

LJH29 29.6.89

18,9; 'English, mixed race'; lives with ma, 3 bros, one sis; ma - no work; pa left 15 years ago; catholic but means nothing to her and she does not practice; hetero, bf of 3 years, has sex (after 2 years) which she enjoys.

Very attractive, small, dark haired (longish ringlet style), lightish skin, wearing jeans and a sweat shirt. Pa is now on his third marriage, she sees him when he and she can be bothered, never had much of a relationship with him. He is a dreadful MCP to his third wife. (So are her brothers, at least the older one, a dreadful womaniser, and her older sisters' boyfriend.) She thinks this is a generational thing. Older (30 or so) men are like it, women expect it. The younger ones, her age, the boys are more aware that girls might object. They might slap your bottom, but then worry that you would object. She describes in detail the girlfriend of her 16 year old bro, who won't put up with any crap, an independent person, whom she clearly admires "she's brilliant" and sees a lot of herself in. She mentioned being a feminist in the context of putting off a womaniser type of man, who came up and put his arm around her (at college, one of these older men with the outmoded ways). I asked her if she thought the changed attitudes of younger men had been influenced by feminism, she said the word meant so many different things, and for some it just means being 'against men'.

She is in a three year relationship with a boy of her own age. They were together for 2 years prior to having sexual intercourse, did all sorts of things (sexually) but not that - the time was not right. But then it was right, she didn't decide, it just happened, no precautions. But the next day told ma (who said there were no virgins left in her family) and went off down to the clinic with ma to get the pill. She sees this as her responsibility, she is the one who will have to carry 'the lump' for nine months. She enjoys the sex and sees the relationship as continuing, but does not envisage marriage, does not think that far ahead. Clearly does not see herself as at risk, in a monogamous relationship where you know each other's sexual history.

She is doing A levels (English, Theatre Studies, Sociology), going to uni/poly but not decided what, maybe drama or some such. Has not thought further, does not think into the future except in relation to particular engagements which she might have (going to a wedding next month), but considers education very important, (in Thatcher's Britain, "this country" won't get on without it, be on YTS, a fate worse than death for her it seems) and is encouraged by ma.

Sex ed in school useless, all about contraception (and made a big deal re having a black condom, which she saw as absurd). Also was in fifth year and if what the girls in the class said about their sexual behaviour was true, most of them had already had sex so presumably it was a bit late for them. She thinks that clinics could do more to inform young people re STDs in general (and AIDS) in particular, and the effect of the pill etc on their bodies. Young people do not know enough re AIDS, don't see it as relevant to them, and the problem is getting them to change their behaviour, even if they do start realising that it is important and does have relevance in their own life. It is also, as with so many other young women I have spoken to, pregnancy which is the most urgent worry for her, and her friends - or as far as she is concerned should be if it is not.