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EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF SEXUAL ABSTINENCE AMONGST A GROUP OF YOUNG BLACK MALE STUDENTS

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Submitted to the faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology by Coursework and Research Report

Johannesburg, 2008

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology by Coursework and Research Report at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

_____

(Mamakiri Nomina Khunwane)

_____day of_____, 2008

Abstract

Sexual abstinence has become the primary response to prevention against sexually transmitted infection (STI) and unplanned pregnancies amongst young people. However, not much is known about the perceptions of young men on sexual abstinence. The central aim in this study was to explore the perceptions of sexual abstinence among young black males. The research aims to examine men's understandings of their own sexuality and the way these might influence their decision on sexual abstinence. A total of 10 in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with young men aged between 18 and 25 years, studying at The University of the Witwatersrand. All data collected were then qualitatively analysed through the use of thematic content analysis (TCA). Findings show that in constructing their masculinities participants predominantly endorsed discourses of male hegemony. At some instances the young men retracted to subjective alternative masculinities, although there was a stronger need to fit in with their peers, to protect themselves from being ridiculed or rejected. As such conforming to the hegemonic masculinity was expected. The young men constructed women as sexual objects and as a means towards affirming their masculinity.

A key conclusion drawn was that some traditional notions of manhood still held sway, and these tied in strongly with how these participants constructed their masculinity and this influenced most of them to not sexually abstain.

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CHAPTER 1

1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the reader to this research report, providing insight and background information relevant. This includes issues involving youth sexual behaviour, including HIV/AIDS statistics on youth particularly in South Africa. The concept of sexual abstinence which is of the utmost importance to this study is also defined in this section. Motivation for conducting this research as well as the objectives and the research questions are also outlined in this section.

1.1 Background

A considerable number of research studies report that more than 50 percent of youth today are sexually active at the age of 16 years and that they make their sexual debut at a very young age of about 14 years and younger (Dilorio, McCarty, Resnicow, Lehr & Denzmore, 2007; Harrison, Cleland, Gouws & Frohlich, 2005). These research studies further confirm that while majority of these young people are experimenting with sex, they continue to engage in high risk sexual behaviours that exposes them to sexually transmitted infections (STI's) including HIV/AIDS (Eaton, Flisher & Aaro, 2002; Jordaan, 2005; Macleod & Weaver, 2002; Dilorio, McCarty, Resnicow, Lehr & Denzmore,2007; Harrison, Cleland, Gouws & Frohlich, 2005). The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) (2004) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) indicate that HIV/AIDS infections among youth both males and females between the ages of 14 and 25 years continue to rise despite their knowledge of HIV/AIDS and

preventative methods. If there is enough information on sex and HIV/AIDS easily accessible to young people what then are the factors responsible for the high prevalence in HIV/AIDS within this population?

Eaton et. al. (2002) identified three risky sexual behaviours that mostly expose youth to sexually transmitted infections (STI) in particular, HIV/AIDS infections. These three modes of risky sexual behaviour include being sexually active, having more than one sexual partner and engaging in unprotected sex (not using a condom or inappropriate use of a condom).

In their study on teenage pregnancy, Macleod and Weaver (2002) reported that young people hold attitudes that inform such risky behaviours as “I like it natural” (prefer having sex without a condom) and that “we trust each other” (both trust that the partner is faithful to him/her and are HIV negative). More interesting is the report from the Reproductive Health Research Unit (2004) that suggests that although 52% of youth between the ages of 15 and 24 years reported using a condom the last time they engaged in sexual intercourse, the consistency of condom use amongst youth is incredibly low. The study indicated that 33% of youth engaging in sexual intercourse reported always using a condom, while 31% reported never having used a condom. Moreover, majority of young males (66.4%) reported having more than one sexual partner in their lifetime compared to females (38%) (RHRU, 2004). From this introduction it is evident that the majority of young people do not practice sexual abstinence.

1.2 The concept of sexual abstinence

Before proceeding to engage in the concept of sexual abstinence, it is proper at this point to define this concept as it is used in this study. Sexual abstinence is an elusive concept as different people conceptualize it in different ways. Some people define the concept of sexual abstinence as involving a practice of voluntarily refraining from specific types of sexual contact such as sexual intercourse which involves an activity between a male and female involving vaginal and penile contact (Ott, Pfeiffer, & Fortenberry, 2006). This definition is exclusive of other forms of sexual contact such as oral sex, mutual masturbation as well as anal sex (Ott et. al., 2006). Other people adopt a definition of sexual abstinence, which is inclusive of religious principles. For example in Christianity sexual abstinence involves an act of refraining from any sort of sexual contact that leads to sexual gratification (orgasm); this includes mutual or self masturbation, oral and anal sex (www.encyclopedia. wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_abstinence.html.)

Others associate abstinence with virginity and are against the concept of secondary abstinence which involves choosing to be abstinent after having sex, considering secondary abstinence as not true abstinence (Ott et. al., 2006). Some people define sexual abstinence in terms of self control over the innate desire to have sex and for the purpose of self actualization. This perspective highlights the concept of abstinence as a lifestyle choice not enforced by the structural systems. For instance in the past some women were forced to wear a "chastity belt" which was a device that these women were forced to wear on their thighs to prevent them from having sexual intercourse. In this case sexual abstinence is understood not as a personal choice but as coercion. This might therefore not be defined as sexual abstinence but sexual deprivation (www.encyclopedia

.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_abstinence.html.). For the purpose of this study sexual abstinence is defined as involving voluntarily refraining from all sorts of sexual activity (vaginal sex, anal sex, oral sex, mutual & self masturbation, and any other sexually satisfying actions) at any point in an individual's life for any reason be it religious or non-religious (Ott et. al., 2006).

1.3 Rationale

Due to desperation to prevent HIV and sexually transmitted infections as well as unwanted teenage pregnancies there is a surge of interest in sexual abstinence-only strategy towards prevention (Ott et al., 2006). Most programs on HIV interventions have come to express the concept of sexual abstinence as the primary response towards preventing HIV and Sexually transmitted infections as well as unwanted pregnancies (Ott et al., 2006). According to Ott et al. (2006) there are limited studies on sexual abstinence and as such little is known about how youth, in particular young males conceptualize sexual abstinence. Moreover if young males are to be included in the HIV prevention strategies in the interest of encouraging sexual abstinence, then their views on sexual abstinence must be attended to. Thus the ways in which masculine characteristics are constructed, enacted and reproduced ought to be taken into consideration in order to understand young men's decision-making regarding sexual abstinence and their vulnerability to sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS. This is particularly important given that, cultural and social norms and practices have often been cited as factors that contribute significantly to how men conceptualize and enact their sexuality, thus influencing their sexual attitudes.

1.4 Aims of the study

The principal aim of this study was to explore the perceptions that young men hold on sexual abstinence and how these affect their sexual attitudes and behaviour.

Specifically the study sought to investigate these perceptions with reference to:

- perceptions of a group of young black men on sexual abstinence
- psychosocial and cultural factors that might influence decision-making on sexual abstinence

1.5 Specific research questions

The study addresses two major questions and they are as follows:

1. What are the perceptions of young black men on sexual abstinence?
2. What are the underlying psychosocial and cultural factors that might influence decision making on sexual abstinence?

1.6 Organization of the report

Structurally, this research report comprises of five main chapters and is organized as follows: ***Chapter one*** present a detailed introduction to the whole report, providing the reader with background information involving youth behaviour and how this behaviour renders them vulnerable to HIV/AIDS infections and unwanted pregnancies. The concept of sexual abstinence which is the focus of this paper is well outlined in this chapter. The motivation for carrying out the reported research as well as the research questions and aims are also outlined in this chapter.

Chapter two is concerned with the literature perused to address ideas of masculinity and sexual abstinence specific to the aims and objectives of the study. The social constructionist approach to masculinity and issues on heterosexuality are addressed in relation to the essentialist paradigm, which asserts masculinity as biologically based and not particularly produced by the social milieu. This chapter further includes a discussion on cultural norms and practices and how these influence the constructions of masculinities and how they become enacted. The chapter also touches on a discussion on popular culture and its role on sexual behaviours and their influence on sexual decision making.

Chapter three is concerned with discussing the methodology employed in this research report to answer the research questions. It discusses the type of research design utilized and gives detailed descriptive information of the sample that was used. It further provides a discussion on the procedures through which the data was collected and measures that were utilized to collect and analyze data. Ethical considerations are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter four delineates the research results and focuses on the analysis of the results using thematic content analysis. Major themes that emerged in the interviews are identified and presented, supported by the quotations to illustrate perceptions of sexual abstinence and masculinity.

Chapter five pursue with a discussion and integration of the research results/findings in relation with the literature review. Limitations in the research design, measures and sample of the present study are discussed, and recommendations are made for future research in this area.

CHAPTER 2

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of literature on masculinity, sexuality as well as factors (cultural, and media) influencing the ways in which men enact their sexuality and masculinity. It explores the theories that are more pertinent in providing an understanding of masculinity and how this affects men's decision-making to abstain or not abstain from sexual engagements. This also includes a discussion on cultural norms and practices that may influence men's sexual decision-making within heterosexual relations and how this may put them at high risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases as well as unwanted pregnancies. Further more this chapter provides discussion on the role and influence of media on youth sexuality and how it is enacted in heterosexual relations.

2.2 Theoretical framework

This section looks at a social constructionist perspective which provides the theoretical framework for this study. The aim of this section is to provide an understanding of the concept of masculinity and how this influence men's sexual attitudes and behaviours as well as their relationships with women. Social constructionist perspectives developed as a response to some theoretical perspectives such as the essentialist approach; that seemed to overlook the idea that humans actively interact to create their own reality and a shared meaning (Beall, 1993).

2.2.1 Essentialist paradigm and the "Gender-role" theory

Theorists who believe in essentialist approach towards understanding issues of masculinity and gender roles base their theory under the assumption that human behaviour is natural and biologically rooted. Underlying the essentialists' perspectives is the theory of "gender-role" which specifies that the roles that males and females enact are virtually innate and accordingly reinforced throughout childhood. Emerging from the assumption that human behaviour is innate is an understanding of sexuality as something that is static and never changing (Potgieter, 2003). Within this framework of understanding masculinity it is supposed that behaviours that are deemed masculine are not learned and acquired, rather that such behaviours will exist even in the absence of a learning process because they are unconsciously enacted. Sexuality is then assumed to be similar in form and invariable across time, culture and societies. Tightly linked to this is the familiar cliché that "boys will always be boys" because it is in their human nature to behave manly (Kimmel, 1997).

2.2.2 Social constructionism paradigm

Social constructionism as a paradigm towards understanding human beings has arisen from, and is influenced by, a variety of disciplines. Its multidisciplinary background means that it has drawn its ideas from a number of disciplines such as sociology, philosophy and linguistics. Burr (1995) suggests that there are four key assumptions that social constructionist approaches share.

Firstly, a critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge: This is an anti-empiricist and anti-positivist epistemological position that questions whether objective observation can reveal the truth about the world. For instance Burr (1995, p 3) explains that our

objective observations of the world informs us that there are only two groups of human beings and these are men and women. Social constructionism insists that people questions whether this distinction is simply a reflection of naturally existing differences of the two groups.

Secondly, a historical and cultural specificity: Knowledge is, in part, a product of culture and history and as such should not be seen as separate to the contexts of its production (Burr, 1995, p 3). This implies that meaning depends on where you are whom you are with, and what the circumstances are (Beall, 1993).

Thirdly, knowledge as sustained by social processes: Knowledge is a product of social process and the interactions of people (Burr, 1995, p 4). This means human beings are interpreters of their own world. As such the constructions of meaning occurs through dialogical process, so that people have to interact with one another in order to come to a shared understanding (Beall, 1993).

Finally, knowledge and social action go together: The knowledge that is constructed through social process makes possible some social practices and action, and deny others (Burr, 1995, p 5). Collectively people decide what behaviors are appropriate and which are not and accordingly reinforce or punish respectively.

2.2.3 The social constructions of sexuality

This is what the well-known social constructionist theorist; John Gagnon has to say about sexuality:

> *"People learn when they are quite young a few of the things that they are expected to be, and continue slowly to accumulate a belief in who they are and ought to be through the rest of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Sexual*

> *conduct is learnt in the same ways and through the same processes; it is acquired and assembled in human interaction, judged and assembled in human interaction, judged and performed in specific cultural and historical worlds."*
>
> Kimmel, 2004, p 566

From this perspective sexuality is less a product of biological influences and more a product of social constructions (Beall, 1993, Courtenay, 2000). Central to this idea is the concept of socialization which is defined by Burr (1998: 38) as "the process through which people come to adopt the behaviours deemed appropriate within their culture, over time". Moreover, Kimmel (2004) argue that sexuality is constructed through gender discourse. Gullotta et al. (1993) argue that at birth people are ascribed gender roles which are defined as those characteristics, behaviours, and interests defined by a society or culture as appropriate for members of each sex. These gender roles have broad implications for sexual behaviour. As such the meanings of sexuality to men and women are not the same (Kimmel, 2004). As well documented in the literature, the difference in the sexuality of men and women reproduce male power over women (Kimmel, 2004). Hence the meanings ascribed to men and women's sexual behaviors are different, and what men and women can do sexually is also different.

Hollway (1989) defined three discourses through which human sexuality can be understood. The central focus of Hollway's (1989) three discourses on sexuality is to highlight the gender differentiated positions which men and women assume within heterosexual relationships.

The male sexual drive discourse

The general assumption of this discourse is that sex is natural and not socially controlled; however, Hollway (1989) argues that this applies only to men. Men are driven by a biological need to have sex with women and their desires to have sex are uncontrollable and intense. Whereas women's sexuality is seen as a lack, or otherwise is seen to be governed more by the need to reproduce than by the need for sex. In this discourse, male sexual needs are privileged over those of women. Men are driven to pursue, and women are expected to recognize this male biological necessity for sex and submit. Women are seen as the object of the male sex drive discourse, whereas men assume the dominant position of being the subject. Hollway (1989) suggests that the use of this discourse may be used to explain the incidences of violence, rape and abuse against women. As objects women are powerless, not worthy of respect and deserving abuse. The naturalisation of male sexual needs as uncontrollable renders it excusable.

Have/hold discourse

Christian ideals of monogamy, family life and partnership are closely associated to this discourse (Burr, 1995). It proposes that sex should be taking place within the context of a long lasting committed relationship. Within this discourse women are offered a position as subjects in that they must be married or at least in courtship in order to enter a sexual relationship. On the contrary men assume positions as objects in that they are being pursued by women for marriage and family life (Burr, 1995).

Although in principle this have/hold discourse applies to both men and women, it is more stringent on women (Hollway, 1989). In that women who deviate from the principles are socially censured while men who engage in similar behaviours are encouraged.

Permissive discourse

Underpinning this discourse is the assumption that both men and women are sexual beings and that they have the right to express their sexuality however they like and equally so. Within this discourse, both men and women assume positions as subjects. However, Hollway (1989) makes us aware that positions as subjects are less readily available to women because of the sexual double standards. For women who dare to move over into this permissive arena risk being seen as "sluts" and not worthy of respect.

2.2.4 The social constructions of masculinity

Similar to sexuality the meaning of masculinity is fluid; it changes with time and varies across cultures and historical eras (Courtenay, 2000, Imms, 2000, Potgieter, 2003). This means that men think and act in ways that they do not because of their psychological traits or innate identities, but because of social conceptions of masculinity that they adopt and internalize throughout their childhood and adolescent phases (Kimmel, 1997).

Edley and Whetherell (1995) posit that definitions of masculinity are constructed in relation to definitions of femininity. Forms of masculinity are historically linked with power and privileges as such it is important for men to not appear feminine. Central to the understanding of the concept of masculinity is the social construction of heterosexuality. Heterosexuality highlights the inequitable nature of gender relations in such a way that masculinity is produced and reproduced in association with those traits that imply authority; and femininity is continuously associated with those traits that imply subordination and passivity (Shefer, 2003).

Moreover, heterosexuality depicts the construction of the domain of sexuality as masculine and male preserved. It highlights the muted voices of women in the realm of heterosexual relationships. Men are viewed as being in control of relationships and heterosex (sexual practices between men and women) and women expected to be waiting on men to "show them the ropes" (Shefer, 2003, p 293). The imbalances in gender power relations that are perpetuated by cultural and social conceptions of masculinity are central to understanding the barriers to women negotiating safe sex practices (Shefer, 2003).

With the amount of extensive research studies on gender and HIV/AIDS, it is relatively known that the behaviour and attitudes of men contribute significantly towards the spread of HIV/AIDS (Kimmel, 1997, Miles, 1997, Potgieter, 2003, Kalichman et al., 2007 & Shefer, 2003). Cultural and traditional values are frequently used to rationalize and support such practices as male infidelity and multiple partners (Shefer, 2003). Moreover, the culturally constructed gender roles promote and maintain power inequality that can facilitate women's risk of unwanted pregnancies, HIV and sexually transmitted infections (Kimmel, 1997 & Shefer, 2003). Several studies (Kimmel, 1997, Miles, 1997, Potgieter, 2003, Kalichman et al., 2007 & Shefer, 2003) suggests that even though women are knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS and wish to protect themselves they are often unable to successfully negotiate this with their male partners because of the unequal gender relations that exist within heterosexual relationships.

Literature reveals that there are different categories of masculinity and that not all have equal power; some masculinities are less privileged and powerful and often found in

groups of men that are marginalised and dominated by the more powerful group (Connell, 1993 & Morrell, 1998). Connell (1993) identified four types of masculinities: hegemonic, marginal, complicit and subordinated. Hegemonic masculinity is the most powerful and dominant form of masculinity. This form of masculinity maintains male collective power and operates to best serve the interest of men in relation to women. Connell (1993) further assert that hegemonic forms of masculinity present an idealised version of masculinity, more importantly of how 'real men' should behave, however very few men in reality exhibit such qualities.

Although marginalised and dominated groups are excluded from hegemonic masculinities at other times, for the most part these marginalised men live under the umbrella of hegemonic masculinities and maintain the 'patriarchal dividend' reinforcing hegemonic masculinities. In that they reproduce hegemonic masculine practices of exerting power over people they consider weaker, in particular women and children. It is crucial to note that although there are multiple masculinities, it is not easy to distinguish between them because they are constantly changing and shifting. Thus any man may position himself in different masculinities in different relationships and contexts (Connell, 1993). It is unlikely that a man will define himself as belonging exclusively to one form of masculinity.

2.3 Cultural norms and practices

Amid the more publicized messages about condom use in South Africa, the rates of HIV/AIDS as well as sexually transmitted infections including unwanted pregnancies continue to increase (WHO, 2007). This reality ought to be enough to substantiate that the

message of condom use informed by HIV/AIDS prevention strategies in South Africa is less effective. From literature, cultural norms or practices are highlighted as factors significantly contributing to the failure of condom usage (Campbell, Mzaidume & Williams, 1998, & Scalway, 2001). These factors are closely linked to perceptions of men towards masculinity.

Cultural expectations rooted in one's status as a man (or woman) affects one's sexual behaviour amongst others. In some parts of Africa, fertility is of considerable importance and closely related to the idea of fathering many children. This may hinder the practice of safer sex because a man has to first test if the woman is fertile (make her pregnant) before he marries her. This may not be problematic in itself with regard to HIV infections, however when it takes place in the context of multiple partners it becomes fatal.

Young men are also encouraged by the domains of cultural practices and discourses to perceive women as sex objects and whose wishes and needs are less important to their (sexual) demands (Scalway, 2001). Moreover traditional cultural norms have been found to encourage women not to discuss or talk about sexuality more especially with their partners (Jordaan, 2005). Such cultural prescriptions may lead women to internalize these norms, thereby becoming easy to succumb to manipulations by men (Scalway, 2001). In addition, traditional cultural beliefs may also have a great influence on men's sexual behaviour. Polygamy as was practiced in the olden days by men as a representation of wealth is still adopted by some young men as a rationale for having multiple partners, however poor they may be (Scalway, 2001).

In some societies and cultures such as Latin America and Thailand, having sex for the first time is considered a 'rite of passage' to manhood for young boys (Scalway, 2001). The older family members accompany young boys to a brothel to engage in sexual intercourse with a sex worker. This initiates their first step to manhood. Hence sexual abstinence for young boys within this particular culture will not be an option (Jordaan, 2005). Contrary to this cultural practice that encourages young boys to engage in sexual actions at a young age are Muslim and Jewish cultures which on religious principles strongly reprimand sexual relations before marriage. Young boys from these societies might have different perceptions of sexuality and of women, which might not be shared by boys from the Latin American and Thailand societies.

Campbell (2001) further contributes to the understanding of masculinity as constructed within particular context. In her article on *"Going underground and going after women"*, Campbell (2001) identifies the construction of masculinity that is associated with risky sexual behaviours among mine workers in South Africa. Masculinity is constructed within the context of dangerous/deadly working conditions as a means of survival. As mine workers they held notions such as "a man is someone brave enough to withstand the rigors of the job (mining). You show your manhood by going underground, this shows that you are man enough to accept that if you die you are just dead" (Campbell, 2001, p 202). This highlights the notion of manhood as linked to bravery and fearlessness. In this article Campbell also brings forth the point that intertwined with this notion of manhood is the concept of a 'macho sexuality' (Campbell, 2001: 203). This is depicted in

one of the comments made by the mineworkers interviewed in Campbell (2001, p 204) study, as he stated:

> "There are two things to being a man: going underground and going after women".

Of equal interest in the Campbell's (2001) study, was also the finding that the mineworkers were persistent in not using condoms during their sexual encounters. They responded that "a man must have flesh-to-flesh" sexual encounter (Campbell, 2001, p 204). Within this context, some men held beliefs that 'flesh to flesh' sexual contact is necessary for men's health. That using a condom is a waste of sperm and not masculine within the context that fathering many children is regarded as a sign of virile masculinity (Campbell, Mzaidume & Williams, 1998). In this sense using a condom will inhibit proof of virile masculinity (Jordaan, 2005).

Moreover, Campbell's (2001) study identified a construction of masculinity representing male sexuality as unappeasable, potent and irrepressible. One of the participants interviewed in Campbell (2001, p 202) study substantiates this assertion as depicted in the following dialogue:

> **Interviewer**: Why do you think that men have sex on their minds?
>
> **Participant**: I think that is the way men were made, that is, to always have a desire for a woman.

Interviewer: You have a family that you love and support, but on the other hand you behave in a way that can make you vulnerable to diseases. Why should men behave like that?

Participant: "The truth is that a man is a dog" meaning that he does not get satisfied… when a man sees "a dress", meaning a woman, he follows her.

Interviewer: Why do people think about pleasure before they think about their life, which is at risk?

Participant: The truth is that we are pushed by desire to have sex with a certain woman. We do not think about AIDS during that time but about it when we are finished… Basically, it is the body that desires.

Very appalling is that this construction of masculinity remains stable even in the face of HIV/AIDS epidemic. Cultural practices that perpetuate risky sexual behaviours and maintain inequitable gender relations continue to provide a frame of reference for rationalizing their sexual behaviours that put them and their partners in danger.

