

Press Release

Date: 31.10.2008

AIDS ... Everybody can support prevention work

by Andrea Schuster

Berlin/Cologne. 1 December is world AIDS day. It is not just on world aids day that it is important to speak with teenagers about this fatal disease and how they can protect themselves. The Cologne-based publishers, *Donna Vita Verlag* has launched an AIDS prevention game which enables adults to address the themes sexuality, prevention and contraception in a playful manner, without trivializing the subject.

The *Robert Koch Institute* speaks of ca. 59.000 people living with AIDS at the end of 2007. In Germany, about 2600 people are infected with the virus per year. The majority of cases are the result of unprotected sex. It is impossible to broach the subject of AIDS without addressing sexuality and contraception. Adolescents are particularly unsettled by the subject. Teen magazines and internet platforms increase the pressure for the „perfect first time.“ In addition, it is regarded as particularly “uncool“ to speak about the risks of infection with HIV or sexuality at all. The children are often unclear as to the ways in which AIDS is transmitted, and a false sense of shame hinders hem from asking. It is however very important not to discuss sexuality independently of AIDS: the greatest risk of infection is still associated with unprotected sex. Adolescents have ever-increasing access to information in the various media, such as the internet, yet these sources of information cannot replace talking about the matter. Self-help organizations and AIDS centres cater in the first instance for those affected by AIDS. Prevention work is just as important as before in order to avoid infection. It is especially effective to speak with the youths about sexuality and safe sex in a relaxed manner, without pointing the finger. It is very important to answer the open questions about “practice.“

It is not easy to broach such matters; especially when the conversations are between adults and pubescents. It is clear that those adults whom the youngsters trust, such as parents or teachers, who have the best access tot he feelings and problems of youths. Yet how does one start such a conversation? Which central theme should the adult focus on? Why not discuss sexuality in a playful manner? A board game with the name “Think Negative!“ can be very helpful. It does not sideline the topic of HIV, but rather shows it in the wider context of sexuality, contraception and prevention. It deals with the topics of homosexuality in the same manner as heterosexuality and highlights the differences in various religions. The game attempts to clear up matters of prejudice and take away the fear of the “first time.“ It refers to the most common methods of contraception and their possible dangers, even if inadequately.

The game provides the chance to approach these areas in small or large groups using question cards. It leaves enough leeway to extend the game independently so that the players own creative ideas can be included. The level of difficulty of the questions are constructed from easy to difficult so that no player feels that he is in any way deficient. The inventor of the game has provided free downloads on the internet page

www.thinknegative.de. Suggestions are very welcome. The game is German and English language available from the *Donna Vita Verlag* for 19.90 Euro plus Packaging and postage. For further information and to order, visit www.donnavita.de.

ETLog Health EnviroTech & Logistics GmbH is a specialist provider in the healthcare system. The Berlin-based firm acts worldwide as an advisor to clinics, institutions and ministries regarding the disposal of hospital waste, waste management technology, waste water and aids prevention.

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