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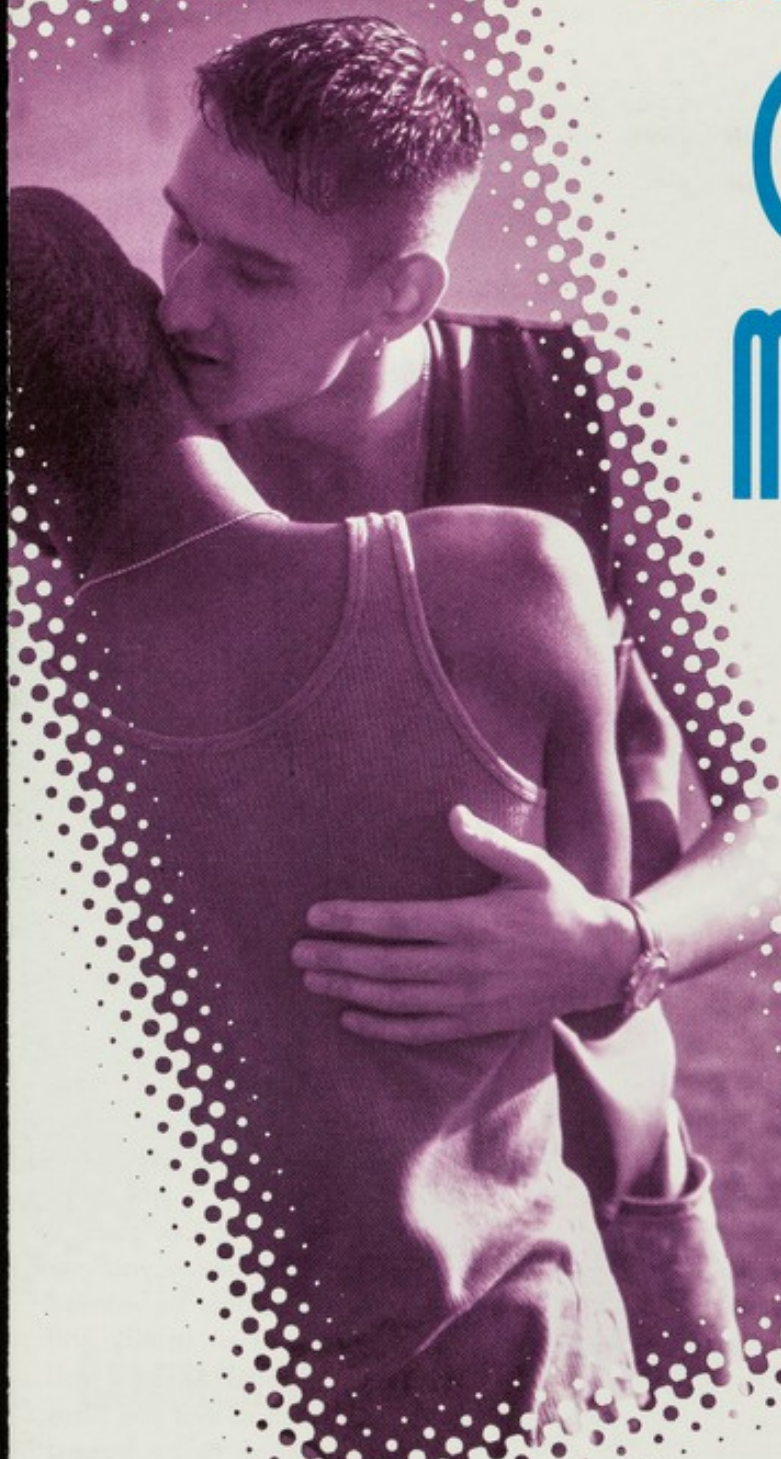
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YOUNG GAY MEN



