Objectives

This module focuses on all the ins and outs of M-groups, the small group component of the Mpowerment Project, and answers the following questions:

1. What are M-groups?
2. How were they developed?
3. What happens in M-groups?
4. How are facilitators trained?
5. What are the most effective ways to recruit young men to the M-groups?
6. What about scheduling, record-keeping, and evaluation of M-groups?

A detailed description of how to run M-groups can be found in Module 13: M-group Facilitator’s Guide. An abbreviated outline that can be used while actually facilitating M-groups can be found in Module 14: M-group Meeting Guide.

What you’ll find in the Appendix to this module:

- Figure 9.1 Formula for estimating the number of young gay/bisexual men in the community
- Figure 9.2 Sample M-group call log
- Figure 9.3 Sample M-group reminder e-mail
- Figure 9.4 Sample M-group reminder letter
- Figure 9.5 Sample M-group attendance log
Core Elements

1. Coordinator(s)
2. Core Group & other volunteers
3. Project Space
4. Formal Outreach (including Social Outreach Events & Outreach Teams)
5. M-groups
6. Informal Outreach (which is a focus on talking with & encouraging friends & acquaintances to be safe & get tested for HIV)
7. Publicity campaign
8. Community Advisory Board (optional)

Guiding Principles

- Social focus
- Empowerment philosophy
- Peer Influence of safer sex messages
- Multi-level approach
- Gay-positive/sex-positive
- Community-building
- Diffusion of innovations
What are M-groups?

M-groups are peer-led, one-time meetings of 8 to 10 young gay/bisexual men that give participants an opportunity to talk openly about HIV prevention issues. The meetings, which usually last about three hours, are an extremely important part of the Mpowerment Project. M-groups make it possible for young gay/bisexual men to meet and get to know one another in a relaxed, supportive, and enjoyable setting. The groups help young men to confront issues and feelings that they may not ordinarily face, and relate to other young men in a deep and profound way. In the communities where we have worked, we have often found that M-groups are transforming, bonding experiences for participants and that this promotes the community-building goal of the Mpowerment Project. Participants focus on their own sexual behavior and the risks involved, the need for HIV testing, and learn to support their friends about safer sex and testing, thereby building a stronger and healthier community.
What happens in M-groups?

M-groups serve a number of purposes:

- They help focus attention on issues about HIV prevention, including how to have safer sex and the importance of knowing your HIV status.
- They serve as an introduction to the Mpowerment Project and as an invitation to become involved with it.
- They mobilize men to support their friends about having safer sex.

It is hoped that each young man who attends an M-group will be so motivated by the experience that he will choose to attend other Project activities, such as Social Outreach Events, or will volunteer for activities sponsored by the Project. Generally groups are co-facilitated by two young men—usually the Project Coordinators—although specially trained Core Group members or other volunteer facilitators can also lead groups effectively. M-groups are usually held at the Project space, but they can be held in participants’ homes or other locations convenient for young men. The groups start off fairly light in tone, and evolve over the meeting into addressing deeper and more emotionally charged issues—but men are never required to share deeper issues with the group unless they feel the desire to do so. M-groups are intended to be bonding experiences, with men usually leaving the group desiring to support their friends to be safer sexually.

It is best to start M-groups soon after other Mpowerment Project activities are underway, such as larger and smaller Social Outreach Events. Once the word gets out in the community that the Project holds fun, well-run events, young men will be more likely to attend the M-groups. We have found this to be the case in many places, where it becomes much easier to recruit men for the M-groups once the reputation of the Project has spread throughout the community. However, don’t delay starting M-groups for too long after beginning Social Outreach Events, or you may miss the opportunity to recruit some young gay/bisexual men to attend an M-group.

Adapting M-groups for specific racial/ethnic target populations

We’ve learned from our research that in order for the Mpowerment Project to be successful, all of the Core Elements need to be implemented and adapted to the special needs of each community. In other words, fidelity and adaptation work best. However, because M-groups are the most scripted Core Element of the Project, it can be particularly challenging to figure out how to adapt M-groups while retaining their essential lessons and key characteristics.

When adapting M-groups for specific racial/ethnic target populations, agencies may feel that many other issues and challenges for particular groups of young gay/bisexual men also need to be addressed in addition to those focused on in the M-groups. We’ve seen agencies attempt to address these issues by expanding the M-groups, so that they go beyond one-time groups.
focused on negotiating safer sex and the importance of talking to friends about the need to be safe. However, from our work with diverse Projects, we have come to the conclusion that adding additional sessions to the M-groups makes the intervention more complex and harder to implement, since it requires substantial effort to get men back into these groups for a second or third session. Instead, we believe that it’s preferable to adapt the M-groups so that they’re culturally appropriate without adding a second or third session. Instead, additional issues the men may face can and should be addressed elsewhere in the Project.

For example, when Mpowerment Detroit began implementing the Mpowerment Project for young gay/bisexual African American men, they quickly realized that there were many issues that the guys wanted to talk about but there wasn’t enough time to address them in the M-groups. As a result, they began a series of discussion groups held on Sunday evenings immediately following a family style meal. Topics included relationships, HIV testing, adoption, domestic abuse, and any other topic of importance to the participants. This adaptation of the original concept enabled the Project to keep the M-groups as one-time events for those new to the program—and at the same time made it possible to address many other issues of concern to the young gay/bisexual men already involved in the Project. Other Projects have addressed these issues through various Social Outreach Events.

**Format and process of M-groups**

M-groups are designed to be fun and interactive, and they include structured exercises, informal discussion, and role-plays. This reflects one of the underlying Guiding Principles of the Mpowerment Project—to empower young gay/bisexual men. We tried a variety of exercises and approaches that dealt with HIV prevention issues and community building in order to find those that went over best with young men.

The M-group experience is based on cognitive-behavioral theory. This theory suggests that people are more likely to adopt new behaviors if they practice them—or if they observe others demonstrating them—within a rewarding and supportive environment. The basic ingredients of the M-group have remained fairly constant over the years. However, what has changed is the “script” of written exercises that facilitators use to lead the group. Due to the fact that each community has its own unique experiences, needs, and culture, the script has been designed to be adapted to each community. For example, each community will want to change the names of settings and characters in the role-plays to reflect their own community.

One of the strengths of M-groups is that they help participants think for themselves about the issues being discussed, and come up with solutions that work for them. This reflects one of the underlying Guiding Principles of the Mpowerment Project—to empower young gay/bisexual men. Facilitators accomplish this by helping group participants engage in a self-reflection process about safer sex, and by acknowledging that there is never only “one way” to deal with safer sex issues. After each group activity the participants are encouraged to discuss their thoughts on the topic and learn from each
other’s experiences. In this way, it is hoped that they will leave the group feeling more capable, empowered, and secure in their own ability to have safer sex, and be more willing to support their friends in doing the same.

