

Tips for Teens, '90s Style
By SARA ALGASE
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Did you know that HIV/AIDS has been the sixth leading cause of death among 15–24 year olds in the United States since 1991?

Did you know that 18 percent of high school seniors are daily smokers and 11 percent smoke 10 or more cigarettes a day? Did you know that approximately 65 percent of all boys and 55 percent of all girls have sexual intercourse before they reach 18?

Sure, we've all heard the statistics. They often make us want to keep our daughters, nieces, cousins and friends locked in their rooms until they're 50! But these are the realities that face young people every day.

These were some of the realities discussed in the Teen Room by both teens and concerned mothers. Spread out on a table were pamphlets like *Diseases That Can Be Spread During Sex*, *How To Say No and Keep Your Boyfriend*, *A Parents' Guide to Drug Prevention*, *How Is Your Self-esteem?*, *Date Rape: 10 Things You Can Do To Protect Yourself*, *It's a Two-Way Street: Traffic Safety*, and *Food Guide Pyramid: A Guide to Daily Food Choices*.

Quotes From the Trenches

Every topic was open to discussion. Here are some quotes from throughout the day:

"If my mother told me what it was like to raise a child, I may have learned more about birth control."

"I can't tell my daughter not to have sex because I don't know what her body functions are telling her."

"It's not dating anymore. He doesn't come to your house and meet your parents. Instead it's 'Meet me at the club.'"

"What's in between 'No' and 'I'll see ya later'?"

"The best time to have a discussion about sex is not in the bedroom."

"The newest cases of HIV and AIDS are women of color who are heterosexual."

"Listen to your inner voice. Nine out of 10 times, it's your best guide in telling you whether you feel comfortable or not."

"Giving information is not about giving consent; it's about empowering each other."

"Risk-taking is a normal part of healthy adolescent development. Isn't that scary?"

"In the past, girls disappeared from school for nine months. Now teen pregnancy is out in the open. These problems aren't new ones. The same thing was going on in my generation. Teenagers are just problem-solving in the light of what people have been doing all along."

"I learned about the facts of life from my friend Rosemary because my mother never told me."

"The more you don't talk about things, the more there's misinformation."

SGI President Ikeda had the last word: "The amalgamation of the rich, multifaceted experiences of age and the energy of youth will herald the arrival of the family of the future. This would be a family firmly based and free to grow in uniqueness and individuality" (*The Creative Family*, p. 9).

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