

LJH7 10.4.89**Justine**

Q. One of the things that we are really interested in in this research, is to find out how people feel and what they think about their relationships, so I'd like to ask you, what's the most important relationship that you have, or relationships?

A. At the moment? I'm in one relationship and I have been for two years now ... with a woman.

Q. And that's the most important ...?

A. That's it.

Q. What's the most important thing about that relationship for you?

A. Um, it's the first stable relationship I've had, well the first sort of long-term thing, um, so that's quite important. It's the first time I've lived with someone and had a relationship with them. Um, ...

Q. I'm just trying to think what would be ... Yeah. What other sorts of things do you value about it?

A. It's very close and I think the main thing is that I'm living with somebody who I'm in a relationship with, it's a, it's a very different ... set-up to ... you know, when you're not living with someone. I think that's sort of the main ...

Q. Have you been living with her the whole time?

A. Yeah, nearly.

Q. You decided straight away that that's the way you wanted it?

A. We met and saw each other constantly for a few months and then went out and got a flat together.

Q. Mm.

A. So basically, it's been living together from the start.

Q. Mm. What does she do?

A. She's unemployed at the moment. We've got a child and she spends most of her time looking after the child.

Q. Mm. How ...? She had the child before ...?

A. Yeah.

Q. Yeah. Because I know ...

A. Just before we met. She was a baby when I met her.

Q. Mm. How do you get on with the child?

A. Oh, very well. I'm sort of like the co-parent.

Q. Yeah.

A. But, um, she's a lot of effort, the child, but we get on quite well, I think. It's a good relationship.

Q. Mm. What sort of other relationships did you have before then? You say you didn't live with anyone?

A. They were all short and all just basically sex. Men and women. Um, and a lot of them.

Q. Yeah, I noticed that from the questionnaire.

A. Um, I never really had a relationship. There was nothing I would call ... a total relationship - it would be the one thing or another. Mainly, you know, very brief.

Q. How did you feel about that? Did you ... ?

A. At the time it was, it was what was happening, you know, it just happened. I was out on the gay scene, very young, in Sydney and it was very promiscuous ...

Q. Mm.

A. At the time. Everyone went to bed with everyone and I followed suit with that.

Um, it was good at the time. Young, free and ...

Q. Yeah.

A. I just never got very attached to anyone.

Q. How young were you when you ... ?

A. About, sort of, fourteen going on fifteen, I sort of hit the gay scene.

Q. Mm. How did you, how did you decide that you were gay?

A. Well, I didn't, I hadn't at that stage. I was, sort of ... I knew I liked women, so I started sort of mixing with people who were gay and, I just took it as it came. I liked gay clubs a lot more and I mean, I wasn't gay then, I was still sleeping with men and women - whatever came along that was good-looking.

Q. Yeah.

A. Um, I didn't really decide until years later when I realised I only liked women. But at the time it was nothing really, nothing major about it, because I knew lots of people and it seemed quite natural.

Q. Mm. Yeah. So, it was when you first started ...? Was your first sexual relationship, was that gay or with a ... ?

A. It's sort of hard because they overlapped a little bit. Um, I guess you could say the first one was with a man but the first person I had sex with was with a woman.

Q. Ah. Yeah.

A. And so, I mean, I had a boyfriend at school - it was a sexual relationship, but we never had sex.

Q. Yeah.

A. But then I sort of went home with a woman on a one-night stand - that was the first time.

Q. Mm. I'm interested in what you say about having a sexual relationship with a boyfriend, but it didn't involve sex. You engaged in other sorts of sexual activities but not ... ?

A. Yeah. It was because I was quite young - it was a lot of kissing and groping and sort of everything basically, except sex. I was sort of young and at home, with my parents, not having any form of contraception, still wondering whether to wait until I get married, type of thing, and so nothing happened ... nothing much.

Q. Yeah. What about ... ? Did you, were you concerned about contraception when you were going through this period of sleeping with lots of people?

A. Yeah. I was very, very determined not to get pregnant. I always made sure, except for a couple of times. Two times when one thing or another happened ...

Q. What sort of things ... ?

A. I was mostly on the pill and when that failed I had some ...

Q. What about the condom, would you, did you use that ever?

A. I think I only used that a couple of times, not with much success, because, you know, it was a real bastard of a partner who I was with at that moment. And that was one of the times when I accidentally had unprotected sex. Um, that just didn't work because I couldn't get people to cooperate with it - it was just a real pain.

Q. Mm. Yes.

A. And it was a lot more visible than the pill so, you know, the only way I could be sure was with the pill.

Q. Mm. Yeah. What about, um, sexually transmitted diseases or other sorts of thing? Were you worried about that at all?

A. I got a couple.

Q. You did?

A. But I was not worried really at the time. I mean, it was easy to go to the V.D. clinic and get cleared up, you know. I really wasn't too bothered. I never sort of worried about that barrier thing, like of having barrier form of contraception. As long as I wasn't pregnant, I was happy, at the time. I think this was still slightly before AIDS really came up as an issue in Australia.

