

Office of Adolescent Health
Technical Assistance Regional Training

Adolescent Sexual Development in 2011: What's the
New "Normal?"

Elizabeth Schroeder, EdD, MSW
Executive Director





National organization dedicated to “providing and promoting comprehensive sexuality education to young people and the adults who teach them.”

Two primary programs:

1) *Sex, Etc.* Magazine &
Web site

2) Professional
Development



Why Wonder?

SEARCH

SEX EDUCATION BY TEENS, FOR TEENS!

6,214 current visitors

sex. etc.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"HER PERIOD WAS TWO WEEKS LATE, AND I NEVER HAVE WAITED SO LONG FOR SOMETHING. I WAS THINKING, I'M NOT READY FOR A CHILD."

—David, New Jersey

[READ MORE](#)

LOGIN

JOIN SEX, ETC
FORGOT YOUR PASSWORD?

TAKE ACTION

GET TESTED

FAQs

VIDEOS

COMIX & QUIZZES

SEX TERMS

FORUMS

JOIN OUR STAFF

BLOG

IN A CRISIS?



Sex, Etc. Magazine
SUBSCRIBE NOW!

SEX IN THE STATES

An HIV Test Easier Than I Thought

By Chelsea Sirico, 17, Staff Writer
[CLICK TO READ STORY](#)

FAQ

Q: Are girls the only ones who worry about their body image?

A: No. Although there's a lot more information for girls about **body image**, boys also experience similar pressures and worries about their bodies.

[READ MORE](#)

In the Forums

Got a question about **sexuality**? You're not

Get Tested

Sexually active with a partner or thinking about it? Take control of your health and get tested for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)! Find a low-cost and confidential sexual health center near you.

[LOCATE A CENTER](#)



Stacie, 17

Blog

Gay Friends Crowned Prom King and Queen

There was a solid victory for all who support **gay** and **lesbian** people: Charlie Ferrusi and Timothy Howard, two gay best friends were voted prom king and queen.

[READ THE LATEST POST](#)

MAKE AN IMPACT



[TAKE THE SURVEY](#)

Poll

Do you think **celebrity**

TOPICS

GIRLS' HEALTH

GUYS' HEALTH

SEX

LOVE & RELATIONSHIPS

GLBTQ

DECIDING ABOUT SEX

BIRTH CONTROL &

CONDOMS

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED

DISEASES

PREGNANCY...AM I/IS SHE?

TEEN PREGNANCY AND

PARENTING

ABORTION

ADOPTION

EMOTIONAL HEALTH

ABUSE & VIOLENCE

BODY IMAGE

ALCOHOL & DRUGS



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start

AIM

Powerpoints

Sexuality and ...

Adolescents a...

Sex, Etc. -- Se...

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Answer is a national organization dedicated to providing and promoting comprehensive sexuality education to young people and the adults who teach them.



News

Answer's 5th Annual Fundraiser Is a Huge Hit!
On Wednesday, October 13th nearly 200 guests joined us at the Greenacres Country Club in Lawrenceville, New Jersey, for our annual fundraising breakfast. See photos from the event, view a special video about Susie Wilson, our senior advisor, and read a special message from Answer's executive director Elizabeth Schroeder, Ed.D., M.S.W. [>read more](#)

Answer Mourns Rutgers University Freshman Tyler Clementi
The entire Answer staff joins the Rutgers community, the country, and the world in mourning the devastating loss of freshman Tyler Clementi, who committed suicide this past week in response to the thoughtless, abhorrent behavior of two fellow students. [>read more](#)

FOSE

[f](#) [t](#) [Find Answer on Facebook and Twitter!](#)



Some Truths about Teen Pregnancy
November 17, 2010

We're told that we have notoriously short memories. So I wonder, do you remember the infamous "Gloucester 18"? Here's a hint: Gloucester is a small town in Massachusetts that bills itself as "America's Oldest Seaport." Doesn't ring a bell? Then how about the words "pregnancy pact"?

answer

sex ed, honestly

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Lesson Plans

This is a directory of lesson plans on a variety of health topics for grades 8-12. We have divided them into categories, and we recommend that you read each lesson and article carefully in order to decide if it is a good match for your community.

