

REPORT ON THE COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH  
CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP

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Kelowna, BC, March 2002

Out of the bushes...  
and into the beds

RESEARCH BY DESIGN

# Community Based Research

## Capacity Building Workshop

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Facilitated by Theresa Healy PhD  
A Project of:



Funded By



The views expressed herein are solely those of the authors  
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“Until lions have their own historians, tales of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.”

*African proverb*

History in the Making  
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## WHY COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH

*The leadership and involvement of community members in every stage of a research project greatly improves the process, the data, and the outcomes.*

**T**he issue of men having sex with other men in clandestine, anonymous and transient settings presents a variety of issues and problems for health care providers and community educators. Impervious to the usual educational and supportive outreach of safer sex, resisting labels and identification, the rise of HIV positive status among men who have sex with other men, and their partners, indicates that practice of MSM requires action and responses beyond the innovative and effective outreach programs of “regular” HIV outreach.

Men who are part of the MSM community are particularly vulnerable and isolated. For whatever reasons they prefer to remain anonymous, to keep their same sex activities to safe, hidden edges of their lives. Identifying their sexual practices in ways that may disguise or obscure the levels of risk they are engaging, risking loss of status, employment relationships and family may be perceived as real risks. Attempts to undertake research or to provide services, support or education within the geographical locations men have found to explore this part of their sexuality may well be perceived as intrusive and drive the men to other, deeper locations putting them at even more risk. The homosexual community may also reject men who are “fence sitters” reaping the benefits of a heterosexual public lifestyle and the pleasures of same sex activities in private. Some men who pursue MSM may also be homosexual men in long term-committed relationships. All these factors become barriers to the desire to research and improve services and supports.

Thus, the challenges facing the group at the onset of this workshop seemed overwhelming and insurmountable. How would it be possible to undertake respectful and effective research that did not harm or put at further risk an

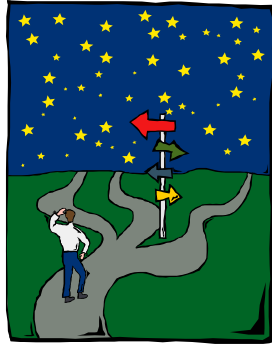
already vulnerable group and at the same time gather meaningful and accurate information? It is a tribute to the skills, compassion of those present, and a testament to the power of a process designed to share those skills, that the results of this workshop not only meet the objectives of developing community capacity but developed a comprehensive and possible research design for a highly sensitive subject. Using the highly complex and seemingly impossible task of researching MSM, the workshop participants acquired an understanding of community based research, its potential for ethical and community led action and positive change in the community.

This report was intended to be a summary report of the workshop. This objective has expanded due to the richness and generosity of the participants. What is presented here is not only a summary report but also a “HOW TO” manual. The summary report presents the material presented to, and the material generated by, the workshop, including the vision, the research design and action plan, and the evaluative measures. Further, the report includes the first data set collected through the pilot test of the research design. As a manual, the report covers each section of the workshop in three themes: the why (or theory) of the section. The how (or methods) used in each section and the results (or findings) of the section.

As this report demonstrates, the foundations have been laid for a community based research team who feel ready and committed to engage on a sensitive but imperative research topic in their region, the needs of MSM in the Okanagan Valley.

There is no such thing as a problem only a challenge we haven't met yet.  
*Participant comment*

## INTRODUCTION



### **OVERVIEW**

This report presents the workshop content, the research plan, and an initial data set collected by participants at the Community Based Research Capacity Building Workshop of March 8-10, 2002. These documents are presented here as a draft: open to additions, corrections, revisions, and development by the participants as needed. The report presents the words, ideas and visions of those at the conference – the facilitator/author has striven to minimize her own voice in preference to the clarity and power of the participants' own words.

In the course of the workshop we articulated the following slogan, mission and goals

### **SLOGAN**

“Out of the bushes and into the bed”

### **MISSION**

Our mission is to redress the social, cultural and community factors that isolate MSM and to reduce their risks and the risks of those who love them in the Interior Health Region

### **GOALS**

We will achieve this by:

- : Heightening community awareness and acceptance
- : Increasing safety and visibility of same sex activities
- : Increasing access to services resources and support

The joy of community-based research (CBR) is also its greatest challenge: working with people to develop mutually acceptable and rewarding processes and tools. With CBR we can uncover the richness of our lives and address the challenges we face with solutions we can create collectively. As mentioned in the backgrounder paper and in the opening to the conference, research is not just the prerogative of the highly trained university based professor. Developing a research expertise grounded in community ethics and a thoughtful practice ensures the skills of research can be applied within a community setting by community members.

A paper that introduced the participants to some of the challenges and concepts of community-based research was distributed as part of the conference package (It is available on request). The emphasis in the workshop was on heightening the readiness of the participants to undertake research in their own interests in their own communities by advancing the understanding of research as a tool that could be learnt and applied. In particular, the idea of research as something that could be applied and used in real life circumstances was prominent throughout (see Appendix B).

Acknowledge people are the sum of their experiences rather than the deficit of those to which they have not been exposed. *Social contract comment*



## OPENING REMARKS

My name is Theresa Healy, I am here to facilitate this workshop, so I need to tell you a little bit about myself and how I think, so you know who you will be working with for the next two days. This is more by nature of a pep rally, to inspire us all before we get to the real work tomorrow so my opening remarks will be brief, I'd like to hear from all of you.

So, who am I and why am I here?

I have always been an outsider. I grew up a poor working class Irish Immigrant in working class Britain. I left school at 14, ran away from home at 15, lived on the streets, had my first child at 16. Now, 25 odd years later, I have a Ph.D., I am a happy and out lesbian in a happy and fulfilling relationship and politically active in my community. I am here because I have skills to share and I believe the best people to do research work on an issue are those living with it.

The quote that welcomes you to this workshop is what I believe and live by:

Until lions have their own historian, tales of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.

African proverb.

We are the experts in our own lives. However, as the quote says, we are denied that space and voice, we live on the margins, without a voice, without history, without knowledge. Other experts come in and research us, tell our stories and make a living and a reputation off our lives. This workshop is an immense luxury. We have the opportunity to come together and create a safe place to share: emotionally, intellectually, to physically take the time to explore and question our own lives for ourselves. To develop insights, ideas, share our opinions and decide for ourselves what it is that is important for us to do.

If we want to see meaningful change in our lives and circumstances we have to undertake research. Research is foundational to making positive and long lasting differences we need research that is done by and with us, not on us. What emerges from a process we own, we know, we control. The solutions are more innovative, more possible, and have more potential for success because we are invested in them. They are our solutions and we know the world in which the solutions must be implemented and which can work. The success becomes integral to our undertakings because we designed, we carried out, we collected, we analysed, and we answered the questions. In addition, we have learnt and made changes as we went along, as we grew and gained insights together along the way. We have made changes that made sense.

This is a form of legitimate research: Community Based, Action (CBR), Participatory Action Research (PAR), call it what you will, it has 3 common themes: Community members work together as part of the research team, The focus is on learning as we progress, and we make changes as a result of what we do, while we are doing it. There is no outside control, there is no waiting until the research is done and a report filed. In addition, essentially, there is democracy and citizen enhancement: there is no emphasis on mythical standards of what constitutes research held by an outside expert. We assume we all come to the table with skill, knowledge, and insights to share in a common goal.

Each of the theme has it's own potential benefits and challenges.

- 1) *Working together.* This can be a delight and a joy but there is the potential for conflict. Much of this kind of research depends on relationships, it is hard to earn the trust of community members and easy to blow it if you have it. What is key to this theme is how we respond to the disagreements and conflicts, how to make real the claim that in our diversity is our strength.
- 2) *Learning together.* Everything we do is about learning, is about taking risks. The challenge becomes how do we embrace risk in safety, reducing the potential for harm. Building a team environment, a culture of learning relies on building concepts such as trust and respect into meaningful activities.
- 3) *Making change.* Traditional research depend son the research environment not changing. Traditional research strives to be objective, to stay outside of and removed from the research environment and maintaining control so the declarations made at the end of the research can be presumed valid because of the extreme measures of control exerted at every stage of the research. CBR or Par invites researchers to be passionate to be involved and to instigate change. The difference between the two is often presented in ways that diminish and undermine the work of community based and action research/ For my way of thinking, this are completely different tools, acting in different ways in the world. Where traditional research strives for validity and reliability (did the research prove the hypothesis and can this be replicated elsewhere with the same results) Community based research strives for accuracy and honesty (did we collect and translate what we found accurately and did we report honestly what we found). Very different agendas and very different outcomes. For research projects where there is not a lot of funding, where people are literally dying, Community based research with it's promise of action is often preferable to traditional research's more slow moving approach. Yet, both forma of research have their standards of rigour and both forms of research provide insights and ideas.

My appeal here to you to night is the clarion call that research does not just belong in the laboratories and study halls of university. With care, with thoughtfulness and consideration, with capacity building, training, and skill sharing we too can do research and do it well and surpass the standards of traditional university research. In addition, we can inject the richness of voice and emotions that is the hallmark of the qualitative tools of CBR.

What this project is looking at is powerful and important. How this project is undertaking to look at this sensitive topics I daring and provides, I think, some national leadership. Our work could be a model for other smaller communities, more rural and remote communities to look at themselves in appreciate ways – not deficit ways. We can show that you can do it for your self and do it well. We can uncover and explain our own experience in ways that make a difference; we are embarking on an adventure.

After this opening address, the group discussed the implications of this research project, in particular the difficulties surrounding reaching out to a group of men who have so much to lose. (Transcript of this discussion attached as Appendix A)

## THE AGENDA FOR THE WORKSHOP

The agenda was presented for review and the group was asked if there was anything missing they would like to see added. The agenda was accepted as presented, with the proviso that it could be revised if needed.

### AGENDA

- Welcome
- Introductions/Ice breaker
- Social contract
- Parking lot
- Visioning the community
- Mission, Goals and Strategies
- Research introduction
- Ethics: boundaries of principles and practices
- Tools of research
- Research design
- Practice, pilot and revision
- Evaluation and closure

## SOCIAL CONTRACT

### **WHY: CREATING THE FRAMEWORK FOR A PRODUCTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

Every time a group comes together, no matter for how long, they create a culture. As so much of communication is non-verbal, it is possible to have misunderstandings, and conflict may emerge, not matter how good the intentions. A social contract allows us to spell out the supports that help us to participate fully and effectively and have fun in the process. The purpose of the contract is not to create a weapon with which to attack or monitor others, but a tool for watching and monitoring our own behaviors and improvements.

### **HOW: BUILDING CONSENSUS**

Generally, building a social contract has three distinct stages. Because of the shortage of time, we used an abbreviated process of brainstorm and refining that developed the clauses and a validation review of the final draft.

### **RESULTS: BUILDING CONSENSUS**

The following presents the agreements developed for the group to use as a framework to enhance the group's interactions.

- Encourage each other
- Avoid judgmental words, tones, eyes
- Respect for colleagues and the workshop
- Courtesy and politeness
- Humor is helpful
- We are all learning together- if make mistakes gently respond
- Honesty as part of moving forward
- One conversation at a time
- Focus on the person speaking
- Let people finish their ideas
- Acknowledge people
- Having fun is important part of learning
- Exercises the encourage speaking
- Respect learning styles
- Self-care is okay
- Tread softly among other peoples ghosts
- Acknowledge people are the sum of their experiences rather than the deficit of those that have not been exposed

**“The social contract really helped – I know other places that could use this.”**

*Evaluation comment*

## PARKING LOT

### **WHY: MEASURING BEFORE WE START**

The Parking Lot has a triple function. In the first place, it allows a facilitator to acquire a sense of the priorities and needs of the workshop participants before the workshop begins. Secondly, it provides an informal measure of evaluation when revisited at the end of the workshop and lastly, it allows a test of knowledge gained, serving as a mini quiz.

