

**LSFS26****Ira**

Q. I mean, perhaps we could begin with ... the research is about relationships in general, but particularly about the kind of relationships with your girlfriends, boyfriends or whatever. Can you tell me at the moment what relationships are the most important for you?

A. With my friends, which are both girls and boys.

Q. So they're like a mixture?

A. Yeah, I mean, they're ... I haven't got a boyfriend or anything but ... it's just a mixture of friends.

Q. And are they a group you go around with a lot?

A. All the time.

Q. All the time! How many are there?

A. There's six of us but like it can be ... it expands to about twelve of us at times, but there's usually just six of us.

Q. How many girls versus boys?

A. Four girls and two boys.

Q. And what do you normally do?

A. We drive around, we smoke, drink, watch tele. It depends if we've got money or not. If we've got money we go out to parties, but if we don't we just sit at home.

Q. So do you have money that's pooled? I mean, if somebody's got money and the rest haven't is it all ... ?

A. Yeah, we just ... anyone who's got money puts it in and we just do what we've got with it, depending on how much we've got!

Q. And somebody's got a car, it sounds like?

A. Yeah, two. Both of the boys have got cars.

Q. Oh well, that's very convenient.

A. Very convenient, yeah.

Q. And when it's twelve is that another mixture of boys and girls as well?

A. Yeah, that's ... we have another car as well then.

Q. And do you do that kind of every night or is that just weekends or ... ?

A. There's usually six of us. There's at least four of us every night, usually six. And a couple of times a month there might be twelve of us.

Q. And are they people from here?

A. Yeah, mostly.

Q. Do you all do different subjects?

A. Yeah. A few of us do sociology and art but apart from that it's a variety of subjects.

Q. All different.

A. Yeah.

Q. And did you meet together here or did you know each other before?

A. No, we met at NAME OF SCHOOL, most of us – NAME OF SCHOOL.

Q. Right. So you were already kind of mates before you came?

A. Yeah.

Q. And are any of the boys actually boyfriends of the girls in the group or are you all sort of ... ?

A. No, there was one but ... there was one relationship, but it didn't work out. I think it spoils the group, actually, cos when they sort of argue there's a bit of friction.

Q. So is that kind of discouraged?

A. A bit, yeah.

Q. Cos that must be a bit awkward if somebody actually fancies one of the boys that is in the group but would feel a bit nervous perhaps of going out with them?

A. I think it's one of the boys that fancies one of the girls and ...

Q. What, at the moment?

A. Yeah, and it's a bit difficult at times.

Q. But would she feel ... I mean, was it you?

A. No, it's not me!

Q. Would she feel sort of embarrassed about that, that it might sort of split up the group if she did go and ... ?

A. Well, she went out with him for like three days and it didn't work and there's still a bit of sort of friction.

Q. Right, so it's stopped now?

A. Yeah, but like, he still fancies her and it's really obvious.

It's just a bit embarrassing at times.

Q. I can imagine. But it hasn't stopped you both ... them both, I mean, being in the group.

A. Oh no, no, no. Not at all.

Q. And do you go to pubs a lot?

A. Not lately, but yeah, we used to go much more than we do now. We used to go about ... we sometimes used to go every night. But now it's a couple of times a month.

Q. Why's that?

A. We haven't got the money and we tend to smoke more now.

Q. What, smoke dope?

A. Yeah.

Q. But that costs money too?

A. Yeah, I know, but in the long run it's cheaper. We only need to have five pounds a night for all of us. You know, it's cheaper.

Q. And does somebody get it for you or ... ?

A. No, we buy it, well, we know loads of people that sell it so we just ...

Q. So does that mean you've stopped drinking and you're now smoking?

A. Yeah, yeah.

Q. Did you drink alcohol before or was it just other sorts?

A. Yeah, beer and spirits mainly, yeah.

Q. What, in pubs?

A. Yeah.

Q. Were you over age then?

A. No, I was underage.

Q. But was that alright? You didn't get questioned or anything?

A. No, I mean, I don't look my age and I'm now old enough. I'm eighteen now. But I have been drinking in pubs since I was fourteen and I've never been asked my age. I just don't think they bother.

Q. So, do you find smoking better than drinking?

A. Yeah.

Q. Why?

A. Drinking you usually, I mean, usually you have to go to a pub or something ... I don't know. I don't really like the feeling of being drunk all that much. I used to when I was younger but not so much now. I prefer the feeling of being stoned now.

Q. How would you describe being stoned, for you?

A. Just get in a really silly mood and just talk rubbish and, I don't know, you talk ... we have the most dirtiest conversations when we're stoned.

Q. What, about sex?

A. Yeah, it's our favourite topic.

Q. What do you talk about?

A. Oh, just about ... just about the most disgusting things and things like that. Well, we might bring perfectly normal sexual things and make them sound really disgusting and then see who can make up the most disgusting sentence. Something like that.

Q. What is disgusting?

A. Like a boy putting his prick in your mouth or something like that.

Q. And who talks about that? You all do, or is it the boys who talk about putting pricks in girls' mouths? Or do you all talk about it?

A. No, we tend to talk about this when it's just the four girls.

Q. Right, so you don't talk the dirty talk when the boys are around?

A. Not really, we might come out with a few comments, but we don't have a really good conversation about it.

Q. Do you like it?

A. Yeah, it a laugh, yeah.

Q. But is that how you normally think about those things or is it just pissing about because you're a bit stoned?

A. Um, yeah, I think it is how we think of ... how I think about those things to a certain extent.

Q. Cos what are the most awful and dirty things you can think of?

A. I don't know. Like what men might do to a woman, you know.

Q. What?

A. We just talk about how he might finger her or something. I don't know. We've all made up disgusting names for each other as well.

