Party Favors

Harm reduction ads highlight the link between partying and HIV.

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Imagine you're a guy at a house party surrounded by sexy women. A voice-over describes the unfolding action. "You passed the blunt. You ordered the food. You undid her top…." Then comes the tag line: "So you can use a condom. After party. Hit it right."

That's one of four new 60-second ads released this fall as part of the "After Party" online campaign from New York City–based Harm Reduction Coalition. (Check them out on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr.) In addition to marijuana, the spots focus on cocaine, alcohol and ecstasy. All four ads present upbeat, MTV-style scenarios and address the link between partying and the ensuing risky behavior that can lead to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

"We wanted to do something that was fun, youthful, sexy—but didn't say you shouldn't be drinking, you shouldn't be partying, you shouldn't be having fun. But flip the message around and say you could have fun and remember to use a condom at the same time," says Daniel Raymond, policy director at Harm Reduction Coalition.

Two of the videos are geared toward men who have sex with men (MSM)—though in a clever directorial twist, since the camera acts as the eyes of the viewer, it's not a stretch for ladies to imagine themselves as the ones scoring the studly dates.

"After Party" further stands out because it highlights a risk factor many prevention campaigns overlook: alcohol.

"When we talk about substance abuse, we often think about drug injection," Raymond says. "But really alcohol is way more common in that when you hear stories about people talking about sexual decision making, alcohol is often in the mix."

Having fun and remaining safe? Party on!

Go to harmreduction.org for more information.

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