**Helping young men address reasons for having unsafe sex**

Research has identified a number of factors that contribute to unsafe sex among young gay/bisexual men that need to be addressed in the M-groups. These are the most “proximal” factors—that is, the reasons that are most closely connected with why young men are at risk sexually. (To be sure, other more distant factors are also involved with why young gay/bisexual men are at risk, such as internalized racism and homophobia, little future time perspective, poor self-esteem. These are or can be addressed in other parts of the Project, but M-groups focus on immediate issues involved in risk-taking behavior). They include:

- uncertainty about what is unsafe and safer sex
- beliefs that safer sex is boring and not fun
- poor communication skills for negotiating safer sex
- beliefs that it is difficult to get a partner to have safer sex with you
- interpersonal issues that may interfere with safer sex
- lack of planning ahead to have safer sex
- lack of perceived social norms that support safer sex and knowing your current HIV status
- lack of knowledge of correct use of condoms
- social support to have safer sex and to get tested

For additional information about these factors, see *Module 1: Overview*, which provides an overview of the research and principles underlying the Mpowerment Project.
Sometimes service providers ask if these issues are still relevant to today’s young gay/bisexual men or if they should be “updated.” We have found that young gay/bisexual men continue having unsafe sex for many of the same reasons that they did back in the 1990s. Many still do not know how to negotiate safer sex, or are unclear about some of the issues regarding unprotected sex. Interpersonal issues continue to make it difficult for some men to practice safer sex. For example, some men find it difficult to initiate the topic of safer sex with a new partner because they fear rejection. For others, entering a love relationship can make it harder to practice safer sex because they may want to stop using condoms prematurely (i.e., before both partners know their HIV status, have developed an adequate level of trust to warrant unprotected sex, and have discussed what they would do if one slips up and has unprotected anal sex with someone else).

The M-groups help young gay/bisexual men deal with these issues, which is why they remain so important. Additionally, it is important to remember that young men come out as gay or bisexual all the time, so may not yet have encountered basic HIV prevention information. The M-groups reinforce “the basics” for the men who already know them, and the groups may provide other young men with this important information for the first time in an appealing and effective manner.

Unfortunately, not all men who engage in high-risk sexual activities are likely to attend M-groups, no matter how well they are marketed. Unlike more traditional safer sex workshops, however, M-groups also motivate and train participants how to speak informally with their friends outside the group and encourage them to practice safer sex and get tested for HIV. This expression of support to friends is what the Project calls “Informal Outreach” (See Module 8: Informal Outreach for a more detailed description). Consequently, both group participants and others in their social networks benefit from M-groups.

Content of M-groups

Here is a brief summary of what takes place during each M-group:

1. **Welcome** The facilitators welcome participants, describe the Project and its goals, and the purpose of the M-group. The facilitators then present ground rules for the group to make the men feel safe participating in it, and to encourage them to relax, to participate fully, and to have a good time.

2. **Introductions** The facilitators then get the men to take part in an amusing “ice-breaker” to introduce them to one another and to feel more at ease participating in the group.

3. **Interpersonal Issues** The first topic the group addresses—issues related to meeting and getting to know other young men—is not directly HIV-specific. However, it is usually very engaging for group members and provides a context for discussing the sexual topics that follow. In this section, the participants role-play various scenarios dealing with meeting another man in a bar or asking a casual acquaintance for a date.
4 Safer sex guidelines  The facilitators pass out a list of safer sex guidelines and the group discusses questions or thoughts they may have about them. It has been our experience that participants tend to be fairly knowledgeable about the guidelines. Therefore, the facilitators do not spend much time elaborating on them. Instead, they try to clear up misconceptions that participants may have (“Unprotected intercourse is safe if you withdraw before ejaculating”) and help them resolve areas of confusion (“I’ve heard different claims about how safe oral sex really is”).

5 How to have fun, hot safer sex  Since research shows that many young men perceive low-risk activities to be less enjoyable than high-risk behaviors, the group next performs an exercise designed to help them think more creatively about safer sex. Participants are divided into groups of three or four and given a large sheet of paper with the name of a body part (ass, dick, mouth, or hands) written on it. The groups are then asked to brainstorm and write down as many fun, erotic, safe acts they can do with that body part. Each group then reports to the entire group the list of behaviors they came up with, and the group discusses each list, adding any new suggestions anyone else thinks of that would go well with the body part.

6 Fun with condoms  Next, the group does an exercise designed to show the correct use of a condom. The facilitators divide the group into pairs and ask each pair to reach into a bag and pull out an object. Inside the bag are an assortment of different dildos and humorous, phallic-shaped objects. The facilitators then demonstrate how to put a condom on a dildo, while the pairs follow along using the object they picked. Participants are then given gift packages filled with an assortment of different types of condoms and lubricants for them to take home and sample.

7 Negotiating safer sex  Following a short break, the group focuses on strategies for communicating about safer sex with partners. First, the facilitators read a scenario about a young man getting ready for a first date with a guy with whom he may have sex. The group is asked to brainstorm things they could do before the date to make it likely that any sex that occurs is safe. (Examples might include: have condoms readily available near the bed; have a safer sex poster on the wall; carry condoms with you; avoid getting drunk, etc.) Since much of the prelude to sex is nonverbal, this exercise attempts to help the men think of ways they can engineer sexual situations in such a way that they increase the likelihood of safer sex happening.

Next, the group is presented with a scenario about being in a sexual situation with a partner. First, the group discusses the situation, and then role-plays

It is important for the Coordinators to have effective group facilitation skills.
verbal and nonverbal ways to suggest safer sex, first to a willing partner, and next to a reluctant partner. Since the most common situation in which young gay/bisexual men have unsafe sex is within a boyfriend relationship, the next exercise asks participants to divide into pairs and role-play a scenario in which they suggest to a boyfriend with whom they have never had safer sex, that they start having safer sex now. After each role-play, participants describe how they handled the situation.

8 Informal Outreach/encouraging friends to have safer sex
This important section of the M-group is intended to motivate and train participants to encourage their friends to have safer sex. The facilitators introduce the topic by discussing the importance of encouraging their friends to engage in safer sex, and about the reality that if young gay/bisexual men do not support their friends to be safe, who will? Next, the facilitators discuss with the group specific ways they can encourage their friends. Participants then role-play two scenarios that give them an opportunity to practice doing this. Afterward, participants are then asked to make a commitment to invite several of their friends to an M-group, and the facilitators provide them with M-group invitations and safer sex packages to give to their friends.

9 Invitation to join the Mpowerment Project
The facilitators conclude the groups by inviting participants to become involved with the Mpowerment Project, and announce upcoming Project events and volunteer opportunities. Participants are given buttons or some other item such as keychain lanyards containing the Mpowerment Project logo, and are asked to wear them to show their support for the Project and its mission. It is hoped that wearing the buttons will trigger conversations among their friends and acquaintances about the Project and will serve as a reminder about the importance of practicing safer sex.