While for the larger part, men seem to be presented as victims of the social and cultural structures, Connell (2000) advocates that masculinities exist in cultures as personal positions. Meaning that individuals may exists within structures but have agency and as such may actively decide to accept and reproduce dominant cultural or social practices or defy them. On this idea Connell (2000) emphasize that in every culture there are multiple masculinities. He further distinguishes between two forms of masculinities, namely: hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity refers to constructs

of masculinity traits that are accepted and followed by a larger group of men and are thus dominant. This form of masculinity represents the “superiority of one group of men over another”, thereby allowing this form of masculinity to function as a baseline against which other forms of masculinities (non-hegemonic) will be gauged and thus subordinated (Connell, 2000, p 60). Non-hegemonic masculinities involve masculinity traits that are generally subordinated, in particular homosexuality. Non-hegemonic masculinities are generally conceptualized as those behaviours that deviate from the commonly accepted prescribed masculine practices (Connell, 2000).

While generally, men and boys would opt to conform to cultural prescriptions of dominant masculine practices, some men and boys may defy or contest against such practices for religious or moral reasons. For example some young men may choose to abstain from sexual activities until marriage based on their religious principles. Other young men may resist against the idea that “a man must have flesh-to-flesh” sexual encounter. As such, those men and boys who depart from such dominant cultural practices that designate masculinity often experience verbal abuse and discrimination. Such vilifying names as *setabane* (a Pedi referring to homosexual) and *mpara* (a Pedi term meaning a fool) and *kgope* (a Pedi term referring to a man/boy without a girlfriend) are used to belittle these men. Often, some men might choose to conform to dominant masculine practices because of fear of being called such belittling names. For example some men might consider having unprotected sex because of fear of being called a “boy”.

2.4 Influence of media on sexuality

Mass media (this includes television, movies, computers as well as pop magazines) plays an increasing role in sexuality especially amongst youth. Young people are exposed to movies, adverts expressing a lot of sexual connotations. Hence the common saying that "sex sells". Brown and Keller (2000) assert that given that the objective of adverts is to sell products, the media is less likely to be concerned about promoting healthy sexuality.

In addition, the music industry promotes nudity \ sex through music videos as a way to sell their music. In most music videos particularly where the artist is male, women perform half-naked, reducing them to sexual objects. This takes us back to the notion that men may use their economic power to establish their power over women (Shefer, 2003). It will not sound gullible to assume that women that are commonly featured half-naked in music videos may be doing this as part of their job or for economic benefits.

Moreover media presents sex as sensational and fashionable, particularly premarital sex. In movies or soap operas less or no emphasis is made on using a condom during penetrative sex, abstaining from sexual relationships or being faithful to one sexual partner. In soap operas incidences of one-night stands ending up in unplanned pregnancy between people who should not have been involved in sexual encounters in the first place are common. Moreover mass media tell stories and advice that present sexual abstinence as atypical, whilst promoting sexual relationships and approving for people to be sexually active.

Generally abstinence is perceived as difficult to endorse especially within a relationship. In his study on *"A gendered critique of the ABC prevention policy of the South African government concerning HIV/AIDS"* Jordaan (2005) reported that male participants explicitly stated that men cannot abstain from sexual intercourse. It will sound naïve to expect that promotions of sexual abstinence as well as fidelity or successful use of condom as a prevention strategy can be successful if these notions of masculinity remain overlooked.

CHAPTER 3

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research methods and data collection procedures used to address the aims of this study. It begins by describing the nature of the research design employed and a detailed description of the sample and how it was acquired. A brief description of the instrument for data collection will be provided. This is followed by a brief discussion on content analysis and its history as a qualitative method of data analysis leading to a detailed discussion on Thematic Content Analysis and the process involved in executing this form of method of text data analysis. To account for authenticity in representing participants' perspectives on masculinity and sexual abstinence and for the ownership (subjectivity) of the results reported, the researcher also reflects on her experience of the process of the research and how this might have influenced the results and the interpretation thereof. Concluding this chapter is a delineation of the ethical considerations relevant to the study.

3.2 Research Design

The current study utilized a qualitative research design, which is aimed at "describing and understanding actions and events in greater details from the point of views of the research participants" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 270). This study intended to describe and understand how young men perceive the concept of sexual abstinence as well as how this

influences their sexual behaviours. As such, qualitative research design was considered to be more suitable to employ in view of the fact that rather than measuring people's external characteristics, qualitative research approaches seek to describe and interpret people's experiences of events and their way of thinking about these events (Greenstein, Roberts & Sitas, 2003). The topic on perceptions of sexual abstinence among young men is not as much explored compared to gender studies on women in the area of HIV/AIDS. Hence exploring this area will be of greater value especially to HIV/AIDS policy makers and prevention activists as well as contribute to studies on masculinity and sexuality more generally.

3.3 Participants

A non-probability purposive sampling method was used to select appropriate participants for the study. Purposive non-probability sampling is a sampling method that is utilised when the researcher wants to select participants that meet a particular criterion (Neuman, 2000). This means that the researcher has sufficient knowledge on the topic of interest which affords her/him to make a selection of appropriate individuals of inclusion into the sample (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The population target of this study consisted of young black men from university of the Witwatersrand. Ten young black men between the ages of 18 and 25 years, from University of the Witwatersrand were involved. Subsequent to achieving permission from the University of the Witwatersrand ethics committee, the researcher walked around university campus approaching young men to request them to take part in the study. This procedure was followed until the desired number of participants for the study was achieved. The participants were informed of the purpose of the study and on their willingness to participate the researcher arranged an interview with

each participant at a time suitable for them. The interviews were conducted at the University of the Witwatersrand campus in one of the available comfortable rooms at the psychology department.

3.4 Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were chiefly utilized as a tool for data collection purposes since the researcher intended to gather detailed information regarding the perceptions of sexual abstinence. In semi structured interviews the interview questions are clearly structured, however the nature of the semi structured interviews allows for flexibility around the sequence in which the researcher will ask the questions listed. Interviewees are given a chance to speak more broadly on the question asked allowing for greater details on the responses (Thomas, 2003). Most importantly, semi-structured interviews give the interviewer an opportunity to seek clarifications for responses that seem ambiguous or vague. In addition, when the interviewer feels that the information provided by the interviewees is insufficient, he/she is afforded an opportunity to probe to elicit more information (Greenstein, et al., 2003).

Ten participants were interviewed one at a time, face-to-face and the interviews lasted for at least an hour each and the interviews were consensually tape recorded.

3.5 Data analysis

In a qualitative data analysis the researcher wants to bring order and meaning to the qualitative raw data gathered from the interviews (Greenstein et al., 2003). For this particular study, qualitative content analysis in particular thematic content analysis was

used to analyse data. The following section presents a detailed background on content analysis and a thick discussion on the process of doing thematic content analysis.

3.6 Content analysis: Introduction

Content analysis is one of the most popular techniques for data analysis in both qualitative and quantitative research studies. It emerged in the 1920s and 1930s as a quantitative method of data analysis widely used in mass media to analyse communication content through counting manifest units of text (Krippendorf, 1980). In the 1940s there was an increased interest in content analysis amongst researchers across different fields of study (Berelson, 1952). Essentially limiting text to numbers content analysis somewhat could not be satisfactorily employed particularly in research areas that were more qualitative in approach (Weber, 1990). It was as such criticised for missing semantic information embedded in the text and this led to the development of content analysis from merely counting words to explore concepts and meanings underlying physical messages (Berelson, 1952). Content analysis allows for the analysis of content of text data at two levels and these are manifest content and latent content levels of analysis. Analysis on the manifest content data is the initial phase involving an analysis at the surface level. That is, the researcher looks at what the participants actually said without making any inferences or assumptions. Analysis at the level of latent content focuses on the underlying meanings embedded in the physical messages (manifest content) which frequently form the basis of interpretations of the text.

There are many ways of doing content analysis depending on the research question that is investigated. As such content analysis can be defined in many ways. As a qualitative

research technique, content analysis can be defined as a research method of data analysis involving systematic identification of themes and patterns that appear or are latent in the manifest content of text data in order to develop meaning about a particular social phenomenon or research topic (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The process of content analysis involves systematic coding of text data thereby breaking text data down to different levels of categories ranging from words, sentences, to phrases and themes (Berelson, 1952).

3.6.1 Thematic content analysis

Thematic content is one of the widely used methods of qualitative content analysis whereby themes and categories are identified for the purpose of further systematic interpretations of research data (Marshall & Rossman, 1998). The process in thematic content analysis involves reading through the data material while in the process identifying themes and categories and through 'narrative description' elaborating and interpreting the data (Greenstein et al., 2003, pp). The analysis begins when the tape recorded interviews are transcribed and translated into meaningful, ordered information (Marshall & Rossman, 1998).

3.6.2 Deriving themes from the data

Boyatzis (1998, p. 4) defines a theme as "a pattern found in the information that at the minimum describes and organises possible observations or at the maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon".

Van Manen (1990 as cited in Kiguwa, 2003, pp 41-42) identifies 7 key characteristics of themes that one must look for in a data text:

1. *Theme is the experience of meaning*: in the process of extracting themes the researcher's central concern is the understanding of the meaning and the point that the text intends to communicate
2. *Theme is not an object one encounters at a certain point or moments in a text:* this means that themes serve as dominant meanings or points that recur throughout the text to put across an understanding or knowledge about a phenomenon one seeks to understand
3. *Theme is a way of capturing the phenomenon one tries to understand:* themes are not necessarily a full capture but a simplification of what is going on in relation to the phenomenon of interest. Reality is multiple and as such different people will attach different meanings to a lived experience. It is therefore not possible to fully grasp the meaning of a phenomenon. This is why different researchers might provide different analysis from the same data.
4. *Theme is the means to get at the notion:* theme carries within it idea(s) about a phenomenon of interest. As such identifying themes from the text serves as a means towards understanding the notion of what is being studied. This means that themes serves as instruments through which particular meanings in relation to what the researcher is trying to understand can be explored
5. *Themes give shape to the shapeless:* the raw data provided by research participants is not empty of meaning, however the meaning is often multiple, diverse and ambiguous in nature. Through the process of extracting themes and

categorising them, one is able to achieve a more focused meaning specific to the research topic

6. *Theme describes the content of the notion:* given that themes have the capacity to clearly describe the constructions of meanings related to the phenomenon under study, in utilising themes it is easy to attain a more in-depth and comprehensive insight of a concept or notion related to the research question
7. *Theme is always a reduction of a notion:* it is most important to make aware that it is impossible to provide a full description of an event or phenomenon through people's lived-experiences. This is for the reason that people's accounts of their experience will have multiple and varied meanings. As such themes reduce the researcher's focus to specific aspects of the phenomenon thought to be of significance towards an exploration and description of that phenomenon. Nonetheless any description of a lived-experience is an essential source for uncovering meaningful aspects of the phenomenon of interest.

3.6.3 The process of thematic content analysis

Thematic content analysis as a qualitative method of data analysis begins at the early stages of data collection. Van Manen (1990) recognises that there are three approaches to carry out a thematic analysis:

1. Holistic reading approach which involves the formulation of a single sentence which will essentially constitute the entire meaning in relation to the research question.

2. Detailed, line-by-line reading approach whereby the researcher is required to look at each sentence and comprehend its meaning in relation to the research question and
3. Selective reading approach in which the researcher is required to read the text several times to look for those specific statements, words or phrases that seem informative about the phenomenon understudy.

In the present study, selective reading approach was utilised. The decision to use this approach was based on the reason that selective reading approach allows the researcher to organise the data into categories and then look for those patterns and links between categories as the themes emerges from the data itself. There is however a shortcoming involved in using selective reading approach to uncover themes particularly when working with interview excerpts from participants (Greenstein et al., 2003). The researcher often will try to enforce the excerpts into themes and categories that are already in mind rather than allowing them to emerge from the interviews that represent the participants' lived experiences (Charmaz, 2003). This awareness has helped the researcher to guard against this shortcoming by adopting both an inductive and deductive processes of context analysis to code data and to develop categories. The researcher immersed herself into the interview transcripts and allowed the categories to emerge on their own. Some categories were based on manifest content and were straightforward and easy to identify whereas others were based on latent content of the texts and harder to identify. On the other hand some categories were generated from the already existing

theory of social constructions with regard to sexuality and masculinity with an intention to verify these theories.

In every process of thematic analysis it is crucial for the researcher to read the text several times to familiarise him/herself with the data. New insights might potentially arise each time the data is re-read. In the process themes, patterns are identified and categories established. The process of thematic analysis generally involves the following stages:

Step 1: Arranging the data before analysis could begin.

This involves transformation of data into a written form (transcript).

Step 2: Selecting the unit of analysis.

Unit can be a single word, sentence, paragraph, whole text or theme carrying information, an idea or meaning related to the phenomena of interest. These different forms of units can be used in combination within one study. The process of selecting units of analysis enables the researcher to code the messages as represented in the themes. A theme is used in qualitative content analysis when looking for expressions of ideas and can be expressed in phrases, sentences, single words, paragraphs as well as an entire document (Babbie & Mouton, 2003).This study utilised themes as a meaningful unit of analysis. A code can be assigned to a word, sentence, paragraph or whole text regardless of its size as long as it represents a theme (Kerlinger, 1964). It is usually time-consuming to code a theme and even more difficult to code with high reliability. However theme is generally a

valuable unit of analysis because “it is usually realistic and close to the original content” (Kerlinger, 1964, p. 549).

Step 3: Coding schemes.

Coding is a means of organising the data by defining the data to help capture what is happening in the data (Charmaz, 2003). After units of analysis have been identified, ideas or meanings explicated by each sentence, paragraph and theme should be carefully assessed and conceptualised by giving it a name that seem logically related to the data it represents (De Vos & Van Zyl, 2003).

Step 4: Discovering categories.

Holsti (1968, p 646) define categories as ‘pigeon holes’ into which units are organized. Once particular events or themes have been specified, coded and conceptualised, the researcher needs to develop a rationale to guide the process of grouping together the themes that seem to relate to the same idea, meaning or phenomena (De Vos & Van Zyl, 1998). This process can generally be guided by inductive and deductive approaches to analysis. In an ‘inductive’ approach categories and codes for analysis are derived directly from the data. While ‘deductive’ approach allow for the development of categories and codes to be guided by already existing conceptual framework, theories or other research findings related to the research topic (Marshall & Rossman, 1998). Both inductive and deductive approaches can be used in a thematic content analysis (Charmaz, 2003).

Step 5: Drawing conclusions.

In this stage the researcher engages in the interpretations of the data which involves making inferences and drawing meaning from the generated themes and categories (Poggenpoel, 1998). The process may involve identifying relationships and making comparisons between categories or themes as well as uncovering patterns in the process of analysis (Poggenpoel, 1998). Now the researcher can begin to interpret and discuss what the themes mean and the implications thereof.

3.7 Procedure

Once the research proposal was approved by internal ethics committee of the University of the Witwatersrand, the researcher began recruiting black young men to participate in the study. Data collection for the study was carried out during the last term of the study year just prior final year examinations, 2007. Dates, times and venues for conducting interviews were arranged with each participant. A formal letter with all the relevant information regarding the researcher and the research project was provided to each participant along with a consent form to sign on agreement to participate. The researcher explicitly informed the participants both in writing (in the subject information letter) and verbally before the interview that participation in the study was not obligatory. Thus, participants participated on the basis of informed consent and they were assured that they have the right to leave the research process at any point when and if they want to. Each interview process lasted for approximately an hour and participants were thanked for their contribution and time. After conducting all the interviews the researcher transcribed the tape-recorded interviews and embarked on data analysis. Participants were informed

that the report will be made available at the Wits archives should they want to access it. They were also made aware that the report might be published in a journal.

3.8 Ethical considerations

A number of ethical issues were addressed in this study. Firstly, participants were recruited on voluntary basis as well as on the basis of signing a consent form. The researcher therefore ensured that participants were aware of their rights to withdraw from the study at any point in time and not to answer to any questions that they did not feel comfortable to. Since the researcher wanted the interviews on tape, participants' permission to record the interviews was sought. Secondly, participants were also assured of their confidentiality and anonymity. All information provided by the participants was made available only to the researcher and her supervisor. Participants' names were not recorded on the interview schedules and anywhere in the research report. All the identifiable research data including the tape-recorded interviews will be secured and destroyed when no longer necessary for reference. Results of the study will be presented in a report form to be submitted to the department of Psychology, School of Community and Social Development. Possibly the study may be published in a journal or be presented at a case conference. This may afford the participants access to the results of the study, otherwise the researcher informed them of where they can access the results.

3.9 Reflectivity

The researcher's persona in a qualitative research bears significance on the research process and thus the nature of the data collected. The subjectivities of the researcher as well as of the research participants are part of the research process. Ashworth (2003) argues that the researchers' reflections on their actions and observations in the field, their impressions, irritations and feelings become data in their own right, forming part of the interpretation. It is crucial that the researcher constantly is aware of her influence on the analysis and discussion of the results. As such, the researcher acknowledges that her own ideas and beliefs might have influenced the research process. In accordance with a social constructionist perspective, the researcher acknowledges that the findings of this study are open to other potentially equal and valid findings.

The researcher conducted each and every interview with an open curiosity and made an effort to maintain an unbiased position although it is inevitable that the researcher's own reality will always influence the process. On conducting the interviews the researcher was aware of her inexperience as an interviewer; however she became more confident from one interview to another. As such some interviews were richer in data than others, although each interview contributed significantly in the analysis of the data and interpretation of the results.

Given that the participants in this study were young men, it is possible that they might have reacted to the researcher being female. By virtue of being a woman, the researcher inevitably influenced the way that the participants responded to the interview questions as

well as the kind of information they chose to share or not to. The researcher was amazed at the evidence that the participants positioned themselves outside of the discourse of multiple partners. Although all of them acknowledged that it is ‘cool’ to have more than one girlfriend, they all reported that they were not involved in multiple relationships. The researcher presumes that there is a possibility that the participants responded to the question in a way that might be desirable by females. It can therefore be assumed that there is a possibility that had the researcher been male, different or other additional themes might have emerged.

Moreover the young men in this study are university students; as a result they might have been familiar with the research process. They might have engaged with the questions based on what they thought the researcher was looking for given that they were also briefed about the study.

In consideration of the social constructionist perspective that realities are multiple, the researcher wishes to apologise in advance to the young men who participated in this study if she misrepresented them and their ideas in any way.

CHAPTER 4

4 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter explores and presents the results of this study. The focus of this study is on gaining insights into young males' perceptions of sexual abstinence and how these perceptions are interlinked with how they think and construct their masculinity. Several key themes emerged in the analysis of data that speak to the way in which participants' subjective and group meanings of masculinity interrelate with how they understand sexual abstinence. The following dominant themes emerged and presented under each theme are sub-themes that are used to help further describe the broad theme:

4.1. Constructions of masculinity

4.2.Constructions of male sexuality

4.3.Constructions of femininity

4.4. Sexual abstinence as impractical

The themes as well as sub-themes presented are those that reflect the aims of the study. It is important to note that the themes as well as the interpretation and analysis are the result of the researcher's subjective reading. Thus the reading was not of objective or definitive nature but of potentially multiple interpretations (Ashworth, 2003). As such the themes in this study are potentially a few of many other possible themes that might have emerged in case other researchers read the text.

4.1 Constructions of masculinity

Participants were directly asked what it meant to be a 'real man' and this question proved interesting based on the responses provided. Various themes regarding the participants' constructions of what it means to be a man emerged. Dominant conventional notions of masculinity were central to the discussions while subjective understandings of what constituted 'manhood' also held sway over traditional notions.

Of particular interest was apparent evidence that most participants seem to perceive cultural notions of masculinities as becoming obsolete and replaced by modern notions. Whether this change was viewed as positive or negative was not communicated by the participants however there was a clear lack of clarity with regard to articulating what it meant to be a 'real man', particularly when looking at it from a cultural perspective. There was a sense of lack of cultural knowledge in terms of defining masculinity and how cultural values affect sexuality.

> *"I am not cultural, I am Tswana but I don't follow any traditions, not because I don't like them its just I find myself to be at a different point in time. So I don't really know much about what it means to be a man in my culture"* KG

> *"You know it's sad that I've lived with the Tswana people, okay I grew up in the township where culture has been neglected and the cultural values are not being practiced. People are becoming more westernised so I can't really comment on this."* K

"Aggh, I guess nowadays culture has changed so fast, its now moving towards…..things are becoming westernized, guys are white man. So by the time you are 23 years old people see you as a man even if you haven't done any cultural practices. That's how I see it nowadays." ED

4.1.1 Constructing masculinity: gender roles

The traditional understandings on gender roles particularly with household chores as seen as a women's domain held sway. However, it was interesting to note that even though in general participants agreed that there were set rules clearly prescribing household chores as women's responsibility and other tasks as manly they seemed to not agree with the way that men tend to use the inherent gender role power over women. Some participants stated that even though some tasks are women specific and some are men specific, they should be able to assist each other.

"What you should understand is that there are certain tasks that are women specific and there are certain tasks that are man specific but they should help each other hand in hand. It should be a complimentary thing, when I am asking you [as my partner] to give me water is not a big deal and maybe you will ask me to braai meat or……it should be a complimentary thing." ED

"Guys are still stereotyped that women should clean the house and wash dishes and cook, its like I've seen with this other friend of mine, we'll go to his house and make party, end up with plates tsa braai and he will expect his girlfriend to

clean up that mess alone and yena [he] is just sitting with us, I wouldn't do that, its not fair I mean I would help her out the other guys can sit down you know…" KH

In general, a man whose demeanour within any given context becomes identified as unmasculine faces discrimination and oppression in someway. It is without question that every man's appearance is constantly under gender assessment and that which is suspicious will be punished. Following this idea it is evident from the comment made that young men who did not abide to the traditional definitions of masculinity, particularly with regard to gender roles were jeered at by not only their peers but their male seniors as well. This is based on the socially validated reasoning that within heterosexual relationships it is improper for a man to do his laundry and cook in the presence of his girlfriend.

"…sometimes you would find for example my girlfriend she comes to visit me and I am cooking and doing the dishes and the guys will be on some 'hai, you are not supposed to do that' ……. I know there was some guy he was quite old he used to tell me "ja wena [yes you] you are not a man you should give this chick ya gago [of yours] your trousers to wash" KH

Moreover, the comments made by some of the participants indicated that the traditional notions of masculinity were closely tied to the gender role discourse. The different roles associated with women clearly separate women from men and thereby successfully

identifying that which is ‘masculine’ in relation to that which is feminine. As implicated in the excerpt below men believe that they ought to have power over women and that is what makes them ‘men’. Following the implication of this idea, traditionally a kitchen is a women’s sphere and as a man being sent to a kitchen by another man may give a sense of being reduced into a woman. Hence feeling of being stripped off a man’s masculine identity because of the implications of then taking over a woman’s role by taking care of another man’s physical need and thus assuming a submissive role (that of women). This is amply described in the following quote:

> *“Man have this…….you know for me to ask another man to bring me water is not gonna happen if is just genuinely asking that ‘KG please get me water’ he is dominating he is taking my…..what I am he is making me like almost like a woman [eish that sounds so wrong] but you cant get another man dominate you.” KG*

4.1.2 Constructing masculinity: physicality vs. intellectuality

In traditional definitions of ‘manhood’ a real man was associated with his physical prowess and engagements in tough tasks. Thus muscles and bravery were attributes that separated what makes a boy and what makes a man. Participants appeared to agree that

> *“times are changing and the environment is totally different and as such we should adapt accordingly. We can’t dwell on what our fathers and great grand fathers were doing because circumstances and environments were different.”* TH

And this acceptance of change encouraged changes in the way that men constructed masculinities. A man’s mind rather than his muscles is more likely a central marker of

masculine character. In both their direct responses and descriptions of behaviours, the majority of the participants clearly indicated their dispute of the association of masculinity with physical appearance.