Q. Mm.

A. Like, looking back ... it was very still very promiscuous.

Q. Yeah. How old were you when you sort of decided that it was women for you?

A. Um ... It's really hard because there wasn't a definite sort of time. It was ...

Q. Well what was the process like? I mean, how did you come to the conclusion?

A. Well I had a sort of an upheaval when I left Australia and came to London and by then, you know, I had decided I was a dyke and that was it. Um, before that I sort of drifted away from most of my male partners ... or, a bit more rapid than drifting, I suppose. I can't think how old I was. About, say, nineteen, eighteen, no, it must have been about eighteen.

Q. Mm. But, so there'd been quite a while, while you were ... ?

A. In between, yeah.

Q. I've put milk in it and I didn't ask you.

A. Yeah, I do take milk.

Q. And I didn't bring up sugar, but I can go and get some.

A. Yeah, I take sugar please.

Q. The other thing I noticed on your questionnaire ... (you can dip it straight in cos I don't take sugar which is why I thoughtlessly didn't bring any up) ... But the other thing I noticed on your questionnaire that you marked the spot which said that you'd had sex against your will.

A. Yeah.

Q. What happened there?

A. The first time I had sex with a man was against my will. And I was, because I was quite young and I was out on the scene, and I lived in the suburbs of Sydney and the sort of gay metropolis was right in the centre of the city and all the gay clubs were on the same street, so I had this problem of going to and from the gay part of Sydney without, you know, the cooperation of my parents, without any transport and without my parents really knowing. And, so, I got into the habit of, you know, just spending the night with people in the city - with friends who I'd gone in with or else getting a lift home or this that and the other. And anyway, I spent one night with, it was a transvestite, who took me back to his place. I mean, he was really friendly, but I was sort of, I didn't realise that he, you know, was at all attracted to women. I thought that he was totally gay. He started making passes at me which I sort of brushed off successfully and then I woke up in the

middle of the night and he was screwing me. And so that's, you know, once against my will ... It wasn't too traumatic, luckily.

Q. Yeah. How did you feel afterwards then?

A. Um. I don't know, I sort of, I went back home, I was still living with my parents and sort of, I felt fairly defeated because, you know, especially the first time and everything, virginity loss. Mind you, I'd already been with women then. I don't know, I think I just recovered from it really. But I didn't think of it as rape at the time. I don't know ...

Q. Mm, whether you would now ...

A. No, I don't know. It wasn't, sort of pleasant but it wasn't too bad.

Q. Mm. I guess it could, in fact it sounds a little bit unpleasant.

A. Yeah. It was strange.

Q. Yeah. Did that affect the way that you felt about men after that?

A. I don't think it did, I don't know because, um, if anything I'd probably, you know, made my mind up by then. No, I haven't drawn any lines between the two anyway.

Q. Mm. You also say on the questionnaire that you, um, when I ask you what you're thinking of doing in the future that you'll stay in this relationship for a while and then maybe stop. You don't have a sort of ...

A. I don't think it will go on forever, you know, because what we've been together for two years, and I can see, sort of small cracks appearing which I should imagine will break us up eventually.

Q. Mm. But then it looks as if you're thinking in terms of a cycle, of sort of relatively, stable relationships?

A. Um, I think a lot more stable than the old ones used to be, definitely.

Q. But I suppose you'll see how it goes, really.

A. Yeah.

Q. I was interested too in what you said about sex education at school, as if it was designed to put you off sex? What was it like?

A. Oh, horrible. It was like, it never taught me anything basically, but it was interesting to see it come up and everybody's different reactions and I think there would only have been about one or two or three people in the class who would have learnt anything and they were really backward. And, like, for them it would have been good because their parents hadn't told them anything and they were so sheltered that they might have learnt, sort of, some background, some knowledge. It was taught in the revolting environments, like with, um ... all I can remember is really, sort of, ugly, non-sympathetic teachers, like the worst choices that you possibly think of and, just like being taught in a biology lab or something like with all, you know, just after, say if you had a double period - you'd spend the first period dissecting a rat and then the second period talking about, you know, ovaries and all the rest ...

Q. Yeah.

A. And you could still smell the dead rats. It was just ... nothing really appealing about it.

Q. Yuck. And it was mainly around pregnancy, contraception, stuff like that?

A. Yeah, and it was, it just sort of seemed so backward anyway because I knew, I think everyone knew ...

Q. Yeah. Do you think that is general in Australia? I mean, I don't have any idea about what ...

A. Yeah. I think it, well I'm lucky I came from AUSTRALIAN STATE. Up north it's worse, in Queensland, because they are a lot less willing to educate children about sex at all. It's a lot stricter.

