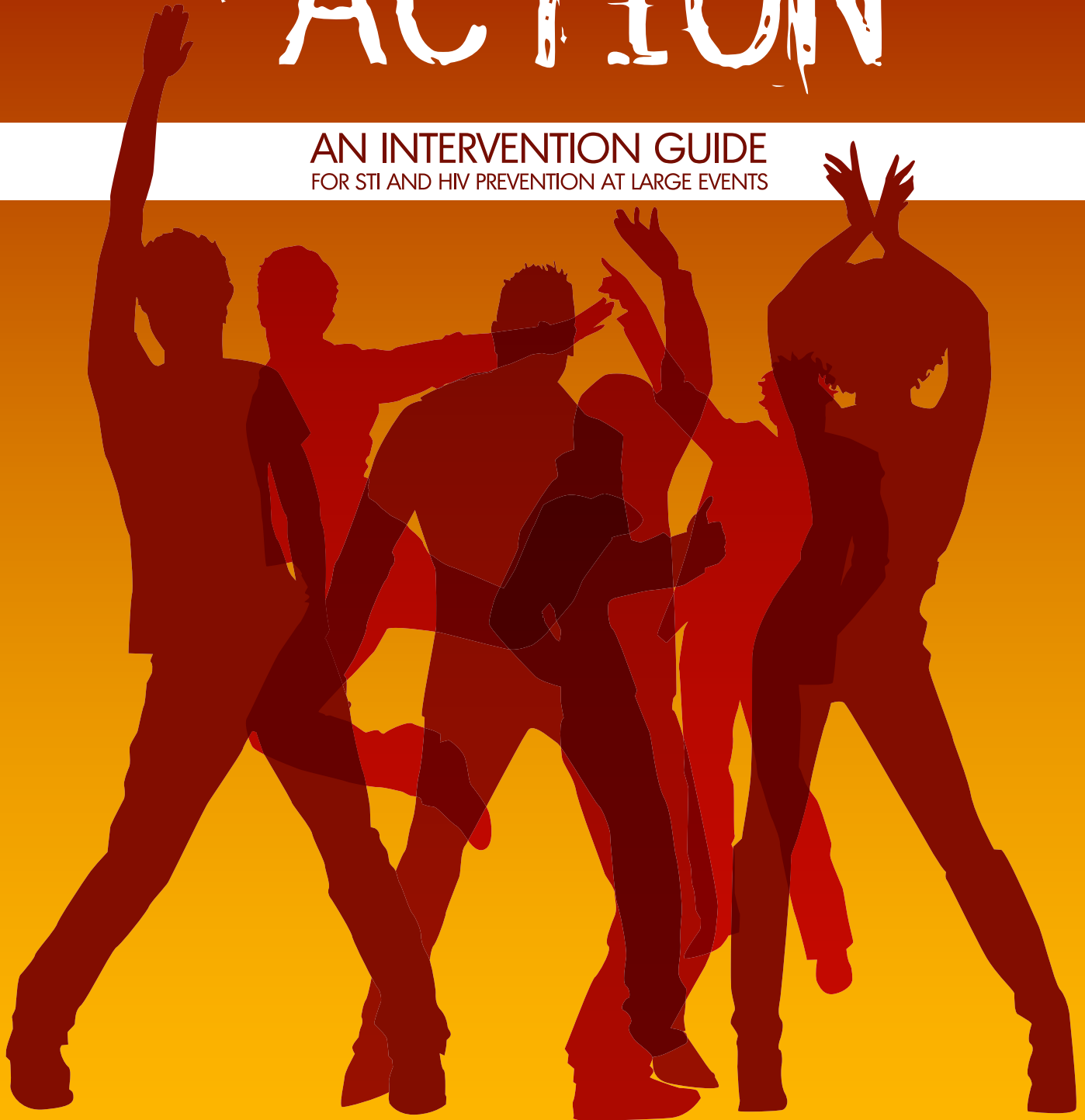


From
to

CONCEPT ACTION

AN INTERVENTION GUIDE
FOR STI AND HIV PREVENTION AT LARGE EVENTS



SÉRO ZÉRO

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Preface

Action Séro Zéro (“Séro Zéro”) is a non-profit community-based organization that has been working to improve the health of gay and bisexual men in Montreal since 1990. In addition to offering a variety of programs and services oriented by a commitment to transparency, respect, and an open-minded attitude, we have developed considerable expertise in community-based research and have undertaken a number of innovative social marketing campaigns.

In 2005, Séro Zéro launched an intervention project aimed at reducing the transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections (STIs) in the context of large events such as circuit parties, cultural festivals, and athletic competitions that bring together high numbers of participants from different regions of the world. This project has three main goals: 1) to collaborate with event promoters and other partners in the gay community; 2) to raise awareness of health-related risks related to HIV/AIDS and other STIs and to promote safer sex practices among event participants; 3) to encourage STI and HIV testing and facilitate access to health services prior to, during, and following the large-scale events that take place in our community.

To achieve these goals, we undertook 6 key activities:

- 1) A review of recent literature (research reports, journal articles, and other relevant publications) dealing with issues raised by large events held within the gay community in relation to STI and HIV prevention;
- 2) Partnering with various groups in the health care field and with event promoters in the community;
- 3) Developing intervention tools and activities aimed at preventing STI and HIV transmission;
- 4) Testing these tools and activities over the course of three major events that took place in Montreal in the summer and fall of 2006: the 1st World Outgames, Divers/Cité 2006, and the 2006 Black & Blue Festival;
- 5) A formative evaluation of the resulting intervention model aimed at improving our outreach and activities at future events;
- 6) Production of this document *From Concept to Action: An Intervention Guide for STI and HIV Prevention at Large Events*.

Why was this intervention guide developed?

A range of researchers have observed and commented upon the growth in tourism associated with large-scale events and major festivals catering to the gay community and the frequency with which some event participants seem inclined to take health-related risks (such as engaging in unprotected anal sex). In the face of a growing number of international events such as the 1st World Outgames and the ongoing popularity of circuit parties (see definition, p. 10), we identified the need for an intervention guide to address health issues associated with these events that could support the development of appropriate STI and HIV prevention activities. This guide has been developed to fill a gap, given the lack of intervention models specifically adapted to the context of large events. The approach it proposes was informed by a number of studies that examine factors associated with sexual risk-taking among participants who attend large events.

These studies have suggested that in some cases, there is a link between the reasons why people attend large events and the likelihood that they will engage in risky sexual practices. In particular, the prospect of using recreational drugs and having sex, as well as an overall desire to feel a sense of well-being, appear to be underlying factors that, in motivating many men to attend events such as circuit parties, are also associated

with sexual risk taking¹. By contrast, no link has been established between risky sex and the desire to go to these events just to listen to music or to be surrounded by friends. Thus, if we compare participants motivated by music and friends to those searching for heightened sensations linked to sex and drug use, it is the latter group that appears more likely to engage in risky behaviours through their attendance at large events.

