

Getting Close, Staying Cool
*Early Adolescent Boys' Experiences
with Romantic Relationships*

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"Just wait 'til they're teenagers." This ominous warning surfaced one evening during a middle-aged man and woman's conversation about their young boys' relationships with their peers. While their mother was waxing poetically about their sweet and loving ways, their father was quick to remind her of the inevitable changes ahead. He asserted that the empathic and emotionally intelligent boys of today will become the hormone-possessed teenagers of tomorrow, eager only to find ways to get as much sex as they can, without regard for the (presumed) girls whom they manage to persuade to meet their persistent sexual urges. At that moment, the boys' interest in relationships or intimacy with friends or romantic partners will either evaporate or never evolve, eliminating the chances that anyone will know about their vulnerabilities, hopes, or fears. To turn a phrase, she should not be so foolish as to think that somehow her boys will avoid becoming "boys." The assumption that pubertal changes drive adolescent boys to be single-minded in their sexual aggressiveness prevails as a given principle of adolescent life. The mother in the story may be hoping that her boys will remain "sweet," emotionally sensitive, and generous with their future girlfriends, but the father, speaking from the other side of male adolescence, predicts and expects what is to his mind inevitable.

Working backwards from the burgeoning literature on the psychology of men, it would seem that the father is predicting the future. Bursting

with descriptions of emotionally stunted adult men, this literature constitutes a retroactive search for understanding how and why men's relationships became what are described as emotional wastelands (Bergman, 1995; Kindlon & Thompson, 1999; Real, 1997) and offers prescriptions for how men can alter ingrained behaviors and attitudes by developing the requisite skills to match their long dormant and repressed yearnings for intimacy (Brod & Kaufman, 1994). Several explanations of what happens, or will happen, to boys as they enter the arena of impending adult masculinity and begin engaging in heterosexual romantic relationships have been proposed. They include the assertion that boys' desire for emotional intimacy is already thwarted by the time they reach adolescence by the lack of encouragement for the development of empathy and relational skills in childhood (Kindlon & Thompson, 1999). Coupled with their exploration of their sexuality through the isolated but highly pleasurable and controllable activity of masturbation, they are thus sexually and emotionally ill-prepared for developing a relationship with a "real-life girl" (Kindlon & Thompson, 1999, p. 196). It has also been suggested that boys take a "defensively macho" approach to sexuality to protect themselves from inherent vulnerabilities and fears, and potential shame and humiliation, associated with having to perform with girls (Bergman, 1995; Pollack, 1998). Yet another perspective holds that biological substrates anchor boys' disinclination toward relationships (Gurian, 1996).

One common characteristic of most explanations for boys' development into sexually aggressive and emotionally off-limits men is an absence of a wider sociopolitical analysis of the (re)production of dominant or hegemonic forms of masculinity (Connell, 1995, 2000; Kimmel, 1994, 1996). Identifying the social processes by which "boys learn to fashion particular forms of gendered subjectivity that are policed within regimes of compulsory heterosexuality" (Martino, 2000; see also Connell, 1995; Rich, 1980), these analyses position masculinity as a kind of quicksand of practices that boys begin to engage with as they experience new thoughts, feelings, responsibilities, and relationships with the onset of adult sexual feelings and heterosexual expectations in adolescence. Boys' behavior in heterosexual relationships becomes a primary site for demonstrating the "menacing, predatory, possessive and possibly punitive" sexuality (Kimmel, 1994, p. 121) that proves one's manhood primarily to male peers.

This behavior is undergirded not only by the social imperative to demonstrate successful heterosexuality, but also to deny any possibility of homosexuality and reject thoughts, feelings, or behaviors that may be

tainted with any hint of femininity. Intimacy, vulnerability, and connection are not only suspicious but potential signifiers of failed masculinity, which may elicit possible rejection or retribution from an ostensibly privileged brotherhood of men to which boys learn to aspire. Thus it is not surprising that Mandel and Shakeshaft (2000), in their study with 7th–9th grade students, found that if a boy is not "overtly or obviously heterosexual, students believe that something is wrong with him" (p. 90). Majors and Billson (1993), in describing the culture of "cool pose" among some African American young men, identify the compulsive quality that efforts toward masculinity can have—suggesting that it is always at risk and must be constantly reconstructed (see also Epstein & Johnson, 1998; Kimmel, 1996; Martino, 2000).

The literature on the development of romantic relationships in adolescence, while significant (e.g., Furman, Brown & Feiring, 1999; Shulman & Collins, 1997), tends to overlook gender as a key dynamic by which the meaning of relational processes is constructed (for an exception, see Feiring, 1999). However, research examining the relational lives of younger and older boys illuminates the importance of gender as a vector of meaning in boys' experiences of relationships. Judy Chu (2000) has observed how young primarily White boys actively engage with expectations that they behave in gender-appropriate ways if they want to be liked and accepted. In in-depth case studies of several 4-year-old boys, she noted that, while these boys show relational abilities and desires, they also begin "to compromise this ability as they learn what it means to be a 'real' boy and become more savvy about how they express themselves and strategic about how they engage in their relationships" (p. 174). Niobe Way (1998) described urban high school boys' experiences of wanting closeness and trust in their same-sex friendships while feeling unable to speak honestly, fearful of making themselves vulnerable to hurt and betrayal. Focusing on the relational needs and constraints that their social location puts at odds and looking for patterns across multiple relationships in these boys' lives, Way suggests the potential role of masculinity in the service of establishing and solidifying heterosexuality in this phenomenon.

These sociological and psychological insights lay the groundwork for considering what the actual experiences of boys who are entering adolescence and having their initial romantic relationships with girls might be. In the current chapter, we explore how early adolescent boys talk about their initial experiences in heterosexual relationships. Turning to in-depth qualitative interviews with a group of 8th-grade boys, we pursued

the following questions: How do early adolescent boys describe their early experiences in romantic relationships? How do these boys understand and experience sexual and emotional intimacy and the ways in which these two forms of intimacy connect and do not connect for them? How do these boys negotiate cultural scripts associated with masculinity and compulsory heterosexuality as they enter into these new forms of relationship? We foreground sexuality as a key facet of masculinity as it is encountered by boys in early adolescence, when they are experiencing significant bodily and hormonal changes which will mark them as men in the context of friendships with male peers, burgeoning identity, and new types of intimacy with girls.

Collectively, the experiences of these adolescent boys move us beyond the popularized notion of pervasive and relentless "raging hormones" and provide a survey of the uncharted terrain of boys' experiences in romantic relationships. Revealing the contradictory realities of desiring, actively seeking, and experiencing intimacy in heterosexual relationships, their narratives challenge the assumption that all boys are unquestionably consumed only by desire for easy sex. As they describe their experiences with romantic relationships, these boys reveal, both straightforwardly and more subtly, the different sites of pressure associated with demonstrating or embodying masculinity, as well as refuges from it.

Study Description

As part of a longitudinal study of male and female adolescent sexual health, we conducted individual, semi-structured clinical interviews with a group of 25 ethnically and socio-economically diverse 13- to 15-year-old boys in the 8th grade of a school district serving contiguous urban and suburban communities in a single city. These boys were selected from a larger group of male and female early adolescents who were surveyed ($n = 244$, 133 boys), which included White (52%), Latina/o (23%), and biracial (17%) adolescents from poor, working-class, and middle-class families (26% reported their families currently received public assistance). Of the entire sample, 85% of the boys reported having had some dating experience by the 8th grade and that their dating relationships lasted, on average, more than 2 months. The boys we interviewed were selected from among those surveyed who had reported some experience with dating relationships and who indicated that they were willing to be interviewed.

The interviews were conducted during the spring of their 8th-grade year by male and female project staff (11 of the interviews were with male and 14 with female interviewers). The interviews took place in a private room at the middle school and were audiotaped, transcribed, and verified. The participants chose their own pseudonyms. The interviewers were guided by a protocol designed to elicit narratives that would generate an understanding of the parameters of early adolescent sexuality and relationships. The protocol included open-ended questions about their experiences in dating relationships, such as how these relationships began and ended, reasons for wanting or not wanting a girlfriend, particularly memorable times with girls they liked, who they talked to about their dating experiences, and their experiences with physical intimacy within and outside the context of a romantic relationship. They were also asked to describe their friendships and their understanding of, and experiences with, the larger school culture as one potential, and in hindsight successful, way of eliciting narratives about masculinity ideologies. Interviewers asked questions from the protocol such as "Could you tell me a story about something that's happened in your relationship [or about how it started or a special time] that can help me understand what it's like for you?" They were then asked follow-up questions in response to the stories told, yielding co-constructed narratives about these boys' experiences with romantic relationships (Silverman, 2000). The boys reported finding the interviews interesting, noting that they found themselves considering aspects of their lives that they had not given much thought to in any previous context.

The conceptual anchor of our analyses weaves together one of the prominent frameworks in sexuality research, scripting theory (Simon & Gagnon, 1986), with feminist theory that has articulated "compulsory heterosexuality" (Rich, 1980) as the centerpiece of patriarchy, and recent theory and research on masculinity ideologies and boys' development (e.g., Lesko, 2000). Rich (1980) conceived of heterosexuality as a universally pervasive *institution* comprised of unwritten but clearly codified and compulsory conventions that organize the ways in which males and females join in romantic relationships. Utilizing these theoretical lenses as organizing principles, we examined how these boys negotiated culturally scripted beliefs and behaviors associated with masculinity and compulsory heterosexuality, such as boys only want "one thing" (i.e., sex), as they were beginning to engage in romantic relationships. We conducted standard content and narrative analyses of each of the transcribed interviews

by evaluating how culturally scripted beliefs and behaviors appeared, were absent from, or were resisted in the narratives told by these boys. We identified the specific themes of emotional intimacy, sexual intimacy, public performance of heterosexuality and hegemonic masculinity, and tensions between boys' private and public experiences that were used in the content analysis. In this analysis we focus on what was common across the boys' narratives in light of our conceptual emphasis on hegemonic forms of masculinity.

Forays into Intimacy

Emotional Intimacy

Contrary to the popular characterization of boys as only wanting "one thing" from girls, meaning sex, we found that the reach of most of these boys' desires was not confined to the sexual arena. Rather, expressions of desire for emotional connections were predominant in the interviews, with most of the boys expressing interest in having a girlfriend for the potential companionship, openness, trust, closeness, and emotional connection these relationships were thought to offer.

For example, when Sam, a 13-year-old bicultural (White and Native American) boy, was asked why boys his age want to have a girlfriend, he replied, "I want a girlfriend mostly just 'cause of companionship and stuff like that. . . . Like just friends, like not friends but I mean like being able to talk to each other openly and stuff like that." Skater, also 13 years old and bicultural (White and Native American), positioned his desire for companionship and closeness against his awareness that all he is expected to want in a girlfriend is a "make-out body." When he actually had a girlfriend, he discovered that he wanted "[s]omeone with the same interests as me and like, some of the, not just like, [a] make-out body, you know what I mean, like you don't just hang around them to make out, you just hang around them like regular friends, just as regular friends." But he adds the relationship would be different than other friendships "cause it would be more open, we'd . . . we'd feel closer and I don't know. I don't know how to explain it." Frank, a 14-year-old White boy, echoed the theme of finding a different kind of emotional intimacy with a girlfriend than with his other friends. Girlfriends are fun to be around, he states, because "It's just different than being with your best friend. So you can talk about different

things not what you talk about with your best friend." Frank elaborated by saying that with a best friend he might talk about "cars and bikes and blading and sports" whereas with a girlfriend he would "talk about life," or "about days at school and like bad days and good days and like that." Frank signified his desire for intimacy and his understanding that this kind of connection takes time in his stated preference for longer relationships (months as opposed to days or weeks) "because you don't really get to know the person if you're in a short relationship." For these boys, at this point in their relational development, emotional honesty, more than physical intimacy, seemed to be the basis for fostering feelings of openness and closeness.

