

# SADD PROM ALERT

Contact: Jason Glashow  
617-348-1667  
jglashow@mlstrategies.com

## NEW RESEARCH LINKS TEEN SEX TO STRESS, DEPRESSION

**MARLBOROUGH, Mass. (May 6, 2004)** – With prom season commencing across the country, many parents are wary of the pressures this special night places on teens to have sex. Their fears may be well founded, according to new research from SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) and Liberty Mutual Group conducted by Roper/ASW:

- **A majority of teens ages 15-17 report having engaged in sexual activity other than kissing (60.9 percent), including more than half who report having had intercourse (52.1 percent).**
- **Only about one in six sexually active teens feels strongly that teens who have sex are likely to develop STDs (16.1 percent).**
- **Just about one in ten sexually active teens feels that sex is very harmful for someone his or her age (10.2 percent).**

Perhaps most alarming is the apparent connection between early sexual activity and feelings of inadequacy, depression, and stress.

- **More than one third of sexually active 15- to 17-year-olds say having sex often leads to depression (30.7 percent) and loss of self-respect (38.8 percent).**
- **Almost one third of sexually active 15- to 17-year-olds say that the decisions they make about sex cause them to feel stressed (29.7 percent).**

“Prom and sex are too often linked in the minds of young people seeking independence and maturity in adult behavior,” said Stephen Wallace, chairman and chief executive officer of SADD. “Along with this rite of passage can come significant pressure for both boys and girls to engage in activities they may not really want and may not be ready for.”

The study also found that the relationship between teens and their parents is typically the largest factor contributing to their overall mood and resistance to destructive decision-making. More than half of teens (53.6 percent) think that losing their parents’ trust is a likely outcome of being caught having sex, and almost one third (27.6 percent) cite “pleasing parents” as a reason not to have sex.

**For more information or to receive materials, contact:**

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