Drug and alcohol consumption appears to have a particularly strong link to sexual risk-taking. A number of studies have suggested that substance use is significantly greater during weekends when large-scale events take place compared to weekends without such events². This increased substance use has been linked to an increase in unprotected anal sex³. As such, a number of researchers have underscored the necessity of addressing drug use issues as part of a broader prevention effort, despite the evident challenge of discouraging participants at these events from using drugs.

¹ Mansergh, Colfax, Marks, Rader, Guzman and Buchbinder, 2001; Mattison, Ross, Wolfson and Franklin, 2001.

² Colfax, Mansergh, Guzman, Vittinghogg, Marks, Rader and Buchbinder, 2001; Mansergh et al., 2001.

³ Lee, Galanter, Dermatis and McDowell, 2003; Mansergh et al., 2001; Mattison et al., 2001.

Some fieldwork has also brought to the fore a phenomenon of “disindividuation” specific to large, festive events where drugs are consumed and that appears to be a precursor to sexual risk-taking. Drawing on social psychology, Ghaziani and Cook (2005) argue that the gathering of individuals into large crowds can lessen participants’ self-awareness. Lewis and Ross (1995) suggest that circuit parties create an enhanced atmosphere of anonymity, given that most participants are similarly dressed. This sense of group belonging can distance participants from the personal norms and behavioural constraints that they might generally observe in other contexts, leading instead to more impulsive behaviour. In short, these models of social psychology suggest that in certain group contexts, people’s individual identity can be suppressed in favour of a group identity⁴. In a context of heightened anonymity, event participants may therefore feel a diminished sense of responsibility for their sexual behaviour. As the number of people attending an event increases, so may the tendency for participants to take risks⁵.

Researchers have also proposed increased libido and cognitive distortion as two other factors that can help to explain sexual risk-taking during large events. The cocktail of recreational drugs that many participants consume, along with an underlying motivation to experience heightened sensations, can lead to an increase in libido⁶ and

a greater possibility that participants will engage in unprotected sex. Cognitive distortions such as an erroneous perception of one’s ambient or personal reality may also result in participants being less inclined to engage in safer sex practices⁷. Despite the fact that a large segment of event attendees are aware that risky behaviours increase the likelihood of HIV and STI transmission, this knowledge can be temporarily forgotten or left aside in the party context. Participants may temporarily dispense with rational thinking; they may feel invincible, set aside concerns related to HIV/AIDS, and engage in risky practices that they would avoid in other situations.

Drawing on these findings, Séro Zéro has developed this intervention guide both to assist with our own intervention activities and also in the hope that it will be of use to other organizations. *From Concept to Action: An Intervention Guide for STI and HIV Prevention at Large Events* offers an approach informed by other intervention planning guides⁸, by a range of research undertaken in the context of circuit parties and other large events attended by gay and bisexual men⁹, and by Séro Zéro’s practical experience in undertaking intervention activities in the context of these events.

We hope that you will enjoy reading this document and that it will assist you in the development of your own approach and activities.

⁴ Smith and Mackie, 2000.

⁵ Ghaziani and Cook, 2005; Lewis and Ross, 1995.

⁶ Ghaziani and Cook, 2005.

⁷ Ghaziani and Cook, 2005.

⁸ Bartholomew, Parcel, Nell and Gottlieb, 2006; Green and Kreuter, 1999; Pelletier, 2001; Pinault and Daveluy, 1986.

⁹ Colfax et al., 2001; Ghaziani and Cook, 2005; Lee et al., 2003; Mansergh et al., 2001.

Introduction

The aim of this intervention guide

From Concept to Action: An Intervention Guide for STI and HIV Prevention at Large Events presents a way to develop and implement intervention activities aimed at reducing risky sexual practices among gay and bisexual men during events that bring together large numbers of participants.

This guide is intended to serve as a tool for community groups working to prevent STI and HIV transmission, for event promoters, and for others involved in prevention and health promotion work. It does not enumerate an “ideal” list of intervention activities nor does it contain “magic recipes.” Rather, it offers an approach to developing, implementing, and evaluating intervention activities that can promote risk reduction in the context of large events. We have chosen to provide a more-or-less generic planning framework instead of a specific list of activities so that you may customize your approach to suit the context in which you work. The examples referred to in this guide are based on our experiences in our own community; you will no doubt want to adapt them to respond to the needs of your community and the populations with whom you work.

Using this guide

This guide contains six sections :

1. Selecting which events to target;
2. Analyzing participant trajectories;
3. Collaboration and partnerships;
4. Developing intervention strategies;
5. Implementing your plan;
6. Evaluating your activities.

Each part is introduced using a three-part overview outlining objectives, key steps, and a central concept (“Rule of Thumb”) that is helpful to keep in mind. Each key step is then elaborated in more detail, offering techniques and approaches for developing and implementing intervention activities and examples based on work we have undertaken at Séro Zéro.

We encourage you to adapt the steps proposed in this guide so that they meet the needs of the settings in which you work and the populations you target. Developing an intervention campaign is a process that improves each time you do it, requiring back-and-forth flow between the different stages of your plan¹⁰. Proper planning takes time and requires patience and organization. As you move through the process proposed in this guide, you will no doubt want to review previous stages in order to adjust certain details. Rather than proposing a definitive intervention structure, this document is instead intended to serve as a departure point for your own reflections on how to undertake STI and HIV prevention activities in the context of the events that take place in your community, allowing you to adjust our approach to suit your purposes.

For more information on the planning and implementation of prevention activities, we invite you to consult the bibliography at the end of this document.

¹⁰ Bartholomew, et al., 2006; Green and Kreuter, 1999; Pelletier, 2001; Pinault and Daveluy, 1986.

Glossary

1st WORLD OUTGAMES

International sporting event for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people and their friends, held in Montreal in the summer of 2006.

AIDS

Acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

BLACK & BLUE FESTIVAL, MONTREAL

Circuit party held in Montreal during the October long weekend, primarily promoted to gay and bisexual men.

CIRCUIT PARTIES

Large-scale dance events, often held during long weekends (i.e.: Montreal's Black & Blue Festival).

COLLABORATION

Two organizations working together on an intervention campaign.

HIV

Human immunodeficiency virus.

LARGE EVENT

Major cultural, festive or sporting event held over the course of one or several consecutive days, attended by large numbers of participants from the local community and other regions / countries.

MAIN EVENT

Primary attraction drawing the highest number of participants, often accompanied by a series of secondary events.

PARTICIPANT TRAJECTORY

Manner in which many or most event participants progress from one venue to another over the course of a large event.

PARTNERSHIP

Collaboration of equal weight between two organizations working together on an intervention campaign.

PROMOTER

Individual or company that develops, organizes and promotes events.

