

THE SECRET LIFE
OF THE
AMERICAN TEENAGER

DISCUSSION GUIDE



EPISODE SIX

SUMMARY

Amy finally tells her mom about the pregnancy, throwing her already fragile family life further into turmoil. Amid all that, she considers having an abortion and gets a ride to the clinic from Adrian (and Ben) — only to be followed by Ricky and Grace, who show up and try to stop her.

FOR TEENS



Shailene Woodley and Molly Ringwald star as mother-daughter team Amy and Anne Juergens.

Stuff to talk about:

- What did you think of Mrs. Juergens's reaction to the news of Amy's pregnancy? Do you think she really had no clue about what was going on? How do you think your parents would react in a similar situation? Amy's mom talked about having a plan, and Amy said she'd never thought about getting pregnant or what that would mean. Do you have a plan when it comes to sex and relationships? What is it? Have you talked about it with your parents?

FACT: *As awkward as it might be to talk to your parents about sex, it's much more awkward to tell them you're pregnant.*

TIP: *Have a plan. Know what you'll do in the heat of the moment. How will you say no without hurting someone's feelings? If you say yes, what kind of protection will you use? If this is too complicated to think about, then you know you're not ready for sex.*

- It seemed like everyone had an opinion about what Amy should do when she went to the abortion clinic. Why do you think it is that in this country people have such strong views about abortion, yet few people seem to be as passionate about preventing pregnancy in the first place?

FACT: *Just 17% of all abortions in the U.S. are performed on teenagers.*



- What do you think of the possibility of Amy and Ben getting married? Do you think they're too young to make a commitment like that? What do you think of Ben's father supporting the idea? Have you thought about what you'd want to have in place in your life before you get married? What is your plan for getting there?

FACT: Only 30% of teen moms who marry after the birth of their baby are still in those marriages at age 40.

- There's lots of talk about relationships in this episode: Jack wants Grace back, Adrian wants to be with Ricky, Amy and Ben are talking marriage, and Amy's parents are struggling to get along, etc. Do you spend a lot of time thinking about relationships? How do people learn what a healthy relationship is? If your parents talk to you about sex, do they also talk to you about relationships separately from sex?

FACT: More than six out of ten teens (68% of girls and 62% of guys) say they find it easy to talk to their parents about relationships. About one in four teens (27% of guys and 24% of girls) say it's difficult to talk about relationship issues with parents.

FOR PARENT'S

Watching a show like "The Secret Life of the American Teenager" alongside your teen is a good way to start a conversation about sex, love, and relationships. Even though teens say that parents most influence their decisions about sex, parents of teens underestimate their own influence in this area. Here are some ideas for talking to your kids after watching the show.

- What did you think of Mr. and Mrs. Juergens's reactions to the news of Amy's pregnancy? How is their strained relationship affecting their daughters? Ask your teens: What do they think about how the parents' relationship in this show influences Amy and Ashley?

FACT: Teens say that one reason they don't ask their parents about contraception is that they fear parents will assume they're already "doing it."

TIP: If your teen has a question, don't freak out. Listen, and if you don't have the answer ready, ask them if you can think about it, research it a little, and get back to them. Be an askable parent — better to have an awkward conversation about contraception than one in which you find out about a pregnancy.

- When Amy's parents are arguing over whose fault it is that Amy is pregnant, her dad accuses her mom of never having the sex talk with her, to which her mom responds that Amy was never interested in talking about it in the first place. As a parent, how do you know when it's time to talk with your kids about sex, love, relationships, and preventing pregnancy? Especially if they haven't asked you yet? Do you have any advice for other parents about how to make these conversations easier? Do you have any "don'ts" to share? Tell us in the comments section of this week's StayTeen blog post, which is called "Instead of 'Just Do It,' How About 'Just Think About It?'"

FACT: Teens say parents influence their decisions about sex more than any other source — including friends, the media, school, and religion.

TIP: Don't think of it as one specific "Talk" — rather, make it a series of conversations that span your child's lifetime.

For more information, please contact web@thenc.org
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