

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who can work with teens or lead groups in this area?

Working with teens requires a unique skill set and an appreciation for where they are in life. This often calls for patience, a tender heart, and a willingness to lean into the challenges teens face.

Usually, parents are a good choice for working with teens and leading groups, especially parents who have teens or have experience raising teens.

Other adults who resonate with teens or want to help them navigate life can be a good choice, too. We recommend adults with the following characteristics: they love Jesus; are healthy; have good emotional awareness; are mature and humble; and take responsibility for their behaviors. Especially when adults have had their own struggle with pornography or other compulsive sexual behaviors, and have done all the work and are living in recovery, they are a great fit for working with teens and leading groups. This will take an evaluation and discernment process from church leadership to ensure they are not a risk in this environment.

Some churches will run a background check on adults who want to work with teens. This is appropriate and a good way to ensure safety in the group. If an adult refuses to give you the information needed to run a background check, they are likely a risk and should not be working with teens.

What if a teen reveals abuse by a parent/adult?

This can be a difficult situation to navigate. If a teen is trusting you with this information, believe them. Be empathetic and caring in your responses, and validate what they've experienced. Maintain a calm demeanor. Explain that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in this type of situation. They need to know this upfront.

It's best not to promise a specific outcome, since this may not be in your control. The last thing this teen needs is another disappointing experience with an adult.

We recommend getting as much information as possible from the teen—asking questions is a good place to start. Obtaining answers to these questions will be helpful: Who hurt you? When? Where? Have you told anyone else about this?

Talking with your church leadership is also important, as they may have a process in place for handling this type of situation.

Contacting local law enforcement and/or child protective services is necessary to pass along pertinent information and understand next steps. This will likely result in an investigation.

In these situations, the worst thing to do is to do nothing.

What if a teen reveals abuse by another minor?

This can be a tough situation. If a teen is trusting you with this information, believe them. Empathize with what they're telling you and validate their experience. Explain that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in this type of situation. They need to know this upfront.

Asking questions is the best place to start, so you have as much information as possible. Obtaining answers to these questions will be helpful: Who hurt you? When? Where? Have you told anyone else about this?

Talking with your church leadership is important, as they may have a process in place for handling this type of situation.

Contacting local law enforcement and/or child protective services is necessary to pass along pertinent information and understand next steps. This will likely result in an investigation.

This will also require a conversation with the teen's parents, which might come from you, your church leadership, or other authority figures, depending on the details surrounding the situation. Assure them that they are your top priority. Their well-being and safety is most important.

What if a teen reveals that they have abused someone else?

This is an unfortunate situation. However, if a teen is sharing this with you, they likely feel some remorse and need help navigating what comes next. Explain that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in this type of situation. They need to know this upfront. Assure them that they have done the right thing, the brave thing.

Ask questions to obtain as much information as possible. Ask: Who did you hurt? When? Where? Have you told anyone about this? To your knowledge, has the person you hurt told anyone about this?

Talking with your church leadership is important, as they may have a process in place for handling this type of situation.

Contacting local law enforcement and/or child protective services is necessary to pass along pertinent information and understand next steps. This will likely result in an investigation.

This will also require a conversation with the teen's parent, which might come from you, your church leadership, or other authority figures, depending on the details surrounding the situation.

If two teens in my youth group are having sex, should I tell their parents?

Talking with the teens, together and/or separately, would be a good first step to ensure you have accurate information. This will also give you an opportunity to present God's design for sex within the context of marriage and also give them insights about what's happening in their brain when engaging in sex (for more information, watch the brain videos in the Youth Leader Library).

Encourage them to talk with their parents. Even if parents disagree, it allows the teens to live authentically with their parents. They can be the same person at home and at church.

It also allows parents to come alongside their teen and help them navigate the temptations and challenges of life.

Teens need to know that secrets create shame. If they keep things from their parents, they will have a sense of living a double life and feel like they won't be loved and accepted if their family knew the full story.

Offer to be with them when they talk with their parents. Supporting them through this process will show them you are safe and can be trusted.

If I find out teens are sexting each other, do I need to report this?

Sexting laws vary tremendously throughout the United States and can result in felony charges and registry as a sex offender.