Q. What, like nicknames?

A. Yeah.

Q. What's yours?

A. They haven't really got a good one for me because it all begins with the letter of their name and they haven't really got one for me.

Q. What, there's nothing beginning with '...' that they can think of?

A. Only REDACTED, but that's a bit boring.

Q. What are the others?

A. There's NICKNAMES. That's it.

Q. Yeah, I can see why HIV doesn't ...

A. Doesn't come over quite as well.

Q. And what do you actually talk about when you're with the boys?

A. What? To do with sex?

Q. Yeah.

A. We don't tend to ... well, we do talk about ... not, no, I don't think we really talk about sex with the boys all that much.

Q. Is that because it's a bit sort of inhibiting?

A. Um, I mean, we have talked to the boys about sex and everything but we don't have one of our big conversations with the boys. I don't know why it is though.

Q. Do you talk about things like masturbation or ... ?

A. Yeah, we take the piss out of that a bit. Yeah.

Q. But would you ever talk about things that you actually do or is it all sort of jokey?

A. No, it's jokey but then someone comes out with, 'Oh, but we all know everyone does it', you know. So, like we're taking the piss out of it, but someone says that everyone does it anyway, so you know, we don't pretend that no-one does it.

Q. What, girls as well as boys?

A. Yeah.

Q. Would you feel you could kind of talk about anything that you perhaps wanted to know more about or anything like that in that sort of situation or is it not that kind of situation?

A. No. We sort of talk about what we've done - not ... we don't sort of talk about what we've done but we might just drop little hints. Do you know what I mean?

Q. What, and then leave people to think what they want of you?

A. Yeah.

Q. Whether it's true or not?

A. Yeah.

Q. So have all the girls in the group had some sort of sexual experience?

A. Yeah. All the girls and both the boys.

Q. So everyone's had some kind of ... ?

A. Yeah.

Q. And is sex seen as something serious or funny or enjoyable or horrible or ... ?

A. I think it can be enjoyable and it can be funny when you're talking about it afterwards and it can hurt sometimes. It's not always enjoyable.

Q. Is that what you've found?

A. Mm.

Q. When did it hurt?

A. When I was younger. I put it there.

Q. That's when you had it against your will?

A. Yeah.

Q. What happened then?

A. I was sexually abused by a babysitter for five years.

Q. Five years?

A. Mm.

Q. Was that a male babysitter or female?

A. Yeah. Male.

Q. How old were you then?

A. It started when I was six and finished when I was eleven.

Q. So what did he do, if you don't mind talking about it?

A. Um, he'd rape me and, I mean, he'd do some quite perverted things at times.

Q. What, did he put his prick in your mouth?

A. Yeah. I think that's why I just can't stand it now.

Q. So you had full sexual intercourse, did you?

A. Yeah.

Q. Although you were only six?

A. Mm, yeah.

Q. That must have been painful.

A. Mm.

Q. And could you tell anyone?

A. No. I told ... I first told someone when I was sixteen and I've been getting counselling since, so ... like ... I'm more able to talk about it now.

Q. Do you know why you felt you couldn't tell anyone then?

A. Yeah, I thought it was my fault. I thought that ... I mean, he made all sorts of threats saying that he'd kill my mum and that I'd be put into care and no-one would believe me and things like that. And there was no-one really I could tell anyway.

Q. You didn't have any brothers ... ?

A. Yeah, I've got brothers and sisters.

Q. But they couldn't ...

A. I didn't think I was able to tell anyone. I didn't think anyone would believe me and I felt ... I felt totally disgusted about it all.

- Q. And were you the only person being babysat for?  
A. No, my younger sister. But I'm pretty sure nothing happened to her.  
Q. Was she in bed then?  
A. Yeah.  
Q. So it was just you and her and ...  
A. And the babysitter ... yeah.  
Q. Was that like for evenings or was it a daytime thing?  
A. No, at night. Every ... it was like once a week when my brother and sister and parents were out. Once a week every week, all doing their own separate things. He was [A FAMILY FRIEND]... he used to come and babysit.  
Q. You must have felt quite scared too?  
A. The babysitter?  
Q. No, you!  
A. Yeah.  
Q. I mean, having somebody making those sorts of threats is horrible.  
A. Yeah, I was very scared.  
Q. So what happened at eleven?  
A. He died.  
Q. He died?  
A. Yeah, when I was eleven.  
Q. What did he die of?  
A. He was in a fight. He's a bit aggressive. He was REDACTED. He shouldn't have died but he did die.  
Q. How did that make you feel?  
A. Um ... I was really relieved that he'd died ... well, that it wasn't going to happen anymore and then I felt guilty that I felt like that because I really loved him a lot. He was like my substitute daddy in a way and I really missed him but then I really hated him. I can't really explain how I felt cos they're all contradicting themselves, my feelings.  
Q. Yeah, well, you must have hated him for that, but presumably there were other things going on, like this substitute father thing. Cos was he nice in other ways?  
A. Oh yeah. He was brilliant. Like he was ... like we used to do a lot of things with him in the day and all that, at weekends.  
Q. What, all of you? Like your brother and sister as well?  
A. Yeah, the whole family. Like he used to come on holiday with us, he used to go out at weekends with us, he used to come round for dinner.  
Q. So did he sort of change into a different person when he was babysitting with you?  
A. Yeah, yeah, he wasn't like he usually was.  
Q. Was that helped by drink at all or was that just him?  
A. He used to get drunk, but he wasn't always drunk. I mean, it was usually worse when he was drunk but ...  
Q. And did that happen every week for those five years?  
A. Yeah, roughly, yeah.  
Q. So you knew every week that it was probably going to happen?  
A. Yeah, every Friday.  
Q. So did you think about it or did you sort of cut it off?  
A. No, I blocked it off completely. I don't know. I can't really remember how I felt like cos by the end of the week I'd sort of forgotten but then I knew it was going to happen again, I think. I don't really know.  
Q. And did he expect you to do things to him as well?  
A. Oh yeah. Like wank him off and all that.