> *"In my opinion a man is defined by the way he thinks, making wise decisions probably. A man can't just be tall; a man is someone who thinks like a man not just looks like a man. A dwarf can be more of a man than a six feet guy." ED*

> *"It's your way of thinking that really you can decide this is a man. It's the way you think…"* TM

This idea of manhood as linked to a man's way of thinking was also closely linked to an idea that a 'real man' takes responsibility for his actions.

> *"For me a man is someone who has responsibility, someone who take responsibility in everything that he is doing"* TM

> *"You see I think if you have a child and you don't support that child you dare not call yourself a man, not taking responsibility for your actions…I will judge you less of a man"* TH

Being a 'real man' also meant possessing material goods, and within these participants' context (studying) this meant working towards possessing these things:

"… as soon as you start thinking about getting a car, buying a house you know what I mean you think in the future." TM

"Owning lots of cows but nowadays is something else like lots of money…" ED

And this thinking towards the future meant putting on hold other things that can destruct a man from staying focused and this included sexual relationships. In this regard other forms of masculinities were constructed as an acceptable alternative to hegemonic masculinities. The alternative masculinities that were revealed from the data included 'achievement' and 'competitiveness'.

"...really there is point were if you wanna pass you hit the books almost every day and your life will revolve around that... I think is the environment that we live in I mean even though we are at wits, we are at wits engineering and the circumstances, you know the environment there if you don't have a girlfriend its totally understandable, we wont judge you, we won't… in fact you are maybe…. 1 in 8 people have a girlfriend so we wont judge you so it doesn't really make a difference if you have a girlfriend or not. In fact you pass brilliant, you know you are the man, if you pass you are 'the man'." TH

"You want to be "THE GUY" amongst all the others. because it boost in….if you didn't do it and you excel in other activities like sports say soccer, you can get

away with murder in terms of you could still tell them that you are not doing it and they will not see you as less of a man because you beat them in sports." M

4.1.3 Constructing masculinity: sexual activity

Kimmel (2004) argues that sex is a primary means through which masculine identity is achieved and responses from the young men who participated in this study are in support of this argument. The data revealed that even though other constructions of masculinities are accepted, sexual activity continues to be the central marker of masculinity. This is often evident in the tendency of men to focus on maintaining control. The man who is having sex holds more control above the one who is successful in other aspects of life. The general male behaviour of laughing at each other and name-calling serves to assert power over one another. The following excerpt highlights the importance of sex for men:

"I have been telling them all the time, still even now you get those few comments that 'hee, hee….KG is not having sex' I don't care. Like my friend yesterday, when we start dissing each other he was like " I m going to see my girlfriend and I am going to have sex today, when are you getting it?" but it was in the context of competing with one another that I got higher marks than you in a test, then it got down to the whole sexual thing that "you are not getting sex, haaa haaaa. You might be a man in other instances but when it comes to the sexual aspect you are not really a man like I may be the biggest guy there, like I may be bigger than all the guys in there but if I'm not having sex you are still a laitie, 'o se nxane' [you are still young]." KG

Alongside the notion that a real man has a strong sex drive was the idea that sex is largely a performance expected of a man. There was a strong reference being made to the importance of a man's capacity to please his woman sexually. This idea of a real man as identified through his ability to sexually satisfy his woman is captured in the following response to a question about what defines a real man from one of the young men interviewed:

> *"I think that's when you can really please your women in bed, like she can walk away and say that guy is amazing."* KG

4.1.4 Constructing masculinity: multiple partners

One other way of constructing masculinity for men is through the practice of multiple partners. Participants spoke about the joys and importance as well as the advantages of having multiple girlfriends. They confessed that a man with more than one girlfriend is regarded as more masculine and often attractive. This is reflected in the following extracts:

> *"its fun, nobody must try to deny that, its fun because it's like having different water flavours, spring water, Bonaqua you just have that "I wanna have this today" it's a choice and that's life in general…."* KG

> *"…But it is seen as a cool thing to do, you know, have the girls feel like "I am the man". Image is what it is……I mean as men we see them as cool there is no lie about that."* ED

Although the participants acknowledged that the practice of engaging with multiple partners was an act that signified manhood they also spoke negatively about it. It is important to note that participants were engaged in the process of constructing others' masculinity rather than their own. Hence it is reasonable to deduce they personally did not engage in this practice of multiple partners. Which is quite interesting and atypical a finding.

The following statements highlight the participants' disapproval of the practice of multiple partners:

> *"its wrong man, it's not good. You can't have a woman committed to you and you have multiple partners. Yah he got game but it's all wrong, everybody knows that it's wrong."* ED

This young man not only did he express his disapproval but also highlighted the disadvantages of having more than one girlfriend. He went on to suggest that men often encourage each other with a sole goal to put each other at risk.

> *"It's not good, unless you know how to play your cards. These days having multiple partners it means….no having a partner means sharing with her so if you have multiple it means you are sharing with more than one…..so you won't have time to see all of them they are all demanding…..guys we like getting each other in trouble. You find that guy who gives you praises about your behaviour yena he got one partner and he is safe. You know its not like we are promoting you when you are around we will be patting you on your back saying "ja, o skhokho, o nja, o ja lana na lana wena ma uifuna wa ithola [you are the man, you have more than*

one choice of sexual partners, hence you always get it whenever you want]. We are promoting his interests but truly speaking it doesn't mean we are agreeing with it and we envy you because you will find that most of us have single partners." T

4.1.5 Constructing masculinity: 'real men' do not do that….

On other occasions in the discussions participants were not able to express directly what constitute a 'real man' however they were able to communicate what did not define a 'real man' in terms of what 'real men' do not do. Most participants also held traditional notions of masculinity as indicated in the following comments made relating to notions of masculinity as tough and not soft. These were strongly linked to the long standing cultural belief that "real men don't cry". In the interview extract below there is a sense that men are always under pressure to adhere to ideologies of hegemonic masculinities however at times they fail to live up to these standards. This idea is captured in the extract where the young man describes his incidence of loss as unbearable although the requirements of hegemonic masculinities demanded for him to toughen up:

"The way I grew up as well……it's like 'monna ga lle' [a man does not cry], that 'monna ke nku o llela teng'[a man is like a sheep] that's the way I grew up. But I remember last month they stole my lap top which was still new and I was also writing exams so it was very painful and I was in the bus and sitting next to my friend, so I cried. It was like my mother just died, I didn't care what people were thinking. T

4.2 Constructions of male sexuality

In the interviews the accounts representing beliefs about male sexuality clustered around the male sexual drive and the essentiality of heterosexuality.

4.2.1 The male sexual drive

The socially prescribed male sexuality continues to hold a powerful effect and value on male sexual behaviours and attitudes. Gendered sexuality scripts prescribe the male sexuality as natural and acceptably uncontrollable. This notion of the male sexual drive as intensive and uncontrollable was reflected fully in the narrations of the young men in this study.

> *"…maybe is in my mind or something but it's like it controls you……the problem with me is when I have a girlfriend and… you know I cannot control it to that extent."* KH

Not only was the desires to have sex experienced as uncontrollable but also incapable of being suppressed unless by some form of remedial intervention.

> *"I will try to drink all medicines if possible that would make me not be sexually active. If they can invent a pill that when you take you don't feel anything…"* M

Also the intolerance of the sexual urges was implicated as manifested through the body, depicting men as physically needing sex:

> *"…you feel like "oh god I am gonna die, I am gonna die if I don't have sex" KG*

The idea that the male sexual drive is insatiable was also implicated as reflected in the following comment:

> *"…go outside of relationships because their girlfriends haven't given them sex in like a month an half and they go have sex with another person, is not because they love the girlfriend less or they feel that gee…..you know its over or whatever. Is just because guys have this…..I call it a tank where they have to fill up each time." KG*

These conceptions of male sexual drive as insatiable and irrepressible reinforces the seemingly so acceptable practices of multiple partners while at the same time burdening women with the pressures of keeping up with their partners' sexual demands. Some of the participants clearly expressed that it is women's responsibility to make certain that her partner remain faithful. Her supposed failure to do so will result in him straying to the sides for sexual satisfaction from other women willing to sexually cater for him. The following young man advises that women should sexually satisfy their men to ensure that they will remain faithful:

> *"…Women should also try to be the good girlfriend so that they [their men] don't go cheating." M*

Interesting here is how readily the participants put the blame on women for the rationalised male infidelity. Contradicting is that while there is an implicit construction of male sexual drive as insatiable and mostly uncontrollable, female partners are expected to

control it. This naturalisation of the male sexual drive as potent and overpowering represents men as vulnerable to a sexual desire that demands gratification at all cost.

4.2.2 Essential heterosexuality

Participants' own accounts reflected their constructions of masculinity in relation to heterosexual performances. There was a strong sense that having a girlfriend was an overt signifier or public representation of a man's heterosexuality and therefore affirmation of his hegemonic masculinity. Furthermore, there was a sense that being a man meant avoiding that which is not masculine and that is homosexuality and having a girlfriend is the only way to avoid being identified as homosexual.

> *"…being seen with a hot chick, it's like you are conquering even if she is not your chick. With this emerging gender thing now you have to be sure where you stand as a man……I mean its even not about being sure but making everybody aware of were you stand. I remember there where speculations that my friend was gay because they never saw him with a chick."* M

> *"…obviously it's going out with them chicks you know, having girlfriends and so on. Because if you not going out they will think you are gay, so to prove you are a man you got to have a girlfriend."* K

It is not the idea of being identified homosexual that some men feared but the consequences of being singled out and loosing friends:

"No, hmmm hhmm (shaking his head strongly) no, no, no hey, these days that one… you will destroy the relationships, these days….they will think you are gay..." T

What was also apparent was that teasing and ridiculing behaviour associated with fear of "women" predominantly occurred as directed to young men who rarely publicly displayed their heterosexuality. These young men were seen as 'unmasculine' because they are assumed to be 'scared' of women. The following interview extract goes some way to highlight the pressures and fears of being ridiculed and teased by peers:

Interviewer: *when somebody refers to you as someone "o tshabang bana", does that affect you negatively as a young man?*

K: *personally, I've heard that before but knowing myself I mean some guys would say ke tshaba bana[I am scared of women] not knowing gore o na le ngwana wa bona?[that you have a girlfriend, you see?] Because you are not a player, you don't have a lot of chicks and all that ba tlare o tshaba bana [they will say you are scared of women], only to find that you have a partner but that partner is not around. She is somewhere else. With me it's not an issue that is provided I know what I have and what is it that I want.*

Interviewer: *in that case did you ever feel like you can prove to them that you have a girlfriend?*

K: *exactly, especially if you know that you've got someone you know and magenge[men] suddenly have this perception that o tshaba bana [you are scared of women], you feel like you can prove that you've got a girlfriend and ga o tshabe bana [you are not scared of women].*

Interviewer*: why do you feel the need to prove to the guys that you have a girlfriend?*

> ***K**: you feel like……sometimes you feel like you are been undermined. Obviously as a guy you like to be respected by your peers and this thing that ga o na ngwana [you do not have a girlfriend]……not that you earn that respect per se but then they should respect you in a way that they don't undermine you especially when you know that you have a girlfriend, so you want to prove. If it was true then it would be different. I think it has to do with the inferiority complex, feeling inferior to your peers.*

The above excerpt clearly shows how hegemonic masculine practices put pressure on young men to such an extent that they act in ways that do not represent their true attitudes. Men do care about what other men think of them and men who abide to the dominant notions of masculinity often exert pressure on other men by 'othering' their experiences and restricting them from expressing themselves freely. This act of marginalisation and oppression/ domination often strips others off of their positions as 'a man', hence the often sense of attempts by these marginalised men to re-secure their masculine positions. The young man in the interview excerpt expressed his need to have to prove to the other men that he is not scared of women and that he actually does have a girlfriend with a desire to reassert his respect.

4.3 Constructions of femininity

Constructions of masculine identity invariably occur in opposition to those of femininity and this was apparent in this study. Indirect themes concerning the participants' constructions of femininity surfaced from general questions on masculinity. This was interesting in the sense that it further supports a long standing assertion that the concepts of masculinity and femininity are relational (Kimmel, 1997 & Shefer, 2003). Thus

masculinity and femininity are defined in terms of each other and obtain meaning in opposition with one another. As such it is inevitable to talk about masculinity in the absence of femininity and visa versa. In this study the young men's responses relating their experiences and perceptions of masculinity and sexuality reflected their thoughts and attitudes regarding women. Their accounts clustered around the following dominating themes:

4.3.1 'Respectable' women vs. 'non-respectable' women

One of the most striking features that emerged from the discourses engaged in the constructions of female sexuality was the way in which women were positioned as either 'respectable' or 'non-respectable'. Women who are regarded 'respectable' are those that are positioned within the 'have/hold' discourse (Hollway, 1989: p 55). This discourse articulates the position that women are allowed to freely explore their sexual desires and express them without being called 'sluts' for as long as it is within the confines of a stable relationship promising marriage. These women as reflected in the young men's narratives during their interviews in this study are desired by most men and are perceived marriageable.

The term 'slut' was used to refer to a woman who is perceived as sexually 'loose' and deserving to be used by men for their physical sexual release and adventures. Generally women labelled as 'sluts' are women who take up the subject position in the 'permissive' discourse (Hollway, 1989: p 55). In describing this discourse Hollway (1989) argues that both men and women are equally understood as sexual beings and allowed to experience their sexuality anyway they choose even outside of stable relationships. However what

this discourse failed to address is the issue of sexual double standard that operates against women. In that women who choose to move into the more 'permissive' sexual positions risk being called 'sluts' or other related derogatory names while men continue to enjoy the privileges.

Very well highlighted in this young mans' statement below is the idea of women as primarily sexual objects for male sexual gratification, even easily justifiable if she fits the category of 'slut':

> "*…If you are dating a 'slut' and then you say "no I don't wanna have sex with her because sex is special", she doesn't really think sex as special otherwise she wouldn't be seen as slut. If you tell us I am not having sex with my slut girlfriend I am waiting till she is ready, you can go to hell, that's bullshit."* KG

Hollway's have/hold discourse prescribes the meaning of sex in terms of commitment and emotional connection, both attributes of a long lasting stable relationship. The interview extract suggest that the kind of relationship expected with a seemingly 'sluttish' girlfriend is that in which the man positions himself within the male sexual drive discourse instead of assuming a position within the have/hold discourse. Positioned within the male sexual drive discourse, men are seen as driven into relationships by the need to have sex. Hence it is expected of him to make use of his relationship with the 'sluttish' girlfriend to his sexual advantages. Within the male sex drive discourse, women are positioned as objects which satisfy men's natural sexual desires (as implicated in the interview excerpt above) and the subject positions are confined to men.

Unlike women positioned as ‘non-respectable’, respectable women are constructed as principled and therefore marriageable. This construction of the good, respectable and pure women is consistent with the social considerations that assign value to the sexual purity of women. Clearly highlighted here is the moralizing of female sexuality. Suggesting that men admire such women who are virgins and willing to wait until marriage.

> *“…Because you know this is a potential wife and you respect her for having that principle that no sex until marriage. We want such women, we value them, you understand? But at the same time you reach a state where you are sexually active and living without sex is another thing, you know. So in most cases guys will tend to go outside of the relationship to get it. You keep her until you are ready to get married.” K*

Further implicated from the participants’ comments from the above excerpts is idea that the male sexual drive discourse continually employed in the young men’s discussions of sexuality is used to legitimate sexual infidelity. Male sexual infidelity or promiscuity is normalized by the male sexual drive discourse through the assumption that when it comes to sex, male sexuality is by nature powerful and uncontrollable. The moralized female sexuality discourse which centres on religious beliefs of partnering and monogamy does expect women to accommodate the male sexual drive but ideally within the confines of marriage. The socio-cultural constructions of moralized female sexuality assign value to

the sexual purity of females. It is in this discourse of a moral female sexuality that men explain the widespread practices of multiple partners and sexual promiscuity by men.

> *"…if your woman doesn't give you sex… what is that? You can't, is unacceptable sorry. I go to the brothel, do my business and then come back and I am happy. I still love you but you are denying me something that someone else can give me… if you want me to stay committed you have to help me stay committed. I am not gonna do that by myself." KG*

> *"…If the woman doesn't understand he must go get it [sex] somewhere else."* T

The above excerpts illustrate the conflict between male sexual drive and the moralized female sexuality. The moral sexual drive of female is not in collusion with the male sexual drive by expecting men to take control over their sexual urges. In reality the sexually pure positions assumed by females in heterosexual relationships do not work well. While these women are positioned as sexually pure and clean and they are valued and considered potential wives, the male sexual drive does not accommodate them. What is also interesting is that there appear to be discrepancies in these young men's constructions of the female sexual purity as respectable. Thus while they confess their respect to these women, their promiscuous sexual practices while in relationships with these women are not seen as disrespectful. Moreover the relationship between sex and power is also illuminated in one of the excerpts above. Women are burdened with the responsibility of ensuring that their men remain faithful to them by sexually catering for

them whenever and however they want. Also in the excerpts above there is a sense of portraying women as objects of sexual desires for men in the sense that men account the sexual infidelity incidences as purely physical and without any element of love.

4.3.2 Women as asexual or sexual beings

It was interesting to note that there were contradictions in the perceptions held by the participants regarding positions of women as either sexual beings or asexual. There was a rejection of the notion of biological differences in female and male sex drives, suggesting that sexual desire is not confined to male sexuality but women as well and equally so. This construction seem to contradict the positioning of women as asexual yet at the same time not conflicting social demands that restrict female sexual expressions. There was recognition that while women are sexual beings their sexuality as compared to that of men is often concealed. This difference in sexual expressions between men and women is deeply-rooted within the social constructions of sexuality which reinforces gender differences. Enshrined in the social constructions of female sexuality is the notion of sexual morality which prescribes that a woman with sexual morals is asexual. This moralistic notion encourages women to restrain their sexual desires:

"...women are just as horny as guys are, they just don't show it". KG

Such a sexual positioning of women at the same plane as men might be implicating a shift in standards indicating that the conventional 'heterosexualised' patterns of relationships are beginning to change.

A clear distinction of what satisfies a man and a woman in a relationship was highlighted, distinguishing women as desiring romance and men as desiring sex:

> *"…women have this thing of: they want you to show affection. They can't live without it you know. They can't live without their boyfriends bring them flowers or surprise them with breakfast in bed…and is that, for women is just that! For guys is that sexual thing…" KG*

Such constructions of men as seeking sex and women as rather seeking romance would seem to contradict earlier positioning of females as equally sexual beings. The excerpts above illustrate the importance of sex to men while at the same time emphasizing male perceptions of what women are like and what they want, which is not sex. This can be seen as implying that women are asexual. Furthermore the idea that women are okay not having sex is brought forth in the excerpt below as reflected in their practices of denying their partners sex.

> *"I think he wants to [have sex] because I think ladies are the ones who are denying us of the pleasures."* T

The imbalance in sexual power between male and female partners in heterosexual relationships is well noted. What is interesting to note in the above excerpt is the awareness of a certain measure of sexual power which women have over men. This is shown in the ability of young women to refuse sex.

In general these beliefs that men hold about sexuality asserts gender differences in sexual drives and further work to naturalize the different socially constructed sexual practices.

4.3.3 Women as calculating

This particular theme emerged from a specific question that the participants were asked about their opinions on the practice of multiple partners. They discouraged the practice of multiple partners for both men and women however what was very interesting was the way in which the comments made on this topic went on to reflect on the participants' constructions of women as calculating. Their comments were infused with suspicions about what women want out of relationships, particularly when they know the polygamous nature of the relationships. This is reflected in the following statements:

> *"…Women always want something from you especially if they know you have a girlfriend."* M

> *"…what's happening is that once you have the money you are the 'diamond' everybody wants to be with you, you know what I mean? Once you start working and driving cars girls are all over you."* AL

4.3.4 Women as sex objects

As already revealed in the data, the primary means by which men display their masculine identity is through sexual involvement and as such it would make sense to presume that sex will be the primary motivation for them to have a relationship. The extracts below highlight this implication that male get into relationships primarily for sex:

"Guys would feel that they have lost the game if their relationship with a woman ends without having had sex with her. If the girl who broke up with the guy walks past the guys they will start laughing at the ex-boyfriend as they remember that they broke up before they did it. The girl also sort of becomes a constant reminder that he lost to her since they didn't have sex before they broke up." TM

"You know when you are in a relationship and you find that she leaves you before you even sleep her. It's like you lost, o fitile fela hai aowa, its not on. No you must get that thing first. You must get something out of it. Your friends will laugh at you that you never got some from her." T

This point of view highlights the fact that women are seen as objects created for the sole purpose of asserting male identity. There is a common discourse of sex and money and underlying this discourse is the male understanding that if women accept to have a relationship with them, they are expected to have sex with them in return for money or gifts and being taken out. Therefore men feel entitled to sex particularly with women that they spend money on. The young man (KH) in the following extract implicitly suggests male expectations of sexual involvement with women that they spend money on:

"I remember even this other time he went to Bloemfontein all the way to see this other chick and they stayed at some hotel for two days. And he came back and told me he did nothing there and he wanted to call our friends and tell them that 'hey guys I drove all the way to Bloemfontein for nothing', I was like don't tell

them because I know how these guys are, they are going to think otherwise and start laughing behind his back, they are gonna think 'die man o stupid' [this guy is stupid]. Because I remember when he came back he had spent so much money and he was complaining that now he is broke and it's like nothing exciting happened. I was worried and I thought when I was analyzing his situation and I would think maybe he is asexual or there is something wrong with his body that he is comfortable about." KH

4.4 Sexual abstinence: impractical or not?

The primary objective of this study is to gain insights into male perceptions of sexual abstinence and how these would affect their decisions making on their sexual behaviours. Participants were therefore asked directly to provide their beliefs regarding sexual abstinence. The data revealed that participants strongly claimed sexual abstinence as difficult and impractical based on various factors.

Sexual activity is one of the essential markers of masculine identity. Throughout available literature on sexuality, masculinity and gender identity, it was found that men across all age groups held a strong perception that manhood is often affirmed by sexual conquest and virility (Haffejee, 2003; Macphail & Campbell, 2002; & Ford, Vieira & Villela, 2003). These perceptions about male sexuality are enshrined within the male sex drive discourse (discussed in details in the section on male sexuality). It is worth repeating that one of the influential aspects of the male sexual drive is the notion that men

are driven to always desire sex. This notion that men cannot live without sex and that men naturally desire and need sex was reinforced in the following interview extract:

> *"…but its just like you know I will say this again….when guys cheat neh?, go outside of relationships because their girlfriends haven't given them sex in like a month an half and they go have sex with another person, is not because they love the girlfriend less or they feel that gee…..you know its over or whatever. Is just because guys have this…..I call it a tank where they have to fill up each time." KG*

Moreover some of the young men interviewed made references linked to masculinity in relation with general and mental health and well-being.