### **HOW: WHAT WE NEED TO FEEL SUCCESSFUL**

The facilitator asks each person in turn to list what it is they want, or expect to get from the workshop and what would make the workshop a success for them. These are listed on a flip chart sheet for later review.

### **RESULTS: WHAT WE “PARKED”**

#### *What do we need to feel successful?*

- Focus ✓✓✓
- Understand Research ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓ (Especially CBR)
- More knowledge ✓
- Qualitative Research ✓
- Analysis
- More: Tools, strategies, skills ✓✓✓
- How to combine data collection and services
- How to anticipate the unexpected
  - Responsive, flexible
- Give voice + power to those effected by cuts
- Generic Skills ✓
- Personal empowerment / self growth
- Networking-building a powerful team
  - Capacity building ✓✓✓
- Starting point, foundation + groundwork ✓✓✓✓
  - Collaborative plan
- Comprehensible template
- Principles into practice, including outcome based evaluation ✓✓✓
- Recognize embrace diversity as value

## THE VISION

### The Vision Exercise

Gives us mission, vision, goals, direction  
Gives us success indicators = evaluation plan  
Gives us shared ownership

### **WHY: DREAM BIG**

The purpose of developing a common vision brings everyone on to the same page. We rarely stop to share or discuss the reasons why we do the work we do. The horizon that keeps us motivated and passionate about our work even within a very diverse group, the visioning exercise can heighten points of contact and empathy and explain points of difference. In addition to getting everyone on the same page, it also serves to bring forward the success indicators, the concrete measures by which the group would recognize success.

### **HOW: DRAWING THE FUTURE**

This exercise breaks the large group into smaller groups to predict what the community looks like after the project is successfully completed. Within the smaller groups they are asked to draw this idealized future together, using colors and symbols, what has changed, what the community looks like because of the project. Each group has a reporter to present their visions to the other groups. While they are presenting and verbally explaining their drawings, the facilitator records key phrases and ideas.

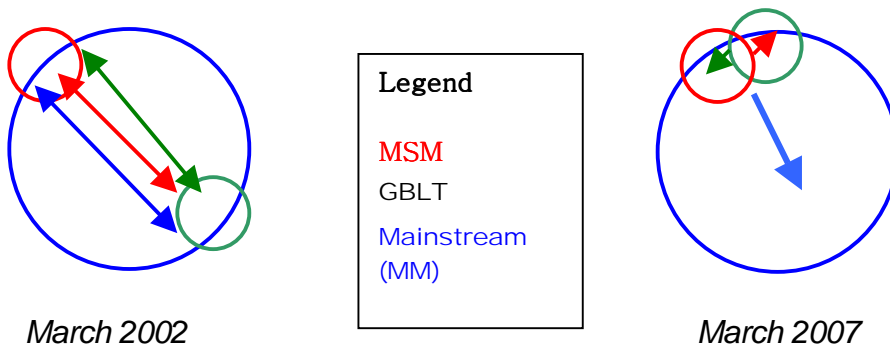
### **RESULTS: WHAT WE ENVISION** **In response to the question**

What will our community look like five years from now, after a successful MSM research project?





### Group three



- A Complex issue- made simple – and this we can address
- *Today* there is some overlap but most MSM live in large community without identifying themselves and do not identify with the GLNT community – Mutual exclusively | disagreement | conflict
- “We’re not you” versus “you’re just messed up”
- GLBTQ live in large community, but also generally isolated
- *Positive* – view ideal as pressures drawing MSM and GLBT communities closer together and more into the mainstream
- *Reality* is that there will always be a small segment of both who may not want to be part of the larger community or integrated into the GLBT;
- Needs creative thinking- responsiveness, flexibility; willingness to bring enrichment to all sectors
- Circle- change one spot ripples out because of chain of interconnections

Vision summary All three visions show dynamic movement and desire for change. Almost all visions reflect a desire to have felt welcomed and accepted by the greater society as a whole. General community awareness, education, and understanding would contribute to a climate in which honesty and healthy relationships would be fostered and supported.

Two of the vision drawings were very detailed and specific in how some of necessary transformations would look, and identified key point where influence and action should be directed.

## VISIONING EXERCISE

The visioning exercise also produced some measures by which the project could judge the success of its efforts:

- Lowered rates of infection
- Less community, familial and relationship conflict
- Greater community connectedness at many levels
- Attitudinal changes: shame decreased
- Knowledge of healthy and safe sexuality increased

“The MSM community is so hidden because many of the men risk losing a lot if they are found out. We, as researchers, can not be harassing them or driving them from the safe places they have found.” *Conference participant*

## AN ETHICAL PRACTICE

Principles and practice of ethical community research

### **WHY AN ETHICS OF RESEARCH**

We only have milli-seconds in which to make choices and decisions. If we can be sure the ground we stand on is firm, we can be assured our chances of causing harm and making mistakes are reduced. The principles and practice of community-based research are challenging. They are different from the ethics that bind university researchers. Sometimes, the ideas that frame university research ethics are formed by concern for protecting the university as much as the researched. Consequently, the practices under a university ethics process sometimes undermine the principles of care for the research subject. It may appear that the ethics process governs the research process not the care of the subject. As a result, sometimes, the principles actually impede participation. Community ethics thus, have a different face and flavour.

### **HOW WE DEVELOP OUR OWN ETHICS**

In our workshop we address the question of research ethics and what we felt were the important issues our principles of practice should address. We began by asserting that our research was not more important than any person was.

“No research is worth the sacrifice of one’s person’s human dignity.”

From this point of choice we discussed, in small groups these questions:

- How to enhance safety?
- How to enhance participation?
- How to gather accurate information?
- How do we encourage participation that is informed and safe in research projects that are on sensitive topics with potentially harmful implications for those who participate?
- How can we assure participants that their participation will be kept anonymous, that their participation and information is important and that their dignity and safety will be protected?

From reviewing these questions we decided the most desirable outcome is a participant who has found the research process to be supportive, confidential, useful and meaningful to them. They will also have felt safe, able to be honest and stay anonymous, at all three stages of the research process of outreach, recruitment, and participation.

We decided the outcomes for the research project are:

- Protected informants
- Accurate recording of rich data
- Truthful accounts
- Rewarding experience

## **RESULTS**

The ethical principles developed by the group fell into four broad categories:

- Environment - physical and emotional
- Information - access issues
- Process - respect, cultural appreciations
- Relationships - power and continuity

1. **Environment:** the overall concern was for the safety to the participants. Physically, a location of their choice should be the number one concern, that they should choose where they would like to carry out the survey, interview, whatever research tool was proposed. Emotionally, the comfort and care of the participant and the interviewer was of paramount concern. If the research process should raise any troublesome issues for the participants, the interviewers will need to be prepared to respond in the first instance as a caring peer support. If then issues should become overwhelming, interviewers should make every effort to direct the interviewee to appropriate resources and supports. (Such as calling in a “Flying squad” of volunteer support). Only in the last resort would the interviewer attempt to provide counselling (e.g. interviewee is in distress but refuses to respond to anyone but the original interviewer.) If this were the case, the research endeavour would have to be put aside. Care of the interviewer would require regular research team meetings where debriefing would be part of the research analysis process. Sharing of key learnings or issues would be carried out in a way to enhance and protect confidentiality of interviewees. We also agreed that protecting confidentiality would include removing all identifying factors (age, race, profession) from narratives and transcripts and assigning identity numbers to information sets. We also agreed to give as many choices over to the interviewee as possible, such as form of data collection (where, when, how recorded etc.)

2. **Information:** We agreed that an ethical consent process was central to this work. We would need to make sure consent was revisited and reconfirmed many times during the research process. Informed consent covers such issues as knowing the limits to confidentiality (admitting to molestation of children or threats to others for example), what happens to the information gathered (where and how it is stored, who has access, what will happen to it), and the overall purpose of the research, including the benefits we hope emerge from it. Interviewees need to understand these key elements before they undertake to be come involved.
3. **Process:** We recognize the barriers to participation and agreed that the utmost respect fore participants needed to be built in and maintained. It was very easy to slip in language, labels, or words that implied disrespect for the choices of the interviewees. Interviewers would need to be empathic, patient, supportive and non-judgmental. Honest fair questions, common, clear language, recognizing the expertise and authority of the interviewees were all keystones to building a safe and equitable process. In addition, protection of interviewees at every stage was a concern. Another major issue was developing a process that could be flexible and responsive to the needs of the interviewees.
4. **Relationships:** Crucial to qualitative research and Community Based Research is the concept of relationship. Built on trust, with a shared authorship: the interviewees are sharing their stories and eyepieces. Careful selection and training of interviewers, matching interviewees and interviewers in terms of age gender and cultural backgrounds were identified as key principles. The necessity of protecting both interviewers and interviewees from potential abuse is important. Faming of questions so as not to inflict moral judgments or offend will require care. Inclusiveness, making sure all sectors are involved in the research design is also a key component.

**Overall:** We wanted to ensure transparency at every step, with a holistic compassionate approach. The watchwords are this research is for, by and about MSM, the participants.

## THE RESEARCH DESIGN

“North Americans have trouble with Qualitative Analysis because the focus is the “word”~ ephemeral, unfixed, unstable. Statistics & numbers are concrete, fixed, and stable. We desire the material” (*unknown*)

### **HOW WE BUILD OUR WORK**

We began by looking at the overall big picture:

#### Research by Design

- What do we want to know?
- Who has the information?
- How will we ask them?

The facilitator presented a seminar that covered some of the basic concepts of research including a comparison of qualitative and quantitative research and an overview of the most common research tools.

### **Types of Qualitative Analysis – a brief overview**

- Heuristic- systematic transparent
- Ethnography- live the reality
- Grounded theory- let the reality speak
- Narrative- recollect + recount past in present
- Discourse analysis- structure + function of what / how we speak

**Chart 1** presents a comparison of research tools as adopted within either Quantitative or Qualitative methodology.

Chart one: Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Methodologies		
Methods	Quantitative research	Qualitative Research
<b>Surveys:</b> How/benefits/challenges	Can reach larger #'s Wording must be closely Controlled and pre tested Close ended questions Considerable amount of data entry Usually cheaper Easy to maintain anonymity Data analysis, entry boring, computer manages analysis	Reaches smaller numbers of people Can use structured, semi structured or combination Open ended questions Can stop when reach saturation (assuming sample not skewed) More expensive, requires trained interviewers can be carried out by: phone or face to face, one on one or in groups. Data analysis can be challenging
<b>Documents</b> Preexisting and newly generated How/benefits/challenges	Review, compilation of statistics gathered by various agencies	Agency records, media accounts, Diaries, letters, journals, agency, rewards, minutes Requires, time, access and analysis Provides historical and retrospective
<b>Participant Observation</b>	Track contribution of volunteer hours contributed	Record the self as a participant, own feelings thoughts, ideas
<b>Innovative</b>	Re-interrogating previous studies with a new eye	Photography, postcards from the front, theatre, art – all permit participant contribution in ways that work for them, challenge is in the analysis

The question is not either/or: but which methodology will help us with the population we are attempting to reach. What do we want to know? Who has the answers? How do we best ask them? Chart two compares the methods and methodologies.