Q. Yeah. Quite a lot of people are Roman Catholics in Australia as well, aren't they?

A. Yeah.

Q. Were you originally?

A. No. I don't know what I was - a Presbyterian or something or other, but I'm not religious at all.

Q. No. (Put a drop more tea in it if you like because it came out a bit weak.) Yeah, sex education in England is pretty variable, I mean some of it is totally dreadful, but other people don't seem to have too bad experiences.

A. Well, the worst bit was that ... like I also wrote on my questionnaire was that we had, um, religious teachers that came in, and they were, sort of, not governed by the school rules at all and they just seemed to have a free reign with us and could teach us whatever they liked, and they used to come in with the most amazing literature and bright colour photos of aborted fetuses and, just like, and propaganda. And they just seemed to be able to teach whatever they liked.

Q. Strange, isn't it?

A. It was, really, sort of Bible-thumping stuff.

Q. Yeah, yeah. I guess you get religion here, but I doubt whether they'd let those sort of 'Right to Lifers' in so strongly.

A. Yeah. I remember hanging out at things like that when I was quite young, about twelve or so. I remember all the girls standing round in hysterics, 'I'm never getting an abortion' - it was working.

Q. Sort of aversion therapy or something.

A. Yeah, and I mean when that's the only lesson you had around anything like that - sex education never touched things like that, so it was, you know, left unchallenged.

Q. Mm. So it is quite problematic really, that kind of ... Just as well you were getting your information from elsewhere.

A. Yeah.

Q. How did your parents, how did you get on with your parents during that period when you were hitting the gay scene?

A. Oh, I had, I had terrible conflicts with them right through from when I was eleven. I swore that I hated them and sort of fought constantly, 'til quite recently.

Q. Mm. Were you still living, had you left home while you were still in Australia?

A. Yeah, I left home when I was quite young - about fifteen and a half.

Q. Mm.

A. And then I moved into the gay area.

Q. Yeah.

A. And got my own place.

Q. What about work? Did you, had you left school by then?

A. I left school because my parents were also having problems of their own, in their relationship and it was just really, um ... it was unpleasant from that angle and so, I was having all my own problems and so I left school at the same time.

Q. Mm.

A. And I got a job, cos jobs were quite easy to come by. And I had a nice house.

Q. Were you ... ? Have your mum and dad stayed together?

A. They've just separated, really, in the last few months.

Q. Have you got any brothers and sisters?

A. I've got two brothers.

Q. Older or younger?

A. One of each.

Q. So you're right in the middle?

A. Yeah.

Q. What about them? What do they think?

A. What do you mean?

Q. Are they still out there? Travelled like you?

A. Yeah. They're still both at home at the moment. My older brother, sort of, went to uni and dropped out and is a TECHNOLOGY ROLE and my younger brother has just finished his training.

Q. Mm. How did you find it when you came ... well, let me do a prior question first. What made you decide to come over here?

A. It was a spur of the moment thing. I just had a friend, you know, a gay friend, a male friend who said 'Let's go to London' and I was, sort of, not doing anything better and got it together and just came within about a month. Without even thinking about what to do when I got here or anything.

Q. Yeah.

A. I don't think I'd do it again, I'm getting too old.

Q. How did you find it when you got here?

A. Oh, it was brilliant, like, for the first short high and then when sort of reality sunk in, because, I mean, I'd come with an open, like with a one-way ticket, you know, I might be six months, I might be six days or whatever. But eventually the money ran out and you know it started to sink in that I'd have to get a job and we got evicted from our flat and started squatting, so, you know, things changed very quickly. And it really wasn't what I expected, but it was good, looking back on it, we did a lot of travelling and that.

Q. How did you manage to find a job?

A. Um, first of all I started off as a temp for NAME OF AGENCY. And that was by word of mouth and that was quite easy. I got a full-time job from there with TELECOMMUNICATIONS which was a fairly easy way to get into work. And I stayed there for a year or so, and then I got offered my current job in the admin department which was lucky - I mean, it was just a temporary job to start with but I've been here for about sixteen months now.

Q. So you envisage staying in that job?

A. Well, I'm trying to, sort of, move up in LOCAL ORGANISATION now. I can see that happening soon.

Q. So you think there are definite opportunities there?

A. Yeah, yeah. I mean, I've got over

Q. Within that organisation?

A. At the moment, yeah, I'm still looking at COUNCIL. I don't know from there. I'm not sure.

Q. What about staying here? Are you thinking of staying?

A. Well, I'm not thinking of going to Australia. I don't sort of think of it as my base or anything, like my home. I don't think I'll stay here forever. I'd like to go and live in San Francisco or

something ... or, I don't know, just sort of move around, generally. I don't want to settle, like, forever ... yet.