SECONDARY EVENTS

Additional, smaller scale activities held in conjunction with a main event.

STI

Sexually transmitted or blood-borne infection (sometimes also referred to as "STBI").



Part 1

Selecting which events to target

Objective

Choosing the events at which you will undertake prevention activities.



The first step in this guide consists of **selecting the events that are relevant** to your organization. This step will help you to identify the events scheduled for the upcoming year that most merit your attention. Intervening effectively at every cultural, festive and sporting event attended by members of your community may be next to impossible, so it is probably necessary to make choices based on available budget, human resources and other factors.

We suggest three steps to help you create your list:

1. Draw up a preliminary list of upcoming events;
2. Create selection criteria based on your organization's mandate;
3. Apply the criteria to your preliminary list of events.

Each of these steps will help you in planning intervention activities that have the greatest impact in terms of preventing STI and HIV transmission.

This section of the guide responds to the following questions:

- Where should we focus our prevention efforts?
- What are the most pertinent upcoming events based on our organization's mandate and our knowledge of the community?
- What populations or sub-groups do we most want to reach?

Rule of thumb:

You can't be everywhere at once! Evaluate the various upcoming events, and make your choices based on the pertinence of each event in relation to your prevention efforts.

Part 1, Step 1

Making a preliminary list of upcoming events

Step 1 involves **making a preliminary list of large events** scheduled for the coming year (or season) in your community. Do your best to list every event, including those that may not ultimately meet your selection criteria. This bit of brainstorming will allow you to develop a complete inventory of all possible events that might warrant being targeted for prevention activities.

You can build your list by going online to the websites of various event promoters and by consulting newspapers and magazines that feature advertisements for upcoming events. Along with the name of the event and its date, be sure to note the name of the promoter and the type of event (cultural, festive, or athletic) as well as the clientele it aims to attract. This additional information will be helpful further along when you are selecting the most relevant events. The chart below can be used to draw up your list.

Event name	Date	Promoter	Type of event	Clientele
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				

Part 1, Step 2

Establishing selection criteria based on your group's mandate

Once you have drawn up a preliminary list, you can **establish selection criteria** to help you choose the events most relevant to your prevention efforts. Your criteria should be based on your organization's mandate (and, of course, the populations(s) that your organization serves). For example, Séro Zéro's mandate is to provide prevention and health promotion support and services for gay and bisexual men in Montreal. Our selection criteria are based on this mandate and we focus our efforts on events organized by and for the gay community.

Your selection criteria should be simple, succinct and selective, since they are the main "filter" that will enable you to choose which events to target. Obviously, it will help if your organization's mandate is clear and explicit. If this isn't the case, this step might also serve as an opportunity to pause and reflect on the goals of your organization and its intervention efforts!

Here's a sample chart to help you generate your selection criteria:

Selection criteria	Description
- Population	E.g.: Gay and bisexual men should be the primary population attending the event.
- Size	E.g.: Event should attract at least 5000 participants.
- Sexual risk-taking factors	E.g.: A significant number of event participants will likely consume drugs or alcohol, and some may engage in unprotected anal sex.
- _____	
- _____	
- _____	
- _____	
- _____	

Part 1, Step 3

Applying the criteria

This third step deals with **applying selection criteria** to your preliminary list of events. Here, your objective is to identify the events that most warrant intervention in terms of HIV and STI prevention. Upon completing this step, you should be able to draw up a final list of events that will be the focus of your prevention efforts over the coming year.

We've included a sample chart below to help you make the final selection of which events to target. Transfer all of the events from your preliminary list to the column on the left. To the right, include as many columns as you need to cover your selection criteria. Next, for each event, indicate "yes" or "no" depending on whether or not the event meets each of the criteria. The events that meet the greatest number of criteria are the ones you should choose.

Event	Selection criteria			
	Criterion #1	Criterion #2	Criterion #3	Criterion #4
1. _____	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no
2. _____	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no
3. _____	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no
4. _____	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no
5. _____	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no
6. _____	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no
7. _____	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no

Part 1

Planning Chart: Selected Events

Here is a sample chart you can use to transcribe the final list of events you have selected. In addition to noting the basic information (name, date, promoter, type of event and clientele), list the event's theme if there is one. This information will help to guide your efforts at a later stage when you are planning a more specific strategy for each event (see Part 4). For example, if the theme of the event is futuristic, then your intervention workers might decide to disguise themselves as characters from the future.

Event name	Date	Promoter	Type of event	Clientele	Theme
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					

Part 2

Analyzing participant trajectories



Objective

Extending the reach of your prevention activities to include secondary events and related venues.



The second part of this guide consists of **analyzing participant trajectories** (see definition p. 10) that characterize the events you will be targeting. This will enable you to extend your intervention efforts to include not only the main event, but also important secondary events (see definition p. 10) and venues that participants may be visiting before or after these events. The goal is to ensure that you undertake your activities – and communicate your message – when and where participants will be the most receptive to them.

For example, at Séro Zéro we have observed that many gay and bisexual men attending the Black & Blue Festival progress through the following trajectory:

1. they check-in to a hotel or bed-and-breakfast and drop off their luggage;
2. they visit the neighbourhood to see what shops and other conveniences are nearby;
3. they eat in a restaurant or café;
4. they shop and check out a few sights;
5. they go to happy hour at a bar in the Gay Village;
6. they return to their lodgings to rest and change clothes;
7. they attend either a secondary event or the main event or both;
8. they go to an after-hours party or a bathhouse;
9. they return to their lodgings to get some sleep.

Based on our observations of this general routine, we have developed a range of activities aimed at reaching one of our target groups – tourists – at various points and stops along their path.

We suggest two ways to analyze your clientele's event-related trajectories:

1. The identification of key secondary events associated with the main event;
2. Consulting local resource people and publications to map out the most likely trajectories that event participants will follow.

This section answers the following questions:

- What are the places that participants will be visiting before and after the main event?
- Where and when will they be most receptive to your messages and activities?

Rule of thumb:

Participants will not be consistently receptive to your messages and activities at all times and places. Find out where they hang out before and after an event. Taking the time to carefully think about this will help you to organize and position your intervention efforts for maximum impact.

Part 2, Step 1

Distinguishing primary and secondary events

Once you have prepared a final list of the upcoming events you will be targeting (see Planning Chart at the end of Part 1), you will need to make some further choices in terms of the **programming specific to each event**. In many cases, there will be smaller, secondary events held in conjunction with the main attraction that you will need to take into consideration as part of your planning. It is a good idea to assess the full range and type of activities that will be taking place in order to identify the best places to reach your target population.

Promoters' websites and online event listings are often a good place to start. Once you have found the necessary information, list it in the chart below. You may find that some of the secondary events have their own themes – these are worth noting down as they will be useful at a later stage when you are planning your intervention activities.

Event	Main attraction	Secondary events	Sub-themes	Promoters
1.		1. 2. 3. 4.		
2..		1. 2. 3. 4.		