Not only did these boys' stories provide evidence of emotional connection and mutuality, it is this quality that most of them said they liked most about their relationships. Boo, a 13-year-old White boy, who had been with his girlfriend for "maybe a year and 8 months," said that the relationship was important to him "because she's like one of the few people that actually like cares about me." Although Boo has close male friends, his relationship with his girlfriend was different, he explained, because "I'm more able to tell her things." He narrated his male friends' resistance to intimate conversation: "Like other people, like my other friends, they'd just be like, whatever, go away or, I'll see you next week or something. She's just like, like wants to be with me all the time and talk to me for one, stuff like that." In drawing this contrast, he reveals his sense that his relationship with his girlfriend is a safe haven for intimacy, meeting an important emotional need. The emotional connection he feels with his girlfriend is also evident in his reflection on how he would "be lost" if they broke up, because "just sort of being together so long we've like become a part of each other, so . . . it [would] just [be] like, taking a piece out of a puzzle or something."¹

Sexual Intimacy

Skeptics might wonder whether the boys in this study emphasized their desire for emotional connection because our interviewers (male and female) did not invite or encourage them to talk about explicit, unabashed sexual desire. However, the interview protocol contained pointed questions about sexual experiences in relationships. Many (though not all) boys displayed a comfort in talking with both male and female interviewers about their sexuality that we did not witness in girls' responses to

similar questions in this study or in other research on girls' sexuality (Tolman, 1994, 1999, 2002; Tolman et al., in press). While their female classmates' descriptions of their sexual experiences were frequently shaded or muted with tones of danger, vigilance, and self-protection (Tolman, 1999; Tolman et al., in press), the boys conveyed a sense of freedom in speaking about their sexual experiences, as well as in anticipating future encounters with sexuality. Skater clarified an interviewer's more general question about physical experiences with a girlfriend, saying, "Do I get erections?" Later, he explained, "like I, I always wake up with an erection." Wayne, a 13-year-old White boy, told the interviewer about some of his sexual interactions with girls: "They've grabbed my ass . . . ah it's nice, it hurts. One of them told me that she wanted to suck my cock, she never did. . . . Well, I got a little excited, but then I was like wait, she won't." This is not to say that none of the boys expressed some nervousness or trepidation associated with sexual intimacy. For example, Sam described his anxiety during his one attempt to hold a girl's hand as "mind racing, heart pounding, wondering what she would do." But more typically, these boys approached this new aspect of their bodies and their first sexual and romantic relationships with curiosity, enthusiasm, and excitement.

Many of the boys described experiencing sexual desire, and in so doing also talked perceptively about how they were learning to deal with these feelings. They described developing boundaries for their sexuality that were both internally and externally motivated. They discussed their ideas of what sexual behaviors they thought were acceptable for themselves or boys their age. They also mentioned instances of halting sexual progression with girls, and generally seemed to do so with a sense of entitlement and confidence, that it was acceptable and possible to say no in the privacy and safety of interactions with girlfriends. For instance, Wayne explains:

Oh, it was a nice relationship, she wouldn't—she wasn't easy, but she wasn't slow. She was just like the right speed. Like after a couple days, we like um—kissed her couple of times, and she didn't care, she was just like "yeah, it was pretty nice," too. But like she didn't just jump into everything wicked fast. And then she didn't not do it again.

While this girl's behavior was congruent with what he felt ready for, the question of her "speed"—and thus the unspoken matter of his not taking up a "speedy" or sexually predatory approach—lingers below the surface

of his narration. For RZA, a 13-year-old White boy, the line he was not going to cross was sexual intercourse; like several of the boys, he reports not feeling ready to have sex because he is worried about disease and pregnancy, but he was otherwise open to a range of possibilities. "What's going to happen next? . . . Um, umm—it doesn't matter to me what . . . whatever she wants to do as long as it's not like sex or going all the way or something like that."

Defying conventional wisdom about adolescent male sexuality, a number of boys narrated a clear link between sexual intimacy and emotional intimacy and also their efforts to sort out the nature of the connection between the two. Significantly, this interplay became apparent when they were describing their private experiences with girlfriends or beliefs about romantic relationships. JJ, 14 years old and Latino, described how for him a French kiss meant that he and his partner were "going out . . . being girlfriend and boyfriend . . . that there was . . . it meant that there was love between us two (sigh)." One boy, Frank, illuminated his struggle to figure out what meaning sexual intimacy might have for the stewpot of emotional intimacy and relationship. He mused that kissing "shows love sometimes," which is what it meant to him when he kissed his girlfriend the first time, a time when kissing "was different because she was my girlfriend." However, at other times, kissing was not necessarily associated with feelings of love for Frank, as at a party after kissing a girl who was not his girlfriend, he said he "felt the same after it as [he] did before" because "it meant nothing."

Although boys, like Frank, often expressed a preference for sexual intimacy in the context of some form of emotional connection, the boys also said that emotional and sexual intimacy did not necessarily have to be linked. Many described having had sexual experiences while not in committed relationships. Sexual experiences outside of a committed relationship were acceptable even if one or both partners were in another relationship at the time. Wayne's response to a question about how he felt after kissing a girl several times who already had a boyfriend was "Well I wish I stayed a little longer but . . . other than that, nothing." RZA, who said that his closest relationship was with a girl who would "only kiss," explains that:

Like I'd be going out with this girl and there'd be somebody like that that I kinda liked more or that I thought was prettier and I would call 'em, I'd be like, "I know I have a girlfriend, but I but I kind of like you more," you know? And like, when my girlfriend wasn't around, I'd go with that person.

And I'd do stuff with that person. I'd kiss that person. I'd do whatever with that person.

For Boo, having a sexual experience outside of a relationship gave him insight into the emotional bond he felt with his girlfriend, and the role of physical intimacy in that connection. When he kissed a different girl during the week he and his girlfriend were broken up, he said he "liked it in a way, 'cause it was different and I wanted to, but I didn't like it 'cause it made me kind of feel bad . . . because I missed the person I was going out with." He added that the experience had shown him that he was "really attached" to his girlfriend.

While many of these boys expressed a preference for both emotional and sexual intimacy in their romantic relationships, a few emphasized a driving interest in sex and an alignment with stereotypic notions of masculinity. Angel Negro de la Muerte,² a 13-year-old White boy, created an aura of bravado in the interview, peppering his stories with phrases like, "I'm the man" or "the SlickMaster," and reveling in covert expressions of "male supremacy" with his friends. He described himself in terms of his belief that most boys are driven by testosterone—"guys have sex on the mind 95% of the time, so like we we're really always expecting something to go down"—and looking for "Mrs. Right Now." However, when asked directly about his own experiences, he faltered and stammered, sounding less cocky and even disappointed. The experiences he described were mostly attempted forays into romantic relationships in which girls rebuffed him or were not physically close with him, to which his response was "don't don't play with my emotions like that." He seemed to have little actual sexual experience. A possible interpretation of this disjuncture between actual experience and hypermasculine posturing is that such boys are more vulnerable to this construction of masculinity because they have no countervailing experience. In other words, without the groundwork laid by experience, they narrate their masculinity into being in the face of a vacuum of actual evidence.

Public Performances: He's the Man!

In contrast to the private world of emotional and physical intimacy that characterizes these boys' romantic relationships stand their descriptions of the public world of their peer relationships, which played a significant and pervasive role in these initial experiences with sexuality and heterosexual

relationships. While we did not hear stories of reckless sexual pursuit or predation or even privileging sexual experience for its own sake in the stories most of these boys told, the pressure that these boys felt to enact hegemonic masculinity for other boys was evident. The most frequently narrated route was through public displays of stereotypic male heterosexuality: the male who needs/wants sex and not relationships, commodifies and acquires sexual experience, dominates and objectifies girls in the service of his sexual interests and needs, and has no emotional vulnerabilities. We heard hints that in solidifying their status as heterosexual, boys were also **accomplishing** another key task: demonstrating that they were not homosexual. Boys told stories of what could be or was witnessed by other boys, as well as what they felt were the limits on what they could let their peers know about the real vicissitudes in their emotional and sexual experiences with girls and girlfriends. The public performances about which we heard were not about directly avoiding certain behaviors or monikers (i.e., Martino, 2000), but about creating public images that indicated they were interested in and actively seeking sex.

Much of the time, these boys' entrées into their romantic relationships occurred on school grounds, and often one of their friends brokered the relationship for the couple, rendering the activity in these relationships inherently public and transparent. In addition to their peers' awareness of the relationships that were beginning and ending, the school's staff were aware of dating behaviors of the students. Within this very public sphere, there was variation in how the boys negotiated the pressure to provide public evidence of the particular forms of heterosexual interaction that constitute hegemonic masculinity, sometimes participating in it, at other times resisting it, and sometimes managing to do both simultaneously.

The boys' interviews were peppered with stories, anecdotes, and asides that highlighted the ways they were expected to and had demonstrated their interest in sexual experiences with girls to their male peers. When LL Cool J, a 14-year-old Latino boy, was asked by his interviewer why a guy would want to have a girlfriend, he replied, ". . . to show other people . . . that he can have, let's say several girlfriends" which shows them "that you are macho or more of a man." James, a 14-year-old White boy, recounted his friends' response to seeing him kiss his girlfriend for the first time—"You were kissing. We saw you kissing. You're the man!"—illuminates not only the public nature but also the significance of public evidence of heterosexuality and "getting some." While in fact such an experience may have a private dimension, that is, that James was experiencing a moment

of intimacy in kissing his girlfriend, the fact that it is performed in public insures that he is a “man.”

Some boys described engaging in certain sexual experiences solely in response to feeling the pressure to do so. Doug, 13 years old and White, described how he got into a relationship with a girl in response not to interest on his part but to his friends saying, “‘Oh you have to go out with her. People saying ‘you’d make such a perfect couple.’ . . . If my friends left me alone, I don’t know if I would have gone out with her so . . . I probably wouldn’t have.” He also described how he kissed a girl in front of his friends “to prove that it really happened.” Similarly, Nervous Guy, a 13-year-old White boy, described a time when he felt pressured to play a truth-or-dare kissing game, because most of his friends were: “You gotta do something, so I did. And, like, it was terrible. I regret that, I guess, yeah.” He described how he felt disgusted kissing a girl in this situation by the thought of “what’s been in their mouth,” describing it as “terrible,” “disgusting,” and “nasty, ’cause, like, I didn’t want to.” His description sounds like a violation: “I kept [laughing] tightening my mouth and she was, like, digging.” Having gone home and washed his mouth out after what was his first kiss, he reflects that “it was kind of a rip-off, man. It was, like a big rip-off, like a disappointment. Like, ’cause it really didn’t mean anything, it was just really dumb. [he pauses] In a way, that’s just, like, rude to myself.” Countering the script for what a “normal” boy would do in this situation are the actual, conflicted thoughts that he has about this experience: “I mean, I wasn’t thinking, I guess, I was kind of having fun, I got like a picture in my mind, I was like ‘No, no, no.’” The pressure these boys felt to meet the demands of their male peers made it hard to know and explore their own wants, desires, and limits and, for Nervous Guy, led to an unpleasant sexual experience which he then regretted.

A few boys narrated another function of having a girlfriend: to avoid being the target of homophobic harassment and humiliating or shaming labeling. JJ tells his interviewer that his friends would think he was gay if he turned down a girl who was willing to have sex. In a somewhat circuitous fashion, Angel Negro de la Muerte conveys the same sentiment, saying that he would be “socially destroyed” if he answered truthfully that he would have sex with another male for a million dollars. More generally, 15-year-old Ace Eagle, in response to his interviewer’s question about why he thought boys his age wanted to have a girlfriend, replied simply, “So people don’t think you’re gay.”

These boys also spoke about how displays of emotional vulnerability would leave them open to being a target of other boys’ ridicule. Boo, who earlier in the interview had talked about how important mutual trust and caring in the context of an egalitarian friendship was in his actual relationship with his girlfriend, told a different story about relationships when asked what he thought boys were *supposed to be like* in a romantic relationship. He explained, “They’re supposed to be like, they control it basically. Like they tell her what to do, or how to dress, or like who she can hang around or something.” When the interviewer asked if there was any way that boys were not supposed to be, Boo emphatically responded, “They’re not supposed to be sensitive, or like . . . open with their problems.” Given his narration of his own experience as open and caring with his girlfriend, a key feature of these qualities is that other boys not be aware of them. According to him, if boys are seen to be sensitive then it “makes ’em seem like weaker.” Boo warned that if a boy showed this side of himself and “other guys found out, they’d probably make fun of him.”

When the Public and Private Worlds Meet (or Do Not)

How did these boys reconcile their desire for emotional intimacy and their curiosity about sexuality with the pressure to demonstrate their masculinity by proving to their friends that they could, or at minimum wanted, to “get some”? Faced with figuring out how to handle these competing desires and expectations in contradictory interstices where public and private spheres collided, the boys outlined incidents of tension throughout the interviews. These tensions were premised on fears, uncertainty, pressures, and anxiety about how to handle these conflicting messages, desires, and experiences.