Q. No, you're pretty young to do that. If I can get back to the AIDS thing, when did you first hear about it?

A. It was quite early on, um, I can't remember exactly, it was the early 80's. But, you know, at the time it did seem something that wouldn't affect me, and I think everyone's attitude was, 'Oh, it won't affect me'. Even, like, the gay men friends that I had. There was a very casual attitude about it and they were still, you know, very promiscuous. So it wasn't a big worry at first, you know, it was some American problem.

Q. Right. Nothing to do with ... yeah.

A. It didn't put the frighteners on me, you know, for quite some time.

Q. Did it ever ... at any point?

A. Yeah, like, by the time I sort of realised, you know, how widespread it was and that the epidemic had started to happen, that really brought home to me because, you know, friends of friends had died and things like that. By the time I sort of realised, you know, the implications, I'd sort of stopped screwing around with so many people, but I still had this nagging fear and thought 'Oh my God! I could have got it.'

Q. Yeah, yeah.

A. You know, it was well after I had, sort of, stopped ... being at risk.

Q. Mm. So you thought you were OK probably?

A. Well, I don't know. I still have doubts.

Q. Yeah. Would you do anything about finding out?

A. No. When there's a cure I will, but not until there's a cure.

Q. Yeah. It's a difficult ... a complicated decision to make really.

A. I just really wouldn't wish it upon anybody to find out, you know, unless there was some cure.

Q. Did you know much about how, how it was passed on at that time?

A. Yeah, I don't think I was thinking about that then. Oh, there was still all that doubt about, you know, the borderlines with things like saliva and things like that but ... I think I've been up with the news ...

Q. Yeah. What sort of sources of information did you have?

A. Um. The gay press - that's very good for keeping up with things like that. Um, since I've been working for the Council, that's good because there's always lots of ...

Q. Yeah.

A. You know. Leaflets and things going around. It's mainly been the gay press.

Q. I was wondering, I mean, in the beginning quite a lot of the regular press were making negative statements about gays and stuff. I wondered how you felt about that?

A. That's why I wouldn't trust them. I'd never trust something ... the straight press or whatever, the regular press. I wouldn't trust something as sort of emotional as that, like 100%.

Q. So, do you think that the sort of people that you were mixing with ... I mean, you said when it first started out, they weren't bothered at all and they still continued their normal behaviour - do you think as time went by they changed at all?

A. Yeah. Definitely. It's all safe sex now and has been like for quite a while. But, I mean, the minute, the minute they sort of realised how far it was going and that it was actually

touching Sydney in quite a big way, they just immediately, it was just sort of like almost overnight ... it was safe sex.

Q. Yeah. Quite dramatic.

A. Yeah.

Q. Yeah. What about ... ? Some people think that if you are a lesbian you've got no problem at all, sort of thing. Do you think that there is anything that you might do that might be risky?

A. It's really hard. I mean, I had a friend who was working on the AIDS advisory line, you know, the national one, because it was based in the COMMUNICATIONS building where I worked and I kept badgering him for ages, you know, 'Are there any risks to lesbians?' and he just didn't know and it just, that just made me feel that, you know, it's still so foggy, you know, you can't be sure, and I mean I've heard a few American lesbian magazines and things that have been reported that there are sort of lesbians using rubber gloves and things in America, but, I mean, I haven't used them. I just don't, I don't think the risk is that great to lesbians.

Q. No, I think you're right.

A. Yeah.

Q. But I suppose it would depend if they were, I mean, if they were bisexual.

A. Yeah, but I mean, then it's sort of like the hazy areas about how would it be passed on and, you know, what is safe and what isn't.

Q. Mm. Yeah. Very likely you're OK. I mean, it would be unlikely that you would be at risk.

A. Yeah. But it's just so hard to say ... depending on what sort of sexual activities you get up to, anyway.

Q. Yeah, right. It's a matter of practice, it's a ... So, it seems as though you've got masses of information about it, I mean, you're really keeping up with it. Do you think that there's anything that, um ... I mean, what do you think about the public campaigns that they've had, not so much the sort of material that you've come into contact with through ..?

A. Well, the public campaigns, I mean, if I hadn't come into contact with all the other things I've come into contact with I think I'd be either shit-scared or, like, totally in the dark or both and I think it's just adding, snowballing the whole of this unknown, unstoppable plague or whatever because it's like the big looming thing up above, you know, 'Don't do this'. It's so black and white, like a threat. I don't know. I'm glad that I've got information from other sources because I certainly wouldn't rely on that. It's not very good for people that do.

Q. Yeah. Yeah. Well, I suppose it sometimes just makes them think it's not relevant to them or else it just scares them so completely.