A GUIDE TO COMING OUT

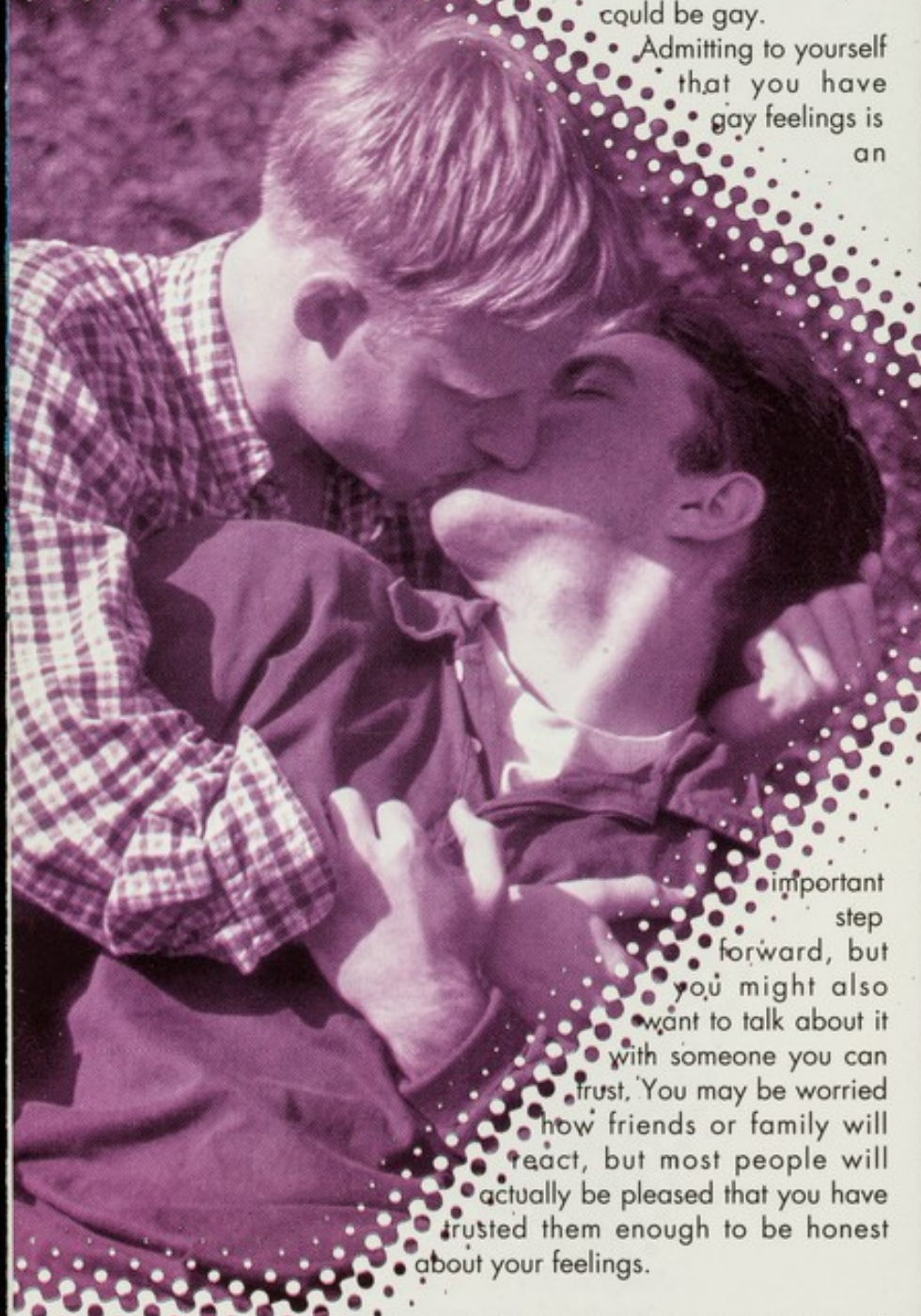
The Terrence Higgins Trust

If you're reading this leaflet it's probably because you are attracted to other men. You may be wondering what you can do about it and who you can talk to.

You might be thinking that you're the only one who feels this way, but you're not. There are millions of gay people out there and most started out feeling just like you.

The first thing you may need to do is to accept that you could be gay.

Admitting to yourself that you have gay feelings is an



important step forward, but you might also want to talk about it with someone you can trust. You may be worried how friends or family will react, but most people will actually be pleased that you have trusted them enough to be honest about your feelings.

Of course it is possible that some people will react badly, so you might want to phone your local Lesbian and Gay Switchboard for a chat beforehand. You can get the number of your nearest one from the phone book, or you could try one of those listed at the back of this leaflet.

MEETING PEOPLE

At some point you will want to meet other gay men, whether it be to make friends, find a boyfriend or just to have sex.

One way is to join a gay youth or social group. This is a good way to make new friend and meet people who will be in a similar position to you and may understand the way you feel.

