

Yorkshire MESMAC



For many, being gay and older has meant living through the harder times of inequality and discrimination. In addition to this, many have also faced the HIV and AIDS epidemic firsthand.

Whatever your sexuality, getting on with life can often mean coming to terms with a range of issues that getting older can bring. For some, this can be more difficult than any challenge to our sexuality. For others, getting older has meant facing worries deeply rooted in having a gay identity.

" Being older and gay is a feat in itself. We've had to overcome rejection and discrimination, and still get on with life."

" You don't have to conform. But I frequently feel there's nothing left for me."

" I'm not interested in gay history and talking about pride. We were the ones who fought the campaigns! I want to look forward."

" Because of AIDS, I think most of the people I used to drink with aren't around anymore. Which is pretty sad. "

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" If you separate people by age, you're creating a barrier "

" I can't see any difference with youngsters of today and myself in attitude. What the youngsters of today have got, are the opportunities which we didn't have. "

" My partner died recently. Now I find myself alone. It isn't easy to start over again. "

" I had no-one gay, like me, to discuss the grief. "

" When my partner died, the one thing I needed was another gay man who'd really understand, and who could put his arms around me. "

" Being gay doesn't mean you're out to all your family and friends. If you're just meeting men for sex, it can be hard to find someone to talk to about the gay side of things. "

" What we need is more social groups. "

" Where I come from, there's nothing. I don't know any other gay people who live near me. "

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" We just need practical, useful information. "

" A lot of us wouldn't ever admit to being lonely. "

" Some of us have to be discreet. "

" Although we had an enormous circle of friends, we had no gay friends. "

" Looking for support. Hoping to give it. "

The gay scene can offer much in the way of a good time. However, it can be difficult to enjoy a quiet pint and the space for a decent conversation. And when it comes to getting the kind of company we want, the scene isn't always the answer.

Whilst the scene will always be subject to the commercial pressures of business, there are social spaces and meeting points for gay men who want something different. Whether it's for socialising or support, there are a number of gay groups throughout Yorkshire and Greater Manchester, offering a variety of reasons for like - minded men to get together : football, rugby, swimming, drama, outdoor pursuits, theatre - going, writing or simply socialising.

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Both Healthy Gay Manchester and Yorkshire MESMAC currently run social groups for gay and bisexual men. for further details on meeting times and activities, just give us a call on 0113244 4209 or drop us an email.

For more up to date information you can also contact your local switchboard, gay mens agency or Local Council.

"Gay culture is obsessed with wild times and the body beautiful. It can be difficult to meet men for anything more than sex."

" The vast majority of gay pubs and clubs tend to cater for the young gay customer and seem to forget the older gay community. "

" The gay scene know that you spend more money meeting strangers than meeting friends. "

" Morals are different today. It's a wide open society. It's not just on the gay scene. "

"There's nowhere to go to meet other gay men that isn't noisy, expensive and trendy. Sometimes we just want a cup of tea and a chat. "

" I can't hear when I go into a pub. Can't talk. You just end up watching. "

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For many gay men, the scene is not a problem. And it's not the answer when it comes to meeting other men for sex. Cruising or cottaging can still be dangerous or difficult. Both Yorkshire MESMAC and Healthy Gay Manchester have produced pocket guides to cruising. These detail your legal rights, plus safety tips on sex and cruising. You can pick these guides up at the cruising ground or on the scene. Also have a look at our guide to meeting men here or our safe sex pack for gay men here. If you would like us to post you some leaflets, or arrange for it to be picked up from our offices please contact us for more details.

When it comes to safer sex, the basics haven't changed a great deal over the past twenty years. For anal sex, using a strong condom and water-based lubricant is still the best way to protect yourself from HIV and Sexually Transmitted Diseases. If you're HIV Positive, using condoms and lube will protect you from cross-infection with more virulent or drug resistant strains of HIV, as well as other STD's that can cause further damage to your immune system.

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" I can't seem to form any kind of sexual relationships as I feel so insecure. "

" Being Queer is a generation thing. "

" I am fed up with safer sex material lowering itself the common denominator. "

" Being older doesn't mean we're brimming with confidence when it comes to the bedroom, or backroom. "

" If an older bloke has sex with a younger bloke, why is it assumed the older one is leading the younger one astray? Why is it assumed the older bloke made the first move. "

" If older gay men are having unsafe sex, it's not a lack of education. It's a decision they've made. Maybe it's lax, more dangerous. But they know what they're doing. "

" When I lost my partner, having been off the scene, I had to start from scratch when it came to cruising and sex. "

" There are still times when we are lonely and want other company. We don't want to go to a pub. we feel out of place. we don't want to go to a club. we just want contact with someone we can talk to. "

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If you have difficulty in getting hold of strong condoms and lube, your local GUM/Sexual Health Clinic, Gay Mens Group or Gay Mens Agency should be able to help you.

There are a number of phonedlines you can call for support and advice around issues of sexuality and safer sex. You can also talk to health advisers at your local GUM/Sexual Health Clinic if you want help in dealing with sexual health issues. Some saunas welcome workers from local gay agencies - who are on hand at various times to offer support and advice. these workers also visit cruising areas, offering advice and information around sex, as well as providing free condoms and lube.

There are a number of community groups, community events and Gay Pride events in Lancashire and Yorkshire which cater for the needs of older gay men. Have a look at our archives section and find out when an event is happening near you soon!, or phone the MESMAC Head Office on 0113 244 4209 for further information.