The magnitude of these tensions is not something that the boys spoke about directly but became apparent in the tenor of their affect, thoughts, and behavioral responses and interaction with their interviewer. For example, RZA described the tension he experienced when feeling pressure to “be the man” and “get some” with a girl his friend planted as an “easy target” and his private desire of wanting physical intimacy to be a caring interaction with a girl. He explained:

I was in my umm friend’s house and it was me and this girl and him and we were all in the room together. And umm, he was being, he was being a little jerk. You know, he was like, oh, I’m going to leave you two alone and you

two can do whatever you want. So, he left the room. So we're sitting there, we're kissing, we're talking you know. We're like getting all like close, feeling and stuff like that. And I don't know what it was, I just didn't want to like do anything. And I just like got up and I said, I said I'm going to go get the kid. . . . And so I was like, no we can't do this right now. She's only thirteen,

RZA attended to, perhaps privileged, his own emotional response "I just like didn't want to do anything," rivaling the obvious expectation from his friend that he would take advantage of the situation to acquire publicly noticed sexual experience. For RZA, the absence of an emotional connection had more power than the expectation that he would want to take advantage of the opportunity to be with this girl sexually. Perhaps the added moral dimension, as he described and experienced it, of the girl being "only thirteen" enabled his choice to act responsibly and also in keeping with his actual feeling of not "want[ing] to do anything." Yet at the same time, he seemed to be aware that he was betraying his friend's expectation of how he should respond to this "gift" of easy sexual access.

Skater spoke in a fervent way to his interviewer about how his friend's presentation of him in the public domain as a boy who has had a lot of sex stands in opposition to how he would like to relate to a girl by "just be[ing] who I am." However, at the same time, he acknowledged the benefit of being recognized as a "player," in the public eye, meaning a boy or man who dates more than one female at a time and has sexual experiences with each. Skater recounted how he met a girl "through a friend, and like, she's telling like all her friends that I'm a certain way that I'm not really. That my friend told her, that I'm like. . . . You know what I mean . . . giving images of me, that's not true, so they like me more." Skater's way of dealing with his friend's false presentation of him was to try to have the best of both worlds: "Yeah, like, you kind of, you don't wanna ruin it, but I just act like myself, if she doesn't like it, then . . . oh well, I don't try to act like the person she thinks I am." The question that remains after this story is who Skater himself thinks or knows himself to be.

For James, having the reputation of being a player created a bit more trouble for him when he tried to maintain his relationship with his girlfriend, Melissa, while continuing his practice of going to the mall with his male friends to look at girls. Aware that this behavior made Melissa angry but also wanting to spend time with his friends, he attempted to resolve the conflict by lying to Melissa about where he was going. He explained, "I tell her I'm going somewhere else then I go to the mall. Like I'll say I'm

going to my friend's house." While he was well aware that if Melissa were to find out he had been at the mall, she would become angry, he considered her anger over these mall outings to be "dumb"—"cause I don't touch them or talk to them, whatever. Like I'll look at them, like if I wasn't going out with her, I'd talk to them then, but I am so I wouldn't have." James told his interviewer that to him being a player did not make sense. He explained, "I think it's bad to be a player because . . . you cheat. Why go out with two different people? Why don't you just break up with one person and go out with the one person you really want to be with?" Nonetheless, James seemed to think it would be impossible to convince Melissa of this and she eventually broke up with him. Given that Melissa had on several occasions said to him "all boys are players," when the interviewer asked James whether there was a "way to convince [Melissa]" that he was not a player, James replied, "I don't know. I never tried." He seemed resigned that the conflict between his relationship with his male friends and that with his girlfriend was impossible to resolve. Not going to the mall with his friends or not participating in their sport of girl watching was not an option for him. Explaining his position to Melissa was also not considered an option for James.

For Andrew, however, a 13-year-old White boy, the public world of his immediate friends did not create the same kind of tension for him, as few of his friends were dating. While some girls had expressed an interest in him, he said he "just didn't feel like ready" to go out with any of them: "well, personally I've been asked and I refused, 'cause, you know, it's, it's like, you know, you don't really need it right now, it's like, it's not worth it, you know, I know some people that do, and that's fine with me and that's their choice, but I personally don't feel like dating right now." Perhaps buffered from the cultural push toward a particular form of masculinity by having friends who were not dating, and consequently not trying to get him to do so, he was able to respond to his own sense that he was not "ready" for romantic relationships with girls.

Moving toward a More Complex Understanding of Boys' Sexuality

The virulence of the notion that adolescent boys' romantic relationships are defined and driven exclusively by their sexual desires—their raging hormones—is so entrenched that it is thought to be a biological fact. The

literatures on the psychology and sociology of men at the very least unearth the complexity of emergent adult sexuality in the context of societal pressures to enact hegemonic forms of masculinity, which contribute to this social construction of male adolescence. Boys' sexuality sits as a kind of proverbial elephant in the room in critical analyses of the roots of male emotional "disability" in later adolescence and adulthood. The reality of new desires for sexual experience and intimacy in adolescence has not been well integrated into work on adolescent relationships in general, romantic relationships in particular, or critical theory on the privileging of particular forms of masculinity. While we know that this small sample of boys cannot provide the full range of how boys are negotiating this new terrain of relationships and adult forms of sexual desire, their descriptions of the interplay of emotional and sexual intimacy, and even their exploration of how these two aspects of heterosexual experience do and do not go together, indicate that at least some boys enter adolescence with the capacity to engage with romantic relationships in ways not limited to finding fleeting satisfaction of singularly focused and barely controllable sexual needs.

This study suggests that there is a lot more to boys' experiences of initial heterosexual romantic relationships in early adolescence than acquiring belt notches. The stories told by these boys refute the notion that boys' bodies simply take over, edging out their minds and their hearts. They described their desires for and experiences of emotional intimacy with girls—their hopes for companionship, sharing, and trust in relationships, with their sexuality entering into their relational experiences in a variety of ways. On the one hand, interviews with these boys in general conveyed their greater freedom in sexual exploration and the open possibility that sexual experience did not have to be acquired within an emotionally close or committed relationship. On the other hand, many of the boys did value a connection between emotional and sexual intimacy and recognized a difference between their sexual experiences when emotions were or were not involved.

We were struck by the intensely private quality of boys' search for emotional connection. Questions or knowledge about this part of their lives was not willingly shared or displayed in view of their male friends. At the same time, their narration of the pressure that they felt to produce and visibly practice hegemonic masculinity in the public world of their male peers was as unequivocal as it was poignant. Given what they told us about their actual experiences, we are unsure how to relate these public

performances to boys' actual identity development. The contrast with the kinds of descriptions that boys offered of authenticity in their real relationships was striking. Indeed, we found evidence in some cases of the kinds of tensions that one might anticipate such competing demands—their internal ones for intimacy, closeness, and connection and the external ones for enacting specific forms of masculinity—would produce. But such tensions were not discernable in all cases.

Some of the impoverished solutions that these boys came to left us with a sense of loss and impending loss. We heard boys tell about actual experiences that reflected our conception of, and hopes for, adolescent sexual health: the freedom to explore new sexual feelings, new relationships, and the interplay between sexual and emotional intimacy. We are concerned, however, about how this endeavor is being shaped by the mandates of masculinity with which they strive to comply, perhaps at this stage of their development, primarily in the service of avoiding negative consequences more than for establishing felt identities. The contradictions we heard these boys narrate either sounded painful to us or like they will become painful. We doubt the sustainability of efforts to demonstrate and maintain their masculinity in their relationships with other boys while at the same time being able to maintain authentic relationships with themselves, honoring their desires and interests in their heterosexual romantic relationships.

Their stories give us pause as we begin to speculate about the experiences these boys describe in relation to the difficulties with emotional connectedness and expressiveness described in the literature on older adolescent boys and men. We hope that this small study ignites discussion of developmental processes that begin with emergent adult sexuality in which boys can and do experience emotional intimacy that may be eclipsed, diminished, or even forgotten or lost over time. As we heard James do, boys may increasingly resolve the tension created by pressures to enact hegemonic masculinity in public performances of heterosexuality by giving up the intimacy, with its many forms of vulnerability, in favor of the emotionally bankrupt option that hegemonic masculinity demands.

While this resolution may appear to be, and in some cases may in fact be, a source of power or status for some young men, it requires a Faustian bargain that takes its toll on men's ability to have integrity in their relationships and to have psychological health (i.e., Kimmel, 1996; Real, 1997). As Niobe Way and her colleagues (2001) found in their study of different types of adolescent relationships, those adolescents who had

more disengaged relationships (much more likely to be males) were more likely to have lower self-esteem and higher levels of depression. We were also struck by how boys tried to resolve their relational dilemmas in isolation, as talking about the fears and feelings associated with the complexities of negotiating heterosexual relationships while trying to secure one's status as masculine is anathema. This isolation is reminiscent of how adolescent girls constantly reinvent the wheel of resolving the dilemmas of their own sexual desire, at odds with societal conceptions of "normal" girls, as if these problems were only their own and out of relationship with other girls or women (Tolman, 2002).

We are keenly aware of the many unanswered questions that this study produces. For example, how do ethnic diversity, family history, and community expectations shape a boy's response to the hegemonic definition of masculinity? Are there competing versions of masculinity to which these boys also have access? How do boys who do not have homosexual interests experience heteronormative pressures? The tension we identified between boys' desires for emotional intimacy and the pressure to publicly demonstrate their masculinity and heterosexuality in specific ways that place authentic relationships with romantic partners in jeopardy raises a unique developmental conflict for boys' sexuality. Do boys' early romantic experiences—and whether they choose to emphasize their alignment with hegemonic masculinity or resist it in favor of more authentic relationships with their romantic partners—predict different pictures of adult masculinity and relational capacity? This study begs the question of what happens to boys who do not meet the dominant "standards" of masculinity, either by choice or not. This study begins to suggest that boys may benefit from interventions that help them develop critical perspectives on masculinity.

The development of boys' sexuality clearly has consequences for girls, who negotiate their own sexual and relational development in the context of their beliefs about masculinity and boys' sexuality (Tolman, 2002). This view of masculinity not only inscribes what is possible and off-limits in boys' relationships, it also regulates girls' behavior, sense of freedom and safety, and ability to explore and express their own sexual curiosity. While boys may not actually be taken over by relentless hormones, such beliefs effectively do result in girls being carelessly trampled in the fray.

The findings of this study suggest implications for interventions in early adolescence that create environments that fortify boys' capacities to develop and maintain authentic relationships in which intimacy, trust, and emotional honesty are possible. The boys in this study demonstrated

their desire for these types of relationships, but the evidence also suggests the difficulties boys face and are likely to continue to encounter in sustaining these relationships while living up to a rigid and dissociated masculine ideal.

NOTES

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1. One might argue that the predominance of these boys' expressions of desire for emotional connections with girlfriends was an artifact of being interviewed by women—i.e., they were simply telling the female interviewers what they believed women wanted to hear. However, the examples in this section, which represent the manner in which most of the boys talked about their relationships, were drawn from four interviews—2 with female interviewers and 2 with male interviewers.

2. Within the context of this particular school, Latino boys and girls are stereotyped as highly sexualized. It may be that Angel's choice of code name was an attempt on some level to emphasize his sexual prowess by associating himself with this group. In the interview, he also used Spanish words to emphasize certain sexual themes, for instance, explaining that being a "papasuelo," or pimp, is a "good thing amongst the guys here."

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Adolescent Boys' Heterosexual Behavior

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Becoming sexually active is clearly an important event in adolescent boys' experience. In addition, adolescent boys' sexual and contraceptive behavior has clear ramifications for teen pregnancy and for sexually transmitted diseases. This chapter presents some of the work on adolescent males' heterosexual behavior conducted by The National Survey of Adolescent Males over the last 15 years. Specifically, we discuss findings based on two surveys of large, nationally representative samples of adolescent males aged 15–19, conducted in 1988 and in 1995. Our survey data make it possible to describe what adolescent boys are doing sexually, how their sexual behavior is or is not changing, and some of the basic dynamics underlying their sexual behavior. In particular, this chapter focuses on three research questions. First, we examine how rates of heterosexual intercourse and condom use have changed in recent decades among U.S. adolescent boys aged 15–19. This information is important for informing adolescent health policy and for increasing our understanding of the developmental experience of adolescent boys. There are several ongoing large-scale studies documenting levels and trends in adolescent girls' sexual and contraceptive behavior (Abma et al., 1997; Manlove et al., 2000). Prior to our work, however, no data on such trends were available for males. Our analyses of change in males' sexual behavior in recent decades first compares levels of heterosexual intercourse and condom use in our 1988 survey with an earlier national survey on this topic conducted in 1979. We then compare results from our 1988 cohort with our 1995 cohort.

