

LJH9
Shanise

Q. ... in this piece of research is how young women feel and think about their relationships, so I was wondering, what's the most important thing for you in relationships, any sort of relationship at all?

A. Well, I think, to stay with the person is the important thing.

Q. Mm. And what kind of relationship is the most important relationship for you?

A. A long-term relationship.

Q. Yeah? You're thinking particularly of relationships with men?

A. Yeah.

Q. Yeah, cos other people might think they were in their family or something like that, but that's an important sort of relationship for you. You're having a relationship at the moment?

A. No.

Q. Have you had relationships?

A. Yeah.

Q. When was that?

A. I broke up before ... February.

Q. Oh, quite recently.

A. Yeah, that was eight months though.

Q. Mm. How did you meet him?

A. One of my friends - a male friend - came round to visit me and brought him with him, brought a friend cos I had a friend at my house. He was just there so I met him then when he came to my house.

Q. Was that ... did that relationship include sex?

A. No.

Q. Have you ever had one that has?

A. What? Yeah, yeah.

Q. Prior to this one that just ended, you had another relationship before then?

A. Yeah, that was about last year.

Q. Yeah. When did you first start having relationships that included sex?

A. When I was fifteen.

Q. Mm. I said sex, but I never quite know what people mean by it, really. When you say it was a relationship with sex, what exactly does that mean?

A. Um ...

Q. I may seem like an idiot to you, but some people think it's a sexual type of relationship even if it doesn't include say, for example, sexual intercourse or something like that.

A. Well it wasn't sex all the time, it was just sometimes.

Q. But there was ... but it did include sexual intercourse, for example? Yeah. Another thing I've been asking people about is that sometimes people have relationships that they think of as sexual but which don't actually include sexual intercourse, like when they're very young or something and they have a sexual type of relationship but it doesn't include sexual intercourse. Did you have any like that before ... ?

A. Yeah, that's like what I had for the last eight months.

Q. Yeah. But before that you had?

A. Yeah.

Q. What was the difference with the last one? Why didn't it ... or didn't you want it to?

A. What?

Q. The one that you just had?

A. I didn't want to because I didn't like the other one and the other one I was just doing it to please him and I still think I'm young and I don't want to get into any trouble or something.

Q. Yeah.

A. Didn't really wanna do anything.

Q. Yeah. Did that have anything to do with you breaking up or was it something ...?

A. No. We just fell apart. We didn't ... we just didn't have the same feelings towards each other anymore and we was always arguing and everything so it wasn't worth carrying on.

Q. Staying together, yeah, definitely. You said in that other relationship before which did include sex that you were really doing it to please the other person. You didn't ... it wasn't what you wanted to do?

A. No.

Q. How did you feel about that? I mean, did you feel bad at the time or ...?

A. Yeah, I was really scared just in case anything happened to me. I kept saying, 'If anything happens to me, you've got to promise to stay with me'. He kept going, 'Yeah alright, I will stay with you'. But I didn't really like it, it's not what I wanted to do.

Q. But then you had the next relationship where you decided you wouldn't ... I mean, do you think that's the position you're going to take now?

A. Yeah, because I don't want to be forced into having sex or something. I'm busy now, I've got my exams and everything. I just wanna get on with that and when I'm ready ... It's my body so ...

Q. Absolutely, yeah. In that first relationship, were you taking any precautions or is that why you were worried?

A. No, we were taking precautions but it was the first time I'd ever done it, so I was still scared.

Q. What kind of precautions did you take?

A. A condom.

Q. Do you think that's what you would use in the future, you'd use a condom?

A. I think I'd use the pill.

Q. Why's that?

A. Cos with a condom you don't know. It could have a hole in it or something - anything might happen. But I think I'd use the pill and a condom at the same time.

Q. Why's that, belt and braces?

A. What?

Q. Belt and braces, to be really sure.

A. To be really sure that nothing could happen.

Q. Has the idea of AIDS being around affected the way you feel about that?

A. Yeah, before I get to know them, before I do anything with a person, I have to get to know them cos I won't just go with anyone. And I would use something at the time.

