



June 30, 2010.

PARENTING THE PROBING ADOLESCENT MALE.

When was the last time you had a heart-to-heart talk with your child? About... sex. As uncomfortable as it may be for you, the spotlight is thrown your way as adolescent males have identified you as the person from whom they want the facts. But have you got the answers?

Parents or guardians like you were cited by approximately thirty-three (32.9) per cent of adolescent males ages 15-17, as their most preferred source of information on family life education. Let's face it – your adolescent wants honest answers from a person or persons who they trust - You. Avoidance of the bevy of issues related to reproduction will not make them 'disappear'; it will only serve to drive the enquiring mind to other sources which may be less than accurate.

So brace yourself for the straight up inquisitions about physiological changes in the opposite sex, intercourse, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). An approach is to try to assess just how much they already know and from that launch pad perhaps the talk won't seem as ominous or foreboding. Providing your young adolescent male with correct information does not spur them to become sexually active. More than anything else it outlines clearly the consequences of poor decision making, including experimentation. The reality check that discussions such as these can have, affords our young males the opportunity to assess their life chances and delay sexual debut. The earlier the talk is had, the less likely your teen will falter.



Parenting the probing.../2

In Jamaica, preliminary data points to almost one-half of males under 14 not using a contraceptive when they first had sex (48 per cent). The mean age at first intercourse among males is 14.5 years – in actuality younger than girls who initiate sex at 16.1 years. Among men aged 15-24 years, 34.7 per cent reported being under age 15 at first intercourse, engaging in intercourse with their girlfriend (62 per cent).

As their guardians, certainly have that heart-to-heart talk before they begin dating at 15 -16 years. Survey data shows that 32.2 per cent of 15-17 year olds dated for one to five month before their first sexual experience.

Approximately 52.4 and 56 per cent, of our young adolescent men 15-17 years have received information about condoms and pregnancy respectively from parents or step-parents. What is more, they were quite comfortable discussing condoms and how pregnancy occurs with the parent or step-parent (70.6 and 63.1per cent).

You have a responsibility to that young man who believes that you have all the answers he requires. More often than not they also do not have comprehensive enough information on HIV despite being surrounded by several sources. Don't wait on the school to formalise the information for him, as 13.4 per cent of 15-17 year old males do not receive a course of study in health and family life education (HFLE), and 76.1 per cent are exposed to the material in school only – not hearing it from their most trusted source – you.

The confidence that comes with being an authority on a particular subject matter, acts as a magnet for those seeking enlightenment. Be the change in your child's life, be his confidante.

-end-

Contact: Dianne Thomas
Director, Outreach (NFPB)
Telephone: (876)968-1632-3
Facsimile: (876) 968-1626.

.../2 of 2