The second research question we examine focuses on the validity of adolescent boys' self-reports about having heterosexual intercourse and

using condoms. Some scholars are not confident about the accuracy of boys' self-report data regarding their sexuality. Anecdotal data suggest that boys may exaggerate their level of sexual experience. At the same time, in reporting whether or not they use condoms, boys may want to present themselves as behaving in a socially desirable way. Since public policy is grounded in part on research based on self-reports, it is important that their validity be assessed. We use a variety of methods for this purpose, including comparisons with external data, prospective prediction of behavior in a follow-up of the 1988 cohort, and a methodological experiment embedded within the 1995 survey.

Our third and final research question focuses on how boys' heterosexual behavior and condom use are linked to masculinity. The linkage may seem obvious, and has been assumed by policy makers. For example, a former Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services called for action to address "a generation whose manhood is measured by the caliber of the gun he carries or the number of children he has fathered" (Sullivan, 1991). A governor has urged the policy community to send the message that "contrary to what many of today's young people think, making babies is no act of manhood" (Wilder, 1991). But what is the scientific basis for positing a linkage between masculinity and adolescent males' sexual behavior? This chapter discusses our work on the role of "masculinity ideology" in adolescent boys' heterosexual experience and condom use, in the context of prior approaches to understanding how a boy's sexual behavior may be linked to issues of masculinity. For this purpose, we focus our empirical analyses on the 1988 survey data.

Methods

Sample

1988 COHORT

The 1988 National Survey of Adolescent Males (NSAM) selected a national probability sample of 1,880 boys between the ages of 15 and 19 years from the noninstitutionalized, never-married U.S. male population. This survey used a multistage stratified sample, and also over-sampled African American and Latino males so that their numbers would be large enough to base valid population estimates for these groups. However, by employing sample "weights,"¹ these data can be used to describe

the national population of U.S. males aged 15–19. The response rate among those eligible to be interviewed was 73.9% (Sonenstein, Pleck & Ku, 1989). Following the 1988 survey, further data were collected from this sample. In 1991, 1,676 men (now 18–22 years old) were re-interviewed. The follow-up rate from the 1988 survey was 89.1%, not including 11 men who died between 1988 and 1991.

1995 COHORT

In 1995, a new nationally representative sample of males aged 15 to 19 was drawn. A cohort of 1,729 males living in the conterminous United States, not including persons living in prisons or institutions, was interviewed (Sonenstein et al., 1998). Like the 1988 cohort, this new sample was developed using multistage stratified selection procedures, again with over-sampling of minority males and use of sample weights to describe the population. Among eligible males, the response rate was 75.0%.

Procedures and Measures

At each wave of data collection, in-person interviews were conducted at a confidential location and lasted about an hour. The interview protocol consisted of close-ended questions. For the most sensitive topics, a short, self-administered questionnaire was employed. The main focus of the interview was the males' experiences with and attitudes about sex and contraception, especially condom use. However, the interview also covered a broad range of other topics potentially related to sex and contraception, such as other risk behaviors, experiences in school, self-efficacy, and sociodemographics.

In addition, the interview also assessed masculinity ideology using the Male Role Attitudes Scale (MRAS). This eight-item measure includes seven items drawn from Thompson and Pleck's (1986) Male Role Norms Scale. MRAS items were selected to represent the three factorial dimensions of the Male Role Norms Scale: status, toughness, and anti-femininity. Eight items considered most relevant to an adolescent sample were selected, and wording was simplified to be more appropriate for this age group. Sample items included "A young man should be physically tough, even if he is not big" and "I don't think a husband should have to do housework." An additional item about the link between masculinity and sex, a topical area absent from the Male Role Norms Scale, was added

from Snell, Belk, and Hawkins (1986). An index was derived from the eight items with a coefficient alpha of .56.

Results

How Adolescent Boys' Heterosexual Behavior Has Changed

1979–1988

Data from the 1988 NSAM can be compared with a prior large-scale study conducted by Zelnik, Kantner, and Ford's (1981) National Survey of Young Men in 1979 (NSYM). The National Survey of Young Men interviewed a national representative sample of 847 males who were aged 17–21 and lived in metropolitan areas. Zelnik, Kantner, and Ford's sample differs from the NSAM with males in the Zelnik sample being older, living only in cities, and including married males. However, the two studies overlap with both including substantial numbers of 17–19-year-old and never-married males residing in metropolitan areas (609 in the earlier study, 742 in the NSAM). A comparison of the 1979 and 1988 samples shows that the proportion of males who have ever had heterosexual intercourse rose from 65.7% to 75.5% over this period. Within racial subgroups, heterosexual experience rose from 71.1% to 87.7% among Blacks, and from 64.5% to 73.0% among non-Blacks (Zelnik, Kantner, and Ford's survey distinguished only Blacks and non-Blacks).

Use of condoms alone or with other methods also rose from 21.1% in 1979 to 57.5% in 1988 (23.2% to 62.0% for Blacks; 20.5% to 56.5% for non-Blacks). Our analysis tabulated condom use as including both the use of condoms by themselves as well as in combination with other methods. Almost all prior research on sexual behavior had coded condom use with other methods *only* as use of the other method. Use of female contraceptive methods alone dropped somewhat, but use of ineffective or no contraceptive method dropped markedly (50.9% to 20.8%) (Sonenstein, Pleck & Ku, 1989). Thus, while the proportion of adolescent males who **were** heterosexually active increased somewhat between 1979 and 1988, their use of condoms rose markedly.

1988–1995

NSAM data were also analyzed to examine how adolescent boys' heterosexual behavior changed between 1988 and 1995. Comparison of the 1988

NSAM cohort with the 1995 cohort of 15–19-year-olds indicated that the proportion of these males who were heterosexually active declined from 60.4% in 1988 to 55.2% in 1995. However, this decrease occurred only among White males (56.8% to 49.5%). Among African American males, the rates held constant at 80.6% and 80.4%, and among Latino males, 59.7% and 60.9%. Analyses by age further confirmed that young men were delaying first intercourse in 1995 as compared to 1988. As one indication of this delay, the percentages of 19-year-olds who were sexually active in the two surveys were almost identical: 85.7% and 84.0%; whereas the percentages of 15-year-olds who were sexually active dropped from 32.6% in 1988 to 27.1% in 1995. Condom use at last intercourse also increased, from 56.9% in 1988 to 67.0% in 1995. This increase in condom use was most evident among the younger males (e.g., in 15-year-olds compared to 19-year-olds). Increased condom use was evident in all ethnic groups: from 54.4% to 66.8% in White males, 65.5% to 73.9% in African American males, and 53.0% to 58.2% in Latino males (Sonenstein et al., 1998).

The Validity of Adolescent Boys' Reports about Their Sexual Behavior

The dramatic increases in adolescent males' condom use between 1979 and 1995, and the postponement of first heterosexual intercourse shown among White male youth in 1995 compared to 1988, are noteworthy, if males' self-reports about intercourse and condom use are valid. Many other researchers have questioned the validity of adolescents' self-report data about sex. Validity is primarily a methodological issue, but because of its centrality to our research, and to all research with adolescent boys using self-report methods, it is worthwhile exploring it in some depth. In this section, we briefly present several different approaches to address these validity concerns.

Consistency with External Data

The increase in condom use evident in the NSYM and the NSAM data between 1979 and 1988 is corroborated by women's reports for the same period. Women's reports about whether a condom was used at last sexual intercourse were more than twice as high in the 1988 National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) as in the 1982 NSFG (Mosher, 1990). In addition, changes between the 1988 and 1995 NSFG surveys parallel those observed

in the NSAM, namely, there was a marginally significant reduction in the sexual activity of 15- through 19-year-old females and significant increases in condom use at first intercourse (Abma et al., 1997). Further, national natality data showed that the rate of adolescent childbearing fell between 1991 and 1994 (Ventura et al., 1996), and gonorrhea rates declined from 1992 to 1995 (*Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance*, 1995, 1996).

Internal Consistency in the 1988 Survey

The NSAM interviews ask the sexual intercourse and condom use questions in two places in the interview: first, in an interviewer-administered survey (IAI), and then in the survey's "self-administered" questionnaire (SAQ), which participants were given to complete in private and on their own after the end of the interview. Upon completing the short SAQ booklet, participants were asked to place the booklet in an envelope that the researcher/interviewer immediately sealed to assure the participant of the confidentiality of his responses. In the 1988 survey, the consistency between responses about ever having sexual intercourse and about condom use between the IAI and the SAQ ($\kappa = .80$) is quite high (Sonenstein, Pleck & Ku, 1989).

Prospective Prediction of Pregnancies, 1988 to 1991

We also examined the association between the sexual behavior that males reported in the 1988 survey with the pregnancies they reported in the 1991 follow-up survey. A composite measure of sexual risk-taking in 1988 was developed with 5 levels, ranging from "never had intercourse" to "had intercourse in the last 12 months with more than 5 partners, without condom use." With standard sociodemographic factors controlled, our 1988 risk-taking measure was a strong predictor of pregnancies between 1988 and 1991, as reported in the 1991 survey (Sonenstein, Pleck & Ku, 1993).

Social Desirability Analysis in the 1991 Follow-Up

Further, the 1991 NSAM included a "social desirability" scale (Paulhus, 1991). This scale assesses the tendency for respondents to give socially desirable answers via items concerning socially desirable behaviors which few people do (e.g., "I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake"), and socially undesirable behaviors that most people do (e.g.,

"There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone"). Our results showed that self-reported condom use is unrelated to this social desirability response set (Pleck, Sonenstein & Ku, 1993a), suggesting that reported condom use is not biased by social desirability influences.

Effect of Two Modes of Administration on Self-Reports in the 1995 Survey

Prior research suggests that the greater the level of privacy afforded by the data collection method, the more willing respondents are to report socially stigmatized behaviors. For example, reported rates of substance use are consistently higher with self-administered questionnaires (SAQ) than with interviewer-administered protocols. The more stigmatized the substance (e.g., heroin vs. alcohol), the greater the discrepancy in reported rates (Turner, Lessler & Devore, 1992). Variations in reported rates of a behavior according to the degree of confidentiality of the data collection method give a direct indication of the extent to which reports of that behavior are biased by social desirability effects.

Determining the validity of adolescent males' self-report data about their sexual behavior was so important that we tested this specifically in our 1995 survey. We randomly assigned respondents in the 1995 new cohort of 15–19-year-olds to two conditions: one group reported sexual behaviors with the paper-and-pencil SAQ used in the 1988 survey and its 1991 follow-ups, while the other group used a new methodology, audio computer assisted self-interviewing (audio-CASI). In the latter condition, males were given a laptop with headphones, which displayed and read aloud the questions, and recorded their responses on the keyboard. Because the SAQ requires handing a form to the interviewer with one's responses (which can be easily read), while audio-CASI involves entering responses on computer keyboard (requiring technical skill to retrieve), we hypothesized that respondents would experience audio-CASI as a more private method.

As expected, a variety of stigmatized behaviors were reported significantly more often with audio-CASI than the SAQ. For example, 5.2% of audio-CASI respondents report ever taking street drugs with a needle compared to 1.5% of SAQ respondents. Other significant differences occurred for being drunk at last heterosexual intercourse (34.8% vs. 15.3%), using drugs at last heterosexual intercourse (15.8% vs. 9.7%), ever having sex with a prostitute (2.5% vs. 0.7%), and ever having sex with someone

who shoots drugs (2.8% vs. 0.2%).² Respondents also reported sharing needles with others, using crack/cocaine, and participating in violence-related behaviors such as threatening to hurt others and carrying guns, knives, and razors at significantly higher rates with audio-CASI (Turner et al., 1998). By contrast, differences were nonsignificant for behaviors not stigmatized among adolescents, such as drinking alcohol in the last year (65.9% vs. 69.2%). These differences give an indication that respondents indeed experienced audio-CASI as providing more privacy than the SAQ. Further, these comparisons suggest that, like the difference between in-person interviewing and the SAQ, a significant SAQ versus audio-CASI reporting difference for a particular behavior reflects how much social desirability bias influences their reporting of that behavior.

The percentages of sexually active males who reported using a condom the last time they had heterosexual intercourse were almost identical in the two conditions, 64.4% versus 64.0% (Turner et al., 1998). Reports of ever having heterosexual intercourse in the last five years were also relatively similar (and not significantly different) with the paper-and-pencil SAQ as when audio-CASI was used (49.6 vs. 47.8%). The small and nonsignificant difference in adolescent males' SAQ compared to audio-CASI reporting of sexual intercourse and condom use is thus another piece of evidence that these reports are not biased by social desirability influences. Considering this and the other data reviewed here, the available information suggests that the dramatic increases in adolescent males' condom use and the changes in sexual behavior between 1979 and 1995 observed in the NSAM are real.