> *"…you know your stress levels decreases, you know sex at he end of the day I was reading is the actually a good form of exercise. It decreases your…..what is it? Like your…..like guys who have sex like often are less susceptible to heart diseases, I am telling you is true because when you have sex is a damn work out hey? Unless you are one of those 2 minutes guys and that's just plain selfishness. But may go for good 30 minutes you know that's like running, have you ever ran like 30 minutes? But you can have sex for 30 minutes, so it's good and it's a whole body thing you know". KG*

Given this strong links between sex and masculinity it is evident that sexual abstinence for many young men will not be an option. Participants in this study were very aware of

the advantages of sexual abstinence in relation to HIV/AIDS as well as unwanted pregnancies; however this did not provide strong motivation for sexual abstinence.

> *"…they should by then hopefully understand what sex is and the consequences of having sex, at some level it's a risk that I am also accepting its my decision, I understand those programmes are trying to prevent unwanted pregnancies and prevent HIV you know, I know about that and I know you get that through being sexually active. So because I know that and I understand the consequences of being sexually active and I've made my decision …ja I believe I'm of a mature age and mind to have sex and I've made my decision and I doubt they can convince me otherwise. So to me if you come to me preaching about sexual abstinence because of HIV I will tell you to go knock next door". TH*

> *"...But at the end of the day we are abstaining because of a disease not because of anything else, which is a bit of a problem. Its like saying ice cream makes you fat, not one cone/ one cup make you fat. So what we are saying is don't eat ice cream at all instead of saying eat ice cream carefully so you don't get fat you know what am saying. That's how the new programmes are looking at, now it makes it seem as if sex is bad, which is not true. It is good it is human act; it cannot be bad it's not like killing someone. It should be done properly for one you know, but promiscuity is bad. But saying no sex at all it's like saying the same thing with ice cream, that no ice cream at all, they are saying sex cut, cut, cut it from your life.*

You are eliminating one of greatest aspects of life; you need every aspect to live as a person". ED

Although participants in this study fairly agreed that sexual abstinence would be effective in preventing sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS, several other factors which related to the notion that sexual abstinence is somewhat impractical were identified. These included: perceptions that sexual abstinence is not natural, peer pressure relating that men who sexually abstain are not normal and sex as a familiar theme in male conversations.

4.4.1 Perceptions that sexual abstinence is not natural

There were frequent references made to the way in which abstaining from sex was an unnatural process and therefore seen as depriving the body of its natural way of functioning. This is amply described in this young man's narrative:

"…cause you are starving your body of natural feelings, you know…..its like love, you cant tell yourself not to love its gonna be here forever, or to have happiness or to, you know…..its a feeling that will always be there…. I see abstinence as restricting someone to not doing a certain pleasure you can say and restricting someone of a certain pleasure you have to find a replacement for that pleasure somewhere else, you know. Haai, it really has to be….like really, really valuable reason for me to abstain. But I am sure it will still be hard for any young man to abstain". ED

4.4.2 Peer pressure relating that men who sexually abstain are not normal.

Once again it is worth reiterating that the male sexual drive discourse positions men as sexually driven implying that sexual relations provide a means to achieving masculinity. This notion pressures men to pursue sex such that any signs of deviation may result in the young man being singled out. The interview excerpt below bring forward an idea that there is an expectation that at a particular age all young men must be sexually active or at least must have been active. It is incomprehensible for a young man to have not had sex at a particular age and that evidence of virginity raises suspicions about his masculinity and heterosexuality as reflected in the interview extract:

> *"like I said, you find a 20 year old guy who tell you that he has not had sex…I don't know its like "ke bari [he seem stupid], or something" I mean you cannot imagine that such an old guy he hasn't really done it…like in the eyes of his peers he appears to be…I don't know somehow. I cannot understand a 23 year old guy who tells me he's never had sex. There is something wrong with him. You know I used to have a friend….that guy would have so many girls but he would do anything but sex. I always thought there is something wrong with him; I used to think he is gay. So I thought he was going out with these girls just to hide that he is gay". KH*

Non-compliance to hegemonic notions of masculinities appears to have serious repercussion for the young men. Connell (2000) described the common practice of name-calling as indicative of attempts from men who conform to dominant definitions of

masculinities to discipline those that are not abiding to the demands. In order to avoid being labelled sissy or gay for not conforming, some young men often opt to pretend to adhere to the demands of hegemonic masculinities. Holland, Ramazanoglu, Sharpe and Thompson (1994) reported in their study carried out with young men between the ages of 16 and 25 years, that one of the strategies that young men used to protect themselves from discriminations was through the use of 'performance stories'. This experience involved the young men telling stories about their supposed sexual experience to present an image of 'macho, knowing and experienced male' (Holland et al. 1994: p 130). Although Holland et al's study is a decade old it is interesting to note that the data form the present study revealed findings similar to those of their study. Participants in this study confessed that it was rather worthwhile to tell lies about their sexual experience to avoid being ostracized by their peers. The following extracts reflect the pressures experienced by young men such that they had to lie about their sexual involvements to prove their masculinities:

> *"That was the hardest for me, having to try and come up with all stories, lie and…..just to make me feel like I am not seen as an outcast…*
>
> *"… I had to make up that impression that no man I know what I am talking about. That's what made me be so inquisitive about this, like read about it. 'Cause I noticed most of my friends they don't know….most of the people they don't know much about sex. So for me…..'Cause I know I am a very inquisitive person like I said, for me to be able to gain the upper hand at least let me know more about this things. So when it comes to a point where I have to say something you know I know I even sometimes used to use people's experiences like share on people's*

experiences not my own just tell them as if its my own and no one could tell that." NK

"...in fact I was one of those…I used to lie….I used to lie like "my girlfriend came yesterday and we did it" you know things like that because they know when she comes. I wanted to be accommodated, when you are in Rome you do what the Romans do." T

While the need to have sex emerged as a measure of masculinity, sex was also identified as a potential life impediment. Participants highlighted the idea that sex and academic success do not go together. That it can be excusable for a guy who is not engaging in sexual relations only because he is focusing on his studies.

"…cause I am an engineering student and really there is a point were if you wanna pass you hit the books almost every day and your life will revolve around that and having gone through that phase if a guy from my class tells me that "I don't want a girlfriend"…I mean I had a friend who out of…I think ever since coming here he's never had a girlfriend I don't judge him I understand totally cause it's the environment, I think is the environment that we live in I mean even though we are at wits, we are at wits engineering and the circumstances, you know the environment there if you don't have a girlfriend its totally understandable, we wont judge you we wont…In fact you pass brilliant, you know you are the man, if you pass you are 'the man'. TH

"I wouldn't think they are sissy or funny especially in this university environment we are always stressed most of the times, you don't think about this things but assignments. It gets to a stage where now you are fine with this whole thing 'cause now you want to get something out of your studies, so it doesn't become an issue for you, but surely when you start getting back to your senses it gets lonely".
AL

The image of male sexuality as all powerful and dominating with its only goal to oppress other 'subordinate' sexualities particularly female sexuality is socially accepted. However the data revealed that there is general agreement among young males that women can exert some considerable power over men. Some of the participants confessed that they felt pressurized by their girlfriends to have sex. Such that failure to comply would result in the risk that women would either leave them for a 'quick fix' with someone else or quit the relationship. One participant indicated his vulnerability when his girlfriend threatened to leave if he is not willing to have sex with him:

"The girl pushed me to it. It was more of an emotional blackmail cause it was quite a situation like 'if not ke a tsamaya' [I am leaving]. And again also she is the one who initiated; I was not interested or ready"

Again this threatens their masculine identity, and poses a threat of being ridiculed or ostracized by their peers. This is simply because one of the requirements of dominant notions of masculinity is that men exercise their power over women. As such in failing to

secure a relationship, the young man is not just failing within the relationship, but also in terms of wider expectations of hegemonic masculinity.

4.4.3 Sex as common theme in male talks

For many of the participants in this study, peer relationships and the media were cited as the most influential factors in their sexual behaviours. They expressed that the reason sexual abstinence seem impractical to them is also largely to do with the fact that sex is a familiar theme in their conversations with other men as well as that the media portrays premarital sex as an acceptable aspect of normal life:

> *"The media portrays sex as something that is so cool and if you are not in this sexual thing something is wrong with you." AL*

Most of the participants indicated that their first early-age sexual encounters occurred out of curiosity arising from the conversations that they had with their peers. Although it was less clear from the participants why sex is the most common topic in male talks, it was rather evident that the conversations were sexually enticing for many of the young men. This point is emphasized in the following extracts:

> *"…they will always talk about the pleasure of it, wa bona….and "when you hold her like this"……so I wanted to experience it…you know I got that idea from my friends." T*

> *"…[they] make it look so flawless like so beautiful….but they don't tell you to go for it but because of the way they are telling it you think "maybe I should try it too." NK*

CHAPTER 5

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

Data from the young men involved in this study generated wide-ranging ideas highlighting both dominant conventional as well as current constructions of masculinities and sexuality. Four broad interesting themes emerged as already presented in detail in the previous chapter. Various constructions and meanings that emerged within these four themes appeared to support as well as contradict relevant literature on masculinity and sexuality. This chapter discusses in detail these themes:

5.2 Constructions of masculinity

Participants identified with a range of behaviours which were associated with being a man that reflected and maintained traditional gender role discourse. Of the foremost importance here is the apparent shift in the meanings attached to these traditional gender role scripts which prescribes household chores as women's arena. A strong sentiment was the belief that the prescribed gender roles should not be used as a tool to subordinate women. The traditional gender role discourse was rather used in this case to ingenuously distinguish men from women not at the level of discrimination, that is: not to demonstrate power differences that inherently exist between the gender groups. Traditional notions of gender roles in part advocates that women are supposed to be submissive to their male partners and such notions were found to perpetuate gender power inequality at times resulting in abuse of women. In one of the extracts taken from an interview with one of

the young men who participated in this study, the young man describes an unfair situation in which power inequality is being demonstrated. He points out the unfairness of his male friend to expect his girlfriend to clean up the after party mess on her own, the duty which is expected of her. Such instances are demonstrations of the 'exploitation' that results from the traditional gender role discourses.

The apparent shift in the meanings embedded within the traditional gender roles is not unique to this study. Several studies have also revealed this change in the meaning attached to the traditional gender role theory (Strebel, Crawford, Shefer, Cloete, Henda, Kaufman, Simbayi, Magome & Kalichman, 2006; Jeftha, 2006). These authors have argued that this shift has occurred as a result of the movement towards women's empowerment which advocate for gender equality. While the young men in the current study seemed to promote this shift in the meanings underlying the traditional gender roles, the experience was contradictory to the young men interviewed in other studies. Jeftha (2006) found that the young men in her study experienced 'masculine crisis' due to this shift in the meaning of gender roles. This is because Strebel et al. (2006) argue that masculinity can no longer be asserted through the gender labour division given that the gender role boundaries are nowadays permissive. Men and women can share roles. This meant that men had to find other ways of asserting their masculinities.

Once again there was a shift from associating masculinity with physical toughness to the embodiment of the mind. That a real man is distinguished by the way he thinks and not his physical strength. This idea is closely linked to the association of successful

masculinity to wealth strongly enshrined in the traditional expectations that men are responsible for financially supporting their families. The acquisition of success has long been one of the attributes strongly tied to hegemonic masculinity (Kimmel, 2004).

As expected from previous research studies, sexual activity remains the primary means through which men demonstrate their masculinity. For the young men in this study engaging in sexual relations guaranteed them positions as 'men'. It was particularly evident from the narrations of these young men that sex is important for their masculine identity. Several other studies in the field of masculinity revealed similar findings. For example Hafeejee (2003) in her study found that sexual activity appeared to be an important defining feature of being a man. In their study with young people in Umthata, Wood and Jewkes (1998) found that sexual involvements among young men were regarded as the crucial factor in defining masculine identity. Kimmel (1997) argue that the socialisation of male sexuality informs men that sexual activity is the domain for men to prove their manliness. Following this idea Staples (2004) assert that the way that young boys are socialised with regard to their sexuality encourages them to engage in premarital sex as well as multiple partner relations.

According to Haffejee (2003), cultural notions of male sexuality that values sexual prowess influences the constructions of masculinity in young men. In her study, Haffejee (2003) reported that the young men in her study exhibited beliefs underlying the cultural implications that manhood is defined by sexual conquests and the practice of multiple partners. She further reported that these findings were not unique to her study as other

research studies revealed similar findings. For example, Selikow, Zulu and Cedras (2002) reported that sexual encounters with multiple girlfriends were regarded by young men in their study as crucial for achieving successful masculine identity (cited in Haffejee, 2003).

Interestingly, the young men in the current study repositioned themselves outside the discourse of multiple partners while admitting that this practice is still regarded as a crucial factor in the display of proper manliness. What was more interesting was that while they acknowledged the strong links between the need for multiple girlfriends and masculine identity, their choice to not engage in this practice did not seem to affect their masculine status.

The researcher reasons that this might be explained by the fact that there are many ways of demonstrating masculinities although others are more preferred. As demonstrated in the results, participants seemed to conform to other masculinities, for example sexual activities. Moreover it is evident from the results that cultural notions of masculinities no longer influential in the constructing meanings in the lives of many young people. Participants clearly identified themselves as not 'cultural' and went on to admit that they are not familiar with cultural notions of what it means to be a 'real man'. The long lasting African cultural notion more familiar to the Pedi culture that "monna ke nku o llela teng" simply translated in English to mean that "real man don't cry" seem to some extent to hold no significance in the constructions of masculinities due to the dynamic nature of culture. From the text, one participant provides a subjective account of non-

conformity to cultural implications that a ‘real man’ does not cry when experiencing painful situations. The presence of cultural devaluing multiple and resistance to other constructions of masculinities can be explained by Kimmel’s (1997) assertion that gender is constructed from cultural and subjective meanings that continuously change and differ, according to time and place.

5.3 Constructions of male sexuality

Kinsey amply summarises the male sexual drive as follows:

“The crude sex-urge . . . is entirely incapable of being sublimated. If it is strongly excited, it needs, in its urgency, an immediate release. It cannot be deflected from its one aim to different aims, or at most can be as little diverted as the need to urinate or as hunger and thirst. It insists on gratification in its original realm.” (Kirkendall, 1958, p 58).

As already presented in the previous chapter, this description of the male sexual drive is well supported by the comments made by the participants in this study and is demonstrated both by the behaviours and attitudes that this men associate with in their constructions of sexuality. The findings have shown that the young men believed that their desire for sex is natural, normal and a necessity that women are supposed to recognise and accordingly submit to it.

Holland, Ramazanoglu, Sharpe and Thompson (1994) argue that the naturalisation of this male sexuality renders it irrefutable such that women are socially expected to accommodate this male sexual drive. In that this male sexual identity affords them

sexual power that they often exert on women, in the sense that men feel that they have the right to make sexual decisions on when and how to have sex. Hence they feel that it is also their right to seek sexual satisfaction from outside the relationship when their sexual demands are denied by their partners and this decision to stray will be socially supported. Hollway (1984) argue that the male sexual drive discourse was often used to legitimate male infidelity as was found in this study. The findings from the current study concur with those found in Haffejee (2003). Haffejee (2003) show how the male sex discourse was used by the young men in her study to explain their sexual liaisons and multiple partners.

Hollway (1984) contend that the male sexual discourse offered different positions for men and women. This assertion is well explained in connection with the sexual double standard discourse. The sexual double standard discourse clearly demonstrate the male sexual power in that when women decide to sexually engage outside of their relationships for the same reasons of depravation within their relationships their decisions are frowned upon. This was reported by Wood and Jewkes (1998) in their study with young people in Umthata. Wood and Jewkes (1998) found that the young girls in their study reported practices of infidelity for reasons that they were sexually dissatisfied and the young men reported this behaviours as ‘unacceptable’ (p 23).

Hollway (1984) contends that one powerful aspect of the male sex drive is the different positions it affords men and women. Men are positioned as the subjects in this discourse whose sexual needs are privileged over women’s. While women on the other hand are

denied subjectivity and relegated to position as objects of the male sexual drive. In the context of HIV/AIDS this positioning of women as objects makes it difficult for them to negotiate safe sex.

The male sexual discourse strongly brings forward the notion that men are driven to have sex with women (Hollway, 1984). In line with this idea is the argument that heterosexual sex is therefore a requirement towards achieving hegemonic masculine identity. Several studies have shown how hegemonic notions of masculinity are inextricably intertwined with notions of male heterosexuality (Ford, Vieira & Villela, 2003; Renold, 2003; Kane & Schippers, 1996). For the young men in this study having a girlfriend served to affirm their heterosexuality and thus achieving hegemonic masculinity. This findings was also evident in the studies by Ford, Vieira & Villela (2003); Renold (2003) as well as Kane and Schippers (1996). The focus of the heterosexual performance was explicitly on status. Meaning that for the participants having a girlfriend for personal gains was less significant than the opinions of their male peers. This is evidenced in the need for some of the participants to prove to their girlfriend that they have girlfriends.

When contextualised, heterosexual relationships are perceived as a site where male power over women is established. A considerable number of studies have shown that in sexual encounters man has power over women. From a social constructionist perspective, power is relative (Burr, 1995). This perspective has led to a belief that although men have power, women are also endowed with a certain measure of power. This power is seen in the capacity of some women to refuse men sex. This measure of power in women was

acknowledged by the young men in this study. This finding is not limited to the current study. Wood and Jewkes (1998) reported that the young girls in their study have reported incidences were they refused to have sex with their partners. Macphail and Campbell (2001) also reported similar findings. However, these women experienced physical abuse by their partners as consequences of their attempt to exercise this supposed women power (Wood & Jewkes, 1998; Macphail & Campbell, 2001). From the above discussion, the question that remains to ask is, do women really hold some measure of sexual power that they supposedly are believed to have? When taking into consideration that when women exercise this supposed power through deciding when to have sex they are again punished for it and blamed for their men's infidelity as was revealed in this study.

5.4 Constructions of femininity

In general, the way that the young men in this study discussed women portrayed the female character as negative although there were some instances where participants spoke positively about women. Hollways' (1989) three discourses of sexuality were used to illustrate the way in which young men in this study positioned women and the implications of these positions to the understanding of their sexuality. Hollway (1989) distinguishes between the male sexual drive discourse, the have/hold discourse and the permissive discourse.

As already discussed in the sections above, the male sexual drive discourse portrays men as biologically driven to have sex and that their sexual desire is almost insatiable. This discourse positions women as objects of male sexual desire and the young men in this

study used this discourse to further justify male infidelity. The use of this discourse was also used to justify their sexual exploitation of women because women are not trustworthy too, they can be calculating. In the permissive discourse, women are supposed to assume a position as subjects however because of the good/bad girl dichotomy; their position as subjects is limited (Hollway, 1989). This discourse clarifies the way in which the young men tend to refer to women as 'sluts'. The have/hold discourse centres on the idea of monogamy, partnership and family life. Women in this discourse are afforded a position as subjects. The young men used this discourse to discuss their ideal potential wife as a woman who is sexually pure and respectable.

This portrayal of women serves to highlight the overt different social standards for men and women as well as reflecting the way in which men and women are positioned within different discourses. These different positions within various sexual discourses reflect the power differentials between men and women often making it almost impossible for women to negotiate safer sex practices. The notions that men hold about their sexuality and their constructions of femininity will influence the domineering positions that they assume in relationships and how they interact with their female partners.

5.5 Sexual abstinence: impractical or not?

From the preceding discussions the idea of sex as the centrepiece of male identity is clearly revealed. The young men in this study articulated the practice of sexual abstinence as generally impractical. Similarly the young men in Jordaan's (2005) study explicitly stated that men cannot sexually abstain. The findings from the current study further

reveal that young men appear to be particularly influenced by what their peers think of them. There were frequent references made to the way in which young men who abstain were not 'normal' and that otherwise one should have a very good reason to abstain. Literature has pointed to the influential role that peers have on one another (Connell, 2000; Holland et al. 1994 & Kimmel, 2004). This referred literature has revealed that men care most about what other men think of them. In line with this idea, Kimmel (2004) maintain that men live in fear and this is the fear of being dominated, humiliated and of being seen as a sissy and that it is this very fear that "keep men in tow and reinforces traditional notions of masculinity" (p 567).

The media has been constantly cited as one of the major influential factors that make it difficult for young people to abstain. The media continue to naturalize premarital sex and young people are constantly exposed to ideas about sex and its pleasures. The young men talked slightly about the impact the media had on their sexuality, especially regarding their persuasiveness in making them want to experience the things broadcasted. This is not unusual. In a study conducted by Jeftha (2006), the young men said that some of the risky sexual behaviours they exhibited were things that they leant from the media.

There was also a strong recognition that the topic on sex is common among young males hence sexual abstinence is an unusual practice in men. According to Kimmel (2004), talk about sex form part of dominant conversations that affirm hegemonic masculine identity. It is an affirmation of ones masculine identity to be able to hold a conversation about recent sexual encounters and this is not always possible when one is sexually abstaining.

Following this idea, often young men tend to lie to their peers to avoid taunting by peers. Holland et al (1994, p 133) explains this lying behavior as “performance stories”, in which young men will talk about sexual conquests that are non existent only to affirm their masculinity.

5.6 Conclusions

A considerable number of studies in the area of gender and sexuality have been conducted to gain insight into young people’s sexual behaviours and their implications on HIV/AIDS. This study aimed at gaining a better understanding and insight into young men’s perceptions and understandings of being a man, and to further explore how these constructions of masculinity is linked to their decision making on sexual abstinence.

The concept of masculinity has been used in many studies towards developing a deeper understanding of young men in order to assist in the development of HIV/AIDS prevention programmes. Shefer, Strebel and Foster (2000) maintain that heterosexual relationships are a site where men are afforded the opportunity to exercise power over women to affirm their manhood. The imbalance in power between men and women in heterosexual relationships has been documented in many research studies. This unequal power relation is dominant over the ability of young women to either refuse sex or negotiate the use of condoms (Haffejee, 2003; Shefer et al., 2000; Wood & Jewkes, 1998). In bearing all this evidence in mind, it will seem acceptable to assume that within relationships the decision to sexually abstain might rest solely on male partners. Given

the strong associations between sex and masculinity, for many men sexual abstinence may not be a choice. Findings from this study confirmed this assertion.

Participants' constructions were consistent with other studies particularly conducted in South Africa. The constructions of masculinity reflected the importance of sex in defining manhood. Findings also suggest that the young men predominantly referred to traditional notions of masculinity however there were points in the discussions where participants retracted to subjective notions of masculinity. This demonstrated the participants' constructions of alternative masculinities. From a social constructionist perspective, this evidence of multiple masculinities can be explained by the fluidity and plurality of the concept of masculinity.

The young men used sex, and their male sexuality beliefs as well as behaviors to demonstrate dominant and hegemonic masculine ideals that clearly establish them as men. They do this by relying heavily on the male sexual drive discourse. The fact that men continue to describe their masculinities in terms of the male sexual drive discourse demonstrates the hegemonic nature of this discourse in positioning men and women within heterosexual relationships. Given that the male sense of identity is constructed in opposition it is no surprise that the young men's constructions of masculinity were in many instances liked with women. Although women were at some instances perceived negatively, they remain a crucial aspect of masculinity.

