



PEZ DISPENSER

Fall Newsletter

2009

Special points of interest:

- Renew or discover interest in PEZ Projects with seasonal newsletters.
- Reflect with Dr. Sondra Solomon.
- Read about research results.
- Receive updates on PEZ team members and activities.
- Read about and support our new project

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PEZ Greeting and Reflections from Sondra

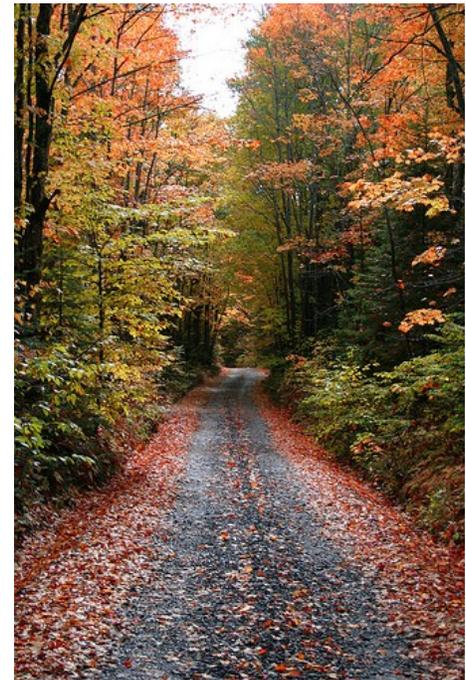
Greetings from Dr. Sondra,

PEZ Haiku:

*We weave together
Stories and experience
From our community*

Hello again to our family of supporters, colleagues and friends. It has been a while since we have been able to connect. We wanted the opportunity to share good news. After several attempts, lots of midnight oil, and your input, patience and support, Dr. Carol Miller and I were able to obtain continued funding from the National Institute of Mental Health to expand our exploration of rural community HIV stigma. We now have 5 years to continue to gather data, stories and experiences with an eye towards contributing authentic and accurate knowledge about the complexities of HIV/AIDS stigma. That means 5 more years with you!

This newsletter introduces a re-configured Person Environment Zone team, research findings, and personal stories about our PEZ team. Dr. Carol Miller and I continue to examine the clinical and community aspects of HIV/AIDS stigma. New graduate students bring fresh perspectives to our efforts. You are there to assist us along the way.



Fall in Vermont

I write haiku but rarely share it with more than a few people. Perhaps the autumn chill has encouraged me to share the PEZ Haiku with you. Research is more than just the data we gather. It is a collective effort to merge the concrete and obvious with the subtle and understated. The entire PEZ team is grateful that you are willing to work with us again. It is your expertise and experience that moves us forward.