Q. So did that kind of affect how you felt about him when you were with him on other days or could you just cut off?

A. I could cut off. I mean, I know it's really hard for me to explain cos I don't remember everything about what he did when I was little, but I just knew that there was something really wrong in my life but I didn't know what it ... I couldn't really explain what it was for a long time. I mean, we just ... I just treated him as normal ... like as he usually was when we went out and everything. But I don't know - I didn't like him ... it got to a stage where I didn't like him even touching me when we were playing about outside or anything. I think I'd begun to realise ...

Q. What? What was happening?

A. Yeah.

Q. You were eleven, you must have ...

A. I realised for quite a long time before that.

Q. And then did you not tell anyone until you were sixteen?

A. Yeah.

Q. Not even a best friend or anything like that?

A. No. I haven't told any of my friends at all.

Q. So who did you first tell?

A. I first told a teacher. I mean, I had ... I was just appalling at school. I was just totally disruptive and everything and nobody knew why. They just thought I was like spoilt and didn't have any manners or anything.

Q. So then what happened?

A. Well, I got really depressed and I was quite suicidal at one point and this girl told me that she'd been abused, and she somehow got it out of me ... I didn't tell her, but she somehow got the impression that I had as well, and she went and told a teacher. And it started from there.

Q. So could you then talk to the teacher about it?

A. No. I talked to ... I had a social worker. I talked to her about it and then I went and got counselling.

Q. Are you still having counselling or ... ?

A. Yeah.

Q. Is that helpful?

A. Yeah, I think so. I feel better about myself now.

Q. Yeah, cos how did you feel about yourself before?

A. I hated myself. I'd, like, hurt myself and thought I was totally shit.

Q. But did you know why you felt like that about yourself?

A. No, not really. I mean, I didn't really ... I didn't ever really think about what had happened when I was younger at all. I just tried to sort of block it out. And there's still a hell of a lot of things I don't remember. I know they're there, but I can't really remember.

Q. Do things sort of suddenly come to you? I mean, do you remember more as time goes by that you might have forgotten at some time?

A. Yeah, when I start talking about things, then I start remembering other things. And like smells and things like that, noises, all brings stuff back.

Q. And did your parents have to be told?

A. No, I haven't told them at all. I don't think I could really.

Q. Why not?

A. I don't know if they'd believe me, for a start. And he was their best friend. I don't get on too well with my parents.

Q. What, either of them?

A. I get on better with my mum than my dad. I don't get on with my dad at all.

Q. Has it always been like that?

- A. Yeah, as long as I can remember.
- Q. So is that why this guy was a bit like your substitute dad?
- A. Yeah, I think so. I was really ... I was very close to him.
- Q. So, do you talk to your mum about anything that's personal?
- A. What, like sex?
- Q. Yeah, sex or if you're feeling depressed or if you're, I don't know, having a period and feeling lousy or having a row with somebody at school or ... ?
- A. Certain things. If I'm feeling a bit pissed off about school or something, then I might tell her but I don't really ... I hardly ever see her.
- Q. What? Cos she's working or cos you're out?
- A. Both. Yeah, so ...
- Q. Cos she's got a full-time job ...
- A. Yeah, and she doesn't always live with us.
- Q. Where does she live sometimes?
- A. She lives with her boyfriend in LONDON BOROUGH.
- Q. And doesn't your dad mind?
- A. No, they've sort of been splitting up for years. They sort of both lead their separate lives now.
- Q. What, does your dad go off and live with a girlfriend?
- A. I don't know where he goes. He just goes off for weeks on end and comes back.
- Q. Really?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. So who kind of looks after you if they're both off leading their own lives?
- A. We look after ourselves.
- Q. Do you?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Do you have to look after ... ? Is your brother older?
- A. Yeah, I've just got a younger sister at home.
- Q. Right. How old is your brother?
- A. My brother's twenty-four. He's not living at home anymore.
- Q. So he's left?
- A. Mm.
- Q. So it's really you and your sister when your mum and dad are not around much.
- A. Yeah.
- Q. So how old is she?
- A. Seventeen.
- Q. So she's only a little bit younger than you?
- A. Oh, yeah. What is it? Fifteen months or something.
- Q. And can you talk to her?
- A. Not really. Well, we talk, we get on well and everything. We talk about drugs and all that, but we don't really talk about sex.
- Q. Does she come here or is she somewhere else?
- A. No, she used to come here but she dropped out. She's not doing anything at the moment. Just sits at home all day.
- Q. That's a bit boring. So do you two kind of lead your separate lives or do you kind of look after each other if you're at home, like cook something for each other or watch tele together or something?
- A. Yeah, we do that sort of thing together if we're both at home.
- Q. But you don't go to the same sort of parties or that sort of scene?
- A. Oh no. We've got totally different tastes in music.
- Q. What do you like then?

A. I like Soul and Reggae and Acid ... a bit of Acid. She likes sort of, I don't know, some depressing music she listens to. She's like ... do you know Goths? Like dress up in black leather and all that? Yeah, that's what she's like.

