

LJH25 21.6.1989
Susie

Q. Okay, one of the things that we're interested in asking young women about in this study is their relationships.

A. Uh-huh.

Q. For example, what's the most important relationship to you at the moment, how they feel and think about that relationship. What would you say is the most important relationship to you at the moment?

A. With another person?

Q. Mm.

A. I would say mainly three, yeah, definitely my boyfriend, my mother and a girlfriend, a friend of mine. They'd be the most important to me really - 'cos my mother 'cos she's my mother, and I get on with her quite well, and I didn't used to, for about the past year and a half, my boyfriend because I've only been out with him for a short while, and my friend because I've known her since I was about eleven years old, like you know, I've just got back in contact with her and started going out again, so I'd say those are the three most important relationships in my life at the moment.

Q. And what's important about them, I mean what's important for example in the relationship with your friend that you just got back in contact with?

A. With my friend - well at school as friends we didn't get on for a short while, just before we left school we didn't get on that well, and then she invited me out one night recently, I said yeah, I'll go along. And - 'cos I split up with my best friend a few months beforehand and to be back with a friend that knew me is really nice, and I want to keep in contact with my friends because I think friends is one of the things you have all through your life, and I wanna keep in contact and that, that's why it's important to me.

Q. Yeah. What about your boyfriend, what's important about that relationship?

A. Because he is my boyfriend. I haven't had many boyfriends really, I've had a couple beforehand and to me, for me to like someone, something's got to be special to start off with; I think that's why it's special to me really, 'cos he likes me and I like him.

Q. How did you meet him?

A. I met him about two years ago down the (?) pub very briefly, oh this is GRAHAM - his name's GRAHAM - this is GRAHAM; you know there was a group of us sitting there, and I met him there about a month ago on a train station. He was just coming back from a concert with some friends and I was with my friends, and they come up to us and they just said, can you speak English, they said it in German, can you speak English, and we got speaking to them, they come up... school... gate... I said I went to... and he said oh, d'you know so-and-so and it turned out we knew the same people. That's how I met him.

Q. Did you recognise him when you met him at the station from having met him before?

A. When he said his name, and when he said what pubs he went to, and I was going, oh, I'm sure I've met you, I saw a photo of him yesterday, I said that's how I remember you -

Q. Yeah?

A. - And he didn't remember me, but I said no, I have met you before.

Q. How old is he?

A. He's twenty, he was twenty in MONTH.

Q. Is the relationship a sexual relationship or -

A. Yes, it is, yeah.

Q. How did you decide that - or did you decide it?

A. I - I don't know, it just - I - it was me who said it to him, I want to go to bed with you, it just - when I said it, it just seemed right at the time, I don't know, it just - it was just - on the moment it just felt right, but, you know, we waited a week afterwards and then at the time... his house it just seemed like - it just - he just seemed the right person to me, it's weird to explain it, I can't, I don't really know myself, but to me he seems to be the right person.

Q. Mm, yes. Had - was that the first time you'd had sex with anyone?

A. Yes, yes. But it was - it was just last week actually, so - yeah, it was the first time I slept with somebody.

Q. And how are you feeling about -

A. Sort of - the next - beforehand, the day before, and I was thinking, God, should I have said it to him,... think I'm easy and all this, and - and then, you know, it just happened. And afterwards I was sitting there and I thought, oh, God, have I done the right thing? And - 'cos my mum doesn't know, and today she's saying to me, you know, I hope you don't sleep with him, all this, and I felt really guilty 'cos I felt - let my mother down, but it was right, to me and him it seemed right so - you know, but today I feel quite bad really 'cos I felt I let my mother down, 'cos she'll say to me, you know, you can get AIDS and if you do I hope you take precautions and all this.

Q. Did you take precautions?

A. Yeah, yeah.

Q. What did you use?

A. We used a sheath.

Q. Do you think you would be - you will be able to tell her at some point? I suppose you'll have to -

A. Yeah. I don't know. I'd very much like to tell her, but whether I actually do is another matter. I mean I was speaking to my boss the other day at work and they take the mickey out of me about me being a virgin 'cos they don't know that I sleep with my boyfriend, and I said, well, what would you think if someone said that to your daughter? He said, oh but my daughter wouldn't tell me, and I said to him, well you should make sure that she does, you know, if you have a good relationship with her. I'd love to tell my parents but the reaction I'd get - I don't know.

Q. Do you know what the reaction would be?

A. They'd be annoyed and they'd wanna see him and they'd... him and it wouldn't be worth the hassle. You know, 'cos my parents had known each other from an early age, my - my father was my mother's only boyfriend, so I - you know, she's a bit - I mean my first boyfriend I had I was her age when she met my dad, and she thought I was gonna marry him, you know. No, I - I would like to tell them, but I don't know if I will, unless they'll somehow find out... can imagine happening, and that would be my mother and I don't think she'd tell my father, so -

Q. Have you - you were saying you - it just seemed like the right moment. I know it's difficult to say why and how... but had you thought about it before, I mean had you thought of the way it might be?

A. I disc - when I had my best friend, we used to discuss how would you like it to be, you know, and it was how I expected it to be actually.

Q. It was?

A. It was, because before I asked him I was thinking, oh he'll think I'm easy, what will he think of me, will he pack me in afterwards, will he just use me, and I thought, no he won't. So I said to him, and he said yeah, and we waited a week, and then it just happened how I thought it would. ...said to my friend, well he's a nice bloke and he'll know what he's doing. (laugh) So I think it was yeah -

Q. And he did - he did know what he was doing?

A. Yeah, I think so, anyway.

Q. So you enjoyed it, did you?

A. The second time - we done it twice the same day in the space of about two hours, the first time it hurt like hell, then the second time it wasn't so bad, you know.

But we've only done it twice. It seems okay, he said oh, he said, you'll properly lose it when you've enjoyed it, but to me I feel I've lost my virginity now.