Q. And so would you be mainly worried then about contraception, I mean about not getting pregnant or getting some sort of sexually transmitted disease or ... ?

A. I think I'd be worried about getting pregnant. I don't really think about diseases because I think I'd be careful with who I choose but sometimes people think they're careful with who they choose but they still get AIDS.

Q. It's a bit difficult to know really, isn't it? When did you first hear about AIDS?

A. It must have been about three years ago I heard about it.

Q. Did you hear about it on television, in school or?

A. Yeah, it was on tele ... it come in on tele, this new killer disease called AIDS and they said it was from Africa.

Q. Yeah.

A. And people were having sex with green monkeys, green monkeys or something ...

Q. God.

A. And I just thought, the first thing, that's what I thought AIDS came from.

Q. Yeah, and what did you think about that?

A. I thought that was really horrible. How could people have sex with monkeys and all that? And then they had sex with people and AIDS ...

Q. Did you find out more about it as time went by?

A. Yeah, cos they started putting leaflets through your door and advertisements and everything, so I just used to read it cos that's what ...

Q. So what do you know about it now? I mean, how do you think it's transmitted now?

A. Through homosexuals and sleeping with ... if you've been with another man or something and then you sleep with a woman you can get AIDS or if you have blood transfusions or share needles, heroine and stuff like that.

Q. And what do you think that it is really, AIDS?

A. What do I think AIDS is?

Q. Yeah.

A. It's a killer disease. It's killing everyone off.

Q. Yeah, quite a few people are getting it. Do you think that people of your age and your friends and people that you go around with are worried about it at all?

A. Not really, I don't think so.

Q. What, you think they don't think about it or ...?

A. I don't think they think about it. If they were asked like I am being asked now, then they would just come out with it but I don't really think they would think about it.

Q. Do you think they should think about it?

A. Some of them should be because some of them are a bit flirty and that. Some of them should think about it.

Q. Mm. Especially if you don't know where the people have been.

A. It's true.

Q. Yeah. What kind of things do you think would be helpful to help young people to think about it?

A. I think there should be advice sessions like for young people to come and talk to people in confidence like. That's something that can help them, make them be a bit cautious of who they're with.

Q. Do you think they could do some of that through sex education in schools?

A. No, because people ... in school not everyone's serious. There's some girls who are really serious and wanna listen and they're other girls who are always giggling and everything, so you can't concentrate and then your mind gets distracted and you don't wanna listen and you just get embarrassed because you wanna listen but other people are laughing at you, so I don't think it would be good at school.

Q. Yeah. Is that what you found in your sex education lessons at school anyway?

A. Yeah. You're just talking about normal things like periods and all that kind of thing and girls are just laughing and giggling. You think they're really stupid and the teacher's always telling them to shut up and everything. You're not learning nothing really.

Q. Mm, yeah. So did you feel you didn't learn anything very much.

A. Oh, I did learn something, I did learn a lot.

Q. But it was a slightly difficult situation?

A. Yeah, cos when you're putting your hand up to ask questions people are going, 'Er, she's nasty', and all that kind of thing, you know, for asking questions.

Q. Some people would suggest, and I've spoken to quite a lot of young women, as you can imagine over the period, and some of them were suggesting that it's quite helpful if you write down the questions anonymously on a piece of paper and then the teacher pulls them out and reads them out.

A. Yeah, we did that.

Q. Yeah? Did that work or did everybody know who'd asked the questions?

A. No, we did that in class one time, in health education, we did that and everyone wrote anonymously and she read the questions out. It was about childbirth though. Answers about childbirth. She had to answer the questions. So no-one knew who asked it.

Q. Yeah, that helps the embarrassment a bit, though I suppose they then start speculating as to who it was who asked a particular question. Did they do much on AIDS in those sessions or ...?

A. No, we didn't really do nothing on AIDS. It wasn't a topic that came up really.

Q. It's sort of a bit slow getting to the schools isn't it?

A. Yeah.

Q. So you think it might ... well, when you said you didn't think it would be useful, it was because people wouldn't really be asking the right questions?