<b>Chart two: METHODS AND METHODOLOGY</b>		
	<i>Methodology</i>	
<i>Method</i>	<i>Quantitative research</i>	<i>Qualitative research</i>
Observation (Visual)	Preliminary work (e.g.: to aid in designing surveys)	Fundamental to all methods
Textual (Written)	Content analysis (i.e. counting responses into researcher's categories)	Understanding and exploring subject realities and world view
Interviews (Interactive)	Survey research (fixed, close ended, large numbers, random sampling)	Interviews or focus groups (Open-ended, small numbers, selected samples)
Transcripts (Created records)	Infrequent (for checking and verifying)	Data for understanding how participants organize interactions,

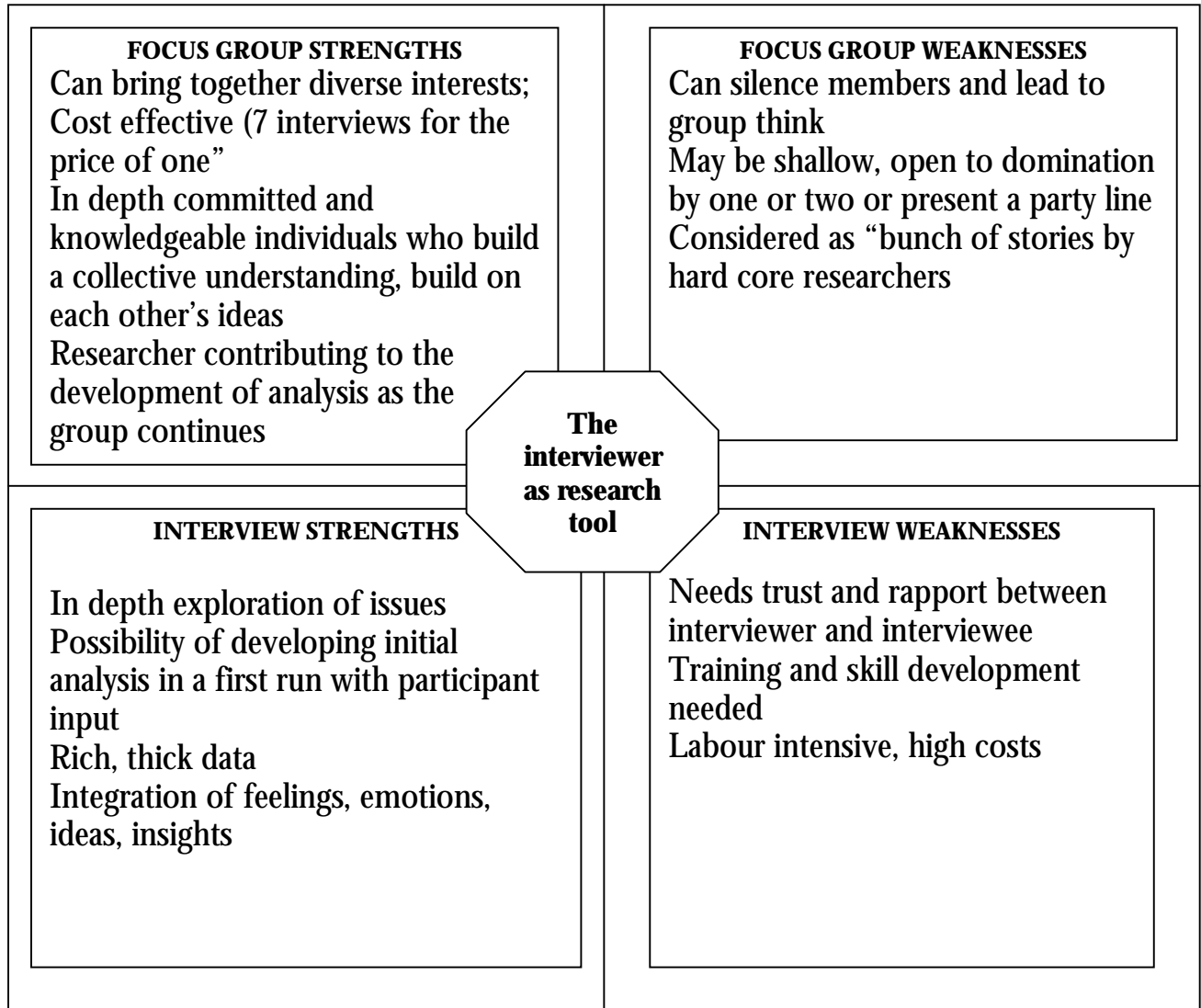
Adapted from Silverman, *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, 1993.

In our case, the researchers themselves become a research-gathering tool. In focus groups and interviews in particular the person, of the researcher is the most powerful research tool. In particular, chart three shows how; in the group and the one on one interview, the researcher is a complex part of the research process. Chart three shows how the insertion of the researcher's body as a collection tool has advantages and disadvantages.

Most important to recognise, is that a community member who is also a researcher has an important role to play in gathering and recording their own insights and ideas. Not only does this material become part of the data and makes the data collection process more transparent but also this systematic recording of the self makes the data more clear. It separates out the researcher's insights from that of the participants at the same time giving them credence, validity and a place of their own, thus lessening the chances of bias in recording the "other" voices but increasing the richness of the data



CHART 2: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH TOOLS – USING THE RESEARCHER’S BODY



**Researcher Tasks (Multitasking)**

Own experience- observation, reflections  
 Debriefing – collate/organize/initial analysis  
 Reflect- evaluate, refine, analysis  
 Present- Action, moving forward, validate

## RESULTS: THE RESEARCH PLAN

We focused first on our questions:

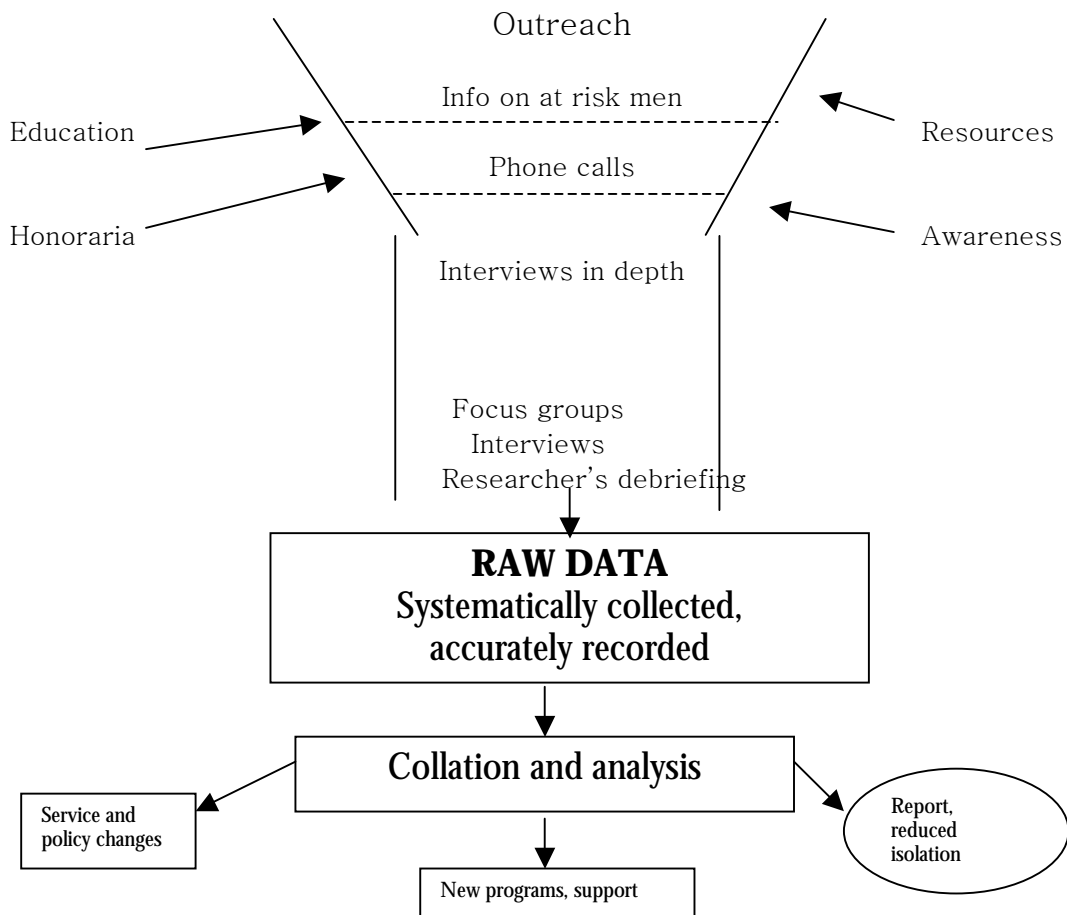
**What do we need to know?**

How do we reach them men?

Next we constructed an over view of what the research “big picture would look like. (See chart 4)

Chart 4: The funnel of research activities

**Note the funnel is of solid construction, there is a second exterior wall surrounding the activities made up of process and ethics.**



We also reviewed who we wanted to talk to, where we could reach them, what we needed to know from them. The summary below presents the results of this exercise.

Summary: Who do we need to reach?

- -MSM & their partners & Families
- -Subgroups – Gay, B, TG, Sextrade w, Hobbyists, one timers
- -Corrections, Churches

Summary: Where do we reach them?

- Anywhere men go
- Parks, restaurants, washrooms, and cyber chats. Beaches, bushes, internet, bars, gyms, male escorts, sex trade, gospel mission, YMCA, word of mouth

Summary: What do you think we need to know?

- #'s
- what is happening
- Demographics
- Attitudes
- What risks are you taking?
- How are you accessing men
- How do you identify

From this summary, we developed a more detailed plan. This research plan was envisioned as progressing through three stages, each one a more risky undertaking and moving closer to the group of men we needed to talk to the most. The idea was that we would build and validated the research as we moved forward, so by the time we were actually talking directly to men who were currently engaging in sexual activities with other men, we would be really well grounded.

Definition: MSM: Men who have sex with other men in anonymous encounters, without necessarily identifying as gay, and who may, or may not have other significant relationships and who may or may not be practicing safe/r methods. The permutations may be: m:f – m:m; m:m – m:m; m: f - m:f

Phase one would begin with agency and organizational staff who are experienced with this area. At this stage we would not only be asking questions related to the topic

we would also include questions related to how the construction of subsequent stages of work, asking the interviewees to be research consultants, soliciting their advice on how best to reach such a sensitive group, what they need to know, how to phrase questions etc.