Q. That's a bit depressing. And you do some baby-minding. Does that give you enough money to do this and that?

A. Not really. I've never got enough money.

Q. You haven't got a job in Sainsbury's or Tesco's like everyone else seems to have done?

A. No, I could never do that.

Q. Why not?

A. It's slave labour. No, I enjoy my Saturdays too much to get a job.

Q. And what are you hoping to do when you leave here?

A. I'm hoping to go on to university to study psychology and something else with it.

Q. Do you think you'll leave London or stay here?

A. I'll leave London, yeah, definitely.

Q. Do you know where you'd like to go?

A. I'm not sure. I'm not too sure if I want to go to a city. I think I probably do want to go to a city so probably something like Manchester, something like that. I'll have to look at what's got the best course.

Q. Right. Cos when would that be? Next year? Have you got another year here?

A. Yeah. Yeah. I've got to make a decision by December or something.

Q. That's right. You have to apply usually by December or January. But do you have any ideas about what you want to be in the future?

A. Yeah. I wanna be a child psychologist.

Q. Do you think that's got anything to do with your experiences?

A. Yeah, I think that's got a lot to do with my experiences. I used to go to one when I was little, when I was nine and ...

Q. Why did you ... ? What happened?

A. Well, I was sent by the school because I was very disruptive and I kept running away from home and, I don't know. When I think back on it now there was all the typical signs and she just didn't ...

Q. Didn't pick it up.

A. Didn't pick up any whatsoever.

Q. Do you think if she'd actually asked you would you have told her?

A. Perhaps if we'd built up a relationship and like I trusted her and everything, I probably would have done eventually, I think. But I don't know - she was just really distant and everything. She never really ... she just used to watch me the whole time.

Q. Sounds like people watch people in the zoo. But waiting for you to do something or say something?

A. Yeah, she used to watch me draw paintings - all that - and ask me why I'd drawn it and why I'd used those certain colours. And I didn't know why. I just used to say, 'Cos I wanted to'. It just seemed a bit silly to ...

Q. So she could never really talk to you in a way that you felt was a trusting way?

A. No, never. I never really understood what she was asking me, you know what I mean? So I don't think she ever really got down to my level.

Q. So how long did that last?

A. That lasted about eighteen months.

Q. And did it change how you were at school at all?

A. No, not at all.

Q. You were still as disruptive?



A. Yup.

Q. Did that carry on when you went ... ?

A. To secondary school? Yeah, it got worse when I went to secondary school.

Q. What were you doing?

A. I was just getting sent out of all my lessons. I was just being really rude to everyone. I didn't really ... I mean, everyone knew me and I knew everyone, but I didn't really have a close friend or anything. I don't know. I just got a name for myself as being disruptive and I didn't ... wasn't really doing much work, so ...

Q. So you've done quite well to get up to doing 'A' levels?

A. Yeah, well, in ... I sort of decided that I wanted to do well in the sixth form last year and so I did some more GCSEs which enabled me to do 'A' levels this year.

Q. So when was the point at which you changed from being disruptive to ... obviously having to work otherwise you'd never get as far as you have now?

A. I think after I'd told someone at the end of the fifth year it was. And I think it was that summer holidays and then I went into the sixth form in the September and I sort of changed. I was sort of doing subjects I wanted to do and everything so I did quite well in them.

Q. Was that in the sixth form at NAME OF SCHOOL?

A. Yeah.

Q. They've actually got a sixth form?

A. No, they did have last year.

Q. What and they've all been ... ?

A. Yeah, they've all been moved here now. Yeah, best year of my life that was.

Q. Was it?

A. Yeah, it was brilliant.

Q. Why?

A. Oh, cos we were in our own separate building. We had our own teachers and there was, like, about sixty students and everyone got on really well with everyone else. Like all the teachers and pupils were really close. And we organised our own things and everything. It was a really good laugh.

Q. Is it as good here?

A. Not as good here, no. But you can't expect it to be cos it's much bigger and everything and ...

Q. And more spread out everywhere.

A. Yeah. It's really empty at the moment cos no one's in.

Q. And did the teachers notice a change in you? They must have been quite ...

A. Well, none of the ... that was another good thing cos hardly any of the sixth form teachers had ever known me before so I could sort of gradually change without them all thinking, 'What's happened to IRA?', you know.

Q. Yeah, cos it would have been awful getting all those questions and them expecting you to do awful things and you actually not doing them.

A. Yeah. I mean, a lot of the pupils were expecting me to do this and that but, you know, they sort of forgot about how I was in the fifth year after a few months so ...

Q. And how did it feel to actually be able to tell somebody about what had happened?

A. Um, I was so depressed for a few ... a couple of months I reckon, really. But I felt much sort of lighter. I felt much better. And then I was sort of, I don't know how I would say this ... pushed in the right direction to get counselling and all that cos I wouldn't have done it otherwise. And then I felt better.

Q. Did the social worker come and help you do that?

A. Yeah, she organised it all.

Q. That was good. And you don't have to sort of explain where you go or whatever to your parents or anything? Presumably they don't know you go to counselling.

A. Oh no, cos they'd ask too many questions if I told them. It's not worth it.

Q. And do you think it's affected the way you see boys and men and sex and things like that?

A. Yeah, it has. I think I'm much more wary about men.

Q. What, more than your friends, or more than you think you might have been or ... ?

A. I think both. More than my friends and more than I should be really. I mean, I have had other sexual relationships, but they didn't really work out that well.

Q. When did they happen?

A. I was about sixteen.

Q. Was that before you told anyone?

A. One was before and one was quite soon after and it was just ... both times were completely the wrong times to do it so I think it would probably be better now but I don't really want to do it at the moment.

Q. What made you decide then? Was it your decision or was it somebody else's decision?

A. Yeah, I mean, I wanted to do it ... I don't know, I just really wanted someone to love me. That sounds stupid, doesn't it?

Q. No. I think everyone wants that, but I would think after what you've been through and your parents not being very sort of receptive to anything, it seems perfectly reasonable to me.

