

Sexuality Across the Lifespan Case Studies

Tad

Tad is an 18-year-old, Hispanic male. His parents are separated, and he lives with his mother and his younger sister. He has dated several young women in the past two years but has not yet had sexual relationships. His family are devout Catholics and he wants to wait until he is married.

He has been struggling with his sexual urges and his current girlfriend, Zoe, has been pressuring him to have sex. He thinks Zoe may be the one he wants to marry, but is unsure what to do about the pressure she is putting on him.

Tad says to himself:

I've always wanted what my parents have—this strong marriage built on love and God. With Zoe, I think I can build that life. She is a good Catholic, but in a modern sense. She thinks some of the preaching is too old-fashioned for the modern world. She says if we love each other, there's nothing wrong with having sex.

I want to. I fight it every time we are together. I just can't imagine going to confession with that on my soul. Whenever we get too close to losing control, it's like I hear my priest's voice and that kills the mood.

My parents may be separated, but neither of them date or do anything. Sex should be for marriage and a marriage lasts forever. I've seen it all my life, the rest of America may not agree, but that's just how it is in our community.

Celia

Celia is a 35-year-old, Hispanic female. She is married to Carlos and they have one child (a 7-year-old son). Celia and Carlos have been having problems in their marriage, often fighting over intimacy, both physical and emotional.

A married couple they are friends with redefined their relationship to be an open marriage. The idea intrigues Carlos and he has been trying to convince Celia to give it a try. Celia is uncomfortable with the idea of Carlos having sexual relationships with another woman but is intrigued by the idea of being able to pursue her attraction to her co-worker, Don.

Celia says to herself:

I was raised to be a good girl and that meant finding a man, getting married, and having children. Most of it all, it meant not sleeping around or encouraging men. Carlos is the only man I've ever been with in that way.

Since he brought up an open marriage, I keep thinking about what it would be like to sleep with someone else. Did I miss out on something, only knowing him?

Everyone talks about how wonderful sex is and it's just not that way for me. It's just something I need to do as part of my marriage. Would it be different with someone else? And if it was different, could I keep that excitement and still have a good marriage with Carlos?

We may have problems, but Carlos is still the love of my life.

Frederick

Frederick is a 65-year-old, black male. He was married 20 years and has a son and a daughter. His marriage ended 15 years ago, after years of communication problems. Frederick has dated occasionally, but it has been a few years since he has been in a long-term relationship. While his last girlfriend was nice, he eventually got bored with the relationship as he found they did not have enough in common. He broke it off with her 6 months ago.

A few of Frederick's friends have encouraged him to consider online dating. He has decided to try it despite his reservations about meeting women online. He is initially overwhelmed with the number of responses he has received after posting his profile. A variety of women have reached out to him including some who are significantly younger than him as well as women from different ethnic backgrounds. While he is open to dating younger women as well as those outside of his race, he typically only dates black women and the youngest was only 5 years younger than him.

Frederick says to himself:

When I was a younger man, I did what I was supposed to and yet it didn't work out. I was a good provider and protector. I tried to make my marriage work, but I never knew what she wanted from me.

Now, there are multiple women to choose from with varied interests, backgrounds, and expectations. How do I sort through them all? When do I decide to go beyond the dating site and talk with the person and/or eventually meet in a public place for a date? I understand that there are also a lot of fraudulent profiles posted by scammers who try to get money from you. How can I detect con artists on these sites?

I have never dated multiple women at one time, but it seems as though these sites promote dating multiple people simultaneously. How do I juggle all of these women while still maintaining my own values and standards?

I think I am going to miss the "old days" when you met women at church, or you were introduced to someone by a friend. I am going to try online dating, but I am not sure it is for me.