10 Informal socializing
Following the M-group, participants are invited to socialize with the other group members and the facilitators. When M-groups are held in a Project’s space, participants may also want to meet any other Mpowerment Project volunteers who may be around and explore the Project space and its resources.

Why the M-group Includes role-plays
Many group participants will tell you that they hate role-plays. This comes as no surprise. Even some group facilitators are wary of role-plays during their own training sessions. Participating in role-plays can feel awkward or embarrassing, and they make some people feel self-conscious, as if they are onstage. So why use them? Role-plays offer learning opportunities that group discussions do not. Research has shown a number of reasons why role-plays are a valuable tool for learning and practicing new social behaviors.

First, conducting role-plays in a group allows participants to experience peer support and positive reinforcement for behaviors that could end up saving their lives one day. This type of peer support has been shown by research to be a powerful factor in practicing safer sex. Additionally, the role-plays give participants a chance to practice these behaviors in a safe and supportive environment outside of the pressure of a sexual encounter.
In selecting M-group facilitators, look for sensitivity, a sense of humor, and the ability to draw people out.

Second, role-playing requires you to “think on your feet.” Scientific studies have demonstrated that role-playing a real-life situation—as opposed to merely talking about it—makes it much more likely a participant will be able to handle the situation when it actually occurs in his own life. Watching a role-play unfold is also more helpful to those in the group who are observing it than if they had only talked about it.

Third, role-plays are an excellent way for the facilitators to see first-hand if a participant has mastered a new skill. Role-plays have been used for a long time in psychology because they can measure the acquisition of new skills very well. They are often used to evaluate the effectiveness of trainings because they can identify strong and weak areas. They are also widely and effectively used with a variety of different populations. It is important to realize that the group will generally follow the lead of the facilitators when it comes to role-plays. If the facilitators approach role-plays with enthusiasm and excitement, group members will follow suit. Group members who are motivated to be part of a role-play will often bring to it some of the most sensitive and important experiences of their lives. Our experience has shown that role-plays often become emotional and set in motion significant, positive life changes among participants.

One final word about role-plays: although some group members may complain about them at first, many find them extremely beneficial afterwards. Role-plays are often mentioned on M-group evaluations as the thing participants liked most about the groups.

Selecting M-group facilitators

One of the keys to the success of M-groups is that they are run by peers—other young men who are close in age to the participants. It is tremendously empowering for young men to attend a group run by someone with whom they can identify. In selecting M-group facilitators, previous experience in facilitating groups is very helpful. Even more important, however, are the following personal qualities: sensitivity, interpersonal skills, a sense of humor, flexibility, the ability to put people at ease, and the ability to draw people out. When selecting facilitators, we strongly recommend that applicants be observed facilitating a mock discussion group to get a sense of their abilities. Since M-groups are co-facilitated, it is very helpful to pair less experienced facilitators with men who are more experienced.
How to train M-group facilitators

The effectiveness of the M-group will depend, to a great degree, on the talents and skills of the facilitators. Over the course of running the Mpowerment Project in your community, facilitators will move on and new individuals will need to be trained to become facilitators. Fortunately, good facilitation skills can be learned. We have developed an effective system for training M-group facilitators. Below we discuss the six elements of our M-group facilitator training.

1. **Use Module 13: M-group Facilitator’s Guide**  This guide includes a step-by-step script for running an M-group, along with helpful tips about how to make the groups run smoothly and how to make them more enjoyable for participants. Listed at the beginning of each section are objectives, followed by an actual script of what to say. All key points that the facilitator should emphasize are highlighted. Facilitators should study this guide carefully in order to become familiar with the content of the M-group. We have found that training prospective M-group facilitators works best when the trainees have carefully read the entire guide before working with the Training Video (described in the next section). The Facilitator’s Guide also explains the purposes and theoretical rationale for the various M-group activities. While the guide provides a word-by-word script for the M-group, facilitators are encouraged to speak naturally and use their own words when covering the material. The guide also discusses common issues that may arise in running M-groups, and provides numerous tips for avoiding specific problems and dealing with difficult situations. As stated earlier, the M-group Facilitator’s Guide is Module 13 of the manual, and individual copies can be downloaded by logging on to [www.mpowerment.org](http://www.mpowerment.org).

Also included in this manual is Module 14: M-group Meeting Guide. This guide contains only the script—what the facilitator says—and not the explanations or tips contained in the full guide. We have found it is more practical to use this abbreviated guide when actually facilitating groups.

2. **Use the M-group Facilitator Training Video**  The M-group Facilitator Training Video guides prospective facilitators through each section of the M-group by providing models of how to conduct the group and offering additional tips. The 45-minute video is designed to be used interactively. For each section, the trainer should do the following with the trainees (the potential M-group facilitators): 1) discuss the goals and key issues for that section; 2) observe the corresponding part of the video; 3) stop the tape and discuss what was seen; and 4) practice facilitating that section using copies of the M-group Meeting Guide. Following this procedure, the trainer then coaches and encourages prospective facilitators to discuss how the practice went and brainstorm alternative ways of handling the situation.

3. **Provide Facilitation Skills Training**  Certain facilitation skills are basic to running a group successfully. For example, all facilitators should know how to establish rapport with a group, listen actively, paraphrase, manage participants who talk too much, draw out shy participants, and deal with conflict among group members. It is beyond the scope of this manual to provide a comprehensive training in facilitation skills. In most communities, there are experts in group facilitation who may be willing to help train your facilitators. Some local colleges offer continuing adult education classes.
on this topic. Other communities offer similar trainings through Parks and Recreation programs, adult learning classes, or community mediation programs. Local AIDS service organizations often have case managers or counselors who may be able to help your staff and volunteers learn group facilitation skills. We strongly recommend that local experts be asked to participate in trainings on general facilitation skills for prospective M-group facilitators.

4 Encourage Facilitators to Gain HIV Expertise

The M-group covers basic safer sex guidelines that the facilitators should be able to explain. It is beyond the scope of this manual to provide a comprehensive overview of all the HIV-related information that facilitators should learn to effectively lead M-groups. However, one particularly good and regularly updated Web resource on many issues related to HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases is found at www.sfcityclinic.org/stdbasics. The website contains accurate and complete information on HIV transmission, prevention, testing, and other relevant issues.

It is important for facilitators to develop a good understanding of HIV issues, particularly the facts of HIV transmission and prevention. For this reason, facilitators should undergo HIV trainings with local experts to gain an understanding of HIV transmission and other relevant HIV issues. This will increase the facilitators’ sense of confidence in presenting the safer sex guidelines and enhance their credibility in responding to the various questions that arise. It is also important to learn about sexually transmitted infections (STI), since a guy with an STI is more likely to contract HIV, and if an HIV-positive guy contracts an STI it can impact his immune function and his viral load can increase.