Through the use of different discourses the ideal woman is a virgin. Socialised to believe that a "good woman" is asexual, women who express their sexuality may become

degraded. The use of the term ‘slut’ by one of the young men in this study serves to affirm that the sexual double standard is still alive and well. Women who engage in frequent sex with multiple partners continue to be called “sluts,” whereas men who engage in the same behaviours are “studs,” (Haffejee, 2003 & Wood & Jewkes, 1998).

The fact that participants defined themselves as not ‘cultural’ was quite interesting in that it is indicative that men generally understand manhood as simply innate and a product of unconscious forces. From a social constructionist viewpoint this can be explained through the concept of socialisation which is a process by which people come to learn and adopt behaviours deemed appropriate within their culture (Burr, 1995). This means that a boy would internalise a normative set of standards that would designate his masculinity (which can only seem natural to perform). Kimmel (1997) further support this argument by maintaining that it is by biological imperative toward reproduction that people are sexual, but how, where, when, how often, with whom and why we are sexual has to do with cultural learning, with meanings transmitted in a cultural setting (Kimmel, 1997). The very traditional gender roles that the young men endorsed and the male sexual drive discourse they relied on to justify their sexual attitudes and behaviours are rooted with culture. Within this view of male sexuality as natural, women assumed sexual objects and are not offered much respect.

Current practices of hegemonic masculinity and male sexuality have been proved to be particularly problematic, especially with regard to the country’s current rates of HIV infection. This study demonstrated that in the area of male sexuality there is still pressure

on young men to prove themselves through hegemonic masculinities. It will be very naïve to believe that efforts to encourage young men to abstain will be as effective.

5.7 Limitations

Firstly the sample that was utilised in this study was small and secondly all the participants were drawn from the main campus of the University of the Witwatersrand. Therefore the findings should be viewed with caution and thus attempts to generalise this findings to all young men at the University of the Witwatersrand will not be appropriate.

As already acknowledged that the researcher was female, it is possible that the young men in this study might have reacted to the researcher being female and perhaps could not respond frankly to certain questions. As such the validity of the knowledge generated from this may be put to question.

Given the qualitative nature of the study the researcher has already acknowledged her subjectivity as possibly influential on the process of the analysis of data. Thus the researcher's understanding of the participants and her perceptions of the issues dealt with in this study were central to her constructions of the analysis and interpretations of the results.

While the researcher recognizes that the findings in this study are based on a small sample of young men drawn from the University of the Witwatersrand, the extensive data gathered from each of the 10 participants certainly reinforce the notions put forth in this report and provide the basis for a larger qualitative investigation of the phenomena

perhaps across racial groups. Perhaps a quantitative investigation to examine quantitatively the perceptions and attitudes toward masculinity and the relationship between these perceptions and sexual abstinence will also be of value.

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APPENDIX A

Interview 1

Interviewer: When do you think is the appropriate age for men to start having sex?

KG: Err…from the time when they come to understand what it is they are doing and engaging in and they have yah….basically matured enough to realize what they are doing. And I feel that there is an age minimum which is16 upwards because when you are 15 like I think guys go through a lot of change I don't know how similar it is to girls. I know personally I went through a lot of ups and down and 15 was just a very haphazard year. Just full of craziness you wanna go there, you wanna do this you wanna cry or laugh, you wanna fight. There is this phrase we used to use that "your balls haven't dropped yet"

Interviewer: What does that mean?

KG: It means you haven't…you know cause your testicles they have this sack here [pointing just bellow the groins] that they can just come up and apparently that's where gay people put them. Is not that their balls haven't dropped it just means that you are being told that you are still like a laitie. And then guys have this thing where you know a guy ……not with a deep voice but you know guys have like a very bass voice and you see time to time like when you are 15 years at times your voice will go up like 10 notes I can't do it now but when you are young you have this [he is making sounds like hiccups to demonstrate] but it comes on occasions. Is called…err [thinking about the term]….it is all to do with the boys, is everything to do with boys.

Interviewer: Does it also have to do with the saying "your balls haven't dropped yet? What do you have to go through, what is the transition process that you have to take to sort of say now "your balls have dropped"?

KG: No is just….is not really like a phase as in……I think is just where by your body has settled, is largely to do with hormones. I know that cause you get acne, you get pimples, you know you are very like moody as well… If there is ever such a thing with guys. But you become very like….you don't know yourself and you know you don't know what you are doing, you don't know why you have to come to school because you are not gonna use the math's in life. You become very rebellious. Is like when a kid…..have you ever seen children at 6years old? 6 or 7 years, they are the naughtiest pieces of rubbish you can ever find. Is almost like when you are 6 but now you are 15 years. So once you have gotten over that whole…I mean you start to value things and you grow up a bit.

Interviewer: Are you sexually engaging with your partner, if you have one?

KG: I am not really sexually engaging with her, because she is in Grahams town which is very far and I don't think is worth me going all the way to Grahams town just to get some ass and come back.

Interviewer: Guys will always do that.

KG: I wouldn't, so I am a different guy.

Interviewer: So am I being right to say that guys will travel miles to get sex?

KG: Yah! to an extent is true that guys will travel that far to get it. But is that….you need…. Okay let me get to your question about partner; you said do I have a partner? Yes I do have a partner and she is in Grahams town. Am I sexually active with her? We had

sex grand total of 2 times. The first time was when she lost her virginity…I don't like this phrase "she lost her virginity". It's more like she felt it was the right time for her to have sex, not loose it. So the second time was just like [he moves his hand side ways to show it was just okay]....basically I would say we rarely engage in sexual activities. For her it was the first time and it was like oh she is still learning…it was quite funny [he laughs]… it was funny really. But anyway I was trying to be as accommodating as possible, I didn't expect too much. So yah……and then….. yah so I guess I am sexually active with her but is very limited…..very limited. It drives me insane sometimes……

Interviewer: What do you mean it drives you insane?

KG: Okay that's maybe exaggerated but it's just like you know I will say this again….when guys cheat neh?, go outside of relationships because their girlfriends haven't given them sex in like a month an half and they go have sex with another person, is not because they love the girlfriend less or they feel that gee…..you know its over or whatever. Is just because guys have this…..I call it a tank where they have to fill up each time. It makes us sound shallow, neh? It's not really a tank, it's like…. you know women neh? You know women never understand something once you relate something to them, once you give them a similar example. Women have this thing of they want you to show affection, neh? They can't live without it you know. They can't live without their boyfriends bring them flowers or surprise them with breakfast in bed…..and is that, for women is that! For guys is that sexual thing…you know your stress levels rises, you know sex at the end of the day I was reading is actually a good form of exercise. It decreases your…..what is it? Like your…..like guys who have sex like often are less susceptible to heart diseases, I am telling you is true because when you have sex is a

damn work out hey? Unless you are one of those 2 minutes guys and that's just plain selfishness. But may go for good 30 minutes you know that's like running. Have you ever ran like 30 minutes? But you can have sex for 30 minutes, so its good and it's a whole body thing you know: change positions, work out your muscles cause you are holding her weight up and it's a whole hey…ohhh……ohhh thing , speeding your heart rate and your also nervous and excited and your heart really pumps and pushes blood out and everything is just beautiful and to top it of, you just…..ahhhhhh [breathing out slowly to signal relaxation]. That's why guys sleep, a guy who sleeps after he had sex is because that's probably the greatest sex he's ever had not because he doesn't care, you've drained him.

Interviewer: some people believe that if you don't have sex you become very aggressive and moody. What is your opinion?

KG: No, that's just to show how severe guys can get when they haven't had sex for sometime, it's just exaggerated. It's more really to do with……. Like for me I haven't had sex since July. The first three weeks was like a bit you know…….. [He uses facial gestures to indicate that it was difficult], like you think about it and you are like gosh I wish I could have sex right now, then you start to realize that okay I am not gonna have sex until such time. But when she came back for the holidays, obviously one would expect that we are supposed to have sex after haven't seen each other for so long and we didn't. Maybe it was like 2 weeks without doing it, which is very surprising. Like it was a challenge that I put to myself, that okay is not a big deal if you don't have sex but it comes to a point where now you feel…..as I said you know that tank that you visit the tank when you feel that you need to, but its only temporary that's the thing and you feel

like “oh god I am gonna die, I am gonna die if I don’t have sex” and then all this opportunities come towards you, you know I’ve been with like maybe 5 girls that were guaranteed that if I just give up then I will have sex with them just to fill up the tank you know. As I said it’s only temporary and then it goes on and you build that self control. Is like that with anything I guess because you look at money, you know one may think if you have lots of money and you don’t spent it you become frustrated or you don’t know what to do with yourself and you end up killing yourself. But I think it has to do with self-control if you know that “I am not gonna have sex then I can control it”

Interviewer: What do you think about men your age who don’t have sex and girlfriends?

KG: Eeh! I’ll laugh at them, ill laugh at them. You know that friend of mine, if he comes to me and say “Eeh Jo! I am not having sex with my girlfriend”, I’ll crack I’ll laugh at him until I’ve had enough.

Interviewer: So you are expecting him as guys to have sex with his girlfriend?

KG: To me is to do……you know is the reasons he is not having sex that would make me laugh at him. If he tells me that “bro I am not having sex with my girlfriend” and I will be like “why?” and he will be like “no because she thinks my dick is small” I will laugh at you like you can’t believe. But if it’s because the girl is still a virgin and waiting for the right time then sure by all means it’s fine. But if he is going out with a ‘slut’ and she is not giving you action then something is really very wrong with him. Is either she is eating his money or you just don’t have that sexual appeal. You know guys have this thing called sexual appeal, you must have sexual appeal like you can have the biggest dick but if you don’t have sexual appeal……..if she can’t picture having sex with you……if you are going out with a chick who is very open and you are not having sex,

it's a big deal, then something is wrong with you. When my chick came back for holidays we have not done anything, so I haven't had action since July, don't you feel sorry for me?

Interviewer: Why should I feel sorry for you?

KG: Because… look at me…..

Interviewer: Are the guys laughing at you?

KG: Yah, okay yah the guys were laughing at me initially like during April, **M**ay, like come on joe you of all people? You should have been there easy, easy. They were busy going on saying "you don't have game" and I told them I said "me and my chick are not ready, until she is ready I ma not gonna do it". Then me and my girlfriend, we got like quite serious and they kinda saw that okay this guy is being for real and they were like big ups brother at least you have self-control. But at the end of the day I won and they felt stupid. So that's why I say it's only after they hear your reasons then it's like oh okay….. and how much you mean it. If you are dating a 'slut' and they you say "no I don't wanna have sex with her because sex is special", she doesn't really think sex as special otherwise she wouldn't be seen a slut. If you tell us I am not having sex with my slut girlfriend I am waiting till she is ready, you can go to hell, that's bullshit.

Interviewer: If you were not engaging in sexual relations with your girlfriend, would you be so comfortable to tell them that you are not getting any?

KG: I have been telling them all the time, still even now you get those few comments that "hee, hee….KG is not having sex" I don't care. Like my friend yesterday, when we start dissing each other he was like " Im going to see my girlfriend and I am going to have sex today, when are you getting it?" but it was in the context of competing with one

another that I got higher marks than you in a test, then it got down to the whole sexual thing that “you are not getting sex, haaa haaaa”

Interviewer: I have had some guys tell me that there was a point in life that they would lie about having sex when they were actually not doing it. What’s your opinion?

KG: It’s true, yah is true, you know girls sometimes don’t understand guys have this thing: we are not like “oh, you are not having sex” with that empathetic voice, like ‘oh shame” you know. We are not gonna give you that thing that “it’s fine if you are not having sex”. Guys just have this thing that we are gonna laugh at you, look even with the tests if you come and say “gents I didn’t pass” we laugh at you, it’s just part of being a guy. Not really like guys are shallow, is just really being a guy.

Interviewer: What cultural norms and practices do you know o that defines what it means to be a man?

KG: When you get circumcised, I did that. Man that shit is painful, hey that shit is painful, you don’t understand… that shit is painful. So I think then that’s when you experience true pain. I am not cultural, I am Tswana but I don’t follow any traditions, not because I don’t like them its just I find myself to be at a different point in time. So I don’t really know much about what it means to be a man in my culture, but for me personally I believe when you get circumcised. In a sexual context I think that’s when you can really please your women in bed, like she can walk away and say that guy is amazing.

Interviewer: What kinds of things do you have to do to prove that you are a man?

KG: I don’t think you know for me this thing of having to prove to someone that you are a man, doesn’t really fly. If you are a man it will show, like if you are naturally born to be

a leader it will show it will just come naturally. You don't have to climb Mount Everest, for them to say you are a man now.

Interviewer: There are common values that implicate what it means to be a man that you have to identify with….

KG: firstly, there are things like sports where you play and watch sports and there are things like on having dominance. Man have this…….you know for me to ask another man to bring me water is not gonna happen if is just genuinely asking that 'KG please get me water' he is dominating he is taking my…..what I am he is making me like almost like a woman [eish that sounds so wrong] but you can't get another man dominate you. Look at sports like rugby, there is this thing of 'if I can over power you I am more of a man than you, if I can arm wrestle you I am more of a man than you'. Controlling women, you can't be seen as if your woman is got you by the balls, if you tell your woman…..if you are around guys and your chick is around ….lets say you are my chick and I ask you to do something and you sort of want to refuse the guys are watching that they are like looking 'lets see how much of a man KG is in this relationship' neh? They always show you like 'let's see what she is saying'. if you defy me to a point where I give up then they think you lost the plot you are not a man because you have to have that dominance and women also have to have that…..what I realised the other day is that women need somebody above, they need that authority, not to control them but they need like a pillar, someone higher and stronger than them. That's what they need, women can't function just by themselves just like men can't function just by themselves, because they all wanna be bigger and stronger, you see so I think as a man you need to have that dominance over your woman, you need to have that assertiveness, that confidence and to

some extent that arrogance as well. It's good cause you need to believe in yourself, you need to know that I'm this, you are not that. Is largely to do with your ego, how big is your ego, how big is your man. Gay people are men but they don't really have much of an ego, if you are arguing….like if you are watching something and a gay man is busy talking and you raise your voice and say 'shut up!' he will shut up or mumble but if you do that to another man he will stand up to you and that's were that battle come were its about 'who is more of a man'

Interviewer: So it's more of a constant battle about who is more of a man the rest of the other men?

KG: Yah it is that simple, it happens in nature, it happens everywhere.

Interviewer: Do you think if you are not having sex you are less of a man?

KG: That's were the whole mockery comes into it, the jokes and whatever, because you are not dominating…..like if you are not having sex not really that you are less of a man but you don't know what other men are going through, so you don't really know what it is to be a man. You might be a man in other instances but when it comes to the sexual aspect you are not really a man like I may be the biggest guy there, like I may be bigger than all the guys in there but if I'm not having sex you are still a laitie, 'o se nxane'

Interviewer: What do think about sexual abstinence?

KG: When? ,….sexual abstinence as in remaining a virgin or just that you had sex before and you don't want to have it anymore because you want to achieve something?

Interviewer: Both definitions

KG: With the virginity case it really comes down to what type of person you are or what do you believe in because there is religious aspects attached to it, but if you think to

yourself that you are going to stay away from sex for 40 days……like in that movie…….that's just to prove a point to yourself or to gain self-control. You know like me now I have gone three months without sex, that's 90 days…..that's more than 40 days……I am the man. But you know is like I'm working on my self-control you know I've had opportunities where I can sleep with a girl like now. Abstinence can be for self control or religious reasons.

Interviewer: Some men have confessed that they have been victims of labelling because they were abstaining

KG: It really comes down to what guys are about, guys have that thing were we just tell you off even when we are talking about a completely different topic like cars, we go like 'you don't know anything' and you know what we mean but its not in a derogatory way, it will be in a joking manner, there are severe cases where guys have been pushed out of groups until they go have sex but those are not your friends they are just people trying to get you to have sex. But when it comes to a group of guys being together is just like a joke is not to hurt your feelings is just not personal.

Interviewer: Some people believe that practicing sexual abstinence in this life time is unrealistic, what is your opinion?

KG: Like I said before is not impossible but sexual abstinence is quite hard to practice especially when you have done it before.

Interviewer: Do you think it is possible for a young married man to maintain a commitment to be faithful and monogamous?

KG: I hope you are using the man just because I am a guy because women are just as horny as guys are they just don't show it. it is very possible but people should understand

that if you are married you have taken in a partner, its not just you anymore, you are always thinking about the next person what ever action you take you must think about how the next person is gonna react so its more like you re in it together, so I think a guy's commitment to his marriage is not solely dependent on it is him and his wife's. I think women should do more to……..as I said if your woman doesn't give you sex for a month and a half, because she is always like 'no I have a headache, no I am tired', what is that, like you cant is unacceptable sorry I go to the brothel, do my business and then come back and I am happy. I still love you but you are denying me something that someone else can give me. With the commitment thing is to do with the partner helping out, 'if you want me to stay committed you have to help me stay committed vice versa. I am not gonna do that by myself'

Interviewer: what do you think about young men with multiple partners?

KG: It's fun, nobody must try to deny that, it's fun because it's like having different water flavours, spring water, Bonaqua you just have that "I wanna have this today" it's a choice and that's life in general like people who have a choice, like the rich always have a choice about what type of car they want, like having a constraint doesn't make you happy like being constricted to one particular thing will make you unhappy you see. But it can also be dangerous depending on the guy, cause if you go have multiple partners and you know that you are a drunkard you will be very…… you know when you are drunk you don't know what you are doing and woman don't believe that, and is true, when a guy is drunk "o lahlile" he does not know what he is doing when a girl starts touching his dick he gets horny and just does his business you know his animal instincts takes over.

Interviewer: I hear that men praise each other for having multiple partners, what is your opinion?

KG: A guy with lots of girlfriends is praised because you know its fun, it's like you look at a rich person as I said the people who have a choice are the most happy. If you have a choice that "I am not gonna go work and is not gonna affect me", you are happy. So if you have more girlfriends is like "well done" because you are doing something that other guys can't achieve.

Interview 2

Interviewer: When do you think is the appropriate age for men to start having sex?

M: whoa that is quite a challenging question because in other words you are asking when one does starts to have sexual appeal. That's when you think I am ready to have sex. If I have to put age to it bearing in mind that one is in terms of responsibility wise I will say 16 years will be sort of the time and age one should be expected to be having sex.

Interviewer: in terms of responsibility?

M: no, in terms of expectations, like you are expecting this person to start being highly and effectively sexually active at that age, but if in terms of responsibility when you are 16 you are just about in standard seven, that's not really to say you are responsible enough at that age, but not saying that people at that age don't have it [sex]. I for one I think I was around that age when I first experienced such. For responsibility wise you will be responsible enough when you are 18.

Interviewer: So you had your sexual debut when you were around 16? What was the experience like? Was it because of peer pressure or something? Why did you decide to engage in sexual activities?

M: err, at that age your friends and peers, the ones you play soccer with or any sort of sports are at about 18 years and older than you. The guys who are 18 years they already had it and they talk about it. You are 16 and you have not had it so you feel like maybe I am at their age and you start having it because you are mixing with the group that talks about it but if you are 16 and you were all 16, I don't think one will have the pressure of starting to engage in things that they don't know.

Interviewer: but the thing is when you are around that age, I would assume that there is not that thing inside; the emotions that you were making love to someone you love. It is more of a man ego, to boast about it your friends.

M: when you are at the age group of 14 and18 you talk……..the guys who are 18, they will tell you "I have done it [sex] with that one and that one" and then you have nothing to say, so for you to engage in the conversation you have to come up with "I have done it with that one and that one and that one". It's a competition in an essence among the peers, because if you haven't you cannot engage in the group if you don't have anything to say to the group so you will be left out in a way. for you to fit in you have to do what the group is doing but like I said it can be that if you did not engage with such a group but in activities such as soccer and after you go home instead of sitting at the corners of the streets then you wouldn't be engaging in such conversations because after the soccer game you talk about soccer and you wouldn't have the time to talk about such. The thing is when you don't play soccer or any sport you engage in social activities of sitting at the

corners charting and that where everything start going wrong. You start learning how to smoke as well. I will say 16 is the age a man will be expected to start having sex.

Interviewer: You said expected, whose expectations?

M: The groups

Interviewer: The groups, sort of peer pressure. That's if you are not doing it you are not the man?

M: Yes you are not a man. So in a way someone will say "this guy is stupid, he is not clever" because you are not doing it, you are abstaining.

Interviewer: Because you are not doing it?

M: Yeah! Because you are abstaining from it….But it boils down to personal issues as well, if a person as an individual feel is not right for them to engage in such because they are not responsible enough……..you know there are people who grow faster beyond their age and the only reason is that they hang around people who are way older than them, say 5 years older. Then you try to live a life of those who are 5 years older than you. You go out to the game shops and play games together…you know all this 50cents games, this where we hang out and then during that interaction this is where you find these18year olds telling this 14 year olds this is how things are done. Then the 14 year olds when they reach 16 they start feeling it physically, starts to have erections and they see girl girls differently from when they were 14, 12 years old.

Interviewer: then when you see girls different and want to have sex. Who do it with? I mean is just with any girl or do you have to find a partner first?

M: initially what brings you into this whole concept of girlfriends and boyfriends was the peer pressure from the old guys telling you "that's how things are done" and then

when you start thinking to get a girlfriend you…..obviously they introduce you to their girlfriends, they tell you "this is my girlfriend, that's my girlfriend…" so you know whose girlfriend is whose here but you also know who which girls in the community are free. So you will pick from those who are free in your school or around the area. When you see them around then you say that is the chick I like then you start to propose. But really the matter is you are really looking for love or you just looking for a partner to sleep with later on? You can't really distinguish between the two.

Interviewer: when do start looking for a partner? Is it when you start feeling like "I am not fitting in" when your peers are talking about their girlfriends?

M: the first thing that will cause you to go looking for a girlfriend…..a girlfriend as in sexual partner type of a thing would be that the older guys would have told you what happens. Then you will start looking for one; before they influence you, then you won't even try. You will have just friends and it will stop there. But the minute they start telling you stories about men and women type of things and then they start influencing you in that way. And then sometimes you find that you just happen to know each other [the girl who is just a friend] because you stay in the same street, and they will start teasing you about it, they will say "that's your girlfriend, that's your wife, you have been sleeping together" and that develops in you that they are telling me that I have slept with that person and I haven't actually done anything. Then that start to influence you to develop that relationship to a certain level where you feel like maybe is right for me to have my friend as sexual partner although we just live a street down from my house then you start putting that influence from the older guys as if that person is your girlfriend for sexual partner reasons whereas the person was just initially your friend.

Interviewer: You had your first sexual encounter when you were 16, do you wish you could have waited?

M: Ahh, err…..I cant say I would love to turn the hands of time but…err… in today world where we are live in……..back then there wasn't much about safety issues against sex, except that one will fall pregnant, right? Today's life we are talking about AIDS which kills people. If I'm to advice a person of today age about sex I will "say never have sex until you get married" and hope that that person you get married to have never had sex until she got married to you. But that is in a perfect world, we know it doesn't exist.

Interviewer: If you had a girlfriend …

M: A girlfriend as in the girl who lives down the street or the woman, lady or girl I thought I love?

Interviewer: The girl you thought you love and you happen to around the guys talking about sex and you chose not to have sex. How do think they will react towards you?