A. If people were prepared to pay attention and listen, then it would come across.

Q. Yeah. When you were in the relationship that you had before which did have sex in it, you were taking precautions?

A. Yeah.

Q. So you didn't want to take any risks really, take chances? Do you think that you take chances in any other area of your life? I mean are there any other things that you think might be slightly risky?

A. What, apart from relationships?

Q. Yeah, not necessarily sex.

A. Not really.

Q. Some people think, you know, smoking and drinking and stuff like that.

A. I don't smoke. I drink if I go out to the pub, but I don't smoke.

Q. Nothing spectacular. What about drugs or anything like that?

A. I've smoked drugs before - hash or weed - that was really horrible.

Q. Yeah? Didn't think much of it?

A. No. I wouldn't do it again. Some people asked me to take coke before cos I see them sniffing it, but I see the way that they react and everything. I couldn't do it.

Q. So, some of your friends do but ...

A. No, my friends don't take coke. Some of them just take hash cos it's so easy to go and get. You just go down to ... you just go down the road and they're selling it in the shops and so forth for a fiver so it's so easy.

Q. So they do. But who are the people ... I mean, not exactly who were they ... but was it a party or somewhere where people were sniffing coke and that?

A. Yeah. Just at parties they sniff that. Sometimes, cos we go to youth clubs on Fridays and Wednesdays we see, it's the boys, not the girls - the boys are the ones who are on the heavy stuff. We see them sniffing it and you walk past them and they say, 'Do you want some?' and you say, 'No'.

Q. And most of your friends avoid it, do they?

A. Yeah, cos they know that's dangerous. And they've got songs out about coke so I wouldn't touch it.

Q. Oh right. Who sings about it?

A. It's reggae singers, erm, people from Jamaica, I don't really know their names. Some people from Jamaica talking about drugs cos they ... in the words they're talking about young people and drugs cos they know that it's mainly young people that are taking them now.

Q. Do you think that's a good idea, that's the kind of thing young people would listen to?

A. Yeah, there are some people that it's difficult, like, to sort out. Like in a song or something because you know people listen to, like, music and everything. It would be good.

Q. So that would be an idea for AIDS wouldn't it?

A. Yeah.

Q. They may have made one for all I know. I hadn't thought of that. What sort of other things do you do? I mean, you've said you go to parties and you go to the youth club ... ?

A. Yeah, I go to the youth club, go round my friend's house - I sleep over there the weekend sometimes, she sleeps over at my house or something, go out visiting and I go to work on the weekends.

Q. Oh, I was going to ask you about that. What is it that you do on the weekends?

A. I work in FAST FOOD RESTAURANT in Piccadilly.

Q. Oh right. I went down there once. I took a load of schoolgirls down to visit cos we were doing things about the kind of jobs you can get, and they wanted to see the sorts of jobs you can get in fast food places. So we went down there. But it was quite a long time ago. It was probably before

your time. How is it working?

A. It's a bit ... it's alright. Once you first start everyone starts picking on you and shouting at you to hurry up, but I've been there this month, no last month, it's a year now, so I'm used to it so they leave me alone so I'm alright. I've been put on the till cos I'm fast - you know, you've got to run about and everything - and REDACTED.

Q. And then what's your reward?

A. Erm, cos I got a pay rise. REDACTED, and after that you become a manager.

Q. So you think you would, even just working part-time, you could get up to be a manager or something or do you think not?

A. No, I don't think so. Well, you could, I suppose you could, cos this boy used to work part-time cos I never went to work for a couple of months and then when I came back he was PROMOTED, in charge of people cleaning up downstairs. And I worked there, he worked there, I started work before him, I think.

Q. How to progress, yeah. But that's not what you ... I mean, you don't plan to work in a fast food place for the rest of your life-

A. No, I'll be leaving there soon.

Q. Yeah. What have you got in mind? I see that you hope to go on to higher education.

A. Yeah, I'm going to go to college and do sociology or psychology, one of those.

Q. Yeah. What gave you that idea?

A. I want something to do with crime in the courts because I like defending people - I think I'm quite good at standing up for people, speaking out. I'd love to do that.

