



HUMAN SEXUALITY

**Values
& Choices**

**A GUIDE FOR PARENTS
OF YOUNG ADOLESCENTS**

Revised Edition

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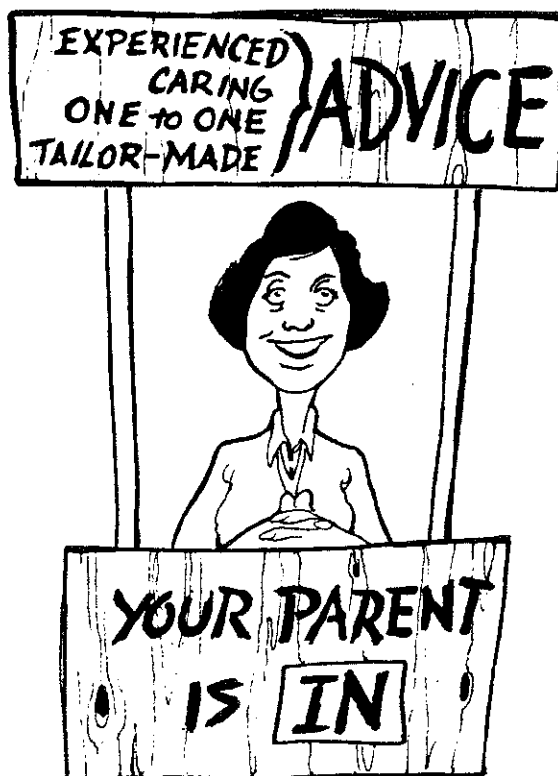
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Introduction

BREAKING THE SILENCE

It's not always easy to talk to our kids about sex. A recent study found that only one out of three seventh and eighth graders has had a good talk with parents about sex. Your own parents may have never discussed sex with you. Or maybe you aren't used to talking about sex with anyone. Maybe you're afraid your children will ask questions you don't know how to answer. Maybe you're worried that their questions will embarrass you.



You're not alone. Many parents share these concerns. That's why this book is written for parents of teenagers—seventh and eighth grade students in particular. By now, many 12-, 13-, and 14-year-old kids are thinking about sex. They're naturally curious at this age and less inhibited than they might be at ages 16 or 17. Most are watching TV programs or reading books and magazines that involve sex. Some are even feeling pressure to have sex. Some are already having sex. In fact, by ninth grade, one-fourth of kids have had sex at least once. And 59 percent have experienced it by the time they graduate from high school.¹ For these reasons, it's important for you to start talking with your children about those decision now—if you haven't already.

This book is meant to make it easier. Most of the time, the facts and explanations are written in sentences that you can repeat word for word to teenagers. There are no secrets in the book—nothing that parents should know, but teenagers should not. In fact, we encourage you to leave this book out where your teenager will see it and pick it up. The information inside is important for everyone to know.

All of the topics in this book relate to both teenage boys *and* teenage girls. Boys aren't the only ones who have sexual urges. Girls

¹ Benson, Peter L., *The Troubled Journey: A Portrait of 6th-12th Grade Youth* (Minneapolis, MN: Lutheran Brotherhood, 1990), p. 90.

aren't the only ones who need to know about pregnancy and birth. Boys should know how the female body works, and girls should know how the male body works.

Parents have a special role in teaching young people about sex and about values. In fact, you're the most important educator of your children. Young people need to know more about sex than just facts. They need to know how their parents feel and what they believe about it. As a parent, you have a very strong influence over your children. They need to know you care about them and are aware of their sexual feelings. They need to know what you expect of them as they start to become adults. They need coaching. If you don't give it to them, they may not get it.

The fact is, young people shouldn't have to make decisions about sex all alone. The choices they face are difficult. The results of those choices can affect young people and their families far into the future.

Teenagers need the guidance of parents in matters as important as sex because:

- Teenagers are just learning to look to the future. They haven't had much practice in thinking about the outcomes of big decisions.
- Teenagers' values are still being formed. What they want from life changes from day to day. They are often influenced by the last person they talked to.
- Teenagers need rules to feel safe and comfortable. If you don't tell them how you feel about teenagers having sex and explain why, they might take your silence as an okay. This is especially true today when there is so much pressure to have sex. Silence, to teenagers, often means permission.

It's not too late to begin talking to your teenagers about sex. You can tell them that you know they have sexual feelings. You can give them correct information—the kind they probably won't get from television, movies, or friends. Then you can tell them what you think about teenage sex and share some of your own beliefs and your reasons for them.

Are you afraid that talking about sex will give your kids "ideas"? That you'll encourage them to experiment? **DON'T WORRY.**

Research shows that when parents talk with their children about sex and make rules and explain why they make them, their children are more likely to delay sexual activity than children whose parents are silent about sex. Children brought up by very strict parents (who may have "no talk" rules about sex) often rebel by having sex at an early age. Children brought up by very permissive parents (who give messages that "it's up to you") tend to have sex at an early age, too. They may think that their parents don't really care. Or that decisions about sex aren't really important.

This book will help you find good times and places to break the silence. We don't pretend that talking about sex with kids will be easy from now on. We don't expect all parents to feel comfortable talking about sex with just anyone, anywhere. But we do believe that the talking may keep some teenagers from making serious mistakes. And the talking may also turn out to be a good investment in getting along together better—something that both of you can enjoy.

ABOUT *Values & Choices*

This guide for parents is a part of a award-winning sex education curriculum for seventh and eighth grades titled *Human Sexuality: Values & Choices*. This book is important because *Values & Choices* is built on the belief that parents are vital participants in any sexuality education. Your *active* involvement in the course—through parent sessions and through your child's homework assignments—make the course a valuable and important experience.

Values & Choices is a comprehensive, honest course in human sexuality. It ...

- Advocates sexual abstinence as the best choice for teenagers.
- Helps teenagers understand the basic values that underlie sexuality and sexual choices.
- Gives teenagers important, factual information about sexuality and related issues.
- Emphasizes the problems and dangers of early sexual involvement.
- Promotes positive values that help teenagers make healthy, positive choices.

Most parents are rightly concerned about the content of sexuality education courses in schools. After all, these courses touch on important values, beliefs, and behaviors. Parents want to be sure that the course doesn't contradict the values they seek to teach and model at home.

Values & Choices recognizes these concerns and addresses them in a number of ways:

1. Parents are actively involved in knowing about the course content, talking with the teacher or teachers, and interacting with their children on homework assignments. Parent workshops are designed to introduce the curriculum content, allow parents to ask questions, and to express their concerns and priorities.
2. *Values & Choices* is built on the belief that "anything goes" is an inappropriate approach to adolescent sexuality. In dozens of ways, the course emphasizes abstinence as the best choice for teenagers. The course also emphasizes and affirms positive, widely held values that are either implicit or explicit in the U.S. Constitution or are borne out in our nation's laws. These values are:

Equality
Self-Control
Promise-Keeping
Responsibility
Respect
Honesty
Social Justice

3

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3. Because we live in a diverse, pluralistic world, this course is designed to be appropriate for people regardless of their specific religious or philosophical beliefs. By talking with your teenagers about what he or she is learning, you'll discover that it's easy to add your own specific religious or moral perspective to the issues. In fact, the curriculum tells teachers to encourage students to take these questions to their parents or religious leaders.

4. This curriculum recognizes that families take many forms these days. Thus we don't assume that all students have two parents, or that students have parents who can participate in the learning and growing process. In these cases, we encourage students to find other significant adults to help. Ideally, however, we recognize that parents are the best people to participate.

Since the first edition was released in 1985, schools across the continent have found *Values & Choices* to be a valuable and effective way to teach young adolescents positive values about human sexuality. They've found that students do become more aware of the seven values that are promoted. And field tests of the curriculum show that students who complete the course are more likely to value sexual abstinence and to intend not to have sex as teenagers.

People in all walks of life are deeply concerned about the widespread sexual activity among teenagers today. Through this course, we hope parents will become active partners with teachers and others in working together to curb this critical problem and promoting positive lifestyles that prepare our young people for positive futures.

Chapter 1

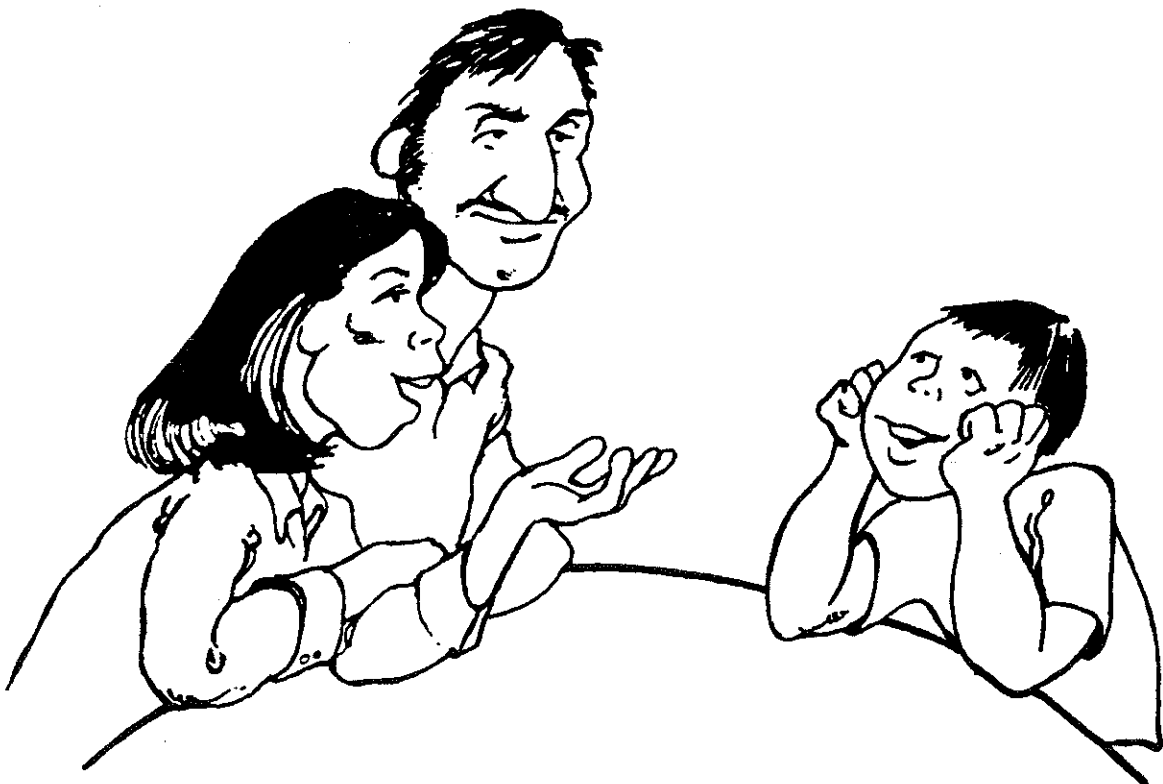
STARTING OUT

Talk is one of the ways we learn. Kids hear plenty of talk on television and from their friends. Talk that tells them what life is all about. Talk that tells them how people are “supposed” to think and act.

What kind of talk does your teenagers hear at home? Who does the talking? Do your children feel free to express themselves? Can they talk to you about both good and bad experiences? Are you there when they need you to listen?

It's never too late to start talking with your children. About school. About their friends. About what interests them or how they feel. Talking openly with children and listening to what they have to say is one of the best things parents can do to show love and acceptance for their kids.

Much of the talk teenagers hear these days is about sex. They hear so much about sex outside the home that you may decide not to talk about it yourself, not wanting to give it



even more attention. But there are very good reasons why you, as a parent, *should* be one of the people who talk about sex. You have beliefs, opinions, and feelings that your children need to hear. If you don't share *your* ideas with them, they'll likely form ideas based on the sex they see on television or hear about from friends.

Many teenagers are shy about coming to parents with questions about sex. You can encourage them to trust you by being an askable parent. An ASKABLE parent is one who:

- Really listens.
- Doesn't make fun of questions.
- Will help kids look for answers.
- Can talk about things that might be embarrassing or hard for teens to bring up.
- Is honest.



You CAN Talk About Sex!

Many parents today feel embarrassed about talking about sex. They figure that teenagers know more about sex than parents. Or that they must pick just the “right time” to talk. Some are afraid their kids will ask questions they don't know how to answer. But it's not as hard as it seems—if you keep two things in mind.

1st

There's no one right time to talk about sexuality.

The right time is whenever the subject comes up. The perfect time for you probably won't be the best time for your teenager. You probably won't get advance warning every time your son or daughter has a question, either.

Talking about sex with your kids isn't a one-time thing. By the way you talk and act, you have been teaching them about sexuality since they were little. As they grow older, children ask different questions—usually when they know what to do with the information. It's impossible to tell them *everything* about sex at once, and they probably won't ask. They usually want bits of information to help them think about their newest problem.

It's a good idea to talk about sex whenever:

- You feel the need to bring it up.
- Your teenager asks a question.
- You find a *good opening*. (This is often the easiest time to open a conversation!)

Good Openings

TV programs, movies, news stories, school events, or letters to advice columnists make good openings to find out how much your teenagers know and what they think about issues such as:

- marriage
- abortion
- contraception
- sex for teenagers

It's also your big chance to tell them how you feel. And to give them information in small doses.

Take advantage of their off-hand comments ("A girl in my class just found out she's pregnant...") to talk with them. It's a much better opening line than your saying, "I'd like to have a serious talk with you."

2nd

It doesn't matter if you don't know all the answers. This isn't a contest. You can always tell your teenagers:

"I don't know, but I'll try to find out."

OR

"Come on, let's look it up right now."

How you talk with them is usually more important than *what* you say. Try to be matter-of-fact and talk in your normal voice. You don't have to feel embarrassed.

What's important is that you're willing to talk. Although they may not want you to tell them what to do, at least you can let them know how you feel about it.

What Teens Think

"I wonder if I can ask about sex."



"It would be a lot easier if they said something first."

"I know I'm not supposed to talk about this, because they never bring it up."

"It's none of their business."

"If I bring it up, they'll probably think I'm doing it."



Teenagers don't know what judgment parents are going to make, so they often keep quiet. Some teenagers are just self-conscious about their privacy. As a parent, it's your job to bring up the topic anyway. If your teenagers have nothing to say, it doesn't mean they know it all. It might mean they're embarrassed or that they don't know what to say.

**YOUNG PEOPLE WITH GOOD SELF-ESTEEM
ARE LESS LIKELY TO GET PREGNANT, USE
DRUGS AND ALCOHOL, OR GET IN TROUBLE
IN OTHER WAYS.**

Teenagers need to feel like worthwhile people. When their parents show them love and acceptance, they feel better about themselves. This feeling is called *self-esteem*.