M: In essence, they will not know, so you can tell lies and get away with it because they are not there when you are together and when you are not. They only see you alone, so you can tell them we did it yesterday, they wouldn't know you lie.

Interviewer: Why would you lie?

M: No, the thing is if you wanna keep in the group, you will crack a story and says "we did it, it was nice and all that and telling lies. But the issue is the girls on the other side will be doing the same thing so they talk and then maybe the story will break that you didn't. The thing is you lying to keep the friends so you can keep on telling each other lies stories about the sex you had which you never had. Now the problem is when you start talking about that you had it and you didn't have it, then the girls on the other side

will start to deny it because maybe she doesn't like you enough to have sex with you. The guys will come back to you and tease you that you didn't do it and then you are forced to find somebody who will seem to agree that you do it.

Interviewer: I get a sense that you would rather lie and say you did have sex when you did not, what are the consequences of telling the truth.

M: The fear of you being the "so not cool guy" is a status that is big among the ages between 14 and 17 years. Everyone at these ages wants to be seen as the "cool" guy by ladies. You want to be "THE GUY" amongst all the others. because it boost in….if you didn't do it and you excel in other activities like sports say soccer, you can get away with murder in terms of you could still tell them that you are not doing it and they will not see you as the "not so cool guy" because you beat them in sports.

Interviewer: What do you thin about men your age not having girlfriends and not engaging in sexual activities?

M: I wouldn't think of them as stupid or anything. I will just think…err…err maybe waiting for the right person to have it [sex] with if they ever intent to at a later stage

Interviewer: If your friend tells you that he is a virgin what would be your reaction?

M: No, the thing is w all at some point wish we could have it with our first wife but it doest exist. Here is this guy who tells me that he is virgin at the age of 25……like I said I had it at 16 and….and…....I wish I could have been him, I wish I was him. I don't know what….how he managed to get to the age without being pressured or…..I don't think myself I would have reached 25 years being a virgin, because I think when you reach 21 you are responsible enough. You can start your own family you can marry, with no problem. You can achieve so much at 21, finish your degree with honours degree and

from there you can marry. Which at the age of 25 he still a virgin, is either he has had setbacks in life which prevented him not to marry or he is just not intending to marry all. Maybe he is waiting to marry and wants to have it for the first time at their honeymoon.

Interviewer: What do you think about sexual abstinence?

M: Okay now you need to make me understand what you mean by sexual abstinence…….are you telling me people should have sex when they want to have kids? Is that right?

Interviewer: No, sexual abstinence is when you refrain from sexual activities. In this study when you are not having sex and you are not doing anything that can ultimately satisfy your sexual desires, that is an act that can arouse you and gratify you sexually, for instance: masturbation.

M: okay, I need to ask this question, "At what age are we considering sexual abstinence?

Interviewer: I never really thought about this question but for now let's just say throughout until such time that you get married.

M: Okay. I would say sexual abstinence will exist in that perfect world. It does not work and in a relationship it doest work because one partner will abstain the other will get it somewhere else. You see people go to parties and they come back the thing you hear is "we don't remember what happened". I would not say it is not possible but I will say it is difficult.

Interviewer: Can you abstain from having sex?

M: I will try to drink all medicines if possible that would make me not be sexually active. If they can invent a pill that will you take and you don't feel anything because I have tasted before and I feel I should have it everyday and just to stop from having it everyday

to not having it at all will be trying to quit cigarette or drugs. I need a rehabilitation centre.

Interviewer: Are you saying it will be impossible for you to abstain?

M: Yes. At this point in time it will be.

Interviewer: if you have not tasted it [sex] yet, do think it would be easy for you to abstain?

M: Yes

Interviewer: If you were to speak for all men generally, do you think sexual abstinence is realistic a practice?

M: We are talking about a being that has possibly 4 to 10 erections in one day. That happens when you least expect it and you don't need to look at a naked woman to have an erection, it just happens randomly. You can go to church and pray you will still get an erection. Man you can have an erection when you just were sitting and watching cartoons, that's the kind of human being we talking about. Imagine now that happens everyday and you know you are not gonna have it. I mean when you study you put all your focus on books and then you hardly ever get an erection that will press you to have sex, but if you study and relax and you stress then you feel like if I have it I will relax and have less stress. That's just how it works. Now for every man out there: would they abstain? Well for those you have never had it, would, those who have had won't manage. It is not possible to stop, unless you have some sort of medication.

Interviewer: Do you think it is possible for a young married man to maintain a monogamous and faithful relationship?

M: It is possible, I did mention earlier that having it for the first time with your wife can turn out to be two ways, if your wife don't cheat and you don't cheat you will be together for life but if you are tempted because of pressure because people tell you this things are different and you want to taste. Then you won't be faithful. If on the other hand when you were growing up, you had too many girlfriends then you finally found the one you want then there is no reason to cheat.

Interviewer: What do think about men who have multiple partners?

M: First they don't think and they are stupid. Women always want something from you especially if they know you have a girlfriend. Too many trophies for one guy are problems. Women should also try to be the good girlfriend so that they don't go cheating.

Interviewer: What do you think defines you as a man?

M: My anatomy. This is a difficult question we never really thing about this until someone ask you. Well I don't do women's stuff that's makes me a man. Traditionally back in the ages a man was supposed to provide for his family, wait for food to be delivered to the table. But now things have changed, men and women share chores and can both provide for the family.

Interview 3

Interviewer: When do you think is the appropriate age for men to start having sex?

TM: I think when you are ready, anytime when you feel ready.

Interviewer: In your opinion do you think a young male at the age of 15 years is ready to engage in sexual activities?

TM: No, you know why young people at that age have sex is because of peer pressure. Usually they don't have the need to have sex but because of peer pressure they start having sex at that age, they are not feeling ready but because of pressure they start having sex. My feeling is, from the age of 0 until the age of 21 years really there is no need at all for you to have sex between those ages but because of peer pressure……it even applies to people who are married, they have peer pressure to have sex outside their marriage. So it's not about when are you ready or when you feeling…it's about Er… wena inside yourself, you know when it's the right time.

Interviewer: How old were you when you first had sex?

TM: Err…I can't remember

Interviewer: Was it 2 years back, last week….

TM: I can't remember honestly, but is not anytime soon; close to soon it is way back

Interviewer: Were you very young?

TM: Ja, I was very young

Interviewer: In which grade were you?

TM: Let me just say I was still in middle school.

Interviewer: If you can remember, why did you have sex then?

TM: The only thing is peer pressure that's all, peer pressure applies to everything. When I started …..Okay I started dating it was peer pressure, all my friends had girlfriends. I started doing my ears, piercing because all of my friends were doing it and it went on and on and on and I had sex because all of friends were doing it and we thought we were giving each other support.

Interviewer: In your opinion why do you think you succumbed to the pressures?

TM: That's the problem of peer pressure you can't stand alone, because you become isolated and as soon as you become isolated you become discriminated against.

Interviewer: Was there ever a point when you felt that you did not want to have sex but you were…

TM: I didn't want to hurt myself because every body says it's enjoyable so why should I be negative? You know what I mean, so its really…I would say depending on the group, the friends you have would determine at what age you have it, the kinds of friends you have. If you have friends who play football full time usually you will have it at the later stage

Interviewer: I feel that you are saying it's the influence around you……

TM: exactly

Interviewer: ….that you are not given a chance to give this a careful thought

TM: Exactly and its topical again, everybody is talking about it, so why not do it.

Interviewer: I know one guy who told that the only reason he had sex was because he had a friend two years older than him and he was having sex already and he used to tell him all about it and out of curiosity he went and experimented….

TM: That's true and fortunately for guys people who explain it they say it's not painful so there is no scare for you to explore because really you have nothing to loose.

Interviewer: What would be your personal opinion about a man who at the age of 25 is a virgin?

TM: First of all I'll laugh at him, but I think is good, it's good for him if he feels confident, you know what I mean but I don't think you will ever find a guy at that age

saying “I’m a virgin” even if they are because of the same pressures like I said if you come to me and say “I’m a virgin” I’ll laugh at you and you don’t want to be laughed at.

Interviewer: Why would you laugh?

TM: ‘cause then it’s unusual it’s something that doesn’t happen quite often, you know what I mean? And its cause of thinking at the age of 25 he must be really experienced in all departments of life and if he is not experienced in sex surely building a family is a strain he might not be able to do so. You know what I mean…..and then again these stories we read, when we read a lot of stories were people say “well my marriage failed because of my lack of performance and staff like that” they really encourage young people from early age to start practicing thinking they’ll be perfect.

Interviewer: Why do you think we find young men as young as 14 and 15 years of age engaging in sexual activities?

TM: I think is too much exposure, they are too much exposed to sex. In the olden days you were not that much exposed and most of them were afraid to get into it unless it was through peer pressure and the old guy pressurizes you to do it. But now because you can see it on TV read about in the papers and hears about on radio, its all about sex. They encourage these young people…you know its curiosity, the same as a BMW you never tested it and you want to test it

Interviewer: What do you think about sexual abstinence?

TM: mmmh…I think it’s a good way to start but it’s still a long way to go, it’s a good way to start, to encourage people, you know preach every time young people must hear ‘abstinence’.. ‘abstinence’, maybe it will get through their heads.

Interviewer: Do you believe that the message of abstinence will be embraced by young men?

TM: After some time, yes I believe it will. If we parents and guardians with great leadership and they can guide their children, I think t is possible. So mustn't attack the children t abstain but attack the parents in guiding their children to abstain, I think it's a good way of doing it.

Interviewer: Can you sexually abstain?

TM: Yeah I can, in fact it's been a couple of years. In fact when I was in high school I think is was great 12, I like making promises to myself, the last time was actually was in matric farewell and I told myself that from this point onwards I need to choose between studies and woman, usually they don't go together, its either you choose one and let one go. You know what I mean…..I chose one, studies of course. So I have been concentrating on books fulltime, I am not a part time student I mean fulltime. And whenever I think about sexual thing……what's amazing about this thing is when you abstain from it keeps coming back.

Interviewer: One guy I talked to said that sexual abstaining is denying the natural to happen and its more like saying people should not drink water

TM: I don't think so. The problem is we need to understand, who came with the rules that sex before marriage is a sin? One of the things is the preachers or rather the Christians are not doing their jobs properly. Ja just to be honest, because the thing about sex before marriage is a sin came from the bible from my understanding. So if you are telling your child that the bibl say abstain, they don't believe you, that why can't you abstain yourself. See you got'o go through…..that's the reason why people think is

nature, to my opinion you need to go back and think why sex was in plans. There are lots of opinions, some will say to enjoy some will say to make children, but there is only one reason why sex was in life…to make children that's the only reason. If you think about it, if we just stick to nature if you have sex you have a child without using this scientific things to prevention and condoms. So why cant we….if you say you denying yourself nature, that is you denying yourself to have children which is not the case. We just saying you are not old enough to have a child.

Interviewer: If you were to tell your friends that you are not having sex, what will be their response?

TM: In fact I have a friend o mine who was telling me something like that, depending on the kind of environment you are living in the response will be different. For example if you are living in Hilbrow and you tell me that you are abstaining I will really clap hands for you because of the surround but if you stay in a fairly controlled place and you saying that you abstaining I can really listen to you, you know what I mean or what I should say to is at this point in time I have really switched off my mind cause I realize that all this sex thing was really in your mind and if you think you that you are not gonna do it, you are not gonna do it and if you think gore that feeling is just a moment feeling and then if you can deal with it for that moment then the future is great. So if my friends tell me that they are abstaining already I will clap hands for them provided they have a sustainable relationship.

Interviewer: Would you be so free to tell your fiends that you are abstaining?

TM: Precisely, ja I would I mean why not. 'Cause I think now I am a grown up like I can handle any kind of pressure you know what I mean, I can do anything I want I to do at

anytime, unlike when I was young and I didn't have confidence in myself to do whatever I want the believe that me without my friends is nothing…definitely at this age hai no confidently.

Interviewer: Would you be confident to disclose to the guys you casually hang out with?

TM: Hell no, I won't cause it depends on the kind of people you hang out with cause remember if you if you….when you talk to a person and you explain yourself and the friends understands the kind of person that I am and how my changes came about, so if I don't know you why should I tell you about my confidential stuff. They start judging you. I have on friend who changes girls like in and out, I can't tell him that I am not doing it because then it becomes from one extreme to another extreme. He is extremely doing it and I am extremely not doing it, so the two of you will suffer heavily mentally. If I am not doing it and he laughs at me and then he will really harm my confidence.

Interviewer: I get the sense that you think it is better for the guy who is doing it that for the other guy who is not having sex

TM: Exactly, that's how it is. So if you are not doing it rather keep it to yourself. Until you feel that you will not be embarrassed. because of the way we were brought up, its kind of told that if you don't have at a particular age lets say if you reach the age of 15 years without having sex you are really an extreme stupid because of the idea that people have when you start making your own decision you must be really careful how you present them to other people, you know what I mean?

Interviewer: You have made your decision to abstain from sex; do you feel like your decision makes sense to you and not to the general population?

TM: Ja that's true and nobody really know that I am abstaining.

Interviewer: I heard other guys confess that they had lied about having sex while they were not. Do you think you can lie about it?

TM: I think is better to lie in a group than on one on one because in a group they will make a lot of noise but on personal level the person can understand. I would lie myself, in fact I lied a couple of times. Other people when you tell them they will tell other people and when most people know you start having this thing hanging "this guy doesn't do this thing" and even women when they start keeping away from you because you are not doing it. Then you find that it's messing up your life, it's another pressure on your shoulders.

Interviewer: Are there cultural norms and practices that you know of that implies what it means to be a man?

TM: That's the problem I had when I was young, I had to go and herd cattle. To prove that you are a man you have to do man stuff, you have to hold tough stuff and do tough staff. The good thing is you don't have to be seen with a woman to show that you are a man. In our culture you have to go to the mountains for circumcision and immediately when you come back from there you are a man. For me a man is someone who has responsibility, someone who take responsibility in everything that he is doing, so from the age of 16 you can't be responsible, what are you doing having sex? Don't you have other fun stuff you can do than having sex? So I think a man really doesn't use sex for fun, a real man. Sex can be irritating at some point when you've had it a lot, it's like driving, you are so anxious when you don't know how to drive and every time you get into a car you want to drive but as soon as you know how to drive it changes. The things that define what it means to be a man, I would say certainly is not a woman….its Err…

it's your way of thinking that really you can decide this is a man. It's the way you think, as soon as you start thinking about getting a car, buying a house you know what I mean you think in the future.

Interviewer: What is your opinion on men with multiple partners?

TM: Personally I don't have a problem with them. Really if they are feeling happy and they feel that what they are doing is right for themselves them let them do it. But I think it's really a wrong thing if we talk general sense, how come you have more that one woman.

Interviewer: Did you ever have more than one girlfriend at the same time?

TM: Really with my case I didn't have more than one girlfriend at one time…okay I did but none of them found out…it's really pressure put by the opposite person on to me that I end up agreeing to them. It's one thing for you to propose one woman and the other woman come and propose you and that's another problem because you can't say no as a man you don't have the guts to say no cause you feel like it's an opportunity lost that can never be regained. If you tell her that "look I have a girlfriend, I am not sure if you mind" if she doesn't mind, it's the same thing as saying food is cooking itself, I just have to eat it you know what I mean. It's rare that a guy in this situation will say no because it might bruise the woman's ego if you reject her.

Interviewer: Is it possible for a young married man to maintain a commitment to be faithful and monogamous?

TM: Ja its very possible. If you are willing to take the risk to stick to that woman I think it's possible. But unfortunately most of the times your woman will cheat on you and that's something you got to deal with.

Interview 4

Interviewer: when do you thing is the appropriate age for men to start having sex?

TH: I really cant put age to it, I wouldn't say 18 years maybe above 18 years especially with the younger generation now I think you should start having sex when you know and understand the consequences that comes with having sex, because not only do you have HIV/AIDS but you also have the possibility of getting someone pregnant and becoming a father so when you understand and ready to take responsibility for your actions that's when you can start having sex. So I will say 20 years, ja I would say 20 years generally. When you are 20 you are mature, I say this because maybe 5 years ago 18 years was okay you know because level of maturity and morality was higher then compared to now when now 18 year olds aspire to be superstars like people on TV and people on TV are not really living a mature life, that way I say 20 and not 18. I am not surprised that young people at the ages of 15 are having sex, like I say the messages we getting form the media….eer they are….nowadays people are more open minded, back then in the days of our fathers and mothers people were narrow minded and the world was the village or the town, the world was just that they were so constrained but now with the media and the internet and everything opening up the whole world we are exposed to other thing bad and positive. The other day I heard on radio that at some school learners were having sex in the open, I am not surprised cause now the media is glamorising sex. I am not saying there is anything bad with sex I mean I enjoy sex myself but while they are glamorizing it they are not highlighting really what sex is about and the consequences.

Interviewer: How old were you when you had your sexual debut?

TH: I was 18 so according to nowadays I was quite old.

Interviewer: What was the influence?

TH: It was….I guess really it wasn't love it was just being a boy there was not honest….there was no…..ja the inspiration behind was you know "I am a guy, she is a girls and she is hot" that's about it there was no connection there was nothing.

Interviewer: Afterwards did you go and tell your friends about it?

TH: I didn't boast around but I told my friends. Same time I am not a person that tells all he details but guys …..okay generally guys don't give details about anything, some people do.

Interviewer: Why did you tell your friends that you did it?

TH: [he burst out laughing], you know boasting for guys will be "hey I did it for 15 hours and did this and that and I turned around…. That's boasting.

Interviewer: What was he feeling like afterwards?

TH: There was that five minutes of glory and "I conquered" but there was also like an anti climax to it I guess that's why I didn't boast because its not all that wrapt up to be, there was no fire I guess hats why I didn't boast. Look I did give details like were and how but ja nothing more.

Interviewer: Was there ever a point when your friends were having sex and you were not?

TH: Mmmm, I am sure there was.

Interviewer: Were you ever made to feel like you are missing out and there is something wrong with you because you were not having sex?

TH: No, you know I've been blessed with true friends like I was friends with them since standard seven and I'm still friends with them, and they are quite mature I mean like two of them are two years older than me and two of them… like I was saying I have four friends, so two of them are at least two years older than me and two are a year older, so they were more mature than me and there was never….okay there was peer pressure but there was peer pressure in general, but not peer pressure pertaining to sex and we have to do it all. In fact all of us… is a personal thing we don't really…now and then we talk about sex and the pleasures and stuff like that but we don't boast about it, you know we don't really boast about "eish you know I had sex with six girls", no we don't do that, we don't do that.

Interviewer: What is your personal opinion about young men your age who don't have girlfriends?

TH: Okay, the first guys who don't have girlfriend, aah…it's… if it's your choice it's your choice I don't discriminate against that. Its if you don't want to have a girlfriend and you are shy then I would say then its your fault and you know…you are not really…,you are missing out because there are joys of having a girlfriend but if its your choice in a sense that you don't really want anybody and you maintain that….I actually respect people that have made rules and ideas and stick by them I respect people like that, so people that decide they are not gonna have sex and when they switch on TV and radio and internet and are bombarded with these images and they still maintain that they are gonna remain a virgin I respect them because some of us we are a bit weak we succumbed.

Interviewer: What makes you weak, is it by virtue of you being a man or is just you?

TH: Listen I don't regret having had sex, I don't. In fact I think I would continue right now I am not but I will with time I will continue. But there are those that had sex because they were weak and succumbed to external pressures and okay to some extent we all were pressurised but I don't know whether I was weak or not I don't know.

Interviewer: What pressures did you succumb to?

TH: What pressures did I succumb to? Just being young, you know you are at the club the music just….its just being young and the pressures that come with being young and not knowing better, just music, the music that we listen to talk about doing it and the pleasures, so those are the type of pressures.

Interviewer: Were there such pressures that had implied if you are not having sex you are not man enough?

TH: eer…..I am sure there was. I mean considering I was young and it wasn't…..like I said it wasn't about love, It was just do it type of a thing, I am sure there was, there was definitely…. but I also didn't dwell on the fact that prior to that I was a virgin, I didn't dwell on it.

Interviewer: Are there cultural norms and practices that you know of that implies what it means to be a man?

TH: Culturally as in me being Tswana and being raised the Tswana way or……culturally I think generally in the African cultures its…. there are distinctions that a man will do this a man will do that, a man will be strong man doesn't cry, if there are ceremonies man will do this and their responsibilities is this and women will do that. But at least with my experience in my family and my culture I've never came across sexuality is considered as spoken of ….anything about sex and men.

Interviewer: For instance when Zuma was said that in his culture a man does not walk away from a woman who is aroused

TH: HIV/AIDS, personally if I meet someone right now hopefully I will turn away, I will not take chances with my life like that. I think it was an irresponsible statement, very irresponsible. Like I said we are now open to these things, they are good and they are bad now we realise that "hey, okay sex I great" but when sex comes you know….i disagree that that a man does not leave a woman aroused, it is her partner's responsibility to see that the woman is taken care of sexually. Nna personally I wont judge you if you walk away from the woman. Personally for me will walk away and I can easily tell people, tell my friends and I will not feel judged. I don't think my friends will judge me, because they are my friends, I guess you know you hang around…. birds of the feathers flock together. I think if you….like I am saying I can tell my friends and not feel judged because I think they will understand gore hey man you look at the situation like ja okay she is beautiful but we think twice like…okay I am not like okay I am not a bad looking guy but still why….i will think twice personally and think my friends will understand why I've thought twice and why I walked away

Interviewer: But what about the general population of men…

TH: With the general population then you will be judged, they will judge, ja they will. Some of them will make stupid comments like 'how could you do that" you know, type of a think. But times are changing heh, times are changing. I mean with the whole thing of culture, we cant dwell on what our fathers and grand father, great grand fathers were doing because circumstances and environment were totally different, now I think recently

I have discovered that culture should be dynamic thing should be changing with the times. Yes I agree that in a marriage there are places a man should be able to do x a man do y, cause nowadays you find women for instance earn more money than a man in a relationship, you know. Nowadays things are changing, environment is totally different and then we have to adapt accordingly.

Interviewer: Men are not encouraged to say no to a woman who approaches him for sex. Other men will think there is something wrong with you…

TH: Aai, no no no, in fact nna I will brag, I go around bragging cause you know its very rare that woman comes and propose such proposal and if I said no there must be reason why I said no, maybe she is ugly. You know you cant be going accepting every proposal because she is a woman, people have standards and preferences and if she doesn't meet those standards then I will say "no" and if she does and I am not seeing any one then I will say "yes". And I will tell my friends if a woman came and proposed as such and I will brag about it like I said "yeah! you are the man, who is the man?" type of a thing.

Interviewer: Do you think there are still things such as bad labelling to men who don't have sex?

TH: I am sure they still do, you know I would say majority…cause I am engineering student and really there is point were if you wanna pass you hit the books almost every day and your life will revolve around that and having gone through that phase if a guy from my class tells me that I "I don't want a girlfriend"…I mean I had a friend who out of…I think ever since coming here he's never had a girlfriend I don't judge him I understand totally cause it's the environment, I think is the environment that we live in I mean even though we are at wits, we are at wits engineering and the circumstances, you

know the environment there if you don't have a girlfriend its totally understandable, we wont judge you we wont… in fact you are maybe…. one in 8 people have a girlfriend so we wont judge you so it doesn't really make a difference if you have a girlfriend or not. In fact you pass brilliant, you know you are the man, if you pass you are 'the man'.

