

RESEARCH ANALYSIS

For the Booklet

"THERE'S WISDOM IN WAITING"

JAMES H. PETERSON, Ph.D.

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1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Tobacco Institute desires to make the public aware that adolescents should delay their decision about using tobacco until adulthood. An ad campaign is planned to announce this point of view.

Parents, teachers, community youth leaders and schools have important influences upon the decisions that adolescents make about adult behaviors and customs. They can motivate adolescents to delay participating in adult behaviors and customs. Schools are important communicators of strategies for dealing with adolescents. They regularly sponsor a variety of programs, in and out of school, that deal with the day-to-day living decisions made by adolescents. Parents, teachers and community youth leaders often respond favorably to the recommendations that schools make about guiding adolescent behavior.

A booklet titled "There's Wisdom in Waiting" will be developed by a national school policy organization (i.e., National Association of State Boards of Education, The Council of Chief State School Officers) in cooperation with The Tobacco Institute. The booklet will contain a discussion of adult behaviors and recommendations for delaying the participation of adolescents in adult customs. The booklet will be made available, free of charge, to parents, schools, teachers and community youth leaders. The Tobacco Institute and the national school organization will promote the booklet.

The booklet project will begin mid-1982. The goal is to have it available for distribution by late 1982 or early 1983.

Follow-on opportunities exist for this endeavor. Once the booklet has had exposure and distribution, the following activities may prove worthwhile:

- . involvement of a national parent organization (i.e., PTA, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts) to distribute the booklet to their members and constituencies;
- . development of a media piece (poster, booklet, etc.) for use by adolescents to reinforce responsible living behaviors;
- . development of a program on responsible living, one that is directed toward adolescents and adult behaviors, to be used by schools and youth organizations;
- . design and introduction of a pilot state project to focus attention on successful ways of delaying adolescent participation in adult behaviors.

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2. ADULT BEHAVIORS AND CUSTOMS

The following listing of behaviors are accepted by American society as adult customs:

- . having sex;
- . driving an automobile;
- . drinking, wine, beer and distilled spirits;
- . smoking and chewing tobacco;
- . voting in elections;
- . obtaining credit;
- . joining the military service;
- . having a child;
- . having an apartment;
- . obtaining and using drugs; ?
- . participating in gambling;
- . getting married;
- . living together.

Some of these behaviors or customs are forbidden by law (drinking beverage alcohol, voting, gambling, etc.) while others are discouraged by social custom. Some of these adult customs are forbidden by religious beliefs and attitudes and values held by different groups of people. Our nation's melting pot culture gives rise to many sub-cultures that promote differing views about these behaviors and customs.

Adolescents, particularly since the 1960's, have engaged in these adult customs more often and at an earlier age. Researchers believe this is a result of the development of stronger adolescent peer and reference group pressures.

The advent of technology, expanded media presentations, new work roles and other innovations have diminished the control of adolescent behavior by families and religious institutions. Adolescent pressure groups compete with family, religious and community pressures for the control of adolescent

behavior. Today, the adolescent peer and reference group pressures are the important determinants of whether or not an adolescent participates in adult customs. This change is in contrast to the dominant force of parents, religion and community influences of an earlier era. Today, adolescents are more controlled by their own peers and the teenage referents (rock music, designer jeans, braided hair, etc.) than their parents, teachers, community and religious leaders.

Adolescents, as one might expect, are unable to deal responsibly with many of the adult customs in our society. Sometimes they do fine, but often they engage in adult customs unprepared for the consequences. Teenagers having children, drinking beverage alcohol, driving automobiles, conjugal living arrangements and using drugs are major problems.

For example, pregnancies among teenagers are on the rise that create serious health and social problems. Driving cars while intoxicated is a practice among teenagers more often than adults. The forecast is for more problems with adolescents and their participation in adult customs.