Teenagers with high self-esteem take risks and make mistakes just like everyone else. But they usually make it through with fewer scrapes and bruises, because they have a strong sense of their own value.

Speaking of Sex...

All of us are sexual people throughout our lives. We express our sexuality in many ways. People often think that being sexual means having sex. *But sexuality is much more than sex.* It involves the total person.

SEXUALITY includes your:

- Gender (male or female)
- Feelings
- Attitudes
- Values
- Relationships
- Physical makeup
- Ideals and goals

Sex is just one part of sexuality. In this book, when we use the words "sex" or "sexually active," we mean sexual intercourse.

Here are some of the ways you express your sexuality every day:

- What you do or say when you're with males or females.



- The way you react to a photograph or a cartoon or a song.
 - What you choose to wear.
 - How you feel attached to family and friends.
 - What you daydream about.
-

What Parents Can Do

1. It's okay to let your kids know that:

"This is hard for me to talk about, too. My parents and I never talked about sex."

OR

"Sexuality is really a difficult thing to talk about. It's hard to know what to tell you because many of your questions don't have easy answers."

2. Think about your own teenager years:

- What were you like?
- Who were your best friends?
- Where did you learn about sex?
- What could your parents have done to make it easier?
- What would you have wanted them to tell you?

3. Show your teenagers that they are loved and accepted by:

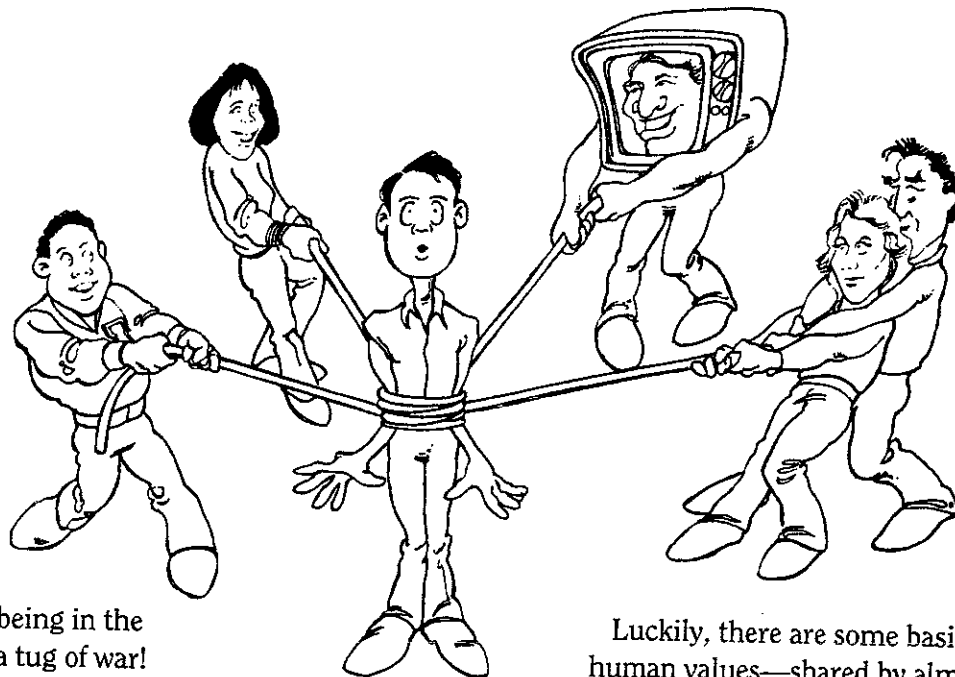
- Telling them you love them.
- Giving occasional warm touches—hugs, backrubs, affectionate pats.
- Complimenting them—"You look great today." "I was really proud when you..."
- Listening to them talk about their interests and concerns.
- Asking about their activities and paying attention to their answers.
- Offering to help with problems.
- Encouraging their good relationships—"I like Ed. Do you want to invite him for dinner sometime?"

4. Emphasize the positive. Notice when they've done something generous or helpful, and say so. Teenagers really take what you say to heart.

5. Let your teenager know: "You are my child. No matter what happens, you can come to me, and I'll help you."

Chapter 2

WHAT'S REALLY IMPORTANT?



It's no fun being in the middle of a tug of war! And teenagers often find themselves in just that spot. It's hard to sort out what's really important when they have hard choices to make. They hear the voices of friends, parents, and the media telling them what to do.

What do you do when everyone gives you a different message?

SEX

- DANGER! says your family.
- POPULARITY! say your friends.
- NOT HERE! says your school.
- HAPPINESS! say television and movies.
- EXCITEMENT! says pop music.
- MARRIAGE! says religion.
- BIRTH CONTROL! says your doctor.

Luckily, there are some basic human values—shared by almost all people—that help us make choices we can be proud of.

What Are Values?

Values are things that are very important to everyone. They affect how we treat ourselves and other people. The kinds of values we're talking about here aren't things that money can buy. They are values that help us live together by cooperating. Values protect everybody's rights.

Seven Basic Values:

Most people agree that these seven values are important in our society. Furthermore, they are either implicit or explicit in the U.S. Constitution or are borne out in our nation's laws

1. **EQUALITY** means having the same standard for everyone. It means everyone gets the same size piece of cake. Parents who hold this value place the same importance on girls' athletics as on boys' athletics. Someone who values equality won't treat the opposite sex in demeaning ways.
2. **SELF-CONTROL** means keeping certain desires in check. It means not hitting someone just because you're angry. People who hold this value see that having a good relationship is more important than having sexual intercourse.
3. **RESPECT** means treating all people with the dignity they deserve. It means not putting yourself down. It also means not calling people names. Someone who holds respect as a value won't force sex on another person. Someone who holds self-respect as a value won't let anyone use his or her own body for sex.
4. **RESPONSIBILITY** means answering for your own actions and taking care of obligations. It means coming to work on time. Someone who holds this value recognizes that sex isn't a casual issue, but involves serious responsibilities.
5. **HONESTY** means telling the truth. It means not cheating on a test. People who hold this value won't say "I love you" just to get sex.
6. **PROMISE-KEEPING** means being true to your word. It means calling a friend when you say you're going to call. Young people who hold this value will come home at the time they say they will. Teenagers who value promise-keeping recognize the long-term commitments involved in relationships, so then are careful not to get involved sexually in casual relationships.

7. **SOCIAL JUSTICE** means being responsible toward the whole community. It means not playing dirty to win a game. People who hold this value won't produce movies and TV programs that treat men or women as sex objects.

Why Are These Values Important?

These seven values help us build good relationships and make good choices. When a person goes against one of these values (maybe by following the crowd), someone is usually hurt. It's normal for young people to want to be like their friends. But it's not worth it if they get hurt or hurt other people by ignoring these values. The hurt can be physical. Or it can mean hurt inside—which can also cause a lot of pain.

The way that people think about these values affects how they make decisions about their sexuality. People who see each other as equals, for example, will treat each other as people, not just body parts. By holding values such as honesty and responsibility, young people have a better chance to enjoy their teenage years.

Why Do Parents Need to Talk About These Values With Their Kids?

Children are better able to adopt your values in their own lives when you talk about what's important to you. Yes, it's good to set an example for your children. But you also need to *talk* with them about why you do things and *what it means*. If you returned a lost \$20 bill to its owner, tell your kids what happened and why you decided to give the money back. Talk about why the choice was hard to make, if that's true.

What Parents Can Do

1. Which of your feelings and beliefs do you want to pass on to your children? Your children may never learn about them unless you:
 - Do things that show what your values are, *and*
 - Talk about why those values are so important to you.
2. Let your children know that, "You can make your own decisions. You aren't letting your friends down if you decide to do something your own way."
3. Teenagers can be pressured into following the crowd. Remind your teenagers that all the kids they hang around with may not be true friends.
4. Keep the communication lines open to your teenagers by keeping your promises, sharing your time with them, respecting their needs, and listening to what they have to say.
5. Give family members the chance to make up and start over again when they make mistakes.
6. Show family members that you care about them, even when they're not being very lovable.
7. Values are caught, not taught. So if you want kids to be honest, be honest yourself. Anytime's a good time to start.
8. Share your thoughts and feelings on important issues with your children.



Chapter 3

CHANGES

Imagine how you'd feel if you were floating inside a spaceship. You're upside-down. Your body feels different. You bump your head. You're not sure what to do with your arms and legs. Growing an adult body is a little like being in a spaceship. It's hard to get used to the new feelings in your body and to figure out how all your body parts are supposed to work.

"Am I normal?" is a question teenagers wonder about. If your teenagers don't have the nerve to ask you, they probably want to. Their bodies seem to be changing all the time, and they have nothing to say about it! Remember the last time you moved into a new house or apartment? You needed time to begin to feel at home, to decide where to put the furniture, how to arrange your things. A teenager needs time, too.

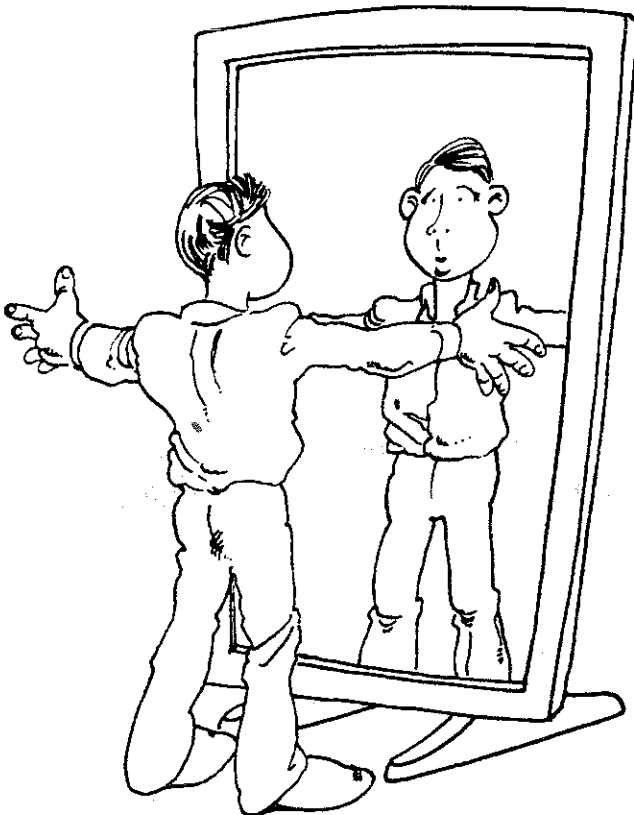
What Happens During Puberty?

Puberty is the time when young people's bodies change in big ways. The changes can begin anytime between the ages of 9 and 16, and take about two years. (For a diagram of some of these changes, see Appendix A, page 58.) The changes happen differently for boys and girls.

Changes for Boys

When a boy goes through puberty, his testicles begin to make sperm. A boy is physically able to father a child once his body produces sperm.

Throughout puberty, boys often have erections. During an erection, the penis hardens and becomes larger and stiff. (Actually, it fills with blood.) This can happen at any time, and can come from touch, thoughts, feelings, or other things.



Boys often feel uncomfortable when this happens at awkward times. Erections sometimes last only short periods of time, sometimes longer, depending on the situation. A boy can have an erection without ejaculation.

During ejaculation, fluid from small glands in the boy's body joins with sperm and is released from the penis. The fluid is called semen. There is only a small amount of fluid that comes out during ejaculation, but millions and millions of sperm are in that fluid. It only takes one sperm for a pregnancy to take place.

Wet dreams (nocturnal emissions) are another common change during puberty. During a wet dream, boys ejaculate (release semen) while they are sleeping. This is completely normal and very common.

Changes for Girls

When a girl goes through puberty, she begins to have bleeding from the vagina (her monthly period or menstruation). Girls often have questions about why this happens. Here's what is happening on the inside:

Her ovaries begin to release one egg each month. (Hundreds of eggs have been stored in her ovaries since she was born.) The egg travels down a tube to the uterus. Each month, the uterus grows a special lining of blood and tissue to prepare for a pregnancy. If there is no pregnancy, the lining is not needed and it flows out the vagina. This is the blood that's seen during menstruation. Then, this monthly cycle begins again. A girl is physically able to become pregnant as soon as her body begins to release eggs.

Girls often begin to notice small amounts of clear or milky fluid that comes out of the vagina. It's reassuring for them to know that this is a vaginal discharge and is completely normal.

A Note About Masturbation:

Masturbation is one way that some people explore their bodies. People touch or stimulate their sexual organs for sexual pleasure. Most teenagers have masturbated. People have mixed feelings about masturbation. Some think it's okay. Others don't. No matter how you feel about masturbation, it can't hurt your body. But if you have concerns about the wrongness of masturbation, this lesson gives you the opening to talk to your teenager about it.

What Teens Think



"I feel so ugly."

"There must be something wrong with me."



"As long as I've got it, I'm going to show it off."

What Parents Can Do

1. Let your teenagers know that everyone's body changes at a different rate. You might say something like, "Penises (or breasts) come in different sizes. So do teeth and noses. Smaller teeth and smaller noses work just as well as bigger ones."

2. Use words such as "penis" and "vagina" or "masturbate" and "menstruate" when talking about sex. Many people know street words or "secret" words, but not everyone uses words that are straightforward. Using these straightforward words makes it easier in the long run to talk to your teenagers. It may make it easier for your teenagers to talk and read about sex, too.
3. If your children feel ugly or clumsy, remind them that, "Your body isn't going to be like this forever."
4. Boys need to know how girls' bodies work and vice versa. So talk about changes in the opposite sex, too.
5. Think about the stage your teenagers are going through and how they may be feeling. For example, "I know my son's having wet dreams. They must bother him a lot because he makes excuses about spilling water on his bed."
6. Give your teenagers a good book about sexuality. One that talks about teenage girls and boys, not birds and bees.
7. Really listen to your teenager's questions. It's easy to exaggerate or jump to wrong conclusions when young people ask about sex. ("Oh, no, if my daughter wants to know about contraception, she must be having sex!") This happens because adults tend to answer questions the way they understand them, not the way young people mean them. Just answer questions in a direct way. Then check to see if that's what teenagers wanted to know by asking questions such as:
 - "Does that explain what you want to know?"
 - "Is that clear?"
 - "How does that make you feel?"

- "Is there anything else you want to know?"

It's easy to misunderstand what teenagers ask. Here's an example of how even a simple question can be confusing:

Child: "Dad, where did I come from?"

Parent: "Well, my sperm fertilized your mother's egg..."