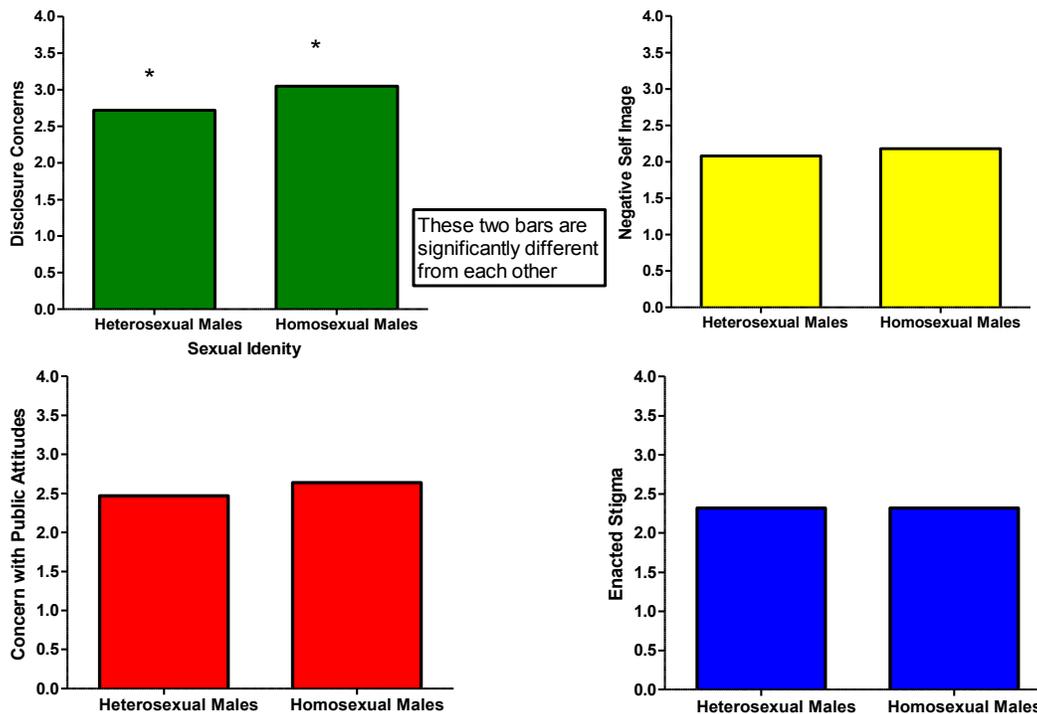
Best,
Dr. Sondra

Research Snapshot: HIV Stigma and Sexual Orientation

HIV/AIDS stigma is different from some other types of stigma researchers study because there are multiple aspects of HIV/AIDS that make it stigmatizing. HIV/AIDS is stigmatized in the United States in part because of fears about contracting HIV. HIV/AIDS is also stigmatized in the United States because of its association with other stigmatized groups, in particular its association with homosexual men and intravenous drug users (1).

In a recent paper(2), we looked at how sexual orientation affects people's experiences with HIV/AIDS related stigma. We

compared perceived stigma for 36 exclusively heterosexual men to 82 exclusively homosexual men to see if they differed in their concerns about disclosure, how negatively they viewed themselves, how concerned they were with public attitudes, and their experiences of enacted stigma (i.e., their personal experiences of prejudice and discrimination). We also controlled for the influence of peoples' HIV health status (e.g., CD4 count), self-esteem, how they cope with HIV/AIDS stigma, and some demographics (i.e., age, employment, education). The results of these comparisons are shown below.



Summary of Results

For the most part, homosexual men and heterosexual men did not differ in perceived stigma. Heterosexual men were more concerned about disclosing their HIV status than were homosexual men in our study (green bar graph). Even though we controlled for how people cope with HIV/AIDS stigma in these comparisons, it may be that people who may already have experience being stigmatized, like homosexual men, have less concern about disclosing because they have had experience dealing with disclosure issues before.

Because people tend to associate HIV/AIDS with gay men, homosexual men may have more difficulty disclosing their status because their diagnosis will be surprising to other people. Other peoples' homophobia or negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians may also increase heterosexual HIV-positive men's disclosure concerns. Heterosexual men may fear being misperceived as homosexual (especially if they, too, have negative attitudes toward homosexuals), and/or may fear experiencing homosexual prejudice and discrimination as a heterosexual.

This study provides us with a lot of potential directions for future research, some of which we are exploring in our current study (see page 4 for more information). Not only is our research helping people to better understand the experience of HIV/AIDS stigma, but it is also helping to show why different people may have different experiences of HIV/AIDS stigma.

We'd like to know what you think about our findings-visit our website at www.uvm.edu/pez and let us know!

1. Devine, P.G., Plant, E.A., & Harrison, K. (1999). The problem of "us" versus "them" and AIDS stigma. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 42(7), 1212-1228.
2. Gonzalez, A., Weibust, K.S., Miller, C.T., and Solomon, S.E. (in press). A preliminary examination of sexual orientation as a social vulnerability for experiencing HIV/AIDS-related stigma.

PEZ Projects Profile: Who is... Andy Knapp?

