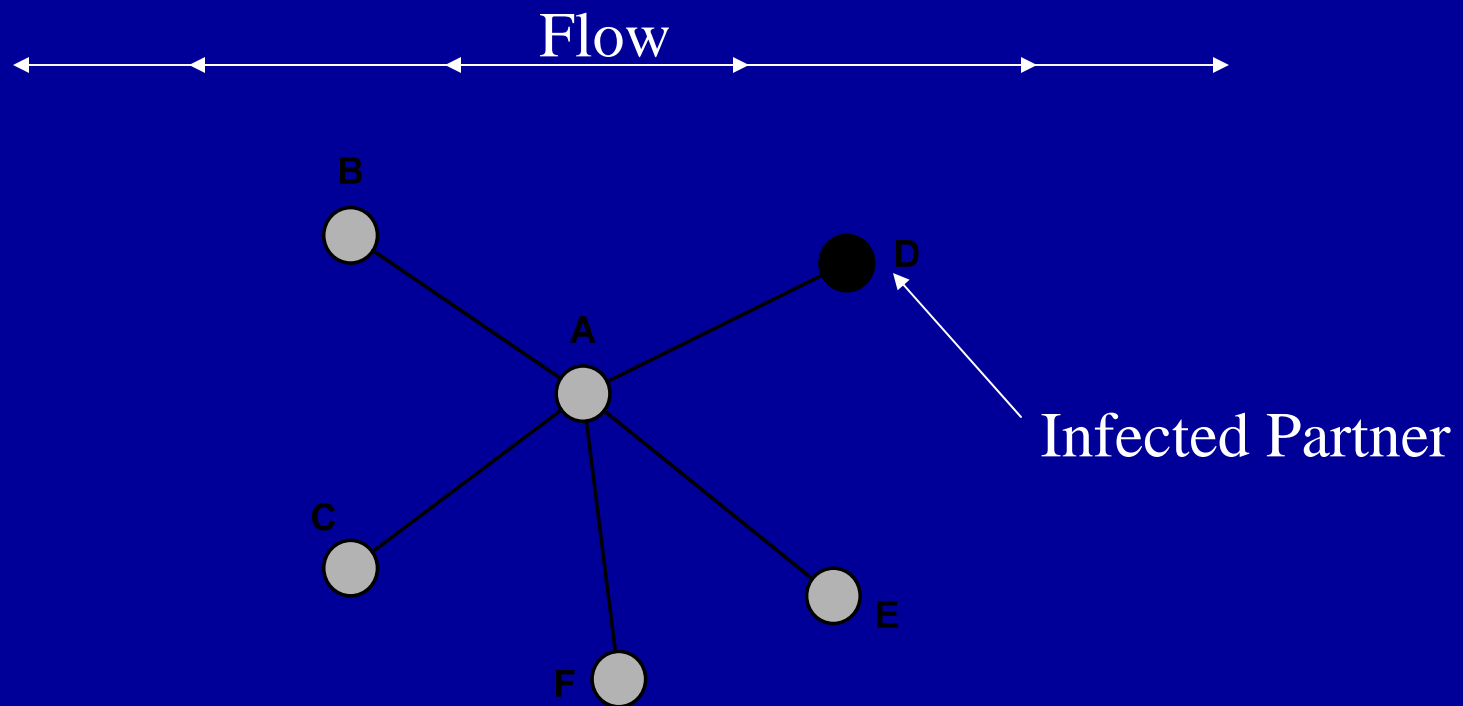


Serial Monogamy



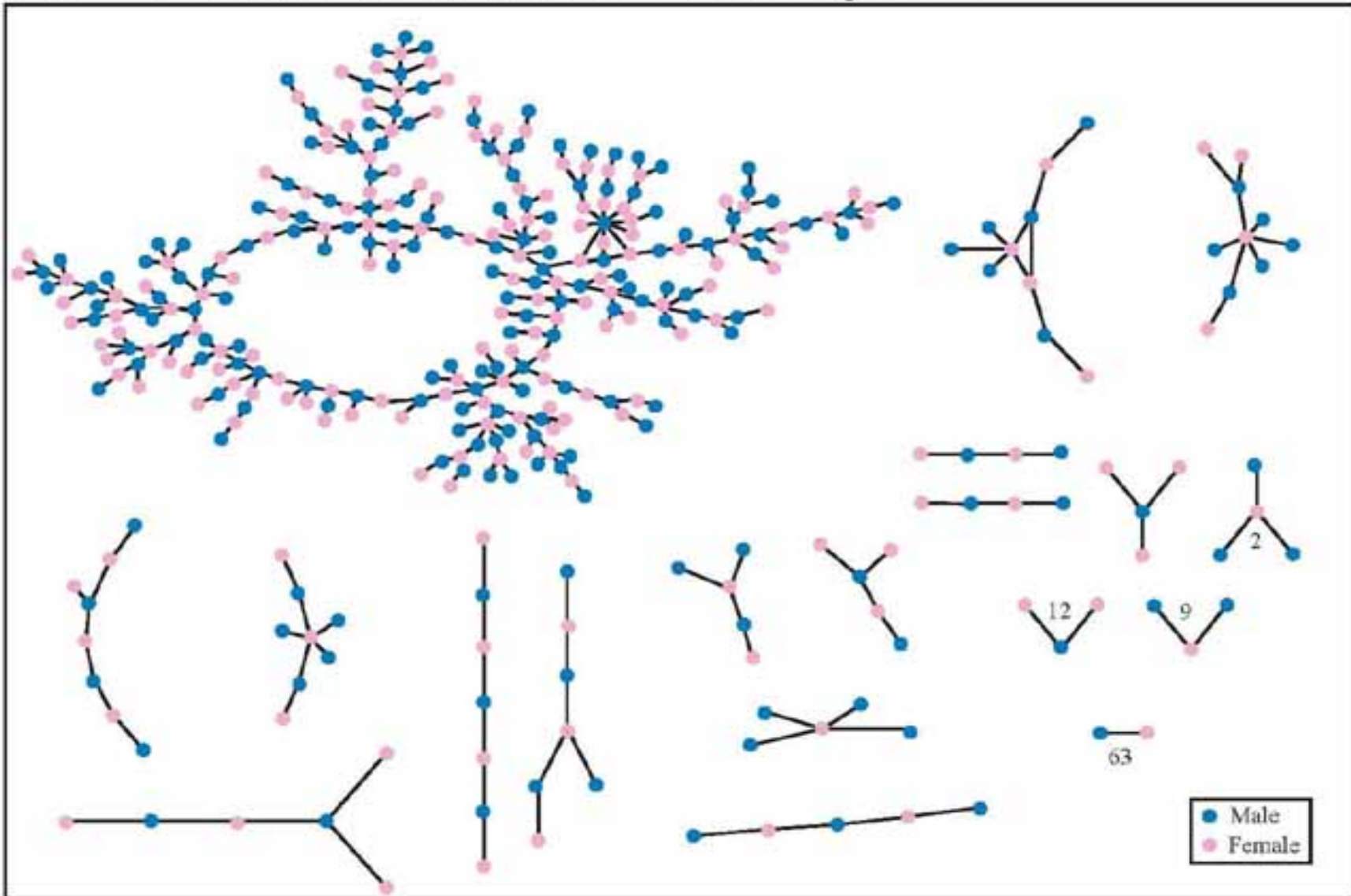
After A is exposed to infected partner D,
three are potentially infected.

Concurrency



After A is exposed to infected partner D, five are potentially infected. Concurrency facilitates more transmission than serial monogamy.