Delaying the participation of adolescents in adult customs offers several advantages:

- . A decision to act should be based upon factual information; often adolescents act without full information because of pressures to do as their friends are doing. Every year an adult custom is delayed, the child has a greater opportunity to obtain more complete information about the behavior. Factual information permits a rational decision as opposed to a pressured decision.
- . Experience provides a basis for judging how one wants to live. Delaying adult behavior gives time for adolescents to observe various adult customs and make a personal decision about how to deal with the custom. Experience is an important sounding board for evaluating choices.

- . Pressure to delay adult behavior creates an opportunity for parents, teachers and community youth leaders to compete with adolescent peer and reference groups for control of their behavior. Adolescent peer and reference group pressures are strong and often based upon myths that describe how to deal with adult customs in an irresponsible way that results in harm. Parents, teachers and community youth leaders, if they can compete effectively for control of adolescent behavior, can help adolescents to identify myths and motivate them to adopt factual explanations of adult customs.

There are a number of potential benefits and problems, both for society and adolescents, associated with each adult custom. They are described as follows:

Having Sex -

Benefits if delayed:

1. Providing opportunities for parents, schools and community agencies to develop alternative behaviors.
2. Desires for sex, parenting and marriage are part of the process of growing up. Parents, teachers, churches, and media can channel adolescents into responsible decision-making.
3. Adolescents learning to make responsible decisions about having sex.
4. Reduced early sexual involvement of adolescents.
5. Improved knowledge and attitudes about sex, parenting and marriage.

Problems:

1. Early sexual activity before marriage is becoming more common.
2. Peer pressure of dating in an atmosphere conducive to sexual activity.
3. Media and society's emphasis upon sex and attractiveness.
4. Modern contraception and the implication that pregnancy can be avoided.
5. Lack of knowledge about contraception and VD.
6. Failure to inculcate and develop values related to sex, marriage, family and parenting.

Driving Automobiles -

Benefits if delayed:

1. A decision to drive responsibly.
2. Driving defensively.
3. Avoiding poor driving conditions.
4. Keeping drinking apart from driving.
5. Developing sound driving judgment.

Problems:

1. In present society of urban-suburban sprawl, cars are a necessity as much as a luxury. Adolescents and young adults often need cars for school, work and social activities.
2. Parents of adolescents feel free of chauffeuring and adolescents of being chauffeured.
3. High accident rates and insurance rates demonstrate a serious problem believed to be associated with lack of experience, irresponsible driving (speeding, "chicken" game) drinking alcohol, taking drugs, etc.
4. Credit for driver's education and "good student" is not necessarily holding up.

Drinking Wine, Beer and Distilled Spirits -

Benefits if delayed:

1. Responsible decision-making about deferring drinking until of legal age.
2. Understanding the importance of drinking in moderation (if one is to drink), with food, over an extended time.
3. Understanding the importance of keeping drinking and driving (as driver or passenger) under control.
4. Understanding the effects of combining beverage alcohol and drugs.
5. Understanding the positive aspects of beverage alcohol in the proper setting.

Problems:

1. Underage drinking is far too commonplace, resulting in increasing rates of alcohol abuse among adolescents.



2. Accidents and deaths attributable to driving while intoxicated are increasing among adolescents.
3. Beverage alcohol and drugs are often used interchangeably by adolescents.
4. There are ongoing efforts to increase the legal age requirements for drinking as well as driving.
5. Moderate drinking is an age-old adult custom (with religious ties) with some beneficial effects.

Smoking and Chewing Tobacco -

Benefits if delayed:

1. The decision to smoke or not to smoke, when, where, how often and how much, is one that should be made responsibly (i.e., with more experience).
2. Respect others' decisions to smoke or not to smoke.
3. Consideration for other people who prefer a non-smoking environment. — ?
4. Smoking is an adult habit which in moderation can be relaxing and pleasurable to some people. — ?
5. Create a climate of opinion unfavorable to smoking among adolescent peer groups.