It's best to know the laws in your area and share this information with teens. They need to know that if another teen shares a nude photo with them, they could be charged with possession of child pornography. Check with local law enforcement if you have specific questions about reporting.

Also, make sure your church leadership is aware of the situation and the steps being taken to resolve any potential legal issues.

Can teens go through *Sexual Integrity 101*?

Yes. While the majority of the content focuses on trauma, pain, shame, and addictive behaviors, some of the content may not be relevant to their age and life experiences.

As a parent or youth leader, it may be beneficial for you to watch through the course and pull together questions or discussion topics that would be more relevant to them as teens. It's a great way to introduce the topic of pornography, sexual addiction, and what it looks like to live in sexual health.

As a youth leader, is it okay to teach teens about healthy sexuality without their parent's permission?

When talking with teens about healthy sexuality, having parents' permission is the best way to ensure they are informed and supportive of what you're teaching their teen. You want parents to know what you're teaching is safe and biblically based.

There are several things you can do.

First, create a proposed outline of all the topics you're going to talk about, who's going to be teaching on the topic, and a schedule of when these talks are happening.

Second, share this outline with parents. Better yet, host a “Parents Q&A” where they can come and ask questions about the topics and content you’re going to talk about.

Lastly, share this outline with the teens in your youth group. This will allow them to ask questions and get more information ahead of time.

Throughout these conversations, be upfront with parents and teens about what information cannot be kept confidential. Parents will appreciate knowing that they will be notified if their teen shares anything concerning their safety. Teens will be reminded that youth leaders are safe people, and that their safety will always be a top priority.

Is it okay to teach about sexual health with guys and girls in the same room or should a male leader teach the guys and a female leader teach the girls?

It’s good for guys and girls to get the same information about sexual health, even hearing it at the same time, in the same place. However, for discussion or any type of Q&A, it’s best to separate guys and girls with a leader of the same gender.

There can be benefits to having a panel discussion or panel Q&A where female leaders talk to the guys and male leaders talk with the girls, but this would be more for a special event. Normal, ongoing discussion with teens should be with leaders of the same gender.

What resources does Pure Desire have for teens?

The teen materials we offer are intended for group use, where a leader takes a group of guys or girls through the curriculum following Pure Desire’s [group guidelines and best practices](#). As a leader, you will go through the curriculum and answer the questions from when you were a teenager, sharing the struggles you faced as a teenager, not your current struggles.

Behind the Mask

As a girl becomes a young woman—experiencing new, exciting, and mysterious changes—developing healthy sexuality can be a challenge. Discover how our family of origin, trauma, and pain contribute to the masks we wear: those we hide and live behind. Filled with biblical principles and clinical tools, *Behind the Mask* provides practical steps and strategies for young single women, ages 14-21.

Top Gun

For many young men, pornography and masturbation will impact their world in their early teens. Fueled by pain and shame, they become trapped in a perpetuating cycle that often leads to sexual addiction. *Top Gun* provides a biblical perspective, clinical tools, and practical steps to develop sexual health. For teen boys, ages 13-16.

Authentically You

Intended for a group experience, *Authentically You* is written specifically for single and college-aged women, ages 18-30. Through the use of weekly exercises, strategic tools, and self-care focus, you will learn how to live in health—how to live as your authentic self. You will discover how lifelong healing comes from a greater understanding of who God is and who He created you to be.

Living Free

Specifically designed for college-aged men, *Living Free* identifies the underlying factors that create and reinforce compulsive sexual behavior. Intended for a small group and planned around a semester system, *Living Free* combines clinical data and biblical truths to create the foundation for lifelong healing and freedom. For young men, ages 18-30.

As a parent, is it okay for me to work through the materials with my teen?

Yes. As you work through the material with your teen, we recommend you use examples of things you struggled with or experiences you had when you were their age, and even use some current struggles and practices you've put in place to keep growing in health. Being able to say, "That's even a struggle for me, and I have to keep social media off my phone so I'm not tempted to act out," helps teens understand that their behaviors are normal and nothing to be ashamed of.

As parents, when we can show our teens we've had the same or similar experiences, it shows we're safe and we can be trusted.