All of these lessons are from the *Sex, Etc.* Discussion Guide, so you will find both a link to the lesson and a link to the *Sex, Etc.* teen-written article it accompanies. To download the latest *Sex, Etc.* Discussion Guide lesson plans, click [here](#).

Topics:

[Abstinence and Sexual Decision Making](#)[Abortion](#)[Body and Self-Image](#)[Contraception](#)[GLBTQ](#)[Love and Relationships](#)[Pregnancy Prevention](#)[Sexual Violence](#)[STDs and HIV/AIDS Prevention](#)

"I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOUR ORGANIZATION FOR YOUR FINE CONTRIBUTION TO TEEN HEALTH AND SEX EDUCATION MATERIALS. THE ARTICLES ARE WONDERFUL. MY STUDENTS WERE ABLE TO RELATE TO THEM AND PARTICIPATE IN MEANINGFUL DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES ABOUT THEM. I RECOMMEND SEXETC.ORG TO ALL OF MY STUDENTS, AND THEY HAVE FOUND IT TO BE QUITE HELPFUL."
—HEALTH TEACHER, CT

Training Institute in Sexual Health Education (TISHE)



For middle and high school
education professionals

40 hours of PD credits



Professional Development in Your Pajamas!



■ 11/10/2010

Running to Keep Up: Trends Among
Teens and Technology

■ 12/9/2010

Sexting: When Technology Advances
Quicker than Cognitive Development

■ 2/10/2011

Friend Request: Teens, Social
Networking and Relationships Online

■ 4/5/2011

Innovative Tools for Teaching Sex
Ed to Youth with Developmental
Disabilities

■ 4/14/2011

Sex Ed for Youth with Asperger's
Syndrome

Today's Presentation

- Youth include:
 - Young, middle, and older adolescents
 - All sexual orientations (data is limited)

- Will hone in on gender (M/F)

Today's Presentation

- Will make generalizations
- Will go into areas that feel like digressions, but...
- May sound like stereotypes at times (won't always apply), but...

Today's Presentation

- Combination of research and professional experience working with youth
- Will focus on ADOLESCENTS... not specific populations of adolescents

So keep in mind...

Youth of color disproportionately affected

LGBTQ youth widely ignored in research/programs

Heterosexual males widely ignored: sexual decision-making and responsibility discussions

Adolescents w/disabilities completely ignored

Speaking of Adolescence...

- What celebrities were you excited about/dying to see or meet?
- What did it feel like the first time you fell in love?
- What was one piece of clothing or cool “thing” everyone just HAD to have?
- What were people your age thinking/ talking about when it came to sex and sexuality?

Typical Adolescent Development

- Physical
- Emotional
- Psychological
- Social

Physical Development

- Puberty
 - Secondary sex characteristics
 - Sexual feelings = “ready for sex”

- Body image (girls AND boys)
 - Good body image = healthier decisions

(all of which is related to...)

Brain Development

- Changing quickly, esp. around abstract learning
- Pre-frontal cortex (rationality) developing more slowly
- Learning to calm oneself down, not be impulsive or aggressive, think things through

Emotional Development

- Boys and girls VERY emotional – express it differently
- Girls (from online behaviors): seeking relationships; boys (from online behaviors) seeking to play games, porn

(all of which ties into...)

Psychological Development

- HUGE pressure on both boys and girls to “fit in” (nothing new!)
- Boys: Need to look like they know what they’re doing – “I *know*, ok?” – even if they don’t (starts early)
- Girls: appearance important; Boys: *appearances* important (e.g., video games)
- Peer group the most important group, thus...

Social Development

- Start measuring self in relation to others (now includes dating and sexual behaviors)
- Girls mature faster than boys
- Girls and boys look older; treated differently by adults

An adolescent might look like this...