Q. Has anybody else in your family gone in that direction?

A. My aunt's a CARING PROFESSION and my other aunt's an ENTERTAINER - she comes on tele, she does shows and everything and my mum's a SECRETERIAL ROLE and my other uncle's an ENTERTAINER and one's a SKILLED TRADE, so they're sort of ...

Q. A mix really.

A. Yeah, stuff like that.

Q. So you're taking a few ...

A. A' levels.

Q. A' levels and GCSEs. And how are you getting on at school, I mean, how does it seem to be going?

A. It's alright but it's really depressing sometimes - we've got all this work all at the same time that's all to be given in on the same day. You've gotta rush and when you come into school and they say, 'Where's this work?' and you say, 'I can't do it because I had to give in this today' or 'I had to give in English today' and they say, 'Well, this lesson's important cos you've gotta pass this exam', so when you do that, say like German, you do your German homework and you haven't done your English and the teacher starts shouting at you because you haven't done your English, you know, it's all together. It's really hectic, I don't like it.

Q. A lot of pressure.

A. I can't wait to get out of here. It was better in the other years.

Q. Yeah?

A. Yeah. It's not cos we messed around and didn't do no work, cos I'm up to date, but it's just that you've got a load on top of you, you know? And the way the teachers make it sound, you sort of like get frightened, thinking like, I hope I pass this exam cos if I don't pass it then I'll have to stay all the sixth form and I don't wanna stay.

Q. Yeah, so which year are you in now?

A. 5th year.

Q. So then you're going to leave to go to sixth form college?

A. No, I wanna go to college, proper college.

Q. To proper college straightaway, yeah.

A. But if I don't pass then I'll have to go to sixth form college.

Q. How do you think the school is feeling about your progress? Are they encouraging?

A. Yeah, they are encouraging. They sort of nag all the time though, cos it's always, 'If you don't come in then you won't be entered for your exams', and that kind of thing. All the time - they're always nagging you. They're not sort of saying, 'We hope you do well' and sit down and say, 'If you don't come in then you know that you'll miss out on a lot of work and you won't be able to enter for your exams and we want you to come in'. They should say something like that, but they don't say that.

Q. So it's more, yeah, nagging you to do it rather than encouraging or giving you motivation, yeah.

A. Yeah.

Q. You'll have to think of a few things to suggest that they do to provide you with motivation.

A. Yeah.

Q. Make the lessons enticing and interesting and then you'd be very eager to come in maybe.

A. Yeah, it's true.

Q. I suppose it's difficult at times when they've got a lot on their plates too.

A. Yeah, cos they've got to keep phoning up other people telling them to come in cos they don't come into school. Cos a lot of people have dropped out in the fifth year now, like there was loads of people and now they've all dropped out cos they can't take it.

Q. Mm. What, they were sixteen already or they were dropping out before they were sixteen?

A. Some were dropping out before they were sixteen.

Q. Mm, yeah. I suppose that's illegal so they've gotta try to get them back into school.

A. Yeah, but they've just dropped out in order to work and that.

Q. Mm. Were they finding it easy to find work?

A. Yeah, because well, my friend that dropped out, her dad owned a shop, so she went to work in the shop and that. One went to COUNTRY. They all went different places.

Q. Yeah, so it wasn't so much of a problem cos I was wondering about the unemployment levels, whether they were dropping cos it used to be a bit of a problem if you left school. People were staying on just because they couldn't get work, so they weren't leaving so early, they were staying on later, even if they didn't necessarily want to. That was happening a couple of years ago when I was working in schools before. Are you living at home at the moment?

A. Yeah.

Q. With your mum and ... ?

A. Brother.

Q. Brother. How old is he? Younger or ... ?

A. Ten.

Q. How do you get on with him?

A. He's alright at times but he can be a real pain because he's so spoilt cos he's the youngest and he's got HEALTH CONDITION.

