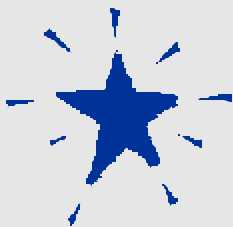


The Cautious Generation?

Teens tell us about
sex, virginity, and
"The Talk"

APRIL 27, 2000



RELEASED BY THE
NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT
TEEN PREGNANCY

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A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM TWO NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE SURVEYS OF TEENAGERS

CONDUCTED FOR THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT TEEN PREGNANCY
BY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS RESEARCH

1 SEX IS NOT ACCEPTABLE FOR HIGH SCHOOL-AGE TEENS.

CLOSE TO SIX OF TEN TEENS SURVEYED (58 PERCENT) SAID SEXUAL ACTIVITY FOR HIGH SCHOOL-AGE TEENS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE, EVEN IF PRECAUTIONS ARE TAKEN AGAINST PREGNANCY AND SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES.

- MORE TEEN GIRLS (64 PERCENT) THAN TEEN BOYS (53 PERCENT) SAID THAT HIGH SCHOOL-AGE TEENS SHOULD NOT ENGAGE IN SEXUAL ACTIVITY.
- NEARLY 70 PERCENT OF YOUNGER TEENS (AGES 12-14) SAID THAT HIGH SCHOOL-AGE TEENS SHOULD NOT ENGAGE IN SEXUAL ACTIVITY.

2 TEENS SAY THEY SHOULD BE GIVEN A STRONG ABSTINENCE MESSAGE.

AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF TEENS SURVEYED (93 PERCENT) SAID THAT IT IS IMPORTANT FOR TEENS TO BE GIVEN A STRONG MESSAGE FROM SOCIETY THAT THEY SHOULD ABSTAIN FROM SEX UNTIL THEY ARE AT LEAST OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL.

3 TEENS DO NOT THINK IT IS EMBARRASSING TO ADMIT THEY ARE VIRGINS.

THE VAST MAJORITY OF TEENS SURVEYED (87 PERCENT) DO NOT THINK IT IS EMBARRASSING FOR TEENS TO ADMIT THEY ARE VIRGINS.

- CONTRARY TO CONVENTIONAL WISDOM, EIGHT OF TEN TEEN MALES SURVEYED (83 PERCENT) DO NOT THINK IT IS EMBARRASSING FOR TEENS TO ADMIT THEY ARE VIRGINS.
- MORE YOUNGER TEENS (16 PERCENT) THAN OLDER TEENS (5 PERCENT) SAY IT IS EMBARRASSING FOR TEENS TO ADMIT THEY ARE VIRGINS.

4

MORE THAN ONE-THIRD OF TEENS SAY THEY HAVE NOT HAD EVEN A SINGLE HELPFUL CONVERSATION WITH THEIR PARENTS ABOUT SEX.

THIRTY-SIX PERCENT OF TEENS SURVEYED SAID THEY HAD NOT HAD A HELPFUL CONVERSATION WITH THEIR PARENTS ABOUT SEX.

- BOTH MALE AND FEMALE TEENS (40 PERCENT VERSUS 31 PERCENT) AND YOUNGER AND OLDER TEENS (36 PERCENT VERSUS 35 PERCENT) SAY THEY HAVE NOT HAD A SINGLE HELPFUL CONVERSATION WITH THEIR PARENTS ABOUT SEX.

5

FEAR OF PREGNANCY AND STDs IS THE MAIN REASON TEENS DON'T HAVE SEX.

HALF OF TEENS SURVEYED (50 PERCENT) SAID THAT FEAR OF PREGNANCY AND STDs IS THE MAIN REASON WHY TEENS DON'T HAVE SEX.

- ONE-QUARTER OF TEENS SURVEYED (26 PERCENT) SAID THE MAIN REASON WHY TEENS DON'T HAVE SEX IS BECAUSE OF RELIGION, MORALS, AND VALUES.

A NOTE ABOUT THE SURVEYS

THIS REPORT SUMMARIZES THE FINDINGS FROM TWO OMNIBUS SURVEYS OF TEENS AGED 12 TO 17. BOTH ARE NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE SURVEYS AND WERE CONDUCTED BY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS RESEARCH ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT TEEN PREGNANCY. THE POLLING TOOK PLACE FEBRUARY 3-6, 2000, AND APRIL 5-10, 2000. THE ACTUAL POLLING QUESTIONS, ANSWERS, AND RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FOLLOWS. THE SURVEYS ARE WEIGHTED TO PROVIDE NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE AND PROJECTABLE ESTIMATES OF THE POPULATION 12-17 YEARS OLD. THE FEBRUARY SURVEY QUESTIONED 515 TEENS WHILE THE APRIL SURVEY QUESTIONED 510 TEENS. THE RESPONSES HAVE A MARGIN OF ERROR OF PLUS OR MINUS 4.3 PERCENT-AGE POINTS.

THE SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

1

SOME PEOPLE THINK IT IS BASICALLY ACCEPTABLE FOR HIGH SCHOOL-AGE TEENS TO BE SEXUALLY ACTIVE, AS LONG AS THEY TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT PREGNANCY AND STDs, INCLUDING AIDS. OTHERS DO NOT THINK IT IS ACCEPTABLE FOR HIGH SCHOOL-AGE TEENAGERS TO BE SEXUALLY ACTIVE WHETHER THEY TAKE PRECAUTIONS OR NOT. WHICH COMES CLOSER TO YOUR VIEW, THE FIRST STATEMENT OR THE SECOND?