Child: "No, I mean, Dan was born in Chicago. Where did I come from?"

If you're not sure what your kids want to know, or why, ask questions to find out:



Child: "Mom, could I get pregnant?"

Parent: "Do you mean, is your body physically able to do that?"

Child: "I guess so. Sharon said that as soon as a girl gets her period she can get pregnant. Is that true?"

Parent: "Yes, partly. A girl can also get pregnant before her first period if she has already released an egg."



You can also ask:

- "Was there something that happened that made you start thinking about that?"
- "Can you tell me more about what you're asking? I'm not sure I understand."

It's very important to let young people know that it's okay to ask questions.

Chapter 4

MORE CHANGES

As teenage bodies change into adult bodies, the way teenagers see themselves changes, too. That's because our bodies have a lot to do with how we feel about ourselves. We can point to our bodies and say, "This is me." But if the shape and size keep changing, we can feel unsure about who we are.

When you, as a parent, feel pressure at work or worry about money, don't you feel it in your body? Maybe your shoulders get tense, or you smoke more, or you have trouble sleeping. Feelings affect your body. A teenager's body and emotions are connected, too. That's why teenagers go through "phases" (as parents well know). As their bodies change, their feelings have to catch up.

During this time, kids get *two messages*:

1. We want you to act grown up!



2. You're not old enough yet!

So which is it?

Puberty Is Rough on Parents, Too!

You want to teach your children to be responsible. You give them the freedom to be themselves. But you also know there are situations they're not ready to handle. So you have to draw the line somewhere. But where?

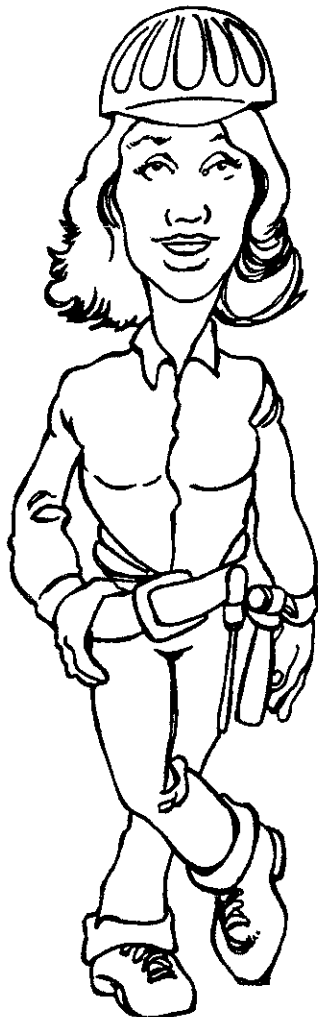
To make things worse, your kids probably want to be treated like adults and like kids at the same time. They're making decisions for themselves that you used to make for them. For example, they're probably deciding for themselves what to wear. Sometimes it feels good to feel grown up and independent. But sometimes it's so scary that they would like to say, "Tell me what to do!"

Chapter 5

EQUAL THOUGH DIFFERENT

Pink and blue are traditional colors for dressing babies. Pink for girls. Blue for boys. It might be a cute custom. But “pink or blue” is not just a cute way of treating children, young adults, or men and women. It’s a way of *stereotyping* them. Sexual stereotyping means limiting who boys and girls are allowed to be.

People who use sexual stereotypes usually have *sexist* attitudes. They think men are superior to women. Or women are superior to men. We know now that sexism hurts people. It tells them they’re not okay as they are; that they must change to be like everyone else in a group. Sexism, like stereotyping, limits people.

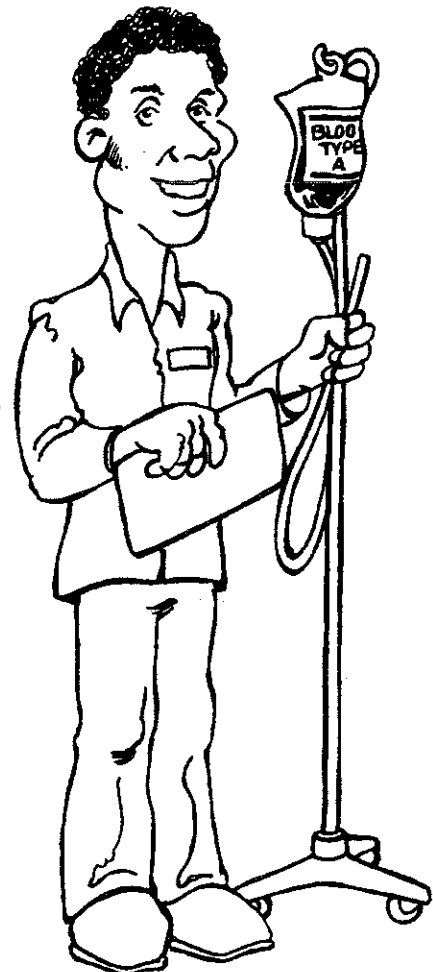


Are We Talking UNISEX?

No! Equality doesn’t mean there aren’t any differences between men and women. It just means that people of both genders deserve the chance to be the best they can be.

Instead of forcing people into molds they don’t fit, we need to give them all the same chance to grow. Girls can be engineers; boys can be nurses. Girls can enjoy team sports; boys can let their feelings show.

Why Should Someone’s Sex Organs (or Their Skin Color or Religion) Control the Way Others Treat Them?



What Does Equality Have to Do With Teaching Teenagers About Sex?

We're talking about young men and women having equal rights and responsibilities in relationships. That means that either of them has a right to say and a responsibility to respect someone else's no.

Equal means that...

- Neither a girl nor a boy should feel guilty about saying no to sex.
- If a girl feels like holding hands, she doesn't have to wait for the boy to think of it.
- A girl isn't always the one responsible for "leading the boy on" with the way she looks.
- Teenagers must not expect boyfriends or girlfriends to "make them happy" or "take care of them."
- All teenagers—boys and girls—should be encouraged to do the best they can do.
- Men are not the only ones responsible for things getting out of control.
- Men and women should share responsibility for birth control.
- Teenagers don't have to have sex to prove they're "real" men or women.

What Teens Think

Most people still make different rules for boys and girls. And that's not good. The old rules say that it's okay for boys to "get what they can." But girls aren't supposed to "to too far." Teenagers who buy into these rules can hurt themselves—and other people.



"If I don't try something, she'll think there's something wrong with me."



"If I ask him out, he'll think I'm desperate."

What Parents Can Do

1. Think about the roles that you and your partner take in running your household. They affect your teenagers' ideas about men and women.
 - Who usually makes decisions?
 - Are there jobs you or your partner won't do because it's "man's work" or "woman's work"?

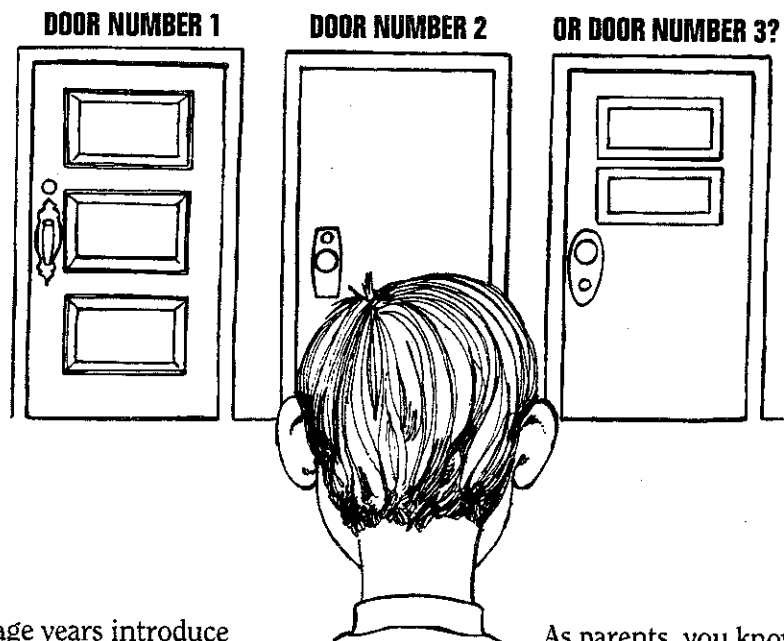
Make a point of sharing jobs, or exchanging jobs, as examples for your kids.
2. Take stock of how you treat your teenagers.
 - Are you more strict or more relaxed with your teenager because he's a boy or she's a girl?
 - Would you treat your teenager differently if he or she were of the opposite sex?
 - Are there "boy's" jobs and "girl's" jobs in your home?
 - Do you insist that girls avoid sex, but figure that "boys will be boys"?

3. Tell teenage boys, "If you're serious about having female friends, judge them the same way you judge your male friends—as real people, not as things or body parts."

Chapter 6

MAKING CHOICES

Hurry up and decide! Do you want...



The teenage years introduce young people to decisions that they've never had to make before. What's even harder, they'll have to take the consequences.

As parents, you know how serious some of their choices are. How can you influence what they choose?

Kids Need Coaches!

Making decisions isn't easy. Like playing music or sports, making decisions takes practice. The more often teenagers make thoughtful decisions, the better they get at it. Let them practice. But it helps to have someone—like a teacher or a coach—to help them find their mistakes and tell them when they do a good job. That's where you come in, as a parent. Kids need you as coaches as their sexuality develops.

Some of the choices that teenagers make *seem small* to them.

"Should I skip class today?"

Some choices *seem big* to them.

"What should I wear to Nancy's party?"

Some choices *are big*.

"Am I ready to have sex?"

You can't make all their choices for them.
But you can:

- Give them facts.
- Show them a new way of looking at something.
- Point out what's good and bad in each choice they might make.



Some Tough Choices for Teenagers

"Suppose you're out with a guy, and he starts to feel your breasts. What are you supposed to do?"

"I really like Janet. But I'm afraid to ask her out. What if she laughs in my face?"

"Some of the guys are going to ask 'what I got' on my date with Ellen. We just talked and had a good time. What should I tell them?"

"I really want to know more about the pill. But if I ask my mother, she'll kill me."

What Teens Think

Some teenagers won't talk about the choices they face because they're afraid of how their parents might react. They think parents will:

- Be embarrassed.
- Act shocked.
- Punish them.
- Not answer the question.
- Make fun of them.

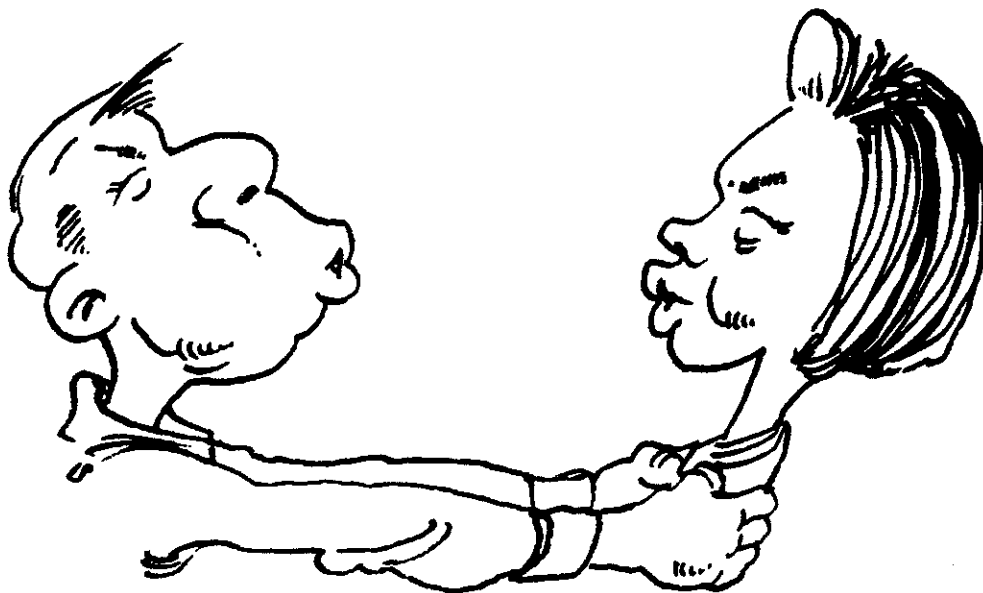
Sometimes teenagers want parents to help make the decision by saying no. They're not ready to deal with the situation (even if they don't want to admit it). And they want you to help them out of it (even if they complain)!

What Parents Can Do

1. Show that you're available by:
 - Taking their problems seriously.
 - Accepting the fact that they're old enough to think about sex.
 - Answering their questions.
2. Think about decisions you used to make for your teenagers that they now make for themselves.
3. Think about the kinds of decisions your teenagers will face soon. Teenagers are just beginning to think about sex-related decisions, so they need some help. They haven't had much practice in thinking about the consequence of big decisions.
4. Point out that there is more than one alternative for every situation. If you help kids look at their options, you may hear them saying, "You mean I can do that?" Or, "It's okay for me to say that?"
5. Help them think about the results of each of their choices—Door Number 1, Door Number 2, and Door Number 3. Ask: "If you do this, what do you think could happen? Is that what you want to happen?"
6. Don't assume kids know about their own sexuality. Often, so much of what they "know" is hearsay.
7. Use magazine articles or TV programs to talk about situations before your teenagers have to deal with them first-hand. That way...
 - Your kids won't be taken by surprise later on.
 - They won't be so shy about asking questions when they need help.
8. Point out that the choices they make should go along with their basic values. If there's a conflict between those basic values and what they decide to do, someone will probably get hurt.
9. Include another adult in your conversations, if it makes talking about sex easier. It could be an adult sister or brother, an aunt or uncle, a close friend of yours, or a neighbor with a teenager. That way...
 - Teenagers can get more than one point of view.
 - Teenagers can learn about their options without putting themselves on the line.
 - You might feel less pressure.

Chapter 7

GOING OUT?



Do you remember your first kiss? Or the first person you had a crush on?

- Who was it?
- How old were you?
- What attracted you?

Were you ever dumped? Did you ever do something really risky that you'd never do now? Be honest.

Your first dates are behind you now. But your teenagers are just beginning to have the experience. For them, it's scary. It's also exciting. Some teenagers date a lot. Some go out once in a while. And some don't date at all.

It's perfectly okay not to date. Teenagers will enjoy dating more, anyway, when they don't feel rushed. A good date is one that happens when kids are ready. When they can do

things they enjoy. When they can be friends. Going out should be fun!

For teenagers, the dating scene brings up new questions:

- How am I supposed to act?
- Do I look okay?
- What can we talk about?
- Why do I feel so nervous?

Dating also affects their other friendships. Things happen that hurt.