Interviewer: Are you sexually abstaining?

TH: err, no. I mean okay what do you mean sexual absti…I told you that I am not a virgin….

Interviewer: In this case I define sexual abstinence as an act of refraining from sex and you don't do anything that can sexually gratify you such as oral sex, mutual masturbation, self masturbation….

TH: Ohh, okay… okay, ja ja ja……I get it, I am not sexually abstaining.

Interviewer: What is your personal view on sexual abstinence, about people who are abstaining from sex?

TH: Like I said I won't judge them if you've had sex and you decide to stay away good for you, but for me, like I said I like sex.

Interviewer: Is it possible for you to sexually abstain?

TH: That's asking a lot there. Maybe under the right circumstances, you meet a girl you fall in love and she only wants to have sex/make love after you are married, if you really love her you will do that, I will do that.

Interviewer: Will you not wait for her while you are getting it somewhere?

TH: Ja, I pray I wouldn't do that, yes…but ja so I guess under that circumstances I would. I will not sexually abstain without being….. No probably not. I mean listen I don't go around having sex with people that I don't…… I like to get to know a person, I

mean first time there was no connection but now I know how to develop connection first and have feeling for that person first before having sex with her. When I say I like to have sex, I mean I like to have sex with my girlfriend and not my girlfriend and others.

Interviewer: Recently there are programmes that are being implemented with the aim to preach sexual abstinence until marriage. In your opinion do you think that they will be effective in getting young people to abstain?

TH: To me they will not be effective because it is the decision I have made to have sex, if they can convince me otherwise. I mean like I was saying, that I would think that a 20 year old should start having sex at 20 because by then they would understand…they should by then hopefully understand what sex is and the consequences of having sex, at some level it's a risk that I am also accepting its my decision, understand those programmes are trying top prevent unwanted pregnancies and prevent HIV you know, I know about that and I know you get that through being sexually active. So because I know that and I understand the consequences of being sexually active and I've mad my decision , I've made a conscious decision, you know…sometimes they talk about….I forgot….but ja I believe I'm of a mature age and mind to have sex and I've made my decision and I doubt they can convince me otherwise. So to me if you come to me preaching about sexual abstinence because of HIV I will tell you to go knock next door. To the general population the programmes will not be effective either, because you already have millions of people, they say 1 in 4 people have HIV or something like that? That's what?.....eer 25% of the population is HIV positive, you know, so abstinence is but it shouldn't stop there, should deal with the problem at hand at the same time,

abstinence will deal with new infections but while…..sexual intercourse is not the only way of contracting the infection, its not a full solution.

Interviewer: In your point of view do you think there is hope with the younger generation (our little brothers and sisters and our children) that the message of sexual abstinence will be embraced?

TH: no, unfortunately no, things are gonna get worse before they get better, I mean right now…not about sex but just the whole world the whole level of morality, level of self respect in the youth especially unfortunately is very low and until they learn to respect themselves there is not hope.

Interviewer: Most young men have confessed that they had sex at a younger age because they were pressured by their peers to do it. What is your opinion about this?

TH: When you look at society as a whole there are… you can find persons that within a group of friends….. that don't respect themselves and they have more influence on the others.

Interviewer: What kinds of things you wouldn't do for fear that you will be seen as less of a man?

TH: Things that I wouldn't do…...I can't think of any. I personally think I live by my own rules and principles. You see, I think if you have a child and you don't support that child you dare not call yourself a man, not taking responsibility for your actions, I will judge you.

Interviewer: Most people believe that practicing sexual abstinence in this life time is unrealistic?

TH: I disagree with that statement, true there are people that are not having sex, it is possible. If you have the will power you can stop if you want.

Interviewer: Do you think it is possible for a young married man to maintain a commitment to be faithful and monogamous?

TH: Ja, I think is possible. I mean for almost three years I had one girlfriend and I didn't have any other girlfriends and I did not have any other sexual relations with anybody and ja I did it ….okay now and then obviously you are tempted if you go out with your friends or go out in public you see another beautiful girl, you are tempted yes but you know if you are really in a serious, legitimate and solid relationship is not impossible. Personally I think it is possible, I mean to some extent I think if you do succumb to those situations is a matter of weakness and other issues.

Interview 5

Interviewer: When do you think is the appropriate age for men to start having sex?

KH: I think is 18, I initially thought 21 is the appropriate age but I think is late. You are too old to experience sex for the first time at the age of 21.

Interviewer: What would be your personal opinion about a man who at the age of 25 is a virgin?

KH: He is developing too slowly, its like he is gonna get to a point in his life where he is gonna start experiencing all this things at the wrong age and he will be into things that nobody is not into, I mean at that age you are probably round about the right time to get married or something. Personally I believe that sometimes because you don't know anything it might just mess up things in your life, sometimes you just have to learn

certain things at a certain stage so that when you get to a certain stage in our life you would have already gone through all those you don't obsess over certain things anymore.

Interviewer: How old were you when you had your sexual debut?

KH: I was 18 and that's why I said 18 is the right time to start.

Interviewer: What was the influence?

KH: I actually had a friend who was also going through the same thing at the same time but he was 2 years older than me. So he had like an influence on me. I wanted to experience what he has, you know he will tell me certain things and I will wanna see them happen. So it was not out of love but curiosity I was actually experimenting. I think at that age is peer pressure and curiosity; like I said I wanted to experiment and not feel out, so in a way I will find something to talk about afterwards. Back then it was such a "man you are 18 and you still….man what are you still waiting for?" type a thing in a way I got pushed to trying it but it w with my girlfriend.

Interviewer: What do you think about sexual abstinence?

KH: Yo! That's a tough question what do I think about sexual abstinence, I think it is possible

Interviewer: Can you sexually abstain?

KH: To be honest, with me I don't think so. You know is so sad that…I think I got exposed to it at a very young age and right now is like I don't think is possible. If you experience was not that good then it will be possible, I think both men and women if you got exposed to it its not easy to just take it out of your mind once you have its like…..maybe is in my mind or something but its like it controls you. I think with the young people they should just preach safe sex and not abstinence.

Interviewer: Recently there are programmes that are being implemented with the aim to preach sexual abstinence until marriage. In your opinion do you think that they will be effective in getting young people to abstain?

KH: They can get through to some heads; I think the more mature heads. With the kids I mean its like they don't really listen but with someone mature they listen. Nna personally with me I want to but I just loose it at some point, you know I know the disadvantages of this and I believe they are more than the advantages but somehow I just…I don't know, I would survive for a certain time then I fall back. The problem with me is when I have a girlfriend and we become intimate, you know I cannot control it to that extent. if I don't have a girlfriend I can live a normal life and I don't bother about it and I don't go out of my mind if I don't have a girlfriend life still continues as normal and I like that way actually because I know there re disadvantages.

Interviewer: Some people believe that when you abstain it is not healthy and you can go crazy from that. What is your opinion?

KH: no, there is no such. Not with me, its like nna [myself] at this stage I have just reached a stage whereby…..its like at first I would right jump into that before I get to know a person but right now I wanna delay it first its like there are so many stuff which come into this things but now because I have learnt I prefer not to continue until a certain stage when I feel like yah maybe is right.

Interviewer: Most young men have confessed that they have experienced situations whereby they will resort to lies about having had sex when they have not because of fear of being laughed at or mocked. Why is this happening?

KH: Like I said, you find a 20 year old guy who tell you that he has not had sex…I don't know its like "ke bari [he seem stupid], or something" I mean you cannot imagine that such an old guy he hasn't really done it…like in the eyes of his peers he appears to be…I don't know somehow. I cannot understand a 23 year old guy who tells me he's never had sex. There is something wrong with him. You know I used to have a friend….that guy would have so many girls but he would do anything but sex. I always thought there is something wrong with him; I used to think he is gay. So I thought he was going out with these girls just to hide that he is gay. As a friend we will tell him that it's okay to be a virgin but we just do that to make him feel comfortable but behind his back is something different. I remember it actually happened with…. We used to study and some guy said something that no body expected and you know I heard it even from some guys who were in my class who don't really know that and they were commenting that 'you know that guy this day said this", its like it was one of those cases where he just lied to appear as if he was engaging in sex you could just judge by the way he said it gore hai no this guy just…wa bona [you see]. So you do get people….nna like my friends…. I have two sets of friends, I have friends from home who are working here in Jo'burg and I have friends here at Wits whom I study with. The ones here at Wits they would be more...they wouldn't really tell you to your face but my other friends, they would be on your case right from the start and they would make you feel like you are…..Like even nna I don't really believe in ….I don't believe in multiple girlfriends at a time and trust me they will make you believe that you are stupid and you know, so I just, what I do is spent less time with them. But in general guys will just tell you "hai, man its fine, we understand your time will come" but behind his back they will be laughing like crazy like "jo, this guy"

something is definitely wrong, well nna honestly that will be my perception even if I don't tell you, nna I actually even work out my solutions gore this guy this is what's wrong with him. Some guys is not that they don't want to have sex they just don't have a choice.

Interviewer: What are the cultural norms and practices that define what it means to be a man?

KH: Yo!

Interviewer: what kinds of things you wouldn't do for fear that you will be seen as less of a man? and I was like 'hai I don't care whatever men" everybody's got their personality. I used to do everything she could do when I was growing…..maybe this thing I took it from my mother because my mother could do the garden, there was nothing that she said that this is a man's job. I grew up cooking even when my sister is there, even though you get that thing from guys that 'hey, wena.

Interviewer: What is it about sexual abstinence that men often never want to admit to it?

KH: You see what I have experienced throughout is that even guys when they are in a relationship with a girl and they are not getting it but to us his friends he tells us that they are doing it even if they are not. Its cool to appear as if you are doing it than you are not even now as I am talking it still happens. I do know people that they don't do it but when they talk with other people they tell them "no me yah…..its happening" and you cant say "no dude you know you are not getting it". For the guys its like there is something that is wrong with this guy and in most cases there is something wrong you find someone has weird interpersonal skills he just scares women away and they do wanna try. I know I had two other friends, one was a virgin and proud to be and the other one was not, he was

really trying. But the other guys did not know that this one is a virgin and proud of it he kept it to himself he didn't everyone to know, I was the only one who knew and everybody thought I was lying all along. The other guy was trying and is just girls didn't like him; he was even worried that his younger brother will do it before him. Guys are very fussy about sex, they think about like "jo! My younger brother can't do it before me" and sometimes you do get this brothers who tell you "hai wena wa baiza, o stupid, you are missing out".

Interviewer: No you think it is possible for a young married man to maintain a commitment to be faithful and monogamous?

KH: No, its not. I can tell you something, I've lived with people who are married around me I've seen it man, it's not easy more especially in this young couples. You see for the guy who waited until he was 27 and he did it and got married I think those are more vulnerable but those once who started like a long time ago, they are used to it. its like you get to a point where you know its so exciting that you wanna try it with different people and very shortly they start getting bored and they are "eish, my wife…." So they have to go outside and make life more interesting. Even in a normal relationship generally people like that thing of cheating behind someone's back, make things exciting ja so with married people I can promise you 80% of married men they cheat. When you are married and you don't have other partners on the side they think "man you are weak, you are scared of your wife, o shapile ka whatever". You know is so sad that men who are married they also experience peer pressure. I have a cousin which is 35/36 years and the husband is like a year older, he is working, he is policeman and apparently all those guys he works with they are married and they have girlfriends so he was under pressure.

Interview 6

Interviewer: When do you thing is the appropriate age for men to start having sex?

K: Err…..from 18 years. I don't know but I have seen like in most cases when you become 18 years…..I know about me so I can't generalise. When I was 18…..I don't know maybe it was the environment that I was living in, but obviously you start being sexually err……not sexually active per se but you start developing this sexual feeling when you are around…….when you are still in high school, you know. And nowadays middle school they are sexually active but I think it's appropriate for one to start doing it around 18 years of age. I don't have an explicit reason, it's because I did it when I was 18 and I thought it was cool for me, you know but I can't generalise and say everyone should do it at 18 years.

Interviewer: What was the influence for you to have sex when you did the first time?

K: That's what I am saying; maybe it was the environment that was in because at 18 I was already her at Wits wa bona? And pressures, you know peer pressure and me wanting it you know, it had an impact in me. I think it is the environment 'cause when I was still in high school I didn't do sex you know and I started doing it when I got to Wits but I was already sexually charged you know and when I got to Wits I wanted to do it and the pressures and the environment was viable or me. So yah, there were lot of girls available.

Interviewer: What is your personal opinion about young men your age who don't have girlfriends?

K: Err, I think it has to with the value principles that they adhere to, I wouldn't think it's a flop that they are not doing it or I wouldn't praise those who are doing it, you know what I mean? It has to do with the principles, what it is that works best for you. So if you think abstaining until you get married is good for you then you should go for it. If you think doing sex at an early age or age that you think it's appropriate for you then you should do it. Generally at kasi the guys there if you are my age and haven't done it yet, they consider you a moron. They think you are stupid actually. They think something is wrong with you and o tshaba bana.

Interviewer: When somebody refers to you as someone "o tshabang bana", does that affect you negatively as a young man?

K: Personally, I've heard that before but knowing myself I mean some guys would say ke tshaba bana not knowing gore o na le ngwana wa bona? Because you are not a player, you don't have a lot of chicks and all that ba tlare o tshaba bana, only to find that you have a partner but that partner is not around. She is somewhere else. With me it's not an issue that is provided I know what I have and what is it that I want.

Interviewer: In that case did you ever feel like you can prove to them that you have a girlfriend?

K: Exactly, especially if you know that you've got someone you know and magenge suddenly have this perception that o tshaba bana, you feel like you can prove that you've got a girlfriend and ga o tshabe bana.

Interviewer: Why do you feel the need to prove to the guys that you have a girlfriend?

K: You feel like……sometimes you feel like you are been undermined. Obviously as a guy you like to be respected by your peers and this thing that ga o na ngwana……not that

you earn that respect per se but then they should respect you in a way that they don't undermine you especially when you know that you have a girlfriend, so you want to prove. If it was true then it would be different. I think it has to do with the inferiority complex, feeling inferior to your peers.

Interviewer: What is your opinion about the issue of multiple partners?

K: I think its not cool looking at the outcomes of it but when you are doing it its very cool in that…… you know different taste in different women. I can't rate it as cool myself. Generally speaking in most cases when you have multiple partners, guys turn to respect you. It takes us back to that idea that "o tshaba bana" now in this case is ke taba ya gore "ga o tshabe bana", o skhokho you know that thing?

Interviewer: What do you think about sexual abstinence?

K: I think it depends on what it is that you believe in, things like culture, religion and so forth. Now I don't think…….like I am saying, you see not abstaining…. it depend on which age you started doing sex, you know. But again if you are a religious person obviously you get to do sex when you are married, if you are a cultural person you still wait for marriage and so on. But in the world that we are living in now, whereby culture and religion people are neglecting in a way err…abstinence is not prevailing. A lot of people can't abstain and my perception on that is that I don't think there is a problem if you don't fall within cultural, religious groups. It has to do with the state you are in at that point, the sexual state that you are in. I don't see any faults about abstaining or not abstaining because I don't know the consequences of not abstaining and of abstaining because myself I've never abstained. Again it depends on what group you fall in and at what age you started doing it because when I started doing it at the age of 18 years I

thought it was appropriate for me. Now when you say abstain, until when and from what age and based on what? So personally I don't think it can be detrimental if you don't abstain especially when you are over 18 years. To me I think you would have abstained enough until you are 18 years.

Interviewer: If you were given all the right reasons you should abstain, would it be possible for you to sexually abstain?

K: I think that question would be relevant to high school teenagers but as soon as you reach that level of high education this is not relevant to us based on the age that we are in. unless if you want to bring issues of religion and culture, I am a religious person and I turned astray after doing it. If you have done it before it is difficult to abstain.

Interviewer: In a case where your partner asks you to abstain until you get married, what would be your reaction?

K: What happens in most cases especially if you are a guy like me who have had it before err you don't really err…….I don't think you and your partner would reach a consensus on that or even if you do it won't be genuine you know. Because you will be having other thoughts like you will go and get it somewhere else. Because you know this is a potential wife and you respect her for having that principle that no sex until marriage. We want such women, we value them, you understand? But at the same time you reach a state where you are sexually active and living without sex is another thing, you know. So in most cases guys will tend to go outside of the relationship to get it. You keep her until you are ready to get married.

Interviewer: Would you also do the same thing?

K: Err…I have not been in that situation myself, fortunately. If I meet the situation….. I am a very open person you know and I got chicks that are virgins and knowing that I tend to loose interest because they are virgins. If I get someone who wants to wait until marriage I don't know why I would stick around because knowing myself its difficult for me to abstain.

Interviewer: What kinds of things do you have to do prove that you are a man in your culture?

K: You know it's sad that I've lived with the Tswana people, okay I grew up in the township where culture have been neglected and the cultural values are not being practiced. People are becoming more westernised so I can't really comment on this. But in this modernised world obviously it's going out with them chicks you know, having girlfriends and so on. Because if you not going out they will think you are gay, so to prove you are a man you got to have a girlfriend.

Interviewer: Do you think it is possible for a young married man to maintain a commitment to be faithful and monogamous?

K: Yah it is possible, but on a scale of 10 I mean what are the possibilities of that happening….I will give it a 4. Like that is based on observations, its something that I've witnessed as I was growing up.

Interview 7

Interviewer: When do you think is the appropriate age for men to start having sex?

ED: I don't think there's an appropriate age, it depends on the person's maturity…you know you can't draw the line and say "16 years is fine or 18 years its fine", people grow

up differently you know there are people that are old they still have different views on sex as compared to younger people. As soon as they understand what goes on in their body and yah we can still jump for 18 years but then you do get 18 year olds who still don't understand what's going on. 15 years is not really appropriate but it depends on the person as well, some 15 year olds just it for experience, some understands what's going on.

Interviewer: How old were you when you had your sexual debut?

ED: Sexual debut! How do you know I had a sexual debut? .....17 years.

Interviewer: What was the influence?

ED: Err…aggh I just felt it was about time, there was no external pressure like there was no "do this do that" pressure, it was just err…….just wanted to see what it was like, experience. It was not really prepared for like my friends know I am gonna get it today kind of issues, I could see there was an opportunity and I decided to rather go for the opportunity. I think I was prepared but consequences……. I didn't think about it.

Interviewer: Was it with your girlfriend?

ED: It was a girl that was available which led to us dating for a while.

Interviewer: What do you think about sexual abstinence?

ED: Err….its good if it's done for the right reasons. If you want to abstain you must not abstain because you are told to abstain, you must abstain because you yourself personally you have a reason to abstain or to believe in abstinence.

Interviewer: Are you saying sexual abstinence should be practiced for the purposes of self actualization. What about religious reasons?

ED: Yah, I do not understand. In the religious reasons I cannot agree with pure abstinence for religious reasons because sexual feeling is a natural feeling is not dirty feeling, a feeling cant be negative its just a feeling that people get that is been shunned upon. So if you want to abstain it shouldn't be because your church tells you to do so or your parents, it should be maybe because you feel "right I just wanna abstain for such and so period or…." Not because……cause you are starving your body of natural feelings, you know…..its like love, you cant tell yourself not to love its gonna be here forever, or to have happiness or to, you know…..its a feeling that will always be there, that will haunt you if you are forcing yourself but if you understand why you are abstaining then ok no problem, but if you are abstaining because someone told you to you don't understand fully why you must abstain its gonna be a problem for you. It's gonna come back and haunts you, you can't deprive your body of your feeling or emotions. If you understand why you abstain when the edges come because you understand that "I am abstaining for such and such" so you are not gonna give in because of that understanding, its also gonna be hard I guess to have a young man abstain for an extended period but if that person understand why they abstaining and its their body at the end of the day, you can if you get this edges you know how to deal with them.

Interviewer: Recently there are programmes that are being implemented with the aim to preach sexual abstinence until marriage. In your opinion do you think that they will be effective in getting young people to abstain?

ED: I don't think so, I don't think they will be effective, unless we have people understanding why they are told to abstain, you know. But at the end of the day we are abstaining because of a disease not because of anything else, which is a bit of a problem.

Its like saying ice cream makes you fat, not one cone/ one cup make you fat. So what we are saying is don't eat ice cream at all instead of saying eat ice cream carefully so you don't get fat you know what am saying. That's how the new programmes are looking at, now it makes it seem as if sex is bad, which is not true. It is good it is human act; it cannot be bad it's not like killing someone. It should be done properly for one you know, but promiscuity is bad. But saying no sex at all it's like saying the same thing with ice cream, that no ice cream at all, they are saying sex cut, cut, cut it from your life. You are eliminating one of greatest aspects of life; you need every aspect to live as a person.

Interviewer: If you were given all the right reasons you should abstain, would it be possible for you to sexually abstain?

ED: Abstain for how long?

Interviewer: Until you get married?

ED: Ohh weeh……No, no. I see abstinence as restricting someone to not doing a certain pleasure you can say and restricting someone of a certain pleasure you have to find a replacement for that pleasure somewhere else, you know. Haai, it really has to a very….like really, really valuable reason for me to abstain. But I am sure it will still be hard for any young man to abstain.

Interviewer: What is your personal view about young men your age who are abstaining from sex?

ED: Hey, they are disciplined I can say. They are abstaining by choice neh, not by chance?

Interviewer: What do you mean by chance?

ED: They are just not getting any. Going back to the question, Err well……..it's their decision and am not against their decision, so yaahh….I would respect them for, as in their will power to abstain, but they are missing out! The pleasure is a sexual pleasure. Everyone should experience you know it cannot be….if they are abstaining for personal reasons good shot. I know if I abstain it wouldn't be because someone told me to.

Interviewer: If you were not engaging in sexual relations with your girlfriend, would you be so comfortable to tell them that you are not getting any?

ED: Close friends maybe, only. Close friends I mean people who understand you not just people you hang out with, there is a difference. Like people you chill with at the matrix and your close friends are not the same. If your friends know that you are not getting any it shouldn't be err……obviously you can make jokes about it but it shouldn't be a seriously attacking matter whereby when you come by they are like "ahh, here is this guy, he is not having sex"

Interviewer: I have had some guys tell me that there was a point in life that they would lie about having sex when they were actually not doing it. What's your opinion?

ED: Guys are embarrassed to say that they are not getting any. Boys will be boys hey; it's just a man thing. Guys are like that they just don't have egos; maybe sex gives you a big ego as a guy.

Interviewer: What kinds of things do you have to do prove that you are a man in your culture?

ED: Initiation school obviously, owning cows but nowadays is something else like lots of money. Aggh I guess nowadays culture has changed so fast, its now moving towards…..things are becoming westernized, guys are white man. So by the time you are

23 years old people see you as man even if you haven't done any cultural practices. That's how I see it nowadays. In my opinion a man is defined by the way he thinks, making wise decisions probably. A man can't just be tall; a man is someone who thinks like a man not just looks like a man. A dwarf can be more of a man than a six feet guy. what you should understand is that there are certain tasks that are women specific and that are certain tasks that are man specific but they should help each other hand in hand. It should be a complimentary thing, when I am asking you [as my partner] to give me water is not a big deal and maybe you will ask me to braai meat or……it should be a complimentary thing, not you being exploited as a slave and me getting fat or the other way around. No it should be complimentary, maybe that's what a man is: understanding his woman as well.