Another way of meeting people is to go to gay pubs or clubs, which is called going out on the scene. Most larger towns or cities have gay bars, night-clubs or cafes. Even some smaller towns may have a gay bar.

You might find the idea of going into a gay bar for the first time a bit intimidating, but it can also be exciting and fun. Once you have tried it you will probably be surprised at how comfortable you feel being with other gay people.

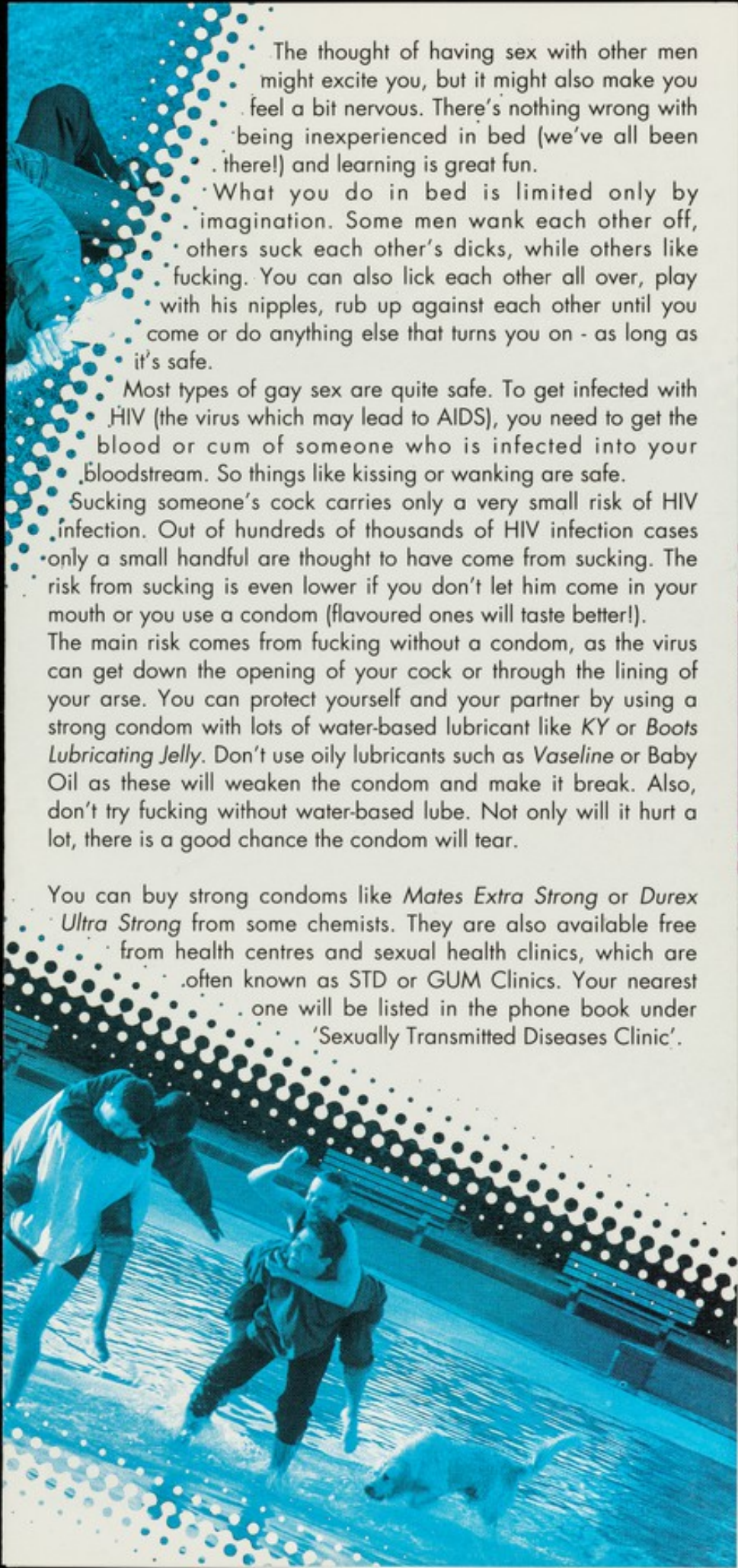
If you go to a gay pub or club, you may be worried about what to do if you get approached by someone you don't fancy. Some people will only want to be friendly, while others may also want sex. Lots of people will only be out to make friends. Others may want sex. If you want to have sex then that's fine. If not then just politely say so. No-one will think any less of you for that.