Q. And what does that feel like, I mean was it something you were planning to sort of hang onto or -

A. I don't know, actually, saying that, I was - I got a - 'cos... the other day, there's this song about innocent filled with no shame, he said oh, that's me, that's me - I thought oh God, that's not me anymore. It's a bit weird and I thought, well, I don't regret what I've done, so I don't feel ashamed, and when he goes and tells his mates... oh, God, but no, I don't feel ashamed of what I've done, no. It's only natural... so -

Q. Yeah. And do you think - I mean this is also difficult to say but do you think that the relationship has...

A. I feel - I feel closer to him. 'Cos afterwards we was sitting there and I - I never felt so close to anyone in all my life, that was so close to someone. That's all, really, just felt closer to him, like it's something between us, you know, 'cos when I told him I was a virgin he said, oh God, you've got to be sure that you want to and all this, I was going, yeah, I'm sure.

Q. You feel he's someone you can trust?

A. Yeah, yeah. I've been out with different blokes before, he's the eldest I've been out with, and he seems like more mature than the other two were, you know, the other two were. I feel that, you know, he's not gonna... "guess what I had the other night", he won't go like that to his mates.

Q. Do you think that's a problem with like young men in general?

A. Oh, definitely, their conquests, you know. I mean at school, used to sit there, used to talk about - oh, my God, they was only about fourteen at the time, and I think it depends on the bloke really, you know, some will brag about it, they don't really care for the girl, some used to brag about it anyway for their image, but I think it just depends on the person, you know, what they say, a lot of them exaggerate anyway, I think. So you know, you ask the bloke one thing and the girl will tell you another, you know.

Q. Did you used to talk about that kind of thing with your friends at school, I mean about what they, the girls, were doing as well?

A. Yeah, yeah we did, because - there was a girl that I knew, she went on the pill - oh, she's gone on the pill, you know - but looking back, she was just taking, she was just being sensible, she wasn't a slag or anything, she was just being sensible.

Q. Was there that danger, though, that people might think that she was a slag?

A. Oh, at school, yeah, it was a totally different attitude to what it is out of school. I've left just over a year now, and if you slept with a boy you was automatically branded a slag, that was it; you know, but if it was a long relationship, like six months or that everyone was going, ah, but she's been going out with him for a long while so that's alright; and there was girls at our school that had reputations 'cos they slept with different blokes, you know. That's what they wanted to do, it's up to them, it's not up to everyone else, you know, to decide what they - what they are.

Q. Yeah. Were there sort of - I mean sometimes when people have spoken to me they've said there were like, at school there were girls who did and girls who didn't...

Do you think that was going on at school?

A. Oh, yeah, because from the first year there was a group of girls that was about, they all went to the same school together... just down the road, and they stuck friends all throughout, you know, 'til we left in the fifth year, and they were... - not sleeping around but they had a boyfriend for a couple of weeks, they slept with him and they just - the way they were sort of stuck out, they didn't like talking to people, they were unique, they were the best in the school, people didn't like them 'cos of that, but there was girls in there who was quieter, like HARRIET, and she was sleeping with her boyfriend -

Q. - but kept it to herself, did she?

A. People found out because he told people, you know, and he told one of his mates in confidence, you know, "don't tell anyone but", ... go and tell someone, it'll just get around. She was really upset about it, when everyone knew what they was doing together, you know. Not very nice really.

Q. Is that one of the reasons why you didn't get involved with the boys that you went out with before?

A. Well the first boy I went out with, that's when I was fourteen, he was sixteen, I met him - I met him through my best mate, and I just went out with him to go out with someone, so I could get the experience of knowing what a relationship was like, and that only lasted about three weeks. I didn't like him at all, I put him off and, you know, I just kissed him, that was it, 'cos I didn't want to know about it, 'cos, looking back, I wasn't ready for it I don't think. The second boyfriend, he was in the army,... that only lasted a week 'cos like he got... 'cos I was younger than him, I was fifteen at the time, he was eighteen - 'cos he's one of the youngest they all took the mickey out of him anyway 'cos he's going out with a school (?) leaver, even more so, so, you know... Then there's GRAHAM now. He just - he just seemed the right one basically.

Q. When was it you met him again, how long ago?

A. It was - not that long actually, about a month.

Q. What kind of thing does he do, does he work?

A. Yeah, he left school and went to college for two years, he worked for a communications company, he's working now actually, he works shift work, early in the morning 'til afternoon or in the afternoon till about nine o'clock at night. He like (?) telex..., he does - basically he does the same what I do actually, in contact with people over the world. So we actually got talking because - talking about telexes, and he said something, he said something about... - oh, we sell them, you know - you know, had things in common and that.

Q. Yeah. What do you - what is your job like?

A. Well I work in a computer company, we buy and sell computers, things like that, I'm the one that does - is responsible for shipping them out, all the documents, the VAT, stuff like that, I do secretarial work - general, you know, dogs body really, as I'm the only girl that works there, there's five other blokes - no, four other blokes, sorry, and I like do secretarial work, run down the post office, the bank, general - just general office and logistics, that's what I do.

Q. How do you like it?

A. Oh, I enjoy it, I've been there just over a year now and I've learnt so much since I've been there, it's unbelievable. I enjoy my job a lot, I'm planning to stay there for at least another year, unless something major happens like getting the sack, which I don't see happening.

Q. Yeah.

A. I enjoy my job a lot.

Q. How do you see the future in general, I mean do you think you'll stay in that kind of work or -

A. I don't know. The business can be very quiet, it'll be quiet now 'til about September and it gets very, very boring. Maybe if I do get bored and I decide to leave and get another job, I don't know if I'm going to stay in the line. I - I'd like to be a personal assistant to a director actually, I'd like to do something like that. That's what I can see me doing, but what I'd love to do if I could just do it would be a beautician. But I can't really see that happening because I don't want to go to college. When I do eventually get married, have children, stop work, then when they go to school go back to work again, part-time, I don't know. But for the future, at the moment, as far as I'm concerned ...

Q. Maybe when - well, I don't know - maybe after a while you'll feel that you might want to do - you might want to go off to college. Is it a real desire ... beautician, is it something you've always wanted to do?

A. Mm. Ever since I was little I always wanted to be a hairdresser, be a hairdresser. Then it was a beautician, I'd really love to do that - I've got a friend at work who works in the office downstairs, a different company to us, she's Brazilian and she's over here learning English... and she's saying to me go back to college, go back to college, you know, get some qualifications, you'll regret it if you don't do it. But I speak to people that go to college, and oh, God, gotta do the homework, gotta do the studying and - I mean at school it was awful, the last two years, having to stay in and study for my exams. I couldn't see me sticking to it but - qualification,... I'd just love to be a beautician, I really would.

