



THE BIRDS AND THE BEES

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STATISTICS

- 47% of high school students say they have had sex
- 15% of students have had sex with four or more partners

(2011 Center for Disease Control)

WHAT IS 'NORMAL'?

Sexual curiosity and sexual exploration
vs.
Sexual compulsion and sexual exploitation

WHAT IS SEX?

- Sex can be any number of activities which people freely/consentingly do to express their sexuality:
 - Masturbation
 - Kissing
 - Petting/stroking
 - Frottage ("dry sex")
 - Manual-genital sex (handjobs, fingering)
 - Oral-genital sex Penis-vagina sexual intercourse
 - Anal intercourse (with penis, toy, or hands)

INTIMACY

- Closeness
- Vulnerability
- Transparency
- Trust
- Communicating/connecting

WHY SOME KIDS HAVE SEX

- They want to be loved.
- They want to fit in.
- They want to please.
- They want to exploit.
- They want to feel good.
- They want control.
- They want to be intimate.
- They want to explore.



SEX AND ATTACHMENT

- Many kids are confused about what sex will or will not do for them.
- It is often an unmet need that goes far beyond sexuality.
- Sex requires some level of physical contact, as does attachment.



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THEY CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT

- The child with attachment trauma can't figure out what exploitation is.
- They're not sure they deserve to be treated well, so they don't protest if someone hurts them.
- Even if they get hurt, they may dismiss their own pain and distress if they're told they're pleasing someone else.



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ADOLESCENT ATTACHMENT

- Identity: Who am I to me? Who am I in respect to the world? Who am I in terms of a sexual person?
- Autonomy: I am my own person, not a reflection of you. I am good, capable, and loveable (sexy).
- Independence: I don't need you in my business; I can figure this out; I'm not a baby. (You're not the boss of me!)



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DOES THIS MAKE ANY SENSE?

- Attachment-challenged children are reluctant to let their guard down and trust their parents; yet at the same time, they often display poor boundaries and compulsive sexual behavior when it comes to intimate relationships.



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BROKEN DREAMS

- They can't gauge risk in a typical fashion.
- They don't have a strong sense of self to help them cope with betrayal or abandonment.
- They think having sex means they are loved. They think this every single time.
- They think, "This time it will be different."

LOOKING FOR DADDY

- Does your daughter want a daddy or a boyfriend?
- They dream about being told they are beautiful.
- They dream about being safe.
- They dream about being able to trust.
- They dream about being taken care of, cuddled, nurtured, played with, and focused on.



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MANAGING RISK: MYTHS TYPICAL TEENS VS TRAUMA TEENS

- Young people are incapable of considering risk and making sexual choices.
- Young people take sexual risks only for the sake of taking a risk; to get a high from risk-taking or to "act out."
- Young people who make very risky sexual choices only do so out of ignorance or lack of impulse control.
- Young people can really only decide to have sex or not to have sex; they lack the maturity to make sexual choices with more nuance.
- Young people are slaves to their hormones and incapable of clearly thinking through sexual decisions because of hormones.

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DISINHIBITED BOUNDARIES CASUAL HOOKUPS

- This child has never really learned to say NO and mean it.
- Their life experiences taught them to have open, indiscriminating boundaries with anyone.
- As they become interested in sex, this same pattern remains.
- They are easy to exploit.

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SEX ED AND SCHOOL

- Know what type of sex education your child's school offers.
- According to a national survey, most parents would prefer schools to provide a more comprehensive sexuality education. (Kaiser Foundation)
- Abstinence-only programs have not been shown to help teens delay having sex nor to protect themselves when they do engage.
- We can't count on schools to tell kids *everything* they need to know.

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DO THEY LIKE THEIR BODY?

- Do they like the way they look?
- Do they enjoy nudity?
- Do they enjoy posting positive pictures of themselves?

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SOCIAL MEDIA

- Your child MUST understand that social media is NOT private.
- They must understand the people they 'meet' online are usually fake.
- They must understand you will monitor their communication.
- If they send a picture, everyone in school may see it.



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CYBERSEX/SEXTING

- Not ALL kids do this sort of thing, but the child who is impulsive, lonely, attention-seeking, gullible, insecure, or eager to please will struggle.
- Sound like anyone you know?



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SEXTING STATS

- Nearly 40% of teens have sent sexually suggestive messages.
- 17% of sexters share the messages they receive with others, and 55% share with more than one person.
- Why do it?
 - 40% as a joke
 - 34% to feel sexy
 - 12% feel pressured

(National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2014)

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WHAT TEENS NEED FROM PARENTS

- Open dialogue
- Guidance and support
- Knowledge of daily life
- Involvement
- Stay away from sex-negativity



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KNOW WHAT YOUR PRIORITIES ARE

- Keeping them safe.
- Teaching them respect.
- Helping them grow.
- Maintaining a relationship with you.



