



Evaluation of fpa Speakeasy course for parents: 2002 to 2007

Report on research commissioned by **fpa**

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Report Summary

Speakeasy is a community-based educational programme run by fpa. The overarching aim of the Speakeasy course is to support and encourage parents to communicate with their children about sex, sexual health, and relationships. The course is run over a number of weeks and delivered directly by **fpa** Speakeasy trained facilitators.

The main aim of the evaluation conducted by the Trust for the Study of Adolescence (TSA) was to quantitatively and qualitatively explore progress towards achieving the main stated aims of the Speakeasy course, providing insights into how the course has benefited parents in terms of sustained changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours.

The Five main aims of fpa Speakeasy course are to:

1. Increase parents' confidence and communication skills with their children
2. Help parents show a more positive and open approach to discussions of sex, sexuality and sexual health
3. Increase parents' factual knowledge around sex and sexual health
4. Provide a step towards further learning or professional development for traditionally excluded groups of parents
5. Enable health and educational professionals to give higher priority to work with parents and carers, with the backing of accredited Speakeasy training so that large numbers of parents throughout England will have access to a Speakeasy course

This report focuses on the first four aims of the Speakeasy course. An additional evaluation conducted by TSA outlines the effects upon professionals trained as Speakeasy facilitators (Sherriff & Coleman 2006) and is concerned with the fifth aim of the Speakeasy course.

The current evaluation is based on five separate strands of research, these are:

- Impact Evaluation: Quantitative analysis of pre and post course monitoring forms completed by parents attending the course between 2002-2007 (Chapter Three).
- Impact and Outcome Evaluation: Analytical Themes from repeat interviews with five parents attending prior to 2005, interviewed originally in 2004, and again by TSA in 2005 (Chapter Four).
- Impact and Outcome Evaluation: Analytical themes from interviews with 40 parents who attended Speakeasy in 2005 and who have been interviewed at three time points between 2005 and 2007(Chapter Five).
- Impact and Outcome Evaluation: Analytical themes from interviews with 13 Males in 2007 who attended the Speakeasy course between 2002-2007 (Chapter Six).
- Impact Evaluation: A focus group held with a group of parents at a Newcastle Speakeasy 'Graduation' (Chapter Seven).

Summary of Findings to date.

Demographics of people attending the course

Approximately 6500 people have taken part in fpa's Speakeasy course. Of these, 2367 people's details have been entered into a database by fpa. This sample is representative of all the people who have attended the Speakeasy course and allows us to draw firm conclusions from any statistical analysis carried out on the database.

Exploration of the data shows that:

- 95% of the people who attend the Speakeasy course were female.
- 71% classified themselves as "White British"

The largest other groups in the remaining 29% of people were:

- 3% who classified themselves as "White Other",
- 3% who classified themselves as "Black or Black British-Caribbean"
- 3% who classified themselves as "Black or Black British-African"

- 12% of the attendees were in full time work,
- 27% worked part time
- 29% were registered unemployed and
- 32% were unwaged and not seeking work.

For 17.7% of people it was the first course they had attended since school.

Ten percent of the sample did not consider themselves able-bodied.

Summary of Quantitative Findings

People who attended Speakeasy were asked to fill in monitoring forms before, and again after the course. As well as collecting demographic information these asked parents to rate themselves on key areas relating to the aims of the Speakeasy course such as confidence, and knowledge in relation to sexual development and relationships education. Major findings from analysis of the forms show that:

1. Before the course, **confidence** in talking with children was self-rated by parents at a score of 2.99 (out of five). After the Speakeasy course confidence levels had been raised to a score of 4.40. This relates to an average increase of 1.41 points (or a 47.0% increase).
2. Overall **knowledge** of the topics, including puberty, contraception, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and keeping safe, increased from a score of 3.07 before course, to 4.47 after course, an increase of scores by 1.4 (or 45.6%).
3. Before the course 60.9% of parents agreed strongly or agreed with the statement, "I feel able to talk to my children **openly** about sex". This rose to 95.5% after the course. As such an additional 34.6% of parents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement as a result of the Speakeasy course.
4. There was only a slight increase in interest in **further education**. Prior to the course 67.6% of people strongly agreed or agreed that they were considering returning to further education, after the course this figure rose to 73%, an increase of 5.4%.