Homosexual Behavior and Orientation

One reason that audio-CASI methodology was introduced in the 1995 survey was that the rates of male-male sexual contacts reported in 1988 seemed too low, with 2.1% reporting any type of contact (Ku, Sonenstein & Pleck, 1992). Prior surveys that asked adult males about their homosexual contacts during adolescence provided much higher prevalence estimates for this period than male adolescents reported in the NSAM. Because of its implications for the transmission of HIV and other STDs, it was particularly important to obtain better estimates of the frequency of same-gender sexual contacts.

In the 1995 cohort of 15–19-year-olds, 5.5% of males using audio-CASI reported having any (lifetime) male-male sex, compared to 1.5% of

those using the paper SAQ, a highly significant difference. This comparison is again consistent with our interpretation that respondents experience audio-CASI as more confidential than the SAQ, and audio-CASI increases reporting of stigmatized behaviors. The decrease in SAQ-reported male-male sex among 15–19-year-olds from 2.1% in 1988 to 1.5% in 1995 could be evidence of a small decrease in rates of adolescent homosexual contacts. However, since the SAQ versus audio-CASI comparison indicates that SAQ reports are depressed by social desirability bias, it is also possible that heightened stigmatization of homosexual behavior among adolescent males accounts for the decrease.

The type of contact most frequently acknowledged with audio-CASI in 1995 was the act of being masturbated by another male (3.5%). Receptive oral sex was reported by 2.3% and receptive anal sex by 0.8% (Turner et al., 1998). In the 1988 data collected with a paper SAQ, the majority (52.6%) of those reporting homosexual contacts never used a condom (Ku, Sonenstein & Pleck, 1992). The 1988 data also revealed discrepancies between males' reports of male-male sexual contacts and self-reported sexual orientation. Orientation was assessed by the male's self-classification as 100 percent heterosexual, mostly heterosexual, bisexual, mostly homosexual, 100 percent homosexual, and not sure. Whereas 2.1% reported that they ever had some homosexual contact, 13.1% reported that they were other than 100 percent heterosexual. Further, a small number (0.3%) of those reporting themselves as 100 percent heterosexual acknowledged some male-male contact (Ku, Sonenstein & Pleck, 1992). Replication of these analyses with the 1995 data (not yet undertaken), using audio-CASI reports of male-male contacts and of sexual orientation, will likely contribute to our knowledge of the complex link between same-gender sexual contact and the construction of sexual orientation in recent cohorts of adolescent males.

Adolescent Boys' Masculinity Ideology

Perhaps NSAM's most important contribution to understanding adolescent boys' heterosexual behavior concerns a conceptual link that seems obvious: adolescent boys' heterosexual behavior has something to do with issues of "masculinity." This connection may seem self-evident, but in terms of empirical research, it was not well established prior to NSAM.

One strategy used in prior research involves simply comparing rates of sexual behavior for adolescent boys and girls. The ways in which boys' be-

havior differs from girls' were attributed to masculinity or the male gender role. However, this strategy is flawed as aggregate gender differences can result from biological as well as socialization differences between males and females. A second strategy employed in prior research employs the construct of "gender orientation" as an individual-differences variable. Gender orientation refers to the personality dimension assessed by measures such as the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI, 1974) and Spence and Helmreich's Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ, 1978) (for a comprehensive review, see Lenney, 1991). These scales ask respondents to rate themselves (e.g., strong-weak) on a variety of adjective dimensions that have been previously determined to be more characteristic of males or females based on U.S. populations. In the few studies investigating the link between these measures' masculinity subscale (M) and adolescent males' sexual behavior, however, few significant associations have been found. That is, variations in how "masculine" a male thinks he is are not linked to his pattern of sexual behavior. A few studies take the gender orientation approach further by distinguishing socially positive aspects of masculinity (e.g., rating oneself as strong) versus socially negative ones (e.g., aggressive). Although prior research provides considerable evidence that perceiving oneself as possessing socially negative masculine traits is associated with adolescent males' substance use, negative masculinity appears to be independent of adolescent males' sexual behavior (for a review, see Pleck, Sonenstein & Ku, 1993b).

Our research developed a third approach: linking adolescent males' sexual behavior with their gender ideology, that is, their attitudes and beliefs about gender (Pleck, Sonenstein & Ku, 1993b, 1993c, 1994a, 1994b). According to this approach, the way that gender as a social construct influences behavior is not by shaping personality traits, but by establishing normative beliefs about how males and females should act. The hypothesis deriving from this approach is that a male's sexual behavior is influenced by the extent to which he believes that males as a group *should* act "masculine," not by the extent to which he believes that he, as an individual, is "masculine."

Within the gender ideology approach, a further distinction needs to be made between gender-comparative beliefs and gender-specific beliefs. Almost all available scales for gender attitudes (which are often labeled attitudes toward women) use items that are gender-comparative. For instance, the first item in Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp's (1973) Attitudes toward Women Scale, which is the measure used most frequently to assess gender attitudes, is "Swearing and obscenity are more repulsive in the speech of a

woman than of a man." Agreeing or disagreeing to this kind of item has been uncritically interpreted as reflecting an attitude only about how women should act. To assess masculinity ideology more precisely, the NSAM developed the Male Role Attitude Scale (MRAS) using gender-specific items. This attitude scale includes statements like "A guy will lose respect if he talks about his problems" and "A young man should be physically tough even if he is not big."

In the 1988 NSAM, whether a male held a more traditional or a less traditional masculinity ideology, as assessed by the MRAS, was significantly linked with numerous aspects of his relationships and his sexual and contraceptive behavior. Males with a more traditional ideology said they had a less intimate relationship with their current or most recent female partner. They more often endorsed the belief that relationships between women and men are inherently adversarial. They also had more heterosexual partners in the last year (Pleck, Sonenstein & Ku, 1993c; see also Pleck & O'Donnell, 2001).

Prior research about the factors influencing adolescent males' condom use has focused especially on their attitudes about condom use and their beliefs about male responsibility to prevent pregnancy. Not surprisingly, these factors usually do predict condom use (see review in Pleck, Sonenstein & Ku, 1991). This prior research, however, left unanswered the question of why some males have more favorable attitudes about condoms and male responsibility, while others have less favorable beliefs. Filling this gap, NSAM analyses established that males with more traditional MRAS scores had more negative attitudes about condoms and male responsibility to prevent pregnancy. In addition, these traditional males were less likely to believe that their partner would like them to use a condom, and were more likely to believe that causing a pregnancy would validate their masculinity. These findings supported a conceptual model that claimed that traditional masculinity ideology influences condom-related attitudes, which in turn influence condom use (Pleck, Sonenstein & Ku, 1993c).

These significant multivariate relationships were replicated within the African American, Latino, and White NSAM subsamples. In addition, these associations with the MRAS persisted even with sociodemographic variables controlled, thus ruling out the possibility that masculinity ideology and sexual behavior were linked only because both are a function of background characteristics like education and family socioeconomic status. Overall, NSAM documents in a more convincing manner than previ-

ous studies how boys' "masculinity" is linked to their heterosexual behavior and their use of condoms. These analyses not only establish that masculinity ideology is a significant influence on adolescent males' condom use, but also give insight into the process by which this influence manifests itself.

Discussion

Data from the National Survey of Adolescent Males provide a variety of insights into adolescent boys' heterosexual behavior and condom use. It provides important "social indicator" data about how adolescent males' heterosexual and contraceptive behavior have changed over the last 25 years. Our methodological work suggests that one can study adolescent boys' sexual experience via self-reports, with some confidence in the data's validity. Our findings about their increasing condom use and their delaying of first intercourse in recent years counters negative stereotypes about adolescent males as sexually irresponsible. Finally, NSAM helps us understand how adolescent male heterosexual behavior derives from cultural norms of masculinity by revealing how traditional masculinity ideology is linked to heightened risk of unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, and to limitations in the quality of adolescent boys' heterosexual relationships.

Future research should investigate whether the increases in condom use and delay of first intercourse observed here in adolescent males through 1995 have continued. Partly as a result of our work, the National Survey of Family Growth has included males in its 2002 data collection (for the first time), and these data will be available soon. There is also a need for more studies on how masculinity influences adolescent males' sexual behavior. We are currently in the process of analyzing relationships between masculinity ideology and sexual behavior in our 1995 data. These relationships should also be examined in samples of younger adolescent males (Pleck & O'Donnell, 2001). The concept of masculinity ideology itself also needs development. For example, Chu, Porche, and Tolman (2001) observe that by focusing on beliefs about the importance of men's adhering to culturally defined standards for male behavior in general, rather than within the contexts of specific relationships, the concept of masculine ideology is somewhat decontextualized. Yet they also find that masculinity ideology, when it is assessed within specific relationships, is negatively

associated with well-being measures, which is consistent with gender role strain theory (Pleck, 1995). Thus, our understanding of the lives of boys can be enriched by this and other developments in our understanding of the dynamics and influence of masculinity ideology in their lives.

NOTES

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1. For example, if Latino males are over-sampled by a factor of 2, each Latino counts as .5 of a person in descriptive statistics, e.g., calculating the proportion of all males who have ever had sexual intercourse.

2. In a given sample, the closer the percentages are to 0 or 100, the smaller the difference needed to be statistically significant. Conversely, a relatively large difference is less likely to be significant the closer the percentages involved are to 50.

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Boy-on-Boy Sexuality

Ritch C. Savin-Williams

Sex between boys is sufficiently stigmatized in our culture as to be essentially ignored, subjected to misunderstanding, and stereotyped. Those who believe that such behavior does not exist frequently embrace antiquated assumptions that children are, or should be, sexless. Others acknowledge that a few boys may have sex with each other, although they dismissively attribute it simply to opportunistic play, rather than to consequential “sex.” To them, same-sex behavior during childhood and early adolescence is negligible for the boys’ future sexuality—and certainly should never be encouraged through open discussion. Others maintain the opposite—that it turns innocent boys away from heterosexuality to a life of promiscuous and dangerous homosexual sex (read: AIDS).

A slightly more enlightened view acknowledges that although some youths secretly participate in these unorthodox relationships for reasons beyond mere amusement, same-sex activities are customarily temporary and experimental. As noted developmental psychologist Eleanor Maccoby observed, although “a substantial number of people experiment with same-sex sexuality at some point in their lives,” only “a small minority settle into a life-long pattern of homosexuality.”¹ If true, then most same-sex encounters between boys are relatively insignificant, transitional encounters that are best disregarded. Absent from this discussion is the perspective that these boy-on-boy activities represent the expression of an enduring same-sex orientation that brings happiness, pleasurable gratification, and identity consolidation—an affirmation of a very important aspect of life.

Although some may deny that boy-on-boy sexual behavior takes place or believe that it is harmful and must be prevented, these views ignore developmental research and are not based on the real life experiences of children and adolescents. For example, one of the best predictors of adult homosexuality is child and adolescent same-sex sexual activity, suggesting its early origins.² Gay and bisexual young men frequently and vividly recall their first same-sex encounter and attribute immense significance to it for their developing identity, sexuality, and intimate relationships.³ Furthermore, child and adolescent same-sex behavior occurs across the spectrum of sexual orientations and, as such, it likely impacts many more youths than those who eventually identify as gay or bisexual. Given the general cultural directive that such behavior should remain stigmatized, boys who engage in same-sex behavior might well be adversely affected by these negative views. This may be particularly true for boys who, in addition to participating in same-sex behavior, experience a preponderance of same-sex attractions and desires.

Boys are led, in this culture, to believe that their homoerotic attractions and longings for sex with other boys will diminish or evaporate once girls become available during adolescence. For some boys with transitional homoerotic desires and behaviors, this may be true, while for many others this sexuality is a central aspect of who they are. Whether these youths identify as gay or whether they engage in sex with other boys, their same-sex attachments are enduring. Parental and cultural proscriptions can shame, delay, or squelch these feelings—but they cannot extinguish them. Internal motivations to satisfy homoerotic desires often far exceed external prohibitions against them.