- Old friends forget about them.
- People get labeled.
- There's teasing.
- Secrets get told.
- Best friends go after the same date.
- There's pressure to hang around with the "right" people.

For parents, the dating scene brings questions, too:

- Are my teenagers ready to date?
- Do I need to limit my teenager's dating?
- Will they get hurt?
- Should I make rules to protect my kids?
(I remember what it was like when I was young!)
- Have we talked enough about sex?

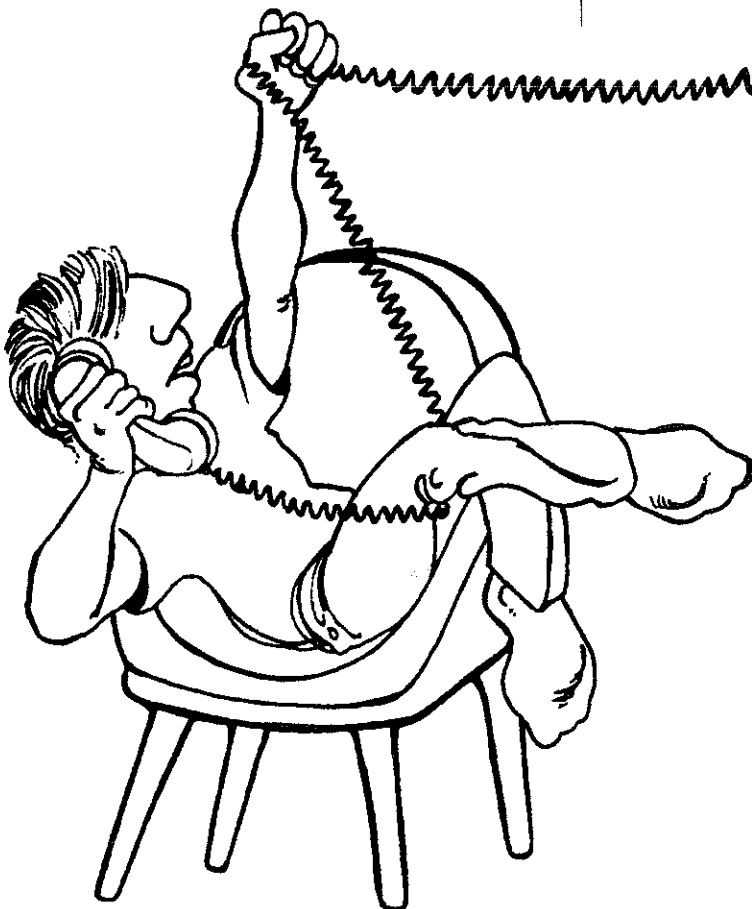
Dating has changed since most adults were teenagers. Now it's common for girls to ask boys out, for girls and boys to pay their own way, for kids to go out at an earlier age, and for them to be more open about sex. As parents, you may or may not like the changes.

Recognizing Risks

Sometimes teenagers get into situations without seeing how risky they are. Parents need to let kids know when they're worried about a date or a get-together. Many times parents can't agree between themselves about what's risky for their kids. But it helps to think about it ahead of time. The way *you* look at dating risks may depend on your teenagers, their friends, or where you live.

Would you be concerned if your teenagers...

- Went to a party where there were no adults?
- Skipped school and went to a friend's house?
- Got high on a date?
- Left a party with somebody they just met?
- Went out with someone who's a lot older?



In a recent survey of 8TH graders, more than half said they were "in love."

What Teens Think

"I'm the only one who doesn't go out. There must be something wrong with me."

"It seems like I'm thinking about her all the time."

"What if I don't want to...(go out, kiss good night, go to a rowdy party, have sex)?"

"How can I tell him I don't want to go out?"

"My mom just doesn't understand what it's like being in love."

"I could use a little encouragement from my parents."

"It would help if my parents said I had to be home by a certain time."

"My dad doesn't trust me at all."

What Parents Can Do

1. Let teenagers know what you expect of them:

- What time to be home.
- What settings are okay for dates.
- About having sex.

Tell them why you think it's important to have guidelines.

2. Let teenagers know that they have some control over what happens when they go out. They can help decide where to go, what to do, what they want, and what they don't want. *Nobody has to put up with an uncomfortable situation just to be polite.*

3. Suggest that teenagers go out in groups. There's less pressure on everyone. It's easier to relax and have fun.

4. Don't push your kids to date.

5. Support your kids during the ups and downs of their friendships.

6. Think about what it was like when you were dating.

7. Open your home to your kids and their friends.

8. Talk with your teenagers about the funny, scary, or embarrassing things that happened when you dated.

9. Show interest in boyfriends and girlfriends, but in careful ways: "I don't want to pry, but I was wondering what kinds of things you like about the girl or boy you're going out with."



Chapter 8

SAYING NO

Television, movies, music, and teen magazines often give strong messages about sex: "Do it! It's romantic! It's fun! Everybody is doing it." No wonder teenagers feel so much pressure to be sexually active!

Most teenagers have strong sexual feelings. Some act on them. Others think they're supposed to, because "everyone else" does.

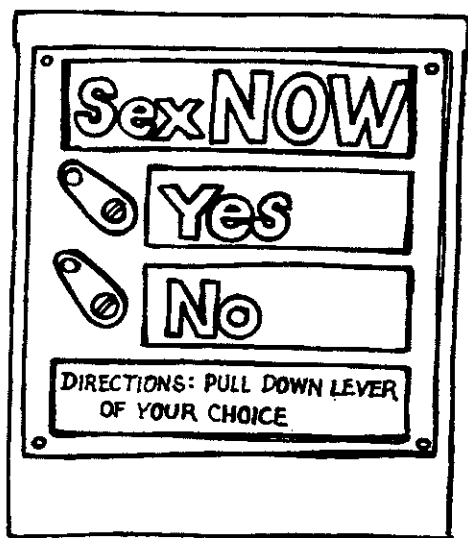
The truth is, everyone *isn't* having sex. And sex *doesn't* make relationships better for teenagers. Just the opposite is likely. *Not* having sex is the best choice for teenagers.



For teenagers, sex usually causes more problems than it solves!

- Worries about...
 - getting caught.
 - hiding something from parents.
 - doing it "right."
 - how to act afterwards..
 - how the relationship might change.
- Stronger feelings that are harder to manage.
- Guilt about going against personal values.
- Disappointment and bad feelings.
- Fear of being used, or of using someone else.
- Bad reputation.
- AIDS or sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).
- Unplanned pregnancy.

Long before they can vote in political elections, kids are voting about sex!



Staying in Check

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Voting no to sex is the best choice for teenagers. Good relationships take time. They also involve much more than sex. Young people aren't ready for sex, even if they think they are. If they do get involved, there's almost always one person who gets hurt. Sometimes two. Young people who care about each other should be encouraged to keep sex *in check*.

In check means under control. People who care about each other don't always immediately say exactly what they think. They wait for the right time and place. When we say that teenagers need to keep sex in check, we mean that teenagers will be much better off if they don't have sexual intercourse.

What Teens Think

"I'm probably the only virgin in my class."



"I don't want to have sex yet. Is there something wrong with me?"

"The way the other guys talk, I'm supposed to get as much as I can, as often as I can."

"If I say yes, she'll think I'm easy. If I say no, she might not want to go out with me any more."

"If I get it over with, it won't be such a big deal from now on."

"I know I'm ready for sex. And I want to see what it's like."



"It must be love because I feel so turned on."

No is still the best contraceptive.

What Parents Can Do

1. Tell your teenagers you know they have sexual feelings. Urge teenagers to say no to sexual intercourse. Tell them they don't have to apologize. It's okay to say no. And it's okay not to "make a move."
 2. Let teenagers know that they don't *owe* anything to the other person because they've gone out together.
 3. Tell teenagers what kind of sexual activities are and aren't okay with you. (Remember, "sex" may mean different things to you and your kids.)
 4. If you feel this way, say it: "I don't want you to have sex because it's too risky. Sex can be tough on a relationship, because people can get hurt. I want you to be a healthy, happy person." Explain other reasons you feel that way too.
 5. Talk about ways that teenagers can show they care about someone besides sex. There are *many* others.
 6. Be an example to your kids by:
 - Showing care and love in your relationships.
 - Not using sex to control your partner.
 - Making your own decisions, without being pressured by what other people think.
 7. If talking about morality or virginity (or even pregnancy) doesn't mean much to teenagers, try some of these reasons for saying no instead:
 - Sex can mean love to one person and just sex to the other.
 - Their partners may brag about it to friends.
 - Sex puts a lot of pressure on both people. They worry about doing it well enough. They worry about getting caught. They get jealous. They feel ashamed.
 - Intercourse may not feel good for girls. It can be disappointing, or it can even hurt if she's not really ready.
 8. If you're looking for words to describe sexual intercourse to your teenager, you may want to say something like this: "A man and woman lie together making love—kissing and holding and touching each other—before they have sexual intercourse. During that time, the man's penis hardens and the woman's vagina gets wetter. The man puts his penis into the woman's vagina when she feels ready. Usually the man and the woman experience pleasure while they are having intercourse. After a while, the man releases a fluid containing sperm. If sperm joins together with an egg from the woman's ovaries, a baby begins to grow."
- Follow this explanation with your personal beliefs and values about sexual intercourse.

GOOD ANSWERS TO STICKY QUESTIONS

[Teen to Teen]



Q: "What if he or she says, 'I love you'?"

A: "If you loved me, you wouldn't ask me to do something I don't want to do."



Q: "What if he or she says that everyone else is doing it?"

A: "Everyone talks big, but it's not true."
OR
"Then you can do it with someone else."



[Teen to Parent]



Q: "What if we just can't stop?"

A: "If I walked into the room, couldn't you stop?"



Q: "How do I know when I'm ready for sex?"

COME UP WITH YOUR OWN LIST for ways your teenager can tell when he or she is ready for sex. Write in your ideas below.

Chapter 9

PREGNANCY AND BIRTH

Birth is an exciting time. To participate in birth is to participate in a miracle.

As children become teenagers, they learn more about their bodies. They're more curious about how everything works, including how women give birth. Having a baby is a big event for a mother and father. You may want your teenagers to understand how special it can be, too.

Mothers Taking Care of Themselves:

Do's and Don'ts

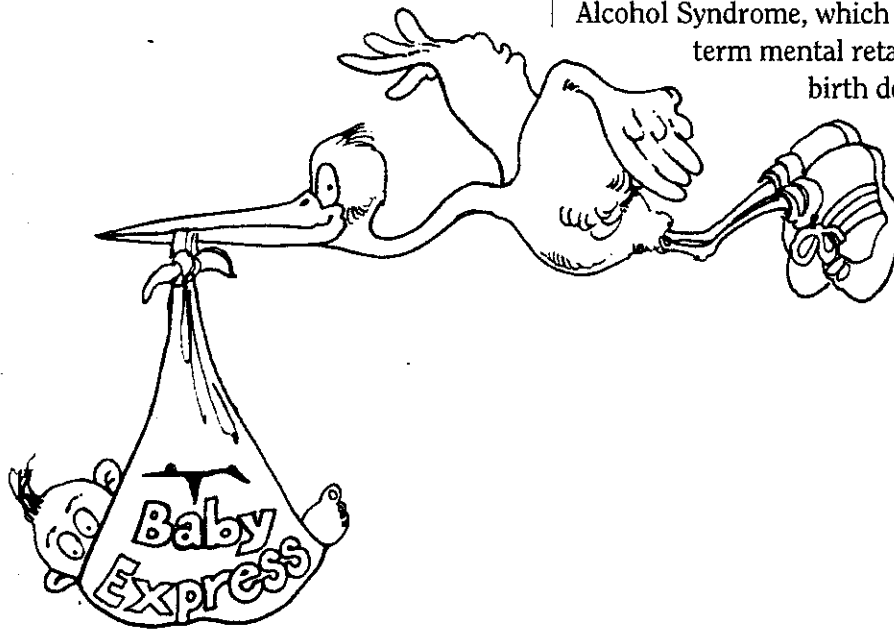
Mothers-to-be have the power to help make pregnancies healthy by:

- Seeing a nurse-midwife and/or doctor as soon as they think they're pregnant.
- Eating healthy foods.
- Getting regular exercise.
- Going to childbirth classes.

They can also make sure the babies growing inside them stay healthier by:

- Not smoking.
- Not drinking alcohol.
- Not using drugs (even over-the-counter drugs such as aspirin) without talking to a nurse-midwife or doctor first.
- Limiting or eliminating caffeine use.

Smoking, drinking, and using drugs can be dangerous to the baby's health. Some drugs cause irreversible birth defects, addiction at birth, and death. Alcohol use can cause Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, which can result in long-term mental retardation, other birth defects, and death.



Changes May Have Taken Place...

since you became parents

Medical Care

Women have a lot to say about what happens during the birth. They can see a doctor or a nurse-midwife. They can have their babies in a delivery room or a birthing room. Many new choices are open to pregnant women.

Childbirth Classes

Classes help both mothers and fathers play a more active part in the birth. New parents learn about how a woman's body works when she's pregnant. They learn exercises to help the mother during labor. And they learn what they can do together to make all of it easier.

Dad's Role

It's true that the mother-to-be is the center of attention during a pregnancy. But there's so much the father can do to help her out. In fact, it's easier on the mother if her partner is interested and concerned about her. A father-to-be can:

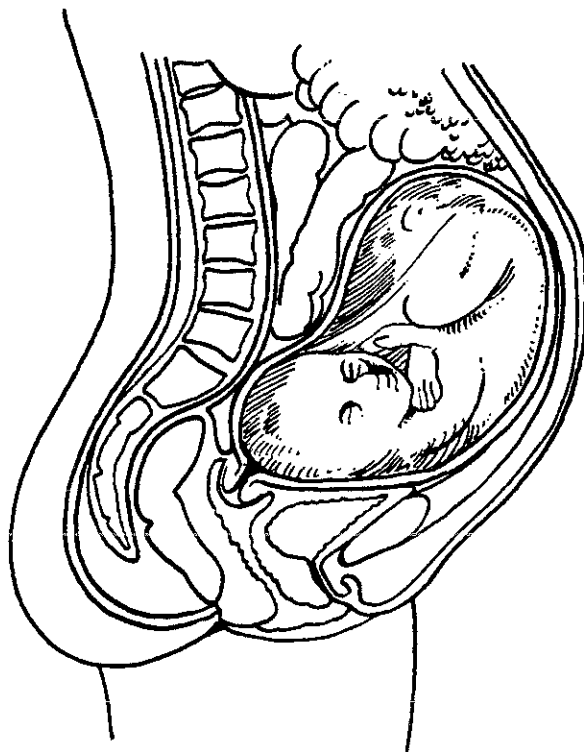
- Visit the nurse-midwives and/or doctor with his partner.
- Help pick a hospital, maternity center, or other birthing arrangement that lets him be part of the labor and birth.
- Learn about the changes going on in his partner's body.
- Participate in childbirth classes.
- Be in the delivery room to experience the birth.
- Find out from his partner what would help her the most.