A. I don't know. I just sort of wanted a really close relationship with a boy, someone near my own age.

Q. So what happened the first time?

A. Well, the first time we tried a couple of times and it just didn't work. And then I got very very drunk and it worked better.

Q. How do you mean it didn't work?

A. I just couldn't ... I just tensed up and it was really painful and ...

Q. What, so he couldn't actually get in?

A. The first time he couldn't get in at all and then the second time he did sort of and it was just so painful, and I was just crying all over the place. And he got upset cos he thought it was all his fault and ... But then we both got drunk and it did seem to work better.

Q. So how long did it last, the relationship?

A. Um, a matter of a few weeks. I should say about six weeks, I should think. I'm not quite sure. Four to six weeks.

Q. And how did it end?

A. We just sort of drifted apart. We were very intense at the start and then it just sort of wore off. And like I didn't want to have sex with him anymore and he sort of got the message, so we drifted apart. We didn't really have an argument or anything.

Q. Why did you decide you didn't want sex with him anymore?

A. I didn't like him.

Q. Fair enough! Was it that you didn't like him anymore or did you never like him?

A. I liked him at the start, but I didn't like him enough to have sex with him, I don't think. I need to really like someone to have sex with them, I know that now but at the time I was quite immature and I just wanted to have sex basically.

Q. Whose idea was it?

A. I think it was his, but I let him. He didn't rape me or anything.

Q. And did you ... were you aware of your kind of previous sexual experiences?

A. Yeah, but I dunno, I'd sort of blocked so much of it out. I did know it had happened but I never thought about it so I never really related anything to it.

Q. So did you kind of feel yourself like you were a virgin like presumably a lot of your mates would be?

A. No, I didn't feel like that either. I knew I wasn't a virgin. Like I knew all that had happened before but I don't know, I can't really explain how it was.

Q. But presumably you wouldn't have really been able to remember what it was like so it would all be ...

A. No, I could remember what it was like when it started to happen.

Q. Did that kind of unblock memories?

A. Yeah, it did. I think that's one reason why I always sort of ... I was really depressed afterwards and that's when it all started to come out.

Q. So it was really your first sexual experience in your teens that made you ... or helped to kind of release the other?

A. Mm.

Q. But presumably your boyfriend hadn't got a clue?

A. No, he didn't have a clue. When I think back now, he was such a bastard. He was so immature and everything. Like, he was seventeen, but he was so immature. He didn't have a clue.

Q. Did he know what he was doing?

A. Well he thought he did!

Q. Had he done it before?

A. No, I don't think he had actually. He made out he was a right Jack the Lad, but I think back now, and he didn't have a clue. I mean, he didn't know how to arouse me or anything, you know what I mean?

Q. Mm. So he had no idea how to actually give you pleasure?

A. Oh no. It was totally for himself, totally. I mean, he might give a quick rub here or something but that was it.

Q. Well a quick rub doesn't actually do a lot!

A. No.

Q. Well that must have been a bit disappointing for your first encounter.

A. Oh very. I was just totally ... really, really upset. I thought, 'I'm never going to have sex again'.

Q. So how did you have sex again?

A. I met a nicer bloke. He was older and he'd had a lot of experience. I mean, it was harder. It was still hard, but it wasn't as horrible as the first time. It still hurt and everything.

Q. Did you get very tense again?

A. Yeah.

Q. Do you think that was because you were thinking of what happened in your childhood as well?

A. Yeah. In a way I think everything I do and say and all that is related to it now.

Q. Is that what the counsellor thinks as well?

A. Yeah, sort of. She doesn't say it directly, but I know it's what she thinks.

Q. So how old was the second one?

A. He was nineteen.

Q. And did he actually try and relax you or ... ?

A. Yeah, he was better at masturbating me, I suppose you call it, yeah.

Q. So he could actually relax you and arouse you a bit?

A. Yeah, I mean, I never really minded that. It was just when he tried to actually have sex, actual intercourse.

Q. What, you minded that?

A. Yeah. I didn't really like the sight of his body either.

Q. Why not?

A. I didn't like his prick. I think they're so ugly.

Q. What, in general or just his?

A. In general, no, not just his. In general, I really don't like them. I don't know. I think I'll probably get better about them. I hope so, anyway.

Q. Was that the same with the first one?

A. What, that I didn't like his body?

Q. Yeah.

A. Yeah, I thought it was totally disgusting.

Q. And do you think that's because of the ... like your dad's friend's prick that presumably was ...

A. Yeah, I think all my sexual relationships will have something to do with that. I hope it will get much better though. I think it will do when I meet someone I really like and everything.

Q. Yeah. And someone who is really caring for you.

A. Mm.

Q. So did your second one actually arouse you to orgasm?

A. No. I don't know anyone of my age who has had an orgasm.

Q. It probably takes a bit of practice. Were you covered when you were having sex with both of these guys? I mean, did you use any contraception or ... ?

A. Most of the time, yeah. Not all the time though.

Q. What, sometimes you didn't use anything?

A. Yeah.

Q. What did you use when you were using something?

A. Condom. I was going to go ... I mean, at one point I was going to go on the pill but the relationship didn't last so I didn't bother.

Q. So who was in charge of the condoms?

A. Um, we both were really. Whoever had one at the time.

Q. Did you both carry them around?

A. Well, I had them in my bedroom and he had them in his bedroom.

Q. So you both had them in various places. Did you actually have sex in each other's bedrooms?

A. Yeah. But, like, if we'd run out, we'd usually carry on without one.

Q. Did you ever feel you were taking a risk?

A. Not at the time but afterwards, yeah. But like I never got pregnant or anything, so I thought I was quite lucky.

Q. Yeah, some people have done it once in their life and got pregnant.

A. Yeah, I know a couple like that.

Q. And was it easy to actually find the time and place to have sex?

A. Yeah, it was quite easy. I mean, his parents weren't in a lot, my parents weren't in a lot so ...

Q. There was quite a lot of empty houses around.

A. Yeah, it was very easy actually.

Q. And did you ever think about things like AIDS?

A. No, not really. I thought both of them were a bit too young to have AIDS at the time. And I also thought using a condom so ...

