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U.S. Teen Survey Headline Highlights

Prepared for M.A.C. AIDS Fund, June 2014

Majority of teens don't think they're at risk for HIV or AIDS, signals need for more education

A new survey by M.A.C. AIDS Fund finds American teens could benefit from further discussion about HIV and AIDS.

1. Teens would be afraid to have HIV or AIDS, but few feel they're at risk.
2. There's more to learn about the impact of HIV and how to prevent it.
3. Teens are open to discussing HIV and AIDS with others.
4. Education could help minimize stigmas attached to HIV and AIDS among teens.

Teens would be afraid to have HIV or AIDS, but few feel they're at risk.

Nearly nine in ten (88%) American teens ages 12-17 **don't think they're at risk for getting HIV** at some point in their lifetime.

In fact, they're more likely to think they have the potential to develop **cancer (38%), diabetes (33%), heart disease (28%),** or **obesity (22%)** during their lifespan.

However, one in two (50%) teens admit they'd be **most afraid to have HIV or AIDS**, compared to other issues like cancer (32%), drug or alcohol addiction (7%), or being overweight (3%).

In fact, nearly all (93%) **teens admit they'd be nervous to find out they had HIV or AIDS**. This is about the same as those who think they'd be nervous if faced with other life-altering events like finding out they were pregnant (94%), or having sex for the first time (91%).

There's more to learn about the impact of HIV and how to prevent it.

One-third (33%) of American teens do not realize that **HIV is a sexually transmitted disease**. This likely **explains why far fewer teens think it would be difficult to talk to an adult about HIV or AIDS (27%), than sex (66%) or sexually transmitted diseases (41%)**.

What's more, when asked which type of behavior **would most put their health at risk if they were doing it now**, less than one third (31%) of teens say this is true of **having unprotected sex**. Instead, others believe that **smoking cigarettes or drinking alcohol (28%) or eating unhealthy foods every day for a year (20%)** would be most risky to their health.

While **most realize that using a condom (71%), abstaining from sex (58%), or getting tested regularly (55%) can help them avoid the disease**, fewer realize that HIV can be prevented through **other actions, such as having only one sexual partner (47%), not using alcohol or drugs (33%), or feeling comfortable talking about HIV with others (29%)**.

Teens are open to discussing HIV and AIDS with others.

Nearly three in five (59%) American teens **realize that learning more about HIV can help prevent it.**

That's likely why most (71%) **have talked about HIV or AIDS with someone in their lives,** specifically a **parent (60%),** or **teacher (43%).**

Not surprisingly, then, most of their **knowledge on the topic comes from sex education classes at school (56%) or from family (38%).**

While nearly half of those who've discussed HIV or AIDS **admit it's uncomfortable (45%) or sad (26%),** a majority (51%) of American teens **wouldn't mind having such a conversation** with a parent, teacher or mentor.

Education could help minimize stigmas attached to HIV and AIDS among teens.

Teens admit that if they put themselves **in the shoes of someone with HIV or AIDS, they'd feel scared (69%) or ashamed (53%)**. Half (50%) even think they'd **feel worried that others might be afraid of them**.

Yet, when it comes to thinking about a close friend or classmate having the disease, less than four in ten **would want to talk to them to make them feel better (37%), spend time with them because they need support from a friend (35%), or talk to them to learn about what they're going through (32%)**.

Only half think they'd **treat this person normally (51%)**. Some go so far as to say that they **wouldn't want to share a drink with them (24%), or touch them (13%)**.

Margin of Error = +/- 3.1 Percent
Sample = 1,039 Nationally Representative American Teens Ages 12-17

About The Survey The M.A.C. AIDS Fund U.S. Survey was conducted between May 22nd and June 5th, 2014, among 1,039 nationally representative American teens ages 12-17, using an e-mail invitation and an online survey. Quotas are set to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the entire U.S. population ages 18 and over.

Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results.

For this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 3.1 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all personas in the universe represented by the sample. The margin of error for any subgroups will be slightly higher.

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