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MORALITY, RELIGION & VALUES

- For parents, sorting out values and beliefs about sex and kids is very hard work.
- This is tricky business and requires some forethought and Valium.



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THE DISCONNECT

- For many adults, sexuality is tied to cultural and religious context, where it becomes a matter of right vs. wrong, good vs. bad, moral vs. sinful.
- If your kids think they are committing a sin and you will condemn them, they will never be able to be honest with you.



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JUDGMENT

- This decision, more than almost any other in their life, requires the ability to make good judgment calls.
- As a parent, it is your job to remain available to help them with that.
- If you judge them, they will learn shame but they will NOT learn good judgment.



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PORNOGRAPHY

- Despite the lack of evidence of harm, researchers feel uneasy about the messages teenagers might take from pornography.
- At a minimum, parents should be talking with their teens about sexuality in general and porn in particular.

CENSOR

Segal, D. (2014, March 28). Does Porn Hurt Children? The New York Times.

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BAD STUFF IS OUT THERE

- Today's readily-accessible internet porn is more intense, explicit, violent, or downright strange than anything you're probably imagining.
- Just because it's possible doesn't mean it's a good idea. Kids should not become desensitized to or normalize illegal, harmful, or exploitive behaviors.
- Talking about sex with your teens will give them a *positive* resource.



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CASUAL SEX STEREOTYPES: TYPICAL TEENS VS. TRAUMA TEENS

- One person must be using the other.
- Emotional intimacy can't happen in casual sex.
- Anyone who engages in casual sex doesn't respect themselves or others.
- Engaging in casual sex must = low self-esteem.
- Casual sex is morally, ethically or emotionally inferior to sex within a committed relationship.



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BE SEX POSITIVE

- "Sex Negative": secretive, repressive, controlling, shame, guilt
- "Sex Positive" emphasizes:
 - Safe sex
 - Healthy sex
 - Consensual sex
 - Personal preference



LET'S TALK WITH OUR TEENS

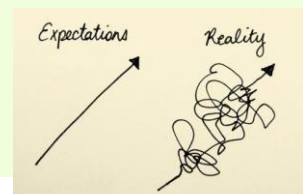
- Talking to your child about sex, sexuality, and safety is much more effective than trying to put electronic controls on their devices.
- If you monitor, do so openly and honestly from the start.



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TALK ABOUT EXPECTATIONS

- Having sex does not:
 - Guarantee a longer-lasting or closer relationship, or guarantee joy or sorrow.
 - Feel great the first time, or feel like the ninth circle of hell, either.
 - Give you increased status or importance with your friends or partner.
 - Make you more grown-up or a "real" man or woman.



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TEACH THEM TO ASK

- They need to learn to ask themselves if sex is what they want, at that moment, in that way, with that person.
- They need to ask their partner if sex is something they want.
- Lack of consent is not a yes. Maybe is not a yes.
- A drunk partner can't give consent.

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WHAT IS VIRGINITY?

- Everyone will interpret/define this concept differently. There is no one true definition.
- It may be a physical, psychological, and/or spiritual concept.



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BIRTH CONTROL

- It is never too soon to talk about birth control.
- It is NOT giving permission; it is providing safety.
- They need access and information.
- They need regular checkups with someone who is not their childhood doctor.
- Safe sex = good sex



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TALK ABOUT BEING 'READY'

- Why do they want to do this?
- Who do they want to do this for?
- What do they expect from sex?
- Does this partner want the same things they do?
- Does this partner care about them or their feelings?
- Do they like this person and do they feel 'liked'?



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TO START THE CONVERSATION

- Try talking in the car, where nobody has to make eye contact.
- Depending on how comfortable or miserable your teen will feel when you bring up pornography, it might be a good idea to begin the conversation when you're close to home so your teenager can count on an imminent escape.

Damour, L. (2014, March 31.) How to Talk to Your Teenager About Pornography. The New York Times.

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STEP #2

- Give your teenager fair warning of what's on your mind.
 - E.g., "We need to talk about internet pornography; there are a few things I want to be sure you know."
- Your personal views and family values will dictate what you say next and how the conversation goes.

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STEP #3

- **Pornography depicts one shadowy and loveless corner of the vast landscape of human sexuality.**
- “I know a lot of kids are looking at porn online, but I’m hoping you won’t. Sex can be mutual, loving, and fulfilling and it can be dark, offensive and destructive. What you see in pornography is almost always the wrong kind of sex, and I don’t want you getting the impression that’s what sex is all about.”