You can get information about any social groups or gay pubs in your area from your local Lesbian and Gay Switchboard. Local listing magazines often have information on gay groups and places. So does *Gay Times* which you may be able to get in your local newsagent or library.

SEX

Sooner or later you're going to meet someone you want to go to bed with and hopefully he'll feel the same way about you. What you do in bed is entirely up to you and it's much more fun experimenting than reading about it in a leaflet. Saying that, there are a few things you might want to know and some you need to know.





The thought of having sex with other men might excite you, but it might also make you feel a bit nervous. There's nothing wrong with being inexperienced in bed (we've all been there!) and learning is great fun.

What you do in bed is limited only by imagination. Some men wank each other off, others suck each other's dicks, while others like fucking. You can also lick each other all over, play with his nipples, rub up against each other until you come or do anything else that turns you on - as long as it's safe.

Most types of gay sex are quite safe. To get infected with HIV (the virus which may lead to AIDS), you need to get the blood or cum of someone who is infected into your bloodstream. So things like kissing or wanking are safe.

Sucking someone's cock carries only a very small risk of HIV infection. Out of hundreds of thousands of HIV infection cases only a small handful are thought to have come from sucking. The risk from sucking is even lower if you don't let him come in your mouth or you use a condom (flavoured ones will taste better!).

The main risk comes from fucking without a condom, as the virus can get down the opening of your cock or through the lining of your arse. You can protect yourself and your partner by using a strong condom with lots of water-based lubricant like KY or Boots Lubricating Jelly. Don't use oily lubricants such as Vaseline or Baby Oil as these will weaken the condom and make it break. Also, don't try fucking without water-based lube. Not only will it hurt a lot, there is a good chance the condom will tear.

You can buy strong condoms like *Mates Extra Strong* or *Durex Ultra Strong* from some chemists. They are also available free from health centres and sexual health clinics, which are often known as STD or GUM Clinics. Your nearest one will be listed in the phone book under 'Sexually Transmitted Diseases Clinic'.

Having all types of sex also carries the risk of catching Hepatitis B, which can be caught more easily than HIV. You can get a jab at your local STD/GUM Clinic to protect yourself against this.

The best way to make sure that you have the safer sex you want is to talk about it with your partner, whether he is a one night stand or a serious boyfriend. Some people find talking



about sex a real turn on. It also means that you can be relaxed, knowing that what you will be doing will not only be fun, it will also be safe.

To find out more about safer things to do in bed read *Safer Sex for Gay Men* which you can get from The Terrence Higgins Trust.

RELATIONSHIPS

It is important to continue having safer sex even after you meet someone you want to start a relationship with. He may be the man of your dreams, but that's no guarantee he's always had safer sex in the past.

A lot of gay men have become infected with HIV by having sex with their regular boyfriend and not using condoms. Clearly there are many different (and safer) ways of showing someone you love

them than by not using condoms. You may also find it hard to get back into the habit of using condoms with anyone in the future.

These are just some of the issues you may be worried about and some of the things you've got to look forward to. By exploring your feelings, talking about them, seeking support from friends and meeting new people you'll discover what it's like to be gay in the '90s - more accepted than before and more common than you think. Soon you will become happier and more comfortable with who you are.

In Britain the law says you should not have sex with another man until you are 18. The age for straight people is 16. Clearly this is wrong. However the law cannot stop you being gay or having feelings for other men.

Being gay can be great, especially when you're young. If you are gay don't waste your life wishing you were someone else. Be proud of what you are. Go out and meet new friends and whatever you do, do it safely.



The Terrence Higgins Trust

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Helpline

0171 242 1010 12 to 10pm daily

National AIDS Helpline (Free)

0800 567 123 open 24 hours

London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard

0171 837 7324 open 24 hours

Black Lesbian and Gay Project - Helpline

0171 837 5364 Thursday 7-10pm

Bristol Lesbian and Gay Switchboard

0117 942 5927 Mon-Sat 7.30-10.30pm Sun 2-5pm

Manchester Gay Switchboard

0161 236 6205 4-10pm daily

Gay Youthline Sat 12-4pm

Strathclyde Lesbian and Gay Switchboard

0141 221 8372 7-10pm daily

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