A. Yeah, I think it does scare people, things like that.

Q. Yeah. Like 'Don't die of ignorance'. They've changed the campaign slightly now.

A. Not very positive is it?

Q. No. What do you think of the one with the young woman, the beautiful young woman where it says something like, "In five year's ... She's got HIV infecting her. In five years time she could look like this". Have you seen it?

A. No.

Q. Cos it's got this very beautiful young woman and it says, "This young woman has got HIV infecting her. In five years' time she could look like this" and you turn over the page and she looks exactly identical ...

A. Oh, right.

Q. And I suppose the message is supposed to be that you can't tell whether or not somebody is infected. I just wondered what you thought, but if you haven't seen it! I was a little bit surprised about them using a woman since, err, by and large it's, err, it was, men who'd been getting it.

A. Well maybe that's the only way to get it to the men.

Q. To say that you can get it from a woman? Yeah, yeah.

A. Yeah.

Q. I think what they were trying to do, maybe in female circles where a (?)percentage of the population didn't think it had anything to do with them ... getting the word across to them. So, by and large, you don't think much of the public campaigns?

A. No.

Q. But the other sorts of information that you've been able to come up with ... ?

A. Yeah, I've come across really good basic, straightforward stuff and like, I think the most effective one has been the stickers stuck on the toilet at work. You know, there's one in every cubicle and it says, you know, 'This is AIDS. You can get it from this, and you can't get it from this' and it just has a list of each and, like, every time you're taking a piss, you see it and you can't avoid it, you know, no matter how hard you try not to read it. So, I think it's cut down a lot of the toilet seat phobias.

Q. Yeah, yeah. Oh, it sounds as though they're doing good work there. NAME, probably! I know you said that you've basically decided that it's women for you now. Can you imagine yourself in a situation where you might ... ?

A. Um, I suppose I could imagine it, yeah.

Q. But you don't think ... ?

A. I don't think so, no. It's hard to say but ... no, I don't think it's very probable.

Q. Yeah, yeah.

A. It's possible.

Q. What about, um, in your own relationships that you've had or either with men or women? Who has sort of taken the initiative?

A. In sex?

Q. Mm.

A. What? To have it?

Q. Yes. Well, to have it, how you should have it.

A. Um, I think, like, when I was really promiscuous, I didn't really do ... I made it aware that I was sort of open and available, but I didn't really do much of the going and getting. I was quite passive in a way and, sort of, just waiting to be asked. But now, you know, I'm not really. I'm getting older and I'm a lot more willing to sort of ...

Q. Make the decision yourself.

A. Yeah.

Q. Yeah. Cos sometimes, I mean like you were saying about that first relationship where ... that you had when you were very young, that it included everything but not sex. You must have made some decisions there that it wasn't going to include ...

A. Yeah, I think we both did to a certain extent because we were both quite young schoolkids. It was just sort of an unspoken rule - you don't go all the way.

Q. Mm. And that was a sort of general thing among your friends at the time?

A. No. I think, there was a mixed crowd at school, I mean, some girls were doing it and some weren't. A big group who weren't and a big group who were and I was just in the group that wasn't at the time.

Q. Yeah. So how was it that you got into the gay scene? I mean, what sort of triggered it off?

A. Um, well it was just a trip one night into the gay strip cos it was all like on the one street and it was quite sort of spectacular and exciting compared with, sort of, life in the suburbs.

Q. Yeah.

A. And a bloke at school ... cos I sort of had a girlfriend at school at the time and he, you know ... he was an enemy of mine at the time and he'd been watching me, you know, with this woman and he saw that we were getting quite close and then at school camp we sort of came out together in a little tiny gesture and we were dancing together at the school dance and things like that. We got loads of flack and ridicule and he came over to me, sort of on the quiet, and sort of said, you know, 'Come out with me one night'. So he took me and this girl out in his car and we drove away and he showed me the gay bars and I never looked back from there. I think I went every night after that - it was just brilliant!

Q. Yeah, yeah.

A. It was really good.

Q. Yeah. Is that ... you said when you, the two of you came out when you were at school camp dancing and everything, you got a lot of flack, people were very hostile?

A. Oh, it was really bad because it was a really straight area and I don't think anyone had heard of a lesbian, or not at that age-group anyway, and it was a really, sort of cliquey, situation at school and, um, you know, the person with the deepest suntan and the best surfboard, type thing ... It was a surfing town and quite, sort of, straight ... suburban. And, um, yeah, we practically got beaten up. When we got back to our bunks that night there was sort of graffiti all over about being queer and all the usual sort of abuse.

Q. Mm. You must have found it very upsetting.

A. It was ... but it was also good to challenge them and like, create so much of an uproar because the whole school were ... after that it just sent the whole school into turmoil. No-one knew what to do. I mean, it was powerful in a way as well because we could sort of rattle the foundations of the social circle. That's what, that's what it's like.