Phase two would undertake a research pilot of the questions and structure with a retrospective cohort; that is a group of men who used to practice MSM but are currently in a different place in their lives. Again, the question should not only gather information on the issue, they would also seek insights and feedback on how to improve the questions and the outreach and recruitment process. Phase three would be the interviews/focus groups with MSM currently practising. (See chart 5)

**Chart 5: MSM Research Action Plan**

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Who to ask</b>	<b>What to ask</b>	<b>How to ask</b>
<p><b>Phase 1</b></p> <p><i>Focus: low risk; exploratory, enhance design of later stages (advisory/resource group)</i></p>	<p>“outsiders” e.g. service providers; others: members of the GL community, counselors street workers. Health care workers, client service workers</p>	<p>Who do we need to reach? Where can we reach them? How to approach them? (Recruitment) What do they think we need to know (ask)? Why we need this information? How does such info benefit (maximize benefit) When are the best windows of opportunity? Do we need different approaches for different target groups? What factors enhance risk/reduce risk? Can your agency assist in research?</p>	<p><i>How to recruit:</i></p> <p>Letters, newsletters, newspaper ads, chat groups, websites, networking;</p> <p><i>How to ask:</i></p> <p>Info. Meetings (public?) 1:1 Face:Face interviews; Questionnaires/survey (quickie) Resource consultation focus groups</p>
<p><b>Phase 2</b></p> <p><i>Focus: Medium Risk more in depth closer to MSM experiences</i></p>	<p>Retrospective/graduates</p> <p>People no longer living the dichotomy</p>	<p>-Data on why, where, how. -Why take the risk? -What pressures put you in dichotomy (at risk?) spouse, self, -What changed your comfort zone? -Value the grads retrospective data -history and anonymously Are these questions valid? Do these questions reflect what you would want to be asked if in phase 3? What is missing? How do these questions make you feel when asked? Whom can you recommend we talk to?</p>	<p><i>How to recruit:</i></p> <p>Approach thru -dances -coffee -internet</p> <p><i>How to ask:</i></p> <p>survey on web -anonymous answer on website - 1-800 # -special separate -newspapers ad -paper survey , survey in e.g. ORC News, Phoenix -physicians <i>participation</i></p> <p><i>Also ask for involvement in ongoing research</i></p>
<p><b>Phase 3</b></p> <p><i>High Risk; intense; MSM Partners</i></p>	<p>MSM Partners (M/F/ALL) Transgendered Cultural Ideals (Norms) People directly engaging (MSM) Married Men (Common</p>	<p>How can we make it safer for them to do what they do? Why they hiding?- what are the pressures What do they do? How many are unsafe- Why -</p>	<p><i>How to recruit:</i></p> <p>Internet AD's +People/Partners Health Units/Agencies Referrals</p>

<p><i>currently engaged.</i></p> <p><i>Focus: high risk, in depth, explanatory</i></p>	<p>law) Single Men (Again) Gay relationships (Contact w/MSM) Separated/Divorced Young men Undecided Questioning Male-Male not defined as gay 1 timers Bisexual men/Two-spirited</p> <p>MSM &amp; their partners &amp; Families -Subgroups – Gay, B, TG, Sextrade w, Hobbyists, one timers</p>	<p>Ignorance VS. Denial How do you feel? Guilt/Satisfied/ Angry/ Shame How do you Identify? What are your perceived risks? How do you assess/Balance Frequency Types of sex/Activities What limits/contributes to frequency</p>	<p>Incentives/Benefits (Partner/fam/comm.) Word of Mouth Active Allies Distribution of materials (at sites) Corrections, Churches</p> <p><i>How to ask</i> Internet AD's +People/Partners Health Units/Agencies Referrals Incentives/Benefits (Partner/fam/comm.) Word of Mouth Active Allies Distribution of materials (at sites)</p>
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***Additional key points***

*Health prevention and health promotion* are integral parts of this research, providing support and information must be part of research activities. Educating others about the realities of MSM to pursue the objective of heightening awareness and non-judgemental responses is also important.

*Providing incentives* to reduce barriers to participation must also be built into the research proposal activities and budget.

Researchers will need *on going training and support*. This needs to be considered both an integral component of the research data.

**Strategies**

- Use Institutional entry points
- Identify link, prioritize
- Skills and interest of those involved

## Principles of Research

The research collection itself takes third place in the list of priorities:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Care of interviewee
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Interviewer
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Research

For Evaluation purposes

We would like to incorporate a participatory evaluation, very easy to do, given the participatory nature of the research. (For example, the debriefing session would be a form of participatory evaluation with an ongoing structure.

We would also like to include the following changes as success indicators:

- ↓ Incidence rates of HIV and new diagnosis in MSM and female attached to them
- ↑ Connections resources network
- ↑ Community knowledge and acceptance

## RESEARCH TOOLS

### ***WHY A PRACTICE RUN***

This workshop intended to include a review and practice session with the two most likely research tools: the focus group and the interview. Thus allowing us to pilot test the research design and collect a first set of data, which would be used in further training on how to analyse qualitative data. Unfortunately, the richness and depth of discussion precluded doing both the focus group and the interview as the workshops sections ran over time. In addition, there was no qualitative analysis section included. These will need to be addressed in subsequent training session.

### ***HOW: A CAROUSEL TRAINING TASK***

The one on one interview was a role-play – noting that role-plays are very real and participants should be debriefed following the conclusion. The facilitator acted as the interviewer and a volunteer, willing to speak openly to past experiences, role-played an interviewee. Thus, the content and process was very real.

The task of watching the interview was a carousel: There were three tasks and the participants were divided into the three carousel tasks: Body language, Verbal language and process and protocol. Each carousel task had a set of questions. The participants watched the interview with an eye and ear to the questions set in their section of the carousel.

### ***RESULTS: INSIGHT AND DATA***

The results were a rich and improved understanding of the pitfalls of the interview and solid interview transcript (attached as Appendix E, including a list of the interview questions).

The key points of the carousel feedback reports are summarized in Chart 6 below.



Chart 6: Carousel feedback

Verbal language	Body language	Process & protocol	
<p>Verbal Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Tones ✓/inflection ✓</li> <li>-Vocabulary ✓ drove to, prison, shadowy, I messages?</li> <li>-Flexibility ✓</li> <li>-Words/phrases/language ✓ (wordy)</li> <li>-Pace/pause ✓</li> <li>-Affirmation/reflection (wife) (validated) ✓</li> <li>-Clarification ✓</li> <li>-Control/empowering ✓ (suggestions)</li> <li>-Compassionate ear ✓</li> <li>Supportiveness ✓</li> </ul>	<p>Proxemics (closeness, angle)</p> <p>Attitudes (observed, perceived)</p> <p>Feelings</p> <p>Expressions (non verbal)</p> <p>Eye movements</p> <p>Body posture</p> <p>Fidgeting</p> <p>Sweating</p> <p><b><i>Interviewer (Theresa) Interviewee (Bob)</i></b></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Close prox. (Varied)</li> <li>-Hand talking (Way more than Bob)</li> <li>-Broke looked down (reading)</li> <li>-Empathy/compassion in body language</li> <li>-Cross-uncross (more attention)</li> <li>-Uncomfort- fidgety / cautious</li> <li>-Look up (At why quest.) as if wanted to rephrase</li> <li>-Wrapping in front (towards end more 1-1 more sharing)</li> <li>-Nodding</li> </ul> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Consistent prox.</li> <li>-Crossed legs/hands (forced relaxation)</li> <li>unconscious guarded</li> <li>-Different eye movements</li> <li>*Divided on crossed uncrossed</li> <li>-Looked right except when excited</li> <li>-not thinking (open) (love)</li> <li>-Became expert (more open increased movements)</li> <li>-Excited eyebrows more relaxed</li> <li>Few movements (than Theresa)</li> <li>*Saw crossed uncrossed as nervousness</li> <li>*Saw feet forward as relaxation</li> <li>-How did feel increased movement</li> <li>head nodding (love)</li> <li>came from the heart</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Close prox. (Varied)</li> <li>-Hand talking (Way more than Bob)</li> <li>-Broke looked down (reading)</li> <li>-Empathy/compassion in body language</li> <li>-Cross-uncross (more attention)</li> <li>-Uncomfort- fidgety / cautious</li> <li>-Look up (At why quest.) as if wanted to rephrase</li> <li>-Wrapping in front (towards end more 1-1 more sharing)</li> <li>-Nodding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Consistent prox.</li> <li>-Crossed legs/hands (forced relaxation)</li> <li>unconscious guarded</li> <li>-Different eye movements</li> <li>*Divided on crossed uncrossed</li> <li>-Looked right except when excited</li> <li>-not thinking (open) (love)</li> <li>-Became expert (more open increased movements)</li> <li>-Excited eyebrows more relaxed</li> <li>Few movements (than Theresa)</li> <li>*Saw crossed uncrossed as nervousness</li> <li>*Saw feet forward as relaxation</li> <li>-How did feel increased movement</li> <li>head nodding (love)</li> <li>came from the heart</li> </ul>
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		<p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Understanding (written oral tape) ✓</li> <li>Consent (revisited?)</li> <li>-In R – supportive, respectful, re-affirming</li> <li>Approved –let me know –signal – negotiated</li> <li>-Comments at end – !!! Happened</li> <li>Shared Authority– empowerment of interviewee</li> <li>-Valued + validated of experience/expertise</li> <li>Caution/consideration</li> <li>-Sensitivity to interviewee (time to think)</li> <li>-Tuned to interviewee</li> <li>-Interviewer not pushing their agenda</li> <li>-Paraphrase + validate</li> <li>-Interviewer made statements …they tended to lead to the answers</li> </ul>	

The group was very observant and the feedback was a very educational session for everyone.

## EVALUATION

The conference closed with a round asking for verbal feedback on the experience and a written evaluation form distributed. The highlights from both the verbal and written evaluations was a strong recognition of the importance of a non condescending or alienating introduction to what could be (and had been in the past for some) a very intimidating and dis-empowering topic – research.

The sense of accomplishment, the sense of readiness was also reflected in the desire to move on to the next steps.

(A collation of the evaluation forms is available on request)

## CLOSING COMMENTS:

This was a very productive, intense, and enjoyable conference. The solidity of the research design, the strength of the principles and ethics developed bode well for future work built on this firm beginning.

A second follow up conference, with a focus on refining the research plan, and developing more skills with other research tools is recommended.

## APPENDIX A: TRANSCRIPT OF THE EVENING DISCUSSION

Transcript from March 8<sup>th</sup> 2002  
Evening presentation discussion CBRCB Conference

**Note: Some place names, organization names, as well as participant names, other than the facilitator, have been removed to preserve confidentiality of identity. Initials allow readers to follow threads of individual comments.**

[Theresa]

“First do no harm, no one should be hurt by what we do. So we really have to think about how men might be hurt by their participation in this project, even approaching a man might damage his reputation or out him in some way. How the hell are we going to do this so we don’t hurt anybody?”

[B]

“ Just want to make a comment about something you said about the research being in big cities because that’s supposedly where the people are. I think there are two other things that possibly need to be taken into consideration. There are many of us that lived in the big cities for 20-30 years that just got burned out, have moved. I’ve just gone through the process. The other thing is, other aspect – became aware of up here- are tired of ghettoized social interaction that happens in cities- preferred [Kelowna-Kamloops-Vernon-] their events. More honesty and sincereness of interaction between people. From my perspective it’s certainly very true that the community, although, small or perhaps hidden in the smaller communities simply out of necessity is often sometimes a healthier community.”

[Theresa]

“I think this is an amazing peace. So often you’re in a small community. You come out particularly if you are young; the big bright lights draw you in, the clubs, the bigger dating pool, all those things. You go to [Vancouver, Toronto] where ever, five years later you're moving back, 2 years later you are moving back. Because the thing that attract us to the small communities, the more intimacy the closeness. I know that when I lived in [Vancouver], I mean the division between men and women was very pronounced. I mean in [Prince George] I’ve got gay men friends, it’s a wonderful experience, you know they are kinda nice guys. But in [Vancouver] –“

[B]

“Standing joke is in [Vancouver] is the women live on Commercial drive”

[Theresa]

“And the guys live in the [West End] and never the twain shall meet”

[B]

“Huge no man’s land”

[Theresa]

“And so I think really an important piece that to put into our research is that recognition of strengths of our community. That we are not here just because we can’t make it in the big city or we don’t want to, there are choices we make to live here that are contrary to the gay communities prize in the big cities.”

[Theresa]

“We’ve been sorta, I was gonna say oppressed, but they haven’t noticed us enough to oppress us I don’t think.”