Part 2, Step 2

Gathering input on participant trajectories

The next step involves **consulting with a range of resource people** who can provide you with details on the routines and trajectories that participants typically follow when attending the events you are targeting. You should aim to get a variety of viewpoints on the best times and places to reach your clientele. Consulting with event organizers and with other local partners involved in HIV and STI prevention can also help you to get a good picture of crowd size and attendance at the main event and various secondary events. The resource people whom you consult can probably also provide you with other useful observations and information regarding how people progress from one venue to another and the times and places when they are likely to be most receptive to prevention and health promotion activities.

You can gather such input through interviews and also through more informal meetings and discussions. You will likely also want to consult with members of the population you are targeting, as well as with bar and hotel owners, community workers, and health care professionals. These discussions can assist you in anticipating where the crowds will be and which venues and events are likely to be the busiest and most popular.

Use the chart below to map out the trajectory you expect most participants to follow in attending an upcoming event you are planning to target. This will provide you with a basic schedule that you can use to plan your intervention activities. In the column on the left, list the approximate time that most participants are likely to be present at each location or venue. When the list is complete, you will have a good sense of how a typical participant might progress chronologically from one location to another over the course of the overall event. In the column on the right, note the names of contact people (owners, managers, promoters) associated with each location or venue. This will provide you with a list of some of the key people with whom you should begin to develop a working relationship (see Part 3).

Time	Location or venue	Contact person

A man in a dark suit and white shirt is standing on the left side of the page, gesturing with his right hand towards a large white graphic that resembles a piece of paper with torn edges. The graphic contains the text 'Step 3' and 'Collaboration and partnerships'. The background is a solid dark blue color.

Step 3

Collaboration and partnerships

Objectives

- Obtaining a range of viewpoints on how to undertake intervention activities during large events;
- Obtaining access to events in order to undertake your activities;
- Identifying partners who can contribute to the development of your activities, and agreeing on who will do what.



The third part of this guide focuses on fostering **collaboration and partnerships** and establishing good lines of communication among key stakeholders such as promoters, community workers and health care professionals.

These groups can be sources of valuable expertise that will enhance the development of your intervention activities, and they can also help to ensure that you gain access to the events you wish to target. Contacting and working with promoters at the early stages of planning your HIV and STI prevention strategy will increase the likelihood that they will be receptive to your ideas and will grant special permission for members of your outreach team to be on-site during the event. Developing links with other partners, such as health care professionals, can help to widen the scope of intervention activities undertaken before, during, and after an event (e.g. holding an STI testing and hepatitis vaccination blitz aimed at members of the local community prior to the arrival of tourists).

We suggest two steps:

1. Raising awareness among potential collaborators and partners;
2. Involving event promoters.

This part of the guide will answer the following questions:

- Which stakeholders can help in the development and implementation of intervention and health promotion activities?
- How can you get promoters interested in your activities and ensure that they provide you with direct access to their event?

Rule of thumb:

You don't have to do everything by yourself! Invite others to become involved: community organizations, health care institutions, event promoters and tourist industry representatives (hotel owners, travel agents and wholesalers, etc.) Ask for their input and help in developing your intervention activities. Setting up a solid network of collaborators and partners will improve the quality of your activities and help you gain special access to the main and secondary events.

Part 3, Step 1

Identifying potential partners

This step involves **raising the awareness** of those you think should be involved in ensuring that prevention efforts are undertaken at the events you are targeting. You can identify potential partners based on the venues and businesses that will be catering to event participants and by drawing on partnerships you have previously developed through other projects. You will need to explain your objectives in a compelling way and promote understanding of the health issues and concerns that need to be addressed in the context of large events. This should provide opportunities to convince potential partners of the importance of working together on a concerted prevention and health promotion campaign.

In many cases, strong partnerships and effective collaboration can be fostered on a purely informal basis. In some instances, however, it may be helpful to create a more formal task force or committee to define the roles and responsibilities of the various partners on a long-term basis, plan the work ahead, and ensure that everyone is moving in the same direction.

Why do large events require collaboration?

Collaborating with other partners enables you to:

- Decide on the type and sequence of intervention activities that will be undertaken;
- Develop a common vision for the work at hand;
- Determine what equipment and supplies are needed (e.g.: condoms, lubricant, information pamphlets);
- Identify the medical services that should be offered;
- Identify information and promotional materials that need to be developed and decide on their design;
- Discuss how prevention activities should be undertaken and do step-by-step planning;
- Determine services that should be provided and special activities that should be undertaken prior to and following a large event (i.e. awareness activities, testing and vaccination blitzes).

Part 3, Step 2

Involving event promoters

The next step consists of **soliciting the participation of event promoters** in the activities you are planning. In most cases, you will need their collaboration in order to gain special access to event venues so as to reach participants on-site during an event. Emphasizing the mutual advantages of partnering with your organization is a good way to get promoters interested. As much as possible, try to present a potential partnership as a “win-win” situation for the promoter. Pointing out the benefits that your prevention and health promotion work will bring to the promoter will usually set the stage for a good partnership.

Making your pitch

To capture the interest of promoters, you may find it helpful to create a short **document** that describes in a dynamic way your goals and the activities you are proposing. This document should also outline the importance of preventing HIV and other STIs in the context of large events. Be creative and try to come up with a format that “sells” your project.

Formalizing a partnership

Drawing up a written **agreement** to be signed by the various partners with whom you are collaborating can be a good way to ensure that everybody is clear about how you will be working together. Although not legally binding, this type of document can help to establish the roles and responsibilities expected of each partner as well as the circumstances under which partners may decide to withdraw from the agreement.

The following list covers most of the points you will want to include in a written agreement with an event promoter, and can serve as a basis for drawing up your own agreements:

- Subject or purpose of the agreement (name of event, type(s) of intervention being proposed);
- General information (names of the partners involved, contact info, resource people, date of the agreement, etc.);
- Roles of the various partners;
- Responsibilities expected of the various partners;
- Conditions under which the agreement will be carried out;
- Timeline;
- Conditions for withdrawing from the agreement;
- Partners’ signatures.