"What Happens When a Woman Gets Pregnant?"

This is a question your teenagers might ask you, now that they've learned more about their bodies. Here are some of the things you might want to tell them:

A woman's body changes a lot during the nine months she is pregnant.

Inside the *uterus*, the place where the baby's growing, there's water to protect it from bumps and falls. It's called *amniotic fluid*. There's also a special organ called the *placenta* (or "afterbirth") inside the uterus. It forms early in the pregnancy to feed the baby, give it oxygen, and pick up its waste. The *umbilical cord* connects the placenta to the body at its navel.



DURING THE FIRST THREE MONTHS...

The woman may not look pregnant. She will stop having her period. Some women may have tender breasts and have to urinate often.

Some feel nauseated or have an upset stomach. Others just feel tired. Or have many new feelings. All of these are signals that a woman's body is undergoing great changes.

DURING THE SECOND THREE MONTHS...

The pregnancy will begin to show. Very often the symptoms a woman had in the first three months go away. The mother-to-be may feel more like her usual self. She will feel the baby moving. It will "swim" around, kicking and turning.

DURING THE LAST THREE MONTHS...

The mother really feels the baby. She gains more weight now. As she gets bigger, it's harder for her to move and get comfortable. The last three months is a waiting time. Many mothers have mixed feelings about giving birth.

Now the baby is very awake! It can hear all kinds of sounds. It can swallow, suck, hiccough, and move around, too. Other people can even feel the baby moving.

When the Baby's Ready to Come Out:

A guided tour of labor and birth

When the baby is about to be born, the mother usually goes into *labor*. Many women say that this is the hardest work they've ever done.

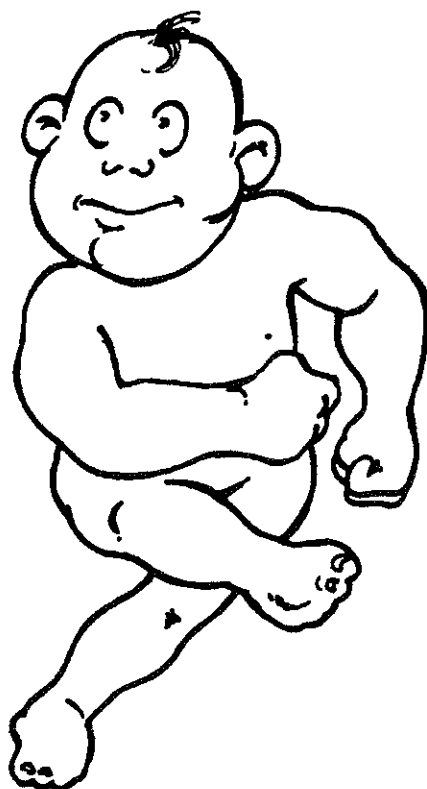
At the beginning of labor, the mother has strong cramps or "contractions." They begin far apart, with rest periods in between. As labor goes on, they get longer, stronger, and closer together. The contractions

make the *cervix* (the opening to the uterus) open wider, until it's big enough for the baby to get out. Once the cervix is wide open, the mother pushes hard.

Little by little, the baby is pushed down the birth canal (*vagina*) until the head appears. Once the shoulders are out, the rest of the baby's body slips out. After the baby is born, the mother's body pushes the placenta out.

Sometimes It Happens Differently

Sometimes babies can't be born through the birth canal. Instead, the doctor gives the woman a pain-killer, makes a cut in the abdomen and uterus, and delivers the baby. This is called a *caesarean birth* or "having a C-section." The most important thing is that both the mother and the baby are safe.



What Parents Can Do

1. Think about how you can use this chapter to talk about pregnancy and birth with your son or daughter.
2. If your teenagers are birth children, tell them what it was like for you when they were born. This can be a special time between you and your children. Talk about things such as:
 - Were both parents there?
 - Who helped?
 - What was the setting?
 - What did you like about it?
 - What didn't you like about it?
 - What would you do differently if you did it today?
 - How did you feel when your baby was born?
3. If your children are adopted or not your birth children, tell everything you know about their birth. If you have no specific information about it, talk about the process of birth as it occurs for most people.
4. Share your own reactions to the new choices parents have when planning for childbirth.
5. Talk about what life was like for you when your child was one month old:
 - "I worried about..."
 - "The best thing that happened was..."
 - "I was afraid that..."
 - "The hardest part was..."
 - "I remember when..."
6. Have a good book on childbirth around the house.

Chapter 10

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Young teenagers shouldn't be experimenting with something as risky as sex. Teenagers aren't ready for sexual intercourse and all the adult-size problems and responsibilities it brings on. Teenagers who have sex find that it often:

- Makes relationships more complicated.
- Spreads sexually transmitted diseases.
- Causes pregnancy.

There are other serious problems that come up, too, when teenagers have sex.

Teenagers Are Likely to Be Hurt by Sex

Anyone can be hurt in a sexual relationship. But it's easier for teens to get hurt. They aren't as experienced as adults and haven't learned how to protect themselves in the same ways. They leave themselves open, and others are able to take advantage of them.

KIDS CAN GET HURT BECAUSE THEY ARE YOUNG AND GROWING

- **They don't always look to the future.**
They do things without understanding what might happen afterwards. (They can drive around with five kids in the back seat of a car, for example, without realizing how dangerous that is.)

- **They don't know who they are yet.**
They are unsure of themselves and are just learning to accept themselves as worthwhile people. Many adults don't feel okay about who they are until their 20s and 30s—or even later.

- **They don't see the “big picture” of sexuality.**
They don't know yet that sexuality is not just physical sex. That it has to do with how we relate to people, how we think about ourselves, and how we live out our values in real life.

- **They don't know that people need to show caring in different ways, depending on the level of their commitment.**
People who have promised to care about each other deeply and for a long time have a different commitment to the relationship than people who are just physically attracted to each other. They show these commitments with different kinds of loving. Many adults show this caring and commitment through marriage.

- **They don't know themselves as males and females yet.**
They are still figuring out how they will express their sexual feelings, which rules they will use to make decisions about sex, and what's important to them.

- **They don't realize the deep, long-term meaning of love.**

Instead, they tend to look at love in simple ways—as romantic or perfect. Many young people who are sexually active don't see themselves as having sex at all. They think of it as “making love.”

- **They need to be touched.**

As teenagers begin to follow their own life paths, they and their parents may not touch and hug each other the way they used to. The new distance between them makes teenagers “skin hungry.” They want a closeness to replace the separation they feel from their families.

Those adults make the mistake of thinking that teenagers know it already. These adults also may think they don't know enough about sex to explain it to teenagers.

For all these reasons, teenagers can get hurt by sex. They are better off if they keep sex in check by saying, no. Saying no to sex is absolutely the best way for teenagers to handle sexual pressure.

**KIDS CAN ALSO GET HURT
BECAUSE THIS CULTURE
MAKES SEX SEEM SO
IMPORTANT.**



- **Movies, television, books, magazines, and popular music put a lot of pressure on teenagers to have active sex lives.**

They also give the wrong ideas about sex. In fantasy love scenes, how often does a couple stop to talk about responsibility or values? People just have sex when they want to, and unwanted babies never seem to happen.

- **Many adults who teenagers care about and look to as models don't talk to them about sexuality.**

Keeping Sex in Check

Many people decide to live parts or all of their lives without having sex, for many reasons. They:

- Never meet a person with whom they want to share those sexual feelings.
- Aren't ready for a committed relationship.
- Know sex can complicate things between people.

- Have learned through experience that sex with someone they don't care enough about—or with someone who doesn't care enough about them— isn't enjoyable.

Married couples often abstain from sex for periods of time because:

- They need to be apart from each other for a while.
- One of the partners has a job that involves travel.
- One of the partners is ill.
- One or both of them isn't feeling sexual.
- They don't want children.

Adolescence is one of the stages in life—like those just described—where it's much smarter to say no to sex, too. It can't hurt teenagers physically in any way. It will protect them emotionally, too, for many years to come. Even teenagers who have been sexually active in the past can choose to stop. This is often called "secondary virginity."

Family Planning for Teenagers Who Don't Say No

Many families like to plan for the birth of a child. They want to be in control of such an important event. They need to know they have enough money in the bank, enough room in the house, and enough time to care for the baby. As your teenagers learn more about birth, they may be curious about how the timing works. That's where family planning comes in.

By using family planning methods, people can decide when they want to have children. Unfortunately, most of the babies born to teenagers are not planned for. Neither the teenage father nor mother used birth control. Or, if they did, they didn't use it the right way.

Wrong Ideas About Birth Control

People have many mistaken ideas about how to prevent pregnancy. They think they can protect themselves by:

- Having sex standing up.
- Douching with water or Coca Cola after sex.
- Taking one birth control pill.
- Taking a birth control pill only on a day when you think you might have sex.
- Using vaginal deodorants as birth control.

None of these methods work! To plan families, people need to know facts about birth control.



It's hard for most parents to admit that their kids might be having sex—or want to. They're afraid to encourage it by talking about family planning. They think that telling their kids about birth control is the same as telling them to have sex. This isn't true! When kids decide to have intercourse—or decide not to—their decisions come from values and attitudes they've learned all along. Knowing about birth control isn't likely to change their ideas.

It's definitely better for kids not to have sex. But the truth is, parents telling kids not to have sex won't stop some teenagers. Refusing to give them birth control won't stop them, either. Most teenagers who are starting to have sex don't use birth control. As a result, they're likely to get pregnant.

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT KIDS WHO KNOW ABOUT BIRTH CONTROL AREN'T SEXUALLY ACTIVE ANY SOONER THAN KIDS WHO DON'T.

There's one more thing. Girls (and women) don't get pregnant by themselves. It takes two. Both partners should take charge of birth control together.

What's Available?

For teenagers, staying “in check” (not having sex at all) is *always* best. But if people have intercourse and don't want to have a child, they need to use a family planning method. There's no one kind of protection that's right for everyone.

It must also be said that there are hazards and drawbacks to all artificial family planning methods, and none of them—except abstinence—is 100-percent effective.

But none of the hazards attached to any of the family planning methods is as serious a threat to the health of a teenager as a pregnancy.

This list of methods of family planning is very brief. It doesn't give all the information necessary to choose one method or another. When it's time to choose one method, the people involved should get further information about the drawbacks of each method and figures on their effectiveness.

Without a Prescription

Abstinence – Not having sex. A 100-percent effective, risk-free method, and the best choice for teenagers.

Condom – A condom is made of thin latex and fits over an erect penis to catch sperm. Other than abstinence, it is the only birth control method that is effective protection against AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Contraceptive Foam, Cream, Jelly and Suppositories – These contraceptives kill sperm and act as a barrier to the cervix. They are placed inside the vagina before intercourse.

Contraceptive Sponge – A small sponge is placed in the vagina, covering the cervix. It protects for 24 hours.

Fertility Awareness – By paying attention to daily body changes, a woman estimates her least fertile times, and a couple has sex only at those times.

With a Prescription

Diaphragm – A diaphragm is a rubber cup that holds contraceptive jelly. It's placed in the vagina and covers the opening to the uterus.

Birth Control Pills – The pill is taken daily to keep eggs from being released by the woman's body.

Intra-Uterine Device – The IUD is a piece of plastic that is placed inside the uterus by a doctor. Can cause serious infection, so is no longer considered an appropriate birth control method.

Norplant Implant – Small capsules of contraceptive drug that are implanted by a doctor and are effective for five years.

Morning-After Pill – A drug that can be taken after intercourse to prevent pregnancy. However, at the time of printing, this has not been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Permanent Methods

Tubal Ligation – The tubes that carry eggs from the ovaries to the uterus are either cut and tied, or blocked.

Vasectomy – The tubes that carry sperm from the testes to the penis are cut and tied.

Other Common Methods of Contraception That Are Not Effective

Withdrawal – Pulling the penis out of the vagina just before ejaculation. Often sperm are released before ejaculation and can cause pregnancy.

Douching – Flushing out the vagina with water (or another liquid) after intercourse. It doesn't work. It can even make it easier to get pregnant.

Why Don't Teenagers Usually Use Birth Control?

- It's embarrassing for them to talk about—together or with doctors and pharmacists.
- It makes them feel guiltier about having sex.
- Sex “just happened.”
- A parent might find out.
- Boys think it's the girl's responsibility.

YOU CAN FILL AN AVERAGE HIGH SCHOOL WITH TEENAGERS WHO WILL BECOME PARENTS BY THIS TIME TOMORROW.

What Parents Can Do

1. Support abstinence

- Use TV programs and newspaper articles to find examples of caring relationships that aren't expressed in sexual intercourse. Talk about them with your teenager.
- Let your teenager know that not everyone has sex.

2. Tell your kids how you feel. Here's an example of how to do that: "I believe very strongly that kids your age are too young to have sex. But I want you to know that, if you do decide to have intercourse with someone, I think you could use some kind of birth control. Getting someone pregnant (or getting pregnant) would make your life very hard. And I want the best for you."

3. Make sure your teenager understands how pregnancy happens.

4. Let your teenagers know that all it takes is sex *once, anytime* to get someone pregnant or to get pregnant.

5. Learn more about forms of birth control and their pros and cons. It will help you answer questions.

6. Talk about birth control before your teenagers get involved in *any kind* of sexual activity. It's easier to talk about when everyone feels less pressured.

7. Ask teenagers who tell you they're thinking about having sex:

- Are they feeling pressured or pressuring someone else?
- Are they afraid of losing a boyfriend or girlfriend if they don't?

- How will they feel about themselves afterwards?
- Are they willing to take responsibility for birth control?
- Do they understand the risks involved?

8. If your teenagers are sexually active, there is still a lot worth talking about. They can still choose not to have sex. Talk with them about:

- Whether they're feeling pressured to have sex or are pressuring someone else.
- Whether they are afraid of losing a boyfriend or girlfriend if they don't keep having sex.
- How they feel about themselves after they've had sex.
- Whether they are using birth control or are willing to take on that responsibility.
- Whether they understand the risks involved.
- The benefits of stopping sexual activity.

