

Teenage promiscuity essay



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Teenage promiscuity is that risky behaviour performed amongst adolescents, and today it presents itself as a cry for help from a troubled, yet curious child. There are numerous causes of teenage promiscuity. “ A teenager who is out of control may use sex the same way a teen might use alcohol. ” They believe this act or behaviour makes them popular.

This research paper will in depth, break down and elaborate on the possible causes, consequences and effects of teenage promiscuity; also giving insight to useful and pertinent universal solutions.

What is Promiscuity? Promiscuity is the practice of making unselective, casual and indiscriminate choices. It is most commonly applied to sexual behaviour where it occurs outside on-going sexual relationships or occurs in multiple, simultaneous sexual relationships. This behaviour, coupled with not applying safer sex measures, is often linked with negative sequences.

Causes for Teenage Promiscuity Biological Factor Adolescence is the period between child and adult and is where the most dramatic changes are associated with puberty.

In recent research, the onset of puberty have increase and the timing can impact on early maturing both in males and females, thus they are more likely to become sexually active and participate in risky behaviours. In reviewing Freud’s psychosexual theory, the Genital Stage begins at puberty and it involves the development of the genitals and libido which are both used in its sexual role. Each stage of development encompasses specific markers. However, each adolescent is an individual and may reach these stages of development earlier or later than other teens of the same age.

Adolescents are also face with Separation Individuation.

This theory of development by Margaret Mahler emphasizes that it is the second time the child will go through the dilemma of how to be separated from the dependant. . With lack of education and communication about the changes that are taking place in their bodies, many teenagers tend to be diverted to risky and unhealthy behaviours. Socio-economic Factor In examining the socio-economical factor, poverty was seen as a major cause for teen promiscuity.

Adolescents from low socio-economic backgrounds often resulted in deviant sexual behaviour compare to those of affluent families.

Girls, in particularly who live in poverty have been shown to have increased rates of teen pregnancy compared to those of more affluent families due to the lack of education that limits the possibilities for these young women. Another contributing factor was the lack of religious commitments which studies have shown plays an integral part in society, lowering the likelihood of adolescent sexual behaviour and dire acts of deviance.

The benefits of religious beliefs to a society have been described as its spiritual capital. Social Factor Arising from the social factor, the main cause of teen promiscuity is the breakdown of the family unit.

Because of fragmented families, complex parental work schedules and lack of supervision, adolescents are more likely to find opportunities to engage in sexually activities. The family unit is crucial to a child's development and

healthy upbringing; in addition, much of what a child learns is through their family or guardians.

The theory of culture transmission by Sutherland supports the above statements. Sutherland proposes that an individual learns the culture, norms and values through the persons they interact with. The child learns accepted behaviour, values and gains a sense of security that will enable them to form lasting rewarding relationships. Parents play an extremely important role in their child's life at any age.

Whether directly or indirectly, they can influence important decisions.

Teenagers are often in need of guidance and have many options when searching for someone to talk to. A recent survey conducted by The Shell Poll revealed that eight in ten teenagers rely on their parents for support, although this may be surprising because there has been a common belief for years that teenagers could not turn to parents for advice, there is still the 25% who say they are concerned because they do not have an adult they can talk to about problems and decisions.

Another survey done by the The Shell Poll reports that 68% of teenagers feel that they have had as much guidance and support that they needed when making decisions about handling sex and relationships, but a surprising 58% said that they did not have adequate guidance on the topic of sex.

Teenagers need guidance especially from their parents in making those critical decisions.

Another issue arising from parenting is the one of Overbearing, Overprotective Supervision. Adolescents who are smothered in a controlling, micromanaging, suspicious environment are strong candidates for rebellion once the opportunity arises. Parents can set appropriate boundaries while still entrusting adolescents with increasing responsibility to manage themselves and their sexuality thus decreasing the chances of promiscuity. Peer Pressure has a direct link in influencing teenage promiscuity.

