

# WHAT'S YOUR ADVICE? ADULT MALE - TEEN FEMALE RELATIONSHIPS

## OBJECTIVES:

Participants will:

1. Examine their attitudes regarding relationships between couples in which there is a significant difference in age.
2. Become familiar with the research indicating that males over 20 may be responsible for many 'teen' births, as well as for the high rate of sexually transmitted infections among teen females.
3. Assess the reasons older males might choose to have sexual relationships with teen females and the reasons teen females might choose to have sexual relationships with older males.
4. Decide what advice they would give to someone involved in an adult-teen relationship.

## RATIONALE:

The difficulty the nation has had in reducing adolescent pregnancy rates may be due, in part, to the fact that intervention efforts have assumed those pregnancies were the result solely of peer - to-peer relationships. In fact, many 'teen' births are fathered by adult men. In addition, teen females have a high rate of sexually transmitted infections compared with their male peers, suggesting that adult male - teen female relationships may also be implicated in disease transmission. This lesson examines the issue of relationships in which adult males are having sexual intercourse with teen females. It encourages students to evaluate those relationships and give advice about them.

## MATERIALS:

- **Worksheet: ADULT-TEEN RELATIONSHIPS: WHAT ARE THE FACTS?**
- **Worksheets: WHAT'S YOUR ADVICE... to "UNHAPPY GIRL"?  
to "MY FRIEND'S FRIEND"?  
to "CONFUSED BOY?"**

- Four pieces of easel paper, each with one of the statements below written on it:

**Why teen girls go out with older men**  
**Why older men go out with teen girls**  
**Why adults worry when teen girls go out with older men**  
**How teen boys feel when teen girls go out with older men**

## PROCEDURE:

(**Note:** Before using the *Worksheet: ADULT-TEEN RELATIONSHIPS: WHAT ARE THE FACTS?*, complete the ages for items #9 and #10 according to your state's sexual offense laws.)

1. Draw on the board/easel:

OK-----??-----NOT OK

2. Explain that students will be discussing relationships where one partner is much older than the other. Ask them to draw the diagram. Then, ask them to think about a sexual relationship in which a high school sophomore girl is going out with a 22-year-old man. How do they feel about the fact that he is an adult, seven years older than his teen partner? Put an **X** on the continuum.
3. Ask for several volunteers to say where they placed themselves on the continuum and why. Jot down descriptive words in the appropriate place on the continuum.
4. Distribute the *Worksheet: ADULT-TEEN RELATIONSHIPS: WHAT ARE THE FACTS?* and ask the students to complete it in pairs. When everyone is finished, give the correct answers, one by one. (See the *Answer Key*, which reflects current data.) As you discuss #9 and #10, ask students why they think these laws exist. What is necessary for a person to be able to agree to a sexual behavior freely and safely?
5. Divide the students into four groups and give each group a "statement" easel sheet. Instruct each group to list ***all*** the reasons they can think of in response to the statement on their sheet.

After ten minutes, ask the groups to post their sheets.

**Discussion Questions:**

- a. What observations can you make from viewing these lists?
  - b. Do you agree with adults who are concerned about these relationships? Explain.
  - c. What is your advice to older men? to teen girls? to teen boys?
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6. Depending on your group, ask the students to work again in their small groups, in pairs, or individually. Distribute equally among students the two **Worksheets: WHAT'S YOUR ADVICE? (to "UNHAPPY GIRL" and to "MY FRIEND'S FRIEND")**. Ask the students to write an 'Advice Column' responding to the letters on their **Worksheet**.  
  
(**Note:** If you wish to expand the lesson to relationships between teen boys and adult women, use the additional **Worksheet (to "CONFUSED BOY")**.)
  7. To conclude, ask one or two groups, pairs, or individuals to read their columns to the entire group.