[C]

“what I’ve found- I’ve been involved in the [Gay] community in [Vernon/Kelowna] for 21 years when the Ok [Okanagan] gay organization started up in [Kelowna] many years ago, to add more to [B], I found in [Vancouver] and I don’t mean to put anybody down, its sort of the bitchy West End Queen, where in the [Okanagan] from [Summerland] to [Penticton] right through if you meet somebody at a dance and down the road become intimate you form a friendship and you don’t see that. I don’t see that in the city of all the ones you know. I’ve got a friend in Vancouver that’s been there eight years. His whole purpose was to go down hopefully meet somebody and get a relationship. His best times are at the [Vernon/Kelowna] dances. Because he knows a lot of people and he’s with his friends.

[Theresa]

“My experience with the lesbian community in [Vancouver] was that it’s very fractured. I mean you had the bar dykes, the sport jocks, you had the intellectuals; you had the professionals, again very often not many places of crossing. In [Prince George] there certainly are those divisions; we are big enough to have them. I mean there is a huge contingence of very professional middle class couples who are building houses out on the lake, but we all coalesce around being gay because there are not enough of us. I mean I am not trying to paint heaven, not trying to make it idyllic because we certainly have our conflicts. They are not conflicts around being a bar dyke or gay man or a drag queen, there are not the things that fracture us, they are much more meaningful- like you slept with my girlfriend. Meaning full reasons to have a disagreement”

[B]

“True incident that comes to mind, a friend moved from [Vancouver to Kamloops] and meeting people from [unclear possibly there meaning Vancouver] he kept saying were where you when I lived in [Vancouver], he said they wouldn’t give the time of day to people in [Vancouver] because they are shallow or they are insecure or what ever. I’ve been here for just over five months and I was chatting with someone from [Vancouver]. I said, “You know I lived in [Vancouver] since 1972, I’ve been out for probably 12-13 years. I probably knew half a dozen gay people in all of the greater [Vancouver]. I’ve been here five months. I know a lot of Gay and Lesbian people in [Kelowna/Vernon] because they are just more open, friendly, more welcoming. Through things like potlucks, the kinds of activities we do because we don’t have bars, and dance halls, we do

other things, we play volleyball, we have coffee, most of our interaction is on a much more one-on-one intimate level.”

[Theresa]

“Its really important to me that we stop speaking of our small communities as in a deficit mode. That’s where we have been put a lot of times. I know that my sense of living in a smaller community when I first moved to [Prince George] and a woman had just been beaten up in the college [New Caledonia] washroom for being a feminist. My partner at the time has said “you can’t be out its not safe” so I went back into the closet when I went to [Prince George] and I remember hearing from my friends, very out strong, radical, feminist lesbian friends about how awful it was I wasn’t out and not respecting my choice. I think we live with a lot more danger. It’s very easy to be out in the West End or on Commercial drive. That’s a wonderful luxury to have.”

“I don’t know if you know we’ve just had a horrible murder in [Prince George] [F] has been murdered and the guy who did it came forward the next day and admitted he did it. Has been let out on \$10,000 bail, and what I hear is, the police think, “well transgendered, street involved, drug involved, First Nations you know any red blooded hetro male picks up a prostitute then finds out its really a guy course he’s going to get pissed off. I mean it’s understandable.” That’s what I hear the word on the street. So we have, we live with the harshness about who we are that in a way that you don’t have in the large cities. I think in some ways that forces us into an intimacy we are more prepared to be real with each other because we haven’t time to be shallow, you haven’t got time to pretend. So we by necessity learn how to do the potlucks, and volleyball and we have prison film festivals, and little movie nights to raise funds, we’re finding ways to come together. If you look at our history, you can see how we have grown. From these tiny enclaves of little house parties, to taking slowly a much more public face, those of us who are braver. And sometimes our community responds well to that. Its hard to talk about [F] murder because though [Prince George] regularly elects Reform NP’s, though we’ve got these really Bible thumping fundamentalists who think we are all Sodom and Gomorrah personified for the most part the community accepts us. It really doesn’t matter if you are gay or lesbian if you can help put the barn back up that just burned down. You earn your place, I mean sexual identity is important but it’s not necessarily important to our neighbors if we are a good neighbor. There is a difference.”

[M]

“My other half and I have lived in the very small community of [Summerland] for nine years now and when we first moved in it was all around the street that two gay men where going to be moving into the house, but we where very well accepted by all our neighbors. Unlike the city from which we moved, in [Edmonton]. So it was a contrast coming from a large city and not being very well accepted, we where accepted by one neighbor but not by some of the others and moving to [Summerland] were I thought “Oh my goodness if it was that bad in [Edmonton] what is it going to be like in a small community of 10,000 people?” But the whole block knew and they where happy, the ones that we have met. “

[B]

“As we expand our base in the community we also need to recognize we add to our risk factor. We were just at a board meeting on Sunday for [\*\*\*\*\*] which is an Organization in [\*\*\*\*\*] and one if the issues we had to deal with was at our last dance two women left together to go to their car where harassed by a male. So, in dealing with that, I mean, as a board we have to be careful how we put that information out there. What we’ve elected to do is that as you leave there will be

a notice that says “do you require an escort to your car” So that we don’t discourage people from coming for our event. But, letting them know that yes there was an incident. Some one was stopped leaving the dance and allegedly harassed and for your own protection if you feel at all insecure please ask someone at the main desk to get an escort to take you out to your car. Because I mean we do, as soon as we become larger more visible we also increase our risk factor and so there is a necessity for the organizations that we look to for guidance and leadership like our g/l organizations to be pro active.”

[D]

“We moved into [Kelowna] not expecting and bought a house and we move in and I guess it was about three days after we bought the house and this person comes over talking across the fence and when you look at him in the yard its an older gentleman, looks like a woman. Right, kind of hunched over, anyways to make a long story short these guys have been together they are celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Right we had no idea we bought a house next to another gay couple. Whoa! This is [Kelowna?!] “

[Theresa]

“We, I was part of a CBR Team and we were looking at lesbians’ health care needs in the north and in fact our report has just come out its called “Out in the Cold”. Many lesbians in fact won’t go to the health care system because of how they are treated, in fact they are living with health conditions that are actually really chronic, life threatening because the homophobia within the system is worse than the disease. And we found out there are six women in [Prince George] who are three couples in six heterosexual marriages. As a historian doing life oral histories, I wanted to get my hands on these women. They’re all in their 60’s they’ve been married for decades no body knows, so they agreed to do a kitchen table focus group with us then we made the mistake of asking if we could tape it cause we where taping all our interviews and that spooked them after that, and we could not talk them back into it. But, yeah, our community has found ways to flourish because that’s what history is all about, people, individuals, finding ways of surviving true to who they are. Whether it’s a small community or a big one we as gay people have had to find ways of – it’s like the little dandelion struggling up through the cracks in the concrete in the city. We’ve has to find those little cracks to nourish and flourish and bloom in unlikely places like a heterosexual marriage in a northern community.

The other thing I don’t know if you find it here but we have the locally born and bred lesbian like not moving from [Edmonton] or from where ever else but they are part of the community. There’s a lesbian in one of the small communities who is an absolute - she rides a motorcycle, she looks like a tough diesel dyke, she drinks too much, she seduces women she does all of the wild things but she’s one of theirs, she like from one of the families so she gets away with it all”

[B]

“In a small community though you’re allowed to be eccentric if you where raised there, born there, raised there, and just happen to be a little bit different and eccentric. Well then you where, I don’t want to say the town pet, but I mean the community surrounded you and protected you as one of theirs. So you where allowed to sort of develop your own eccentricities.”

[Theresa]

“And with a sort of strange degree of pride as well”

[C]

“A year ago the two gentlemen I live with in [Vernon] are both living with AIDS and we did an interview with [\*\*\*\*\*] who was, I forget what the name of the paper was its now defunct, and he asked me if I would use my real name and I said no because of my job I am still basically closeted, however they went on holidays and said your here alone, I said well I’ve got a German Sheppard I’m not afraid. And we got two church people who phoned and said hell and damnation and I said, “ well honey “I said,” open your closet I’m sure there’s skeletons” and about fourteen positive response “Good for you guys, Right on!” Slowly its been more accepted as long as you don’t cram it in their face. I mean they go to one of the most top rated, or whatever, one of the busiest churches in town and everyone saw the article congratulated them and they all know their live style and its not an issue. It has not been crammed in their faces.”

[Theresa]

“When [Wendy] and I decided we would go to [\*\*\*\*\*] had a very tough process to go through to be accepted as one of the couples. And we decided we would go through with this and we actually, you had to send in an essay explaining why and then you had to do a questionnaire and then you has to be interviewed and I don’t know what else. But we talked about it and we in spite of any you know we were afraid maybe we were going to be firebombed. So we were afraid but we decided we where gonna do it anyway and out friends were really afraid for us. But in fact what’s happened is that at a workshop like this on a coffee break I’ll go and be getting my coffee and someone will come up to me say very quietly “do you mind if I talk to you for a minute?” and I’m thinking oh god I’ve done something wrong. I’ve forgotten something, they expected something different. And in every case it’s been about how important having us on the front paper of our local paper was. The most recent one was a women who’s 15 year old daughter was suicidal and who in fact saw that article and it became a way that they, she could actually talk to her mom about it. So yes there are risks, yes we heighten our risks but in my experience it’s been for the most part we get we’re getting positives for it and especially for our youth. And for these guys who you know are 45 years old they were gay when they were teenagers and then they buried if for all those years. And I had the most poignant conversation with a guy who said, you know he looked around his house and there was all this gay stuff. And he figured he was going to die and they where going to come into his house and they were going to find all this stuff and were going to say, “You know I never knew he was gay”. And he said he could no longer live with that so he came out, he’s having the time of his life. But we make the difference and differences that we don’t know we are making until somebody comes up and says things like that. But what I worry is its people like [F] who pay the price cause they are vulnerable and. Yeah”

[B]

One of the most uplifting experiences I’ve had in my life my parents live in a community of about 7000 people called [\*\*\*\*\*]. Which is halfways between [\*\*\*\*\*] and [\*\*\*\*\*] and they have, all the hunters and trappers and what have you have this association called the [\*\*\*\*\*] and they have



this annual beast feast where they bring all they cook all their wild meat and what have you. And my partner and I at that time went up to this and it was becoming more and more popular so this one year they announced that in the future they were only going to be able to sell tickets to members and they weren't going to be able to accommodate guests because it would become so big. So I thought well that's simple we will just become members. So I went up to the secretary with two individual memberships, I think they where \$20 a piece or whatever, and the secretary looked at me and she said, "[B] why are you doing this?" And I said, "Well we both need to become members if we want to come back next year to the banquet, or to participate in any of the other events. She said, "Yes but the family membership is a lot cheaper." And I said, "What do you want me to do put [Art] down as my spouse?" And she said, "Well that's the truth of it isn't it?" So here is this sort of very masculine, butch organization, the [\*\*\*\*\*] with all their hunters and fishers and their trophies of moose heads. [A] and I were members and the mail came to the [L] family in Vancouver and I thought cause we were always very very careful my father's position was its ok you can come you can visit you can sleep in the guest room but we don't talk about it as long as we don't discuss it as a dinner topic we're fine with it so we were always kinda really careful how we behaved our self and what have you. So I had to go home and tell him [A] and I had taken out a family membership in his organization. But that's something that does happen in small communities.

[Theresa]

"It's really odd that there is this place that you can find you know, acceptance and where you didn't expect it. [W], my partner has just been, she has been on the board of the [\*\*\*\*] for the past year and this year has become the Chair. And there's been a person in the membership that's been a bit problematic and who you know made this comment that [Wendy] has been in the news, so [Wendy] went back to the board and went to the staff and said," If it is going to be a problem maybe I shouldn't be the Chair maybe I shouldn't be so prominent. I don't, I am on this board because I care about the welfare of animals if my public stance is going to impact on our fundraising ability than I am not going to do it." And unanimously their response was "you are the best thing that ever happened to this organization. If some little old lady doesn't put in her 20 bucks, fine. We would rather have you."