Facilitators should also have a list of referral sources that they can direct participants to and that they themselves can turn to when they have questions, and especially where guys can go to get an HIV test in a comfortable environment.

The knowledge base surrounding HIV is continually growing. Although it is important that the facilitators have a good working knowledge of basic HIV issues— and particularly regarding transmission—they are not expected to be experts. The reasons most young gay/bisexual men sometimes engage in high-risk sexual practices are not generally due to a lack of knowledge. Usually these reasons are more often related to difficulties with motivation,
communication, or negotiation skills. Therefore, group facilitators do not need to know “all there is to know” about HIV. The main focus of the M-groups, therefore, should remain on building skills to make it easier to negotiate safer sex and to make it more enjoyable—and not on HIV transmission or treatment issues.

5 **Conduct Practice Groups** Once prospective facilitators have gone through a formal training, it is extremely important that they have time to sharpen their facilitation skills with practice M-groups. An excellent way of doing this is to invite Core Group members to serve as practice group participants. In addition to providing a supportive first audience so the Coordinators and other facilitator trainees can practice their new facilitation skills, participating in the practice groups is also a convenient way for Core Group members to become more familiar with the issues addressed in the M-group. It can also serve as a valuable bonding experience for Core Group members, and increase their sense of ownership and understanding of the M-group.

It is very helpful for the trainer to sit in on practice M-groups with prospective facilitators to help fine-tune their skills. After the group is over, the trainer can discuss with the group his or her observations while the experience is still fresh in everyone’s mind. We have found it preferable to do this after the group participants have left. This way, the prospective facilitators may feel more comfortable receiving feedback, and the trainer can speak more openly.

6 **Have Prospective Facilitators Sit in on M-groups** In addition to the above steps, we have found that the most effective way of training new facilitators is to have them sit in on as many M-groups as they can. Initially this should be done as a participant-observer, and then as an apprentice who gradually takes on increasing responsibility for leading sections of the group while being mentored by experienced co-facilitators.

**Strategies for recruiting men to M-groups**

As stated earlier, not all young gay/bisexual men in any community are likely to attend an M-group. However, there are still many actions a Project can take to attract as many participants as possible. The following sections will give you some helpful suggestions about: 1) general considerations when developing an approach to market the M-groups in your community, 2) specific marketing activities that we have found useful, 3) recruiting approaches that have been successful, and 4) logistical tips regarding scheduling, record keeping, and evaluation.

**Achieve a critical mass** “Diffusion of Innovations Theory” accounts for how new behaviors spread throughout a community *(See Module 1: Overview)*. Simply put, it states that if 15-20% of a particular group adopt a new behavior and let their friends know that they are practicing it, the behavior will spread naturally throughout the rest of the community. For example, the theory has been used to describe the explosive rise in the use of technologies such as the Internet and fax machines. Another
example is how groups of friends are quick to adopt a new catchy phrase or fashion made popular by an influential person. In much the same way, young gay/bisexual men can spread the norm of safer sex. Therefore, the goal of the Mpowerment Project is to have at least 15-20% of the young gay/bisexual men in your community attend an M-group. (See Figure 9.1 in the Appendix to this module for a guide about how to estimate the number of gay/bisexual men in your community). Once they do, it is likely that the safer sex message will spread naturally through existing friendship networks within the community.

**Make sure groups reflect the community’s diversity**

It is important that the composition of men attending the M-groups reflects the composition of your community. (See Module 2: Community Assessment for more information about how to assess the different groups of young gay/bisexual men in your community.)

**Emphasize the social aspect of M-groups**

We promote M-groups as a fun way for young gay/bisexual men to meet other young men; hear how other young men are dealing with issues of importance to them, such as sex, dating, and relationships; and find out more about the Mpowerment Project. All men who are interested in being involved with the Mpowerment Project should be encouraged to attend an M-group as an “entry” into the Project. It is very important not to describe M-groups as “safer sex workshops.” We have found this is an immediate turn-off for most young men, and particularly for those who would benefit most from attending. (See below, “M-group Recruiting: What to Say, How to Say It”).

**Be creative and keep trying**

Since no one method will reach all the men you want to attend M-groups, use many different approaches. You may find that different approaches work at different times, and that recruiting participants is easier during some periods than during others. Keep trying new methods and improving upon ones you’ve already used even when your recruitment efforts are going slowly. Also keep contacting those men who have been contacted numerous times before without success. As the reputation of the Project and its M-groups spreads through the community, these men may become more open to participating. Module 7: Formal Outreach—Social Outreach Events and Outreach Team describes in greater detail some methods of recruiting men at outreach activities to M-groups. (However, we briefly review those below, and suggest additional methods).

**Let others catch your enthusiasm**

Although recruiting men to M-groups is not always easy, the vast majority of guys tell us they really enjoyed the groups and found them to be a valuable experience. Furthermore, many lasting friendships have been made among men who met at a group. You will be more effective in recruiting guys to M-groups if you believe in the importance and value of the groups, and if you are warm, enthusiastic, sincere—even charming! Most of all, be persistent, but don’t be
pushy. You needn’t feel any reluctance at bringing up the topic of M-groups when you have the opportunity.

**Use a teamwork approach** Since recruitment is a large task and there are so many different recruitment strategies, we have found it helpful for the M-group Coordinator to work with a team of volunteers. The use of volunteers effectively multiplies the efforts of the M-group Coordinator. Volunteers should be highly motivated and taught how to describe the M-groups so that they sound appealing. (See below, “M-group Recruiting: What to Say, How to Say It”). There are many jobs that volunteers can perform, such as making initial recruitment phone calls, calling to remind men of an upcoming M-group, networking with their friends and acquaintances, inviting men to attend Project-sponsored events, and so forth. Working successfully with a team of volunteers is an acquired skill, and requires careful attention to a number of things, including coordinating volunteer activities, evaluating the success of events, and keeping volunteers motivated. As suggested in Module 3, volunteers always appreciate tokens of appreciation for their efforts and commitment, and respond positively to little things such as thank you notes and snacks.

**Specific marketing activities for M-groups**

**Mpowerment Project Social Outreach Events** Whenever formal outreach is done at bars or other community venues, every safer sex promotional material should include some way of promoting the M-groups. This could be a panel in the material with a description and contact information for M-groups, or a separate card included inside with general information about M-groups or the date and time and RSVP information for the next upcoming M-group. An approach we have found that works well is to invite men who show up at Mpowerment Project Social Outreach Events to attend an M-group. One of the important functions of Social Outreach Events is to attract new young men to the Project and to collect their names and contact information so you can invite each and every one of them to attend an M-group. Men who have a good time at an event will likely be more receptive to attending an M-group. As explained in Module 5: Core Group and Other Volunteers, there are many ways to record the names and phone numbers of men who attend the Project’s large Social Outreach Events. But every Project-sponsored event—whether large or small—should be used as a means of recruiting men to the M-groups.