Problems:

1. Smoking among adolescents continues in spite of the fact that some points of view hold it is not a healthful habit. — ?
2. Although states/local jurisdictions establish age at which cigarettes can be legally purchased, adolescents can easily get them anyway. — ?
3. Limiting smoking around school areas has either been ignored or adolescents smoke elsewhere.
4. Most recent Federal tax proposal includes doubling of taxes on tobacco products. ?
5. Laws restricting smoking in public facilities passed in many places. "Non-smoker" groups growing. ?

Voting -

Benefits if delayed:

1. Understanding among adolescents of reasons for age requirements.
2. Better preparation of adolescents to exercise these voting rights when of age.
3. Learning to make hard decisions when one candidate or party does not stand out from the others.
4. Improve the percentage of eligible people who vote in elections.
5. Reduce attention to candidates' personalities and give more attention to the issues.

Problems:

1. A large percentage of eligible voters fail to register and vote in national and local elections.
2. Analysis of the appeal of many candidates suggest that personality, charisma, image, campaign finances and public relations have as much or more to do with how people vote as do the issues.
3. There are many negative attitudes toward politics and voting: One vote doesn't count; can't change things; politicians are dishonest; parents are often non-voters.
4. Social studies and civics courses have not necessarily impacted voting habits.

Credit and Money Management -

Benefits if delayed:

1. Develop an understanding of the requirements and risks involved in credit from lending institutions including collateral, ability to repay, varieties of interest.
2. Improved information and attitudes toward credit and loans as part of a money management and budgeting plan. Show consequence of credit in relation to a repayment plan. Show how credit can be avoided by saving in advance. Show usefulness of credit for housing, business investment.
3. Prepare the adolescent for responsible decision making about credit and money management; how to investigate different credit arrangements.

Encourage values of living within one's means, but show positive uses of credit as well.

Problems:

1. Formal loans (from lending institutions) require evidence of ability to repay based on earnings, potential earnings, or signature of responsible person.
2. Adolescents often don't figure the time to repay and earnings in relation to the ability to repay. Have little understanding of the varieties of interest charges.
3. Informal credit (friends, family) may be okay but may strain relationships and be indicative of inability to manage money.
4. Adolescents enjoy freedom to spend; often not easily amenable to learning about budgeting, saving and money management. When money is on hand, "burns a hole in pocket."
5. Loan or borrow from friends as a sign of friendship and because of peer pressure.
6. Think parents can cover them with loans for "big ticket" items.
7. Parents' credit practices may provide good or poor example.
8. May be misled by leading industry ads and literature.

Military Service -

Benefits if delayed:

1. Develop an understanding of the reasons for age requirements for joining the military services.
2. An understanding that entering the military services should be considered as a decision related to work and career planning.
3. Some adolescents can benefit through training, travel, and discipline at a later time in their lives.

Problems:

1. Military services are sometimes selective; training and travel may not be what is desired.
2. Military service still an issue - voluntary or mandatory.

Gambling -

Benefits if delayed:

1. Understanding of the reasons for age restrictions in formal gambling settings - horse races, dog races, gambling casinos.
2. Responsible decisions means deferring gambling; not getting carried away by "get rich quick" thinking; not risking major assets.

Problems:

1. "Informal" gambling takes place within the family and among friends - card games, football pools, ping-pong, pool, home games, races, etc.
2. Society has always had mixed responses to gambling. Has a legal and illegal element; sometimes legalized if church or charity-related; wide variation of local laws; sharp differences among sub-cultures, religious groups.
3. The attraction of "the action," making a "big kill" (score), "get rich quick," and of a sophisticated environment, entertainment, socializing, and toying with the edge of the law.

Having An Apartment -

Benefits if delayed:

1. Responsible decision making that weighs the pros and cons of living away from one's family, costs, and ability to care for one's own apartment.
2. For girls, greater safety inherent in living at home.