Q. Some of the courses for beauticians are quite demanding actually, aren't they?

A. Mm. I don't know, it's just, I mean, always being like - always when like - always when I did my mum's make-up when I was little - mum can I do your make-up - and from an early age, well, say about eleven, I stuck on a bit of make-up and I've always been interested in it. I used to do my nan's hair for her, things like - I used to love doing that. And go to the hairdresser, I love going to the hairdresser, I feel so pampered and - sit there...hair... I thought, no, I'll do the job that I'm doing at the moment. I think it's just a desire that - a lot of people have desires for things to do and they never really do them.

Q. Mm, I think that's true, yeah. But you were saying you do sort of - you envisage getting married and having children -

A. Oh, yeah, hopefully, if anyone will have me (laugh), I would like to get married some day, when I'm older.

Q. Much older?

A. I'd like to get married at least twenty-two, twenty-three, and have children when I'm about twenty-six, something like that. ... with a woman, she was twenty-one, she was expecting a child and I... went on holiday with a girl who was older than her, who was really weird. I wanna have children at a young age. My mum had me when she was about twenty-six, you know, she was married about seven years before she had me. (?) I want to enjoy it with my husband before a little kid comes along.

Q. Yeah, yeah.

A. But I - I love children anyway, so if I couldn't have children I'd adopt.

Q. What about GRAHAM, does he love children as well, or have you not got into that conversation yet?

A. About children? I don't know actually. I don't know. I mean he's talking about his childhood and that and... when we was little, but we haven't really talked about like kids or what, I mean he knows I like animals I suppose...children, but he knows - he knows that I love little kids and animals, and when I said I like kids... gave me a funny look, I said oh don't worry, I don't want them yet.

Q. How do you get on with your brother?

A. It depends. My brother seems to change when my parents are around, when he's got all his friends around, but apart from that we get on pretty well. I mean we have the odd fight, which we fight, like you... over the head...; no, we can get on really well, me and my brother, very well, you know, I tidy up his room for him and he likes me choosing his clothes 'cos he says I choose stylish clothes. We can get on really well, I mean just I think every brother and sister goes through a point, well, you know, I don't know, at the moment he's going through this funny age, I think, 'cos he's just - I think he's just starting puberty, he's starting - he's that funny age, when GRAHAM calls up he starts acting all stupid and hanging round the phone, you know, "do you want me to phone for you?", you know, "ask your boyfriend if he wants..." - go away, you know. My nan always warned me that he'd get to like that, I was going no, no he won't, he's - he's got to that age now...

Q. So you've probably stopped fighting now then...?

A. Well very rarely, like, we go out and hit each other but it's more like shouting and screaming at each other if he annoys me or I annoy him. He seems to be the age at the moment where he seems to be shouting and screaming at everyone. When I

was his age I was at secondary school, I was the youngest in the year, and I know what I was like at that age, very, very difficult, so that's how I can imagine him being really.

Q. Yes. You can sympathise with him because you remember it yourself.

A. Oh, yeah.

Q. Yeah. What about your relationship with your - with your mum, you said it's good now but it hadn't been before.

A. Well when I was younger - I don't know how old, I must have been about ten, I called my mum a pig when we were rowing and she got really upset about it. Oh, you call me names, I'll call you names. And it seemed that we was always - it's like me and my dad - I believe in astrology, there's a couple of days between me and my dad's birthday, so we're the same sign, so we (?)don't get on, if we can we get on really well, it's always my mum in between me and my dad, you know... and it's always been like that, and ... always have rows with her, and my nan's got cancer and I don't think she's really...and I couldn't understand why she told me about my nan... Then it was... going out with JOHN... army, and I didn't wanna tell her he was in the army, I thought... so she saw him one day down the...she saw him one day down the High Street, he was in a uniform, she went, oh I thought... why didn't you tell me he was in the army... and then when I admitted that I was going down the pub, going out with an army bloke, since that day we've got on so well because I say to her, oh, me and GRAHAM... or I went down the pub tonight and so and so was there, and, like the little things, not really personal things, just things that happen at work and I can talk to her like she's a friend, but not a close friend, if you understand what I mean-

Q. Mm, yes.

A. - but she's nice at points... One thing I really do hate...she's always right, always right. I was gonna go out with this bloke called MARK, he's 'I'm gonna ask you out, I'm gonna ask you out', he never did, my mum said he won't ask you out, you know, forget about him, find someone else. She was right... I said oh God, you know, you're always wrong, it's not fair. She is literally always right at everything, you know... sometimes.

Q. Is that why you're worried that she'll find out about it? I used to worry like that with my mother, she seemed to be able to find out things that you couldn't imagine she could have found out.

A. My mum - I don't - I've got a - actually, in there I've got a bag of stuff, if things happen, if I've met someone or if I'm upset I write it down, and I used to put it in that drawer. I went there one day, it was the wrong way round. Oh my God, my mother's read it, oh my God. And she was like hinting at things, and I was thinking, oh, my God, but she didn't actually say anything. So what was the question again?

Q. I was just reflecting that she could find out about things. I used to worry about my mother because she seemed to be able to find out things without me, you know, trying to keep them from her desperately sort of thing.

A. Yeah, my mum seems to know when I'm upset or when I'm happy or - she can tell when I'm in a bad mood or some - you know, what's happened, she'll know...

Q. But weren't you annoyed to think that she'd looked and read your private things?

A. I'm not sure she did, though - I don't -

Q. You might have moved them around yourself.

A. If - I mean I don't keep a diary - oh, I used to keep a diary and I was petrified that she'd find it... thing like that. And I thought where can I hide it? 'Cos if I throw stuff away, if I sort of - they look through the rubbish, like in there, I've got a black sack in there, threw half the stuff away, my personal stuff, I'm absolutely petrified they'll sort through it. So I'm gonna keep it there 'til the dustmen come... out there. But if they read it, oh, my God, I don't think - she wouldn't let me out the house again. I am worried that they would read some of it, I mean it's not like - you know I haven't got anything down about me and GRAHAM, he said to me, don't write it down

because... his mum read his diary, say no, don't write it down, goes do you keep a diary, he's going no don't worry, I don't write anything down now. You know, but if I thought my mum had been through my personal things I would be upset.