Soon after each Social Outreach Event, it is extremely important to contact every person who was there. It is vital to be thorough in your follow-up with the names collected at each event. This is a critical time to invite each person who attends an event to become more fully involved in the Project by attending an M-group and to welcome them into the community that your Project is creating. We have found that if you do not follow up on a participant’s interest sheet, he is likely to receive the impression that he is not wanted or welcome in the Project.
Community social settings
During an outreach performance at gay bars or other appropriate community venues, Project volunteers can distribute flyers or promotional cards that explain what an M-group is and how to sign up for one. We have found that this approach is more successful than when volunteers, dressed in their regular clothes, approach strangers in bars and ask them to come to an M-group. Additionally, if the community venues have places (e.g., bulletin boards, empty wall space, kiosks) where M-group flyers or cards can be displayed, it is usually a good idea to have M-group promotional materials visible in these locations as well.

Networking with friends
Word of mouth is the best publicity, and it is likely to be the most powerful tool for sparking interest in attending M-groups. Recruitment is most successful when Coordinators, Core Group members, previous M-group participants, and all Project volunteers and supporters strongly encourage their friends to attend an M-group.

Perhaps the most effective method of recruitment is using the Coordinators’ and Core Group’s personal contacts. Working with friends provides a good foundation for beginning the networking process. In order not to overlook any potential group participants, the Coordinators and Core Group members should each make a list of all the young gay/bisexual men they know, and attempt to recruit them to the groups. After these friends have gone through the groups, they can in turn be asked to encourage their friends to attend the groups.

It is important that everyone who is helping to recruit men to M-groups—including the M-group Coordinator, Core Group members, and other volunteers—be taught how to describe the groups (See below, “M-group Recruiting: What to Say, How to Say It”). Recruitment is most successful when friends are invited to the groups in a positive, upbeat manner—delivered in much the same way as invitations to a party or other social event.

Community networking
Establishing and maintaining relationships with different groups is not only helpful for getting a sense of the “pulse” of the community regarding the Project, but also is a means of reaching out to wider social networks for M-group recruitment. Recruiting M-group participants through other organizations seems to be most successful when the M-group Coordinator develops a positive working relationship with various community leaders (e.g., campus organizers, bartenders, club managers, ethnic/racial group organizers, queer activists, political activists). This kind of networking involves more than a phone call, and usually necessitates an in-person meeting of some kind to discuss the importance of the Project and the M-groups in particular.

It is also helpful for other organizations to have a basic understanding of M-groups so that when they encounter someone who would be appropriate for the group they can make a referral. Ideally, the M-group Coordinator, or someone else from the Project, should meet with staff at each appropriate community organization to discuss the M-group’s goals, logistics, and referral procedures.
Ideally, the M-group Coordinator, or someone else from the Project, should meet with staff at each appropriate community organization to discuss the M-group's goals, logistics, and referral procedures.

We have found it most helpful if the referral is made to the M-group Coordinator himself, rather than to the Project in general. When possible, we recommend that organizations give the names and phone numbers of contacts (after securing permission to do so) directly to the M-group Coordinator. Therefore, it is helpful for a Coordinator from the Project to meet with staff at the community organizations to discuss the best ways to refer individuals to each other's programs. It is also useful for each organization to have M-group brochures, flyers, or cards on display.

Counselors, HIV prevention professionals, teachers, people at gay community organizations, as well as other community leaders can be very helpful in getting the message out about the value of M-groups and supplying the Project with contacts.

**Gay community events**

Recruitment efforts should also focus on all of the gay and/or AIDS-related activities occurring in the community. Because these often draw large numbers of young gay/bisexual men who are looking for ways to connect with other men their age, they are an excellent place to make new contacts. We are often asked, “Sure, but how do I approach a stranger and begin telling them about the M-groups?” The best way is simply to walk up and begin chatting. Tell them about the Project, and personally invite them to attend an M-group. Generally, these men are willing to provide their name, phone number, and e-mail address. After they have had a personal contact with someone from the Project they will usually feel more comfortable attending a group.

**Publicity and advertising**

Flyers, posters, and newspaper ads are very important to get the word out about M-groups. An excellent way to get free publicity is by writing an article about the Project for a college, alternative, or gay newspaper and including information about the M-groups. However, don’t count on swarms of young men flocking to M-groups because they saw an enticing flyer, poster, or even a great article. Advertising materials should be used in addition to other more active, personal recruitment strategies, or as another way of promoting a Project-sponsored outreach event. For example, when volunteers approach young men about M-groups, the volunteers can also give them a flyer. Similarly, an invitation to attend an M-group may be better received if the person has previously read an article or seen an ad about M-groups. Module 10: Publicizing the Mpowerment Project contains many additional pointers on publicity.

**Mobilizing the Core Group**

From the start, get the Core Group committed to reaching your goal of recruiting 15-20% of the young gay/bisexual men in the community into M-groups. As a starting point, make sure the Core Group understands that the M-groups are central to one of the Project’s main purposes—helping young men learn to practice safer sex and support each
other in that goal. Make sure that all Core Group members have attended at least one M-group, and encourage those who are interested in becoming M-group facilitators.

The Core Group can help you reach your goal. Here are some ways the Core Group can boost your success with M-groups:

- brainstorm solutions to recruitment challenges
- assist the M-group Coordinator in identifying people for M-groups
- become M-group facilitators
- participate in mock M-groups where new facilitators are being trained
- tell their friends about what M-groups are
- bring their friends to an M-group
- help publicize M-groups
- attend at least one M-group
- encourage those who are interested in becoming M-group facilitators to do so

Be sure to get Core Group members to state what tasks they agree to help with and to be as specific as possible about them. If they do, they will be more likely to follow through.

Evaluate your recruitment activities

It is important to critically evaluate your recruitment methods, and not just give up if they are not successful. One way to evaluate your methods is to keep notes of what methods are being used, what hours phone calls are being made, and what messages are being left at the Project, since all of this information can be reviewed to see if some methods are working better than others. Keep trying new methods of recruitment, modifying old methods, and evaluating what methods are most and least successful.

If you find you’ve run out of names of men who have attended larger Mpowerment Project Social Outreach Events and are constantly checking for new faces at Project-sponsored outreach activities, it’s probably time to begin a new round of networking with friends, acquaintances, Core Group members, guys who have gone through M-groups, and community organizations. Consider if your advertising and publicity methods are as effective as possible or need to be changed. The point is that recruitment activities need constant evaluation and adjustment to be most successful. Different approaches work at different times, so it is best not to settle into one approach that you expect to work all the time.
M-group recruiting: what to say, how to say it

- use positive and enthusiastic descriptions
- emphasize that the M-groups are fun, novel, and interesting
- mention free food, drink, and gifts
- describe the social aspect of the groups, where participants get a chance to meet other guys their age. This is particularly important if you live in a community where there are few places to meet other young gay/bisexual men
- stress that the M-groups offer an opportunity to make an important difference in the community

Points to cover

It is important to convey to everyone the importance of portraying the group in the following way, but using your own words:

It is a one-time, introductory, fun, social, and casual orientation to the new community center where you’ll have a chance to meet other guys and talk about issues of importance to young gay/bisexual men including dating, relationships, community, friendships, and sex.