“i had sex when i was 12 i am still 12 and my life is goin greatwhat do i do to keep my friends from disliking me for the stuff i do in life ...and how i can talk to my mother about what i did that is real hard i dont know what to do i would like to get on birth control but i dont know how to tell my mom.....please help thanks love always”

...or like this...

“I've always been looking forward to having sex and sometimes plan to have it sometime in 7th grade but I know it's wrong and can't help but to keep on adding to what I will do how do I stop this? and I have a boyfriend and he's ok but doesn't talk to me and I'm shy so I don't know how to talk to him how do I sort that out to?”

LGBTQ Youth

- Feelings of attraction often become more obvious in puberty; many know earlier
- Developmentally, same – socially, challenges; coming out
- Emotionally: Safety issues, “am I normal?”

Girls “tell” us...

From Sex, Etc. (www.sexetc.org)

- Don't know their sexual anatomy.
- Feel that their genitals are dirty (are told this by partners).
- Don't know how pregnancy happens.
- Very little sense of parenting realities.
- Unlikely to insist that bf use condoms; expected to be responsible for b.c.

For example...

“I know all about the skin lining over the vagina, the hymen. But I want to get rid of it so when I do have sex, my boyfriend will have an easier time other than ripping it. Is there any way I can get rid of it? I don't want to tear it by putting my fingers in so should I cut it with scissors? What should I do?”

-- 14 year old girl

Should girls pee directly after sex, even if it's protected?

-- 19 year old girl

Is it safe to use olive oil as lube? Whats the worste that could happen ?

-- 13, female

well i am 17 years old and i want a baby!! I know i am prob to
young but **i see all these other teens with a baby and it just
makes me want to be a mom.....** I do not currently have a bf
though

Girls tell us that...

- They want to be in a relationship; do anything to keep relationship.
- Unlikely to bring up their own wants/needs in a relationship.
- Will be sexual with other girls for boyfriends (porn).

Boys:

- High self-esteem in males related to being able to see oneself as superior to others
- Rate themselves much more highly on appearance than girls
- Find it difficult to express feelings. Examples from 8th graders: "Emotions are illogical," "I don't know what to say," or "People will think I'm a wimp."

What's the “normal” range for an adolescent boy?

- Tough
- Distrusts adults
- Doesn't do anything “weak” or “sissy”
- Muscular
- Never cries
- Plays sports
- Doesn't talk much
- Doesn't “act like a girl”

What's the “normal” range for an adolescent boy?

- May “one-up” people, especially peers
- Roughhousing
- Humiliate and be humiliated
- Homophobia

ALL = MALE BONDING

Everything in a boy's life revolves around gender
and masculinity

Boys “tell” us that...

- NEED to be heterosexual.
- NEED to have sex.
- Want desperately to be good lovers. Consumed with giving partners orgasms.
- Obsessed with penis size
- Concerned about statutory rape laws.
- Experience love in extremes.

From Sexetc.org

“Hi. I'm very confused. I don't know if I'm gay, bi, whatever. I need you to tell me some signs for straight and gay or even bi boys. Please. I need to know; and I need to know now.”

-- 15-year-old boy

From Sexetc.org

“I am considering suicide because I do not know what to do after my girlfriend left me. She is the only one I love and I cannot go on without her”

-- 14-year-old boy

From Sexetc.org

“Is there anything i can eat, drink or buy to enlarge my penis? Like that pump thing, does it really works? I hav difficulties since young like u know getting undress in front my friends... My first lov broke up wif me... Sometimes i just wish i wasn't born at all. Suicidal thoughts often cross my mind. i really need ur help...pls”

– 17-year-old boy

There is **SOME** good news...

Teen pregnancy rates decreasing

Youth delaying sexual behaviors

Youth who **DO** have sex using condoms and other
contraceptives

...but it's not GREAT news

Still 750,000 teen pregnancies every year

Still 3 – 4 million NEW cases of STDs every year

Many are NOT delaying intercourse – or engaging in other high-risk behaviors

Youth who use condoms and other contraceptives don't always do so
correctly/consistently

(challenges of self-reported data)

We also know...

