



The AIDS Generation: Stories of Survival and Resilience

By Perry Halkitis

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For young gay men who came of age in the United States in the 1980s, the HIV/AIDS epidemic was a formative experience in fear, hardship, and loss. Those who were diagnosed before 1996 suffered an exceptionally high rate of mortality, and the survivors--both the infected individuals and those close to them--today constitute a "bravest generation" in American history.

The AIDS Generation: Stories of Survival and Resilience examines the strategies for survival and coping employed by these HIV-positive gay men, who together constitute the first generation of long-term survivors of the disease. Through interviews conducted by the author, it narrates the stories of gay men who have survived since the early days of the epidemic; documents and delineates the strategies and behaviors enacted by men of this generation to survive it; and examines the extent to which these approaches to survival inform and are informed by the broad body of literature on resilience and health.

The stories and strategies detailed here, all used to combat the profound physical, emotional, and social challenges faced by those in the crosshairs of the AIDS epidemic, provide a gateway for understanding how individuals cope with chronic and life-threatening diseases. Halkitis takes readers on a journey of first-hand data collection (the interviews themselves), the popular culture representations of these phenomena, and his own experiences as one of the men of the AIDS generation.

This riveting account will be of interest to health practitioners and historians throughout the clinical and social sciences--or to anyone with an interest in this important chapter in social history.

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Editorial Review

Review

"A modern day parable of loss and resilience. Dr. Halkitis relates the stories of these men with empathy, compassion and connection. Yet, he also embeds the tale within a scientific and historical framework that contextualizes the AIDS epidemic as the public health crisis that rewrote the book on activism and the politics of disease. By focusing on the narratives of individual men, *The AIDS Generation* artfully illuminates and humanizes the history of the AIDS pandemic." --*Ramani Durvasula, PhD, Professor of Psychology, California State University, Los Angeles*

"This book is a remarkable testament to members of the AIDS generation, to the terrors and wonders, the loneliness of illness and loss but also the power of community and resilience that evolved. Dr. Halkitis presents the voices of 15 gay men framed in the context of his own conceptualizations derived from his years of research and teaching about HIV/AIDS and the lives of gay men. The stories are gripping, the writing lucid, and the book will be a lasting contribution to the history of the times and members of his--the AIDS--generation." --*Judith G. Rabkin, PhD, MPH, Professor of Clinical Psychology, Columbia University*

"I felt such kinship reading these stories. It was mostly luck that got us through the plague years, but I share more than a virus with these men. We are proudly gay, and have forged unique strengths by getting this far. The AIDS generation shattered the American myth of gay weakness." --*Peter Staley, AIDS and gay rights activist, founder and advisory editor of AIDSmeds*

"From one of our leading researchers on HIV among gay men comes a powerful portrayal of courage and resilience that is hopeful and deeply personal. Through compelling interviews with 15 middle age gay men who have been living with HIV for decades, Halkitis conveys the fear and anger of the dark days before antiretroviral therapy when prejudice and hysteria reigned. He describes the strength and vision of many gay men living with HIV whose activism helped transform the disease in the 1980s and 1990s. He also addresses emerging issues of older adults living with HIV, and the connection between anti-gay public policies and social norms and gay men's health. Halkitis weaves in epidemiological research and policy analysis to create a picture of the HIV/AIDS pandemic that is both accessible and nuanced." --*Sean Cahill, Director of Health Policy Research, The Fenway Institute, Assistant Professor, New York University*

"Upon completing Perry's beautiful volume, the reader will come to understand two things. First, antiretroviral therapy is not the panacea that many may believe it to be. Perry demonstrates that aging gay men face a gauntlet of unpredictable physical and psychological challenges. Second, resilience, courage, and strength are three terms that best characterize the current generation of gay men bravely aging with HIV/AIDS." --*Timothy G. Heckman, PhD, Professor of Health Promotion and Behavior, University of Georgia*

"This book allows a group of remarkable men to tell us about their survival during a remarkable period of gay history. They have a lot to teach future historians--and us--about life, survival, humanity and resilience."
--Ron Stall, PhD, MPH, Director of the Center for LGBT Health Research, University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health

"I believe there are two audiences for this book: long-term survivors who count themselves among the warriors, and younger men who need to learn. If you fall into either category, then reading *The AIDS Generation* will be a worthwhile experience." --*Washington Blade*

"A groundbreaking new book." --*Equality*

"Lest the world forget, Perry Halkitis tells the stories of pain, suffering, survival, and resilience of his generation of gay men--the AIDS Generation." --*PositiveLite.com*

"There is plenty for academics in this book, but casual readers will find something here, too." --*LGBT Weekly*

"Halkitis, a longtime LGBT and HIV researcher, has collected the deeply moving life stories of 15 men who tell not only of surviving the grimmest years of the epidemic, but also of aging with HIV, something many never dreamed possible." --*Human Rights Campaign Equality Magazine*

"These are stories that need to be heard. It's a remarkable and accessible book about a terrifying time in gay history, a time that's still with all of us, even a little bit, no matter how badly we want to move on." --*A&U*

"*The AIDS Generation* spoke not only to my own academic interests, but more deeply, it evoked something in my own life history and that of my friends and colleagues. I am sure many readers will have a similar response. Halkitis's writing is accessible to audiences beyond academic circles. Social workers, psychologists, and other social services professionals will find it helpful and enjoyable." --*AIDS Education and Prevention*

"One can view this book as an important contribution in documenting the journeys of those of the AIDS generation, and perhaps with more contributions like this book, the helping professionals can generate more inclusive perspectives and frameworks to use in their professional activities and in our personal lives."
--*Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*

About the Author

Perry N. Halkitis, PhD, MS, MPH, is Professor of Applied Psychology and Public Health (Steinhardt School), and Population Health (Langone School of Medicine), Director of the Center for Health, Identity, Behavior & Prevention Studies, and Associate Dean at New York University. Dr. Halkitis' program of research examines the intersection between the HIV epidemic, drug abuse, and mental health burden in LGBT populations, and he is well known as one of the nation's leading experts on substance use and HIV behavioral research. Dr. Halkitis hold degrees in both psychology and public health.

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