5. The course successfully alerted parents to opportunities to raise issues with their children. 69.1% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that they were aware of these opportunities prior to the course, this figure rose to 96.7% of parents after completion, an increase of 27.6%.
6. The monitoring forms included a section where parents could give their comments and feedback on the course. The overwhelming finding from this section was that the course was enjoyable, informative and worthwhile.

Summary of Qualitative Findings

The findings from the qualitative evaluation strongly suggest that the main aims of the Speakeasy course have been achieved and that for some parents, these outcomes are sustained in the years following completion of the course. Overall, parents reported that Speakeasy was a very positive experience, informative, fun, relaxed, and a valuable opportunity to meet with other parents and discuss issues surrounding sex and relationships. More specifically, the interviews indicate that:

- Of the five parents re-interviewed from an earlier evaluation (who completed the course between 2002 and 2004), all found Speakeasy to be a very positive experience and would recommend the course to others.
- Parents' memories and perceptions of the course were strikingly positive with a number commenting that the course was a 'real eye-opener', 'brilliant', and very informative. 95% of parents interviewed (from the 40 interviewees taking the course in 2005) reported that they had benefited in some way from the Speakeasy course.
- 99% of parents (from the 40 taking the course in 2005) said their confidence in talking to their children about sex and sexual health had increased, including a large number of parents who said they felt less embarrassed, more open, and more able to see and take opportunities for raising sex and sexual health discussions with their children.
- 100% of parents interviewed (from the 40 taking the course in 2005) said their knowledge of sex, sexuality, and sexual health had increased as a direct result of completing the Speakeasy course. Many parents reported being surprised by how little they really knew.
- 45% of parents (from the 40 taking the course in 2005) said the course had impacted upon their immediate and wider group of family and friends (e.g. spouses and neighbours) in terms of increased confidence, knowledge, and openness in talking about sex and relationships.
- 100% of parents (from the 40 taking the course in 2005) reported submitting portfolios for OCN accreditation (although at the time of writing, no actual results are available).

For the 28 parents re-interviewed a year later in 2006 and the 20 parents interviewed in 2007, the positive impacts of Speakeasy were maintained. Interview schedules for these interviews can be found in Appendices C and D. Parents spoke of the valuable learning as well as their highly enjoyable experience whilst being a member of the course. Aside to generally confirming the positive benefits of Speakeasy, the

time-delay between taking the course and these repeat interviews (up to around three years in some instances) gave parents more time to recall examples of where their learning had been put into practice. Real-life examples of children's questions, and how parents had responded, were reported. Examples of how children felt more comfortable talking to parents about sex and other potentially awkward issues were also reported. Despite this time-delay between taking the course and interviews, most parents said they had retained most information. Those who felt they had forgotten material mentioned their folder as a useful resource to refresh their memories. Around one-half of parents had taken additional courses since Speakeasy.

Illustrations of the findings for 2006 and 2007 are shown below:

- **The course is very highly regarded:** 100% of the sample felt that attending the Speakeasy course had been a positive experience for them. Parents felt the course was relaxed, well-planned with good facilitators, was informative, interesting, and fun.

'It was definitely a positive experience, a truly brilliant course, informative, Excellent! I would definitely recommend it to other parents'.

- **Knowledge:** Parents reported that, even when they had been confident that they knew all about the subject prior to the course, they learnt a lot of information from attending Speakeasy. Information about STIs and contraceptives was valued particularly highly and remembered clearly. Parents said that though they felt they had forgotten some of the information, whenever they needed it in their lives it came 'flooding back'. However, nearly all parents felt that a refresher course would be enjoyable and beneficial.

'She'll say, 'why', 'what', you know? And it's gave me a better knowledge to be able to answer her questions and not be uncomfortable about it as well'.

'You do think you know everything and obviously you don't, and it opens your eyes'.

- **Confidence:** Parents reported increased confidence when it came to talking to their children about sex. Parents attributed this to increased knowledge, feeling less embarrassed, knowing where to get more information, knowing there is support available and being able to discuss issues with other parents.

'I now feel very confident in talking to my children, and this is all due to doing the Speakeasy course, all of it, the whole lot was useful in increasing my confidence'.

'It's helped me cause it made you think about things, it sort of made it clearer how much information to give to them at certain times, yeah it's dead easy to talk about'.