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STEP #4

- **Our bodies can be aroused by things our minds don’t find appealing.**
- You may want to address the unfortunate reality that many portrayals of sex—however distasteful or disturbing—can still be titillating.

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STEP #5

- “There’s another reason I don’t want you looking at pornography. People often find they’re turned on by stuff that they don’t feel good about watching.”
- “I wouldn’t want you to be in the position of having your body react to something your head knows is wrong.”

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STEP #6

- **Many people consider pornography to be fundamentally exploitive.**
- If you go this route, try: “In pornography, someone’s always making money off someone else’s degradation. When you watch pornography, you are participating in exploitation. We don’t do that in our family.”

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STEP #7

- **Everything you do online could potentially be seen by everyone you know.**
- If you haven’t yet had a conversation about sexting, you might introduce that related issue:
 - “Needless to say, we also expect that you would never share or request content you wouldn’t want grandma to see.”

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GOOD STUFF IS OUT THERE

- Online conversations in safe spaces can be very positive.
- The conversation isn’t just about sex and sexuality. It intersects with race, class, politics, feminism, and culture.



TALK ABOUT CONSEQUENCES

- Can your child handle being confused, disappointed, or upset?
- Can they handle big emotions, good and bad?
- Do they know love and sex co-exist but are also different?
- **Give them resources to mitigate these consequences.**



KIDS ARE THINKING AND LEARNING

- Kids are discussing how sex and sexuality intersects with the world around them.
 - They're not just talking about their sexual desires and preferences.
 - They're also discussing rape culture, how people treat each other sexually can sometimes be racist, and how emotional labor is managed in relationships.



WHAT IS SEXUALITY?

- How we experience and express ourselves as sexual beings.
- "The expression of an age-blind desire for meaningful intimacy and connection with others." (Must We Fear Adolescent Sexuality?, Amy Schalet, Ph.D., Medscape, 2004.)
- A natural, fundamental part of being human.



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IS ORIENTATION A CHOICE?

- For the most part, it's considered to be fairly hardwired by our genetic makeup, early experiences, and the 'homonormativity' (the majority culture being heterosexual).
- But still an ongoing debate!



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NEW UNDERSTANDING

- **Binary System:** Something made up of two opposing parts. Gender (man/woman) and sex (male/female) are examples of binary systems.
 - To be a man is to NOT be a woman.
- **Non-Binary:** Anything that falls outside of the binary system. Intersex, genderqueer, and bisexuality are all examples of non-binary identities.

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NEW LANGUAGE

- **Cisgender:** A person who identifies with the sex they were assigned at birth (e.g., if you were told you were "male" at birth and still identify that way).
- **Gender Non-Conforming:** A person whose gender expression is, or appears to be, different from their assigned gender. Other terms include "gender variant" or "gender diverse."
- **Genderqueer:** Someone whose gender identity is not just a man or a woman. This can mean different things to different people.
- **Intersex:** A condition in which a person is born with a sex that doesn't fit the typical definitions of female or male due to genetic, hormonal, or anatomical differences.

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SEXUAL ATTRACTION

- Gay: In the past, only men attracted to men used the word "gay". This is now a common term used by anyone who is attracted to their same sex or gender.
- Lesbian: A woman who is predominantly attracted to other women. Some women prefer the term "gay".
- Bisexual: Someone who is attracted to both men and women, or to more than one gender identity.
- Queer: Umbrella term for "not straight"

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PAN-, POLY-, OMNI-, AMBI-

"all" "many" "all" "both/ambiguity"

- Identity labels like *pansexual*, *polysexual*, *ambisexual*, and *omnisexual* also describe a person with homosexual and heterosexual attractions, and therefore people who have chosen those labels are also bisexual.
- People who adopt these labels seek to express that gender does not factor into their own sexuality, or that they are specifically attracted to trans, genderqueer, and other people who may or may not fit into the mainstream gender categories of male and female.
- This does not mean, however, that people who identify as bisexual are fixated on traditional notions of gender.

Bisexual.org

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LGBT Community Flag Gradients



INTERSEX

- When chromosomes, genitalia, and/or secondary sex characteristics are not exclusively male or female.
- The chromosomal makeup/genitalia/secondary sex characteristics are not easily categorized as exclusively male or female.
- Variations DO occur naturally in humans.
- Variations suggest complexity to human sex, gender, and sexuality rather than just what the dominant binary system implies.

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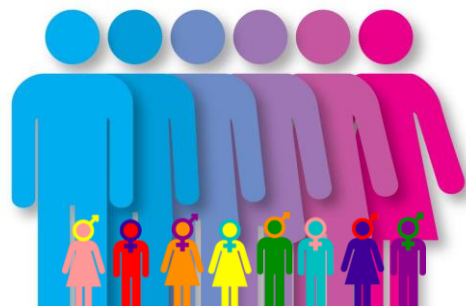
WHAT IS GENDER?