9. Our society has made rules about the minimum age for voting, drinking, and driving. Sex is an important matter, too. At what age do you think your children are ready for sexual intercourse? Is age the only factor to consider? Write your ideas here:

Chapter 11

TEENAGE PREGNANCY: THE REALITIES

“I got a girl pregnant...” or “I think I’m pregnant...”

is something most parents of teenagers don’t want to hear. Yet one out of ten girls gets pregnant every year. One of them could be your daughter. Or it could be your son who’s responsible. Teenager pregnancy can happen in any family—no matter who you are, how much money you make, or where you live.

You know how much having a child changed your life. You’re an expert on the subject! It may have affected your income, your choice of a job, and your use of private time. It may have changed your relationship with a partner, too. Imagine how it would affect the life of a teenager.

A teenage pregnancy affects the lives of the pregnant girl and her partner, the parents of both teenagers, and the child who is to be born. If the girl ends up living at home with the baby, the lives of grandparents or sisters and brothers are changed, too.

**UNFORTUNATELY, WHEN A TEENAGE GIRL
GETS PREGNANT, MORE OFTEN THAN NOT,
THE BOY LEAVES HER.**

When parents find out that a son or daughter may become a parent, their lives are suddenly interrupted. They may have to put aside their own plans for the future until this crisis is over. It could be a few months or a few years, or even longer. A daughter, especially, will need lots of moral support, no matter what she decides to do. She’ll need help with medical bills, too.

Teenage Pregnancies Happen For Many Reasons

Teenagers:

- Don’t think about the future very clearly.
- Can’t see that pregnancy is a direct result of sex.
- Think it can’t happen to them.
- Want someone (a child) to love and to love them in return.
- Think it’s the “wrong time of the month.”
- Feel that their self-esteem is tied into having sex.
- Want to keep a boyfriend or girlfriend.

Teenage Pregnancy—Some Facts

- Most teenagers who become pregnant don't marry.
- Most teenagers who have babies don't place them for adoption.
- Most teenage mothers don't finish high school. Often they never get employment skills.
- Many teenagers will have a second pregnancy before age 20.
- Many teenagers don't seek medical care until late in pregnancy. That increases the health risks to both mother and child.
- Many teenage pregnancies are unwanted; many pregnant teenagers choose abortion.
- The suicide rate of teenage mothers is much higher than for the general population.

BOTH BOYS AND GIRLS...

- feel bad if they have disappointed their parents.
- have to make a *big* decision about the pregnancy. (A boy should help make the decision about the baby's future. The girl may feel better about the decision when the boy is involved. And the boy might feel better, too.)
- must pay for medical care, delivery, diapers, and clothing.
- must be ready to parent 24 hours a day.
- face possible long-term psychological consequences of various choices of how to deal with the pregnancy.

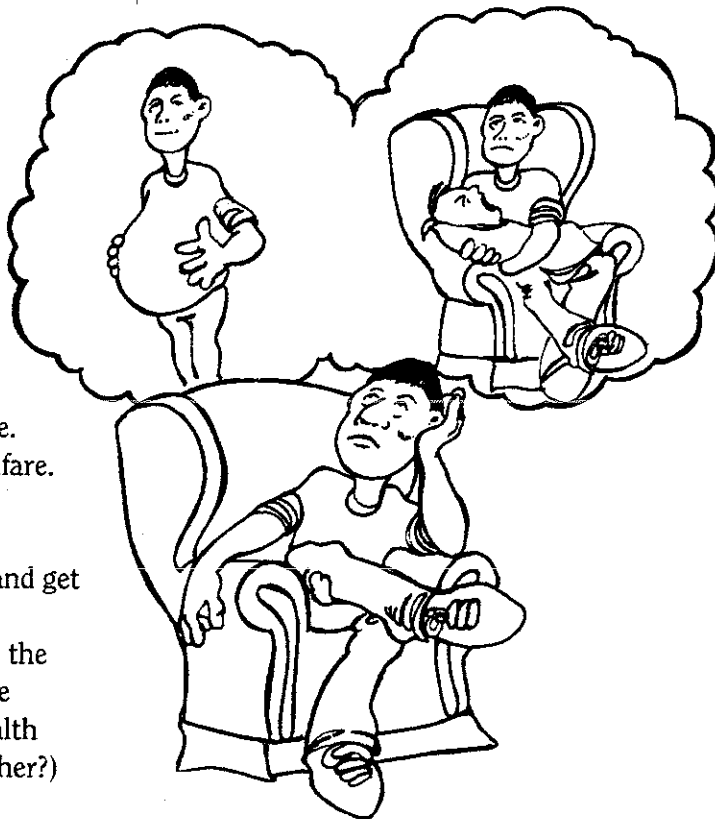
Teenage Pregnancies Cause Problems

GIRLS who have babies...

- run more health risks than women who have babies in their 20s. Their babies often have more medical problems.
- may have trouble staying in school.
- may have to raise the child alone.
- are more likely to end up on welfare.

BOYS who father a child...

- may have to drop out of school and get a job to support the baby.
- may not be ready to give the girl the love and caring she needs. (Is the father-to-be willing to go for health care and childbirth classes with her?)



How Can Pregnancy Affect a Teenager's Life?

For teenagers who are pregnant or who father a child, there are many issues to deal with:

- Relationships that change
- Enough money
- Getting an education
- Job prospects
- Single parenthood
- The child's future
- Growing up
- Less freedom
- Being alone

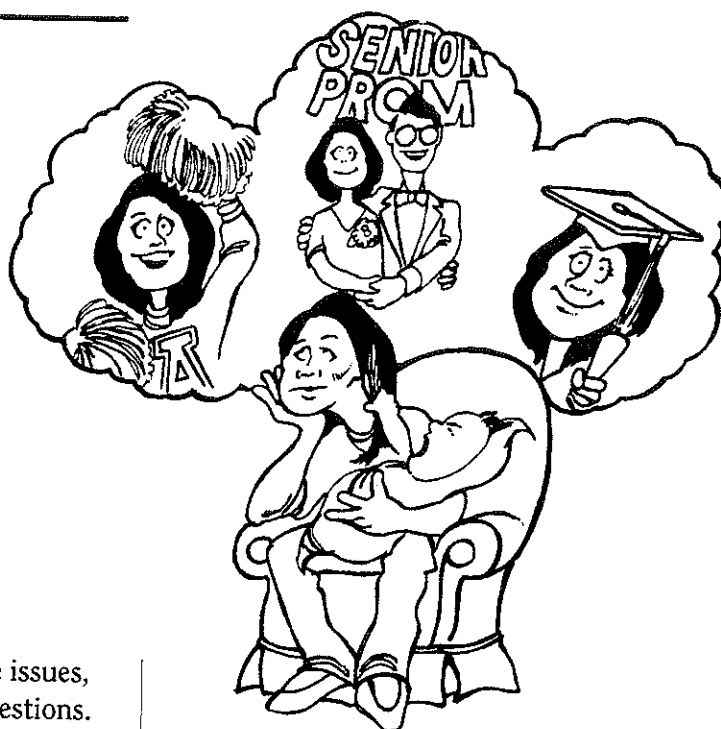
If we look deep into any one of these issues, we'll see that it raises all kinds of questions. Here's an example.

Enough Money...

- Where are the teenage parents going to live? Who pays the rent?
- Who furnishes their place with the basic things they need?
- Who pays for day care if they both want to go to school?
- Who buys special things to care for the baby?
- Who buys food?
- Who pays the doctor and hospital bills?
- How can they finish school and work at the same time?

What Parents Can Do

1. Talk about how parenthood changed your life. Tell your teenager what it takes to raise a child: time, patience, money, the ability to make important decisions.
2. Help protect your teenagers from pregnancy by:



- Instilling values in them that help them avoid sexual involvement.
- Showing them affection and concern. Teenagers who know they are loved by parents and family are less likely to have sex.
- Letting them know how important it is to use birth control if they have sex.

3. When was the last time you:

- Hugged your teenagers?
- Said you loved them?
- Complimented them on something well done?
- Talked about your beliefs and values regarding sexuality?
- Told them how you feel about sex for teenagers and what you expect of them?
- Helped them work through a decision?
- Talked to them about their future plans?

4. Take advantage of news about teenage pregnancy in the community, on television, and in the newspaper. Share your ideas with your children, and find out what they think.

Chapter 12

TEENAGE PREGNANCY: THE CHOICES

No one wants it to happen. No one plans for it to happen. But it happens, anyway. In spite of the best they could do to warn or protect their teenagers against becoming pregnant before marriage, hundreds of mothers and fathers each year have the experience of their teenagers confessing to them that they think they may be pregnant, or have caused a pregnancy.

It's always a shock. Parents' feelings are often very powerful and very mixed. A lot don't believe it at first. But when they *do* believe it, many parents are angry. Some are disappointed. Some yell. Some cry. Some even discover, to their surprise, that, even though they are not happy about what they have heard, one little corner of their mind is acting very pleased and saying, "Hey! I'm going to be a grandparent!"

There are three important things to remember, if it happens to you:

One—It took a great deal of courage to tell you. Most teenagers want very much to please their parents, make them proud. To have to tell you they've done something they know you don't approve takes a huge amount of courage.

Two—As a parent, you must have been doing some things right because your teenager *did* tell you. A lot of teenagers don't tell their parents until they've tried everything else.

Three—In the next few minutes, few days, few months, you're going to have to do some of the best parenting you've ever done. At this point your teenager doesn't need someone to tell him or her about how wrong and bad and disgraceful the behavior has been. He or she already feels terrible. Your teenager needs—as that teenager has never needed before—to hear you say, "...But I love you, and I'm going to stand by you while we figure this out."

If you yelled at first, or cried at first, or did anything else first, sooner or later you must recognize that your child is a scared and downhearted teenager who needs high quality parent love. It's a testing time, for you as well as your teenager.

“What Should I Do?”

A teenager needs your help in deciding what to do. Should he or she . . .

- Get married?
- Raise the child alone?
- Place the baby for adoption?
- Choose an abortion?

FAMILIES HEADED BY YOUNG SINGLE MOTHERS ARE SEVEN TIMES AS LIKELY AS OTHER FAMILIES TO BE POOR.



These choices are hard to make, and both the boy and girl should help make them. No matter what teenagers decide to do, they often feel guilt and regret. Teenagers who want to keep their babies usually end up raising their children alone, or with the help of their families. They have good intentions. But you know how much work it is to raise a child, and how much patience it takes. Most teenagers aren't ready for parenthood.

As parents you can help your kids think about all the alternatives. Point out ways their lives may change with an unplanned pregnancy.

What Teens Think

“I know some guys skip town or drop out of sight, but that wouldn't be right.”

“Poor kid. She's going to have to drop out of school. And she's so smart, too.”

“My mom would be so disappointed if I got pregnant.”

“I didn't think it would happen to me.”

"I wouldn't be able to tell my parents. They'd kill me."



"My father would make us get married."

What Parents Can Do

1. If a teenage pregnancy happens in your family:

- Accept and support your teenager. You can't afford to stay angry or bitter. Your teenager needs you too much for that. When you show support, it doesn't mean that you approve of sex for teenagers or want girls to get pregnant. It just means that you care about your child and want to help him or her through this hard time.
- Don't blame yourself. Just be the best parent you can be.
- Help teenagers with their decisions.
- Encourage the teenager to finish school.
- Let the teenager know what you're able to do or what kind of help you can give.
- Urge the teenager to visit a pregnancy counseling service and to get medical care.
- Encourage young men to take part in decisions about the pregnancy. Urge them to go with the girl for health care and childbirth classes.

2. One of the things you might do, when you and the teenager have both talked through

your feelings, is to think through the various alternatives. It sometimes helps your thinking if you write down each possibility, listing the good things down one side of the paper and the bad things down the other.

- Should the baby be placed for adoption? What are the good things about that for the teenage mother, the teenager father, and for the baby? What are the bad things about it?
 - What are the good things about the teenage father and mother getting married? What are the bad things?
 - Should the mother or father keep the baby and raise the baby alone? What's good about it? Bad about it?
 - Though abortion is highly controversial and hotly debated, it is currently a legal option in the United States. Is abortion an option within your personal beliefs and values? What might be advantages and disadvantages to having an abortion? What would be the long-term effects of this choice?
3. What are the pressures the teenager is feeling about what to do, from friends, from advice picked up from television or books, from your religious institution, from other places? Write down what those pressures are, and then maybe number them in order of how important you think each of them should be.

It's surprising how just writing things down can clear up your thinking. It's worth trying, anyway.

Chapter 13

TAKING CHANCES

As a parent, one of your jobs is to help your kids stay healthy. One way to do that is to be aware of problems that arise when teenagers become sexually active. One of those health problems is sexually transmitted disease. Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are diseases that are passed on through sexual contact. Anyone who is infected will keep infecting other people.

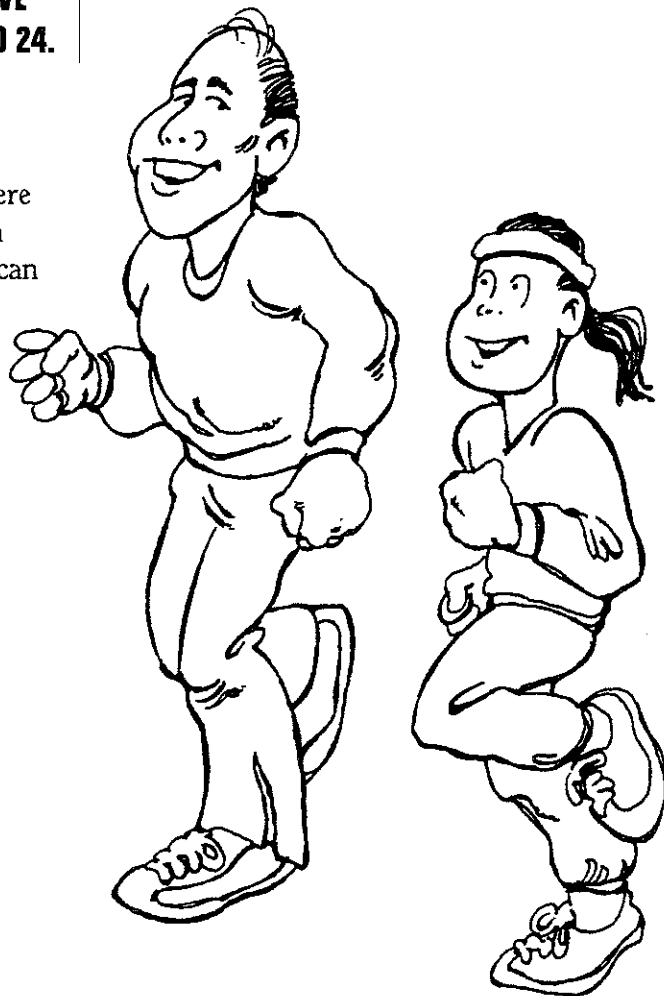
ALMOST HALF OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE STDs ARE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 15 AND 24.

