ForeWord Reviews

HEALTH & FITNESS

The Little Black Book for Guys: Guys Talk About Sex
St. Stephen's Community House
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"Talking honestly about sex is a GOOD thing…And bro, feeling less nervous and more confident is going to help you make smarter deci-sions," the authors write. It's easy to be smart with *The Little Black Book for Guys* at hand.

The book offers a collection of articles, poems, personal anecdotes, illustrations, and medical facts, all pertaining to relationships and sex. There's material about being gay, and detailed but readable information on sexually transmitted infections: "Yeah, STIs are some scary shit, but in this chapter we're gonna try to cut through the fears and the lies to give you the facts…" Other topics include *Sex. Do Ya Really Need It?*, *First Time*, and *Risky Business: AIDS*. Mindful of the brief concentration span of their teenaged male audience, the authors keep each piece short and to the point.

This helpful collection was mostly created by a group of young men from a Toronto drop-in center. One piece, on quantity versus quality, offers a woman's perspective. The contributors don't claim to be sex experts, instead, "What we did have was our experiences, and we've tried to write about them honestly." The text has been reviewed by experts, however, so it's accurate as well as teen-friendly. Naturally the quality of the contributions varies somewhat. One particularly effective piece is about the constraints of living with HIV: "I take up to 10 different pills every day…I ALWAYS need my meds with me."

Few teens have the patience to read anything from cover to cover, and the glossary and index will come in handy for readers with specific questions. There's also a rather extensive list of resource Web sites, both in Canada and the U.S.

The Little Black Book for Guys is a light-hearted and down-to-earth guide to a topic of vital importance to most male teens, written in language that they can relate to. The potentially dry medical facts are presented with concise wit: “If fallopian tubes are like the subway for eggs, semen is like the bus for sperm. Millions of sperm can ride in just a teaspoon of the stuff.” Best of all, the advice offered never fails to emphasize the importance of communication and respect. Purchasing this book would indeed be a smart decision.