Problems:

1. Economically impractical for many.
2. Adolescents striving for independence from parents and old surroundings.
3. Broken homes or falling-out with family may make this an acceptable choice in some cases.
4. Unwise choice of apartment, location, or roommates can cause problems.

Drug Abuse -

Benefits if delayed:

1. Responsible decisions that will deter adolescents from engaging in the illegal drugs and the abuse of prescription medications.
2. Strategies to resist peer pressures to use drugs.

3. Strategies to employ positive peer pressures to stay away from drug use and abuse.
4. Strategies for parents and teachers to employ to open communications.
5. Sources of help for adolescents who start on drugs.

Problems:

1. Incidence of wide variety of drug usage continues with adolescents.
2. Millions of dollars have been expended on drug abuse research and prevention, but the problem is far from solved.
3. Legal restrictions and cultural customs oppose illegal drug usage.
4. Generation gap and information source credibility.

Living Together - 3.

Benefits if delayed:

1. Responsible decisions weighing the pros and cons of a conjugal arrangement outside of marriage - one that has no permanent commitment.
2. Reducing the problems related to the break-up of these arrangements.

Problems:

1. No permanent commitment.
2. Opposing family and cultural customs.
3. Emotional problems when arrangement breaks up.

Having a Child -

Benefits if delayed:

1. Deferring children until married and of age to make a decision responsibly.
2. Understanding the responsibilities of child bearing and child rearing.
3. Understanding the risks to mother and child of childbirth while a teenager.
4. Reducing social problems related to unwed teenage mothers.
5. Girls able to complete high school who formerly dropped out because of pregnancy.

Problems:

1. Lack of knowledge and use of contraceptives.
2. Religious views that oppose contraceptives and abortion.

3. Parents, teachers reluctant to deal with sex-related issues.

Getting Married -

Benefits if delayed:

1. Responsible decisions about marriage that consider readiness for marriage in terms of completion of education, ability to support themselves, understanding of compromises in marriage, etc.
2. Deferring marriage until old enough to make a wise choice.
3. Not getting married as a reaction to a difficult home environment or to prove oneself.

Problems:

1. Early marriages, high divorce rates, early parenting.
2. Supporting a family.
3. Opposing family and cultural traditions.

Society, parents, teachers, community youth leaders and others employ a variety of techniques to curb adolescent participation in adult customs. Society through its institutions (legal system, mainly) attempts to prohibit by laws teenage participation in adult customs. For example, we have laws on the age for marriage without consent of parents, age restrictions on buying beverage alcohol and tobacco, and an eighteen-year-old age for voting. These formal sanctions stand as our society's concern that adolescents not engage in adult behaviors until they have reached a more mature age.

Pressure is the other type of technique used to reduce adolescent participation in adult customs. Pressure comes from parents, friends, teachers, religious and youth leaders and other influentials. These pressures take the form of threats of punishment, loss of friendship and respect, loss of rewards, etc. Although these attempts at curbing adolescent participation in adult customs are informal sanctions, they are the more powerful and effective of the two strategies.

A debate continues in society about whether or not we need more laws to curb adolescent participation in adult customs. There are those who say tougher laws that restrict teenage behavior will establish a standard or code of behavior that is missing. (For example, some policy makers are pushing for an eighteen-year-old driving law; they believe this will reduce highway accidents caused by teenage drivers.) At the other end of the public policy continuum are persons who believe the best strategy for curbing adolescent participation in adult customs is to appeal to teenagers' rational capabilities and stimulate more parental involvement in their decision making about day-to-day living. Obviously, this debate will continue for years to come. These points of view reflect philosophical differences about how human behavior should be directed in a society.

### 3. STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH ADOLESCENTS

The following listing of strategies for dealing with adolescent behavior are those techniques most commonly used in American society:

- . peer and reference group pressure modification
- . decision making discussions
- . value clarification and development
- . citizenship discussions
- . responsible living discussions
- . information sharing
- . scare tactic presentations
- . legal restrictions

Growing up consists of a wide range of socialization processes and experiences. Initially, families provide from birth on the major behavioral guidance for children. As children enter schools, day care centers, and neighborhood activities, the behavioral guidance process is shared with other children, teachers, youth leaders, etc. However, the main controlling force is the family and its values, attitudes and beliefs about how to live.