Q. One of the things we were thinking of asking - we are asking young women to do, is to keep - keep a diary for us, just for a couple of months, and then send it back to us -

A. Yeah, I'll do that.

Q. You'll do that?

A. Yeah.

Q. ... Well you can keep it hidden away in...

A. Actually I keep something written down, like what's - what does happen to me and I did actually write down in the diary. That is carried round with me permanently that bag, or if it's not in that bag, put into something else. God knows what I'd do if I lost it.

Q. Yes. It's just - I mean the sorts of things that you're probably writing down in your diary yourself, how - what you actually do and how you feel about it and how things are going, about your relationships and such.

A. Yeah, I'll do that.

Q. The other sort of thing that we're interested in is to find out how what - when you were at school, what was the sex education at school like?

A. Well there was the first year, that was like this is a man's body, this is a woman's body, this is what this is for, this is what that is for; this is the reproductive system - oh, and the last year at primary school actually, we was taught very basically about periods and... basically the first year was the same what we learnt at the last year in primary school. And in the third year, more of a in-depth thing, that was about contraception - actually we had a very good biology teacher in the third year, you know, she - we had to write down and describe sexual intercourse. We was all sitting there all giggling away and, you know, she - it was homework... writing a paragraph, she - just writing a paragraph, here's some key words to use, and I really... understood... we was all sitting there going, giggling away. And she said, I know some of you...about four pages writing about sexual intercourse, we was sitting there... you know... and she's going, what's funny...you know, and looking back, you know, we was very immature at that age. Yeah, we - contraception, we was shown them, very briefly though... if you wanted them. Yeah, and the reproductive system... I mean I took an exam which I failed. Briefly went through the sex education again, that wasn't as good, that time...- what I don't - I mean the thing -I started to go on the pill, I went to the doctor's yesterday... start the next period, and like little things you don't know what to ask, they don't teach you at school -

Q. Yeah, yeah.

A. Just little things, you know, I didn't know how to start the pill... the pill, you know... I'd like the contraception part thing to be longer, 'cos it's - it's like this is a cap, this is a sponge, this is a condom. They didn't pass them round, you know -

Q. So you couldn't actually see what they were like.

A. ... come up if you want to. Now no one's going up you know, you go oh I'll go up with you, like two of us'd go up, ... end up... ugh. (laugh)... sex education at school really, I don't - it might be totally different nowadays, I mean they seem to be doing it better, I think, they learn more than us, you know.

Q. I think it's a bit variable, some schools it's rather good and other schools it's patchy.

A. I was thinking actually because GRAHAM went to a boys' school and I was wondering... sex education like, you know, all blokes sitting round a table -

Q. Yeah.

A. - you know, and it -... women and they go, dunno, you know, I'll ask him one day I think actually.

Q. Yeah, yeah, be interesting. But was yours a single sex school?

A. No, it was mixed, mixed. Mixed comprehensive.

Q. Did they mention anything at all about AIDS during that sex education or at school in general?

A. When AIDS - I mean when we was in school it just started to come out about AIDS I think, it was about the third year. Used to have a class called social education, and we was took into the hall one day and shown a film, it was all about sexually transmitted diseases and things... very basically, you know... AIDS through, you know, ... how and, you know, people'd go like, how do you get AIDS?... oh, God, you know... AIDS was not - just how you could get it really, if you sleep with an infected partner you can get infected, and through blood. Our form teacher actually, her husband's [REDACTED] and she was like, you know, I'm gonna teach you about AIDS, she was a very very good form teacher, she was. And basically just, you know, you get it if you sleep with someone, if you infected someone's blood, you know, but it was very quick, that was it.

Q. Mm. Did you - do you feel that you know sufficient about it or do you feel that you need to know more? Or do you think it's not relevant to you?

A. My mum always says that, she - she says to me I think it's not relevant to me, I mean if I slept with someone without - unprotect -without any contraception - I mean I'm going on the pill, but he's gonna use a sheath still - a back-up, just in case.

Q. Yeah. Supposing you - I mean if it wasn't this relationship with GRAHAM and you were going to have another relationship, would it - would it bother you then, do you think?

A. Yeah, I mean - I'll have protected sex until I get married and I think even then I'd ... have a test... wanted me to have one but, you know, I know what I'm saying is the truth that I don't trust other people totally what they say, I don't think you can really -

Q. Mm, yeah.

A. I mean, oh yeah "I've only slept with one other girl", but she might have slept with someone who slept with someone who slept with someone else and so on.

Q. Well I suppose really to be sure - do you think that other young people worry about - I mean would you say your friends at school or friends that you have now, are they concerned?

A. Well we don't really talk about it, I mean my mum says this to me, you don't really talk about it, really I mean, it's not like we've got this thing, oh only queers get it or if you're a druggie, it's not a thing I - I think in this age you don't wanna get pregnant, if you do you're bloody stupid anyway, but I think everyone uses a sheath for that and then AIDS just wouldn't come into it. I mean none of my friends as far as I know are drug users, there's one bloke I know and that's... and he only takes tablets and that, but -we don't really talk about it really.

Q. So you don't think it would have - it's not changed their behaviour at all, I mean the main thing they'd be worried about would be pregnancy rather than -

A. Yeah.

Q. Yeah.

A. ... I mean it's - at our age it's - some people have been having sex with people for, you know, a couple of years since they were about fourteen, but it's more like getting pregnant or catching a disease, you know, not AIDS as such. That's, you know, as far as I can see... you know.