Q. Has he?

REDACTED

Q. Mm. I suppose it's only natural that people spoil him. Do you spoil him yourself?

A. Yeah, I do sometimes. But anything he wants, he just gets it, you know?

Q. Mm. Hard to refuse though if somebody's ill, isn't it?

A. Mm. But sometimes he can really put it on and that's what I don't like cos I know that he's putting it on and I tell my mum he's putting it on and she says, 'Oh, just leave him,

just leave him', when you know that he's putting it on.

Q. Mm. Yeah. He's using it as an excuse or something. REDACTED. Who else lives at home? It's your mum and ...?

A. Me and my mum and my brother, that's it.

Q. When we were talking about relationships, just to turn back to that issue again, I mean I was asking you what relationships were important and you were answering in terms of relationships with boys or men of some sort. What about your relationships with girls? Do you have good relationships with your friends?

A. Yeah. I've only got two good relationships with my friends.

Q. (Talking to someone else.) That's right, OK, so I'll see you at 2.30 pm. Good, I'll see you later.

(Back to original conversation) Is that a friend of yours?

A. That's my good friend. That's the one I've got a good relationship with. We tell each other everything. If we're in trouble or something we tell each other, try and help each other.

Q. Have you been friends for long?

A. Yeah, I came to this school at the end of the third year and then I've known her for about two years now, two years. Cos when I first came, she was the one who helped me get used to the place ... get used to it, so I've been with her all the time.

Q. Yeah. And you value that kind of relationship?

A. Yeah. She's good. And I know that if I tell her anything, she won't tell no one, whether we're talking or we fell out she wouldn't say anything to anyone.

Q. It's good to be able to have confidence in people like that. Where were you before you came ... ?

A. NAME OF SCHOOL.

Q. What made you change?

A. I got thrown out.

Q. Did you? Why was that?

A. Cos I used to get picked on a lot and then one day I sort of got ... I used to ... everyone who started picking on me I used to fight them and then I kept getting suspended and everything. And then I started going round with the tough girls, you know, so that no one would pick on me and then they started doing bad things so I followed 'em and they couldn't take it no more so I came here.

Q. What did they think about it here when you came? I mean, did they keep their eye on you or something?

A. Yeah, they kept their eye on me. I was on trial for three months and if they didn't like me then I'd have to go back but I came off the trial in about a month and a half cos they said I was really good so I could just stay.

Q. Did you find it easy to try to adjust, I mean to come here to a new place and sort of like be a 'good girl' or something or was it difficult?

A. It was a bit hard after I was a bit bad, you know, but I still said that I'm not going to let no one walk over me again, like at the other school cos if I'd have stood up for myself in the first place, then maybe I wouldn't have been in trouble.

Q. It wouldn't have happened, yeah.

A. Maybe I'd still have been there.

Q. Yeah. Did you miss your friends there or did you know them anyway still because ...?

A. I know them, I see them all the time anyway. When I come home from school I go to Hackney Baths - they're always there so I just see them.

Q. Mm. And did you still remain friends with some of the people from there?

A. Yeah.

Q. Did you think ... when you said that that group of girls that you got in with - the strong ones - they were, well they were doing things that were considered to be 'bad things', did you think that was risky, I mean, when I was asking you about risky things?

A. Yeah, it's true that. Cos one time after school, there was this TEACHER that we didn't like so we ... after school we hid behind this wall. She was going home. And we started throwing things - I know it's bad. We didn't think she'd seen us so we started ducking and then we thought she'd gone up the road now, so we were coming out and then she saw our faces, so I suppose that was risky.

Q. Taking a chance never knowing what they were going to do.

A. Yeah.

Q. Put the finger on you. It's difficult once you get a reputation in a school, isn't it?

A. Yeah.

Q. That's why I was wondering how easy it was for you to do the shift when you got here cos people are always keeping their eyes on you, expecting you to get into trouble and it can't be easy. But you didn't find that when you came here?