Q. Did you use a condom with the second one?

A. Yeah.

Q. What also part of the time or were you a bit more ... ?

A. I think I used one less than with the first one, actually.

Q. So did you ever think that you might get pregnant?

A. Yeah, I thought at one point I was pregnant, but I wasn't. But again, at the time I didn't ... I mean, it crossed my mind but I didn't really think about it. I didn't say, 'No, we can't do it cos I ain't got a condom'.

Q. And it didn't cross his mind either?

A. No, I don't think so. I don't know. I mean, there wasn't a hell of a lot of communication between either of them, either of my boyfriends and me.

Q. And do you think if you have another boyfriend you will expect something different?

A. Oh yeah, definitely.

Q. What do you expect now?

A. Much more caring and patient and talks, you know, talk a lot. Talk about how we feel about things and I think if we do that, we'll have a much better sexual relationship. And like, you know, trust each other and all that.

Q. And how long do you think you would wait before you'd have a sexual relationship or wouldn't you?

A. I don't know. I mean, I know people who've done it on the first night and I know people who've waited six months so anything between them really.

Q. Sort of play it by ear?

A. Yeah. I mean, I wouldn't rush into anything now just because I wanted to have sex.

Q. I mean, the person you talk about here, is that just one of the guys in the group? Cos you've put that you've got an eighteen-year old special boyfriend.

A. Oh, that's just a friend. I've never gone out with him or anything. It's not ...

Q. Yeah, no, you say, 'I'm not emotionally involved with him. We talk and smoke and drink.' So that's not a boyfriend like a boyfriend. It's more like just a ...

A. Just a close friend.

Q. But different to the two in your group or is he one of those?

A. Oh no, he's ... well, yeah, I think I was talking about one of them, yeah. Cos I've got quite a few close friends of around eighteen.

Q. Who are boys?

A. Yeah.

Q. And is that quite easy? I mean, easy to talk to and do things with.

A. Who, that one?

Q. Yeah.

A. Yeah, but I'd never go out with him.

Q. But could you discuss things, say if you did go out with somebody else and there were sort of, I don't know what, sort of problems or rows or whatever, could you talk about them with him?

A. Oh, I see.

Q. I mean, is he someone you can talk about more personal things with or confide in - things like that?

A. Yeah, probably. But I'd probably talk to my girlfriends first and if I wanted a male point of view I'd talk to him about it.

Q. Right.

A. Yeah.

Q. And do you think like if you ... when you next have a relationship that you'll have the same attitude to contraception and protection?

A. No, I think I'd be a lot more careful now.

Q. Really?

A. Yeah, probably.

Q. Probably!

A. It's just this sort of spur of the moment thing. I mean, if I plan it I would always have contraception and if I was having a long-term relationship with someone I would probably

go on the pill anyway so ...

Q. But sometimes things can happen very spontaneously.

A. Yeah, I know!

Q. Do you think you'd be able to say no, or would you just go along with it?

A. I'd probably just go along with it, I think, and keep my fingers crossed.

Q. But then what would you do if you did get pregnant?

A. I'd have an abortion. I wouldn't have a child now. I mean, I wouldn't ... I mean, I wouldn't keep doing it on the spur of the moment, you know. I think that's a bit stupid.

Q. Well, it could happen at any time, but you also multiply your chances by not having any cover at all. But do you feel aware of any kind of threat of AIDS at all?

A. Um, I don't think any of my old boyfriends had AIDS but, um, yeah. I mean, I wouldn't just sleep with a geezer if I didn't know him or anything without using contraception. But I don't know, because I said a minute ago I'd do it on the spur of the moment. I think in a way it would have a lot to do with how old he was. If he was quite a bit older than me I'd think he was more likely to have AIDS than someone who was nearer my age, so I might be a bit more cautious about having sex with him.

Q. Is it something that you think about at all or not?

A. I haven't really thought about it at all, not really.

Q. So if you were kind of carrying condoms around it would be for contraception rather than for protection against AIDS?

A. Yeah.

Q. Did you learn much about AIDS ... ?

A. At school?

Q. At school or anywhere else?

A. Yeah, we learned a lot. I mean, when it was all in the media and everything, I mean, we did so much stuff on AIDS and everything. And like, you know you shouldn't have sex without contraception because of the risk of AIDS, but when it comes down to it if it's a spur of the moment ...

Q. But then, I mean, the pill isn't going to protect you from ...

A. No, I know. But I would only go on the pill if I was having a long-term relationship with someone cos like you can get other sexually transmitted diseases anyway.

Q. Mm. So who do you think is most at risk from AIDS?

A. Someone who sleeps around a lot, doesn't use condoms, who sleeps with people that have also had a lot of relationships, a lot of sexual partners. That sort of person. I know it's not always the case though, but I think they're more likely to get AIDS than someone who's not so promiscuous.

Q. Although it only takes one ...

A. Yeah, I know.

Q. And do you know anyone who you think is at risk?

A. No. I don't think so. I mean, I don't really ... none of my close ... well, one close friend is having a sexual relationship at the moment but that's all. None of the others are.

