I’m Bringing Sexy Back

The 2023 Biomedical HIV Prevention Summit is April 11-12 in Las Vegas and we are leaning into desire, sex and responsibility.

January 19, 2023 By Paul Kawata

If you haven’t noticed, I love being gay. For me, it’s a gift from my creator. I appreciate and celebrate my inability to fit into the mainstream. My innate understanding of fashion, color, and musicals did not come from my birth family. It was my chosen family who helped reveal those gifts. Core to my queerness is the desire for men. The 2023 Biomedical HIV Prevention Summit is April 11-12 in Las Vegas and we are leaning into desire, sex, and responsibility to better understand how to reach communities highly impacted by HIV. Per a recent New York Times article, we want to bring sexy back to fight HIV.

There is an age restriction on the web site and no federal support will be requested because we don’t want to get anyone into trouble. To end the HIV epidemic, our work needs to reach sexually active adults. The lack of sex positive approaches means HIV prevention misses many of the communities we need to reach. PrEP and U=U must speak to leather, kink, and cos play communities. To be part of the sexual networks that include swingers, sex workers, and the apps. Oh my.

Discussions about sex must also highlight consent, responsibility, and disease prevention. The Summit is during STI Awareness Week. According to the CDC, “STI Awareness Week, observed the second full week in April, provides an opportunity to raise awareness about STIs and how they impact our lives; reduce STI-related stigma, fear, and discrimination; and ensure people have the tools and knowledge to prevent, test for, and treat STIs.

CDC estimates that about 20 percent of the U.S. population – approximately one in five people in the U.S. – had an STI on any given day in 2018, and STIs acquired that year cost the American health care system nearly $16 billion in health care costs alone.”

As part of our 2023 love letter to Black Women, the Summit will host a conversation between Black Women on sex and intimate partner violence (IPV). According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, “IPV can and does occur among all groups, some groups face higher rates of violence. 57% of multi-Racial women, 48% of American Indian/Alaska Native, and 45% of Black Women report facing IPV in their lifetimes (and those shares are likely to be under reported due to a variety of factors). Social class, LGBTQ identification, and disability status are also associated with higher rates of IPV. Among HIV positive women, IPV is even more prevalent, reported by 55% of women living with HIV. In addition to the traumatic impact IPV has on all women, the experience of

trauma and violence is also associated with poor treatment outcomes and higher transmission risk among HIV positive women." The Summit is going to address sex in a responsible way that speaks to pleasure, consent, responsibility, and HIV prevention.

Critical Summit Deadlines:

Registration deadline March 13th

Scholarship deadline is Feb 13th

PrEPpy Awards deadline is March 1st

Abstracts deadline is Feb 6th

Exhibitor deadline is March 6th

You need a paid registration to make a hotel reservation. Your confirmation email will include a link to make a reservation at the conference hotel. To learn how to submit an abstract, register online to join us on Jan 19th at 1 PM (Eastern)/10 AM (Pacific) for a webinar.

There will be explicit discussions about sex, so do not attend if this makes you uncomfortable. Sex and sexuality are complex issues that are missing in too many of our current efforts to get people on PrEP and people living with HIV on treatment with an undetectable viral load. Thank you, Gilead, for being the Presenting Sponsor.

Yours in the Struggle,

Paul Kawata

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