**Categry: Lifestyle**

**10 reasons why teenagers are having sex (or shouldn’t)**

Teenagers want their relationships to give them social status and physical and emotional intimacy and they strongly believe that sex can help them achieve these goals in one way or the other. A study by the Guttmacher-Lancet Commission on sexual and reproductive health says that girls value sex and relationships differently than boys. Boys have a higher expectation that sex will give them a social status and physical pleasure while girls place a higher value on intimacy. Consequently, both boys and girls engage in sex for different reasons. They include;

1. **Peer Pressure**

This is the top reason why teens are engaging in sex. There is a lot of pressure from friends and peers to be sexually active. Many teenagers assume that ‘everyone is doing it’ and the more you know about the topic, the more popular you become amongst your friends. Peer pressure mostly affects teenagers with low self-esteem. They are easily influenced by their friends as they fear being rejected or appearing different.

1. **Social and mainstream media pressure**

Many advertisements, TV shows, billboards, magazines and newspapers sell sex to vulnerable young people. Most of the time, the adverts promise attention and affection from the opposite sex if one buys a particular product, be it clothes, perfume or a gadget. It can be hard for a young person to resist such sexual encouragements especially when they are unaware that they are being used to make profits. Interestingly, the advertisements rarely give further advice on how to prevent or manage the physical and emotional risks linked to sex.

1. **Pressure for partner(s)**

The inability to say ‘NO’ has seen many teenagers engage in sexual activities they would rather avoid. Pressure from a partner(s) is often accompanied by emotional manipulation and/or threats of rejection. Some teenagers therefore engage in sex out of fear of being abandoned or seen unworthy of their partner(s) affection. Regularly practising refusal skills can help teenagers gain the confidence to say ‘No’ in such situations.

1. **Sexual attraction**

Human beings are sexual beings and as such it is natural that we are sexually attracted to other people. Teenage hormones are very real and often facilitate strong sexual attraction. These feelings can however be controlled as each human being has the power to choose whether or not to have sex.

1. **The desire to be loved**

We all want to be loved. We want to belong and boys use love to get sex while girls use sex to get love. Girls are especially prone to this imbalance as they fall for the advances of boys in the hope they will gain the acceptance and emotional intimacy that they desire.

1. **Inadequate sex education**

Sex is a taboo topic in many families and educational institutions and as such teenagers are rarely given timely and accurate information about sex. Often times, sex education is focused on the negatives and the only concern is how to prevent pregnancies and diseases and as opposed to education on what sex is and what it is not.

1. **Parents’ or guardians’ examples of permissiveness**

Adults have their weaknesses too. And just like some of them abuse alcohol or drugs there are parents and guardians who have a problem with promiscuity. Teenagers often learn and adapt to those around them and some could be easily influenced by their parent’s, siblings’ or guardian’s lifestyles

1. **Alcohol and drugs**

Alcohol and drugs drive pleasure while inhibiting good judgement. When taken beyond ones capacities it makes you more liberal with your words and actions. It is therefore not uncommon to hear about teenagers engaging in risky sexual behaviour where alcohol and drugs are involved.

1. **Boredom**

There is a common saying that, ‘an idle mind is the devils workshop.’ This is especially true for teenagers who view sex as ‘something to do’ because they have ‘nothing else interesting to do’

**WHAT SEX IN NOT**

* + A test of your love for your partner.
  + A way to assert your independence
  + A way to get back at your parents, siblings or guardians
  + Always exciting or pleasant (You will wonder sometimes, if it was even worth the time!).
  + **A measure of how mature or grown up you are**. The law considers you a child until you reach the age of majority at 18 years old. Any sexual activity with a child (or between children) is considered defilement and carries a jail sentence. Beyond 18, you are likely to come across adults who act very immature for their age, confirming that having sex is not an indicator of growth.
  + **A way to make somebody love or commit to you.** As you grow older, you will realize that you have no control of someone else’s emotions and decisions. You cannot force someone to stay with you or treat you right if they do not want to.