The Structure of Romantic and Sexual Relations at "Jefferson High School"

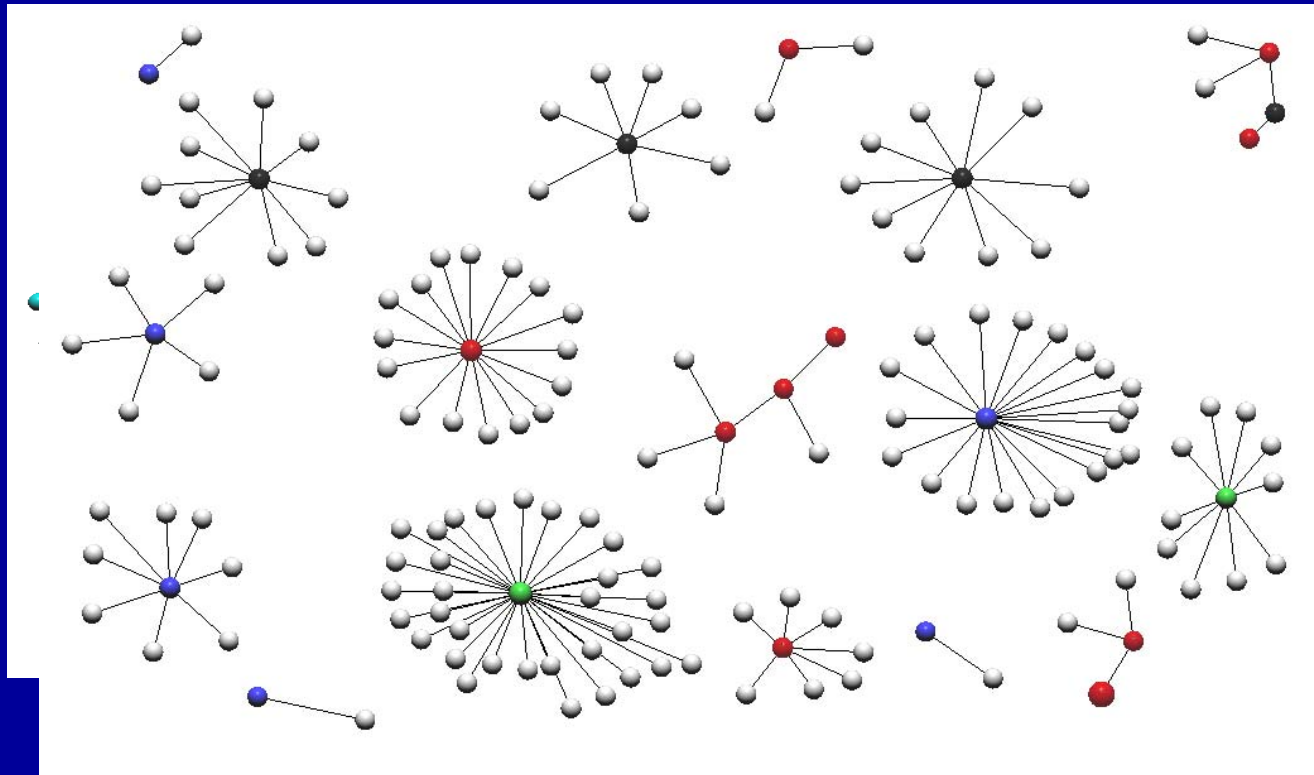


Each circle represents a student and lines connecting students represent romantic relations occurring within the 6 months preceding the interview. Numbers under the figure count the number of times that pattern was observed (i.e. we found 63 pairs unconnected to anyone else).

Figure courtesy of the University of Chicago Press. From the *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 100, No. 1. "Chains of affection: The structure of adolescent romantic and sexual networks," Bearman PS, Moody J, Stovel K.

Maximize Disruption on Internet

- Remove/treat ONLY three actors
 - Network=159 members (50% drop)—17 unconnected clusters



Venues Project Assessment

- HDs reported lack of evidence, but continued outreach
- Nearly all supported the baths. None called for shutting down.
- Spending varied widely (\$20 to \$196,000)
- Sometimes the private sector has more power (i.e., one charged HD's outreach workers admission)
- Politics and lack of a constituency for change hampered development of coherent policies.