A. No, well these lot were loud anyway.

Q. Yeah?

A. Yeah, they were really loud anyway so at first cos there were these girls that used to go to my primary school and then came to this school and I started going with them but they weren't really my type - they were a bit boring. And they just sat down and talked about pop music and everything all the time and I weren't into that. And then I started going round with the other lot - we were just a bit loud, that was all.

Q. Yeah. But you were also ... I mean, what ? ... how ? ... you're doing quite well at school anyway aren't you? What about your friends, are they doing OK?

A. Yeah. Well, one of them, she weren't here for three months but she came back yesterday; she had trouble at home but now she's come back and she can be there for all her exams so she's alright now. One left because she was pregnant but she lost it so she's allowed back now. She came back but she's left again now. She's going to come back in September to stay on in the sixth form so she can do all her exams again.

Q. That must be difficult, I mean, when you get pregnant. I think they don't let you stay at school while you're having it. You have to ...

A. You have to leave, yeah.

Q. So I see why you were concerned or worried about that risk.

A. Yeah, cos I've seen it happen to my friend.

Q. Yeah. I suppose it changes your life so much, doesn't it? What do you think about having children in general? Do you think that's going to be part of your life?

A. Um, I said I don't want any children, but I most probably will have one. But I don't really want them.

Q. You don't?

A. No. I don't really want the tie. Cos I see all the problems that people have. Like my mum(?), she's been through so much problems with me and my brother cos like we're growing up teenagers who are going through these moods and everything and I see all the problems that you have. And then I hear, when I go to my aunt's house ... her baby's always screaming in the night and crying for no reason and everything and I think I don't want one. But I most probably would have one anyway.

Q. Yeah, you think you will?

A. I think I will, but I don't want it now.

Q. Quite a bit later?

A. Yeah.

Q. Do you think that would be in the context of marriage or something like that or you're not bothered about that?

A. No, I don't really ... Yeah, I would like to get married for my child's sake but if I'm not planning to have a child then I'll just live with a man. I don't really see the point of marriage - it's just a bit of paper, you know, you're just signing a piece of paper, that's all I think it is.

Q. I tend to agree with you. On your questionnaire you did say that you were Christian, didn't you? Do you belong to a particular church?

A. My mum goes to a Jehovah Witness thing and I go with her sometimes but I'm not in it, I'm not strong really. They're always telling me to come because I shouldn't follow the ways of people who aren't Jehovah's Witness because they're bad and I should serve God and all that kind of thing.

Q. But you're not that involved?

A. No.

Q. Cos I was wondering whether that ... I mean, quite often with people that have strong religious feeling that affects the way that they behave, but you don't think that it has a lot of effect on you?

A. No. Cos I said to them ... they want me to come along but I said, 'I wanna come along when I feel I wanna come along, not because you want me to come along.' It's not going to be any good if they want me to come along cos I'm not going to have any ... I'm not going to feel anything towards God for them, I'm going to do it because I feel something for Him.

Q. Yeah. When I asked you the question on the questionnaire about, you know, put yourself forward two years and think what you would be doing, you said then that only God would know. Do you think that's the case?

A. Yeah, only God'll know what ...

Q. Can you think of anything now? Can you project yourself forward now?

A. In two years time I think I'd have my car and my own flat.

Q. Yeah?

A. Yeah, my own flat. I'd be on my own, but I think I'd have someone pestering me.

Q. Yeah?

A. Yes, a man pestering me.

Q. That's an interesting way of putting it, isn't it, pestering you? You'd think of it as pestering? He'd be wanting something you didn't want to give him?

A. Mm, like coming to stay in my flat, cos one minute he's staying and the next minute you don't see him for about three days.

Q. Do you think that men are unreliable?

A. Yeah, they are.

Q. Do think they feel sort of a double-standard - a different set of rules for men and a different set for women?

A. Like?

Q. Well, sometimes people ... I mean, it's OK for men to go around with a load of women, but it's not a good idea for women to.

A. Yeah, I don't think it's right for men to go with women and I don't think it's right for women to go with other men. I think everyone should be loyal to each other. I don't think it's right to ...

