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Adolescent Therapy and Early Sexual Debut by [Julia Bennet](#)

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This clinical research project, written by Dr. Cortney Weissglass, who will be a New York psychologist, seeks to investigate the relationship between parent-child relationships and early involvement in sexual activity among adolescent females. Adolescent females'™ early sexual debut is a considerable problem in the United States, with an estimated 4% of females under the age of 13 initiating sexual intercourse (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008). These younger adolescents do not reliably use contraceptives; therefore, have an increased risk for STDs (Abma et al., 2004) and also for later economic and educational difficulties should they become pregnant (Rodgers, 1999; Staton et al., 1999; Taylor-Seehafer and Rew, 2000). Adolescent risky sexual activity is often a topic for therapy in New York.

Another consideration for New York psychologists surrounds the parent-child relationship. Parent-child relationship factors were reviewed with respect to early sexual debut. New York psychologists should be aware that aspects of family relationships such as frequent and open communication and a close, supportive, warm parent-adolescent relationship balanced with appropriate supervision, discipline, and limit-setting were consistently found to be related to overall adolescent psychological functioning and a decrease in risky sexual behaviors including delayed sexual debut (Nagamatsu et al., 2008; Raffaelli and Crocket, 2003; Ream and Savin-Williams, 2005). When seeking therapy in New York, it is important to understand that each of the empirically validated family therapy treatments of Functional Family Therapy, Multidisciplinary Family Therapy, and Multisystemic Family Therapy reviewed appear to address multiple factors involved in early sexual debut (Henggeler and Schaeffer, 2010; Liddle, 2010;

Waldron and Brody, 2010). Recommendations for further research to address some of the remaining limitations as well as applying existing family therapy modalities in order to address the significant familial factors involved in these risky behaviors were made.

As a psychologist in New York, I understand the unique challenges of working with adolescents engaging in risky sexual behaviors and I strive to provide therapy in New York that meets the needs of each of my clients. My research along with significant experience offering therapy to adolescents allows me to approach each of my clients with an understanding of the whole person. When I provide therapy in New York, I will offer a strengths-base approach that focuses on each client's™ unique strengths and resiliency as a means to overcoming the obstacles they are facing.

Written by Dr. Cortney Weissglass as part of Clinical Research Project submitted to the Faculty of the American School of Professional Psychology of Argosy University, Washington, DC Campus, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Psychology in Clinical Psychology. Dissertation chair: Ann Womack, PhD and Member: Jennifer McEwan, PhD. August, 2010.

For a full list of references, contact Dr. Weissglass.

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Dr. Weissglass will be conducting a [therapy in New York](#) as a licensed a [New York psychologist](#) in September of 2012.

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