Q. Yeah.

A. Even though we just got so much abuse at the time which was really bad.

Q. But you had each other to support ... ?

A. Yeah, we stuck together.

Q. You found that that appeals to you then, the, I mean, the idea of sort of overturning the rules or something?

A. It was good because, I mean, I was on the outside of them anyway, I mean, nothing worked for me the way it worked - the big sort of social circles and it was, it was unpleasant for me, you know, from the start anyway. It was just sort of different. They ... If I could upset the whole lot by sort of shocking everyone ...

Q. Mm.

A. No problems there.

Q. Yeah. So, how long ... when you had that first relationship, how long afterwards was it that you went out downtown and sort of began ... ?

A. What first relationship?

Q. The one that you were talking about with the young woman at school.

A. Um, well we'd been close for a couple of years, like best chums at school and you know, then we got really, really close until we were inseparable, we just went everywhere together. It sort of overlapped and we went out to gay clubs together constantly, you know, and then eventually we drifted apart when I left early and she stayed.

Q. So that was quite a long, constant relationship despite the other sorts or relationships you were having as well?

A. Yeah. But that, it was more a sort of ... because it was such a total relationship, it was, you know, I viewed it more as a friendship, it was like, we were, you know, inseparable. It was more companionship and fun than sex.

Q. Yeah. And the relationship you've got now that's a sort of, is that a relationship, a total sort of relationship covering all aspects ... ?

A. Yeah.

Q. Mm. I'm interested in the child as well, how you feel about that. I mean, if you move on from your friend, you'll have to move on from the child, won't you?

A. Yeah.

Q. How does that strike you?

A. It is a difficult one, but I think my girlfriend's come to terms ... well, she's sort of got an idea of what will happen anyway, if we do split up or when we do split up because she, you know, went through the birth and pregnancy with another woman whom she eventually split up with and so if she's been through the whole trauma of losing a partner and also sort of a mother-figure for the baby. We're quite ... you know, we talk about it and are quite open about it and I think if we did split up, we'd leave on good terms. There would still be a friendship.

Q. Yeah, so you'd still ...

A. Yeah, so we'd still see each other.

Q. Yeah, I was thinking like that as well because it's difficult when there's no ... I mean, there isn't any formal relationship. If you just split up, you could have split and maybe never see the kid again which would be dreadful.

A. I don't think that would happen because I think, you know, she's quite worried about the effect that it would have on the child if we did split up, and so she talks about it and that's her main worry is that the child would still be able to see someone who's a big part of her life and so, you know, I can't see that happening.

Q. Yeah. Mm. Yeah. Mm, that would be what would worry ... but I suppose it's the same, whatever kind of relationship you're in, if you're not, not one of the parents, as it were, of the child ... Let me think ... What haven't we covered yet? What about the other aspects of the future? We've covered it a little bit in terms of, um, the work that you think you may be doing moving on in LOCAL ORGANISATION. What about long-term? Have you got any long-term expectations about it?

A. Oh God.

Q. Work, career, this kind of stuff.

A. I really don't know yet. I mean, I didn't even envisage that I would be working in LOCAL ORGANISATION and quite enjoying it a couple of years ago but, um, at the moment I'm just

sort of taking it as it comes and I'd like to move into, you know, a good job in LOCAL ORGANISATION and stick with it but I can't see it being a lifelong career.

Q. Yeah.

A. I don't know what will be.

Q. It might be a possibility of getting trained though, I suppose, especially if you're working for the Council.

A. Yeah.

Q. There should be a sort of in-service training and that sort of business. What about ... when you were talking before about risky activity, risky activities with respect to sex, you were very careful about contraception and so forth. What about other sorts of risky activity? Any other aspects of your life in which ... ?

A. Oh drugs, you mean.

Q. Drugs, yes.

A. No, I've not used sort of syringes or anything myself though some of my partners have, like used and well, did use them constantly all the time and share them with other people, like all the worst things, which is one of my main worries about the past - the people I slept with who did use drugs and weren't very fussy about who they shared with. I've never done it.

Q. Mm. Or taken other drugs, not necessarily injecting?

A. Yeah. I've taken lots of other drugs, just about everything, but I've never injected.

Q. Mm. Probably a good idea.

A. Yeah, I think so.

Q: Any other sorts of risky things? I don't know, people have different ideas of what risk is, really and what would be a risky activity.

A. Yeah.

Q. I mean, some people think drinking and smoking is pretty risky.

A. Yeah, I think it's risky, but what do you mean risky?

Q. Well, I was asking you really what you think of as risky!

A. In connection with AIDS?

Q. Or anything.

A. Oh, just about everything's risky in connection with anything.

Q. Yeah. Now it turns out you can't have a low -fat diet as well, isn't it?

A. Oh, God. That's alright then. Um, yeah, I think I drink too much, and I have done for quite a few years, so I suppose that's one of my biggest risks.