Q. And is she using anything?

A. She's on the pill but like it's quite a steady relationship so, you know ...

Q. And how ... do you know how you actually catch AIDS?

A. Yeah, through blood, through sperm, vaginal mucus and all that. Yeah, that sort of thing. Sexual relationships.

Q. And do you think you are the sort of person who does take risks?

A. Yeah, I like taking risks. I like the bit of excitement in my life.

Q. What gives you the most buzz?

A. I think breaking the law in some way. I don't know.

Q. When do you do that?

- A. Oh, when we drive around, you know. When we smoke.
- Q. But do you do any other things like nicking things or ... ?
- A. Oh no.
- Q. Not that sort of breaking the law?
- A. No. I mean little ... you know, pathetic things breaking the law.
- Q. Like what?
- A. Just like speeding and jumping as many red lights as we can and things like that.
- Q. What, before somebody crashes into you?
- A. Mm. I was just going to say it's a bit silly really.
- Q. Do you take any other risks? I suppose that you smoke.
- A. Yeah, I smoke.
- Q. Drink?
- A. Yeah, drink, I suppose.
- Q. Do you smoke cigarettes as well as dope?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. And you said you played cards.
- A. Yeah.
- Q. When do you do that?
- A. When we're really bored and really skint we play cards. We went through a phase when we played it all the time, but we don't seem to do that as much anymore.
- Q. Did you play for money or was it just ... ?
- A. Yeah, we would play for money if we had like any ... a little bit of money but mostly it was just for ... it might be for dares or something just to liven up the place.
- Q. What sort of dares would you get?
- A. Um, like we might go to Hackney Marshes and you might have to find a couple and go up to them and ask them a question and then go back up to them and ask them another question. I know it doesn't sound very funny but for the people that are ... for us lot who are watching it it's really hilarious!
- Q. Is this any couple or ... ?
- A. Yeah, you just pick ... like you ask ... you have to ask them three questions. Just things like that!
- Q. Is that because you lost the game or is that your reward for winning?
- A. Yeah. No, that's cos you lost. Or you might have to walk round a part of the marshes on your own. Just things like that.
- Q. And if you had to describe yourself, what sort of person would you say you were?
- A. I think I'm happy most of the time now, a good laugh. I piss people off quite a bit.
- Q. Doing what?
- A. I might just talk shit or something. Like in a jokey way, everyone might just run me down or something. Quite clever. I'm good at socialising - I've got a lot of friends.
- Q. So you're quite kind of extrovert really?
- A. Yeah, I think so. I like being with people. I don't really like ... occasionally I might want to be on my own but most of the time I like being with other people.
- Q. So do you still get depressed?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Often?
- A. Yeah, quite a lot more ... a bit more than my friends, actually. Just, sort of ... I might have had a hard session with my counsellor, and I try not to let it spill over into my other ... my social life but sometimes it does. And that's when I piss people off.
- Q. Do you take it out on them?
- A. Yeah, to a certain extent. And like they say, 'What's the matter?', and I can't tell them what's the matter. I can't tell them what the problem is and that pisses them off a bit.

Q. Do you say that nothing's the matter or do you actually say that you can't tell them what's the matter?

A. I tell them nothing's the matter and that really pisses them off.

Q. When it's clear that something is the matter?

A. Yeah. Because I'm the first person if someone's depressed and I'll say, 'What's the matter?' and they say, 'Nothing', I say, 'Don't give me that bullshit'. And like I sort of try and get it out of them what's the matter if they want to tell me.

Q. So do you think there's a time when you will tell people or do you think you'll always keep it to yourself?

A. Well, I won't broadcast it, but I think in the future I'll tell people that are close to me, yeah. I think I have to, really, cos it's a big part of my life and it affects a lot of things that I do now.

Q. So do you think if you found a relationship that you thought was quite good you might tell him?

A. Yeah, I might. After some time though. I mean, I wouldn't tell him ... I wouldn't tell him straight away.

Q. And would you ever tell your sister?

A. I don't think I'll ever tell any of my family. I think that would be the hardest thing to do.

Q. Mm. And do you think you'll get married and have children of your own?

A. I hope so, yeah. Yeah. I love kids.

Q. Do you know when you'd like to do that?

A. In my late twenties, probably. When I've got a career off the ground and all that.

Q. Do you think you're quite ambitious or do you let things go as they go?

A. Um, well I'm not as ambitious as a lot of people but I know what I want, and I expect to do it. But I won't push for it. I'll just let it come to me!

Q. And can you think, in terms of like expectation about sex which obviously for you has been affected a lot by what happened in the past? Do you think of a kind of sex for yourself as something that could be very pleasurable, or do you think it always will be a bit painful?

A. No, I expect it to be pleasurable in time. I mean, if it carries on like this, I'd need to get some serious help! No, I don't expect it to though. I think if I find the right person and I really like him I'd be much more able to do it.

Q. And do you think apart from all the sort of dirty sex that you talk about with your friends, do you think any of those sort of things could actually be pleasurable, or do you think they're all too ... ?

A. Not oral sex. I just don't think that could ever be pleasurable.

Q. What about ... ? Is that oral sex both ways?

A. Oh, it's alright ... it's not so bad for a man to do it to a woman. That's quite nice but ...

Q. Have you had that?

A. Mm, yeah.

Q. Because quite a lot of women actually find that very pleasurable, sort of more so than actual intercourse for some people. But it doesn't get talked about.

A. No! Yeah, that was quite nice.

Q. And that must be a bit less threatening than actually having full intercourse or ...

A. Mm. And like it's something that he's doing to you and I don't know, it's just, sort of ... I don't know how he can really get pleasure out of it really but you're getting ... the woman's getting pleasure out of it.

Q. Well people get pleasure out of giving people pleasure.

A. I suppose so, yeah!

Q. But that's to do with caring about the person that you're with.

A. Yeah.



Q. If it's just sort of selfish and, 'I'm in it for what I can get', then it wouldn't be so much. So, is there any other sorts of sexual enjoyment that you know could be pleasurable?