Once children approach the adolescent period (12-18 years of age), behavioral control begins to shift from the family to adolescent peer and reference groups. Adolescents, the 12 to 14 year age group, begin to aspire to the behavior patterns of the older adolescents. A rite of passage process often becomes a method of controlling who does what and under what conditions. Adolescent peer and reference groups compete with families, teachers, religious and youth leaders for the control of teenage behavior. These are difficult years for children as the pressures are great to do as your family wants and to do as your friends want. Often, these behavioral alternatives are opposites, creating major dilemmas for teenagers.

The following describes how the various strategies for dealing with adolescent behavior are used in our society:

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Peer and Reference Group Pressure Modification

The objective of this technique is to reduce the negative effects of adolescent peer and reference group pressure. The process involves the expansion of parental, teacher and youth leader input into adolescent decision making processes. This is accomplished by parents, teachers and youth leaders challenging the decisions that adolescents make regarding adult customs. Once the challenge is made, a number of courses of action are opened, including a discussion process, value clarification, information sharing, scare tactics, etc. The desired outcome of this technique is to achieve a greater balance between parent, teacher and youth leader wishes and those of the adolescent peer and reference groups.

An example of how this technique might be used is the driving behavior of adolescent males. Many teenage males drive their automobiles in a reckless manner, often as a result of challenges from their friends. This practice has the potential for accidents and injury. A parent might decide to curb this behavior by limiting the use of the automobile unless it is operated in a responsible manner. The proposed restriction causes the teenager to consider whether or not the reckless driving practice urged by his friends is the most desirable way to operate an automobile. He is placed in a position of considering two points of view, both with certain punishments and rewards. A parent can follow-up this intervention with attempts at discussing alternative ways of dealing with how an automobile is responsibly operated. The felt need to test speed might be accomplished on a race track under the parents' supervision as a way of dealing with a teenager's inclinations to test limits and acquire new experiences. To summarize, the parents, in this example, compete with adolescent peer

and reference group pressures for control of their teenager's automobile driving practices.

#### Decision Making Discussions

Decision making discussions are an attempt to motivate teenagers to examine alternative decisions to a situation (adult customs) and their benefits and problems. The appeal is to the rational capacity of human beings. The objective is to cause teenagers to examine their proposed responses to adult customs before they act. Weighing alternative courses of action through exploration of potential benefits and problems is a more responsible way to make choices. Parents, teachers and youth leaders who stimulate decision making discussions among teenagers are attempting to norm these deliberations as a method for teenage decision making. Again, this approach to deciding about adult customs is an alternative to peer pressure that often advocates a specific decision with little concern for an understanding of benefits and problems. Some decision making discussion advocates attempt to gain adolescent peer and reference group acceptance of this process, thereby using adolescent peer and reference group pressure for its adoption as the decision making strategy for teenagers.

For example, having sexual relations is a major decision for all adolescents. There are considerable pressures to have sex and likewise to delay sexual relations until marriage or a later time. This dilemma lends itself to the decision making discussion approach. The benefits and problems of having sex and not having sex can be identified and discussed. The objective is to motivate teenagers to use their rational capacities to deal with this adult custom as opposed to responding solely to peer and reference group pressures.

The concept of a good citizen is often presented with specific definitions of these behaviors. Formal sanctions (jail and fines) and informal sanctions (keeping friends) are described as punishments and rewards for abiding by a definition of good citizenship. Schools usually have courses that explore various citizenship concepts in the hopes that students will abide by the definition of a "good citizen." Adolescents are motivated by schools, parents, and community influentials to adopt "good citizen" codes for daily living.

