

PSI Promotes *Knowing when to stop* among Male Clients of Sex Workers

For Tuan, friendship is an important part of life and every week he and his gang meet up to drink together at a local *bia hoi*, a Vietnamese style bar. Located in the Hai Ba Trung District in Hanoi, Vietnam, this bar is their favorite place to meet. They get together at the end of a long day to unwind over a few drinks. The *bia hoi* is also near a karaoke bar where they go later in the evening and pay women for sex.

As part of its multi-media campaign to promote positive social norms among male clients of sex workers, PSI recently conducted an event at the *bia hoi* where Tuan and his friends were visiting. The event, like the mass media behavior change campaign, is branded *Know When to Play, Know When to Stop (Vui Co Chung, Dung Dung Luc)* to help men understand their personal risk of HIV infection and promote safer sexual behavior. The campaign is designed to reduce the number of times men visit sex workers, while increasing consistent condom use in high risk relationships. In addition to mass media channels and site-based events, PSI's intervention includes one-on-one and small group communication sessions among potential male clients of sex workers in entertainment establishments like beer halls and restaurants.

The *Know When to Play, Know When to Stop* events are hosted at popular bars around town, with facilitators using games and audience participation to debunk popular myths and misconceptions about HIV. The games in the events are designed to encourage interactive communication around HIV risk behavior and promoting safer sex options. Tuan was curious after seeing the *Know When to Play, Know When to Stop* campaign on billboards around town, and convinced his friends to stick around that evening.

“The MC was my age, he was fun and friendly... all the men in the bar would cheer and raise their hands whenever he introduced a new game. It was exciting. I surprised myself by volunteering and had my chance to play at the end of the night. I had to answer whether I would use a condom with a girl even if I was confident she was safe. I thought it was easy to answer... of course I didn't need to use a condom! I could tell by looking at the girl and knowing the owner of that place. I had always believed I was an expert in choosing the right girls. I did not have to think twice about using a condom.”

However, after the MC explained why Tuan was wrong, the messages he heard that evening stayed with him. “I know my friends were all laughing and enjoying the games, but on the inside, they had the same worries I did. All of us remember times not using condoms, but we thought it was no big deal. I did not know we could not base using condoms on instinct or appearance or assurance, no matter how sure I felt.”

After the event, the outreach workers came around to all the men's tables to distribute leaflets and reinforce the messages of the campaign. “They told us correct and consistent condom use when we have sex is the only way to protect ourselves from HIV.” Outreach staff told Tuan about the eleven *Chân Trời Mới* centers in Hanoi, where they can receive free and confidential HIV voluntary counseling and testing. Tuan was tested late last year and is glad he attended the *Know When to Play, Know When to Stop* event that night. He tested negative for HIV and now he knows how to avoid testing positive. He shared his experience with his other friends and hopes he can teach them the truth about the risk of HIV and how to protect themselves.