

**MAG12 Stacey****RT 6/89** (interviewed at my flat)

1. Age 22. Working at [NAME OF HOSPITAL] on a research project about meningitis, research assistant, just finished microbiology degree in UNIVERSITY. Lives with her boyfriend at his parents. Lots of conflict involved, his mother looks through her stuff, they aren't able to have a sex life there. She can't live at her own parents as she is estranged from her mother, this is a central factor in her life which most things that we mentioned came back to, fear of rejection.

Worked very hard at school as it was an escape from her mother who seems to have had mental problems and taken them out on her. Decided very young that she was going to go to University although she didn't really know what it was or anyone who had been. Her Mum was a cleaner and her Dad a hawker. Did microbiology at UNIVERSITY and about to do a PHD as part of her research for her job at the hospital. Heterosexual, no religion.

2. Quite plain looking, short brown hair, not in any particular style, almost intentionally plain. She told me that her Mum had always told her that she was ugly and that now she has a very low opinion of herself, little self-confidence/self-respect. Nevertheless, she was able to talk very easily, seemed to really need the contact, she unloaded a lot. We spent almost 3 hours together, talking mostly about her and the isolation that she is feeling. After the interview she expressed how grateful she was to have someone to talk to who identifies with her ambitions of a career etc. In her environment she is treated as an oddity because she doesn't want marriage and kids and was feeling like she was giving in to them. We also talked about her fear of rejection and the coping strategies that she uses. She seems to have had a really dreadful childhood psychologically and is obviously scarred by it but is really trying to make herself a life that she wants. I suggested ways of getting support which she agreed she needed, being completely isolated since she left University, having moved back to what she called 'the real world' (w/c Oldham).

SEX ED: Minimal biological stuff at school, but nothing on contraception at all. Was told by teacher at 15, 'if you don't know now you never will'. She didn't and the teacher didn't tell them anymore. Long discussion about how sex is dealt with in school culture. Girls who wore make up vs. the girls that studied, class differences, the building of reputations and calling. Her situation was unusual due to her bad relationship with her mother who told her sex was dirty and disgusting and called her a 'whore' even though she was still a virgin. Disallowed boyfriends in weird way. This was all the sex ed that she got from her Mum. She was quite well informed on the biological side and when she did become sexually active she knew enough to protect herself from pregnancy. Learnt most of her stuff on sex from problem pages, girls magazines and a sex manual that she and a friend found when they were babysitting. At school she says there was no discussion of sex between the girls, the boys had a monopoly on the discourse and language. It was only when she was older that she was able to talk to girlfriends about sex.

Knowledge AIDS:

Pretty well informed from the biological point of view but holds populist views on it as a social phenomena. Doesn't see herself at risk (4 yr rel). Had a gay landlord in

Liverpool from whom she found out a bit about AIDS, although mostly negative images. Sees it as something that happens to 'them' not 'us'.

#### SAFE SEX;

Condoms. We didn't get round to talking about AIDS enough to get much further into this. There was so much else to talk about and at this point AIDS didn't seem important (yet) says that with a new partner she would want to find out about their previous partners, she would use a condom at first and then go back on the pill.

#### RISK:

Re: pregnancy and education has never taken risks. Feels in retrospect that she was taking risks using condoms as contraception when she was younger. We talked a bit about why she would take greater risks when younger.

RELATIONSHIPS: Lack of relationship with parents is most dominating rel. in her life and is part of the explanation of the nature of all the rest of her relationships. Looking for security and affection but not trusting it and then feeling trapped by it. been with boyfriend for 4 years, engaged, buying a house. I got the impression that she wasn't certain that she wanted this.

#### SEXUALITY:

Talked a lot about her first sexual relationship when she was 18. She felt that she ought to sleep with him, did it for him, and didn't actually enjoy it herself. Present sexual rel. much more equal, now expects to enjoy it. She started to get a bit shy with the questions at this point, they have a hard time having a sex life at the moment as they are policed by his parents, they have so few opportunities that now she feels that she has to when the chance arises.

PEER GROUP: Seems isolated and lonely since leaving Uni and a world in which she had a lot of friends and was an independent person. Her life now revolves around her boyfriend. Not happy with this but has little choice. He is very protective and she has no independent transport.