STDs are passed on from one person's genitals, rectum, or mouth to another person's genitals, rectum, or mouth. (There isn't much chance of catching STDs from toilets, towels, or other objects.) Anyone can get STDs. It doesn't matter what part of town they live in or how much money they have. It doesn't matter if they are heterosexual or homosexual. And the more sexual partners a person has, the better the chances are of getting an STD.

Some diseases passed on through sexual contact are:

- AIDS
- Gonorrhea
- Herpes
- Syphilis
- Non-specific urethritis
- Vaginal infections
- Venereal warts
- Scabies
- Public lice ("Crabs")

Most STDs can be cured with medication. Venereal warts and herpes, which are caused by viruses, can be treated but not cured. At the present time, there is **no** cure for the life-threatening AIDS virus.



STDs Are Very Serious

- People can die of them. Or become sterile (unable to have children). STDs can attack the heart and brain and cause many other medical problems.
- If a pregnant woman has AIDS, herpes, or syphilis, she can give it to her unborn baby. The baby could get sick, be deformed, or even die. If a mother has gonorrhea when her baby is born, the baby must get medication, or it can go blind.

**THE COMMON COLD IS THE ONLY
CONTAGIOUS DISEASE THAT OCCURS MORE
OFTEN THAN STDs.**

How Do People Know If They Have an STD?

Here are some symptoms for both men and women:

- Sores (around the genitals)
- Discharge (an unusual drip or flow from the genitals)
- Burning urination
- Itching (around the genitals)
- Warts (around the genitals)
- Pain in the lower abdomen or groin

Each kind of STD has different symptoms. Many women and some men don't get any symptoms at all. They can pass on the disease without even knowing they have it. To find out more about each specific disease, turn to page 61 of the Appendix.

People who know they have an STD have a big responsibility. They should:

- Get treated by a doctor right away.
- Tell their partner(s) that they have an STD so the partner(s) can get treatment, too.

- Stop having sex until the disease is cured (not just until the symptoms go away).

The trouble is, some people with STDs have many sexual partners and aren't honest with them. Each person needs to protect himself or herself from STDs.

How Do People Keep From Getting STDs?

People can:

- Not have sex.
- Have sex with only one partner.
- Use condoms when having sex.

As soon as a person starts to have sex, he or she should get a medical check-up at least once a year. It's also smart to stay on the lookout for STD symptoms.



What Teens Think

"Nice people don't get STDs."

"It's like having a cold. It just goes away by itself."

"It's really embarrassing."



"Clean people don't get STDs."

"Nobody listens to lectures in school. They make it sound like you'd end up crippled for life or blind or maybe even dead if you do *anything!*"

"I can't tell my girlfriend that I have an STD. She'll know I've been messing around."

What Parents Can Do

1. Help kids understand that:
 - STDs are spread very easily.
 - One sexual contact is all it takes.
 - It's not fair to pass on an STD if you know you have one.
 - STDs have serious consequences for them and, some day, for their children. Some, such as AIDS, have no known cure and are fatal.
2. Take advantage of TV programs and newspaper articles to talk about STDs with your children. STDs are easier to discuss before they become a personal issue.
3. If teenagers you know have—or think they have—an STD:
 - Make sure they go to a doctor or clinic right away.
 - Make sure their partner(s) find out, too.
 - Rather than get angry with them, be glad they were mature enough to go to a doctor.
 - Talk about how they can prevent this from happening again.

Chapter 14

THE POWER OF TOUCH

Most of us touch people we care about. Touching usually feels good. We hold hands. We hug. We tickle. We get backrubs. We comb someone's hair. But not all kinds of touch feel good. Sometimes you may feel scared or uncomfortable about the way someone touches you.

Abuse involves using touch in a bad way. Sexual abuse means forcing touch on someone in a sexual way. As parents, you want to protect your children from dangerous touching or abuse. You may even wonder whether the ways that you and other family members touch kids are okay.



The most important thing is to respect the way other people feel about touch. Every one of us has a right to decide how our bodies can be touched. Even if someone is too confused or surprised or afraid to say no right away, it's *never* okay to take advantage of another person with sexual touching.

**25 PERCENT OF ALL GIRLS AND AT LEAST
10 PERCENT OF ALL BOYS HAVE BEEN
SEXUALLY ABUSED.**

Unwanted or Forced Touch

“I don’t want you to do that.”

Unwanted or forced touch means touching someone against his or her will. It can mean:

- Touching someone when they don’t like it.
- Using strength or threats to touch someone.
- Using “tricks” to touch someone.

It doesn’t have to be sexual intercourse. It can mean touching someone’s genitals or breasts. Or even just kissing or hugging if that person doesn’t want to. Forced touch can happen in the street with a stranger or with someone you know. No matter where it happens or who is doing the touching, it’s okay to say, “I don’t want you to do that!”

Rape

No one “asks for it.”

Rape means forcing someone to have sex against his or her will. Most of the time, it's a woman who gets raped by a man. But sometimes men rape boys or other men. Even though rape seems sexual, it's not love-making. It's violent and humiliating.

When people think about rape, they usually imagine a dark park or an empty street. This is one of many wrong ideas that people have about rape. Here is the truth:

- Half of all rapes happen at home.
- People are often raped by someone they already know, someone they have seen or met before. This is called “acquaintance” rape.
- No one wants to be raped.
- Women do *not* enjoy being raped.
- It's never a person's fault if he or she gets raped.
- Rape isn't macho. It's unmanly and criminal.

Sometimes it's hard for people to know whether or not they've been raped. What if they were pressured? What if they got drunk? What if they said yes at first and then changed their minds? Here's a rule to go by: *if someone forces sex on them against their will, it's rape.*

THE WAY A WOMAN DRESSES OR ACTS HAS VERY LITTLE TO DO WITH WHETHER OR NOT SHE GETS RAPED.

A situation is risky if someone:

- Gives them a “power stare” (stares long and hard).

- Sits too close.
- Blocks their way.
- Grabs or pushes.
- Doesn't hear, “NO!”
- Talks or acts as if he knows them better than he really does.

You can react by:

- Walking or running away.
- Saying firmly, “Don't do that to me!” Or, “Get out of my way!” Or, “NO! NO! NO!”
- Pushing or lifting the hand away.
- Standing up and talking in a loud voice.
- Yelling and fighting if nothing else works.
- If a weapon is involved, many experts suggest that the victim not fight back, unless you have specific self-defense training. The presence of a weapon makes the situation different. You can't always prevent rape no matter what you do.

Pressuring someone into sex can turn into rape.

Incest

“He told me not to tell.”

Incest is sexual abuse that happens inside a family. The abuser is usually a man—a father, stepfather, grandfather, uncle, big brother, or cousin—but could be a woman, too. The victim could be a boy or a girl. (Sex play between small children is not incest, and it usually doesn't hurt anyone.) The abuser may use only words to persuade the victim or may use physical force.

Abuse may happen just once, or it may go on steadily over many years. Even if incest happened a long time ago, it can take years for someone to recover from it. The emotional pain can go very deep.

THE VICTIM OF SEXUAL ABUSE IS NEVER AT FAULT.

Incest is not a way of showing love (even if some people say it is). Adults who care about children will stop it from happening. They will report people who abuse children and show them how to get help.

Unfortunately, it's hard for children to tell adults that they've been abused by a family member. Children often:

- Are warned by the abuser not to tell anyone.
- Think it's their fault.
- Are afraid the person who's abusing them won't love them anymore.
- Feel too awful to talk about it.



What Teens Think

"I didn't report it. I just wanted to forget it ever happened."



"He promised it would never happen again."

"My mom and dad might blame me for getting myself into such a dumb situation."



"It was awful. I'll never let a guy touch me again."

"It's my own fault. I should never have gotten into that car."

What Parents Can Do

1. Listen to your kids if they tell you about a "funny touch" by a family member or someone else. Check it out.
2. If your child is raped:
 - Explain that it's not his or her fault.
 - Call the police or a rape crisis center immediately.
 - Have him or her see a doctor right away.
 - Offer love and support.
 - Listen.
 - Encourage a visit to a counselor. (Visiting a counselor can help you with your feelings, too.)
 - Be patient. It takes a long time for a hurt like this to heal.
3. Fathers and sons can tell their buddies that rape is *not okay*. That it's not the way real men treat women. Ask your son: "What would you think if a guy raped your sister?"
4. Let your children know that, "It *can* happen to you." Tell them:
 - To *trust their feelings* when they are in situations that seem risky in any way.
 - That they can decide how they want to be touched. And that they should be direct and forceful about what they don't want. Hints probably won't work.
 - That it's okay to be rude or to make a scene if someone comes on to them sexually and doesn't take no for an answer.
5. Set an example by treating both women and men with respect.
6. Get help if you feel sexual desires for children or teenagers that you may not be able to control.
7. Take advantage of TV programs and newspaper articles to talk with your children about sexual abuse.

Chapter 15

MOVING ON

Dear Aggy,

My son asked me today if I ever got a woman pregnant before I married his mother. Why would Joe ask a question like that? Did he get some girl in trouble? What should I say?

Concerned dad

For every question that a teenager asks a parent, there's a "parent" question that comes up: "What did he mean?" "Why does she want to know?" "How much should I say?" *You don't have to know all the answers.* You just have to be someone a teenager feels free to ask. An ASKABLE parent:

- Really listens.
- Helps kids look for answers.
- Is honest.
- Takes questions and feelings seriously.
- Talks about things that might be embarrassing or hard for teenagers to bring up.
- Is ready to talk on the spur of the moment without needing an appointment.
- Doesn't jump to conclusions when a teenager asks questions about sex.
- Answers the question directly, honestly, and respectfully.
- Doesn't think he or she has to know everything.



Don't Worry About Saying Things That Your Children Aren't Ready To Hear

Kids will remember what they can understand. If they don't understand something, they will forget about it or "file it away" until they're ready to talk about it again. Young children tend to ask about physical things—how their bodies work, for example. Older children tend to ask about emotional things—what's the right thing to do, or how they feel, for example.

THE RISK OF NOT TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT SEX IS A LOT GREATER THAN THE RISK OF TALKING ABOUT IT.

Teenagers who get open and honest information about sexuality make fewer mistakes. They're less likely to experiment, too.

Teenagers Learn About Life Through the Media

Television, movies, and music have a lot of power over the way kids think. TV programs usually show achievement (being successful and famous, having money or power) and competition (looking out for number one, winning, beating out others) as being very important. But many parents want to teach their kids basic human values such as honesty and respect.

Television and movies don't talk about the emotional side of sex very much. They show people crying or getting jealous or feeling hurt. But those feelings aren't usually explored. Instead, we get scenes of people kissing or making love. Scenes like these

don't help young people learn about how relationships really work. They don't help young people figure out how to:

- Get to know someone without using "lines."
- Build friendships.
- Decide how close you want to be with someone.
- Build a relationship without playing games.
- Look at alternatives before making choices.
- Think about what will happen down the road after you make a decision.

These are all things that you, as parents, can talk about with teenagers.

Teenagers Need Adults!

Teenagers aren't the only ones growing. Adults keep growing, too. We expect kids to make better choices as they get older. And to learn from their mistakes. Don't kids deserve the same from us? Shouldn't adults get better at talking with kids about sex? Don't we need to learn from our mistakes, too?

If teenagers can learn to be responsible about sex, adults can learn to coach teenagers in responsible ways. We need to be examples to our children. And we need to help them see where "soap opera" leaves off and real life begins.

Your coaching can come in the form of:

- Sharing information.
- Sharing values.
- Supporting teenagers as they work out problems.
- Encouraging teenagers to take control of situations.
- Helping them to look at problems from new angles.
- Making reasonable guidelines.

Most teenagers can learn pretty fast. Given a chance and good coaching, they can make smart choices. When they make dumb choices, they can learn from their mistakes. Parents who would like help in working with their kids can turn to:

- Schools
- Religious organizations
- Crisis centers
- Counseling services
- Other parents

Parents can be good coaches. Coaching takes love, interest, and a little practice. Give it your best shot! They're your kids. Staying in close touch with them can pay off for your whole life!



▼▼▼ APPENDIX



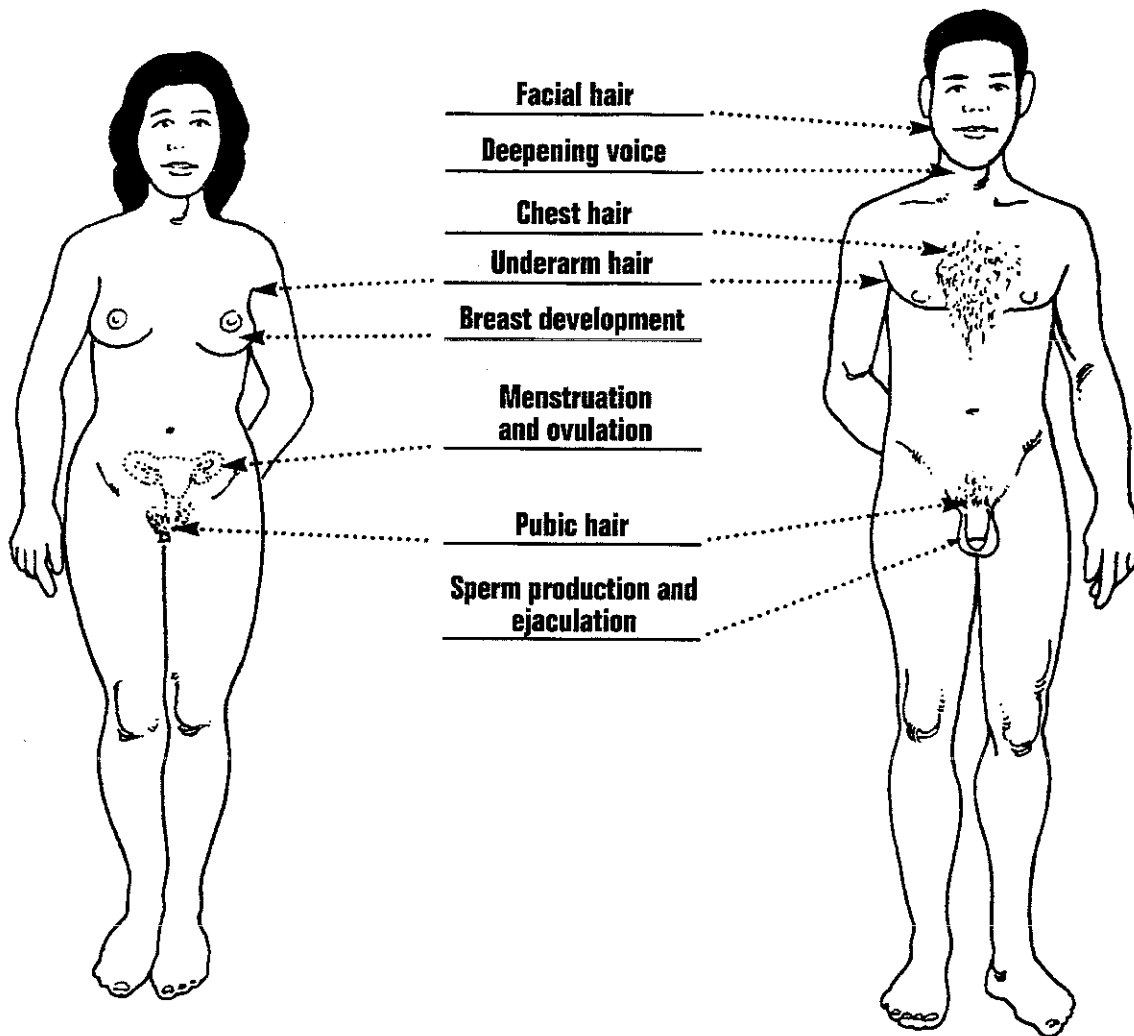
Appendix A: Body Changes

ADULT FEMALE BODY:

