

# Teenage Girls: Drugs, Sex, and Peer Pressure

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Dr. Jessica Bloomfield



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# Peer Pressure



- What it looks like
  - ◆ Overt, contextual, virtual
- Who is Susceptible?
  - ◆ Low confidence, tendency to be a follower, using alcohol or drugs, don't feel like part of a group

# Resisting Peer Pressure

- What Teens Can Do
  - ◆ Learn assertiveness skills, learn to change subject, have responses prepared
- How Parents Can Help
  - ◆ Talk about peer pressure, but look for neutral lead-ins
  - ◆ Monitor exposure to media
  - ◆ If you don't like her friends, voice your concerns.
  - ◆ Be available for tough situations, come up with plans ahead of time.
  - ◆ Be a role model



# Drugs, Alcohol, & Tobacco



# Substance Use Trends Among High School Girls

Substance	Lifetime Use (%)	Use within Past 30 Days (%)
Alcohol	76*	45*
Cigarettes	50*	19
Marijuana	35	17
Inhalants	14**	--
Cocaine	7	3
Hallucinogens	6	--
MDMA (Ecstasy)	5	--
Methamphetamine	4*	--
Heroin	2	--

Adapted from CDC Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System Report (2007)

\* = Usage rate is equal to boys'

\*\* = Usage rate is higher than boys'

# Some Facts about Teen Substance Use

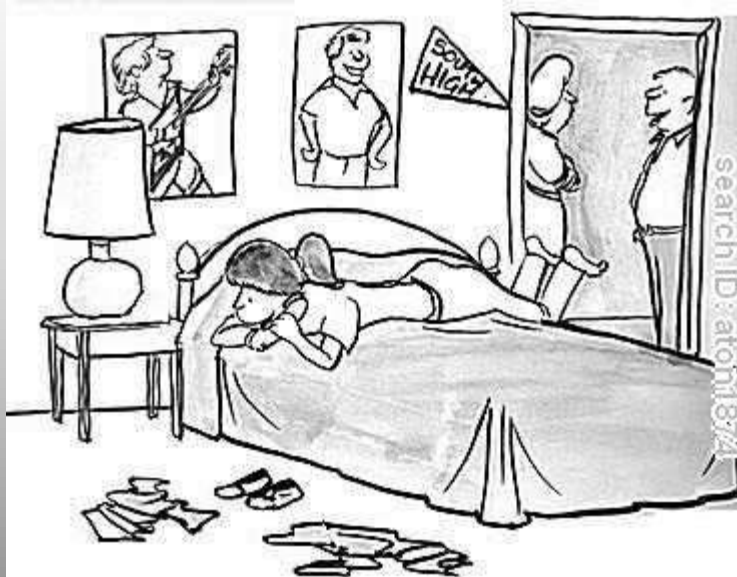
- Experimentation is normal in adolescence.
- Half of American youth have tried cigarettes by 12th grade.
- 25% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders have tried cigarettes.
- Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug in the nation.
- Half of teens have tried an illicit drug by the time they finish high school.
- 26% of teens know a friend or classmate who has abused prescription drugs. 3.3% of youth aged 12-17 abused prescription drugs in 2005.
- 2.1 million teens aged 12-17 abused prescription drugs (drug of choice ages 12-13) in 2007
- 6% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders have abused OTC meds
- Teens can get information about how to use drugs on-line from websites such as: [www.erowid.com](http://www.erowid.com)

# Talking to Your Daughter about Drugs and Alcohol

- Youths ages 12-17 who believed their parents would strongly disapprove of their using a particular substance were less likely to use that substance
- Discuss myths: smoking won't make her look more grown up, coffee and showers don't make you sober, inhalants are very dangerous.
- Role play situations with peer pressure. Help child come up with things to say, ways to change subject or walk away.
- Set limits around drug use
  - ◆ Firm 'no use' rule
  - ◆ Be a role model
  - ◆ Ask daughter to stay away from parties where drugs and alcohol are available



# Know When to Be Concerned



"She's approaching the world record for 'Consecutive Hours on the Phone'."

- **Risk factors for a more serious problem:** First use before the age of 13 or 14, family history, stress, untreated mental illness
- **Signs your child might be using:** Red eyes, new group of friends, trouble concentrating, withdrawal, poor school performance, weight change, loss of interest in normal activities, mood swings, excessive energy, clumsiness, forgetfulness

# Resources for Parents

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug information  
<http://ncadi.samhsa.gov>

Teenshealth.org

CDC YRBSS 2007 Survey Data  
<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>

Parents. The Anti-Drug  
[www.theantidrug.com](http://www.theantidrug.com)

# Sexuality



# Some Facts about Teens and Sex

- It is normal for adolescent girls to start having crushes on boys, girls, teachers, movie stars, etc.
- Sexual experimentation is normal in adolescence.
- Teens in North Carolina are more likely to have had sexual intercourse compared to the national average.
- Girls who are more religious or less physically developed delay intercourse.
- Teens who feel connected to their families and schools are less likely to initiate premature sexual activity.
- Friends tend to exaggerate sexual experiences.
- Youth exposed to sexual content on T.V. were more likely to overestimate the frequency of sexual activity among peers and more likely to have more permissive attitudes toward premarital sex.

# Teenage Girls and Sex

- 46% of high school girls have had intercourse
- 4% of girls have had sex before age 13
- 36% of high school girls are currently sexually active (this is the same for boys)
- 45% of teenage girls did not use a condom the last time they had intercourse (boys: 32%)
- 10% of girls report that they have never been taught about HIV and AIDS
- 1 in 3 girls is estimated to get pregnant before age 20.



# Sexual Orientation



- Adolescence is a time of identity development.
- Many gay, lesbian, and bisexual people become aware of their orientation in adolescence.
- Sexual orientation is not a choice.
- If your daughter is questioning this, be supportive, open, and nonjudgmental.
  - ◆ This may be emotional or difficult for you or for other family members, so seek out resources such as PFLAG (Parents, Family, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays).

# Talking to Your Daughter about Sex

- Start giving information about two years before you anticipate she will need it.
- Address physical, emotional, ethical, psychological, spiritual dimensions.
- Create an accepting environment at home.
- Talk about risks, abstinence, birth control, etc.
- Discuss the pressure that exists from media and peers.
- Use teachable moments.
- Don't try to cover everything in one sitting.
- Don't be preachy. Make it a discussion.
- Model healthy relationships.

# Sexual Assault

- About one in ten girls who first has sex before age 15 describes it as involuntary.
- Risk factors: early abuse, low self-esteem, poor communication
- Have the date rape conversation with your daughter.
  - ◆ It can happen to them or their friends
  - ◆ Talk about ways to stay safe, how to say 'no,' signs of unhealthy relationships, etc.
- Have the date rape conversation with your son.
- If this happens to your daughter, remain calm, do not blame her, let her talk about what happened *if she wants to*. Have resources on hand and seek help.

# Sexuality Resources

**Teens Health**

**<http://teenshealth.org>**

**Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PLFAG)**

**[www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)**

**Time Out Youth (local organization for GLBT youth)**

**[www.timeoutyouth.org](http://www.timeoutyouth.org)**

**Planned Parenthood**

**<http://www.plannedparenthood.org>**

**RAINN Sexual Assault Hotline:  
1-800-656-HOPE**

Presentation and Handouts Available at:

[www.southeastpsych.com](http://www.southeastpsych.com)

Contact Dr. Bloomfield:

[jbloomfield@southeastpsych.com](mailto:jbloomfield@southeastpsych.com)

(704) 552-0116