The exact number of boys who either identify as gay or simply engage in sex with other boys is almost impossible to determine, although it is certainly far more than the 1% to 3% who report they are gay or bisexual on representative, anonymous surveys of junior and senior high school students.⁴ In fact, only a minority of teenage boys with same-sex attractions or fantasies reports that they are gay or bisexual or that they engage in sex with boys.⁵ That males are more likely to experience same-sex attractions than they are to identify as a sexual minority is reflected in a recent national sex survey. Ten percent of all men reported at least one aspect of "adult same-gender sexuality." Of these men, nearly half found sex with another male appealing or were sexually attracted to males, but had no sexual experience with a male and identified as *heterosexual*. One quarter self-identified as heterosexual, had engaged in sex with a male, and re-

ported no sexual attractions to males. The final quarter of men had a convergence of same-sex desire, behavior, and identity.⁶ Similarly, in a recent study of college students, 5% of men self-identified as gay or bisexual. However, twice as many reported that they are mostly sexually attracted to males, and twice that number—nearly 20%—did not strongly disagree that they had sexual attractions to men.⁷

To fully account for the discrepancies in the domains of a boy's sexuality, far more than a chapter is needed. Nevertheless, using data first reported in my book, ". . . and then I became gay." *Young men's stories*,⁸ my goal here is to broaden an understanding of boys' lives through the narratives of young men who describe not just the who-what-where-when of their first same-sex encounters but also the *meanings* of these initial contacts.

The Study

Eighty-six young men between the ages of 17 and 25 were interviewed for the study. An age ceiling of 25 years was established to minimize the time lag between the experience of developmental events and their recall during the end of adolescence and the beginning of young adulthood. Young men were recruited through announcements in local university classes and flyers posted on campus bulletin boards and relevant public establishments (local bar, bookstore, cafe). Advertisements appeared in local gay newsletters and internet listservs.

Youths were, for the most part, articulate, educated college students who elected to participate in research described as attempting to understand the ways in which young men with same-sex attractions come to recognize their sexual identity during childhood and adolescence. At the time of the interview, 83% identified themselves as gay, 7% as bisexual, 5% as unlabeled, 5% as bi-gay, and 1% as questioning. These youths are not presented as necessarily representative of all youths with same-sex attractions. The sample included 13% Latino, 8% African American, 6% Asian American, and 2% Native American Indian youths. Few youths who were closeted to themselves or to others volunteered for the study. Those with diverse educational, socioeconomic, and geographical backgrounds were also inadequately sampled. As with other interview studies, nonverbally oriented and shy youths were also likely under-represented in the study.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted at a time and place of the youths' choosing and used a semi-structured interview protocol. Confidentiality was assured and consent for participation was secured. Tape recorders were considered too intrusive for the material requested, so verbatim notes were taken as the youths spoke. Youths were sensitive to this approach, pausing when the interviewer fell behind in note taking. These notes were immediately transcribed. Youths appeared comfortable with these arrangements and were willing to refer friends to the study.

Although questions about sexual development ranged from first memories of feeling different to the consolidation of a sexual identity, of interest for this chapter is one significant aspect of the developmental process—first sexual experience with another male. Sex was defined as genital contact on the part of one or both partners. To increase the probability of eliciting true memories, youths were encouraged at appropriate moments during the narratives to relate *specific* memories of their first same-sex experience and to anchor them in concurrent life events. Typical probes included: How old were both of you? Who was this person to you? Where did you meet? Who initiated the interaction and why? Where did this occur? What happened, sexually? How did you feel afterwards? How did this affect your sexual identity? Were there further contacts? For the most part, youths remembered exact markers and these details enhance their stories' credibility.

Context of the First Sexual Experience

At the time of the interview, slightly over half of the 86 young men had had sex with both a male and a female. Of those with at least one sexual experience, 84% first had sex with a boy. Six of the young men reported that they were "complete" virgins—no genital contact with a male or female—and two had had sex with a female but not a male. The average age of first sex with a boy was 14.3 years, considerably before first sex with a girl at age 15.7 years.

Of the developmental milestones assessed, none varied as widely as the age of first same-sex sexual experience. It could be as early as age 5 or as late as after 25—if the virgins in the study eventually have sex. Of the 86 young men, 54 (63%) had their first sexual experience during boyhood—before high school graduation. It is these 54 boys who are the focus of this chapter.

Age

Forty-three percent of the 54 youths had a prepubertal sexual experience with another male. The others reported first sexual contact during junior (30%) or senior (28%) high school. The average age of the first male partner was 14.2 years, slightly more than 2 years older than the interviewee was at the time of the experience. However, eliminating the five oldest partners resulted in an average age of first partner that was just slightly above that of the interviewee at the time of the encounter. In 76% of cases, youths had first sex with a peer within 2 years of their age. In 6 of the 54 pairings the boy was older than his first partner, although in no situation was he more than 2 years older. Of the 13 dyads in which more than 2 years separated the partners, 6 dyads were more than 5 years apart in age. A pubertal difference likely characterized three dyads.

One such pairing was 11-year-old David and his 15-year-old friend, Akiva, a friend of a friend. They first saw each other at Hebrew school and were immediately attracted to each other. The younger of two boys raised in a family that relocated from country to country because of his father's occupation, David had been called a "fag" since age 5. By age 9, he watched the men rather than the women in XXX movies, by 11 he bought male pornography "for" his female friends, by 12 he routinely had sex with other boys at his gym, and by 13 he came out to his parents. His first sexual experience was with Akiva.

He sort of initiated the whole thing. At the present time Akiva has no clue of what he is but he certainly is very flamboyant. He came over with my friend to swim in our pool and in the process of changing clothes I noticed that he kept looking at me. My friend then left to go home and we were left alone. We were in my room and he said that he didn't know how to masturbate and so he asked me to show him, so I did him. He added if I would do a blowjob. I didn't give that to him but, of course, I wished I did afterwards. Neither of us really came and I was fully dressed the whole time.

The largest age difference was one pairing in which more than 30 years separated the two. A college junior at the time of the interview, Josh described his background as an "urban cafeteria Catholic." Josh's parents supported three children with blue-collar jobs in maintenance and transportation. Fascinated at age 11 by an advertisement for an all-male theatre

cast, wrestling magazines, and televised football games, Josh identified as bisexual just before high school graduation and disclosed this information to a best friend during his college freshman year, and to his parents a year later. But during adolescence he struggled with the meaning of his same-sex attractions before he concluded it was “time” for him to have sex if he were truly going to be gay.

Fifteen years old and he was 45. Oral sex. I met him at a gay theater. I came out thinking, finally I did it! I did it! I guess this is what is supposed to happen. I was nervous but I had a fake ID to get in. Looking back it made me feel really cheap. I didn't like it because of the circumstances. Not dirty, but it made it difficult to accept the whole gay thing until I fell in love in college.

I've always liked older men and younger women. My first lover in college was 23. Probably the best kisser in my whole life! I can't tell you I'm disgusted with old men. I find them hot—well, maybe not over 45. He looked much younger in the dim lights of the theater!

Josh now identifies as gay and is involved in a long-distance relationship with a 30-year-old man he met while visiting his parents over the Christmas holidays.

The Partner

The first sexual partner was usually (70%) a friend—most often a best friend—from the neighborhood or school with whom the boy interacted on a daily basis. The first partner could also be a complete stranger (15%) or a family member (15%). No one had his first sexual experience with someone he was currently dating.

Two 9-year-olds playing truth-or-dare after practicing for their class Christmas play typify the common pattern of a friend being the first partner. “He kept showing me more and more of himself until he was finally naked. He finally said he dared me to touch him and I said ‘don't be a faggot,’ but I eventually did. I wished I had done more! Eventually I did because we did this every chance we got during the next 2 years.”

Steven, a graduate student in engineering, also had first sex with a best friend 10 years earlier. Not out about his sexuality to his immediate or extended family, Steven was raised an only child in an upper-middle-class white, Protestant home on the West Coast. Aware of his attractions to boys

since the fourth grade, Steven's first sexual experience several years later proved quite rewarding.

We were both 13 and he was my best friend. We were sitting on my bed reading comic books and I started playing with his foot and he reciprocated. Neither of us came the first time, but he did the second. I masturbated to orgasm right after, however. So, just playing around having fun but there was some sense that what we were doing we were not supposed to do, but it was just so much fun. We did it a couple of more times that summer and from then on once or twice a year, and the last time that we did it we were seniors in high school. He is now married.

Finding romantic relationships during his conservative, private undergraduate college years proved unsuccessful. Now, Steven wants to be “monogamously married to a man in a suit and tie and with a Labrador retriever.”

The initial partner could also be someone a youth had not met prior to their sexual activities. In these cases, he was often older than the youth. Josh's experience at the gay theater is one such example. These strangers were discovered in the neighborhood or at a gay organization, club, support group, or bar. Other meeting places included a shopping mall, bathroom, theater, church youth group, school club, summer camp, and athletic locker room.

Against the wishes of his father, Curt attended a music camp for gifted African American youths. Long regarded by his father as insufficiently masculine, Curt had always known that he was “interested in sex with boys.” Recognizing his bisexuality prior to his first sexual experience, Curt was out to his mother, who once labeled someone with same-sex attractions as “a very horrible sick person who was perverted, a child molester, subhuman,” but not to his father, who embraced similar views.

I guess actually my first time was when I was 15 and at music camp. I'm not sure what this other guy is even today and he writes to me and said that he's had no sex at all since that time, but I think he must be leaning towards the gay side. Both of us were very curious. There was a hetero porn magazine that had been passed around from room to room and finally we had it. I think that maybe my gaydar was working even then because I somehow felt that he would be open to suggestion. So I suggested that we masturbate together. He didn't really want to but I did and he watched. The next night we

did it together, both of us masturbating separately. Then by the third night we began to fondle each other and then we had oral sex, which we did for the next 3 weeks, every night.

At the time of the interview, Curt was involved in a lingering, ill-defined romance with a fellow college freshman. After 3 months they ended their romantic relationship but have maintained the friendship and periodic sexual relations.

First-time sex partners could also be family members, usually a cousin but occasionally a brother. Two 6-year-old cousins were playing doctor

with hard-ons and we took every chance to feel each other. Started basically petting each other, fondling each other's genitals. I was fascinated by the event. He initiated and I just went along. I had no idea about how he felt about the situation. I really didn't think it had any significance because we were just playing.

Growing up in south Florida, Catholic, and the only male child, Jose became aware very early that his attractions were directed toward males. For many years he assumed that it was just a phase but "this homosexual thing just wouldn't end!" He never dated girls and always felt different from his peers. Sex with his cousin Tony was one of his fondest childhood memories.

I know that I was playing doctor at age 8 with my male cousin Tony, who was then 10. We made minor attempts at mimicking intercourse and I know that one time my mother caught us and said that it was wrong, but she didn't seem to get real angry. By age 13 we were still doing it.

Later, in my house and my parents were gone at the time, we'd go out to the swimming pool and masturbate ourselves in the same room. I suggested at one point that we do something else and he agreed, so we tried out oral sex. We both came when we manually did each other.

It was not until his senior year in college that Jose self-identified as gay. He still has not come out to his mother, although she frequently asks probing and suspicious questions about his "male friends."

After initial sexual activities, most boys remained friends (72%), with half of the strangers becoming either friends or romantic partners. Most

first-time same-sex encounters were experienced as positive, perhaps in large part because most were with best friends and were chosen rather than forced activities.

Motivations for the First Sexual Experience

Recollecting the reason for engaging in their first sexual experience proved challenging for many of the young men. They remembered that at the time their "excuse" was that they were having sex *primarily* because of curiosity or experimentation. However, many also recalled that they were more "into it" than their partner, and this greater enjoyment made it difficult to deny that they were participating out of lust or desire for sexual pleasure. Indeed, these two—curiosity and lust—inspired nearly 90% of all first sexual contacts. Only a few boys reported that their first sexual experience was motivated by a perceived obligation to their partner. Conspicuously absent were motives attributed to love or the alleviation of their virginity status.

Growing up Brazilian, Julio knew from an early age that neither his culture nor his Catholicism approved of his sexuality. Currently a high school senior, Julio first came out to his best friend in tenth grade. "I told him that I have fantasies about other men. I was very indirect initially but as we talked over the next couple of days I finally told him that I'm gay and he said that was fine with him." Julio is out to both parents, who are okay with it as long as "I love God and God loves me." Julio traced his first awareness of his same-sex sexuality to the sixth grade. Initially he was simply curious about his friends' activities, but he also noted that he had a "strange fascination" and a "compulsion" to participate in their games.

The bunch of us who were about the same age and I heard several of the guys were sort of really into showing off their bodies. I found out about this, so on a campout I made sure that we sort of always ran around naked, and it was a particular boy. We had regular sexual contact and this is before puberty. It would involve some fondling and kissing, and it would never go to orgasm. I knew I loved it but I had no name for it, and this is sort of how I got to know all about sex education.