- **Openness:** Of greatest importance is the suggestion that what was learnt on the course is continually useful in everyday lives. With the increasing time gap the longitudinal research is beginning to show the sustained impact of the course. Parents shared many examples of increased openness with their children, often very recently, and readily suggested that this was a result of having attended the course.

'Even when she was saying to me about babies growing in my tummy my first thought was 'what do I' 'how do I' age appropriate sort of, you have a flash sort of, in your it's a silly thing, but you have a flash in your head of doing that time line thing and thinking oh right am I expecting that question around now'?

'I used some of the techniques to be quite frank and open with my daughter regarding puberty and sex in a way that my parents never were with me... There's nothing now that she feels she can't ask, I've let her know that the subject of sex isn't a taboo thing you know, it's not something that you have to feel like you can't bring up with parents'.

'...He comes back from school a couple of days ago and he says, 'I like this girl' you know, and I thought, 'here we go!' ... He wants to take her out and I was on about being safe you know and everything'.

- **Further learning:** Qualitative findings suggest that the positive learning experience had encouraged parents to go on to further learning and get back into work. People who attended the course reported increased confidence as learners. Parents of young children found it especially useful in helping them reconnect with an adult world, challenging them to learn and as such was a highly valued experience.

'Speakeasy increased my desire to get into further education and do a degree at the Open University... Speakeasy has also really helped me because it's given me knowledge and confidence to get involved in other things. I've been involved in a lot of community projects and I also take part in local environmental meetings, things I wouldn't have done before'.

'I'd gone in with the idea thinking not only is it going to be quite boring and sort of really hard going but it's, you don't want to appear thick and what happens if you can't do it. Whereas the fact that there was no sort of right or wrong, it was very open and easygoing, you were made to feel at ease that you just thought, 'yeah you know, I can do this'.

Males.

Fpa is interested in understanding why so few men attend the Speakeasy course in an effort to discover ways of encouraging more to participate. Research so far suggests that males draw the same benefits from the course as women do, finding it worthwhile, informative and enjoyable. The content and style of delivery was deemed suitable for a male audience and men experienced very few difficulties with the course. Only very occasionally these were attributable to being a male on the course, and this presented a problem only when they were the only male in a group of women. Men particularly valued the acquisition of new knowledge through the course, felt they had retained a good amount of what they had learnt and were able to use it in their daily lives.

Overall, the outcomes of the Speakeasy programme are impressive. Combined evidence from the individual telephone interviews (undertaken in 2005, 2006 and 2007) a focus group discussion, evaluation of the male experience, and quantitative analysis of monitoring forms provide strong evidence to suggest that parents gain important knowledge, confidence, and skills as a result of their participation in the course.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Aims

1.1 Background and Rationale

Fpa Speakeasy course offers a non-threatening group based opportunity for parents to acquire the confidence and skills they need to communicate with their children about sex and sexual health. The Speakeasy course was first run in England in 2002. The course is designed to offer a flexible and relaxed way for parents to gain greater confidence in talking about issues which can often cause embarrassment and discomfort. The Speakeasy course is registered for accreditation with the Open College Network (OCN) which awards qualifications and awards for adult learners. For those parents who wish to, the course and resulting portfolio-based work can be used to gain OCN credits that can offer a pathway for entry into further education. Fpa has been delivering accredited courses to groups of parents (free of charge) in a number of community settings including London, Birmingham, Manchester, and Newcastle. Speakeasy is targeted in areas of multiple deprivation and where high teenage pregnancy rates occur. Recruitment takes place through established parenting centres in partnership with local staff which often help facilitate on the courses.

The evaluation will focus on the four key aims of Speakeasy for parents.

- Increase parents' confidence and communication skills with their children
- Help parents show a more positive and open approach to discussions of sex, sexuality and sexual health
- Increase parents' factual knowledge around sex and sexual health
- Provide a step towards further learning or professional development for excluded groups of parents

Until the summer of 2007 the Speakeasy course consisted of seven weekly sessions plus an initial taster session (see Table One). The structure of the course was modified in 2007 in response to feedback fpa received from trainers, parents and the OCN. This has resulted in Speakeasy becoming an eight week programme with contraception and STIs being studied in separate weeks. This gives parents more time to focus on these extensive topics. It is important to note that the vast majority of the quantitative data, and all of the qualitative data, upon which this evaluation is based was provided by parents who attended prior to the change in course structure. Although the structure may have differed depending on the specific needs of the parents attending, it typically followed the format as shown in Table One.