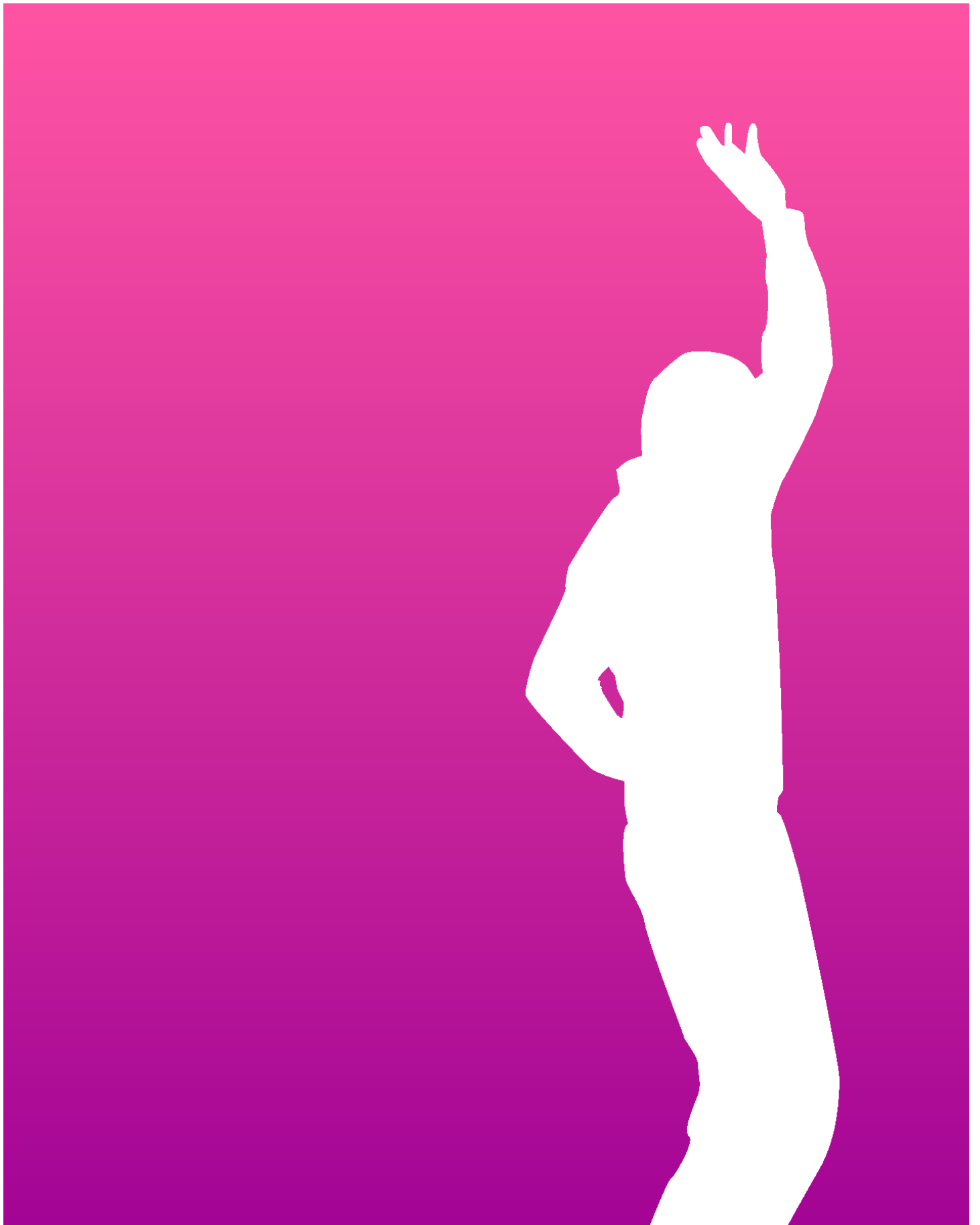


Step 4

Developing intervention strategies

Objectives

- Increasing the impact of your prevention messages by linking them to the theme of the event;
- Reaching event participants who are most at risk of HIV and STI transmission;
- Reaching participants when they will be most receptive to your activities.



The fourth part of this guide deals with **developing intervention strategies** appropriate to the events you are targeting. Now that you have decided where, when and with whom to undertake your activities (see Parts 1, 2 and 3), it's time to think about how to undertake them.

An important consideration at this stage involves how to develop materials and activities that are inspired by and relate to the event's theme. You will also want to determine how to reach the most "at risk" or vulnerable participants at times and in places when they will be receptive to your message. Rather than undertaking a gamut of disconnected activities with little regard to optimal timing, this phase in your planning will enable you to develop an integrated plan to maximize the reach and impact of your various efforts.

We propose the following three steps:

1. Prepare a communications plan;
2. Develop prevention activities;
3. Identify an evaluation method.

This part of the guide answers the following questions:

- What messages will we be communicating to event participants?
- What activities will be effective in reaching them?
- What do we hope to achieve?

Rule of thumb:

Take the time to think about the prevention strategies you wish to implement. Carefully planning your strategy is a good use of time! Putting in place a solid plan will make your life easier when it comes time to carry out your activities (see Part 5).

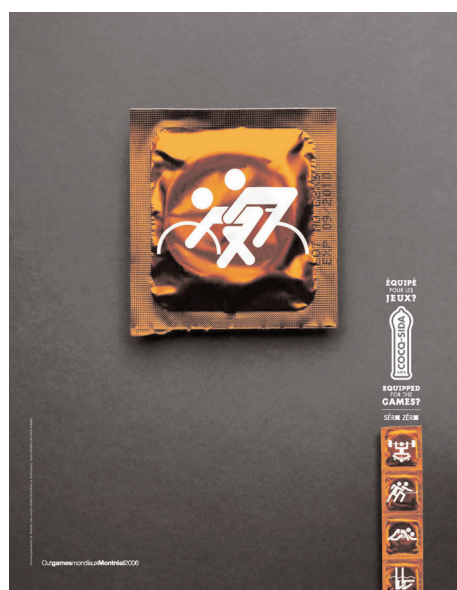
Part 4, Step 1

Preparing a communications plan

This step involves **preparing a communications plan** to cover the duration of the event. Your communications strategy will likely include a range of elements such as advertising (e.g. posters that promote a prevention message), public relations (e.g. sending out press releases to the media) and creating online resources such as a web site. Planning your communications activities will allow you to identify the best ways to communicate HIV and STI prevention messages to event participants. Linking your messages to the theme of the event, and communicating them through outreach activities that you undertake on-site during the event, can make people more receptive to your messages and help to maximize their impact.

Your communications plan should also include a detailed timeline. You will need to identify the key points in time when it is most important to disseminate prevention information and messages, and to decide on the key communication activities that should be undertaken before, during and after the event.

In short, the goal of this step is to get your prevention messages across to those you most wish to reach, and to promote your organization and its mission.



An image is worth a thousand words...

To give one example, on the occasion of the 1st World Outgames, Séro Zéro collaborated with several partners in the development of an original poster campaign to promote safer sex and condom use among gay and bisexual men attending this event.

The poster implemented several aspects of our communications strategy: the visual of a condom inside its wrapper served as a reminder to practice safer sex; the use of sporting event pictograms provided a humorous nod to the event's athletic theme; and the silhouettes of men having anal sex offered a message clearly directed to our main target audience, the gay community.

If an image is worth a thousand words, what is the value of an ad campaign?