Not unlike many boys, 11-year-old Jack assumed that what he and his friend Sam were doing was similar to what most boys do to have fun. His liberal parents always affirmed sex, teaching him about sexual matters

throughout his childhood. They did not, however, talk about sex between boys. Realizing that he enjoyed their “experiment” more than Sam did, Jack concluded that his motives might have a distinct basis. Soon after these sexual activities ended during adolescence, Jack came out first to himself and then to the girl he was dating.

I know that he did not like it as much as I did. This one time that we got most active, neither one of us came. It was just that we did it for fun and neither one of us was particularly upset with it. We both knew that we still liked girls and we just assumed that all boys liked to do what we were doing. We sort of believed that what we were doing only existed in our minds. Kind of strange in a way because last week I was in this boy’s wedding and I sort of felt like saying to everyone, “I remember when we did it; I had him first!”

A variety of boyhood sexual activities emerged from these child and early adolescent sex-play activities with friends and cousins that were motivated by curiosity and the desire to have fun, to experiment with their bodies, and to satisfy erotic desires.

Activities of the First Sexual Experience

The youth in the study perceived that the premiere sexual contact was usually initiated by the partner (50%) or was mutually initiated (20%). Orgasms were optional, achieved in one-third of initial sexual experiences. The low rate was due in large part to the prepubertal status of many youths and to the somewhat awkward or nervous circumstances of many sexual encounters. Sex with a first partner was occasionally a singular event but most often was an act repeated many times over several years. The initial contact frequently occurred in the home of one of the partners.

The most common sexual activities were mutual fondling (35%) and masturbation (35%). Oral sex (20%) was a distant third. Kissing was rare (2%), as was anal sex (9%). One youth noted that as 12-year-olds, he and his best friend did everything, but, “only sex. No kissing. He didn’t want kissing.” He and several other youths stated that kissing was too intimate, too indicative of the meaning that gay sex might have. Mouth-to-penis contact with your best friend was just having fun, but mouth-to-mouth contact stepped across a boundary into new territory—implying an identity or a lifestyle. At the time, Julio accepted without question the limita-

tions imposed by his friends surrounding what constituted acceptable behavior.

Another game we played was truth-or-dare. In one situation one of the dares was to become naked and we began touching each other, acting out heterosexual scenes, mutual masturbation, posing, and modeling. One boy said that there could be no sucking or fucking and so we didn’t.

It was just one of those things that we kids did. Sometimes we did contests of how fast one could reach orgasm and also how much. At the time I couldn’t orgasm to ejaculation but there was this one guy who was 1 year older who was very well developed and he taught us all about it. This is how I found out about liquid orgasm.

Later, Julio realized that to have done what they did during games of truth or dare would have implied greater meaning. “As long as this was as far as it went then we couldn’t be gay. Gays did things with orifices.”

In the evolution of a relationship that began when both boys were 11-year-olds, Jack and his friend Sam’s first sexual encounter did not include oral sex. Oral sex did, however, eventually become a central aspect of their sexual activities.

We sort of spent time sleeping over at each other’s houses and on this one occasion we slept in tents in his backyard. We were talking about girls, as we usually do, and then at some point we began to play strip poker and we would take flashlights and look at each other, very discreetly at first. That then evolved to we would lie on top of each other and read sort of racy kinds of things to each other. This is all, of course, heterosexual stuff. Then the next step was that we began to sort of rub together, you know, sort of rub each other’s back while on top of each other naked. We never kissed.

At some point we didn’t know what else to do and we had heard from other boys about sucking. We didn’t know exactly what was supposed to happen or what we were supposed to do, but we did have a rule that we agreed that neither one of us would pee in the other’s mouth.

Two early adolescents experimented in their private school, attempting “anal sex but it wasn’t successful because we didn’t know how.” A pair of 13-year-olds explored each other’s bodies very closely after a Boy Scout

meeting. "We did it twice in his room in his house, oral and anal. It was a good feeling."

Evaluation of the First Sexual Experience

In retrospect, the maiden journey was evaluated as "good" or "great" by 44 of the 54 youths, primarily because it fulfilled curiosity and lustful desires. When the sex was evaluated negatively, it was not due to the age or status of the partner or to the particular sexual behavior that occurred, but to the possible *meaning* of the sexual behavior. However, few youths expressed worry about the possibility of acquiring HIV.

When he was 16 years old, one youth reportedly experienced ecstasy after his first sexual experience. "I remember being nervous. Couldn't stop shaking, excited, but scared to death. Odd sensation feeling someone else. Never thought what it would be like. Took me by surprise. I was aware of my attractions before this but never acted on them." Although "everyone was doing it," several youths remembered that they were more "into" it than were their male partners. "I remember that I really enjoyed it. . . . This was before either one of us could even ejaculate and I remember that he kept on pulling on my penis and that it hurt. I told him it hurt but I wanted him to continue." Sometimes the partner wanted to curtail the sexual activities, much to the disconcertment of the interviewed youth. "Then when we got home he lost interest because he didn't want to do it anymore but I did. It was clearly more than just an experiment for me." Recognizing the precariousness of his sexual relations, Julio understood that he "couldn't show I liked it too much because then it would stop."

Although sex was perceived as great, fear of negative reprisals occasionally punctured the magical aura, causing some boys to feel guilt, shame, and anxiety. Early adolescents appeared particularly prone to guilt, prompting some formerly nonreligious youths to seek forgiveness from God. One junior high school boy wanted to join a neighborhood friendship group but first had to pass a ritual about which he was ambivalent. "The older guys built a fort and membership was we had to masturbate in front of them. I dropped my pants and came in a couple of strokes. They clapped, gave me a card, and taught me the motto. I should have felt great but I was extremely guilty about it after it happened. I prayed all night, confessed the next morning, and went to mass. I wasn't really religious before that."

Jose also recalled experiencing shame, which he termed his "Catholic guilt." Throughout the many years of sex with his cousin, Jose's adolescent

enthusiasm was tempered by the knowledge that not all Catholics perceived his activities as morally acceptable.

I felt guilty that I had done something wrong and I felt that we should go to confession. I know that I felt guilty because I would take these very long showers and I would brush my teeth. I knew that he and I were doing it for different reasons, him because it was sort of physical and sexual and me for different reasons. It meant more. I sensed something was wrong but once again I just told myself that it was just a phase. This is actually my mother's cousin. I still thought of myself as straight at this time.

Other youths, often as children, expressed a fear of getting caught and being punished by parents. One youth was part of a neighborhood gang that found sex a fun way to pass the hot summer days. Sex was not wrong, unless one was caught.

We would put towels over the windows and then we would take our clothes off. We would masturbate each other as sort of play and we would get erections. I certainly remember having a lot of interest in this activity but I also remember that I didn't want to get caught with this kind of fun and play.

On the whole, however, a boy's first sexual experience was recalled as a "beautiful awakening," "ecstatic," and a "culmination of my sexual desires." When sex was characterized as an unpleasant experience, youths believed it was due to outside forces (parents, religion) condemning boy-on-boy sex. Childhood fears of getting caught merged into adolescent reservations about the consequences or *meaning* of the sexual behavior.

Meaning of the First Sexual Experience

Sexual activities were often experienced and interpreted in diverse ways depending on when they occurred during the life course.

CHILDHOOD

First sex prior to puberty typically incorporated same-age buddies or cousins and involved genital fondling and mutual masturbation. Youths were usually enthralled by these sexual encounters, committed to continuing them as long as possible, and convinced that sex had little significance beyond that of a whimsical, frolicking diversion. On reflection, the young

men believed that childhood sex did not make them gay; it was simply an experiment or a desire for personal pleasure. The sexual orientation of the first partner was a matter of some speculation, with many doubting that he was totally straight.

Adrian's sexual history reflected several of these characteristics. Raised in a small Georgia town with three older siblings and his mother's parents, Adrian described his mother as a "very Donna Reed type" and his father as "I have no idea what he does, but he prepares market reports." Once he disclosed to his best friend, she "jumped up and down and hugged me." His siblings and parents were less thrilled, turning "red [mother], white [father], and blue [brother]." Adrian's first sexual experience was with his fifth-grade cousin. They "whacked off together in the same room under the sheets, but we didn't touch each other." At the time, it bore no meaning other than "Southern comfort." Adrian noted that they "fooled around" because it was "something that was fun and just something that we did, but this wasn't gay."

Few of these prepubertal boys understood the concept of "gayness" as an identity or a lifetime commitment. It would be several years, sometimes many years, before the boys associated early sex with adult sexual identity. However, despite the equation of first sex with physical pleasure, most boys were also aware that their sexual activities were "wrong" or "bad." This they knew because if parents discovered their activities, they would be punished.

EARLY ADOLESCENCE

The onset of puberty motivated boys to physically and mentally explore what they desired but had not acted upon. Although childhood sexual activity was often frivolous, except when it elicited fears of exposure and punishment, and was seldom interpreted as "homosexual," early adolescents with their developing cognitive abilities began to link sexual attractions with cultural definitions of sexual identities. This in turn created concern or worry about the *meaning* of their first sexual encounter. Several youths understood the connection between their desires and activities, identified as a sexual minority, and shared this information with others. Many more, however, did not.

During early adolescence, more "serious" forms of sexual behavior emerged, including anal activity. The partner was still primarily a friend, orgasms were more common, and sexual experiences were sought to satisfy lustful desires. In addition to increasing pleasure, orgasms could also

generate guilt and shame, attenuating the resiliency of psychological defenses intended to deny or suppress the meaning of sexual activities. Although *being* gay was a burdensome reality against which they fought, the recognition that they were more "into it" than were their partners suggested to them that their *behavior* might be gay, with potent subsequent inferences for their identity and peer standing. Clearly, sex was more than a capricious, random event for many of these early adolescents.

The usual defense of an early adolescent to protect himself from understanding the implications of his first same-sex activity was to deny that it meant anything. One pair maintained their heterosexuality by saying to each other, "If you were a woman I would do this to you." Then we'd try to put it up the other's butt or suck on the other's nipple." Another defense was to intellectually minimize the act. After sex with his 12-year-old best friend, one youth recalled, "At the time I washed over it as much as I **could**, to make little of it as much as I could. At the time I avoided seeing it as being gay. It didn't have anything to do with myself being gay." Gradually, these and other defenses began to crumble.

Perhaps because of these internal conflicts about whether sex had implications beyond mere physiological arousal, more so than at any other age, first sexual experiences at early adolescence were evaluated as less positive. For example, the first encounter of the two 13-year-old Boy Scouts who became aware of each other's proclivities while peeing side-by-side after a meeting, was passionate and included oral and anal sex. The "good feeling" was diminished, however, by another concern. "Even then, the first time, I began to worry about what this meant. I knew what gay was and I couldn't be that."

By contrast, two early adolescents reported that the initial sexual encounter helped them *affirm* a gay identity or to disclose this fact to others. One boy realized that "by doing it with him I was saying goodbye forever to being straight, sort of a rite of passage. I was very nervous but I knew it was the right thing." For other youths, this clarity was achieved as same-sex experiences accumulated over time. After 2 years of sex with his 12-year-old neighborhood friend, a young man recalled, "This didn't make me gay because I already was, but it did make my sexual identity more concrete."

Interpretations of differences in meaning that distinguished boys who **experienced** sex with another boy during prepuberty from those who experienced it during early adolescence were also evident over time within

individuals. For example, by early adolescence, Adrian was regularly “whacking off” in the basement with his best friend, Paul. Whereas in childhood his behavior had little meaning, by early adolescence its significance was becoming increasingly apparent.

Paul and me talked a lot and then we whacked off in our separate beds. We did this at first in the dark but then we began shining flashlights on each other’s dicks. On the third time, we put our hands on each other and we tossed each other off. This felt much better than when I did it by myself. We then went to blowjobs and this continued for about 2 years, every couple of weeks.

We wanted to consider it as just experimenting, but I know we had our doubts. We both decided that no, this did not mean that we were gay. We were just exploring. I don’t think either of us really believed this. He is now very closeted but I think he is gay. Later we would have phone sex.

Julio, as well, appreciated shortly after pubertal onset that sex with friends and his intense interest in male-male sexual activities meant something about a gay identity.

I knew that this was on the path that I wanted and I knew that I was on it. I knew that others could sort of experience what I was and I knew that other people would think of it as being disgusting. I knew also that I always wanted to do more than other guys wanted to do except, of course, for this one guy.

Yet, Julio was also conflicted, similar to other early adolescents. He “was comfortable with my gay feelings but I didn’t want to take on the identity. I didn’t want to be a transvestite or a male prostitute because that was my image of what a gay person was. I didn’t want to be a woman.”

