

## MEDIA RELEASE: New Campaign Encourages Reality Check

For immediate release, 19 August 2009

### The AIDS Council of South Australia Inc.

Telephone: (08) 8334 1611

Facsimile: (08) 8363 1046

Web: <http://www.acsa.org.au>

Contact: Shane Dinnison, Executive Director



---

## New campaign encourages reality check

ACSA, The AIDS Council of SA and AFAO, The Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations launched a series of posters and a new resource today, as part of a new campaign focusing on risk taking by gay men who have adopted 'serosorting' as a strategy to prevent HIV transmission. The campaign addresses issues such as the desire not to use condoms; HIV testing; assumptions about HIV serostatus; disclosure; negotiation of condom use; trust; seroconversion illness symptoms and primary infection.

'Serosorting' is defined as restricting unprotected sex to partners with the same HIV status. It is a deliberate choice of partners and practices based on HIV status rather than universal precautions such as the use of condoms.

The Gay Community Periodic Survey, the social research survey about Adelaide gay men's sexual lives, indicates that from 2001-2007, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of HIV-negative gay men who have casual partners and fuck without a condom. The REAL TIME booklet draws upon motivational interviewing techniques and is designed to assist gay men to resolve conflicts between the perceived benefits and costs of unsafe sex. The workbook style of the booklet will enable men to reflect on past and present actions, and help identify and reduce patterns of behaviour that cause anxiety or stress.

*"Reducing risks can reduce stress and worry and increase the enjoyment of sex. For HIV-negative men this means not having to worrying about contracting HIV during sex. For HIV-positive men this means not having to worry about exposing their sex partners to the virus,"* said Graham Brown, President of AFAO. *"It is about sharing the responsibility to increase the enjoyment from sex without increasing the worry."*

The series of three posters focuses on the accuracy of knowledge about their own and their partner's HIV status, explicit verbal communication and negotiation skills, the greater risk of HIV transmission during primary HIV infection – focusing on recognition of symptoms of seroconversion illness and the 'window period'.



The AIDS Council of South Australia Inc.

Our vision is **A FUTURE FREE OF HIV**

## MEDIA RELEASE: New Campaign Encourages Reality Check

For immediate release, 19 August 2009

### The AIDS Council of South Australia Inc.

Telephone: (08) 8334 1611

Facsimile: (08) 8363 1046

Web: <http://www.acsa.org.au>

Contact: Shane Dinnison, Executive Director



---

Serosorting may in fact be much more risky than previously thought. Recent analysis from Australian scientists have shown that *up to one-third* of new HIV infections come from men who don't even know they are HIV positive. This is because many of them have been recently infected themselves. Although a seroconversion illness occurs in up to 80% of cases, the severity of the symptoms varies so they may not be noticed or not attributed to HIV infection.

*"This campaign is important because serosorting is not always accurate. Men who believe they are only choosing partners who are the same HIV status as themselves may in fact be increasing rather than decreasing the risk of HIV transmission,"* said Shane Dinnison, Executive Director the AIDS Council of SA . *"If you don't know your partners status, always use a condom and lube".*

For copies of the posters and booklet, contact Gay Mens Health at ACSA on 83341611, or down load a copy at <http://www.acsa.org.au/resources.html>

For media enquires contact Shane Dinnison, Executive Director, ACSA 0423159699

-END-



The AIDS Council of South Australia Inc.  
Our vision is **A FUTURE FREE OF HIV**