Below we explain what is meant by some of these terms. Become familiar with this information so you can bring it up when talking to guys about taking part in an M-group:

**One-time, introductory**

This is an important message because you want people to realize that you’re only talking about attending for one evening full of fun and information, as opposed to making an ongoing commitment to something such as a multi-session group.

**Fun, social**

Young guys want to have a good time. They are not likely to come to something that seems boring, dry, or preachy, and many are not likely to show up if they think it will simply be another safer sex workshop.

**Casual, non-threatening**

This is important for a few reasons. Many guys are new to the gay community and are just beginning the process of dealing with their sexuality or developing a positive gay identity. Still others may not even completely identify with the community. These guys might feel scared or uncomfortable about coming to a group that seems threatening or that might “out” them. Regardless, they all need the information and support provided in the M-groups.
Also, because many people are shy about making new friends or attending new groups, they might feel a bit intimidated at first. This is why it is so important to communicate that the M-group is very informal and confidential. Make sure the men you talk with understand that it is not a group where they will be put on the spot or forced to divulge personal information to people they don’t know.

**Community center and community building**
This is a very attractive aspect of the group for many young men, so don’t forget to tell them about it. You will be introducing them to a community center that is just for young gay/bisexual men. This is a place where they can hang out during the center’s drop-in hours, socialize, and meet other guys, which leads us to the next point in this list.

**Meeting guys and socializing**
Our surveys have consistently found that young gay/bisexual men want a place outside of the bar scene where they can meet other guys and socialize. The Mpowerment Project space offers them exactly this. There they can make new friends, build social support systems, and become part of a strong and healthy community.

**Discussing important issues**
Many young gay/bisexual men are interested in learning new ways to enjoy erotic safer sex. However, we have found it best not to describe the group as a safer sex workshop since doing so will turn many guys off. Also, focusing on safer sex when describing the M-group sells the group short because many other issues are discussed during the group as well. Even though group participants enjoy the brainstorming section on erotic safer sex and learn a lot in the M-group about how to communicate their desire for safer sex and negotiate successfully with their partners, we have found that the safer sex component is not the best marketing tool. Instead, we stress that the M-groups provide a chance to talk about many issues that are important to young gay/bisexual men including relationships, dating, meeting guys, community, friendships, and sex. Yet it is important not to misrepresent the group either because it certainly does cover issues such as HIV and safer sex. But don’t make these elements the selling point when trying to recruit someone to an M-group.

**Starting the conversation**
How do you begin talking about the M-groups to a relative stranger? It’s probably easier and more natural to begin the conversation by talking about the existence of the Project space, particularly if it is used as a young gay/bisexual men’s community center. Most men will be curious to learn more about the center and what’s happening there. (If you’re physically at the center, you might also give them a short tour.) Once you’ve sparked their interest, you can describe the M-group as the starting point for finding out more about the Project and the center.
A few Do’s and Don’ts

**DO** smile, be friendly, and turn the charm on. Psyche yourself up. Let others catch your enthusiasm for the M-group.

**DO NOT** pressure guys to participate, but make sure you communicate the main points listed above in a clear, somewhat subtle, but warm manner.

**DO** be yourself (natural, friendly, sincere) and get to know the person a bit before telling him about the center or the M-group. If he’s more comfortable with you, he’ll be more receptive.

**DO NOT** describe the M-group as a safer sex workshop or a place where you just talk about HIV or AIDS. Remember the underlying principle of the program that most young gay/bisexual men are not interested in attending activities or being involved in a Project that only focuses on HIV or AIDS. Make sure personal communications, advertisements, and other publicity also conform to this guideline.

**Practice, practice, practice**

It’s up to the M-group Coordinator to develop effective ways of describing the M-groups so young men will want to attend them. He is also responsible for teaching the Core Group and volunteers, through role-playing and discussion, to help recruit for M-groups so that they feel comfortable describing the groups to others and do it effectively. In talking with potential attendees about M-groups, here is an example of what to say:

[**say:**] I’d like to invite you to come to an M-group, which is a one-time group that’s really fun and casual, and which focuses on issues important to us as young gay/bisexual men like relationships, community-building, dating, and sex. There will be 8 to 10 other young men there, along with some light snacks and gifts. May I hold a spot for you in next week’s group, which will meet on [day]?

OR

[**say:**] Have you been to one of our M-groups? (No) Have you heard about them? (No) OK, here’s the deal, we have these one time things where we get 8-10 guys together. They are totally casual and really, really fun. Anyway, we get 8 to 10 guys together and basically talk about sex, dating, relationships, whatever comes up. We usually end up laughing more than anything else. It’s fun, and you get to meet new people and learn about (Project name). It’d be great if you’d come. Would you be available _____?”
When talking with friends, you can add: “Would you come to this group and tell me what you think of it? I respect your opinion and would really appreciate your feedback.”

OR

[say:] “Listen. Keep next Thursday open for me because you are going to our M-group. You’ll have fun and I need your opinion on it. PLEASE??? PRETTY PLEASE???? Thanks.”

A friend may be willing to come to the group out of a personal favor to the person who asked him. He may also attend because he already holds similar values about the importance of gay pride, community building, and practicing safer sex. The Coordinator can also use flattery with his friends, discussing that he really respects their opinions and would like to see what they think about the group. In this case the friends might attend because they know that their friend would truly appreciate feedback about the group.

**Be prepared for rejection**

While personal invitations may be the most effective way to get people to attend M-groups, some men will still not be interested. Being prepared to deal with this sort of rejection is important. No one likes to be told “no,” and when you are, you may feel rejected or put off. One way to prepare for this is by reminding yourself that not every invitation will have a successful immediate outcome. Even if someone declines the invitation now, as the word gets out that the groups are enjoyable and that the Project is trustworthy, the person may choose to attend at a later time. In addition, you might consider inviting these men to other events at the Project space. After seeing the Project in action, some may then be willing to come to an M-group. Remember: every time you have contact with new men—whether on the phone or in person—you are promoting the Project.