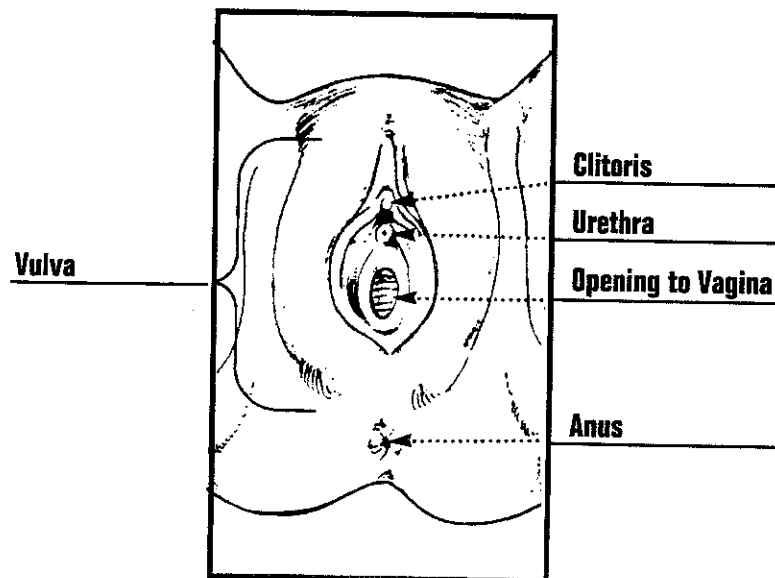
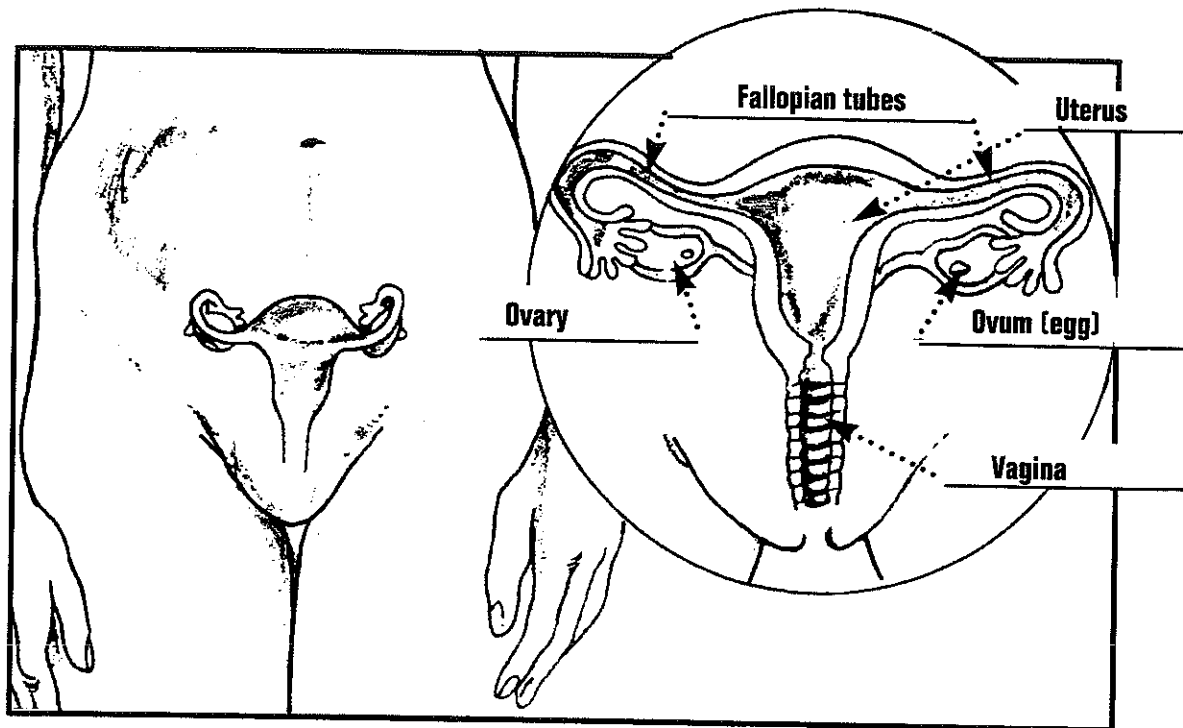
broader hips; rounding of
body contours.

ADULT MALE BODY:

broader shoulders and chest;
greater muscle development

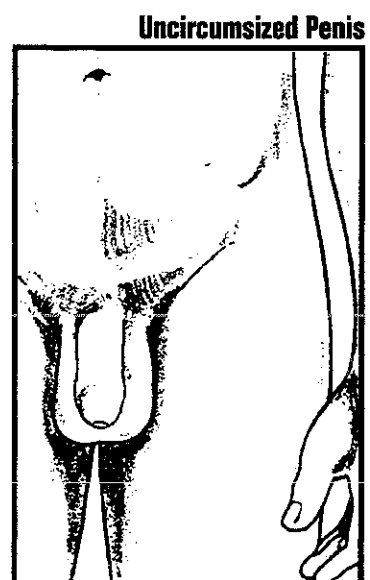
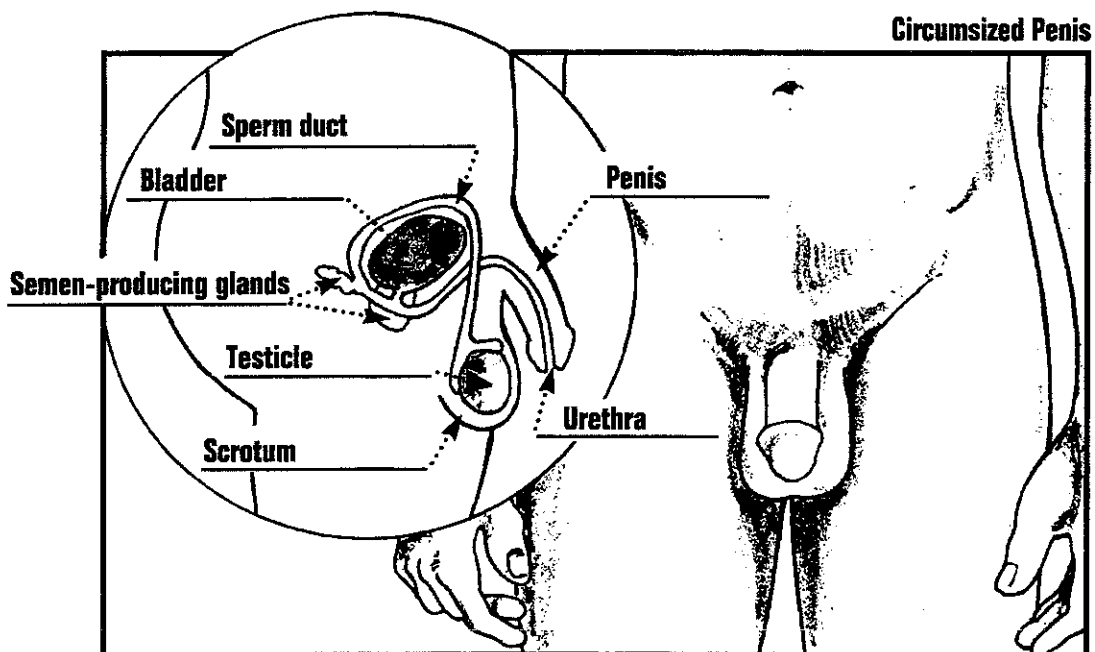


FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM



Appendix A: (continued)

MALE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM



Appendix B

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES (STDs)

Name	Facts	Symptoms	Results
AIDS (ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME)	<p>Transmitted through body fluids (semen, blood) primarily during sexual contact. The AIDS virus attacks the body's immune system and hurts the body's ability to fight disease.</p> <p>High-risk behaviors include sexual contact with an infected person (particularly without a condom); multiple sex partners; and intravenous drug use.</p>	<p>Fatigue, loss of appetite, extreme weight loss.</p> <p>Swollen lymph glands all over body.</p> <p>Night sweats.</p> <p>Skin infections that won't heal.</p>	<p>Most AIDS victims die within two to four years.</p>
CHLAMYDIA	<p>Very common STD.</p> <p>Can cause several different types of infections, including NSU.</p> <p>Treated with antibiotics.</p>	<p>Itching, burning, and discharge from vagina.</p> <p>In men, painful urination.</p> <p>Many men and women have no symptoms.</p>	<p>Can cause pelvic inflammatory disease (leading to infertility).</p> <p>Miscarriages, stillbirths.</p> <p>Newborns may get conjunctivitis or pneumonia if mother has infection while pregnant.</p>
GONORRHEA	<p>Treatable with penicillin. Most women and some men have <i>no</i> symptoms.</p> <p>Spread only by sexual contact.</p> <p>Usually shows up two to six days after sexual contact.</p>	<p><i>For men:</i> pus dripping from penis or burning feeling while urinating; 10 percent have no symptoms.</p> <p><i>For women:</i> slight vaginal discharge with burning, but usually no symptoms at all.</p> <p>Sterility in men and women.</p>	<p>If a mother has gonorrhea when her baby is born, the baby must get medication or it may go blind.</p> <p>Arthritis, heart trouble, and general bad health.</p> <p><i>For women:</i> one complication is an inflammation of the pelvic organs.</p>

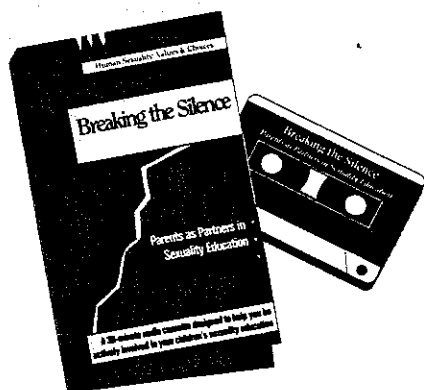
(Student Information 13.3, continued)

Name	Facts	Symptoms	Results
HERPES	<p>Caused by herpes virus.</p> <p>Has reached epidemic proportions in the United States.</p> <p>There is treatment, but <i>no</i> cure at this time.</p>	<p>Painful blisters on genitals, sometimes on thighs and buttocks. They last seven to twenty-eight days.</p> <p>The sores will go away, but the disease will not. The sores can occur over and over again. Stress might be one reason for recurrence.</p>	<p><i>For women:</i> The chance of getting cancer of the cervix is higher, so women with herpes should have regular pap smears.</p> <p>Newborn babies can get herpes as they pass through the birth canal. Herpes can hurt the central nervous system, and the baby could die.</p>
NON-SPECIFIC URETHRITIS (NSU) OR NON-GONOCOCCAL URETHRITIS (NGU)	<p>Very common STD.</p> <p>A painful inflammation of the urinary tract.</p> <p>Treatable with antibiotics.</p>	<p>A clear or whitish gray discharge from the penis along with burning pain during urination.</p> <p>22 percent of the infected men and most of the women have <i>no</i> symptoms.</p>	<p>Prostate problems, infertility, eye problems, skin outbreaks, and small ulcers in the mouth.</p> <p>If a woman is pregnant, the baby can die or be seriously hurt.</p>
PUBIC LICE (crabs)	<p>Insect makes its home in pubic hair area but can travel to other areas.</p> <p>Can be passed on in many ways, including sexual contact.</p> <p>Becoming more common.</p> <p>Treatable.</p>	<p>Crabs are almost invisible and cause intense itching.</p>	<p>Harmless.</p>

(Student Information 13.3, continued)

Name	Facts	Symptoms	Results
SYPHILIS	<p>Treatable with penicillin, antibiotics.</p> <p>Spread only by sexual contact.</p>	<p><i>The first sign</i> is a sore or "chancre." It is very contagious and usually painless.</p> <p><i>In men</i>, it's on the penis.</p> <p><i>In women</i>, it's inside and around the vagina.</p> <p>Chancres may also show up on the mouth or breasts and cause swelling in the groin. They disappear in three to six weeks.</p> <p><i>The second stage:</i> About one to six months later, people with syphilis get flu symptoms: they are tired and feverish; their joints and muscles hurt. They might get a painless rash on the palms of their hands or soles of their feet, swollen lymph nodes and hair loss in patches.</p> <p><i>The third stage</i> (the latent or silent stage). The disease travels all over the body for one to twenty years.</p>	<p>If the mother is pregnant and the baby gets infected, it can die or be seriously hurt.</p> <p>If the disease enters Stage 3, it can be very serious: brain damage, heart and blood vessel disease, kidney disease, and possible death.</p>
VAGINAL INFECTIONS	<p>Passed during sexual contact. Mainly a women's disease, but men can carry germs and show symptoms, too.</p> <p>Treatable.</p>	<p>Redness and itching of the vagina and a smelly discharge. These signs can go away, but the disease can stay.</p>	<p><i>In women:</i> gland infections, more risk of cancer of the cervix.</p>
VENEREAL WARTS	<p>Treatable by freezing or burning. Very contagious.</p>	<p>Warts on genitals that spread quickly.</p>	<p>May be linked to certain types of cancer.</p>

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