



Discussion Guide

By Nora Gelperin, M.Ed.

For Adults Working with Teens

Sexetc.org

Fall 2007

Lesson for When I Was a Teenager...

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to

- 1) Describe at least two ways that being a teen now is similar to and different from being a teen in prior decades by reading an article and conducting an interview with a trusted adult.
- 2) List at least two messages about sexuality they learned from the trusted adult they interviewed for this activity.
- 3) Articulate who the biggest influence is on teens' sexual decision-making through a brainstorm activity.

TIME NEEDED

45 minutes on Day 1

15 minutes on Day 2

MATERIALS

- Copies of the article "When I Was a Teenager..."
—one per person
- Copies of the "Family Matters Interview Guide"
—one per person
- Index cards—one per person

PREPARATION

This activity makes a great homework exercise for teen participants and will need to be conducted over two class periods or sessions.

This activity will be most effective with teens who have access to at least one trusted adult in their lives. If a parent is not a viable option, spend time exploring who those adults might be for your participants.

Also, if adults and/or participants are non-native English speakers, encourage them to conduct the interview in whatever language they and their trusted adult are most comfortable speaking. For the worksheet, have those participants take brief notes in English, if possible, capturing the highlights of the conversation.

PROCEDURE

1. Introduce the lesson by explaining that teens' decisions about sexuality are often influenced by many different people and groups in their lives. Begin by brainstorming who some of those people and groups are that might influence a teen's decisions about sexuality (such as whether or not to become sexually intimate with someone, when to start dating, how to act around someone you're attracted to, etc.). Write the suggestions on the board or flipchart paper. (**Facilitator's Note:** Likely suggestions will include friends, girlfriend or boyfriend, parents/family, religion, media, etc.) [5 minutes]

2. Next, ask participants to look at the list on the flipchart and select who teens feel have the biggest influence on their sexual decisions. Entertain a variety of guesses from participants. Explain that according to research, teens feel that their parents are the biggest influence on their sexual decision-making. [2 minutes]

3. Again, looking at the list, ask participants to imagine that they were parents of teenagers. Ask them, in their role as parents, to look at the list and guess who has the biggest influence on a teen's sexual decision-making. Entertain a variety of guesses. Explain that most parents believe that peers are the biggest influence on teens' sexual decision-making. [8 minutes]

4. Point out to participants that parents are teens' biggest influence on sexual decision-making, but many parents feel like it's their teens' friends who are the biggest influence. Explain that in order to encourage teens and trusted adults to communicate about sexual issues, the assignment is for the participants to select an adult that they trust and interview them. Participants can select any adult they feel comfortable talking to about sexuality issues. It need not be their parents, but it must be someone who is at least ten years older than the participant, if possible. [2 minutes]

5. Explain that there is a great example of an adult-teen interview that you would like each participant to read. Distribute copies of the article "When I Was a Teenager..." and read aloud with participants. [8 minutes]

6. Ask the following questions:

- What are two things that Josh and Bernard have in common?
 - What are two things that are different about Josh and Bernard?
 - If you were Bernard, what do you think you could teach Josh about?
 - If you were Josh, what do you think you could teach Bernard about?
- [15 minutes]

7. Next, distribute copies of the the "Family Matters Interview Guide" and explain when the assignment is due (given the schedule of your next meeting time). Ask if there are any questions about the assignment. If not, close exercise by expressing how much you are looking forward to hearing about what your participants learn from the adults in their lives. [5 minutes]

8. Resume the lesson on day two when your participants have had a chance to conduct the interview with a trusted adult in their lives. Distribute an index card to each participant. Ask each participant to look at the last page of his or her interview guide, where it reads, "Two things I learned as a result of this interview are," and select one thing to anonymously write on the index card.

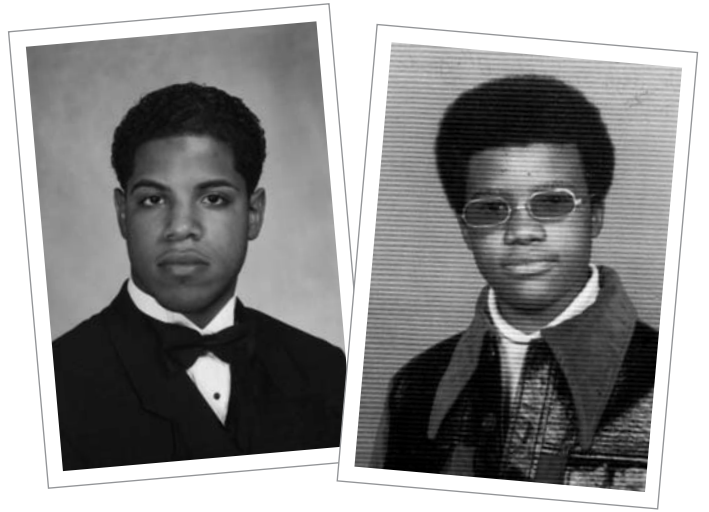
After participants have written on their index cards, collect them, shuffle them and then collect their "Family Matters Interview Guide" worksheets.

Lastly, redistribute the index cards to participants, so that each participant has an index card, but not his or her own. [10 minutes]

9. Ask participants to go around and read what is listed on their index card. Close the lesson by having participants complete the following statement: "As a result of participating in this activity, one thing I will take away is..." [5 minutes]

Family Matters

Interview Guide



Read this section to the adult you have chosen to interview:

I have been assigned this interview as part of my sex education class. There are 12 questions, and it should only take 15 minutes to complete. The goal is for me to better understand what it was like to be a teenager when you grew up. Thanks for your time.

Name of the adult you are interviewing: _____

Relationship to the adult you are interviewing: _____

How long have you known this adult? _____

First, I have a few questions to help you think back to when you were growing up.

1) What was your favorite place to hang out with your friends? _____

2) What did you do to have fun with your friends? _____

3) What was your favorite TV show? _____

4) What was your favorite movie? _____

5) What was your favorite song? _____

Next I have a few questions about what it was like learning about sex ed when you were growing up.

6) What do you remember learning about sexuality from your parents or family? _____

7) What do you remember about puberty when you were growing up? _____

8) Did you ever have a crush on someone? If so, what was that like for you? _____

Next, comparing what it's like to be a teenager today versus what it was like to be a teenager when you grew up...

9) Can you describe something you think is the same now as it was when you were a teen? _____

10) Can you describe something you think is different now than when you were a teen? _____

11) Is there anything you know now that you wish you had known as a teenager? _____

12) Do you have any final thoughts or issues you want to talk about? _____

Questions for Participant to Complete After the Interview

A) What are two things that are different about being a teen today versus when this adult was a teen?

B) What are two things that are the same about being a teen today versus when this adult was a teen?

C) What are two things you learned as a result of conducting this interview?

1)

2)