Obtaining credit and paying the bill is an example of a typical "good citizen" behavior. The concept of credit is based on the need to sell a product, the need of the buyer to have it now, and the ability and willingness of the buyer to pay the debt back at a later time. Teenagers are admonished to adopt the practice of paying their bills as part of the "good citizenship" code. The objective of citizenship discussions is to provide an anchor or standard of conduct for teenagers to model as they consider participating in adult customs.

#### Responsible Living Discussions

Responsible decision making is concerned with living a life that avoids problems and risks which can be detrimental to self or community. The objective is to define which actions or behaviors are responsible for dealing with an adult custom. Discussion is used to explain the behaviors defined as responsible as well as ways of reinforcing their adoption. Often teenagers and adults are encouraged to extend the responsible living concept from one adult custom to another. The goal with teenagers is to seek the definition and adoption of responsible behaviors toward adult customs by their peer groups. If such an adoption occurs, the peer group

pressure process is used to get teenagers to adopt responsible behaviors about adult customs.

Becoming a parent requires certain decisions about being a parent. Certain basic parenting functions are needed for children to develop. For example, food, shelter and health care are essential to child development. Each of these products or services require funds for their purchase. Thus to become a parent involves a capability and willingness to pursue employment. Having a job that provides funds for a child's food, shelter and health care could be defined as a responsible parenting behavior. Responsible living discussions focus for prospective parents the behavior believed to be essential to successful parenting.

#### Information Sharing

Providing information about adult customs is the most commonly used strategy for dealing with adolescents. The objective is to describe the facts, myths, patterns of behavior, benefits and problems associated with adult customs. Information-giving about adult customs is believed to have the potential for altering decisions about adult customs. Often the information a teenager acquires about adult customs is conflicting because there are many sources of information - other adolescents, family, friends, etc. Peer pressures play a major role in determining how a teenager sorts through information sources and makes a decision.

Voting is a good example of how information sharing is used to influence behavior. Here the goal is to cause a decision to vote in a certain way - make a choice. The problem for teenagers and adults is how to evaluate information about a potential issue or candidate. Information sharing is used most often to motivate action toward a specific objective, not as a resource to be used in deliberating about choices.

### Scare Tactic Presentations

Fear and anxiety creation are used to inhibit teenagers from participating in adult customs. The goal is to describe certain outcomes about our adult customs that will cause the adolescent to refrain. This strategy along with information sharing are used often. Teenagers most often do not respond to scare tactics favorably. They rebel and become hostile. Often the messages used in scare tactics are unbelievable to adolescents. Adolescents have a belief in personal immortality and find dire consequence presentations about adult customs as humorous, ridiculous, and not explicable to them.

Smoking is an example of how scare tactics have been used to motivate adolescents not to smoke. Numerous media, school and family presentations have been made about the dangers of smoking. Researchers conclude that teenagers find no credibility in these messages, partly because teenagers have little experience with serious problems. They observe their friends smoking and observe no health problems. They may have a family member who smokes who allegedly has health problems because of smoking. This experience is outside their referents concerning risks thus is not meaningful in deterring smoking.

### Legal Restrictions

Passing laws to restrict adolescent behavior is used to curb adolescent behavior. The effectiveness of such laws is in question. Often law enforcement is weak because law enforcement agencies believe that the law is unfair or should not exist. Teenagers learn how to bypass laws to participate in adult customs. Some researchers indicate that laws and scare tactics to restrict behavior often accelerate the violations of the law.

The use of illegal and prescription drugs is an example of legal restrictions. In both cases, laws prescribe which drugs may be obtained and under what conditions. However, teenagers will often share prescription drugs and use illicit drugs even though these practices are against the law.

4. BOOKLET APPROACH

a. Adult Customs

This list of adult customs (P.3) is comprehensive. The list probably reflects the major if not all the adult customs that our society tries to curb for adolescent participation.