Q. What about - you said that you - you don't think it's a gay plague or just a drug -

A. Uhuh.

Q. - get it, was that - that was the way it was sort of presented in the beginning, wasn't it, did you think that in the beginning or -

A. I honestly can't remember.

Q. Yeah.

A. I mean I watch the news and I read newspapers, so I remember at one point there was programmes and, oh, everything, it was quite a big - there was quite a big

scare... oh God, AIDS, oh God. That's all I can remember about AIDS in the beginning, and, you know, about Rock Hudson dying, and I suppose I was quite ignorant in them days, you know, just... didn't take much notice of it. That's what I can remember, though, I can remember the AIDS programmes, AIDS adverts, AIDS posters -

Q. AIDS anything, yeah.

A. - Oh, Christ, yeah.

Q. What did you think of those - those sort of campaigns, did it, I mean what did it make you think about AIDS, did you think it was effective or -

A. At that point it didn't affect me because I wasn't going out with anyone, didn't wanna go out with anyone so... I think... "Nineteen", "Company" and "Smash Hits", they've always got a thing about, you know, AIDS in there, which I think is a good idea. The coverage on TV, I think it went a bit hysterical personally -

Q. Yes.

A. - like the newspapers, you know, you can get AIDS by, you know I think my mum and dad have got weird ideas 'cos they're saying to me, if you sleep with GRAHAM you might get AIDS, and I was going, you know, well you might get AIDS - how can you get AIDS from...? They said oh well you've had your period... oh my Christ, you know. I think they think I don't know, they're trying to frighten me out of something, you know.

Q. Mm, yeah, that could be.

A. I mean I was - you know, I was taught at school all the basics, I read the newspapers, I got my... that's like... how you can get this and how you can get that and how you get this, that and the other.

Q. Mm. So they haven't succeeded in scaring you out of it.

A. No, no. I don't know if they're trying to.

Q. Yeah. Well perhaps they genuinely don't know, perhaps you ought to tell them.

A. True, I mean at school we was taught by our form teacher and... I think what they heard was on TV, the great hysteria basically, what was on TV, 'cos I remember... programmes, how... they were, having to use a condom, having to get it on.

Q. Yeah. What about safe sex, did you get any impression of what safe sex involves from any of the stuff that you've heard about AIDS?

A. I don't really understand.

Q. Safe sex, what do you think of safe sex?

A. Oh, what, from the AIDS stuff? Oh, just use a condom and don't sleep with people until... yeah, just it's basically that, you know, use a condom...

Q. What about - how do you think of sex, I mean when you think of sex what do you think of?

A. Oh. It can be someone you care about and show your affection for... one-night stand thing...

Q. Mm.

A. That's how I see it.

Q. Do you see it as basically sort of penetration really?

A. What do you mean by that?

Q. Well, the man penetrating the woman - actually having sort of sexual intercourse, is what sex is.

A. Mm, yeah. I think that's it if you're into one-night stands but if you're into - if you care a lot about each other, it's more than just that, I think.

Q. Mm, yeah. I was thinking of other sorts of things that you could do that might be sexual but doesn't include actual sexual intercourse.

A. Yeah, yeah, that's different, you know, if you care a lot about each other and like each other, but then - then again some people I know just do it anyway so - I think... person... try it out really.

Q. Mm, yeah. When you're talking about - I mean you've been very careful in your sexual behaviour, not taking any risks at all - do you think you take risks in any other areas of your life?

A. ...

Q. Well some people think smoking and drinking is risky.

A. Well I smoke and I drink. I don't like smoking, I know it's bad, I wish I didn't smoke, but I do. Drinking, I was watching that ...alcohol thing on late at night... I'm going tee-total then... drink, got a lemonade... (?)I couldn't have a non-alcoholic drink like that especially at lunchtime... but I'm not forced into it. I think social drink, I've never been totally out of my... never, ever, ever. I've been drunk but I've always known what I've been doing... recently... It's only like walking down the road and get run over, it's... anyway so -

Q. And you were saying none of your friends take drugs or anything like that?

A. Not to my knowledge, no.

Q. And you don't -

A. No, I've never touched them, I can honestly say that, I've never touched any type of drug in my life, smoking, injecting...

Q. And you wouldn't too?

A. No...

Q. Yeah. It's very variable what people see as risky, I mean some people think ... is risky...

A. ...

Q. Did you used to do that at all?

A. ...

Q. Yeah. When we were talking just now about girls getting a reputation - do you think there's a kind of double standard, that there's a difference between girls and boys?

A. Definitely. If a bloke sleeps around, oh nice time, well done, if it's a girl, oh, you know... she's easy. It's so much like that - especially at school. So I mean my best friend... they're like that, they... So that's... I go absolutely mad, it's totally, with a girl it's oh well done, all this, I've spoken to the blokes at work about this before and they totally agree with me, you know, that it is the wrong attitude to have. I mean, 'cos I mean, okay, poor girl could get pregnant now, a bloke could get AIDS or syphilis... from the girl... it really annoys me actually.

Q. Yeah. What do you think could be done about it, if anything?

A. I think attitudes are changing, I mean my brother is eleven, it's totally different, what it is now to what it is my age. I hope it will. That's - I mean I hope it will change, I mean I really do, because at the moment people have got such biased attitudes, I think, to a lot of things.

Q. Mm. What other sorts of things would you like to be changed? When you say people have got biased attitudes about a lot of things, what were you thinking of?

A. Well there's like a lot of ... today, as far as I'm concerned, just the world in general that's happening... going wrong recently, you know, it's got to change soon for the better...

Q. Mm. What sorts of things are you thinking of?

A. I'm thinking - 'cos I think.... that's what I was thinking of actually.

Q. ...

A. Yeah.

Q. It's true they were all piling up at one point...

A. I didn't know... I'd just been on holiday that month and then I come back and... oh my God, you was there wasn't you, she was in the other end, thank God. You know, that... shows how much you care about your friends, 'cos if she'd died, my God, 'cos I've known her for about two years now, we get on really really well, if she'd died, God.

Q. ...

A. ... 'cos people have selfish attitudes I think...

Q. I was thinking... do you want - do you want to sit down? Have a chair... Have to turn the tape over in a minute anyway. So what kind of things do you do, I mean with GRAHAM and with friends, what sort of -

A. Where do we go? Pub. You know, I mean he's twenty, he's been going round the pubs since God knows when and I think it's the only place to go, basically. I mean you can go to the cinema, for a meal, you can do that so - so much, up to a point, going down the pub, you meet your friends down there, you meet new people, it's a happy place to be, you can relax after a day at work, ... go to the pub.

