

*“Guys Still Think That  
an STI Test Means a Q-  
Tip Up Their Penis”:*  
What is Stopping  
Young Men from Using  
Sexual Health Services  
in Toronto?



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# Issues identified by Young Men in the TTS:



- Higher levels of risk taking behaviours
- Low rates of clinic attendance
- Few *perceived* barriers to access
- Reluctance to learn more

# What service providers have to say about sexual risk:



- **Machismo view**

- *“Among men, it’s like the more sex you have the more man you are.”*

- **Reluctance to talk about sexual health**

- *“So to have young men coming to a group where’s their going to discuss being sexual and talk about our admit things that they may see as faults to each other is really difficult.”*

# What service providers have to say about barriers:



## Key Barrier: Fear

### ...of STI testing procedures

- “...guys still think that and STI test they get a Q-tip up their penis right and...there is a huge amount of fear still...”

### ...of a positive STI diagnosis

- “...what I’ve heard is that we’re afraid of finding out that we have HIV or STIs. We don’t want to know..it really scares guys that something might be wrong...”

### ...of being embarrassed by friends

### ...of parent’s/ caregiver’s reactions

# Challenges identified by service providers:



- **Engaging young men**

- “...it’s really hard to provide a workshop for young men where these youth are making fun of everything the facilitator or coordinator is saying”

- **Encouraging proactive access to services**

- “*Most guys don’t come in for safer sex info, most will come in for something else- like a bump or it hurts so much I can’t stand it.*”

## Service providers recommend:

- Targeted sexual health education programs and services for YM
- Teach healthy relationships skills
- Must use creative ways of attracting young men to services
- Removing the stigma associated with their use