Adolescents are greatly affected of what their peers are doing and a general sense that " everyone is doing it except for me. " According to Erik Erikson's theory, " Adolescence is the age in which people must set up an Identity to escape identity diffusion and confusion.

At this age, adolescents give much importance to their friends who have a power over them". This phenomenon is called " Peer Pressure. " Indeed, peers are one of the most factors that influence the adolescent's psychological development. In previous findings, family was the only responsible for adolescents' behaviour, yet recent research found out that peers have a more powerful influence on adolescents, especially in what concerns adolescents achievement (Oswald and Suss, 1988).

Research has proven that the role of peers is more significant than parents' role.

This role is important because at teen's age, youths become more interested in knowing who they are. They are now trying hard to find out their identity at this stage. This is known as the " Identity versus Identity Confusion" in Erik Erickson's Theory of Identity Development. In fact, Haynie (2002) found <https://assignbuster.com/teenage-promiscuity-essay/>

out that adolescents get their self esteem from the group they are belong to and they cannot imagine themselves outside of that gathering.

Without a group, youths have a low self esteem and they are powerless. They see friends or peers as a vital component in contributing to their lives.

Psychological Factors Drugs and alcohol use is a severe problem facing teenagers. It is often linked to teenage sexual activity because these substances impair judgment and make teens more likely to engage in activities that they would not engage in if not under the influence. “ Teens have problems with sex and alcohol use because they are less able to cope with the potential consequences of drinking and using drugs which can undermine decisions about abstaining from sex and trigger irresponsible and dangerous sexual behaviour” (Foster 49).

Sex may become an outlet for a struggling teen’s frustrations, much in the same way drugs and alcohol serve as an outlet. In this way, sex becomes a drug, a way to escape feelings and emotional confusion. Any teenager who is acting out sexually will begin to feel a diminished sense of value and self-esteem. Adolescents who have a negative self-image believe that participating in sexual activity can increase their popularity with their peers and that sex, especially in girls, will keep their partner interested in them and also provide the attention and love they crave.

In the search for unique social identity for themselves, adolescents are frequently confused about what is right and wrong. Stanley Hall denoted this period as one of “ Storm and Stress”, and according to his theory this developmental stage is normal and not unusual. Struggles with adolescent

identity and depression usually set in when a teenager experiences a loss. The home is an important aspect of adolescent psychology; the home environment and family have a substantial impact on the developing minds of teenagers.

Adolescents exposed to abuse, whether it may be physical or sexually, domestic violence, rape or any deviant crimes are more likely to be at risk for teenage promiscuity and unfavourable health consequences which raises the likelihood of long term, negative outcomes. “ Once a child has been inappropriately sexualized, the child may see offering sex as an appropriate way to get attention and affection” (O’Leary 1999 3). Promiscuity among teens usually has a foundation.

It doesn’t not come from genes but rather from peers, depression, risky behaviour such as drug abuse and alcohol consumption, and from abuse in the home.

“ More than 75% of teenage prostitutes have been sexually abused. Over 75% of serial rapists reported they were sexually abused as youngsters” (Anon 2005 1). Environmental Factors There are numerous studies that illustrate television’s powerful influence on adolescents’ sexual attitudes, values and beliefs. In movies, television and music, sexual messages are becoming more explicit in dialogue, lyrics and behaviour.

The “ family hour” of prime-time television contains on average more than 8 sexual incidents, which is more than 4 times what it contained a decade ago. Nearly one third of family-hour shows contain sexual references and the incidence of vulgar language is also increasing. Music Television Videos

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(MTV) and other sources of music videos, often display suggestive sexual imagery. In one content analysis, 75% of concept videos involved sexual imagery and more than half involved violence, usually against women.

Although a recent content analysis found less eroticism in violent videos, recent studies have found that viewing music videos may in fact influence adolescents' attitudes concerning early or risky sexual activity. Greater sexual content is also found in videos that depicts alcohol use. Music lyrics have also become increasingly sexually explicit as well, and at least two studies have shown a correlation between risky adolescent behaviours and a preference for heavy metal music.