**Group composition**

We think M-groups work best if the composition of the participants is as diverse as possible. When scheduling men for groups, consider age, ethnicity (unless your program is only designed for one racial/ethnic group), relationship status, social crowd, etc. This way, participants are exposed to a variety of perspectives, and this enriches the experience for everyone. Likewise, it is valuable to have a few participants who already know and are comfortable with each other. Their presence can help break the ice and contribute to a relaxed atmosphere. However, if all the participants know each other well, they may feel inhibited being honest in the discussions and role-plays. For similar reasons, we recommend against having both partners of a couple in the same M-group. Sometimes, however, young men are reluctant to come to an M-group alone, so if that is the case, encourage them to come with whomever they want. The important thing is that everyone feels comfortable so they will participate fully in the group.
Choosing a time

Be sure to vary the days and times M-groups are offered so that every young man has an opportunity to attend one if he wants to. For example, if M-groups are only scheduled for Wednesday nights, men who have a Wednesday night class or work shift will never be able to attend. As you begin scheduling M-groups, you’ll quickly learn that no matter what day or time you choose, there will always be someone who has a conflict and cannot attend. That’s why we encourage you to rotate the times M-groups are offered so no one is systematically excluded from attending. We have also found that occasionally scheduling M-groups for late Saturday mornings can be effective.

Keeping notes & regular office hours

It is important to keep careful notes about the outcomes of different scheduling methods. We recommend that people recruiting for M-groups record what time of day recruitment phone calls are made and the outcomes of each call, because certain recruitment approaches, days, and times may be more effective than others. (A sample call log, Figure 9.2., can be found in the Appendix at the end of this Module.) Then everyone responsible for M-group recruiting can share this information with each other to determine the best days and times to call and to discuss what recruitment methods are most successful. Keeping careful notes enables you to coordinate recruitment efforts and to modify your scheduling style and procedure as you begin to notice which methods, days, and times are most effective.

It is helpful for the M-group Coordinator to hold regular office hours. That way, when the Core Group and other volunteers recruit men to the groups, they can tell them exactly what hours they can call the M-group Coordinator to schedule themselves into a group.

How to schedule

We have found that the following system works well in scheduling men for M-groups:

1 Accumulate a list of names of potential M-group participants. This list will include the names of men who have attended various Social Outreach Events, as well as names provided by outreach volunteers and Core Group members. These names are as valuable to your Project as gold. Everyone who uses the list must understand that the names are to be kept confidential. Keep track of when and how often you have called to invite them to attend an M-group, and the reason given, if any, on why the person hasn’t come to an M-group. This can clear up the difference between an interested person whose personal schedule doesn’t quite match the M-group schedule, and someone not interested in attending an M-group who wants you to stop calling.

2 Personally call each potential participant. The most effective method is for someone to call each prospective participant, describe the M-group to him, and invite him to sign up for a group. When calling,
don’t forget to remind him that this is a chance to meet other young gay/bisexual men. During the call, be sure to respond to any questions or concerns he may have about attending.

It’s best to develop a protocol regarding how to describe M-groups and the Mpowerment Project and to have rehearsed it. The protocol should also include what to say if you encounter answering machines, voice mail, pagers, roommates, and parents. It is important to know ahead of time how you will handle these situations, since protecting people’s privacy is important. Sometimes leaving a message is the only alternative if you’ve made repeated calls and the person never seems to be home. In such instances, it is important to leave a discreet message. Of course, it is almost always better to have a personal interaction with someone than to rely solely on messages. Of course there’s no way to know for certain if the person ever gets the message intended for him. Some roommates are notorious for deleting messages!

3 Schedule each man for a group that will meet within two weeks of your phone call. Scheduling further ahead than this is rarely effective, given the hectic lives that many people lead, and many men will then forget about the M-group meeting.

4 Immediately send out a confirmation letter as a reminder. It may also be helpful to send a reminder by e-mail, text message, or a post on social networking sites like Myspace or Facebook, but always send out a confirmation letter as well, since not everyone checks e-mail regularly. We have not had much success using e-mails or letters to recruit men to M-groups, but we sometimes fall back on this method after numerous unsuccessful attempts to reach them by phone or in person. (An example of a Reminder Letter, Figure 9.4, can be found in the Appendix at the end of this Module. Figure 9.3 contains a Reminder E-mail.)

5 Call men one or two days before their scheduled M-group to remind them of the date and meeting location. For some men, these reminder calls may be the key to getting them to attend the group. When calling, be enthusiastic and welcoming. Remind the men again that the groups are fun and provide a chance to meet other young gay/bisexual men, and that there will be refreshments and free gifts.

Overbook!

The ideal M-group size is 8 to 10 participants, plus the facilitators. Groups with fewer than 5 participants plus 2 facilitators do not work well. For a variety of reasons, not all of the men who are scheduled to come to a given group will actually show up. We have found that it wise to be prepared for this inevitability by overbooking groups by 30% to 50%. In other words, if you want 9 men to attend, schedule 12 to 18. Despite your best efforts, there will be times when only a few men show up. That’s why it’s also advisable to have Core Group members or friends who can serve as backups if more participants are needed. Know where these people will be the night of the M-group, so that they can be called at a moment’s notice. Sometimes these “back-up” M-group participants can be at the Project space working
on another volunteer activity (e.g., assembling safer sex kits) during times when an M-group is scheduled, and they can step into the group if they are needed. This will ensure that you never have to cancel a group because there aren’t enough participants. If you do cancel, it’s possible the men who did show up may never return to another M-group.

**Keeping records of M-groups**

Keeping track of how many men attend M-groups is extremely important for two reasons. First, attendance records serve as documentation that your program is reaching young men and providing them with prevention services. Funders will want to see this data to evaluate whether your program is accomplishing its goals, and this information is very helpful in writing proposals for future funding. Second, it is important to monitor the composition of the M-group participants to make sure they reflect the community’s demographics. For example, are you getting enough 18- to 22-year-olds? Are you only getting white men? Are you on track in terms of reaching your overall attendance goal?

Following each M-group, the facilitators should complete an M-group Planning and Recruitment Form. *(You will find a sample form in Module 12: Evaluation; Figure 12.10).* This form asks about the number and types of men who attended the group, the length of time the group lasted, and general impressions of the group. The M-group Coordinator should compile these forms regularly so he always has a current record of the progress the organization is making with its M-group program.

**How to evaluate M-groups**

During the final section of the M-group, the facilitators should distribute Participant Satisfaction surveys *(See Module 12: Evaluation, Figure 12.11, for a sample survey form)*, which are completed anonymously by participants before they leave. Feedback from participants about their M-group experiences is invaluable. Their comments on the evaluation forms can be extremely helpful in providing positive encouragement to the facilitators that they are doing a good job and that their efforts are appreciated. Likewise, participants’ comments can provide helpful feedback about aspects of the M-group that could be improved. Facilitators should review these forms carefully following each M-group. The M-group Coordinator should then compile the completed evaluation forms. These statistics can be important in documenting the perceived impact of the M-groups on participants, as well as in charting the quality of the M-group experience over time.
Here is how to estimate the number of young gay/bisexual men in your community.

