

Discussion Guide for Adolescent Focus Groups

Day 1

Hi! Welcome to the Parent-Teen Communication study!

My name is XXX, and over the next 3 days, I will be guiding the discussion on this bulletin board.

First, I want to thank all of you again for agreeing to take part in this discussion. We really appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts and ideas with us. As you know, the purpose of this discussion is to better understand how parents and teens your age talk about sex.

Over the next 3 days, I will be posting a few new questions on this bulletin board each day. You should log on at least once each day to respond to each of the questions. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions—we just want to hear everybody's ideas. If there are any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering, you can simply write that you want to skip that question.

Once you have written your responses to the questions, you will be able to see the responses from the other people in the group. There are about 20 of you in the group, all [guys/girls] between the ages of 13 and 15, from all over the country. No one in the group will have any way of knowing who anyone else is, so whatever you say will stay private.

We encourage you to comment on other people's responses—whether you agree, or disagree, or they just made you think of something else you'd like to add. We do ask that all responses and comments be on topic and respectful of other people in the group. We will remove any comments that are inappropriate.

We encourage you to log on several times each day, so that you can take part more fully in the discussion and respond to other participants' posts. If you log in once in the morning, afternoon, and evening, you will see the discussion build as others post their messages. I may also post some follow-up questions to something you have said, which you can answer when you log back on.

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If you have any kind of question for me (about how the bulletin board works, or what a question means, or anything else), you can send it to me in two ways. You can post it where the group can see it, or you can send me a private message by clicking the “REPLY” button next to any of my posts and checking the “private message” box.

In appreciation for your time and effort in taking part in this group, we will be mailing you a check for \$~~40~~25 after the last day of the group.

On this first day, we would like each of you to start by filling out a short questionnaire. The other participants will NOT see your responses to the questionnaire. After the questionnaire, you can join the bulletin board discussion. Please click on the link below to ~~get~~get to the questionnaire now.

[*Questionnaire here*]

Thanks for doing the questionnaire! And welcome to the bulletin board discussion!

For today, the discussion is going to be about what parents talk to their kids about when they talk about sex (*if they talk about sex*), and what kids want to hear from their parents.

“Talking about sex” can mean a lot of things. Some examples of things that might be included are:

- How babies are made
- What’s happening when a girl starts her period or a boy’s voice starts changing
- Dating or romantic relationships
- When is the right time to start having sex
- The risk of getting pregnant or getting someone pregnant before you are ready
- The risk of getting a sexually transmitted disease or AIDS
- How sex is shown or talked about in the media (TV, movies, music, etc.)
- Condoms and other birth control methods

Parents probably talk with their kids about some topics more than others. To start off, I’d like to know:

- How much do you think most parents of kids your age talk with their kids about sex and things related to sex?
- When parents *do* talk with their kids about sex, what kinds of things do they mostly talk about?
- Are there things having to do with sex that most parents don’t talk about that you think they *should* talk about? If so, what?
Are there things kids would rather hear about from their parents than from anywhere else (like school, doctors, the Internet, or friends)?

What about kids who are a little younger than you—around 11 or 12? Some parents think that kids that age aren’t thinking about sex and it is too soon to talk with them about it.

- What do you think? Do kids that age need to be hearing from their parents about sex?
- If so, what should parents be talking with them about?

That's all the questions I have for today. Please log back in later to see if anyone has responded to your comments, or if I posted any follow-up questions for you. To see if I posted a question, look for my text in blue.

Thanks so much for your participation so far!

Day 2

Welcome back! Thanks for the great discussion yesterday! Yesterday we talked about what topics parents and kids your age talk about when they talk about sex. Today we're going to talk about shift gears a little bit and talk about some of the things that might make it harder or easier for parents and kids your age to talk about things related to sex.

- Some parents find it hard to talk with their kids about things related to sex. What do you think are some of the things that might make it hard for them?
- Some kids your age may not feel comfortable talking with their parents about things related to sex. What do you think are some of the things that make it hard for kids to talk to their parents about things related to sex?
- Some parents have really good communication with their kids about sex. Others try to talk with their kids about sex but do it in ways that aren't helpful or make the kids uncomfortable. What do you think are some of the things that parents do that make conversations really good? What are some of the things that make the conversations hard? If you were to give advice to parents about *how* to talk to their kids about sex, what would you say?

That's all our questions for today. Please check in throughout the day to see the responses of other people in the group and add your own comments!

Day 3

Gang—one more day to go!

Again, great job yesterday. Your comments have been really great, and very helpful to us.

Up to now, we've mostly been talking about parents of kids your age in general—both mothers and fathers. Today we're going to start by talking about fathers and mothers separately.

- Are there any differences between how mothers talk about things related to sex and how fathers talk about things related to sex? For example, do they say different things?
- Are there things that make it easier to talk to one parent or the other? What?

Now I'd like you to think about the differences between boys and girls, and how parents talk to their sons compared to their daughters.

- Do you think guys and girls your age think and act differently about sex? In what ways?
- Do you think guys and girls need to hear different things from their parents about sex? What things do you think should be different? What things do you think should be the same?

That's the end of our questions! Please check back later today and/or tomorrow, though, to check on the discussion and add your thoughts, or answer any questions that may have come up. The bulletin board will stay open until midnight Eastern time tomorrow, **(date)**.

Thank you so much for taking part in the group! I hope you enjoyed it and the chance to share your ideas with the others.

We will be mailing you a **check for \$40 in** the next few days. If you have not received it in two weeks, please contact XXX.