

stopthesilence TeenZine

Grades 6-8 : Issue 3.

For more information about STDs/HIV, call 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)

Project Red Talon, Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board

Text selections from SIECUS

Talk About Sex, available in full at: <http://www.siecus.org/pubs/TalkAboutSex.pdf>

Friendship & Dating

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How to Say NO

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Friendship, Love & Dating

You will likely have many relationships over the course of your life – some will be romantic and others will not. Many people begin to think about romantic relationships and dating as teenagers.

Different families and cultures have different ideas about dating. In some families, teenagers are not allowed to date, others have rules about when teens can start dating, who they can see, where they can go, and what they can do. It might be helpful to talk to your family early, so that you know what they think about dating.


The media and popular culture sometimes make us feel like we have to find our “soul mate” – the one person who can be and mean everything to us – as soon as possible. The truth is that one person can't be everything to someone else. Even people who have a romantic partner need other friends and family who care about them.

Don't give in to the pressure you may feel to find a boyfriend or girlfriend. You should know that many people prefer to hang out and share new experiences with their friends. While it often seems like everyone is having sex – don't believe it. The truth is, most teens are not having sex.

There are many types of love... *I love you. I love my parents.*
I love ice cream. I love dancing.

Think of someone you love, and consider what type of love you are feeling. How do you feel towards them? How do you feel when you are with them?

I love...



Peer Pressure

People who are your age, like your classmates, are called peers. When they try to influence how you act, to get you to do something, it's called peer pressure. It's something everyone has to deal with – even adults.

Some kids give in to peer pressure because they want to be liked, to fit in, or because they worry that other kids may make fun of them if they don't go along with the group. Others may go along because they are curious to try something new that others are doing. The idea that “everyone's doing it” may influence some kids to leave their better judgment behind.

NAME THREE CHOICES MADE BY TEENS THAT COULD BE INFLUENCED BY PEER PRESSURE:

1.

2.

3.

It is tough to say “no” to peer pressure, but you can do it. Paying attention to your own feelings and beliefs about what is right and wrong can help you know the right thing to do. Inner strength and self-confidence can help you stand firm, walk away, and resist doing something when you know better. Your true friends will always respect your choices.



Mature love is based on a relationship of trust, honesty, respect, support, loyalty and shared interest, and usually gives you lots of energy to do the things you like to do.

Decision-Making

Over the course of your life you will be faced with many decisions about sexuality. These may include decisions about how to express your sexuality, when and whether to become emotionally involved with another person, how you want to be treated in relationships, what sexual behaviors you want to do and with whom, how you protect yourself from possible pregnancy or STDs, and how you take care of your sexual health.

Making good decisions involves gathering information, thinking about possible outcomes, choosing a path, and taking responsibility for what happens as a result. It's good to have help from trusted friends and family members when you have a hard decision to make.

★ Remember: you are responsible for your actions.

★ Good or bad, you have to live with the decisions you make, so make the best decisions you can!

★ WHEN YOU NEED TO MAKE A DECISION. ★

★ REMEMBER THE WORD STAR. ★

S: STOP - Get out of the situation if you can, and give yourself time to think and make a decision. Take time to remember yourself and what's important to you.

T: THINK - Think about what you want to do. Think about the positive and negative outcomes of your decision. Make your decision.

A: ACT - Tell the other person what you have decided to do so that they understand why you made your decision. Let them know that you care about their feelings.

R: REVIEW - How do you feel about your decision? How did the other person respond? Do you wish anything had gone differently? What would you do if you had to make this decision

Communication: It's All About Me

A good way to tell people how you feel is by using "I" messages. When talking with other people, it's good to use statements that begin with "I" so you are taking responsibility of your thoughts and feelings. An "I" message looks like:

I want to...
I don't want you to...
I feel like...
I think we should...
I believe that...
I am disappointed when...

You can use these types of messages when someone is doing something you don't like, or when you have to make an important decision. When you start sentences with the word "you," the other person may get defensive or mad. "I" statements tend to be less frightening and work better to keep communication open.

Which Would You Prefer?

I feel disappointed when I don't hear back from you.
You make me so mad! You never return my messages.

I'd rather go to the park than watch that movie.
You always watch that movie. You're so boring.

I feel like you don't respect my opinions when you keep asking me to do that.
You never listen - Stop asking me that! I already said no.

How would you change this "you" statement to an "I" statement?
You are so bossy. You never let me choose what we are going to do.

ASK Bear

DEAR BEAR, HOW DO YOU KNOW WHO IS THE RIGHT GUY TO GIVE IT UP 2!!!!

- CUTE GRL

Dear cutegrl: This is a really common question. Having sex is a big decision, and there are many things to think about, including: your personal values and goals, your feelings about the kinds of emotional and physical risks you are willing to take whether you are feeling pressured, how clear you can be with your partner about what you do and don't want to happen what you want out of your relationship.

SEX IS A BIG DECISION

Having sex can be a great experience, but it can also make people feel vulnerable, and they can get hurt. It's important to think about the emotional risks and benefits when making a decision. It's also important to plan how you will protect yourself and your partner from unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections if you choose to have sex.

DEAR BEAR, I'M SCARED TO LOOSE MY VIRGINITY SHOULD I LOOSE IT WHEN I'M DRUNK SO I DON'T FEEL NERVOUS?

-NOTSURE

Dear notsure: Needing alcohol or other drugs in order to feel comfortable having sex is a big sign that people aren't ready to have sex.

Having sex is a big decision that requires careful thought. Adding drugs or alcohol to the mix can cloud people's judgment and make them do things they wouldn't want to do while sober.

SEX & ALCHOL DON'T MIX!

Mixing sex with alcohol or other drugs also increases the chances of unintended pregnancy and exposure to sexually transmitted infections. If you have sex when you are drunk or high, you are much less likely to be thinking clearly enough to use condoms, or use them correctly.

If you're thinking about having sex — or any kind of sex play — it's important to think about it and discuss it with your partner while sober.

How To Say "NO"

If someone is trying to pressure you into doing something, you may get confused about how to respond. Remember, a true friend wouldn't pressure you to do something you didn't want to do.

If you are feeling pressured, you can:

- Be polite. Say, "no, thanks."
- Give a reason. For example, "No, thanks, I don't like the way it tastes" (in response to someone offering you beer). Or, "No, I'm not going to have sex until I know that I am ready."
- Walk away and give them the cold shoulder. Act like you didn't hear the question and keep going. (Of course, this isn't a good way to respond to a friend.)
- Give an alternative to what you are refusing. For example, you can say "I'd rather stay here and watch TV."
- Reverse the pressure. You can say, "Were you listening to me? What did I tell you?"

If you are worried about staying true to your decision, try to avoid the situation by not going places where you know people will pressure you. Only hang out with people who support you and your decisions.

Jake and Jason are at a party, and Jake offers Jason a beer. What are some things Jason could say to say no to Jake?

A group of girls are hanging out after school, and Joyce offers Tamara some pot. What are some things Tamara could say to say no to Joyce?

Trevor and Robin have been dating for a while, and Robin thinks she's ready to "go all the way". What are some things Trevor could say to say no to Robin?