Advertising also contains a significant amount of sexual imagery, including the inappropriate use of children in provocative poses.

Sex is used to sell most common products from shampoo to hotel rooms. Research shows that heavy exposure to media sex is associated with an increased perception of the frequency of sexual activity in the real world. As a result, these explicit messages encourage risky behaviours among teenagers. The Internet provides teens with seemingly unlimited access to information on sex as well as a steady supply of people willing to talk about sex with them.

Sexual predators know this and manipulate young people into online relationships and, later, set up a time and place to meet.

It comes to them through porn spam on their e-mail or by inadvertently clicking on a link to a porn site. In fact, pornography is directly related to

sexual abuse, rape, and sexual violence. Pornography can be addictive, with the individual becoming desensitized to 'soft' porn and moving on to dangerous images of bondage, rape, sadomasochism, torture, group sex and violence. Effects and consequences of teenage promiscuity

According to Teen STD Statistics in the United States the consequences of sexual promiscuity among teenagers leads to an increase in Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or sexually transmitted infections (STIs). When it comes to sexually transmitted diseases the proof is in the fact that the Centres for Disease Control (CDC) in the United States reports that 19 million new STD infections occur every year and, even more alarming is that nearly 50 percent of these new cases happen to young people between the ages of 15 and 24.

Not only that, but statistics reveal that half of all new HIV infections occur in teenagers. Diseases such as Syphilis, a sexually transmitted disease that was virtually wiped out (or at least under tight control) has been making a comeback, resulting in an increase in cases during the last six years and, while Gonorrhoea has levelled off, there is an indication that it could be creeping back into the population. Chlamydia is another STD that is making a comeback in the population. Reports are that it is most prevalent in young people aged 15-24.

According to the CDC, from 2005 to 2006 reported cases of Chlamydia climbed from 976, 445 to 1, 030, 911. However, health care professionals worry that the rates are probably higher than, perhaps as high as 2. 8 million new cases a year. The problem is that Chlamydia is one of the most under-

diagnosed diseases in the country and young women are the hardest hit by the re-emergence. Research by the CDC indicates the rate of Chlamydia in teenage girls is three times higher than teenage boys (“ Teen STD Statistics”). An additional issue is the teenage pregnancy rate.

The United States has the highest rates of teen pregnancy and births in the western industrialized world. Thirty-four percent of young women become pregnant at least once before they reach the age of 20. Eight in ten of these teen pregnancies are unintended and 79 percent are to unmarried teens (Teen Pregnancy Statistics and Teen Pregnancy Facts). The teen birth rate has declined slowly but steadily from 1991 to 2002 with an overall decline of 30 percent for those aged 15 to 19. These recent declines reverse the 23-percent rise in the teenage birth rate from 1986 to 1991.

The largest decline since 1991 by race was for black women. The birth rate for black teens aged 15 to 19 fell 42 percent between 1991 to 2002. Hispanic teen birth rates declined 20 percent between 1991 and 2002. The rates of both Hispanics and blacks, however, remain higher than for other groups. (Teen Pregnancy Statistics and Teen Pregnancy Facts). Many of these teens are at the high school level of education.

When this occurs teen mothers are less likely to complete high school (only one-third receive a high school diploma) and only 1. 5% have a college degree by age 30.

Teen mothers are more likely to end up on welfare. A young male who may want to accept responsibility of being a parent, would drop out from school to seek employment at an early age to provide for his new family. Teen sex

often goes hand in hand with substance abuse, according to an annual survey released by the National Centre on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University. The survey of teens aged 12 to 17 concluded that 66 % of sexually active teens are likely to have tried alcohol, compared with 10 % of teens who aren't having sex.