- Gender: An idea created by society that tells us what certain genders are "supposed" to be like, based on emotional, behavioral and cultural characteristics (like how we express our feelings or how we dress).
- Gender Identity: Our internal, personal sense of what our gender is. Everyone has a gender identity.
- Sexual Orientation: Describes a person's physical, romantic, emotional, and/or spiritual attraction to another person. Everyone has a sexual orientation.

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Gender Spectrum



Childhood Gender Roles in Adulthood



TRANSGENDER

- Transgender (Trans*): An umbrella term used to describe people whose preferred gender identity does not “match” the gender they were assigned at birth.
- Many identities fall under the transgender umbrella, which are often designated as “Trans*”.
- Not all gender-queer or non-binary people identify as transgender – and some people who have transitioned to their true gender choose to identify as just a “man” or “woman” instead of transgender.

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CROSS DRESSING

- Most numerous transgender group
- Drag Queens/Kings
- Many different reasons for cross dressing:
 - To express cross-gender feelings
 - For emotional comfort
 - Sexual arousal
 - For FUN! – not always indicative of something

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BE GENDER-INFORMED

- Always be respectful of how someone chooses to identify, and use their preferred identity, name, and pronouns.
- We are not gender neutral. We are all on a spectrum in terms of how we identify ourselves.
- If you are not sure, it is always best to ask.

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A VOCABULARY QUIZ

- We are developing richer, more accurate ways to describe and understand how teens are talking about themselves and each other:



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COMING OUT

- Educate yourself (be aware of issues, attitudes, and pronouns)
- Don't make assumptions about sexual orientation
- **Keep lines of communication open**
- Get support to process your own reaction



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STRUGGLING WITH ACCEPTANCE

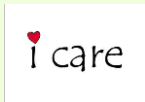
- Don't feel ashamed of feeling ashamed
- Take it slowly
- Do not play the blame game
- Seek support – there are many MANY resources
- Many people have gone through this, you are not alone



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SOMEONE TO TALK TO

- This is no time to be squeamish.
- Kids need to know:
 - They can talk and be heard.
 - Ask questions and not be judged.
 - Be confused and not be shamed.
 - Seek support and encouragement without fear of retribution or consequences.



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TALK ABOUT BEING JUDGED

- Discuss how people will judge them, their body, their dress, their partners.
- Advocate for them, comfort them, support them, and try to protect them from criticism. This is hardest with immediate family.



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COMING OUT: WHERE TO START

- Love and acceptance
- Remember that they are taking a huge risk
- Your child is trusting you
- It is possible you have suspected this for a long time, but the child may not be ready to talk about it. It is better to wait for them to confront you.



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COMING OUT: HOW TO BE SUPPORTIVE

- Keep lines of communication open
- Focus on teaching problem solving skills and coping skills
- Be patient
- Address and be aware of the safety of your child
- Everybody copes differently



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COMING OUT AND TRAUMA

- Children that have experienced trauma may have an even more difficult time with this
- Childhood trauma = higher risk of depression and anxiety
- LGBTQ = higher risk of depression and anxiety
- Be aware that your children may:
 - Have a lack of trust
 - Have problems understanding
 - Lack coping skills



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COMING OUT: THE CONVERSATION

- Start with a statement of support:
 - “You are our child, we love you no matter what”
 - “I am happy you trust me enough to tell me this”
- Avoid statements of non-acceptance:
 - “Are you sure?”
 - “What will we tell our friends and family?”
 - “This could just be a phase”



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HELP IDENTIFY BODY BOUNDARIES

- I am comfortable with...
- Some parts of my body are just off-limits. Those are...
- I am not comfortable looking at, touching or feeling some parts of another person's body. Those are...
- I am triggered by (have a post-traumatic response to) something(s) about body boundaries. Those are/that is...



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HELP THEM EXPRESS PREFERENCES

- I prefer the following gender/sexual identity words (man, woman, boi, femme, butch, top, etc.) to be used for me:
- I prefer my chest and genitals to be referred to as:
- I prefer my sexual orientation and/or identity to be referred to as:
- Some words I am not okay with to refer to me, my identity, my body or, or which I am uncomfortable using or hearing about, with or during any kind of sex are:
- I am triggered by certain words or language. Those are/that is:

Scarleteen



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THANK YOU



“Children’s sexuality should be given free reign to develop naturally, nurtured with information, encouragement, and guidance from adults—not denial, shame and censorship.”



(Winks and

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