Q. Right. And you say you go to the pub at lunchtime as well?

A. Yeah, not that much though, about once a week, three times a week at the most.

Q. What about music concerts, anything like that?

A. No - actually I've never been into music concerts, no, never -well I've been to one with my mother, it was a sixties thing. I don't really feel the urge to go to one actually [REDACTED].

Q. Yeah... What about religion, what did you put on the questionnaire?

A. I can't remember. I know I'm Church of England -

Q. Church of England, that's what you said -

A. I went to a Church of England school, we had assembly every day, went to church once a week, that's like my Bible up there. When I sorted through my books I couldn't throw it away - I just couldn't, I thought no, it's wrong. I think I believe in God because it's like drummed into you literally, you know not to a point where they was like really mad about it, but, you know, God is wonderful, God does this,... praise him and all this. I believe in God and, you know, I can't throw the Bible away, because I just couldn't do it, I felt so wrong doing it.

Q. Mm. Do you think that's affected the way that you sort of run your life at all?

A. No, not at all. I think the only time it does affect me is Christianity, is at Christmas, because all these people go out and get totally drunk and give each other presents - presents, and I don't think people see the meaning of Christmas any more, it really annoys me, I think people should only celebrate Christmas if they believe in God. Because it really does annoy me, people - I don't believe in God and all this; I say that, I don't go to church at all, I can't remember the last time that I went to church, but I watch the church services on TV, I sing along to the songs like here 'cos I recognise it.

Q. Yeah. Those are the sorts of things that stay with you... humming hymns and things, I haven't been to church for centuries...

A. Yeah. Mm. I mean at my secondary school, at Christmas we went to church, you know, I remember that so well, this great... coming through... left secondary school I went to church and it was this christening. I honestly can't remember the last time I went to church, it must be about Christmas years and years ago. My nan's a churchgoer.

Q. How is your nan, you were saying that she's ill.

A. Oh, she's okay, I don't really ask my mum that much 'cos it upsets her, it upsets me, and I see her taking her - she's got breast cancer and she takes all different tablets, has tests and that... on her...

Q. It must be very upsetting. One of the questions I ask people which they often find a hell of a lot of difficulty with, I don't know why, and I don't know why I tell them this because then they're gonna find it difficult - but I ask them, what - what is your image of yourself?

A. What is my image - in what way? The way I look, the way I am or both?

Q. If you had to sort of describe yourself to somebody else, let's say.

A. Oh, God.

Q. What would you say you were like?

A. What I was like... I would actually say I'm a caring person, I care what other people think about me, not to the point where I do what - what I think they want me

to do, but I think, which is wrong of me in a way, I care too much about other people. I'm a caring person like that. I love helping people out with their problems, I adore doing that, when they come to me with their problems, I just think oh... I think I'm a good friend, people have told me that I am, I'm a good person to know, I've been told. I can be funny if I want to, then again I can be moody and horrible, and I can be so bitchy if I want to be, unbelievably. That's I think how people see me and how I see myself.

Q. That's the other question I was gonna ask you, how do you think people see you - do you think they coincide or -

A. No, but I mean we used to do not... but, what do you think of me, and be totally honest, you know what do you think of yourself, and that was quite good actually, you got to know about people and me and my best mates used to sit here and - each other's good points, each other's bad points, write them down, see what we could change about ourselves. But you can't - we couldn't, the bad things about each other we just couldn't change, it was natural, it's like the good things was the only, you know - they're in you anyway.

Q. Mm. What sort of bad things do you think that you can't change?

A. I have a tendency - there's a bloke at work, DON, he's older than me, he's nineteen - we don't get on, we've got to a certain point where something will go wrong, and that's it, and I'm slagging him down, calling him names, you know. I've had a row with him in front of my boss before, [REDACTED]- I'm bitchy, I can slag people down to the ground. I put people down if I don't know them, I'll be sitting, go, oh, God, look at what she's wearing, isn't it awful? I think that's a bad thing in me, I can be so bitchy though if I want to be really, put me with someone else and we just slag people down to the ground, which I don't like doing, I hate doing it but sometimes I just can't help myself. I mean there's a certain girl that I see, I just can't stand her, don't know why, just don't like her, every time I go, oh I saw her today, oh God, you know, like that, and that's what I don't like, 'cos I don't know her but -

Q. Why do you think you do it?

A. I know why I do it, because - 'cos she went out with MARK that I was telling you about earlier, she went out with him, but like he went out with a Chinese girl, I see a Chink, I don't like them, that's it, you know, I - oh... back to her own country, it was just because he went out with them. It's quite a stupid thing really when you think about it but to me it was like it was her over me, a Chink, she was only fourteen, thirteen. A thirteen year old to me, you know, oh - really... kind of thing.

Q. But you think - you were saying though you think that you can't change the bad things.

A. I try but it just - you know it'll stop for about a week and then it'll gradually come back in and I'll notice and I'll think, oh God, I don't wanna do it but I just do it, you know, my sub-consciousness.

Q. What do you think about the good things then, I mean... change...?

A. No. I'd like to be - one thing that I'd like to do is be able to talk to people more easily, I've got this thing that I can talk to people a certain point, I don't know what else to say. I'd love to be able to just to talk to people and the conversation just flow, you know, like that. With GRAHAM... I say oh God, you know, isn't it hot today. I'd love to be a good conversationalist, really good.

Q. Mm. That's - I suppose that's the sort of thing that comes with experience and the more you talk to people, the more you find that you can talk to them.

A. Yeah, I mean I'm getting to the point where I can feel comfortable in silence with him now, like me and my best mate used to - we could sit here for about a couple of hours saying nothing, just pottering around this room... reading a book, totally comfortable. Some people, I just think oh, God what can I talk to them about? ... talk with GRAHAM, I feel more confident myself when I'm talking to him so I won't feel so - you know, oh, God, she's babbling on again, oh God, you know. 'Cos I've got this thing that they think that, I don't know why, it's - I've just got this thing that

they're thinking oh, God, she... why don't she shut up, she's so boring, I've got this thing that they think that, I don't know if they do.