Obviously, not every organization can spend large sums of money to design and produce a sophisticated advertising campaign. However, it is possible to put together a range of interesting communications activities that require only minimal resources (financial, material, and human) while still having a significant impact. Allowing sufficient time to consider your options and weigh all the factors is especially important if your resources are limited. If your activities are to be held during an international event, for example, you may need to create (and possibly translate) prevention materials appropriate to members of the various linguistic and ethno-cultural communities who will be attending the event.

Part 4, Step 2

Developing prevention activities

In this step, you will turn your attention toward **developing prevention activities**. This is the point at which you come up with the activities that you'll use to reach participants at various locations during the events you targeted in Part 2. This step will help you to come up with a solid plan for rolling out these activities. We suggest you divide the work into 4 tasks:

1. Decide on your objectives for behaviour change;
2. Evaluate what resources are available to you;
3. Develop your prevention activities;
4. Recruit and train volunteers.

1: Decide on your objectives for behaviour change

In the first instance, you'll need to identify objectives to help you to structure your prevention efforts. This will provide a framework to guide the development of your activities, defining what your ultimate aims are and how best to achieve them. How should you come up with your objectives? (An objective for behaviour change is a short phrase that describes the shift you want to promote or facilitate among event participants through your prevention activities). The objectives you identify should be fairly simple and straightforward. They should be concise, contain active verbs and clearly describe the behaviour the target group should adopt as a result of your intervention work.

As an example, here are the objectives that Séro Zéro established for the intervention work we undertook during the 1st World Outgames:

- Improve understanding of HIV/AIDS and STIs among gay and bisexual men who attend large events in Montreal;
- Increase the visibility of a safer sex norm within the various social venues where gay and bisexual men spend time during large events;
- Raise awareness of the importance of HIV/STI testing and hepatitis vaccinations within this target group.

You may want to use "brainstorming" techniques to come up with a preliminary list of objectives, and then refine and finalize them in consultation with your partners.

In short, this task allows you to determine specific changes your prevention work aims to achieve within the overall framework of reducing HIV and STI transmission.

2: Evaluating available resources

Once you've decided on your goals for change, the next key task involves evaluating the resources that are available to you – human, financial and material. This includes identifying how many staff members your organization has available to undertake outreach work at the events you are targeting, confirming the budget you have available to cover expenses, and listing out the materials and supplies to which you have access. This will provide you with a clear picture of your capabilities and guide your decision-making in terms of what activities to undertake.

3: Developing prevention activities

With the completion of these initial tasks, you can now move on to the third – and most vital – component of your plan: identifying the actual activities you will undertake in order to achieve your objectives. This is the point at which you decide what to do in order to reach event participants and select the specific locations where your activities will take place. The activities you develop should be based on the objectives for change that you have identified. The theme of the event you are targeting can also be a good source of inspiration – developing activities that link to or are inspired by this theme can help to integrate your prevention efforts more directly into the event, making it easier to communicate with participants and have a positive impact.

You will likely want to prepare a logistical plan for each activity to confirm the details of “who, when, where, and how.” Key elements to consider include the human resources that will be required, the optimal time and date for the activity, where the activity will take place, and your method (materials you require, content and messaging, ethical protocols etc.)

Using existing activities for inspiration

Rather than re-inventing the wheel, take the time to review the activities you typically undertake on a day-to-day basis in your community. You may have some ready-made ideas that can be easily adapted and updated to fit the theme of the event.

Here are a few examples:

- Holding an STI testing and hepatitis vaccination blitz prior to the event;
- Having a prevention message printed on event tickets;
- Distributing condoms and prevention material before, during and after the event;
- Street theatre activities, e.g. representing each of the STIs as a character (“Mr. HIV,” “Miss Syphilis” etc.), dressing up in colourful costumes to engage passers-by in conversation and communicate your prevention messages;
- On-site prevention counselling in locations where sex takes place such as saunas or sex clubs.

Develop new activities that are inspired by the theme of the event

Think of original ways to get close to and interact with participants, given that they may not be especially receptive to your prevention activities and messages. How can you attract their attention? Thematic activities that stimulate interest and engagement through playfulness and humour are a good way to go.

4: Recruiting and training volunteers

Now that you have identified the activities that you will be undertaking, it's time to launch a call for volunteers! Integrating volunteers into your efforts can greatly contribute to the success of your activities. To optimize volunteer involvement, be specific when stating what you expect of your volunteers, and offer them an appropriate framework within which their duties are clearly defined.

Volunteer recruitment

It is not necessary to spend lots of money on an expensive recruitment campaign in order to attract the volunteers you need. A little creativity can often go a long way.

Here are a few ideas to inspire you:

- Post a recruitment banner on your website;
- Distribute handbills and posters in venues where community members and potential volunteers hang out and socialize;
- Send an email invitation to all the contacts in your organization's address list or database, and ask your partners to do the same.

Volunteer training

It's important to provide your volunteers with some kind of training since most will not have a background in outreach or prevention work. And happily so! Including a diversity of people with a range of backgrounds in the implementation of your activities will enrich your efforts and help to increase their impact. The training you offer should familiarize volunteers with the goals of your intervention work, the results you wish to achieve, and the activities you will be undertaking. You should also provide some tips on how to approach and interact with event participants and give an overview of any informational and promotional materials you will be asking your volunteers to distribute.

Part 4, Step 3

Identifying an evaluation method

At the same time as you plan your communication and intervention strategies, we recommend that you also **identify an evaluation method**. This will allow you to gauge the effectiveness of your efforts in order to improve them. It will also provide you with additional guidance in the selection of your intervention activities. In clarifying the results you want to attain, you will gain additional insight regarding how to achieve these results.

Planning your evaluation

Good evaluations require good planning! Take the time to think carefully about who should be responsible for undertaking your evaluation. Identify the information you want to obtain, the people you want to consult to obtain this information, and the evaluation method you will use. Here are some options to consider in planning an evaluation of your intervention activities:

Who should perform the evaluation?

One option is to delegate this task to the person responsible for planning and implementing the intervention activities you will be undertaking, but bear in mind that this person may not be entirely objective when it comes to evaluating his or her own project! The best option is usually to involve an external evaluator who is not directly involved in the project or your organization. However, the cost of hiring an evaluator can be prohibitive – especially if you want this person to come on board at the beginning of the process (e.g. to assist with determining objectives and identifying the means to achieve them, etc.). You will need to weigh the pros and cons when choosing an evaluator and base this decision on your schedule and your budget.

What should be evaluated?

Here are some basic questions that can help your organization decide on what to evaluate:

- Do you want to know if participants appreciated your intervention (evaluation of satisfaction)?
- Do you want to know if you achieved your goals (impact evaluation)?
- Do you want to know if your intended process was adhered to (formative evaluation)?

Each of these questions will lead to a different type of evaluation, both in terms of how the evaluation is planned and the way in which it is carried out. For more information, consult the publications dealing with evaluation methods cited in the bibliography¹¹.

Whom should you target for evaluation?