**Worksheet: ADULT-TEEN RELATIONSHIPS:  
WHAT ARE THE FACTS?**

**Directions:** Mark each statement below **T** for True or **F** for False.

- \_\_\_\_ 1. The majority of teenagers have sexual intercourse with partners close to their own age.
- \_\_\_\_ 2. Many babies born to 15-year-old teens are fathered by males 20 or older.
- \_\_\_\_ 3. The younger a girl is when she first has sexual intercourse, the more likely it is that she does not agree to it and does not want to do it.
- \_\_\_\_ 4. The “age of consent” to sexual intercourse is the same in every state.
- \_\_\_\_ 5. The closer in age a teen girl and her sexual partner are, the more likely she is to use contraception the first time she has sexual intercourse.
- \_\_\_\_ 6. A teen girl is less likely to be exposed to a sexually transmitted infection (like HIV/AIDS) by a partner 3 or more years older than by a partner closer to her own age.
- \_\_\_\_ 7. The younger a teen mother is, the greater the age gap is likely to be between her and her baby's father.
- \_\_\_\_ 8. Half of fathers aged 20 or older whose infants are born to 14 to 17-year-old girls have completed fewer years of school than is expected for their age.
- \_\_\_\_ 9. In our state, it is against the law for a person under \_\_\_\_ years old to have sexual intercourse.
- \_\_\_\_ 10. In our state it is against the law for a person \_\_\_\_ years old to have sexual intercourse with a person \_\_\_\_ years old (Or: \_\_\_\_ or more, years older) even if the younger person consents to it.

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**ANSWER KEY**

***Worksheet: ADULT-TEEN RELATIONSHIPS:  
WHAT ARE THE FACTS?***

**Directions:** Mark each statement below **T** for True or **F** for False.

- T   1. The majority of teenagers have sexual intercourse with partners close to their own age.
- T   2. Many babies born to 15-year-old teens are fathered by males 20 or older.
- T   3. The younger a girl is when she first has sexual intercourse, the more likely it is that she does not agree to it, and does not want to do it.
- F   4. The “age of consent” to sexual intercourse is the same in every state.
- T   5. The closer in age a teen girl and her sexual partner are, the more likely she is to use contraception the first time she has sexual intercourse.
- F   6. A teen girl is less likely to be exposed to a sexually transmitted infection (like HIV/AIDS) by a partner 3 or more years older than by a partner closer to her own age.
- T   7. The younger a teen mother is, the greater the age gap is likely to be between her and her baby's father.
- T   8. Half of fathers aged 20 or older whose infants are born to 14 to 17-year-old girls have completed fewer years of school than is expected for their age.
- \* T 9. In our state, it is against the law for a person under \_\_\_\_ years old to have sexual intercourse.
- \* T 10. In our state it is against the law for a person \_\_\_\_ years old to have sexual intercourse with a person \_\_\_\_ years old (Or: \_\_\_\_, or more years older) even if the younger person consents to it.

\* State-specific information.

**Sources:** Abma, J. (1998); The Alan Guttmacher Institute (1994); Darroch, J. (1999); Donovan, P. (1997); Kirby, D. (1996); Lindberg, L. (1997); Males, M. (1993, 1996); Miller, K. (1997); State Code of Criminal Justice; Taylor, D. (1997); Zierler, et. al. (1991).

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**Worksheet: WHAT'S YOUR ADVICE .... to "UNHAPPY GIRL"?**

Dear Dr. Advice,

I'm 14, and I'm going out with a 21-year-old man. I think he loves me, and I **know** I really love him. He treats me really nice. But my parents don't want me to go out with him - just because he's older! They want me to stop seeing him. What should I do?

Unhappy girl

Dear Unhappy girl,

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**Worksheet: WHAT'S YOUR ADVICE ....  
to "MY FRIEND'S FRIEND"?**

Dear Dr. Advice,

My roommate is dating a 16-year-old girl. It makes me very uncomfortable because he's 21. I think it may be illegal for an adult to have intercourse with someone under 18. Can he be arrested? Anyway, I don't know what he sees in such a young kid. Do you think there's something wrong with him? Should I do anything about this?

My friend's friend

Dear My friend's friend,

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**Worksheet: WHAT'S YOUR ADVICE .... to "CONFUSED BOY"?**

Dear Dr. Advice,

I'm 15, almost 16. One of my mom's friends is coming on to me all the time. I like her a lot and it makes me feel really grown up... but is this normal? I'm very confused, and my mom doesn't even seem to notice.

Confused boy

Dear Confused boy,

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