Interviewer: What kinds of things you wouldn't do for fear that you will be seen as less of a man?

ED: Ok, really can't think of anything…….maybe you wouldn't find yourself crying.

Interviewer: do you think it is possible for a young married man to maintain a commitment to be faithful and monogamous?

ED: Yes, if you love someone……it is very possible to commit but that would be hard but it is possible.

Interviewer: What is your opinion about young men with multiple partners?

ED: Its wrong man, it's not good. You can't have a woman committed to you and you have multiple partners. Yah he got game but it's all wrong, everybody knows that it's wrong. Maybe he is still young and wanna have fun. I mean as men we see them as cool there is no lie about that. Sure most guys have played their girls before but it also depends

what their partners are doing, you know. Like it wouldn't be so cool if I new Ketty* is committed to a guy who has other 4 girls she doesn't know about and she pledge her life according to him. Its not cool but its cool if not a very serious issue, like if she finds out she is gonna die or jump off Berea or something you know. But it is seen as a cool thing to do you know, have the girls feel like "I am the man". Image is what it is.

Interviewer: May you please tell me more about the phrase "boys will be boys"?

ED: Boys just behave in a way that's boyish……maybe because boys are with boys all the times and decide and have ideals as to boys do this and don't do that. That's how maybe boys grow like if you are a boy that grew with only women for his whole life how is he going to turn out? If lets say you are the only guy and you have only exposure to women for your whole life, how are you gonna turn out? As opposed to a boy who grew up with boys for his whole life. Boys influence each other maybe that's why boys are violent and physical whereas girls are more gentle. So….. yah maybe that's why they say "boys will be boys" a typical boy thing to do. If boys drive a car off a mountain, ahh "boys will be boys".

Interview 8

Interviewer: When do you think is the appropriate age for men to start having sex?

AL: I would say 18, I think Er from maturity point of view you are not necessarily like mature to the responsible level but your hormones and stuff causes you to want to have sex. So before 18 you are not mature enough to can handle the responsibility and consequences that could happen. Guys start thinking about sex at about 16 but 16 is too young, actually a lot of my friends started at 16.

Interviewer: How old were you when you had your first sexual encounter?

AL: I was 18. I was a nerd when I was in high school so I didn't have girlfriends. Girls don't like you 'cause they think you not cool, furthermore I went to the all boys school.

Interviewer: What are the cultural norms you know of that implies what it means to be a man?

AL: I think culturally you have to be Err……..there is a stage…..I don't know if its my perception…there is a stage where ladies want this guys who are harsh, they don't like quite ones because you don't like stand out from the crowd. Ba batla ba ba phaphang,like big time.

Interviewer: What do think about the peer pressures that happen around issues of sex?

AL: the older guys in class were doing it, but the other nerdy guys were not doing it so I wouldn't really say that there was peer pressure because my close friends we were nerds so we were all about "did you get a 90% in math's, I got a 95%, or how much did you get? I think guys use this thing that you have to be tough and aggressive; you don't have to be soft. I think this still holds to a certain point. It happened to me last week, I was asking someone out and she was like no that was for the second time so I was quite aggressive but I apologized. I apologized because she explained to me why she couldn't go out with me so it made it right to apologize.

Interviewer: What do think about sexual abstinence?

AL: apparently it's not healthy. Are you talking by choice or by force, which you are not getting a partner?

Interviewer: In my study I define what sexual abstinence is and what it is not. When you are sexually deprived because you don't have a partner because you can't find a partner, this I define as sexual deprivation 'cause it is not by choice.

AL: The way I view it from this point of view of sexual infections and HIV it is cool, but from your psychological point of view I don't think its impractical cause there are other guys who choose not to have sex with their girlfriends and at the end the ladies say they cannot sustain the relationship, I think there should be an agreement between the partners. I think psychologically you become depressed. If we are talking about being deprived you will have all this symptoms of aggression and acne but if we are talking about by choice it think if you chose to do something it should contribute to the good wellbeing. If someone has been having sex and now the system is used to that if you stop I think you are gonna struggle to cope with it but if you never started and you abstain until a certain age I think that wouldn't be difficult. One is driven by a lot of things to start thing about sex. Also I think the socio-economic issues in south Africa always pushes people to the devil 'cause if you think about the multiple partner kind of thing, a lot of my friends who have graduated its really rare that you find one with a single partner cause what's happening is that once you have the money you are the 'diamond' everybody wants to be with you, you know what I mean? The media portrays sex as something that is so cool and if you are not in this sexual thing something is wrong with you.

Interviewer: Are you sexually abstaining?

AL: Yah, I don't have a girlfriend.

Interviewer: What do you think is the motivation that guys engage in sex?

AL: I think there's a whole lot. First of all it's like…..sex sells, sex is everywhere I mean you look at Er……there is a certain age or time where….I don't know if its psychological or not, you just build it yourself when you start thinking about it…I think the media right….like what you see on TV and stuff like that influence you, your friends of course will tell you about it.

Interviewer: When you had your sexual debut, what was the motivation?

AL: The girl pushed me to it. It was more of an emotional black mail cause it was quite a situation like "…if not ke a tsamaya [I am leaving]" and again also she is the one who initiated. I was not really interested or ready.

Interviewer: What do you think about men your age not having sex or girlfriends?

AL: I wouldn't think they are sissy or funny especially in this university environment we are always stressed most of the times, you don't think about this things but assignments. It gets to a stage where now you are fine with this whole thing 'cause now you want to get something out of your studies, so it doesn't become an issue for you, but surely when you start getting back to your senses it gets lonely.

Interviewer: If you were not engaging in sexual relations with your girlfriend, would you be so comfortable to tell them that you are not having sex?

AL: Yah, all my friends know I don't have a girlfriend and surely they can assume as well that I am not getting. I think I hang around people who think sense because to them they really make you believe that ok its fine to get something out of the way first, you don't have to rush. Well some do make jokes out of it but it's not personal.

Interviewer: Do you think it is possible for a young married man to maintain a commitment to be faithful and monogamous?

AL: For people I know a very few manage to do that. From my point of view I don't think I would be able to achieve anything with more than one partner. It's a waste of money 'cause you always have to go somewhere where your other girlfriend won't be able to see you.

Interview 9

Interviewer: When do you think is the appropriate age for men to start having sex?

NK: 25 years old, because at 25 years I think you have run all the races there are to run as much as you like when they say people must watch porn at the age of 21 years which I don't think is appropriate cause still it brings a lot of confusion as to how things run. But I think someone at the age of 25 is regarded as a young adult, I think young people have that direction in mind. So I think 25 is the appropriate age to have sex 'cause you would have…..I don't know if you understand.

Interviewer: Most young people as young as 14 years are already engaging in sexual activities. Why do you think we find such happening?

NK: Obviously I think its wrong, wrong in the sense that it deprives young people of so many stages which they have to go through before they come to that stage. There is a whole lot of stuff that's involved once you've crossed over to having sex…. even your mind set changes. You know what happens, when you see a woman you are around this thoughts that are different from someone who has never had sex before and at that young stage when people start to have sex is purely wrong and I think is parents to blame. Parents to blame as in they take away that responsibility which they are supposed to have over their children lives, of being too over protective at times….maybe not too over protective but let me just "being protective" to an extent that they even cater for

programmes that children watch and the books and magazines that children read. This attitude is influenced by the media and their peers maybe which are exposed to the same thing.

Interviewer: You have touched on peer pressure which is very interesting because other people I have interviewed have also talked about peer pressure. Do you think it is something that still exists and the major influence on young people having sex today?

NK: I think it still exists in a very big way. But the only difference is that I don't think we are subjected to the same type of peer pressure which we used to have at the older stages but we still have peer pressure. You see compared to the previous times you'd hear young boys telling other boys that "eeh wena ubari wena" you know like they'll be actually expressing their force or pressure on the other guy who'll actually act on that. But now fortunately the recognition has come where now people can see that someone is actually leading you into a hole, they're just pushing you into a pit hole when they are saying…..like its still exist in which way? That you get those young people who are doing things and try to make it look so flawless like so beautiful. If they go out all night partying they'll come and tell you stories like "hei, it was happening and rocking, I had this chick…" but they don't tell you to go for it but because of the way they are telling it you think "maybe I should try it too". Its like a fine in which people get in touch with cause you'll hear people say "ee ziyawa at this party, its gonna be happening" but to be honest if you go to the same party you will ask yourself where is the fun in that. But just because of that attitude that people have put that "ee, it's gonna be happening" that kind of pressure put you in a spot where you also trying to find that fun that does not exist. It's not like the fun you get when you go to Goldriff City and you go on those joy rides and it

takes you up and down and you feel elevated, it's not that kind of fun. It's fun which you have to find out of no fun, you know what I am saying? Just 'cause you are there you have to say its fun cause you made it to that point. Such kind of things I regard them as peer pressure kind of the recent pressures that we are facing.

Interviewer: What do you think about young men at the age of 25 years who don't have girlfriends and are still virgin?

NK: Before I can elaborate on that……..it more comes like to a man what he values and why he will even want a girlfriend in the first place. There is nothing wrong with that, being 25 years and a virgin. But being a human being there is always that factor which you cannot remove from yourself, of companionship. So I think being…like having valued reasons like I would think focusing on other things 'cause nowadays being in a relationship is more commitment than working in a company. Cause you can go to work and sign in, chat with friends, and check your emails and still get paid at the end of the month. But you can't use the same routine in your relationship, it spells disaster believe me. Cause if you can't apparently someone else can, you know or something of that sort. So a man not in a relationship at the age 25 years its good but it actually has a disadvantage because of the times we are living in, like as in pressure. Cause it might be hard for that person to maintain that status of being a virgin simply because there are so many temptation. Temptations which are driven by the media, driven by peers you know such kind of things. They also suffer from being kind of like axed from the society of normal people. That's how it has been put, 'cause that's how it had been put that having sex is more than a intercourse or intimate thing, it's like a fashion statement you know. I fortunately had a conversation over this weekend; this other guys were like competing on

whose had the most ladies this year. This other guy was like….I think he is in the 25 years he was saying to the other guy "hei, ja mfethu you lost the title, you are not as good as…ja this guy is beating me now. He is number one, ja he is really sleeping around this days". You know like they were even boasting and priding themselves with such so I mean those kinds of people are the majorities and you come with your title of being a virgin. You know they could really do you some emotional damage believe me, they could really do some emotional damage.

Interviewer: What do you think about sexual abstinence?

NK: Abstinence is very challenging at this time and age but not impossible. Its good but there are few factors of it which are bad right? These factors could be that what if you pass away before you get to that thing. In heaven there are only brothers and sisters so when you are there if you missed it here its sad cause these things are meant for the world. So sexual abstinence is risky but its good in terms of …….it keeps you sane and less wondering about certain things that you've never been to. I would thing for my instance, knowing the kind of person that I am if I was to have sex now I think I would see women differently. It would be quite hard for me to just draw the line between sisters and brothers as some stage knowing what they are cable of. I think it would be a bit haunting that's the dangerous part about it, which does happen to even people who are not…who haven't been there. But anyway my point is I think it's more challenging because at this time and age sex has become as I told you fashion statement.

Interviewer: You are sexually abstaining, what are the difficulties that you had to face?

NK: Eish, having to say no that's the most difficult part. Its so easy to say "yes" when you should say "no" and apparently its so easy to say "no" when you are should say

“yes”. That was the hardest for me, having to try and come up with all stories, lie and…..just to make me feel like I am not seen as an outcast, yet I am not doing something which compromises what kind of believe in….not believe in as such, ja stand for. At some point it was like aggh maybe I am just too unrealistic, like I said what if tomorrow I wake up and get hit by a bus. Imagine! Sad hey? Having lost that chance, no, no, I will ask God to take me back just for a day just one day.

Interviewer: When you find yourself amongst your friends talking about sex matters, how do cope with that?

NK: Me being myself I am a very inquisitive person so I find myself in so many of those situations where my friends or peers they had to come back and tell me their stories, what happened last night. Cause mina I just wanted to know what really goes on. I would even be asking questions and on the other side I would be hurting myself cause that kind of information make me eager myself to like “eish I wonder how it feels” cause they made….no one will go out, as far as I know…will go out and have sex and come back “eish, uyazi, what was I doing, eish”. They are so easy to get rid of the guilt and focus on the good side and now when they come to you they make it feel like “uhhhhh ahhhhhh, yahhhh” you know that green, that fake smile on the face and they make you feel like ja, no hei, they got the sweat out, ga ba na letswai. So my friends tell me about foursome, “foursome? jo! Whaaw”. Okay threesome, with white women as well. I don’t want to lie I kinda like wanted to be in that picture but fortunately my mind hit me like hey this is you, not them you know this is not what you are.

Interviewer: Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you had to lie that you are doing it while you are not?

NK: Yes, at first it was like that. I had to make up that impression that no man I know what I am talking about. That's what made me be so inquisitive about this, like read about it. Cause I noticed most of my friends they don't know….most of the people they don't know much about sex. So for me…..cause I know I am a very inquisitive person like I said, for me to be able to gain the upper hand at least let me know more about this things. So when it comes to a point where I have to say something you know I know I even sometimes used to use people's experiences like share on people's experiences not my own just tell them as if its my own and no one could tell that. I used to be kinda like no I have to kinda like not show myself especially in high school where this things were most happening, we used to find ourselves chatting about this things. The girls would be the ones who'll like bring up this kind of topic and now me being a guy and all the guys being there I had to paint that picture and I really did that very well. Being a liar and all really came up very clear. So at the end I saw that as much as this people have lost their virginity most of them would so love to have it back. Most of them have lost their virginity to people that hey don't even love. These days I don't lie about it, I don't feel under pressure. My friends now know that I am still a virgin. In fact they try by all means to make jokes about it I actually laugh about it, I comment to it. It's now even more fun for me 'cause I've created that environment. At first it was my own box that I've created 'cause if I had old the truth from the beginning maybe I would have helped someone. But because of that pressure it really contributed that I even had to lie about my sexual status. I even had to think……..like cause I used to get scared of that thing that……..like someone said to me you know the way you are so scared of girls we gonna lock you up with a nude girl. As much as I didn't know what to do, I was like so afraid of that

scenario but when it was presented to me I had the courage to say no as a guy and ever since that day I've never looked back.

Interviewer: What kinds of cultural norms or practices you know of that define what it means to be a man?

NK: I am gonna really draw from my fathers experiences because I think that's the only person whom I regard much of a man in my lifetime. Me and father were not that close, like even till now. According to my understanding he the man, for what he stands for like as in his values. That guy has an ego like as high as Kilimanjaro neh? Like you don't just jump on his ego but fortunately his ego is for his family sake he is like a lion defending his territory. He doest want his family to see that yah, he loves them. He is not that kind of person that will gladly put out to you that he loves you. He is not emotional. He got that firm stand to what he believes in and whoever comes against that comes against him. Also, I am just gonna relate to this because it's what most men have lost in this generation….he never lays a hand on a woman. He never changed his choice regarding his woman cause ever since he's been with this woman. I don't care what might have been happening on the sidelines because we never used to stay with him for most of our childhood. He always protected his wife and she never got to find herself in any of the scandals if he was cheating. He was even man enough to make sure that these things doesn't even come back home, I am not encouraging it but I don't think he ever cheated, I think it should have came out by now. He also used to be a strong alcoholic and when he made a choice to quite alcohol he never touched it since. Like you would think that was white and black, before and after, on and off. That's exactly how it is, that's why I even see life like that this days. Its either you are in or out, it's either a yes or no. and

maybe, even a maybe there is one percent which falls on either side, its either falls a little bit to the yes or a little bit t the no. So I really think that's what defines a man.

Interviewer: what defines you s a man?

NK: Jo! Like I said my father, making a choice and sticking to it. Like me sexually abstaining, it's a choice which I plan to keep. Not that I don't want to have sex, I so kinda like desire at some stage to have sex. But because I can see gore the reasons to have sex at this stage are not really the realistic or legit reasons why I should have sex.

Interviewer: what is your opinion about cultural practices that imply that " monna ke thaka o a naba [a man should have multiple partners]"?

NK: culture is dynamic, it was appropriate for those times because the society had a purpose to accomplish and that was to expand. Now things have changed and women can take male positions and roles. Like they can now do without men in such a way that they are reclaiming the power and they don't have to succumb to the men's demands.

Interviewer: What kinds of things you wouldn't do in front of other guys for fear that they will question your manliness?

NK: Not fear as such but I think you know that kind of question is more like the things which I find myself……..for instance you know at parties when people are dancing and ladies will be bumping and rubbing at your pants you know those kinds of things? You know, cause I know I am a guy and they are guys they know exactly what happens when you……in fact they more like enjoy that kind of thing when the women touches you and you get aroused and then now you are more like you don't wanna go home alone. So me I normally kinda like move away openly but quietly. Because I put myself in that environment and I knew that could happen. When you are in Rome you do what the

Romans do right? But I choose to pretend to do what the Romans do when I am in that environment. To them it looks like this guy is part of us.

Interviewer: Why do you feel the need to make them believe you are part of them?

NK: In that place? The first question you should ask yourself is what would I be doing there? If I wanted to be away I could have stayed at home. because of me being inquisitive…..I don't want to lie the things that go on there…….the last party I went to my two colleagues just started to have sex just around us.

Interviewer: What motivated you to sexually abstain?

NK: The times we live in and the consequences of not abstaining such as HIV, pregnancy…also being a Christian cause you know the bible asks us to abstain until we get married. So that's me, I wanted to be different.

Interview 10

Interviewer: When do you think is the appropriate age for men to start having sex?

T: err….I think as soon as you become matured and that must be above the age of 18 and thus you can get permission. You know sex is something that when you do you should get permission from parents

Interviewer: Most young people as young as 14 are having sex without their parents knowing….

T: Then that is wrong……that is wrong

Interviewer: How old were you when you had your first sexual encounter?

T: To tell you the truth I was 21 years.

Interviewer: Was it with your girlfriend or someone you just met and was available to have sex with you..?

T: Yah….no, actually it was a friend…..she came to visit and we both got carried away and it just happened

Interviewer: What was the influence…….I know you got carried away and it was not really planned, but what influenced you to have sex at that point?

T: you know…..eish… err…. When I say it was an accident I mean it just came unexpected

Interviewer: I understand with other guys the first sexual encounter is influenced by peer pressure…

T: Yah…yah…mara [but] I think you know peer pressure does contribute …..but you know I grew up without friends…..but I made friends here at Wits and they will always talk about the pleasure of it, wa bona….and "when you hold her like this"……so I wanted to experience it, but is not like peer pressure like….but you know I got that idea from my friends

Interviewer: So you went looking to have sex?

T: Ja…..and when I got a chance it was like Manna from heaven

Interviewer: What was the feeling like after the experience?

T: Jo….eish… you feel like you are a king after doing that cause its like….you know when you been looking for something and you get it and then you become excited you feel like "I am a man" "ja I am the man"

Interviewer: What does this whole thing mean that "I am a man now"?

T: No it means you are like them now, yesterday you were not like them and now you got it, it's like "now I got it"

Interviewer: If you were not engaging in sexual activities would you be so proud to tell your friends about it?

T: No, hmmm hhmm (shaking his head strongly) no, no, no hey, this days that one… you will destroy the relationships, this days….they will think you are gay or…..When you've got one you are more experienced than the one without one

Interviewer: I heard other guys confess that they had lied about having sex while they were not.

T: Ja….in fact I was one of those…I used to lie….I used to lie like "my girlfriend came yesterday and we did it" you know things like that because they know when she comes. I wanted to be accommodated, when you are in Rome you do what the Romans do.

Interviewer: Most young men have their sexual debut at early ages as young as 15, what made you wait until you were 21 years old?

T: I think it depends on your background like…you know mina I grew up in a Christian family and when they see you with a chick they will be on your case the whole day. They humiliate you, they call you names so you know…. like to be with a chick it was a sin man. So I kept away from girls and thought to myself "ke tla di bona pele" but nne ke iswa cause my friends nne ke re ke fihla sekolong they will be telling me this things because my friends started being active when they were still in high school. There was no freedom for me at home……it's not nice when someone catches you out.

Interviewer: What would be your personal opinion about a man who at the age of 25 is a virgin?

T: Jo, I will strongly encourage him to reconsider because this thing is not meant to be missed, if the woman doesn't understand he must go get it somewhere else.

Interviewer: You sound like you are saying it is the woman's fault he is not having sex

T: Ja, I think he wants to because you know I think ladies are the ones who are denying us of the pleasures

Interviewer: What do you think about sexual abstinence?

T: Eish….ja it's a good thing you know but I think it's difficult……..I will not practice it. If I have a partner who wants to abstain I think I will try to change her so I nzame one day nyana so, or else I will go get it somewhere. You know when you are in a relationship and you find that she leaves you before you even sleep her. It's like you lost, o fitile fela hai aowa, its not on. No you must get that thing first. You must get something out of it. Your friends will laugh at you that you never got some from her. You know this whole thing of sexual abstinence is applicable to guys who are old; you know you can't find someone at your age telling you to abstain. Even Christians can't abstain; it's like denying nature to take its course.

Interviewer: So if you break up with your girlfriend you must make sure that you had sex with her first?

T: Ja and even the pain that she dumped you will not be that bad. The whole thing that you had sex with her makes it better it's like proof that you've been there before.

Interviewer: What is your opinion about multiple partners?

T: It's not good, unless you know how to play your cards. These days having multiple partners it means….no having a partner means sharing with her so if you have multiple it means you are sharing with more than one…..so you won't have time to see all of them

they are all demanding…..guys we like getting each other in trouble. You find that guy who gives you praises about your behaviour yena he got one partner and he is safe. You know its not like we are promoting you when you are around we will be patting you on your back saying "ja, o skhokho, o nja, o ja lana na lana wena ma uifuna wa ithola. We are promoting his interests but truly speaking it doesn't mean we are agreeing with it and we envy you because you will find that most of us have single partners.

Interviewer: What is your culture?

T: Mina I am Ndebele.

Interviewer: What kinds of things do you have to do to show that you are a man?

T: Go to the mountain for circumcision and when you come back that's when they think you are a man. But I did not go.

Interviewer: Did that make you feel less of a man?

T: No, for me it had a positive effect because I remember when my friend went there he came back from the mountain and that was the last he set foot at school. He decided to stop going to school because he "is now a man".

Interviewer: Generally, what kinds of things do you have to show that you are a man?

T: Being seen with a hot chick, it's like you are conquering even if she is not your chick. With this emerging gender thing now you have to be sure where you stand as a man……I mean its even not about being sure but making everybody aware of were you stand. I remember there were speculations that my friend was gay because they never saw him with a chick. The way I grew up as well……it's like 'monna ga lle' [a man does not cry], that 'monna ke nku o llela teng' that's the way I grew up. But I remember last month they stole my lap top which was still new and I was also writing exams so it was very painful

and I was in the bus and sitting next to my friend, so I cried. It was like my mother just died, I didn't care what people were thinking.

Interviewer: Do you think it is possible for a young married man to maintain a commitment to be faithful and monogamous?

T: Yes I think it is possible. But I think there are many factors that could make young men not committed, women when they get married they change.