So yeah, the response is as to the person not as to you - and its been a real struggle for me, because it was such an important thing to come out and embrace my lesbianism. And to finally admit well it wasn't just this woman she's so attractive she just happened to be a female, it's a sort of genderless thing and finally say listen I'm a lesbian and to come to that place and accept that it is a really a part of my identity. And then to be in a community where the message is well it really doesn't matter its who you are and what you do that's earned your place. So then do you, as you say, rub peoples face in it? "Listen I'm a lesbian!" how do you figure out how to stay true to this piece that was so important for so long and it's a bit muddled for me still, how to make sense of it all, that I haven't figured out yet – the ongoing piece."

[D]

"One of the phenomenon's we are actually seeing here is a lot of the people who have been retiring, the gay couples from [Vancouver] are moving out to the [Okanagan]. And buying their homes and I think its interesting to see them when we have out pot lucks when they come in and I notice a lot of them they get to talk to people. In [Vancouver] you don't I mean I know when we lived in [Vancouver] we never went out."

[Theresa]

“And what you will go through to get out, the weather, the distance. I mean it really takes something to come together. And I don’t know about anywhere else but the whole piece around building home building community. When [W] and I had our ceremony it was really important to me that we have this public, even though we couldn’t get a license we couldn’t have a proper marriage. I really wanted to make this public thing happen. We had over 100 people and we had in our garden the regional medical officer of health we had young gay youth, we had- the diversity heterosexual –straight. We had [W] parents came over to visit and come and stayed for three weeks over Christmas and we had this cocktail party sorta thing so they could meet all our friends. And the next day [Wendy’s] dad and I and her mom are sitting in the kitchen and he says “So last night, you know I’d really like to ask a question”. And [W] mom is going “[B] shut up shut up” he says “no no” and I say “ no, every question is a good question. And he says “So was everybody there last night gay?” He really assumed that we would only have gay friends and they weren’t. We had, it was everybody. So that’s a huge piece or me this integration not just between gay men and gay women and then the different sectors of the Gay community but into the heterosexual community as well, so that’s kinda cool”

[C]

“Well the hotel that I worked as for over 10 years. They all knew and It was never a problem. Cause I mean I was editor to the newspaper for three years I just now start this year my 20<sup>th</sup> year playing Santa Claus for charity and through the hotel and the whole thing. And I had one particular young man who I was really thinking was a red neck and I had a party one night and he said” Oh your going to have a party you mind if I come over”. And I said, “well no but you realize its all gay men?” and said, “I don’t have a problem with it” So he came over and I mean he’s a very attractive looking man and somebody came up to me “Oh yeah is he?” and I said, “No he’s straight” and fine. I go to work the next days and he walks in to work and looks at everybody and says. “ You heterosexuals have a problem” he says, “ I went over to [C’s] last night and I had the time of my life”. And they go “why?” and he said, “well they found humor out of a cucumber”. And there were both gay men and gay women there you know” and after that I’m going I’d say to someone I’m gonna have a dinner party and I’d have to say it really low because I had 40 people who that want to come and I only have room for six.”

[Theresa]

“We’ve become really popular because it’s a safe place to be. I think there is something about being gay and about being hurt that for some of us makes up, you know, there something about being safe and accepting. We can accept other people for who they are well because we know what it’s like not to be. If the makes an sense, yeah”

[Theresa]

“I was doing this big workshop with a really difficult group half government half community and I’m trying to get them to talk to each other. And it’s not just a nice neat division between the two there’s actually four divisions. There’s the government people who actually think the community people should take the lead and the government people who just want to tell them what to do and then there’s the community people who just want to be told what to do because they don’t trust the government and then there’s the community people who are generally interested, genuinely interesting in building a bridge. So I’ve got these four distinct divisions. So I have a young friend of mine who’s gay, she comes and she’s an assistant, and then I brought this other young woman

along who, and these two hadn't met, my young gay friend assumed that [C] was gay. [C] was absolutely thrilled to bits to be mistaken as lesbian. She was like she was very pleased so yeah there's changes happening you know"

[R]

"I think also its dividing the community in many different ways. I lived [Toronto] in the east end and I worked in, I don't want to characterize, it for brevity, I'd say a newfie, biker trucker bar. I worked there for a couple of years and then I moved on and was working in a community centre and this young man came in. He was very flamboyant and we got into a discussion and I said "well lets go around the corner I know this place where I used to work" and we went there and these two guys started harassing us and they said, "You know its time you should leave. You guys get out of here" and these two big guys in the back stood up and said "that's right you should get out of here" and I thought "Whoa" I didn't expect it from them though they where actually speaking to the harassers I had a community of these people who believed in me and didn't care about what I was and they just stepped up to the plate and I didn't even identify that so there was this little community which would have been opposite to what I would have expected within the larger community of [Toronto]"

[C]

"Its no different than years ago here at the [\*\*\*\*\*]. Thursday nights all we used to get together at the [\*\*\*\*\*] and what not and there was us and then how they referred to themselves big burly dude bikers the other alternates. And then there was this really Nelly number she minced and swished right in and I use the term she because he was, let me tell you, and sits down and all of a sudden one of the guys looks across the table at this other big burly biker and stands up says "Are you Queer? Are you a faggot?", " No are you?", " Fine we're not either" sat down and of all the years there was never a problem but the bar maid was just a wee bit of a thing and one time there was two of the straight boys getting out of hand and she walked over and cuffed them up side the head and they left and they never bothered her never ever had a problem and there was 30 or 40 people in that old style bar at one time you know. Oh yeah, they are the other alternates and they left us alone"

[Theresa]

"See this is the complexity of our live and experiences I mean the stories we're sharing this is the fabric of who we are but that isn't how we get seen, you know the courage the humour the fact is yes you go into a new work place you don't come out right away. I mean when your young actually you do, you come out, the super market check out person asks you how you are "I'm Gay how are you!" Everybody got to know, I mean it's really out there for you. But mostly we have to feel safe before we come out, so in your old job where everybody knew your out you don't think about it. You move to a new job suddenly, its I always refer to it you remember those sort of weather vane little things where the man and the little woman would come out in and out depending on the weather? It very much like that depending on the climate how out we can be. And so you go into a new job you have to earn your place so you can be accepted in the entirety of who you are and know that people are safe and its really difficult sometimes people will say to you, " why didn't you tell me didn't you trust me? " "Well believe me I've lost to much of my family and to many friends and too many colleagues that, you know."

[R]

“ I’ve just actually started a new job three weeks ago, and when I asked for these days off why of course. Well I’m going to an AIDS conference and their like “Hhhh!” well now the don’t bend over in front of him jokes have come up and this is all starting. And I’ve handled it quite well I just tell then they aren’t cute enough or they would have to mortgage their house. But it is real difficulty because I have work up in [\*\*\*\*\*] so its a lot of jocks and a lot of young people and quite redneck predominantly. So it has been very dicey at spots but I just handle it with humour and you know I’ve finding its okay. But the boss luckily is European so he is very open minded towards that kind of stuff. But most of the staff is under 30 single and in a big hurry and they are having a hard time hearing that their people that are HIV is growing and they are not safe and stuff like that and they are like oh! So we have been doing a lot of talking but we still haven’t said the word gay it’s been just sort of defused”

[Theresa]

“Its really like the dog going to sleep you’ve got to go around it and around about four or five or six times it several times before people will actual settle to it, sort of go around and around.”

[B]

“I have a difficulty with that because until I moved to [Vernon] I never really realized that I was ever at risk because I was gay. I didn’t know that if I just had this sorta cloud around me and I just lucked out. I mean when I came out, I’m one of those people we referred to earlier that was gay as a teenage but didn’t come out till I wasn’t quite 45 about 38, anyway and in my very first job it was one of the very first thing I was concerned about. Until I realized that the Dean had a picture of him and his partner sitting on his credenza. My very first day on the job when I was being taken around and introduced and I realized what it was and I though oh I don’t need to worry about that here and that was the very first place I ever worked and its never been an issue for me. And of course because I’ve lived in the city and I’m used to hand holding and giving people hugs and kissing them on the street and what not. And the first weekend I was here in [Vernon] in the fall where I actually had met someone they where going home and we were going to catch up a later day they where standing at the car and I went to give them a hug and they froze “what are you doing this is [Vernon].” And I’m looking around and I’m thinking we are behind a six foot hedge nobody can see. And that was the very first time and that was the reverse for me coming into a smaller community was having to deal with the fact that I actually was at a much greater risk.”

[R]

“This is the first job I’ve ever had that I haven’t not made right in the interview very clear that I’m gay. Child care ten years there was no problem just this particular climate I know its not going to be a very warm one for my sexuality and that’s not who I am that’s just a component. I know they will never be in my home and they will never sleep with me so they don’t need to know.”

[M]

“Well I came out when it was possible to actually lose your job if you where gay, if you are identified as being gay so I was always stuffing all this stuff in the closet and I think up until I got this job at the [\*\*\*\*\*] there was only one other job where I was comfortable, in the past. But the last job I had in [Edmonton] you didn’t dare come out the person in charge of the whole department was a Mormon so you didn’t dare, I was never able to bring my whole self to work.

[BM]

“Well I’d like to say I am not Gay or Lesbian. However a lot of what I have heard today or this evening are a lot of things I went through working in a mans job. I used to be a steel fabricator and working 75 men and one female. And at that time I had blond hair I got all the blond jokes, all the you know they would stick things into my lunch they used to play all kinds of games and you know. At that time it was something you just kinda dealt with and the same you know where you know you would do an estimate for something and they would say “ no I want a man to do the estimate” and then tell them “well then go someplace else”. So it took a lot of time for me that was 19 up until mid 20 then again early 30s so a lot of the things that we are talking about can be fitted into a lot of different situations. I think that’s really important that as a heterosexual sometimes I find that I get put out on the outside when I am working in the gay community. A lot of the people welcome me very easily and others will not. And so it varies for me as well, working for the [\*\*\*\*\*] and doing volunteer work. So I just really I don’t know how many people, I am not interested in your sexuality I am interested in your spirit, personally. However since we are talking about it that much I want to know that I can relate to that, I can relate to walking out of a night club and being harassed right, not only by males but also by other females, right.”

[Theresa]

“And this is what we have to do, we have to find the points of empathy. Where is it that I can understand your experiences? And I must apologize this is sort of some kinda of reverse discrimination I assumed everyone was gay, gay or transgender or something so I do apologize for those of you are not gay or ungay, or heterosexual I do apologize, but the idea is that in fact there are going to be places of empathy where you too have experienced the erasure of who you are based on your appearance, based on your race based on your sex based on some choice your made in your life, being an unwed mother.”

[Theresa]

“ But we, and yeah, that’s what I think we get to live on the edges of society we get to be on the margins and actually that’s a place of power. Because in fact and I use the gay example, the gay and lesbian or transgendered person actually knows more about heterosexuality then the heterosexuals. We have to in order to survive, we also know our own culture as well, so in some ways there is a power to being on the margins. But the big challenge is to be more than and better than society tells us we are and let’s face it the homosexual community like any other community, we have members who are weak and vulnerable and unhappy and who believe the lies believe the stories they are told. And there are those of us that do find a place of strength to stand we make obvious those lies. And also I don’t believe in a hierarchy of oppression, sexism, racism, homophobia all of those things are out there and I think there’s differences. I mean if I was a black woman, I can’t and, I walked in a room I cannot be not black, as a lesbian woman, I mean I don’t look like I don’t think I look like your obvious lesbian woman. So if it came to it I can pass, and in many cases I have chosen to pass. I was asked why I was coming to [Edited] I was asked why I was coming here and I’m sitting on a plane just as we are deplaning here at the airport and everybody is listening to me. So I’ve come to do a seminar on qualitative research, I mean you have those split seconds when you decide “are you going to be out or not?. Do I feel comfortable at this point?” So we all, there are differences in how we experience our various oppressions and I don’t thing we’re ever just one thing. So I will experience sometimes oppression as a woman, sometimes as gay sometimes as, certainly within the university of being lower. There’s all kinds of ways our lives are complex this piece is not about this is not all I am I

am I'm all these things as well it's the multiplicity of identity we carry, but we do get strengths from being on the edge too."

