

THE SECRET LIFE  
OF THE  
AMERICAN TEENAGER

# DISCUSSION GUIDE



## EPISODE SEVEN

### FOR TEENS

Stuff to talk about:

- Amy's dad blames Ricky entirely for the pregnancy. Amy disagrees and says it's her fault too, that she "let it happen." What do you think about that? Why do you think her father blames only Ricky? Is pregnancy ever only one person's fault?

**FACT:** *It takes two people to make a pregnancy but only one person to prevent it. Either don't have sex or use protection carefully and consistently every single time.*

- Ricky tells his foster parents that he doubts Amy will come to school pregnant, but his foster mother (who is also a social worker) says she encourages pregnant girls to stay in school. Are there any pregnant teens at your school? What do you think it's like for them? Are there any parenting teens at your school? What do you think their lives are like?

**FACT:** *More than half of all teen mothers never graduate from high school and fewer than 2% earn a college degree by age 30.*

- When Ashley asks Amy why she had sex with Ricky, Amy responds with "I don't know. I didn't think about it. I didn't have a reason. I just did it." How do you think something as serious as sex could just happen? How can you keep it from just happening?

**FACT:** *60% of all sexually active teens wish they had waited longer to have sex. There are lots of good reasons to wait—protecting your feelings is one of them. Avoiding pregnancy is another. Don't think it won't happen—most of the 730,000 teen girls in the U.S. who got pregnant last year didn't think it would happen to them.*



Amy (Shailene Woodley) comes clean with her dad (Mark Derwin) about her pregnancy.

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- When Grace and Adrian are discussing what Amy and Ricky should do about the baby, Grace's dad suggests they should pursue adoption so that the baby can grow up in a loving family with parents who are prepared to raise children. What do you think of that idea? Do you know anyone who was adopted? Do you think many pregnant teenagers consider adoption? Would you?

**FACT:** *Even though many teens who have made adoption plans for their babies say it was the most selfless, heroic, and important thing they've ever done, only about 2% of teen pregnancies result in adoption.*

## FOR PARENTS

*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.*

- Amy tells her sister that she wishes she wasn't pregnant and that she was a "normal" 15-year-old who could go to "high school dances, fall in love, get married, and then maybe have a baby." It's important for teens to realize that the sequence of such milestones has an enormous impact on the future. Do you talk to your kids about what they should have in place before having children? Why or why not? What do you encourage them to achieve before starting families? Job? College? Marriage?

**FACT:** *If a mother gives birth as a teen, is unmarried, and doesn't graduate from high school, there is a 64% chance her child will grow up in poverty. But if none of those things is true (if mom is not a teen, is married, and has a high school diploma), there is only a 7% chance of the child growing up in poverty.*

- Amy's dad thinks she should never speak to Ricky again. Amy's mom is encouraging her to talk to him about the pregnancy. What happens when teens get conflicting messages from their parents? How do such situations get resolved without the teen feeling responsible for hurting one parent or feeling as though they've disobeyed their parents? In families with divorced parents, this can be even harder to navigate. How do you make sure you're on the same page as your spouse/co-parent?

**FACT:** *Teens say that their parents are the people they most want to hear from on issues of sex, love, and relationships—even if they don't always act like it.*

**TIP:** *It's never too late to improve a relationship with a child or teenager. Don't underestimate the great need children feel—at all ages—for a close relationship with their parents and for their parents' guidance, approval, and support.*

**For more information, please contact [web@thenc.org](mailto:web@thenc.org)  
or visit us online at [TheNationalCampaign.org](http://TheNationalCampaign.org) and [StayTeen.org](http://StayTeen.org).**