Q. Mm.

A. I don't think I've taken large enough amounts of any drugs to be risky.

Q. Mm.

A. I honestly think you can take a lot of drugs without much risk to yourself at all, less risk than, say, alcohol.

Q. Mm. Yeah. What about your friends, your circle of friends, do they, at the present time, what are they into?

A. Basically the same as me, really. Sort of, drinking a lot, smoking a bit, um, and various sort of mild drugs, you know, nothing injected.

Q. Mm.

A. Nothing ... not heroine, in any form, you know, whatever. They would be what we'd all class as mild drugs. And I don't think they'd be, as I say, you know, as risky as a lot of things that are legal and ...

Q. Yeah. Sure.

A. Advertised, encouraged.

Q. Yeah. It's true about the drinking, still. That's one thing the COMMUNITY PROJECT doesn't deal with - if anyone comes in with a drink problem, they get sent elsewhere. What would you think would be a reasonable way for people, for say the campaigns around AIDS to try and get messages across to young people which might have some effect on them?

A. Well, I think you've got to, like, get away from all this artistic ... whatever they call it ... the approach, you know, when you just have the 'smack you in the eye' presentation with the syringes, you know, poking out of the screen at you and blood dripping and it's all horror and gore.

Q. I hated that.

A. I saw one of those out of the tube one morning with a hangover and I was really shattered and I just looked and I nearly just puked on the spot it was so ...

Q. Really horrific.

A. It was unnecessary, I mean, well, I thought it was unnecessary, like the public campaign. Everyone knows how gory a syringe can look.

Q. Mm.

A. But what was I saying?

Q. I was wondering what kind of thing would help to get the message across to young people, for example?

A. Yeah, I think, well, I think they should just get away from all the sort of images and feeling that they have to grab people and use all these amazing artistic and just put some information in there because that's what, I mean, those stickers on the toilet door, all they say, you know, 'You can't get it from toilets, you can't get it from kissing or talking to an AIDS virus carrier' and they are just so simple, 'You can get it through sex' and blah blah. I think they underestimate people's sort of ... they just underestimate the people that they are putting it out to.

Q. Mm. Yeah. I suppose it gets confused with the whole thing about not wanting to tell them anything at all, like you were saying about in Australian setting, sort of thing. I mean, it must be a bit of a contradiction for the government on the one hand to stop doing sex education in schools, and on the other hand to have to inform people about AIDS. That was another interesting thing in the ad with the young woman because it had, it was suggesting that safe sex might even include sex that didn't include penetration, whereas before the whole thing about safe sex ... Well, what was your impression of what safe sex has meant?

A. Um, it depends who you are but, well with any penetration using a condom and, you know, being careful not to pass blood or semen from one partner to another.

Q. Yeah, yeah.

A. Which is difficult being a lesbian, because there are, like, so many times when I pass blood, or you know, when blood is passed in sex and as far as I can work out that's still a very foggy area.

Q. Mm.

A. Can't get any definite answers which is annoying.

Q. Yeah. There was one little thing that I read that was suggesting that menstrual blood might be more, I don't know, but ...

A. Risky.

Q. More risky, cos I thought that must be one of the straight press scares or something, cos I couldn't see why it should be any different from any other at all.

A. No.

Q. But then it sort of depends how you feel about what your partner has done or has been doing in some cases.

A. Yeah, well I think, I think with safe sex you can't, the most important thing, that you can't vary the, you know, the precautions you take depending on which partner you are with and you can't sort of speak or you can't rely on your partner's history. You've got to take the same precautions with everybody, and safe sex should be safe sex. I mean it's not a point of, 'Have you ever been a prostitute?' or, 'Have you had more than, you know, this many partners?' or, no, I don't think that comes into it. I wouldn't bother vetting someone. I just have it anyway, you know, safe sex.

Q. Yeah. You can't really know.

A. I mean that one relationship they might have had might be the one - you can't tell.

Q. Do you think you would, you are or you would be ... are you, do you use safe sex?

A. Um, well, as far as I know I do but I'm not totally sure.

Q. Yeah.

A. As far as I know, you know, according to the information I've got, I think I'm having safe sex. And if I didn't think I was having safe sex, I would have safe sex if there was something I could see to change.

Q. Yeah.

A. But I just, you know, can't be sure and I suppose a lot of people can't be.

Q. Yeah. Absolutely. Still, I mean you are, sounds as if you're pretty well informed about it. If anybody should be safe it should be you.