Recommendation

1. Display the list of adult customs in the booklet.
2. Use concrete, interesting examples to illustrate these adult customs.
3. Caution should be used on sex, voting, drugs and military issues. Sex and drugs have many controversial pitfalls, while military service and voting are cut-and-dried issues from the standpoint of adolescent behavior.
4. Avoid any continuous discussion of the problems associated with these adult customs. Data show that adults and teenagers are aware of the problems. We are trying to develop awareness of how to delay adolescent participation in adult customs.

b. Strategies for Delaying Adolescent Participation in Adult Customs

This list of strategies (P. 18) is comprehensive. There may be ways of stating the strategies that communicate better. Select the language you feel communicates effectively. Parents, teachers, youth leaders, and other persons who deal with teenagers are the target audience.

Recommendation

1. Research findings show that adolescents respond best when:
  - . communication lines are open
  - . give and take discussions are possible

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- . clear, concise factual information is provided
  - . clear expectations are provided
2. Research findings show that adolescents respond least favorably when:
    - . harsh commands are given of an either or nature
    - . biased information is provided
    - . pressure tactics are used
    - . moralizing and preaching are used
    - . legal restraints are inacted
    - . their friends' and peer groups' motives and integrity are challenged
  3. Research findings indicate that teenage peer and reference groups are controlling adolescent behaviors. Thus, these forces (adolescent peer and reference groups) must be to reinforce responsible decisions about adult customs.
  4. Responsible decision making, responsible living and decision making are concepts useful in developing a workable strategy for dealing with adolescent behavior.
  5. Values clarification means many things to many people. One interpretation is that this exercise (values clarification and development) undermines the moral fiber of American society. Caution should be used with the term values.
  6. Explanations about how children develop and the dimensions of socialization are essential.



7. Developing individual potential, the ability to make wise and responsible choices and learning how to analyze situations to predict consequences, problems and benefits, are important points. We need to show how adolescents can develop into responsible adults and the contribution that parents, teachers and youth leaders can make to that process.
8. Delaying participation in adult behaviors until a teenager's experience base is larger and less pressured by adolescent pressure groups, the right to make an intelligent choice is a useful concept.
9. Balancing teenage pressure group influences on adolescent behavior with parent, teacher, and youth leader influences is an important concept. Parents tend to withdraw from their teenager's decision making and accept their behavior as a condition of this age.
10. Use a generic strategy for dealing with adolescents and their participation in adult customs. Do not individualize or create magic bullet strategies for single adult customs.

c. Content and Approach

1. The following myths about adolescent participation in adult customs may be helpful in communicating with our audience. There are many more, feel free to use these and develop others to facilitate communication:
  - . legal restrictions prevent the practice of adult customs by adolescents
  - . telling teenagers the truth will set them on the right track
  - . letting adolescents know the consequences of adult behaviors will discourage their participation
  - . hard nosed discipline will eliminate teenage problems

- . criticizing adolescent peer and reference groups vigorously will discourage their acceptance and influence
- . teenagers are to be seen but not heard
- . experience is the best teacher
- . traditional values will prevail over new, far-out ways of living
- . tough standards of conduct backed up by strict discipline will eliminate teenage problems
- . roll with the punches, let adolescents explore and develop, they will do fine

Recommendation

1. The approach must be positive. We want to offer encouragement to parents, teachers and youth leaders. They need to visualize a way to make a difference with adolescents and their tendency to participate in adult behaviors more often and at an earlier age.
2. The approach needs to be concrete, a strategy that can be used with little difficulty. If you rely on the decision making strategy for example, it needs to be explained fully and with real life situations.
3. Suggest graphics wherever you feel a point can be communicated more clearly.
4. Suggest reference material as you feel relevant and helpful to the readers.
5. Finally, the writing style should motivate the reader to examine his or her strategies for dealing with adolescents. The reader should know what adult customs are and the problems and benefits associated

with each strategy for delaying adolescent participation in these customs. A conclusion should be reached as to which combination of strategies offers the greatest effectiveness.