**Incidence of abuse: comparable to adult
relationships**

“I currently have a boyfriend. I really like him, but sometimes he hits me and its started getting worse lately. Whenever he sees me talking to another guy, he will beat me and call me names like "bitch" and "slut". He also forces me to have sex with him. He also cut me with a knife recently. I have a huge scar on my arm now. He won't let me wear my hair down or wear makeup or jewelry. He won't let me go to school with my hair wet. I know all this is bad, but he apoligizes and tells me he loves me, and i really like him. What should I do?”

--15-year-old girl

When it comes to sexual behaviors...

- Youth believe it is all or nothing
- Girls believe they have no say in what they do sexually
- Oral sex is NOT “sex”

“I am only 12 I have a 9th grader as a boy friend he fingered me over and over again it hurt like shit i cried and cried my friends all asked me what was wrong i did not tell then at a party he wanted me to have sex we did and the condom did not work help me help”

“Two guys that I really like want me to give them blow jobs and have sex with them. I'm only twelve and have never done this before. Is there anything I should know before I do anything?”

“I am a twelve year old pre-teen and alot of my friends have had sex before.....and i get.... horney a little and tempted by guys penises and.... i just wanted to know would it be okay sence i am interseted to have sex? and will it hurt? i have used tampons before too.”

“I have been really interested in the topic sex since i was really little and now i want to have sex my boyfriend knows but he's not taking any action i know i'm considered too young how do i go about it temptation is killing me it's not like i don't know how to i was raped twice and it can't be much different. Right??”

-- 14-year-old girl

Many girls consumed with virginity – what makes them/does not make them.

Boys less concerned: cultural

“If you are a version and you have sex and your not a version any more, can the doctor tell if you are not a version even if you used a condom.”

-- 14-year-old girl

Young people “tell” us...

They do NOT want to go to the doctor

They do NOT want to “get tested”

They want to get their answers online, and often try to self-diagnose

I have never had any sort of sex, so I'm pretty sure it isn't an STD. But I have a few little bumps above my clitoris. I can barely feel them because they are so small, so it's hard to count them. I've had them for a few years. I'm also 13. Is it puberty, could I have a disease, and what are they? Thank you!

-- 13, female

What is the impact of technology on our
work?

Technology has changed...