Andy Knapp comes to psychology by way of mechanical engineering. He joined the Army out of high school and served three years in Karlsruhe, Germany, where he worked as a truck mechanic. After the Army, Andy worked for Eastman Kodak Company as an Automatic Equipment Mechanic. Soon after being hired at Kodak, Andy married his high school

sweetheart, Maggie. While at Kodak, Andy worked in a wide variety of jobs culminating in a three year expatriate experience in China. With his wife and two teenage children, Colin and Haley, Andy travelled extensively in Europe and Asia. It was while training and mentoring Chinese technicians that Andy discovered a

passion for teaching. He began his college education in 2002, earned an AS in 2003, was awarded a BS in psychology in 2006 and his MA in clinical psychology from SUNY Brockport, in 2008. Andy taught Introductory, Social, and Clinical Psychology for two semesters at SUNY Brockport. His goal is to contribute to the science of psychology through meaningful research and by teaching at the university level. Natives of Rochester, N.Y., Andy and Maggie now live in a condo in Winooski.



PEZ Feature: Supporting Undergraduate Research

Jon Maynard transferred to UVM in the fall of '08 and has been with the PEZ team since January of '09. He is interested in the beliefs of gay men and if you would like to help him in his research here's how:

We are looking for gay men to participate in an online survey that will help us learn more about how gay men view themselves and others.

This **10 minute Online Survey** is confidential.

Gay Men Wanted!

All participants in this study will be entered into a raffle to win a \$50 prepaid debit card. No personally identifying information will be asked unless you win the raffle, in which case we will need an address to mail the gift card to.

\$50 Raffle

You may take this survey confidentially by going to:

<http://www.tinyurl.com/JRMSurvey>

If you have any questions or require additional information, you may contact:

Jrmaynar@uvm.edu



Fall Trivia!

1. Where does the term jack-o'-lantern come from?
2. The largest pumpkin ever recorded weighed in at just over 1,000 pounds. True or false?
3. The first Thanksgiving in the Americas occurred where?
4. In the northern hemisphere autumn begins in September. When does it begin in the southern hemisphere?

1. The name comes from the strange and mysterious lights that can be seen flickering over marshes at night.
2. False. In 2009 a pumpkin weighed in at a record breaking 1,725 pounds.
3. St. Augustine, Florida in 1565.
4. March

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Join our Newest Project! COPING WITH HIV/AIDS PROJECT

We are looking for people to participate in our continuing research project
investigating how people cope with HIV/AIDS.

The Person Environment Zone is continuing its study on coping with HIV/AIDS. The study is supported by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health. We are interested in finding out the ways in which individuals with HIV and AIDS cope with the stigma of HIV/AIDS. We are currently recruiting adult (18 years old and older) men and women with HIV/AIDS to participate in the study.

To participate, you will:

- * Come to our research space at the University of Vermont 3 times over 6 months.
- * Complete a diary of day-to-day experiences living with HIV/AIDS using a telephone call-in system for 7 days.

You will be paid for each of your visits to our project site (\$40 for the first visit, \$50 for the second visit, and \$60 for the third visit). You will also receive \$12.50 for every 50 miles you travel, plus an additional compensation for mileage if you drive. Every day you complete the telephone diary study, you will earn \$10. Completing all seven days in a row will earn you a bonus \$15, for a total compensation of \$85.

In the event you are unable to travel to the UVM project site, arrangements can be made to accommodate you.

The confidentiality of all communications associated with the study will be maintained to the maximum extent allowable by law.

To learn more about the study or if you are interested in participating in the project please call

1-802-656-8029 or 1-866-532-7183 (toll free)

YES! I would like to be contacted to participate in your new project!
(Please return this form by mail, or visit our website www.uvm.edu/pez)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: (H) _____ (C) _____

Is it OK to leave a message on your voicemail (circle)? YES NO

Email address _____



**HAPPY
THANKSGIVING!**