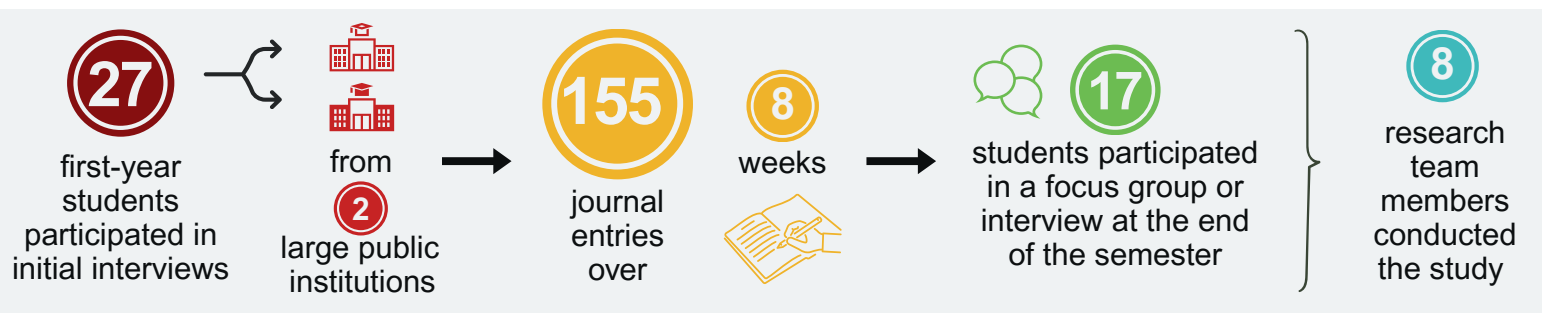
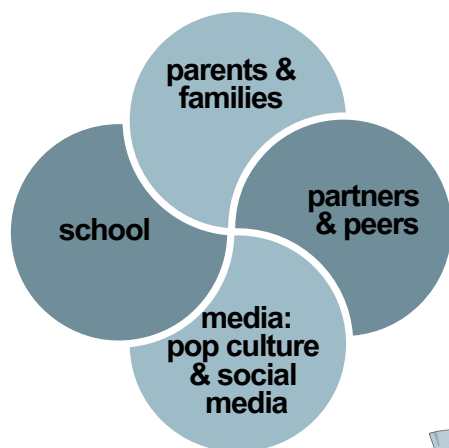


Research Study: College Students' Learning about Dating and Sexual Relationships



What Did Students Say?

Where did students learn about sex and relationships?



examples

parents & families:

"I just grew up with a sense of very traditional roles, not just in a house but like of what a woman is like and what a man is like... I'm in a relationship right now and I definitely see myself falling into these mental traps that I just don't really want to fall into."
-Maria

partners & peers:

"The best advice I have received recently is to stand up for myself. A friend reminded me that my body is special and that if I am not ready to have sex with someone it's more than ok to stand up for yourself and communicate to that other person."
-Sarah

Media:

"I didn't get any information about queer sex in my sexual education classes at all. That had to be sussed out myself through Teen Vogue articles."
-Amy

School:

"At my school, they kind of water [sex education] down, especially because they don't want people to be immature about it and stuff like that."
-Elizabeth

How did students learn about sex and relationships?



examples

Observing:

"I just learned what a healthy and a toxic relationship is myself from seeing other people's relationships and relationships with my family."
-Mallory

Actively experiencing:

"I think I learned about relationships just from having my own. I mean it's really all experience."
-Avery

Being told:

"My mom, she would sit down and have talks about it and obviously she would be like, 'Don't do this, don't do that, don't fall for this, don't fall for that.' And she just ultimately told me what to look for in a partner and what not to look for."
-Fernanda

Actively seeking:

"I've educated myself through other sources, just like online just doing research myself, but the [state] school system doesn't really teach you anything."
-Alex



What Else Did Students Share?

Sex ed they received in school was:

- **overly simplified**
- **without nuance**
- **too focused on biological info rather than on actual experiences**



People have **different needs** in relationships.

"I learned that everyone is different and needs to communicate the best way for you to love them."

-Austin

Examples of **respecting boundaries for everyday things:**

- asking before hugging
- being mindful about touch
- wearing socks around a friend who dislikes feet



Consent is **complex** and **nuanced**.

"A lot of people are afraid [asking for consent is] gonna kill the vibe... it's so sad because it doesn't have to be robotic."

-Avery

Nonverbal cues as indicators of withdrawn consent or discomfort:

- **change in mood**
- **hesitation**
- **facial expressions**
- **pause in talking**



What is *"the college experience"* when it comes to sex & dating?

Surprise:
there isn't one!



Hookup culture is not as common as a lot of students thought it would be.

Relationship Status During Study

In a relationship	12
Casually dating or engaging in sex	5
Previously dated but not currently	5
No personal sex/dating experience	5

Many queer students felt that college gave them **opportunities to explore and learn.**



"Seeing a lot of LGBTQ people go to pride and just be happy and talk about their relationships very out loud made me want to talk about mine more, which I think helped me learn a lot."

-Sam



College is about **building friendships**, not just **romantic** relationships.



"I'm just excited to learn and expand my horizons. Like your pool is just so much more expanded and you have so much more access to people in general and not even just for dating, but just for like friends in general."

-Alexander

What Does This Mean?

1

Despite what the media says, you don't have to participate in hook-up culture to be a "real" college student.

2

There are many ways to engage in relationships. As long as they are mutually respectful and consensual, they are all okay!

3

If you didn't get what you wanted or needed in sex ed in high school, there are places in college you can keep learning! Check out Scarleteen, Our Bodies Ourselves, OneLove and the MCVP Instagram (@uofucvp).



Click **HERE** or scan below to tell us what you think about this!