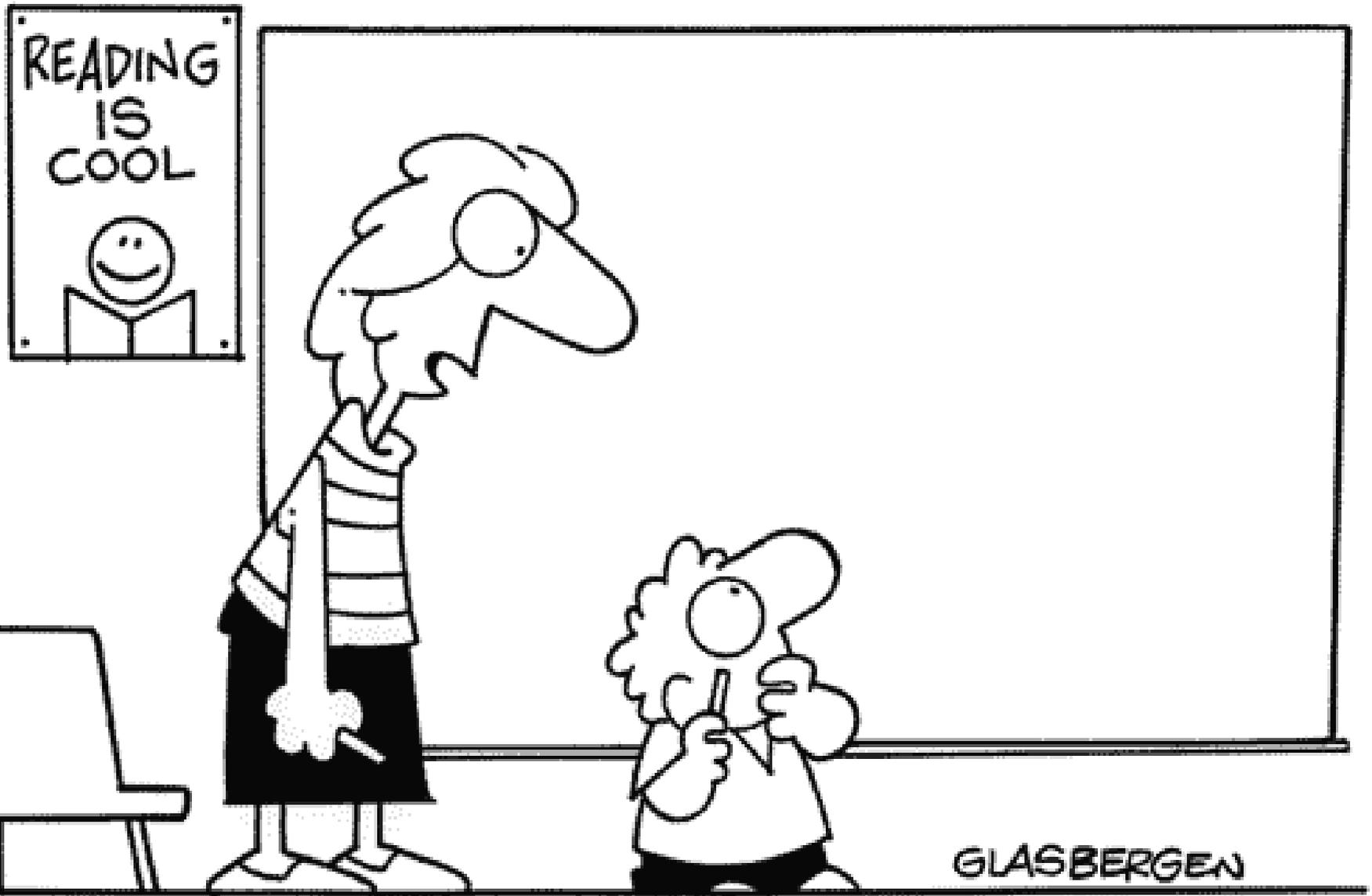
How teens get information

How teens interact w/the world

How teens express intimacy

(friends, partners, family)

How teens start, maintain and end relationships



“There aren’t any icons to click. It’s a chalk board.”

Beloit College Mindset List

Annual observations that help to identify the experiences that have shaped the lives—and formed the mindset—of students starting their post-secondary education this fall.

Available at: <http://www.beloit.edu/mindset>

For the class of 2011



has always been a verb

For the class of 2011

Text messaging is their email



For the class of 2011

“Reality” shows have
always been on
television



For the class of 2011

Bad behavior has always been captured on amateur videos



The class of 2011

Are **wireless**, yet always **connected**



What does that mean for us?

- Relationship issues remain the same, it is just the “medium” that has changed.
- Are having real relationships, real connections—just different from what we’ve understood/experienced.
- Technology isn’t going anywhere, so...

Given all this, how do we reach youth effectively with our programs?

Suggestions

- We MUST integrate technology into our programs and workshops: Builds validity, youth-centered.
- We need to provide and reinforce information – multiple sessions, fewer topics
- We need to spend more time teaching skills – e.g., *how* to make a decision, how to revisit a decision, etc.

More Suggestions

- Come from a strengths-based perspective: “Based on what we know, we can...”
- Consider separating boys and girls (pros and cons) – research on single-sex vs. co-ed
- Make materials/workshops inclusive of all sexual orientations/gender identities (even with teen pregnancy prevention)
- Youth-centered: Meet them where they are (even if it feels troubling at times)

In Closing...

“We must view young people not as empty bottles to be filled, but as candles to be lit.”

-- Robert Shaffer

For More Information...

- **Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls** by Mary Pipher
- **Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood** by William S. Pollack
- **Secrets of the Teenage Brain: Research-Based Strategies for Reaching and Teaching Today's Adolescents** by Sheryl Feinstein
- **Brain-Based Teaching With Adolescent Learning in Mind** by Glenda Beamon Crawford