1. Go to the U.S. Census Bureau website at http://www.census.gov/. We have generally found it most useful to view the information in the 2000 Summary File 1 dataset. To go directly to these detailed tables, use the following address: http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTGeoSearchByListServlet?ds_name=DEC_2000_SF2_U & _lang=en&_ts=4092471256. (Note: these links change from time to time, so if this URL is not working when you try it, navigate to the 2000 Summary File 1 dataset from www.census.gov. You may find it helpful to look for the Census Fact Finder tables.)

If you don’t have Web access from your home or office, many public and university libraries offer free terminals. Another option is to request the information you need directly from the U.S. Census Bureau or from a library.

2. Select your desired place. Begin by determining your desired geographic type (e.g., county, state, place). For this example, we will look at data from the city (or place) of Albuquerque, NM. After selecting PLACE as the geographic type, NEW MEXICO as the state, and ALBUQUERQUE CITY as the geographic area, the website prompts us to ADD Albuquerque to the list at the bottom of the screen. Do this by pressing the ADD button after you have selected Albuquerque City as the desired place.

The online census database allows you to specify states, metropolitan areas, census tracks, counties, or places (cities, towns, villages, etc.). Also, there is abundant evidence that people of color are undercounted by the census. So if you are particularly trying to estimate the number of young gay/bisexual men of color in your area, you should take this into account.

3. Select your desired tables. After choosing Albuquerque City as the desired place, click on the “NEXT” button to see a list of available tables. The census bureau has dozens of tables to choose from (even more detailed tables can be found in the 2000 Summary File 2 dataset), but for our purposes, we are most interested in Table Number 3 “SEX BY AGE.” Highlight this table and click the “ADD” button to add it to the list of desired tables. Then click the “SHOW TABLE” button to display information on the number of males of every age.

Simply add up the numbers for your desired age range. This is easy to do by copying and pasting the desired rows into another program such as Excel or Word and using the programs SUM function. By adding up the information on males ages 18-30 in the city of Albuquerque, we can see that there are 44,437 males in this age range.

4. Estimate about how many of these men are gay or bisexual. This is where the guesswork really begins. A 1994 National Opinion Research Center report from the University of Chicago tells us that 4.9% of men have reported a same sex partner since age 18. In addition, 7.7% of men reported an attraction to other men, and considered the prospect of sex with a same-sex partner appealing. But only 2.8% of the men thought of themselves as homosexual or bisexual. However, in the 12 largest U.S. cities, 9.2% of the men described themselves as homosexual or bisexual.* Of course, any study which asks for a self-reported sexual orientation may underestimate the numbers of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals since these labels are still socially undesirable.

Since Albuquerque is not in the 12 largest cities, we will use 2.8% as the low estimate of gay/bisexual men and 7.7% as the high estimate. So, an estimate of the number of gay/bisexual men, ages 18-30, in Albuquerque gives us a range of 1,244 to 3,422. The midpoint of this range gives us an estimate of approximately 2,333 young gay/bisexual men in Albuquerque.

*In 1992, the 12 largest U.S. cities were: New York, NY; Los Angeles, CA; Chicago, IL; Houston, TX; Philadelphia, PA; San Diego, CA; Dallas, TX; Phoenix, AZ; Detroit, MI; San Antonio, TX; San Jose, CA, and Indianapolis, IN.
## Sample M-Group Call Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Phone #</th>
<th>Called By</th>
<th>Call Status</th>
<th>Notes on Call</th>
<th>Scheduled for M-Group</th>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Reminder Call</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7-27-09</td>
<td>5:45pm</td>
<td><strong>Malik</strong></td>
<td>655-1569</td>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>Not Home</td>
<td>Lives with mom be discreet</td>
<td>Not yet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-5-09</td>
<td>6:30pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-26-09</td>
<td>5:45pm</td>
<td><strong>Josh</strong></td>
<td>567-9585</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>Spoke with Josh</td>
<td>Very interested</td>
<td>8-15-09</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-25-09</td>
<td>8:25pm</td>
<td><strong>Dante</strong></td>
<td>279-2969</td>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>Message</td>
<td>Not yet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-27-09</td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spoke with Dante</td>
<td>May need a ride to group</td>
<td>8-15-09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Here is a brief sample e-mail you can send to scheduled participants the day before an M-group. Note it is brief and friendly, and the Coordinator has made an effort to reference how the contact was scheduled, in this case at a large Social Outreach Event. The M-group here was called “Unplugged Sessions.”

Dear ________________:

Thanks for coming to AMPs 3rd Annual LAVA LUAU this last Sunday. Did you have a good time? I love that event. I look forward to all our events, but I really love that one. Anyway, it was good to meet you, and I wanted to check in to remind you about the Unplugged Session this Thursday (tomorrow!) at 7pm here at the AMP House, and to confirm that you’ll be here. Try to get here a few minutes before 7 so we can get situated and start on time. We’ll order some pizza and have soft drinks here and other refreshments. Please let me know if you need directions, or any help getting here. (Directions are also on our website). Sonny and I will both be here, and so will Jonny K, but you’ll also meet some new guys. It’s going to be totally laid back as usual, and I’m glad you’re coming!

So we’ll see you at (just before) 7. If you have any questions, or if for some reason you aren’t able to make it, please give us a call at 512-447-4270.

David

Austin Men’s Project
1215 West Mary Street
Austin, TX 78704
info@austinmensproject.com
www.austinmensproject.com

AMP is young gay, bi, and curious guys coming together to build a strong and supportive community.
Sample M-group Reminder Letter

Here is a sample of a letter you can mail out to guys you’ve scheduled for an M-group in the future. Again, the tone is friendly, upbeat, and enthusiastic about the M-group, here called Unplugged Sessions.

Dear ______________________:

We at the Austin Men’s Project just wanted to send you a letter to remind you that you are scheduled for an Unplugged Session on Thursday, June 27th, at 7pm at the AMP House. Our Unplugged Session is a great way to get to know about AMP, meet new guys in Austin, and discuss many important topics. It’s a one-time deal, and afterward you’ll know a lot more about what AMP has to offer our community. Both Sonny Bono and I (David Sweeney) will be there, and we’ll have refreshments and snacks and some good music. It’s pretty laid back and pretty fun.

The AMP House is located at 1215 West Mary, one block north of East Oltorf, one block east of South Lamar. You can find a map and directions on our website www.austinmensproject.com, and if you have any questions, give us a call at 512-447-4270.

Thanks,

Austin Men’s Project
1215 West Mary Street
Austin, TX 78704
info@austinmensproject.com
www.austinmensproject.com

AMP is young gay, bi and curious guys coming together to build a strong and supportive community.
### Sample M-group Attendance Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Latino</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>A/PI</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th>Total New</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3 White, 1 Latino, five Black, 1 Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cancelled…5 guys cancelled the night of the group. Several men rescheduled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-7</td>
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