In addition, you will need to identify the people who will be consulted in undertaking your evaluation. For example, do you want to obtain feedback primarily from event participants, or from event promoters and other partners? Do you want the opinions of community members or those of your staff and volunteers? The answers to these questions will depend on the information you are looking for and the type of evaluation you wish to undertake.

What evaluation method should you use?

There are many ways to obtain the data you need to complete your evaluation. Common methods include questionnaires, interviews, discussions groups, activity logs, and observational notebooks. The data-collection method you choose will be closely linked to what you are evaluating and the type of evaluation you require. Take the time to think carefully about your evaluation objectives and how best to achieve them.

¹¹ Bartholomew, et al., 2006; Gaudreau, 2001; Green and Kreuter, 1999; Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Patton, 1990; Pelletier, 2001; Pinault and Daveluy, 1986.

Step 4

Planning chart: Intervention Strategy Overview

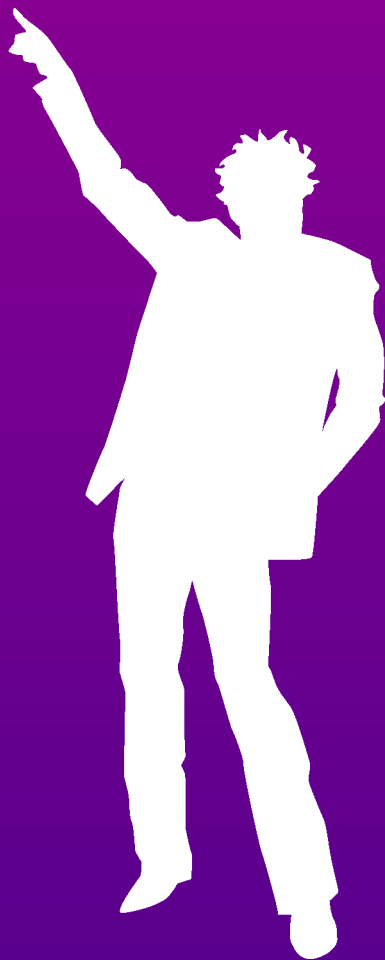
Completing this chart will provide you with a useful overview of the intervention activities you have planned, including:

- **Venues** : locations where event participants will be congregating and where you will undertake your activities;
- **Activities** : the prevention activities ("recycled" or new) that you will be undertaking;
- **Timeline** : date, time and duration of each of the activities;
- **Objectives** : changes you hope will result from your activities;
- **Resources** : number of staff/volunteers (human resources), equipment and supplies (material resources) and budget (financial resources) required to undertake your activities;
- **Evaluation** : data you need to gather for your evaluation and the methods you will be using to collect it.

Events	Activities	Timeline	Objectives	Resources			Evaluation	
				Human	Material	Financial	Data required	Collection method
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								

Part 5

Implementing your plan



Objectives

- Encouraging participants to take an interest in HIV and STI prevention;
- Increasing access to and visibility of prevention materials and information.



Now that you have completed the necessary planning, the moment is at hand to carry out your intervention activities. The benefits of the planning you have done thus far should now become apparent. With a solid plan in hand, this stage of your project should go smoothly.

We suggest 4 steps that can be undertaken concurrently:

1. Carrying out your intervention activities;
2. Enhancing existing services;
3. Collecting data for evaluation purposes;
4. On-site observation of participant trajectories.

This part of the guide answers the following question:

- How can our intervention activities serve to capture the interest of event participants?

Rule of thumb:

There is no time to lose! It's time to implement the various activities you've been planning. Put yourself in the thick of things by engaging and interacting with event participants on their turf. Hand out information and materials that encourage them to react and ask you questions. Be dynamic, be creative and, most importantly, have fun!

Part 5, Step 1

Carrying out your activities

Not surprisingly, the first step at this stage is to **implement the intervention activities** you have developed. As suggested by the discussion of “participant trajectories” (see Part 2), it is important to avoid carrying out all of your activities at the same time in a single location. Spreading them out will, in most cases, be a better approach. You will likely want to undertake some of your activities in advance of the event (e.g. communications activities, hepatitis vaccination blitzes, having prevention messages printed on event tickets), some during the event (e.g. handing out condoms and flyers; street theatre activities), and still others once the event is over (e.g. testing blitzes).

It is also important to pay attention to the way in which your outreach staff and volunteers carry out the activities you have planned. While it may seem easy to hand out condoms or flyers to passers-by in the street, “people skills” such as the ability to quickly interact with event participants in a way that is both friendly and direct can make a big difference and help increase the impact of your efforts. These are key skills that you should aim to develop when you are training your volunteers (see Part 4, Step 2).

Engaging and interacting with participants in a meaningful way

While doing a good job of planning your intervention activities is important, it is even more crucial to make genuine connections with event participants once you begin carrying out your activities. Here are some tips that can help to capture people’s interest and allow you to engage with them in meaningful ways.

Go toward people

Don’t wait for people to come to you. The key to maximizing the impact of your activities is to go out and talk to participants at the event. A simple greeting like “Hi there, my name is (blank) and I work for (such and such) organization. I’m distributing condoms” is usually a good way to start. Listening carefully to how people respond and picking up on the verbal and physical cues (body language) they send your way can help guide your interaction with them in a way that they will find interesting and meaningful. Engaging with event participants in this way may require that you get past feelings of shyness and fear of rejection. These are normal feelings, but it is important to set them aside – go for it and see what happens!

In short, the success of your activities will depend to no small extent on the way the members of your outreach team communicate and engage with event participants.

Be dynamic and use your sense of humour

Remember that you are carrying out your activities in a festive context where people want to enjoy themselves and have fun. Capturing people's attention and getting them interested in your prevention work will require spirit, energy, and good humour. Do what you can to send out a positive vibe so people will want to meet and talk with you. Don't be afraid to make them laugh: wear a crazy costume, speak loudly and brashly and, most of all have fun!

Adapt how you communicate to your surroundings

In some situations, for example if loud music is playing, it may not be possible to have much of a conversation. Try to make contact using your eyes – this can be a very effective way to convey how important you believe your intervention activity to be, even if you say nothing. Obviously, this technique is not as far-reaching as an exchange of words, but it can still allow you to make a meaningful connection. You might also consider carrying around a sign (as in a silent film) or a dialogue balloon (as in a comic book) to get across your message. These playful elements can add a theatrical touch that attracts the attention of your target group.

In contexts where speaking is possible, address yourself to participants using language that is simple and clear. Avoid technical terms; just pass on the basic information. Adapt your tone and vocabulary to the people with whom you are interacting, and feel free to use the same slang and everyday terms that they use. The goal, after all, is to create a dialogue. You need to be sure that people understand you in order to get across your message!

Don't confront people who are unreceptive

It's quite possible that some of the people you encounter will not be very receptive to the activity you are undertaking. Some may even seem a bit hostile. Don't be insistent. Your job is not to confront or convince people, it is simply to provide a helpful service to those who are interested.