Q. Yeah. That's difficult when you feel... I sometimes feel that, sort of parties sometimes...

A. That's the - yeah, that's - I don't really go to them that often but I think it's just like, I mean at our age I mean, when we was at school you just go to a party to get drunk and meet someone, you know, but you get, as you get older it's more conversation, thinking oh, Christ, you know, 'cos I still feel very young and other times I feel really old - not old but, you know, about eighteen.

Q. So how do you - when you were talking about the future before, and you told me you could see yourself getting married and having kids... and then maybe go back to work again later, I mean do you think you will?

A. I'd like to, that's what my mother done, and my mum she's self-employed and she's successful. It causes rows between my parents so - but ...

Q. Why does it cause rows?

A. She earns more than my dad and if me and my mum went shopping and my mum treated me to something, I say, mum bought me this. And my dad was going, no, we bought it, and I say no, mum bought me it -not thinking what I'm saying -

Q. Yeah, yeah.

A. And then they have a row and it's like - she has - because she's self-employed she works in the evenings, she's not in hardly during the day at all, my mum, my dad is old-fashioned, women should stay at home, look after children, do the housework, which is totally wrong in my opinion - I don't know but when people say oh, you marry someone like your father, I won't. I know I won't. He causes rows, it's... you know, you're out all day, you work all night and you get all ratty, you never go out with me, you know, it's just petty little things. I think in a way he's jealous of my mum 'cos she earns more money, she's successful. I mean my dad's done the same job since he was fifteen and he's [40s] now, he's getting a bit bored with it by now.

Q. Yeah.

A. So - I would like to go back to work after I've had children, because I don't think - unless my husband was incredibly, incredibly, incredibly rich, I wouldn't be able to lounge around all day, I'd be so bored.

Q. That was about everything that I was gonna ask you, is there anything that you would like to ask me? ...Anything that comes up that you feel you'd like to say some more about?

A. Can I have my questionnaire again?... few comments in. Right. Everything's changed actually.

Q. Well there is - change on the back but it's - I've got that...

A. I mean this one I found quite confusing actually, this section on health and sex education, I said, you know, oh God, did we learn about that?

Q. You seem to have learned quite a lot in school in sex education. But you think there are still some gaps -

A. Mm, I mean periods, I mean that was - that was at school, my mum didn't say anything so I was so embarrassed telling her, ... I thought, oh, God; I remember it was her wedding anniversary, 1984. Anyway, so - heterosexual relationships... but I mean when you're a little kid you talk about it and laugh about it I think really. Homosexual relationships - I think, you know, when you get to secondary school you start to talk about that. Sexual intercourse, I mean that's just like, where do I come from mummy?, you know; contraception at school -

Q. Were you... it could have been more detailed... a bit more information?

A. Yeah, I mean, like - like I said... period and I mean with me as recently as this thing, everything you need to know about sex and that, it's just like questions and - shall I show you?

Q. Yeah.

A. That's what I got. I found - when I was going on the pill, that's what I read. Sexually transmitted diseases, that's one thing I think wasn't really taught about that well, it was just really AIDS and - oh she had this horrible film at school, all these little green men, - herpes or something, you know, I was sitting there, you know, I remember - 'cos later that night I went out for a meal with my Saturday job and I started talking about it and I was going, ugh, 'cos they showed people with like... just people... all round the mouth, oh, it was disgusting, it was just disgusting, the teacher... I was watching her.

Q. ... it didn't really work -

A. No. I mean that one I found... heard about...

Q. This is quite good, this -

A. That's what I was looking at and I was thinking it'd be that one or that one -

Q. Yeah.

A. ... the pros and cons and -

Q. And you had good advice from a doctor, did you go to a doctor?

A. Yeah. I mean -

Q. ... things to try and see -

A. Yeah, I mean it's the new - it's the new one I've got because I've just got this thing that if I got pregnant, actually it's just used as a back up... wouldn't have sex without wearing protection, but that's as a back - just in case, that's what it's there for, he's not gonna know I'm on it because you get, ah, we won't need anything. On your bike, mate, you know. It's just there for, you know, it's my own - I mean he's protecting himself from whatever he may had, got, may get, or if I've got anything - I very much doubt if I have - but the pill's just there for my sake, you know, so I won't get pregnant. If I get pregnant he can run off, I'll have the baby. I'm the one who has an abortion, has to suffer that, or have it and give it up for adoption or look after it for the rest of my life.

Q. Yeah, yeah.

A. He's not gonna know at all. This one - ... discussions... contraception with him... My mum's always saying to me, I put no there, she's always saying to me, you know, when you have sex with GRAHAM you make sure you use something, you know, I'm not having you come home saying you're pregnant, all this. My father just gave me a bit - like he said, if you're gonna do something, think about it, think of the consequences, use something then do it. So I just laughed. Girlfriends - me and a friend, it's more like when we have sex we're going to use this, we're not going to go on the pill because it'll... stuffing drugs inside us, but looking back now, it's to me just that back-up, that's all it is to me -

Q. Yeah.

A. - it's for me, it's not for anyone else.

Q. ... confident.

A. Boyfriend, you know, have you got anything, yes. Yes. A doctor, I have now. Boys for friends. I used to have at one point a lot of blokes who were friends, my friend - my old best friend - she used to attract blokes like a magnet -

Q. Yeah.

A. So many blokes... we used to get, meet... group of blokes, all our age, we used to sit there and discuss things like that, and their attitude, there was one bloke talking about a period, he thought he knew it all - have you ever had a period? - No - you don't know what you're talking about then. And contraception he'd talk to me about. You know, it was nice because we found out their opinions, that was lovely doing that, I mean I enjoy having male friends because you find out what they think, the other view -

Q. Mm, yeah.

A. ... Most of my spare time with my boyfriend now, which annoys me a bit 'cos I'd like to spend more time with my friends, 'cos when my next best friend, she got a boyfriend, met him at work, she dropped everyone, it was him. You know, one day

he's gonna say... she's gonna say to him... and a lot of her friends won't be around, just people from where she works, that will be it, you know, she lives with people from work, goes out with people from work, sleeps with people from work - which I think is stupid.