Puberty intensified the *possibilities of eroticism* by fashioning meaning to nascent sexual feelings present since childhood. The physical and emotional pleasure of desired sexual encounters could be exhilarating and reassuring, providing substance and understanding to that which was previously murky, or it could be noxious and threatening, reminding a boy of societal censure of his same-sex attractions. This duality, the onset of puberty crystallizing both exciting and frightening erotic possibilities, brought into sharp relief the nature of a boy’s sexual desires. Relatively few, however, were inspired by their first boy-on-boy sex to proclaim, ei-

ther privately to themselves or publicly to friends and family, their sexual identity. Perhaps with additional peer and family support and considerably less cultural negativity toward sexual minorities, the outcome would have been different.

ADOLESCENCE

For those who first engaged in same-sex sexual activities during high school, several striking characteristics were apparent. First, sex partners were less likely to be presumed heterosexual friends and family members and more likely to be strangers and gay friends. They often met in chance encounters in public places, thus increasing the likelihood of having only a single contact. Instigation of the sexual contact and orgasms were now more likely to be shared by both partners.

By adolescence proper, sexual contact increasingly implied to youths that their behavior had meaning for their sexual identity. It was less that high school students feared getting caught (childhood) or felt guilt or shame about their sexual activities (early adolescence). Rather, it confirmed that which they could not imagine during childhood, were terrified of and suppressed during early adolescence, and would come to accept during late adolescence and young adulthood. When superimposed upon known prohibitions against homoerotic desires, most adolescents recognized that their behavior was gay, although some held out a dwindling hope that sex with another boy did not necessarily mean that *they* as individuals were gay. After his initial sexual encounter with another male, one teen became emotionally upset because “This meant I was gay and thus I would become a fit target for all those gay jokes.” Rather than being upset by this sexual revelation, another youth was relieved because “speculation and confusion” about his sexual inclinations had ended. He referred to his first sex as a “rite of passage by which I gained clarity about what was previously an abstraction.” He had now been initiated into “gay life.” For three youths, the significance of initial sexual experiences was heightened when *they* recognized romantic longings. Once this occurred, the implications of same-sex attractions became overwhelmingly poignant—an underlying gay predisposition.

Clarity, confirmation, and initiation into a gay life were enhanced if the first sexual experience occurred outside a youth’s friendship network. In these more anonymous settings, a teen could test his sexuality, not among friends who might turn on him or not appreciate his struggles, but with a safe stranger within the context of a one-time act. If it did not work out,

then he could always return to his former life without friends or family knowing about his experiment. The first partner's older age also served this purpose—someone more experienced and certain of his sexuality might better provide the acid test for a youth's uncertain gay sexuality. One such youth noted, "It was a really wonderful experience because he was so patient and gentle. I discovered it really was a confirmation, a solidification of who I am."

Brian visited one of the nation's gay meccas with the expressed intent of fortifying his same-sex sexuality and initiating himself into gay life. Raised the oldest of three children on a Northwest ranch, Brian's parents were officials of their tribal nation. Without the strictures of Western religion to hinder him, Brian most feared disappointing his Native American Indian elders. Desiring closeness with other boys since age 5 and realizing at 14 that his homoerotic feelings were not transitory, Brian tested whether his fantasies for boys would remain gratifying when expressed behaviorally.

The first sexual occasion occurred when I went to San Francisco. This was when I was 15 years old. I was still very closeted. I saw advertised a gay film festival. And so I went with the purpose of trying to find other gay people. There was this one guy who was my age, so I went over to him and initiated a conversation. We went back to his place and we did mutual masturbation. This over the summer of my sophomore year in high school. He was also 15. He had been adopted by a lesbian couple, so he was very out. I felt that I could do it because it would be very anonymous and away from my home. We still actually have contact with each other. It felt very good. Later some guilt would set in. But he showed me the gay discos and the gay clubs.

Another youth used sex with a man to clarify his bisexuality. He dated several girls during high school and had sex with all of them. However, he was at a loss about what to do with his "homosexual tendencies." Finding no trusted and understanding male sex partners at his suburban high school, he searched an alternative newspaper in a nearby city to discover the hang-outs of gay men. After having anonymous sex, he concluded, "I knew I wasn't as sexually attracted to females as I wanted to be, but I loved being with them. And I knew how they made me feel, but they didn't make me feel what I wanted to feel when I was having sex with this guy."

Youths who initiated sex during their high school years were least likely to claim that these sexual activities had "no effect" on their sexuality. By

this age, most knew what gay was and that sex with another male was one clear indication of being gay. Perhaps as well, by adolescence the sexual desires of most boys were so strong and so clearly oriented toward other boys that the meaning of their attractions could no longer be ignored. After sex, relatively few teens continued to profess heterosexuality. The purpose of the first sexual experience was thus less to engage in fun (childhood), lust (early adolescence), or romance (more of a young adult goal), but to clarify their sexuality, sometimes within the context of the anonymity of a singular, discrete event.

Effects of the First Sexual Experience on Sexual Orientation

Almost without exception, the young men reported that their initial sexual encounter did not make them gay. Over 70% evaluated the effect of boy-on-boy sex on their *sexual orientation* as "none." After recalling his first sexual experience, one young man explained, "This had no real impact on my sexual identity [orientation] because whatever caused me to be the way I am happened before this time." The other youths believed that their first time suggested to them that they might be, but did not *make* them, gay or bisexual. The awareness that they were not to blame for their sexual orientation often helped youths to come out earlier than those who believed that they were "damaged" by their behavior.

Only one youth, Wai, entertained the possibility that his initial sexual experience made him gay. Born in Hong Kong and raised with an older sister until he left home for a private school in Chicago, Wai recalled that shortly after pubertal onset, "I began to explore the whole issue of my sexuality. I was trying to make myself like girls but it just wouldn't work. I didn't go out on any dates [with girls] even though I kept thinking I ought to." Two months before the interview, Wai first disclosed to a friend. His first sexual experience 5 years earlier had turned his life around.

We were 14, classmates, and we were talking on the phone and the conversation just sort of led to sex. I finally initiated the sex talk and just said why don't we do it and he agreed very readily. So, I went to his house and I was very shy. I didn't take off any of my clothes. He on the other hand came to the door naked. We hugged and kissed and felt each other. There was no orgasm the first time but he did teach me later how to masturbate.

I liked the feeling and I wanted to do it again and he said okay as soon as possible. Maybe this was the experience that made me gay. Maybe if the first person had been a female I would be straight today. Maybe I just wanted sex and because the first one was with a guy, this made me gay. It's what I thought then and sometimes I still think that now. It's not a problem because I like being gay and in the next life I'd like to be gay again.

Born of lust or disinterest, carefully orchestrated or a chance encounter, life altering or forgettable, the first sexual act was typically perceived as having no effect on a youth's sexual orientation. Rather, it constituted his sex education, helped him disclose his homosexuality to others, or corroborated that which he knew or suspected about his sexuality.

Discussion

Far too little is known or appreciated about the first sexual activities of boys with other boys. I believe suppression of public discourse and research on boy-on-boy sexuality is detrimental to the lives of boys of all sexualities. One example of how collective proscriptions against same-sex sexuality affect more than sexual-minority youths is the observation that most boys who are called "faggot" or "gay" are not truly gay in their sexual orientation, yet they suffer from societal damaging judgments and stereotypes of homosexuality. One such group may be boys for whom same-sex sexual encounters are experimental or opportunistic with seemingly little meaning or predictive power about their sexual orientation or sexual identity. Although heterosexual, they may be shamed by their behavior and made to feel inadequate, immoral, or inferior. The resulting psychic pain may turn to anger, the expression of which may be directed toward those they perceive as the truly "guilty" ones—boys who are most feminine in their behavior, personality, and interests. If they can reveal the *true villains*—the real "faggots"—then perhaps they can sufficiently divert the "heat" from themselves.

For other boys, however, same-sex desires and behaviors represent a central core of who they are. Some of these individuals will eventually identify as gay, bisexual, or a sexual minority, and participate in gay culture. To negate or misinterpret their feelings and needs can create unnecessary pain and shame that hinder their development of a vibrant, authentic sense of self. Similar to all youths, boys with same-sex attractions re-

quire affirmation that they are acceptable to family and friends. If they fear that their same-sex attractions may preclude them from this acceptance, they may become the boys who, despite childhood and adolescent same-sex behavior, decide that they *cannot be gay* and thus elect to blend into the fabric of American culture as heterosexual young men, with a secret. Little is known about how their lives are changed by their sexual experiences. Perhaps they are "liberals" who sublimate their homoeroticism by working for social justice for sexual minorities; or, perhaps, they are the violent victimizers of gay people, those most threatened and thus homophobic and recalcitrant for maintaining the oppression of sexual minorities. In either case, their inability or unwillingness to connect their sexual and intimate selves likely extracts a great sacrifice. Yes, they appear "normal," but in the process they lose an essential aspect of who they are.

To the extent that alternatives to heterosexuality are misrepresented, myths flourish, stigma abounds, and those who by their very nature are sexually unconventional are condemned. Few individuals concerned with the well-being of youths would advocate that being thus marginalized, especially during the vulnerable years of childhood and adolescence, is desirable. When oppression is unavoidable, survival is greatly enhanced by considerable personal and social support to counter normalization pressures. Although increased cultural visibility has recently been afforded to many aspects of sexual minorities' lives that offset these damaging stereotypes, normalize nonheterosexuality, and provide resources and support, we have been strikingly silent about the particulars of one aspect of their lives—their sexuality. The exception to this silence about boy-on-boy sexuality is the risk it represents for sexual diseases. We sometimes forget, however, that the very behaviors that can result in HIV infection can also lead to love, happiness, fulfillment, and identity integration and consolidation. These, too, deserve our attention. Whether same-sex behavior is a harbinger of curiosity, lust, sexual identity, or intimacy, we should seek to understand and appreciate it among our young.

NOTES

1. Page 191 in Maccoby's 1998 book, *The two sexes: Growing up apart, coming together* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press). No empirical support is given to substantiate either how many people experiment with same-sex sexuality or, of these cases, how many reflect a temporary versus a permanent sexual orientation.

Schooling

2. The earliest research that found this strong relationship is A. P. Bell, M. S. Weinberg & S. K. Hammersmith, 1981, *Sexual preference: Its development in men and women* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press).

3. For one example, see J. Hart (Ed.), 1995, *My first time: Gay men describe their first same-sex experience* (Los Angeles: Alyson). However, these accounts often fall short because they are presented as narratives without comment, context, or analysis.

4. For a detailed examination of issues pertaining to the definition of the population of sexual minorities, see R. C. Savin-Williams, 2001, A critique of research on sexual-minority youths, *Journal of Adolescence*, 24, 15–23.

5. In Minnesota, 1.5% of boys identified their sexual orientation as gay or bisexual. However, three times that number reported same-sex attractions; only 5.1% of all students with homosexual attractions said that they are predominantly homosexual. Of the 1.6% of boys who engaged in same-sex behavior, slightly more than one-quarter described themselves as homosexual or bisexual; of the 2.2% who reported same-sex fantasies, less than one third described themselves as homosexual (G. Remafedi, M. Resnick, R. Blum & L. Harris, 1992, Demography of sexual orientation in adolescents, *Pediatrics*, 89, 714–721). In Massachusetts, 1.7% of boys identified themselves as gay or bisexual (R. Garofalo, R. C. Wolf, S. Kessel, J. Palfrey & R. H. DuRant, 1998, The association between health risk behaviors and sexual orientation among a school-based sample of adolescents, *Pediatrics*, 101, 895–902). In Vermont, 1.3% of boys reported a same-sex experience (R. H. DuRant, D. P. Krowchuk & S. H. Sinal, 1998, Victimization, use of violence, and drug use at school among male adolescents who engage in same-sex sexual behavior, *Journal of Pediatrics*, 132, 113–118).

6. Laumann and colleagues reported that 2.8% of men self-labeled as homosexual or bisexual, 4.5% found sex with another man appealing, and 6.2% were at least somewhat sexually attracted to men. Overall, 7.7% of the men reported same-gender sexual desire, 9.1% have had sex with another man since puberty, and 10.1% reported either same-sex desire or behavior (E. O. Laumann, J. H. Gagnon, R. T. Michael & S. Michaels, 1994, *The social organization of sexuality: Sexual practices in the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

7. R. A. Lippa, 2000, Gender-related traits in gay men, lesbian women, and heterosexual men and women: The virtual identity of homosexual-heterosexual diagnosticity and gender diagnosticity. *Journal of Personality*, 68, 899–926.

8. Chapter 4, *First Gay Sex*, in which the data are presented according to the age when the first same-sex encounter occurred (1998, New York: Routledge). Valsin DuMontier interviewed one-third of the youths.