A. Just like spending time touching and all that. And sort of, just, holding each other. I like that. I don't like just rushing it so he can have a quick screw and then off out of bed and, you know, that's it. It's the worst thing that can happen. Yeah, just taking time over it and like not having the actual screwing part as the most important part cos that doesn't need to be the most important part. Cos it's not all ... I personally find it the less enjoyable part of it.

Q. So you might be quite happy with lots of other aspects of sex and kind of foreplay ...

A. Yeah.

Q. And kind of oral sex ...

A. If he can do it to me. I'm not willing to do it to him, though.

Q. Rather than intercourse itself.

A. Mm. I mean, eventually I'd want full-blown intercourse and everything, but I personally don't think it's all that necessary.

Q. And men can get pleasure that way too. It's not ...

A. Mm.

Q. Cos some people actually use that almost as a form of safe sex and contraception. I mean, actually not having full-blown intercourse - having everything else but.

A. Yeah, I think once I got to know a geezer really a lot and really trusted him and really liked him, I think it would be hard to do all that without having actual sexual intercourse though. Do you see what I mean?

Q. Yeah. Yes, also because for men it's often kind of the symbol of having what they might see as 'proper' sex.

A. Yeah, I think a lot of people see it like that though.

Q. Yeah, I think you're probably right. No, cos when we talk to people and ask them about sex, people often ... a lot of people assume that what we're talking about is sexual intercourse itself, which is often in a way what we are talking about. But when you think about it there are so many other things all round it that are also sex ...

A. Which are much nicer quite often.

Q. Yeah. And yet if everyone in the common room or in the pub or whatever says, 'Have you done it?', they don't mean, 'Have you had oral sex with somebody?', do they?

A. No.

Q. And it's a shame, I think, that that doesn't get talked about more in ... well, I'm not quite sure how it would, cos it's often so embarrassing, sex education in schools, anyway.

A. Oh God, yeah.

Q. What was yours like?

A. It was quite good actually. I mean, it was a bit embarrassing at times. I went to a mixed school. We had some lessons with boys as well and some lessons with just girls. So it was quite useful, really.

Q. Were they in lessons with all girls?

A. Yeah.

Q. Oh right. Probably better.

A. Yeah. I mean, the boys were just so immature and laughed at the most stupidest things and they all thought they knew it all at the age of twelve.

Q. Did you have that ... like some sort of sex education every year or did they just stick it for one year and that was it?

A. Yeah, I've had sex education every year since I was ten. We had it in the fourth year of primary school and right through to the fifth year of secondary school.

Q. Could you actually ask questions and learn about things properly?

A. Oh yeah. And like nobody liked to ask questions in front of the class, so we had this system where you wrote it down.

Q. Yeah, I know other people have had that.

A. Yeah and it's a really good way of doing it.

Q. Yes, cos then nobody really knows who has asked what.

A. And you know everyone else wants to know the same questions as you do.

Q. Do you think they ought to have more sex education say like in the sixth form as well, cos it seems to stop after a certain age?

A. Yeah, I think they should in a way sort of educate boys into how to give women pleasure better ... how to give girls pleasure more.

Q. Yes, so do I.

A. I don't know. By the fifth year sex education is just a laugh though, cos I mean everyone knows the whole facts of life and everything and ... well, they think they do, and it's just a bit of a waste of a time in that sense.

Q. Yeah, there's nothing worse than trying to teach people who think they know it all already, even if they don't.

A. Yeah.

Q. And was there anything that they didn't teach you about at all that you felt then that you wanted to know about?

A. They never taught us ... they never talked about oral sex at all or anal sex, you know, it was just the straight-forward sexual intercourse they talked about.

Q. What, in the missionary?

A. Yeah, that and ... yeah, man on top, woman down the bottom. And they never really talked about ... they sort of skimmed over foreplay. You know what I mean? They didn't really talk about that either. They just basically talked about facts and you could ask questions about things.

Q. Would they have answered say if someone had passed a note about oral sex to the front? Would they actually deal with it or would it be sort of ...?

A. Yeah, they dealt ... any question that was asked they answered. They didn't feel ...

Q. They weren't too embarrassed ...

A. No, they deliberately made sure that they didn't look embarrassed, I think.

Q. It must be hard sometimes with a load of kind of people who are giving you a hard time.

A. Yeah, I mean the teachers asked ... I mean, sometimes the teacher asked personal questions and they'd answer it, so it was quite good really in that way.

Q. Was it a bloke or a woman?

A. We had different ones, but I remember this one, our Biology teacher. He was really good. He'd answer absolutely any question you asked him.

Q. That's good. Cos some people have said they didn't get to know things because the teachers were too embarrassed to actually tell them.

A. Oh no. I mean, all our teachers, I think, were deliberately not embarrassed, tried not to show they were embarrassed, anyway.

Q. Can you think of anything else that we haven't talked about, about relationships, that's important for you now?

A. What, sexual relationships?

Q. Yeah.

A. No, not really.

Q. You've put something about waiting 'til university before you got a boyfriend.

A. Yeah, I think I will. I mean, I don't want a boyfriend next year. It will be my final year of 'A' levels and I just know I won't get any work done if I've got a boyfriend.

Q. So do you think you'll be quite firm about that?

A. Yeah.

Q. You might just meet somebody, your eyes meet across a crowded room.

A. Yeah, well I might. I mean, I'm going away in August. I might just ... I dunno. I might have a quick fling or something.

Q. What, make things a bit more interesting?

A. Yeah. Liven up my dull life.

Q. Right, well, maybe we should stop.

A. Thanks a lot.