[B]

"One thing we haven't talked about and I don't know if we are avoiding it or not is the homophobia within our own community and one that I am struggling with and [CH] will tell you I have great deal of difficulty with is the negativism within our own community about people with HIV. Its incomprehensible to me that people cannot look past the disease and see the person. And yet the reality is that people with HIV the people they should be getting the most support from they are getting the least amount of support from. Which is the right community and I find that appalling but understandable at the same time. That's its something that's become an issue for me recently, separate and apart of the general homophobia that's prevalent throughout our community. I mean I came from a ten year marriage and so initially came out as a bisexual and in [Vancouver] if you are bisexual gay people will tell you that your just somebody sitting on a fence with the fence pole up your butt."

[M]

"To add to what [B] was saying there was a really good article written in the [\*\*\*] newsletter about all the subdivisions in the gay community and that people who where into bondage and discipline and people who where into some of these subgroups are also, sorta lower on the totem pole and looked down upon. Probably not as much as say someone who is HIV positive but people don't want to come out as into b&d even if that's what their game is."

[T]

"Its always struck me, I know when the immigrants first started to come to North American and the Irish, Irish were really discriminated its no dogs and Irish in a pub I mean the dogs even come first, so I mean then who becomes the most racial bigots the Irish!"

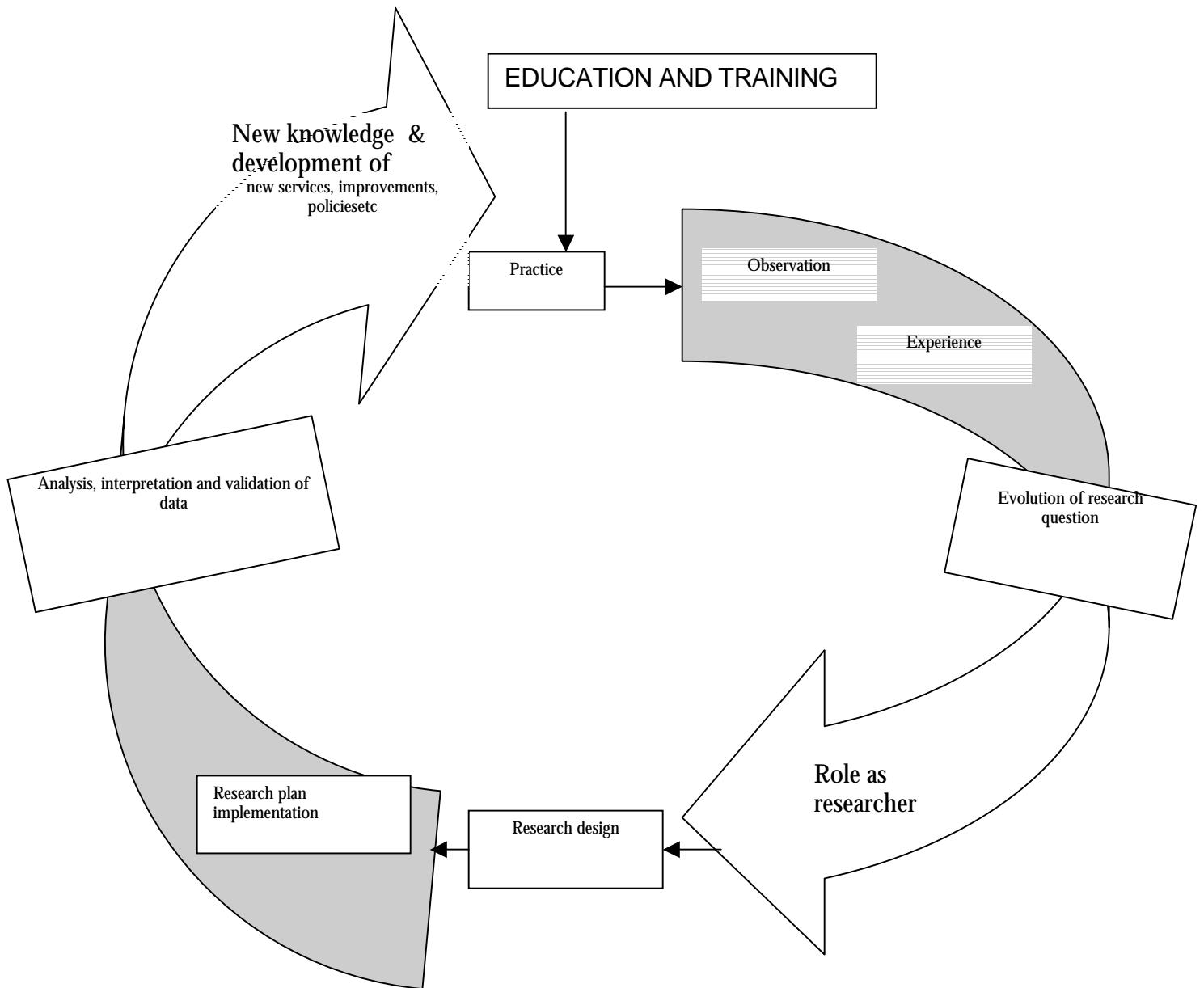
"The other big division, I don't know if you experience it here, but had our first gay pride march five years ago this will be our 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary I think. And there are gay people in our community that are so mad at the activists. " You are making it dangerous for me and I have to listen to stuff in my staff room, why do you have to do this?" And we had the B&D people came up from [Vancouver] and marched in their full regalia and "They're so disgusting it just makes the rest of us look bad, and We're trying to fit in here and trying to show that we are responsible tax payers. " So you know yeah that discrimination we hurl at each other. We have our differences and we are not easily homogenous"

*Transcription ends at this point because conversation became general and with more than one speaker at a time.*

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## APPENDIX B: CYCLE OF RESEARCH

### CYCLE OF RESEARCH IN THE REAL WORLD: THE MULTIPLE ROLES OF THE PROFESSIONAL



## APPENDIX C: RESEARCH TEMPLATE

### Research planning template

Topic:

<b>What do we want to know:</b>	<b>Who will we ask:</b>
<b>How will we reach them:</b>	<b>Who will do the outreach:</b>
<b>How will we ask them:</b>	<b>Who will do the asking:</b>
<b>Cultural Issues:</b>	<b>What resources are needed:</b>
<b>What incentives are needed:</b>	
<b>Other potential needs:</b>	



## APPENDIX D INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The following form as developed by the group and used to allow the data generated at the conference to be used in the preparation of this report and in building a research project proposal. It may be adopted and adapted for subsequent use.

I understand the information gathered at the focus group/ interview conducted as part of the Community Based Research training conference of will be used to support a research proposal and research activities, including education training and support, on MSM activities and related research in the IHA [Interior Health Authority]

I understand any use made of my information will not identify me by name or in any other way.

I understand I can withdraw, or decline to answer any question without explanation or affecting my standing.

I understand only the researchers will see my information & will not reveal any identification associated with data.

Signed:

Dated:

## APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND TRANSCRIPTS

Interview questions for retrospective cohort

### *Opening questions*

- Are you comfortable telling me about.....
- What is your most vivid memory of that time in your life?

### *Main questions*

- What makes that stand out in your mind?
- What has changed for you since then?
- What made the difference?
- How are things different?
- Recall and tell me about how you felt about your activities?
- What would you say to someone facing the same situation)
- What was eventually diff
- What drew/attracted you to this?
- Can you tell us about how you coped?
- What supports/services existed?
- How did you see them then-now?
- How could we improve services for MSM?
- How could we approach/reach men currently active?
- How did you perceive risks then and now
- What does the perfect (ideal) community look like to you?
- What were social pressures you had to deal with
- What things did you (might) you have done to balance the different aspects of your life?
- What did you see around you?
- How did you frame your relationships with other partners? –then –now

### *Closing questions*

- Is there anything else you'd like to say that the questions didn't allow for?
- Can I get back to you if I think of anything else?

## Interview transcript

(“Bob” is a pseudonym. He has signed a consent form for the use of this transcript in the report and workshop. Interviewer’s words in italics))

Interview with Bob, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2002

MSM project

*“We have some questions that a group of us developed, a group of researchers and actually at the end of this I would be really happy to hear from you what you actually thought of our question because we are always trying to improve our process. So our first question, and if there is any question at all you are not comfortable you can just wave your hand at me or do a sign and I will stop the tape if you’d like to talk about something off the tape or if you don’t want to answer it at all that’s okay”*

[Bob] “Okay”

*“Or even if you just need time to think just tell me. So the first question we have is that you know this project is about understanding men having sex with men and I know this was something that was in your past and your willing to talk about it with us today.”*

*“When you look a back at that time in your life what is your most vivid memory, what stands out from that time in your life?”*

[Bob] “ It would probably have to be my first experience with another man outside of childhood activities and I guess I had a sense I had always been attracted to men and that the activities that had taken place prior to that with my cousins was just kids play and then the reality of having that first interaction with another man who I didn’t know was probably my most vivid memory”

*“So what, your life has changed lot since that point what’s changed for you now since that first experience?”*

[Bob] “What changed for me was coming to terms with my being gay and understanding that was okay it was an okay place for to me be and that looking back on it that I hadn’t hurt anybody in that process, although it certainly wasn’t an easy process, to coming to terms with that”

*“As you look back on that process what actually did help you come to terms what helped you make that move?”*

[Bob] “ My wife leaving [Laughs] It was, I mean it wasn't an easy road to hoe I mean I had gone to see professionals in the community seeking information seeking stuff about how I was to deal with this. My physician I went and talked to him and he literally jumped across the examining table and told me he couldn't see me any more. I went and talked to the minister at the church I was attending at the time and he sat there and listened to my story then told me he couldn't talk to me because he knew my family too well and he might have to let some of that information out. So I didn't feel supported, I certainly was supported by individuals who well, who I'd been having sex with, other men. I mean there was a lot of guilt around it my wife accused me of sleeping with other women and I legitimately could say that no I wasn't sleeping with women. But at the same time there was that whole guilt around cheating.”

*“ So what were the social pressures at the time that kept you from moving into the place where you are today?”*

[Bob] “ Well I mean I was I guess 20, 20 years old living in [Calgary] and all of my friends were getting married and had girlfriends and all of that and of course you need to be part of a crowd, it's just being part of that process of peer pressure and belonging and wanting to be part of a community. And part of that is the reason I didn't want to go the other way is because what was perceived what the gay community was about what homosexuals were about and what I'd been told and dirty old man and all that stuff and that not what I wanted.”

*“So you are describing an incredible amount of social pressure on a young lad I mean you were still quite young, so you go into a particular way of life, so in spite of all those pressures something was something drove you or something attracted you to this other way of living, what was it that attracted you into that into those activities?”*

[Bob] “ I think it was, I mean, it was certainly the physical contact with another man I mean I could understand a male body more than I could understand a female body, the pleasure that was received from it. In a lot of incidences it, certainly the guilt was sure it certainly outweighed the pleasure after the fact, but it always seemed to come back to that what it seemed to be about in terms of that in the initial stages anyway was the sex. Until I fell in love.”