Q. You think you should just have the one person that you're in a relationship with?

A. Yeah.

Q. But do you think that happens usually?

A. No. It doesn't happen. I don't really know, I've never really been at that stage with the same person.

(Chat about voice booming out over loudspeaker.)

Q. But you think that people ... I mean, when you've had those relationships that you were talking about, were they, I mean, you didn't go round with other people at the same time, you just stayed ... ?

A. No, I couldn't do it.

Q. What about them? Do you think they were ... ?

A. Well, the first one I had did, yeah. I don't know because I was walking ... me and my friend was walking home together with him, he was walking, and they'd walked me to my door and then he walked her home and then they was ... had something going, right under my nose and I didn't even guess because he said, 'I'd never do that to you, I'd never do that to you'. You know when people ... rumours, you hear rumours and everyone comes back to tell you and I go to him to ask him if it's true and he says, 'You believe your friends and you don't believe me?' That's what it was. But now I believe my friends.

Q. You trust them?

A. Yeah. I don't think ... they wouldn't come up to me and lie, lie like that, unless they want me to split up with the person, then they'll just come out with that.

Q. What, if they don't like the guy or something like that?

A. Yeah.

Q. Well, what about the friend that he walked off with? I mean, she was a friend too.

A. Yeah, some friend!

Q. Yeah, complicated though, isn't it, in these relationships?

A. And people said, 'Don't worry anyway cos you'll get limited too young'. If it's happened to me now when I'm younger, it's helped me to be a bit more cautious in the future when I'm a bit older. Cos if they can do it to you when you're young, then they can do it to you when you're older.

Q. Yeah, so the experience has been useful even if it was a bit painful at the time?

A. Mm.

Q. Do you think that the friends that you have here and from the other school as well, that the ones that you spend most time with, are a bit cautious like that or do you think that they...?

A. Yeah, I think some of them are cautious. But if you tell them anything, if you say, 'Oh, I saw your boyfriend with this girl walking down the street and they were holding hands and everything', they get a bit humpy with you and not with the boyfriend. Some people say, 'Well, thanks for telling me, you shouldn't have told me.' They're not grateful for you telling them, so sometimes I just leave it. I don't bother.

Q. That's always a problem. And then when they do find out they probably say, 'Why didn't you tell me?'

A. Yeah, and you say, 'Because last time ... ' and you don't bother.

Q. Yeah. One question I was going to ask about AIDS, which slipped out of my mind at the time, was this business about safe sex that they're always talking about when you talk about AIDS, what do you understand by that?

A. Is it contraception? Taking precautions - using condoms or...?

Q. Yeah. Can you think of anything else in connection with it? No? I suppose I was thinking of other things that would be considered ... it's really the same sort of question as I was asking before when you said you said you had sexual relationships but they didn't include sex, then you do other sorts of things which don't actually include sex itself, I suppose - that's what I was thinking about. But they have all the little booklets now that explain to you all the things that you can do that are safe sex and stuff like that, so I was just wondering if you had come across any of them. And you obviously haven't come across them in school because they haven't told you much about AIDS at all.

A. No.

Q. When you think of yourself, a strange question to ask, but what sort of image do you have of yourself? What is your idea or image of yourself?

A. Of me?

Q. Mm.

A. I hate myself.

Q. Do you?

A. Yeah. I just think I'm so useless at things.

Q. Why?

A. Because whenever my friends have a problem, they always run to me and I can always, always guarantee that I can help them with their problem - if they've broken up with their boyfriends I can always get them back together, but when it comes to me and my problems I can't do anything, I can't help myself.

Q. No?

A. No, but I can always sort everyone else out. But like now, when I'm getting all this homework all at the same time and I can only do one subject and I can't do another, I get really upset and say I'm no good because I can't do these at the same time, where other people might be able to do it. I don't like it.

Q. What do you think you can do to change?

A. I tried working out a schedule, how I used to do my homework, I done that but I didn't stick to it this week because I had to hand in something yesterday so I had to do that more ...

