

EARLY SEXUAL ACTIVITY – FACTS

- This issue is problematic for heterosexual and homosexual activity.
- There are a number of forces at work as an adolescent matures and begins to enter sexual relationships – physical changes, emotional changes, and peer influences.
- Sexually abused children are at higher risk for early sexual activity.
- There is a very strong association between age at first intercourse and the number of sexual partners.
- Having sex tends to lead towards more sexually permissive attitudes and expectations in all races and gender subgroups.
- Becoming sexually active can lower the importance of school grades and of going to college for some adolescents.
- Female teens that begin sexual intercourse earliest in studies were more likely to form a family through giving birth rather than through marriage.
- Cultural influences impact at what age an adolescent begins sexual experimentation.
- Once sexual activity is initiated, other important questions emerge about such issues as frequency of intercourse, the number of partners a teen has and contraceptive practices.
- Effective treatment with adolescents involved in early sexual activity needs to be sensitive to both the similarities and differences between adolescents (i.e., age of onset of puberty, familial expectations, peer influences)
- The U.S. has one of the highest adolescent pregnancy rates in the developed world with no coherent plan to bring about a substantial reduction in adolescent pregnancy rate.

Early Sexual Activity intervening activities include:

- ◆ Modeling appropriate interactions.
- ◆ Prescribing and reinforcing behavior.
- ◆ Parent control and supervision.
- ◆ Social sanctions.
- ◆ Instilling values about acceptable and unacceptable sexual behavior.