

MYC05 Emma
RT 17/1/89

Had talked to EMMA the week before when she was filling in her questionnaire. She had asked me for help with some of the questions and immediately started 'confiding' by telling me that she was having problems filling in the bit on sexual experience as she had slept with someone but it was a secret from all the girls as it was CLAIRE'S brother. This happened while all the others were in the room, whispered and giggled about in the corner, we talked in the office which was a bit of a problem as people kept coming in and out, these were often the people that we were talking about. They would come in and ask what had been said etc. I had the feeling of being in the middle of something- the girls all shared everything so nothing was private and they all commented on others affairs. There seemed to be a bit of a competition over who gave the best interview which was seen as telling me stories of sexual exploits and as EMMA was the only one who had had sex, everyone was interested in what she was telling. I got the feeling that the rest of the girls considered her story to be partly theirs as well.

EMMA was a very warm and 'homely' type of person, if that isn't too awful a stereotype, and immediately let me in to her emotional space, discussing a relationship which had just split up and which had hurt her a lot. We got on very well and I found her easy to talk to and responded to her opening up to me. I was rather taken aback by how freely she talked of very personal feelings and had the impression that she might not have a very positive self image, e.g. she mentioned being 'big' a number of times.

When we talked about oral sex I asked her if she had done it for a boy, she hadn't and hadn't wanted to either. When I then asked her if a boy had done it for her it became obvious that she hadn't realised that this was a possibility. Me asking her this question thus made it a potential act and enlarged her vision of what sex is. I realised at this point that we ought not take for granted any common definition of what sex is, especially with the younger group of women.