

LJH31 17.8.89

19,5; ESW; CPVE but plans to go to college in September and ultimately be a social worker; lives with 2 and a half year old daughter (mixed race); Ma is [CARING PROFESSION], and lesbian; pa disappeared from her life when she was 7; heterosexual; first time one off with 25 year old (she was 14); long term relationship with child's father (a year older than her) now ended but are friends now after some problems; has seen another man a few times (about her age) but he does not treat her right, so probably won't have much more to do with him.

Attractive blonde, carefully made up and coiffed, hair cut very close to the head at the sides, with pattern cut in it, a bit longer and slightly curled on top. Wearing an unusual shade of lipstick, pale mauve, which matched her tracksuit type top. She seemed confident, and very together about what she thinks and what she is going to do with her life, although she feels she needs to understand herself, what she really is and can do, more. She wants to be social worker, like ma, and sounds as if she has got set up to go to [NAME OF COLLEGE] and start the process. She knows how long it is going to take, but she says they don't like to take you on as social worker until you are older, about 26, have some experience, and she will be ready to settle down by then, having sorted herself out.

Her ma broke up with pa, he beat her up, she and four children went to refuge. Ma became lesbian, and in fact two lesbian friends of hers looked after (sort of but not proper foster parents) LJH31 and her younger sister for some years. This relationship broke down when she was 14 (with the lesbian women who raised her for a period) and she went back to live with ma. She had overdosed, was really mixed up at that point. But it did not work out with ma at that time. Now however, she has a very good relationship with ma, really close. She gave ma's address and telephone number on the qr.

She is currently living on ss, looking after her little girl [MICHELLE] (or the like). The child is mixed race, and the one risk which 31 admitted to taking now was getting into trouble in the street. She says that she looks after her little girl very well, can plait her hair properly and the child is very attractive and well cared for. She has experienced young black women coming up to her in the street and calling her 'slag' bcs of her child. This has made her paranoid in her view, and she almost expects it. So she 'badmouths' them when it happens, and can get into rows in the street. She said tho, that if it was a big woman she probably would not risk it! She says this type of abuse does not come from older black women, whites, or black men, but from the younger women. There was another of my interviewees who was attracted to black men and went around with a black group who said she had experienced something similar, or it was the young black women who had problems with that mix, white woman, black man.

She knew a lot re various aspects of sex and sexuality, since the lesbians who brought her up told her everything about it that she could possibly want to know. Also left it up to her to make decisions about what she wanted. Her first sexual experience was when she was 14, the guy upstairs, 25 years old. She didn't want to do it, he just went ahead anyway. No protection. She did not like it. It was probably technically rape, but she went along with it, tho she did not suggest that. Next was the father of her child (also when she was 14, she started the relationship with him, but they did not have sex for some time). He was 'shocked' that she was not a virgin, but did not have any particular attitude towards her bcs of it. He just thought that she was so shy, young and quiet that it was a shock. She had fancied him and got a girlfriend to approach him. They were together for a while but he did not take it seriously, and they did not see each other for a while. She was pretty determined and wrote to him saying that she loved him, and he started to see her again.

They were together a year and a half before sex. They (or she at any rate) got bored with all other stuff, want to try sex again. She went on the pill prior bcs she knew that they would do it soon. Enjoyed sex with this bf. They were carefree and happy. She decided that she wanted a child and went off the pill, he said he wanted one too. She said that she did it to keep him, which was not how it worked out. But the responsibilities of the child, she was effectively a housewife and mother at 16, were too much for the relationship. He took her for granted. They had a stormy period. He hit her once and as far as she was concerned that was it. If you let them hit you once they think they can always do it. She had an injunction against him and there were problems re him seeing the daughter. Now it works out fine and he has said that he wants to get back together. But she does not. She said something interesting about risk taking re AIDS in this connection. In case they get together again she has told him to use condoms with other women, and he seems to have agreed, or so he tells her I suppose. But she said if it got to be a long time, she could not trust that he had.

Her most important relationship is with her daughter but she does want to have another man, hopes to settle with one, she and her daughter need the security. But she thinks that you cannot trust men, the one she has seen for a while now just wants one thing, and may not return in any case. She has insisted on a condom with him, and would with anyone else. She is really worried re AIDS and death tho not very well informed re AIDS.

Quality of the relationship is important to her, not just sex. Did not know what safe sex was as such, tho she had constantly talked about the importance of using a condom before I used the term. Does not think young women use their sexual power over men to insist on condom use, but they should. In her view young women give in to male desires and wishes. She criticised her best friend for having unprotected anal sex with a guy she did not know.

I asked if she had thought re women - she said no, not at all, tho she knew all the options being brought up by lesbians. She likes sex with men, tho it is not the be all and end all. It's OK if her ma wants to be lesbian, that's her choice, but 31 does not.

Some of her friends do drugs (tho not H, nor injecting) but she 'certainly does not'.