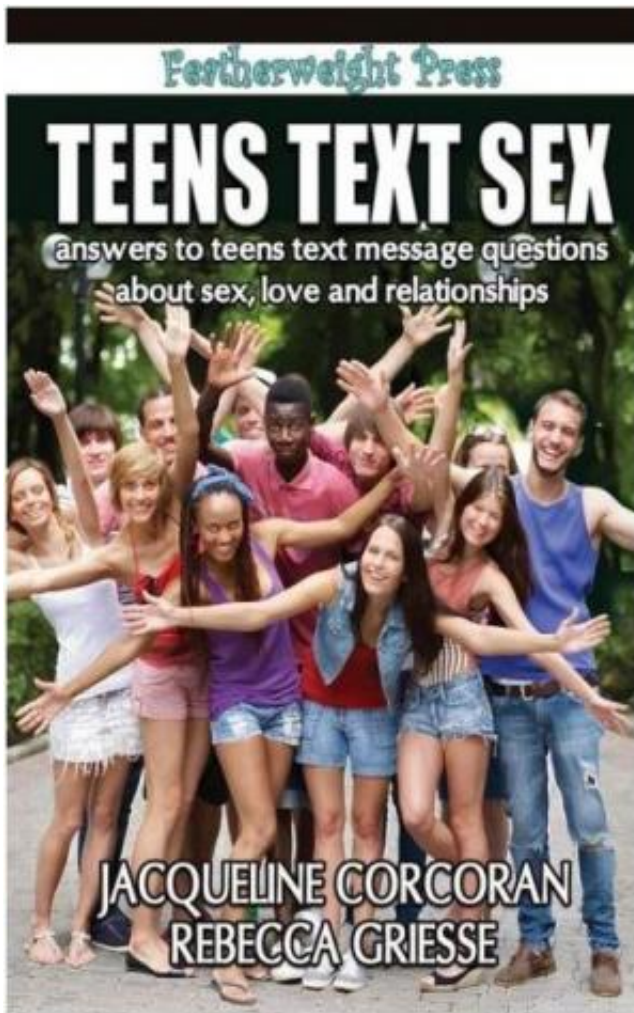


Book reveals teens' questions about sex and relationships, then provides the answers

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A new book co-authored by a Virginia Commonwealth University professor reveals the frank questions teenagers have about sex and relationships, and answers them all with factual, medically based responses.

"Teens Text Sex," by Rebecca Griesse with the [National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy](#) and Jacqueline Corcoran, Ph.D., a professor in VCU's School of Social Work, compiles real [questions](#) texted in by [teens](#) to a hotline dedicated to answering teens' questions about relationships, sexual decision-making, sexual activity, birth control, pregnancy and [sexually transmitted diseases](#).

"For a lot of teens, they're embarrassed to ask about some of these things, and often make assumptions about how much their peers know," Corcoran said. "This book is a way to provide them with honest [answers](#). But it's also a way to hear directly from teens themselves. What are the questions they have about sex and relationships?"

The 24-hour text hotline was created by the Alexandria, Virginia, organization Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy, which seeks to prevent adolescent pregnancy through culturally appropriate and age-appropriate education, advocacy, programs and public awareness. All proceeds from the sales of "Teens Text Sex" will be donated to the organization.

Griesse, who previously worked at the Alexandria Campaign and responded to questions sent to the text line while she was there, said the book is unique because it focuses on questions directly from the youth in their own texting language.

"I hope that youth realize that they are not alone in the types of questions and information they're seeking about sex, love and relationships," she said. "This book is another resource youth can go to get accurate,

straightforward answers about sex, love and relationships."

While the book is aimed at teenagers, Griesse and Corcoran addressed the foreword to parents.

"We didn't want parents to be alarmed," Corcoran said. "Because some of these questions might cause parents to say, 'My goodness!' But these are all frank questions that come from teens themselves, so this is what they want to know."

Griesse said the book is a resource parents can use to learn about sexual health and what questions their teens might have.

"The book can also be used as a conversation starter with their teen about these various topics," she said.

All of the answers provided by the book are factual, medically based and straightforward, Corcoran said.

"A lot of parents might have a hard time because these are questions they may not want to want to talk about with their child," she said. "But these are the things teens are curious about."

Among the frequently asked questions were: "What is sex?" and "How do you define sex?" as well as questions involving pregnancy.

The book does not only focus on questions about sex. It also answers questions dealing with relationships.

"It wasn't just a sex line," Corcoran said. "There were also questions like, 'I'm interested in somebody. How do I let them know?' Or, 'Someone's interested in me. How do I tell them I'm not interested?'"

Corcoran became involved with the Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy after receiving a grant several years ago from the VCU Division of Community Engagement to evaluate the organization's anti-violence programs in high schools and middle schools.

Then, a group of graduate students in Corcoran's Research and Clinical Social Work Practice course conducted a research project to evaluate the questions and answers from the teen text line.

"We were able to look at it qualitatively. What were the different categories of questions that teenagers asked when they contacted the teen [sex](#) line? What were the concerns teens had?" Corcoran said. "As we were looking into it, we realized that this would be a great resource for teenagers if we could just lay out all the questions and answers they might have."

Provided by Virginia Commonwealth University

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