Q. So why did you fall out?

A. It was because she... he's Irish, they started going out with each other, she started work there in July and she was going out with one of my friends, PETE, and she started two-timing him for MIKE, and I found out, went absolutely loopy, you know, don't you do that to my friend, you know, you stupid - I called her names, even though she was my best mate... my friend PETE's going, why she do it, why she do it - I don't know, you know. And then it was like she moved out of the house, she didn't get on that well with her parents, and it was like she - she had to work late, it was like three train stops away, and you used to see her like once a week - we used to see each other every day without fail for about three, five years, you know, from the first year, and then she started going out with MIKE as I said, and ... I didn't like him 'cos he - he's got a kid, he's she's seventeen, she'll be eighteen in September, and he's got a child about two years old 'cos he's twenty-three, you know, I was going, bloody hell, he's got a kid, you know, and I don't - he's changed her, well, she's not the same person that I knew, and it was just that she didn't wanna know me anymore, 'cos she had her MIKE and that was it, you know, he's her life, her soul, her, you know, - her everything, and it just really annoyed me. Then I asked her to come round and I was sitting there crying, you know, going why have you done this to me, aren't you a friend, we said we'd be best friends for life, and - oh but we will, we will, we'll see each other, yes, yes, we will. I haven't seen her since. I phoned her up and talked to her, as soon as I started going out with GRAHAM, on the phone to her telling her, that was my thing getting back at her, and ROB, my friend, he works with SALLY, he doesn't get on with her, when he found out I was going out with GRAHAM he said oh I told her straight away he said. So that's why we - we didn't fall out, it was that she just went off, you know, and I think that happens to a lot of people. It's so upsetting, though, it really really was.

Q. Well perhaps as you say, perhaps she'll come round -

A. Yeah, but I mean I've told my -

Q. ... feel bad about it.

A. I mean I told my friend what happened 'cos I was so upset about it, really was, and they're going, oh if she comes back you should tell her where to go and, you know, I will, basically. I mean she met MIKE, she went off, if she comes back crying to me going oh God I'm pregnant, I'll go well, that's your own bleeding fault, there's a cup of tea, love, off you go. You know. If she did come back to me I'd go, SALLY, I'll still be your friend, but that's it, you know.

Q. ...

A. I mean when I filled this out, it was - the date on it - I mean, do you have a special girlfriend, and I thought, oh God, yes. I put no, I don't.

Q. Yeah.

A. You know -

Q. Well, you do again now.

A. It's funny looking at this now.

Q. Yeah. Well I'll look at that when I...

A. Yeah. Would you be willing to ask a man to use a condom - yes.

Q. Well you would.

A. Yeah.

Q. And you did.

A. 'Cos I was thinking, God, am I gonna say it, I was lying there thinking oh, God, you know, 'cos I was so worried he'd think I was easy, really, really was, and it, you know, once I said it I thought, ah I've said it, you know, it's just - I don't say like, have you got a condom, I go, have you got anything? I can't say, have you got a

condom, I just cannot say - I feel, not embarrassed but I just feel all wrong saying it, I feel like I'm saying that I - I'm gonna have sex with you now or something, but if I say have you got anything... it's more intimate I think, you know, have you got anything, than have you got a condom on you, you know, it's like an odd thing.

Q. ...

A. ... another relation... It's funny, reading this out. I remember because they read it at work, the sexual bit, ... on holiday... a girlfriend... said right, fill this sexual bit out when you come back and go oh, you know, you're only going to get laid and all this. I said no I'm not, no I'm not, no I'm not. And I come back and I was really proud I could fill in... I think the only thing that's changed really though is that bit.

Q. Yeah. But I know it, I know how it's changed.

A. Sorry. I find this quite useful actually -

Q. Yes, it is, it looks rather -

A. 'Cos I read it and I was thinking, it's, you know - ...keep your body pack in a safe place, someday you're gonna need it, I was thinking, oh yeah, years, years from now, and it's like about a month later, you know.

Q. Be prepared.

A. I'm sorry.

Q. Well, just my writing... The other thing we're asking young women is if they'd like to be reinterviewed in about a year's time to see what's changed, what's happened.

A. Yeah, yeah, I'll do that actually.

Q. This diary -

A. Oh, yeah.

Q. I'll send - I'm probably gonna send some next week... keep it sort of a couple of months, I mean you can keep it a bit longer if you like, but if you'd just keep it for a couple of months anyway...

A. What d'you write down, how you feel -?

Q. How you feel, what you've actually been doing, who you've been spending your time with. I mean I'd be interested in detail about your sexual activities -

A. Yeah.

Q. - if you feel you can write them down. And you can use a code, as long as you send off to me what the code is. Otherwise... (laughter). So I mean that's - it needn't be around where anybody can see it.

A. Yeah, because when I told my friend that I slept - actually they don't know that I slept with him yet, I mean I dunno... sleep with him and telling them. I told Sarah and I was sitting there and I was going - at school there was this thing, ten things, your thumb if you kiss a bloke on the cheek, a proper kiss, love bite, and stupid things like that. And I was going, like, go through them, she's saying I was going - that's the one, I ... I was so embarrassed, I really was. I didn't write it down. I'm writing it to you because... see you in about a year's time or something, it won't really matter.

Q. Yeah. Yeah. Oh good.

A. - telling her though, I wanted to say it to someone - 'cos I couldn't keep it to myself and I was going oh God, how can I say it, you know... you know.

Q. So you have told her?

A. I haven't told her I slept with him -

Q. ... number seven or eight...

A. You know, it's like now I've done all ten of them, you know. It's - it just seems really weird 'cos in a short space of time I mean I used to be like the innocent young girl, I'm not anymore, I mean it seems really weird. And at school they go oh, at school, at work they go...girl, all this... oh, Christ, you know, you know, and I was... something about blow jobs... oh my God. And they're talking about it and I was sitting there going, oh, well FRED hasn't experienced it... I was sitting there thinking, oh my God, I was thinking, will my face let anything show, and they started asking me questions and I go... oh dear. That's one thing... find out that I've - I don't know.

When they found out I was going out with GRAHAM it was oh, [REDACTED]. They found out, they said, oh FRED, and things, you know, and I said, I'm going, oh Christ.

Q. Yeah. Well thank you very much, it's been incredibly interesting talking to you... take part in this study...