Sexually active teens were more likely to have been drunk at least once in the previous month; more likely to have tried marijuana; and more likely to have tried cigarettes. The more time that teens spent with their girlfriends or boyfriends, the more likely they were to smoke, use drugs and drink, the survey found. Sexual promiscuity also leads to emotional dysfunction whereby men and women have difficulty in trusting and committing in relationships as they get older.

Individuals having broken relationships after their first sexual encounter tend to become distant towards the opposite sex and this tends to lead to homosexuality and discrimination towards one another. It also affects the individual physically as women would use oral contraceptives to avoid pregnancy at an early age.

In some cases oral contraceptives may inflict internal damage to the woman physically leading to making her barren and creating cervical cancer in her body (“ Oral Contraceptives and Cancer Risk”).

Solutions for teenage promiscuity Author, Charles E. Schaefer, in his book (How to Talk to Your Kids about Really Important Things) suggests that parents and religious beliefs are a potent one-two (meaning it goes hand in hand) combination when it comes to influencing a teenager's decision on

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sexual activities. If they have received serious, thoughtful information from their parents, they will be better equipped to deal with myths and misinformation about such activities since strong family values are essential in preventing promiscuity.

Talking to your teens about sex encourages responsible behaviour when it comes to sexual activities since many teens believe that their parents are the most influential source of information on sex.

When parents are involved in their children's lives and share their religious and moral value system with them, they will see less risky and immoral behaviours from their children. Teenagers are in need of parenting and tend to feel more secure when boundaries are clear therefore parental guidance, care and supervision should be constant. According to experts, keeping the lines of communication open enables parents to properly discuss sex with their children from an early age, ideally pre-teens. Parents should never avoid or feel uncomfortable discussing sensitive issues with their children since, this may lead to the child seeking the wanted information elsewhere, such as friends and the internet. The church and family must take ultimate responsibility for the moral and spiritual values of teenagers.

These units should work together to guide and teach the children to make productive decisions. This involves active participation and perseverance on the path of both these institutions.

By influencing kids and teens to make healthy decisions, the church can halt the influx of teenage promiscuity. According to the Physicians Resource Council (2003), the positive influence of peers play an important role in the

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prevention of sexual promiscuity among teens. They may adopt many behavioural patterns from their peers, such as acquiring good school grades, attending church frequently and abstinence from sex until marriage.

Berne (2007) stated that before hormones begin to impede judgement in teenagers, sex education should take place in the classroom, as a part of a balanced curriculum. Abstinence can and should be taught not only as the cornerstone of sex education but as a lifestyle to be mastered" (Ojeda, 2003). In the United States, some leaders in the fields of politics, religion and education have implemented sex education programs that focus on abstinence, in an effort to reduce the rates of teenage pregnancy which results from promiscuity. Different methods of birth control and prevention methods for sexually transmitted diseases are taught during traditional sex education programs.

According to Ojeda (2003) " Abstinence-only education programs state that abstinence until marriage is the standard for human sexual behaviour and warn students of the psychological and physical harms that may accompany premarital sex. " Sex education also seeks to provide teens with the contraception or STD/HIV prevention information that they need to make responsible decisions if they are to become sexually active. It will also encourage teens to avoid premature sexual acts, teach the respect for others and prepare them to deal with peer pressure and pressure from partners to engage in sexual activity (Ojeda, 2003).

Another suggested solution to teenage promiscuity is the teaching and use of contraceptives. In all aspects of the world we may find that there are

some teens who will decide to abstain from all types of sex, but most will not. Berne (2007) said that “ young people, just like all other people, are sexual beings.

” Introducing the accurate information on contraceptives to teenagers will not only impose a particular lifestyle on them, but it will empower these young people to make healthy decisions on their own accord and also in the realities of life (Berne, 2007).

Positive communication between parents and children greatly helps young people to establish individual values and to make healthy decisions (Whittaker, 2009). “ In one study, when mothers discussed condom use before teens initiated sexual intercourse, youth were three times more likely to use condoms than were teens whose mothers never discussed condoms or discussed condoms only after teens became sexually active”