

Anybody Listening? What Black Teens have to Say about Sex, HIV Prevention, and Sexual Health



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What we mean by 'Black youth'?

- Any respondent 13-17 yrs old and selected any/all following racial-ethnic categories:
 - Black African, Black Caribbean, Black Canadian
- **Survey:** 385 Black youth
 - 50% male, 50% female
- **Focus Groups (3):** 32 Black youth
 - 41% male, 59% female

Survey Findings for Black youth

- 31% engaged in anal or vaginal intercourse
 - Less than 2% have been tested for HIV or STIs.
 - Less than 1% of females have had a PAP smear
- 7% report pregnancy involvement, 5% unsure

Focus Group Discussions about HIV & STIs

- Main STI & HIV education received from school and media (BET campaign)
- HIV prevention education as fear-based
- Belief in being able to identify STI/HIV infected persons through social networks.
- Persistent homophobia-HIV link

Q: What would make you decide to get tested?

“If you hear its in your area.” (F)

“Good looking young people talking to us about it.” (F)

“People don’t want to know they got AIDS.
[If I found out I had it] I would kill myself.” (M)

“If it’s something that would kill me I don’t want to know.” (M)

Sexual Health Risk Factors

- Invincibility- “It can’t happen to me”
- More concerned w/pregnancy prevention
- Male belief that they can identify “nasty” and “rotten” girls.
- Sex double-standard: both males and females ostracize sexually active females.
- Sex negativity in the Black community = less access to support

What changes do youth want to see?

- School-based education that is: modern, detailed, & sex-positive; mandatory throughout 4 years.
- Community-based education w/ attendance incentives (e.g. money, food)
- Canadian media campaigns that feature attractive celebrities.
- More peer-based education programs

Thank you

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