1. Don't accept network structure as a given.

We've used networks to:

- Diffuse messages and change norms
- To find infected individuals

We can do more.

2. Focus on institutions which facilitate partner mixing or disrupt ecologies or communities (and, in particular, network structure)

Facilitate Partner mixing

- Gay men: Baths, internet, circuit parties

Disrupt ecologies or communities

- Criminal justice system

And low-risk men in another.

Pages
Contact
Guidelines



[TOUR](#)

[THE GAY
AGENDAS](#)

[LOGIN](#)

[JOIN](#)

[OUR SUPPORTERS](#)

slip it on

FREE



Photo by Kent Taylor Ragging Stallion Studios

[JOIN OUR MAILING LIST](#)

[TERMS & CONDITIONS](#)

[WHO WE ARE](#)

[FAQ'S & HELP](#)

THIS SITE IS INTENDED FOR ADULTS ONLY.

YOU MUST BE OVER 18 TO ENTER.

SafeSexCity.com

© 2003 Scarlet Letter Services. Site design by LAXTRA, Inc.

Done Internet

Start | Address <http://www.google.com/> Go 1:26

Contac... Microsoft O... Re: F... Trainin... Struc l... Networ... Google... Docum... Networ... Safe ... Desktop »

EROS

BAREBACK

ZERO TOLERANCE

4. Help individuals make more informed choices

www.manhunt.net

↓ The Flavor: what I'm into

- | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> JO | <input type="checkbox"/> Sucking | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fucking | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 on 1 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Group Sex | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Voyeurism |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exhibition | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leather | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Toys | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Role Playing | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B&D | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S&M |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pig Play | <input type="checkbox"/> WS | <input type="checkbox"/> FF | <input type="checkbox"/> Nipple Play | <input type="checkbox"/> Rimming | <input type="checkbox"/> Fuck Buddy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LTR | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Dating | <input type="checkbox"/> Kissing | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Safe Only | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no PNP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feet/Socks | | | | | |

↓ The Time: when I want it

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> Ask Me | <input type="radio"/> Right Now! | <input type="radio"/> Later Today | <input type="radio"/> Lunch Time | <input type="radio"/> After Work |
| <input type="radio"/> Weekends | <input type="radio"/> Weekdays | <input type="radio"/> Group | <input type="radio"/> Away | <input type="radio"/> Not Looking |

↓ The Position: how I like it

- | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Ask Me | <input type="radio"/> Top | <input type="radio"/> Bottom | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Versatile | <input type="radio"/> Into Oral Only |
| <input type="radio"/> Into JO Only | <input type="radio"/> Top/Vers. | <input type="radio"/> Bottom/Vers. | | |

5. Maintain basic respect for human rights.

People will have the kind of sex they want.

We need to make our peace with the fact that we can't change them enough.

If they're going to have unprotected sex, we can help it happen in a network which will facilitate less transmission.

STD/HIV is unique in public health

“To establish effective internet interventions, there must be a balance between the legitimate commercial interests of the venues and the urgent public health concerns of the community.”

----- letter from state AIDS directors and STD directors to CDC, 6/26/2008

Consumer input: help break the public health/private sector conflict

- “An outreach worker? Talk about a buzz kill. Like going to a fancy dinner party and having to sit next to a starving child.”
- More amenable to sorting by risk than by HIV status
- There are a number of interventions which give gay men autonomy AND can affect networks
 - Help sort by risk
 - Links to testing, let people select frequency of reminders

Conclusions and implications

- Most gay men are safe most of the time and businesses can cater to them
- Surveillance efforts should track specific venues where new cases meet partners
- There are a number of interventions which may help reduce transmission without people having to participate in an HIV/STD educational session

Conclusions and Implications (2)

- Understanding business leaders' motivations is important for developing partnerships
- Being aware of legal options is a critical component of exercising public health leadership
- Getting consumer input will hopefully be very useful.
- Status quo may be very durable but is unlikely to be optimal