Step 5, Part 2

Enhancing existing services

Alongside the special activities that you have decided to undertake during an event, you may find it important to enhance, for the duration of the event, certain **services that your organization normally offers**. This can provide a relatively simple way to broaden your efforts and reach a greater number of participants. For example, if you already offer prevention counselling in Internet chat rooms, you could increase the number of hours per day that this service is available.

Enhancing your existing services can help you to reach a broader range of people, in particular those who may choose not to attend the main event but do participate in some of the secondary events or visit other popular venues such as bars or saunas along the typical participant trajectory (see Part 2). Use the chart below to determine which of your existing services might warrant some enhancement over the course of a particular event, both to reach participants attending the event and those spending time in secondary venues.

Existing services offered by your organization	Relevance	
	In terms of event theme	For populations attending main or secondary venues
1.	yes / no	yes / no
2.	yes / no	yes / no
3.	yes / no	yes / no
4.	yes / no	yes / no
5.	yes / no	yes / no
6.	yes / no	yes / no
7.	yes / no	yes / no

Part 5, Step 3

Collecting data for evaluation purposes

The next step of implementation involves **collecting data for evaluation purposes**. This is the moment at which you begin to put your evaluation plan into action (see Part 4, Step 3). In most cases, your organization's outreach staff and volunteers will be the people who are best placed to collect the data you require, given that they are out there on the frontlines! Data gathering can be done in different ways, ranging from observing and taking notes as your activities unfold to distributing an evaluation tool like a questionnaire.

For example, in evaluating the activities that Séro Zéro undertook in the summer of 2006, we printed a postcard that invited gay and bisexual men to participate in an online survey found on our website. The postcard was distributed in a variety of social and community venues with a view to reaching a large and diverse range of people. This proved to be an efficient technique for surveying our target group and evaluating our intervention activities, and we garnered nearly 230 responses.

It is usually best to conduct your evaluation at the same time as your intervention activities are taking place. The data you gather will be extremely useful when putting together your final evaluation report (see Part 6). Collecting evaluation data is an investment that will pay off, helping you to improve the activities that you will be undertaking at future events.

Part 5, Step 4

On-site observation of participant trajectories

As you carry out the activities you have planned for an event, you should also consider undertaking some impromptu **on-site observation of participant trajectories**. This will allow you to see for yourself how the event is unfolding and whether participants are hanging out in venues or locations not listed in the official program. Leave your note papers and computer at the office and put yourself in the thick of things to see what participants are actually doing. Your observations will help you understand where participants are really going and may suggest improvements or changes you need to make for the next event.

The following chart can help you to structure your observations. Note the location in which you undertake each observation, the time, the approximate number of participants as well as certain characteristics of the people you observe (sex, age, etc.). This information will help you to develop an updated “map” of participant trajectories and the various, secondary locations and venues that people visit in and around the main event.

Locations	Time	Number of people	Participant characteristics	Notes
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				



Step 6

Evaluating intervention activities

Objectives

- Evaluating the quality of the activities you undertook;
- Improving your future efforts;
- Drawing lessons from your observations and your achievements.



The sixth and final part of this guide deals with **conducting an evaluation** of your intervention activities with a view to completing an overall review of your planning and implementation process. Undertaking this evaluation will enable you to adjust your goals and improve certain procedures and activities in preparation for the next event. The basis for this review should be the evaluation plan you put together during the planning process (see Part 4, Step 3).

We recommend two main steps:

1. Conducting a debriefing session;
2. Preparing an evaluation report.

This component of the guide provides answers to the following questions:

- Did participants appreciate the activities that we undertook at this event?
- Did our activities meet their objectives?
- What changes or improvements do we need to make for the next time?
- What have we learned from our experience at this event?

Rule of thumb:

Evaluation leads to better interventions! Take the time to do a thorough review in order to improve your activities at upcoming events.

Part 6, Step 1

Conducting a debriefing session

In the first instance, it is usually helpful to conduct a **debriefing** session or “post mortem” to assess the success of your intervention activities. You will likely want to consult staff members, volunteers, as well as the partners with whom you collaborated in order to obtain a full range of feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of your planning and implementation process.

One of the simplest ways to undertake this review is to organize a special staff meeting during which each person is invited to share his or her observations and comments on how the intervention activities went. A note of caution: be careful not to let this discussion degenerate into a settling of accounts! Every comment should be heard, but those participating should be encouraged to provide criticism that is constructive and respectful of others. The overall goal should be to strengthen your team. You will probably want to invite volunteers and key partners to join in the discussion, since their role is important and they will likely have valuable observations and insights to share.

A few questions to jump-start the discussion

- How would you describe your intervention experiences over the course of this event?
- What were the strengths of the intervention activities that we undertook?
- What improvements could be made in preparation for future events?

Part 6, Step 2

Preparing an evaluation report

As a concluding step in your overall planning and implementation process, your organization should **prepare an evaluation report** that highlights both the strengths and the weaknesses of your process. The report should include recommendations aimed at improving the intervention activities you will undertake at future events.

This task will usually fall to the person to whom you delegated responsibility for planning and implementing your evaluation (see Part 4, Step 3). He or she will need to compile and analyze the evaluation data that was gathered during the event (Part 5, Step 3). Based on this analysis as well as on notes from your debriefing session (Part 6, Step 1), a report should be prepared that outlines the strengths and weaknesses of your intervention efforts and that points to changes and improvements to be made for upcoming events. This final step is, in fact, the starting point for re-launching the entire planning process and preparing you for the next event.

Some items that should be included in your evaluation report

- A brief description of each of your intervention activities;
- An overview of your evaluation methodology:
 - type of evaluation that was undertaken;
 - groups that were targeted by the evaluation;
 - type of information you were seeking for evaluation purposes;
 - data collection method(s) used;
- Compilation of evaluation data and description of results;
- Analysis of results:
 - Strengths and weaknesses of each of the intervention activities undertaken during the event;
 - Suggested improvements for interventions at upcoming events.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, we encourage you to remember that this guide is intended to help community-based organizations with the planning and implementation of intervention activities aimed at preventing HIV and STI transmission in the context of major events. Although the concerns and realities of gay and bisexual men who live in or visit Montreal served as the starting point for this guide, we believe it will be relevant in other contexts and for other population groups and we invite you to adapt it to your own needs. Based on your own observations of the events that take place in your community, you will no doubt want to make changes and improvements to the process we have proposed so that it better suits the mandate of your organization and the issues facing the populations with whom you work. Our ultimate goal is to facilitate the development of HIV and STI prevention activities that will be as effective as possible in reaching the people who attend these large events.

In the hope that *From Concept to Action: An Intervention Guide for STI and HIV Prevention at Large Events* will be useful to you, we wish you every success in undertaking your own intervention work!

Notes

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