A. Yeah.

Q. Do you think many of your friends worry about AIDS?

A. Um, yeah, cos I know a lot of gay men and there's always, sort of, it's such a horrible worry that comes up which I can't really, you know, share as much as them, but there's such a horrible, sort of, it's almost like, you know, a taboo, you know, or, because it's recognised, you know, so greatly to be a killer. It a horr... like, you can't make an AIDS joke, you can't, you know, talk about it lightly, and basically you almost can't talk about it at all with them because it's like instant dread or terror or absolute fear. But, you know, as I say, they're having safe sex and hoping for the best. But it's almost a taboo now, it's getting more and more sad really, you know, the atmosphere that comes up whenever it's mentioned. People sort of shaking heads ... like a holocaust or something.

Q. It is a very frightening thing, isn't it?

A. Mm. I really pick that up with my gay male friends.

Q. Mm. Yeah.

A. They are the ones that react to it. Like, whereas, I don't get a reaction like that from anyone else.

Q. Mm.

A. There's definitely something ...

Q. Yeah. And you were saying before about knowing of people who have had it and died and so forth as well, I mean, it really is all close to home.

A. It's just sort of strange. I still get letters from friends at home. Actually, that bloke that first drove me to, um, the gay clubs in Sydney, wrote to me six months ago and said that, you know, his first partner had died of AIDS. With him it happened really quickly.

Q. Mm.

A. But he won't even talk about it.

Q. I suppose he must be worried for himself as well, apart from losing a partner and so forth. Well, I'm certainly hoping that none of the young women that I interview are HIV or get AIDS or anything at all because it is such a dreadful thing. Still, maybe they might find a cure. Do you think that that's been helping people to hold on a bit or affecting people's behaviour, the thought that they might find a cure? That was one of the most frightening things about it for such a long time.

A. No, I think, it's like, there have been so many false alarms and things, like even in the gay press, you know, 'We might have got a cure which might be developed in five years if we get ...', you know. There's just been so many, sort of, false alarms that I think deep down everyone is thinking it's not going to come for a long time if it does.

Q. Mm, yeah.

A. Advertising, like the campaigns we've had, anything possible to say about, you know, 'We're looking into this' or 'We're researching this'. It's just, you know, 'Pull your finger out and don't die of ignorance'.

Q. Yeah.

A. That's it, you know, 'We're telling you to do your bit' and that's it.

Q. Mm.

A. So it's not ... well, I don't think it's helping anyone to hold on.

Q. No, that's right. I suppose the work with special organisations like is being more helpful and supportive.

A. But then again-

Q. It's really depressing. It's interesting what you say about not being able to make gay jokes, I mean, AIDS jokes to your gay friends anymore.

A. It's even more extreme than that. It's not like a crass AIDS joke or anything, which I wouldn't make anyway but, it's just, um, the mentioning of it. And they talk and say, you know, if they do talk about it, it would be like, 'I've got a cold and every time I get a cold I just get so shit-scared and I know it's so stupid'. And you can see that they're absolutely fucking petrified and it's almost like here a death in itself. It's amazing.

Q. That's what everything comes to mean, though, isn't it?

A. Mm.

Q. There's no escaping, once you get it. Now we're thoroughly depressed. What else can we talk about? Is there anything that you'd like to ask, suggest?

A. Um, no, I think basically it's got to be information that people can get. I think people have been so underestimated in the amount of information they can take in. Especially when they went to the trouble of leafleting everyone, didn't they? Was it everyone in London or everyone in Britain?

Q. I think they did everyone in Britain. It was with that loony first one which I thought ...

A. They went to all that trouble and they didn't give anybody any information from what I can remember.

Q. No. But they are trying to target specific groups now but even so it's terribly, sort of, a bit hit and miss and not, although they've directed the groups they want to target, the material doesn't appear to be very well designed for those particular groups.

A. But, when they started they had an overall thing, like, for everybody, didn't they, like the whole public and I think they should start from scratch again and do that, without even bothering to target, like, just put some information in black and white, well, whatever they can in black and white? You know? Because there's still so much ignorance about and, I mean, if you're going to die of ignorance it won't be your fault. There are still all the stories about people, you know, having their glasses thrown away if they go into a pub, you know, because they might be gay or ...

Q. The doorknob fears. I'm not quite sure what that meant. I've got a little pamphlet about the project so that you know who we were and what it ...

A. So what are you going to do with the information when you get it all together?

Q. Well, basically, what we're trying to do, I mean, we want to feed it back into the National Health campaigns really, especially the ones targeted to young people and that's why we need to know how young people feel about their relationships, what kind of control they feel they have over relationships and stuff and so we ask all those sorts of questions, and it's just young women that we're looking at, though it would, of course, be useful to look at young men but there people who are looking at them and so on. So that's we hope to do, and we hope the information is going to be useful. And also asking young people what they think would be useful themselves, you know, so that at least we're getting it from the horse's mouth, sort of thing, rather than guys making decisions about what you should know rather than what you actually need and want to know. The other thing we were thinking of doing was ...