Q. Yeah, it's always difficult to keep to those things but it's always good to have it and try to. But what about the other things? It sounds as though for your friends it's very good, it's very useful to see these things and help them with their problems and quite often it's easier to see it when it's

somebody else's. When it's yours it's so close to home, isn't it? What's their image of you, your friends' image?

A. They think that ... they don't think that I've got any problems, they think I'm just 'Miss Perfect' with no problems at all. It's just because I don't run to people with my problems, I keep them to myself. I'm sort of like independent, I'd like to work it out for myself. I don't like going to people and telling them everything. It's just how I am. My mum's the same. And I just take after my mum. Like, if they need the money desperately, they'd come to someone and ask them for money but if I was really short I wouldn't ask no one, I'd just go without.

Q. Mm. But your friends do see you as being helpful because you're helping them with their problems as well?

A. Yeah.

Q. Have you got any ... I mean, you said you wanted to be a solicitor ... have you got any wild ambition, dream thing that you think ... ?

A. A singer.

Q. A singer? Yeah.

A. I'd like to be famous.

Q. What do you think your chances are?

A. I don't know about that. I think I could sing. I mean, I've sung in shows, REDACTED but I've been singing since I was little in that kind of thing. So I'd probably be alright. But I don't know about getting into fame.

Q. What about your relatives in showbusiness? They might be able to point you in the right direction.

A. I suppose so. But she wants to do television presenting now, she wants to present television so she's getting, she's sort of like moving into the television field. REDACTED.

Q. That's good experience, making the right kind of contacts. But it's a very hard life, I mean, I've got a friend who's a television presenter and you know sometimes they work ... working freelance ... sometimes the work's coming in and sometimes it isn't. I suppose if you catch on or you're a typeset they really want, something like that, then it can be a bit easier. I mean, it's nice once you get one of those jobs and to tell the news they pay you a hell of a lot of money. Is there anything that you'd like to ask me about what I'm doing or anything?

A. Yeah, what are you doing? What's your job?

Q. I'm a sociologist, actually. I'm doing this piece of research which is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council who provide you with money which pays for the research and the

study is about young women and sexuality - finding out what they think about it and I'm doing it in London and I've got a few colleagues who are doing it in Manchester as well. And I've always done things like that - asking people about their lives, various aspects of them. The last piece of work I did was about girls and occupational choice - asking them what they wanted to do in the future and trying to change their minds about the kinds of things that they were doing.

A. Have you interviewed men? Don't you think you should ...?

Q. Well, for the AIDS thing is this?

A. Yeah, to get different opinions.

Q. Absolutely, I think you're absolutely right, but what's been happening is that we wanted to get money to talk to young women in particular because we thought that not much attention was being paid to young women, so that's why we tried to do a particular piece on them. But definitely I think you're right. There are some people doing this - asking young men about their relationships and stuff and it's absolutely crucial - you don't have a relationship by yourself, you're always in a relationship with somebody else, whether it's a man or a woman. Yeah, I mean, you're right. Um, the other thing I was going to say is that what we're doing after talking to young women this year is to come back in a year's time, talk to them again, see how things have been going, what they're thinking and feeling at that point. Would you be interested in doing that?

A. Yeah.

Q. Things will have changed and have happened to you. Do you think you'll still be here?

A. No, I'll be at a college.

Q. Right.

A. But I'll put my address on here.

Q. So anything sent to that address would find you?

A. Yeah.

Q. The other thing I was thinking of doing was asking them if they would mind keeping a diary, just for a short while, maybe for a month or something like that, just writing down what relationships they were having, what they were doing, what they were thinking about it, that sort of thing for a short period. Would you be interested in doing that?

A. In a diary?

Q. Yeah.

A. I keep a diary anyway.

Q. You do?

A. Yeah. I kept one all of last year and just started this year.

Q. Well, I might send you, to that address then, a diary just to keep for a short while and I'll write in it the times that we're interested in. That's terrific. Thank you very much. Well, I hope to see you next year. And I hope that all of these plans work out that you have. Thanks very much for talking to me.