	<u>ALL TEENS</u>	<u>BOYS</u>	<u>GIRLS</u>	<u>AGE 12-14</u>	<u>15-17</u>
NOT ACCEPTABLE EVEN WITH PRECAUTIONS	58.2%	52.6%	64.1%	68.6%	47.9%
ACCEPTABLE WITH PRECAUTIONS	37.9	44.6	30.8	25.1	50.5
DON'T KNOW	3.6	2.6	4.6	5.6	1.6
REFUSED TO ANSWER	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.7	—

2

HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU THINK IT IS FOR TEENS TO BE GIVEN A STRONG MESSAGE FROM SOCIETY THAT THEY SHOULD ABSTAIN FROM SEX UNTIL THEY ARE AT LEAST OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL?

	<u>ALL TEENS</u>	<u>TEEN BOYS</u>	<u>TEEN GIRLS</u>
IMPORTANT (SUMMARY)	93.4%	90.9%	96.0%
VERY IMPORTANT	71.1	64.7	77.9
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	22.2	26.2	18.1
NOT IMPORTANT (SUMMARY)	6.1	8.1	4.0
NOT TOO IMPORTANT	4.6	6.1	3.1
NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	1.5	2.1	0.9
DON'T KNOW	0.3	0.6	—
REFUSED TO ANSWER	0.2	0.4	—

THE SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES, CONTINUED

3

DO YOU THINK IT IS EMBARRASSING FOR TEENS TO ADMIT THEY ARE VIRGINS?

	ALL TEENS	BOYS	GIRLS	AGE 12-14	15-17
YES	10.5%	13.7%	7.1%	15.7%	5.3%
NO	87.2	83.2	91.5	81.0	93.4
DON'T KNOW	2.0	2.8	1.1	2.6	1.3
REFUSED TO ANSWER	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.6	—

4

HAVE YOU HAD A HELPFUL CONVERSATION WITH YOUR PARENTS ABOUT SEX?

	ALL TEENS	BOYS	GIRLS	AGE 12-14	15-17
YES	63.3%	59.8%	66.9%	61.5%	65.1%
NO	35.6	39.8	31.0	36.4	34.7
DON'T KNOW	0.6	—	1.2	1.1	—
REFUSED TO ANSWER	0.6	0.3	0.9	1.0	0.2

5

WHAT IS THE MAIN REASON TEENS DON'T HAVE SEX? IS IT BECAUSE...?

	ALL TEENS	TEEN BOYS	TEEN GIRLS
OF FEAR OF STDs/ PREGNANCY	50.4%	47.6%	53.3%
OF RELIGION, MORALS, AND VALUES	25.9	23.7	28.1
THEY HAVEN'T FOUND THE RIGHT PARTNER	8.6	8.9	8.3
NOT READY FOR SEX	4.6	6.3	2.8
OTHER	3.5	4.6	2.3
DON'T KNOW	6.3	8.1	4.5
REFUSED TO ANSWER	0.7	0.7	0.6

TEEN DEMOGRAPHICS

QUESTIONS 1-2, FEBRUARY 2000

<u>AGE OF RESPONDENT</u>		<u>TOTAL ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME</u>	
AGE 12	13.7 %	UNDER \$10,000	4.9 %
13	17.1	\$10,000 - 14,999	3.3
14	18.9	\$15,000 - 19,999	7.7
15	18.2	\$20,000 - 24,999	8.9
16	18.4	UNDER \$25,000 (UNSPECIFIED)	1.6
17	13.8	OVER \$25,000 (UNSPECIFIED)	1.8
		\$25,000 - 29,999	7.1
MEAN AGE	14.5	\$30,000 - 39,999	15.4
		\$40,000 - 49,999	13.0
		\$50,000 - 74,999	16.8
<u>SEX OF RESPONDENT</u>		\$75,000 - 99,999	7.4
MALE	51.3%	\$100,000 OR MORE	5.1
FEMALE	48.7	DON'T KNOW	1.8
		REFUSED	5.1
		MEAN INCOME	\$44,730

TEEN DEMOGRAPHICS

QUESTIONS 3-5, APRIL, 2000

<u>AGE OF RESPONDENT</u>		<u>TOTAL ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME</u>	
AGE 12	9.4 %	UNDER \$10,000	4.0 %
13	20.4	\$10,000 - 14,999	3.8
14	19.9	\$15,000 - 19,999	5.6
15	19.9	\$20,000 - 24,999	6.4
16	16.1	UNDER \$25,000 (UNSPECIFIED)	1.1
17	14.3	OVER \$25,000 (UNSPECIFIED)	4.4
		\$25,000 - 29,999	7.8
MEAN AGE	14.6	\$30,000 - 39,999	10.7
		\$40,000 - 49,999	9.7
		\$50,000 - 74,999	22.3
<u>SEX OF RESPONDENT</u>		\$75,000 - 99,999	10.2
MALE	51.3%	\$100,000 OR MORE	5.4
FEMALE	48.7	DON'T KNOW	1.7
		REFUSED	6.8
		MEAN INCOME	\$49,150