*“Interesting, so the sexual pleasure was a very powerful motivating force, but it was really love that took you into this new place, this new world in a different way”*

[Bob] “ Yeah, it was when I met [J] it was that piece of it that I could see that it wasn't dirty it was okay there was a piece to my life that was okay I still had a lot of challenges ahead of me but that support was there that person was there”

*“We know that there is a lot of men still practicing this way of life today what would you say to, if you had the opportunity to speak to one of those guys today, what would you say to them?”*

[Bob] “I guess I would have to say to them, and I mean knowing the work that I am in, is that they really have to examine what they are doing in terms of risk factors, they need to examine why they are doing it, not the point where they are dealing with their guilt and that but you know what, some of the questions you've asked me, why what took you there, and understanding that it's I guess, biological thing in terms of if you're there just for the sexual part of it but understanding if they choose to and they don't have to because I think there are

legitimately men who just have sex with men and that's all it is for them just sex, but if they have other issues in the lives about family and how do they deal with those things those are things that hopefully we can work with them in terms of providing resources for them to deal with those things."

*"What you described in terms of your experiences it sounds like there where a lot different pressures in your life at the time how did you cope balancing all those competing pressures?"*

[Bob] " There were people who would say I didn't cope [laughs] I think that I always kept one thing in mind and that was about who I was, and I have to thank my parents for that for giving that courage to always remember to go back to who I was, I mean, I went and saw a psychologist there where things that I did for myself, I mean I did some research I just didn't say that I couldn't do it and there where times in my life where I thought this was not where I wanted to be and I just wanted to end it. So I mean for me I've never though seriously of suicide but I mean certainly it was do I want to be here? Do I want to continue to go through this? I mean some of the experiences where horrendous, I mean a friend of mine who in university, or in collage, I mean we used to have sex but it was never talked about. And then we both got married and we were sitting in the mall and I said to him I said, "I really got to talk to you I really think I am gay" and he looked at me and said, "Well so am I" and we're both married and our wives are shopping down the block and its like "oh my god" and these are things who would have thought that we went out one night we went out essentially to get a head light for their truck at 11 o'clock at night when that wasn't where we were going at all. But I mean the lying and the deception and all that was not something that I am proud of."

*"It's a difficult place to be, it sounds like what you wanted and what you needed and where you where it was almost like a prison"*

[Bob] " Yeah it was, and I mean I need to say I am certainly not proud of the way my wife and I separated and the disappointed and the grief it caused her and her family no, that's just something that you know it happened and its gone but its certainly not something that I'm proud of "

*"Sometimes I think we go through these things and there an awful price but perhaps those are the things that at least [damage to the tape] "and that's easier to deal with the loss of yourself over time"*

[Bob] oh yeah I definitely think so I mean I during my time I mean when I was having sex with other men I would get this sense and you would start talk about what was going on for them and the loses they where having and getting into the whole process around well how do they handle it how do they go back to their wives or that type of thing and its you get into a lot of philosophical stuff around well what will I lose if I come out or how do I deal this with my parents or what's the community going to think or how can I be married one day and queer the next day, right its"

*"So it sounds like not only have you this experience that's really grounded but you also have some you've obviously thought about this and you have some ideas and insights what can you tell us about us reaching men who are in this place today how are we going to reach*

*them so that they can talk as honestly and as self affirmingly as you are today? How can we do that do you think?"*

[Bob] " Well its certainly challenging I think the biggest challenged it identifying, making sure that they feel safe the need to feel safe and secure around their anonymity, they, yeah its how do we talk to them? We have to talk to them honestly and openly and non judgmentally and make sure that they are secure and they're safe and that they understand what this research is about and what this process is about because if you don't its going to harm their going to, you know, understanding the whole process, they somehow, need to understand why they are doing it and we need to make sure we provide the resource for them to access that information should they choose to, so its really it's a delicate situation but I think its work that needs to be done."

*"So please let me know if this is not comfortable but this is an issue I struggle with is that men are going to place looking for sex looking for pleasure how do we intervene with that and say excuse me before you do that could we just have a few moments of your time. I don't know how we do that, do you have any ideas on where we might find windows of opportunity to talk to men that doesn't invade their space and their objectives of what they are doing?"*

[Bob] "I mean I really can't, I mean its something that I think we're going have to talk to other men. I really wasn't a lot into the clandestine having sex; I mean I would go to the bar and pick someone up, so that's more of was go home, although there was a couple of times, no actually there wasn't we knew each other just did have a place to go. I think that's going to be up to those people who are involved in that activity, the washrooms the parks, we are going to have to talk to them and find out, I mean I think that's I don't have the knowledge on how to intervene and find out who these people are other than to sitting outside the park, but"

*"In terms of your observations what you've talked of your experiences, but looking back on that time in your life what do you see as why other men were doing this and where they where coming from in their involvement?"*

[Bob] "Why? I think it was all about the same thing there was an attraction, and I think if I hadn't fallen in love I would have probably continued to maintain the relationship I had with my wife and continues to have sex with other men, I think its about the sexual thing its about men knowing men's bodies and knowing how to please them and that contact I think its just, its nature"

[Switched places]

*"So I am wondering what you think risks, how you saw the risks when you where in this life as compared to what the risks are now? What's your perception of those pieces?"*

[Bob] "Well I think the risks are certainly higher in terms of sexually transmitted diseases but the risks I think you can look at them in different ways, identification risks in being found out, being caught by the police, somebody exposing you to your family, today I think in terms of sexual activities there are certainly a much higher risk factor, its unfortunate we didn't know back in the eighties that the sexual acts we where participation where really risky. I think in Canada we where, we where probably, especially in the prairies, we where probably five

years behind even Vancouver, Toronto or Montreal of finding out of what was going on and it didn't get talked about and it certainly doesn't get talked about in the MSM community, in the gay community yes. But not, because I guess my perception is men who have sex with men don't have relationships with men, they don't talk, they have sex. My experience in that is I mean picking a man up and going home and having sex most of the times you didn't even know what their name was, or their real name, you had no way of contacting them, it was strictly about sex."

*"So this then presents a great challenge cause we've got a shadowy world in which words are not a preferred form of communication anyway"*

[Bob] "That's right its, you know, well yeah its, you know one thing"

*"You talked about that all other things being equal you would have probably continued in your marriage and continued to keep the MSM activities on the side of your life. How looking back at that time of your life how in fact did you frame your relationship with your wife as well as the other individuals, the partners?"*

[Bob] "I had two lives. I used my activities in the community as a way of not being at home, because I was participating in a theatre project or that type of thing, so I had two lives and she wasn't part of that other life, I think I made the assumption she didn't want to be part of it, I don't know that I ever asked her"

*"Perhaps you didn't want her to be?"*

[Bob] "Yes, well yeah, thinking back I mean it was a long time ago, but, Yeah where as my friend his wife wanted to participate in his community activities so it was a different thing. And he still, he is living with his wife they have children, total denial of anything he's ever done in his life. I guess, I, we don't even have a, aren't even friends I mean he can't even talk to me anymore because I think he's probably still continuing in that life style but"

*"Looking back at the support and services and resources that where in the community back in the eighties when you where doing this as compared to what there are now. What are there still gaps are there gaps in supports and services that you think we need that we need in our community that aren't there?"*

[Bob] "Yeah and I think they need to be non judgmental. I mean men who have sex with men that's exactly who they are we don't have to make judgments around the fact that they are gay or that they are bisexual or anything they need to self identify who they are where they are at the time. I know in a lot of service provider's there's a lot of assumptions being made around people being gay and you know leading, but you know what there are men out there that I believe who just want to have sex with men their not interested in a relationship they are not interested in being gay. Its strictly about sex, and, it we need to understand we need to have services available for them to access without any judgment any morals they can walk in the door and say 'this is who I am this is what I need' and I still don't believe today and in our community whether its you know at the agency, the AIDS Resource Centre or Public Health or anywhere that that still that that exists. And it needs to be brought to a level where, and this is where you know the change will hopefully come in that people understand what that is and

I mean maybe we need to look at doing some more education about what that is. I mean women hear about their husbands having sex with other men and it's certainly a threatening thing. But how do we frame that and that's a whole piece that hasn't been done, that hasn't been worked on."

*"Its almost its part of our human condition to want to label to want to categorize to want to put people in a particular box"*

[Bob] " Yeah, and we need to stop that. I mean I think its far reaching other than the MSM it certainly deals with a whole other, of society, I mean we need to look at what effects people in their lives, and that's what population health is all about"

*" Is there anything you would like to say that the questions haven't given you the opportunity to talk about?"*

[Bob] "I guess one of the things that I don't think was addressed was how did you feel, how I mean what, because I mean I remember that first experience with someone other than a relative and I mean I enjoyed it, it was fun but you know I walked out of there and I was scared, I felt guilty you know, I felt ashamed those are not feelings I had when I had sex with my cousins, my relatives, because I was we where just fooling around but this was real I had stepped outside that boundary outside that box and I was confused, I didn't know what. And so you know talking about that but I went back, so, there was obviously something that I needed that I wanted, so you know I hear about men committing suicide 24, 25, and stuff like that and you gotta wonder, you know, why?"

*"It sounds like the risk for you was that first time, like you say stepping outside of a box of safety this is who I am in society, this is where I am accepted, and I have a role to play into this whole new world where you have none of those safe guards it sounds like that was an enormous risk."*

[Bob] "Yeah, and I mean I think in terms of that I was fortunate in the person I did meet, mean, mean he worked in the 7-11 next door to where I worked right. But he, he didn't lived in a dirty dungy back alley place, you know I mean visually someone in my life had given me this vision of what how homosexuals lived and that kept coming back to me and that certainly wasn't what my encounter was so."

*"So there was a conflict between what you where experiencing and all the messages you got"*

[Bob] "Yeah, yeah"

*"One of the things you said that's interesting to me as well that and perhaps its how I'm framing MSM activities is that we talk about from the bushes and into the bed but a lot of the encounters you where describing in fact when'd in the bushes like the neighbor at the 7-11, the husband of a, you know your friend who was a husband of a couple of friends"*



[Bob] “No I didn't like I said I haven't I don't didn't participate in the park stuff and that is because well that I consider it extremely risky. And if I am with my lover and having sex in nature that's another thing, and just having sex with a man is not, I mean, I, and again this is a conflict today is having sex and making love, I mean what is the definition there. I mean at one point I had a lover who had nothing but anonymous sex, and continues to have anonymous sex outside the relationship and I went to the doctor and I said, what's that about and he said that's the way some people have their needs met. Its not that your not meeting their needs at home but there that's just who they are and”

*“That's a big difference isn't it between sex and making love”*

[Bob] “Yeah, and I think I was fortunate when I met [Jim] It was about love it wasn't just about the sex”

*“When we transcribe this I sometimes what I find is I hear a question that I should have asked, or that I could have asked that it was obviously but that I've missed it cause I was so involved in what we where talking about. Will it be alright to get back in touch, to if there are any follow up questions?”*

[Bob] “Yeah, I don't see any problem with that”

*“And if you think of something in the mean time as well that you would like to add you've got my contact in formation and how to get hold of me and we can add anything in that you think of later”*

[Bob] “Ok”

*“My last question is how did the interview go for you? Did the questions work, where there any that worked better than others?”*

[Bob] “No, I think the questions worked, I think the series the way they were asked were progressive and yeah I think they worked”

*“Okay, well thank you so much [Bob] we will be in touch with the completed transcript for you to do a final review and edit and correction of, thanks so much”*