Speakeasy is delivered in a fun and relaxed atmosphere where parents can learn together from their own experiences. A variety of teaching methods are used within the course including collages, role play, and games, as well as more traditional written work. Each session lasts for approximately two hours and covers a different topic.

| Week | Topic |
|--------|--|
| Taster | How we learned/what children need Course outline/OCN accreditation |
| Week 1 | Hopes, fears, expectations/group agreement/language and the words we know/start evaluation |
| Week 2 | Naming body parts/physical and emotional changes in puberty |
| Week 3 | Needs of children at different stages of their life/age-appropriate information/learning opportunities with children |
| Week 4 | Collage exercises on stereotypes and media/pressures and how to deal with them/communication role play |
| Week 5 | Methods of contraception/information on STIs |
| Week 6 | SRE policy/useful resources |
| Week 7 | Safe from harm/child safety/review of portfolio and complete/end evaluation |

Table 1. Speakeasy Course Outline

A recent evaluation of fpa Speakeasy course conducted between 2002-2004 (Burns 2004) involved a longitudinal study designed to investigate the longer term outcomes of the programme. The evaluation consisted of both internal (research carried out by fpa staff) and external monitoring (research carried out by Burns). The research involved a number of measures including:

- Pre and post course parent evaluations for those who attended the course
- Feedback from trainers and co-facilitators on all courses
- Monitoring forms completed by professionals being trained to deliver Speakeasy
- A longitudinal telephone survey of 42 parents carried out by members of the Speakeasy team.

The findings of Burns' evaluation (2004) overwhelmingly suggested that the aims were being achieved by the end of the course, and that the key desired outcomes were being sustained and sometimes increased following completion of the course. Burns reported that 100% of parents whom attended the course between 2002-2004 stated that they experienced an increase in confidence and in their ability to be more open, feel less embarrassed, and be more able to utilize opportunities to raise sex and relationship issues with their children. Burns also reported that the Speakeasy accreditation proved an incentive for many of the parents who had little or no experience of organised learning beyond school and that it had been, '*Successful, and at times instrumental, in enabling a proportion of parents to move on into training or jobs*' (Burns 2004, p.3).

In light of this previous evaluation, Trust for the Study of Adolescence (TSA) was commissioned to continue the evaluation in five ways:

- 1) To analyse the pre and post course monitoring forms completed by parents attending the Speakeasy course from 2002-2007 (Chapter Three).
- 2) To conduct repeat interviews (in 2005, 2006 and 2007) with five parents whom attended Speakeasy between 2002-2004, and whom were from Burn's original interviewee cohort of 42 parents (Chapter Four).
- 3) To investigate whether the desired programme outcomes are being achieved with parents attending Speakeasy in 2005 by interviewing 40 parents in 2005, 2006 and 2007 (Chapter Five).

4) To explore male perceptions of the Speakeasy course to discover whether the course holds similar benefits for men as it does for women and gain insight into why so few men attend the Speakeasy course. A cohort of male parents was telephone interviewed in 2007 (Chapter Six).

5) To further and increase the ecological validity of the evaluation by conducting a focus group with parents attending a Speakeasy graduation event (Chapter Seven).

1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Research

The main focus of the present research was to quantitatively and qualitatively explore progress towards achieving the stated aims of the Speakeasy course. More specifically, the aim was to identify the effects of Speakeasy and provide qualitative insights into *how* the course has benefited parents in terms of sustained changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours.

Chapter 2: Overview of Research Design and Methods

2.1 Research Design

For the quantitative component, the pre and post course monitoring forms were collated by **fpa** and handed over to TSA for analysis in the form of an Excel spreadsheet. Chapter Three presents these findings.

Chapter Four presents the findings of five telephone interviews which were conducted with parents whom were a part of the original **fpa** Speakeasy longitudinal evaluation conducted by Burns (2004). As such, these five parents were re-interviewed following their involvement in the Burns (2004) study. These five individuals were recruited by **fpa** whom telephoned them to request i) consent to be interviewed, and ii) permission for their contact details to be passed on to the TSA. These parents were asked to take part in a 20-30 minute telephone interview about the Speakeasy parents course (see Appendix A for the 2005 interview schedule). All five telephone interviews were conducted during November 2005. Although the aim was to conduct continued longitudinal research with these participants by repeating interviews at a year follow up, unfortunately none of these parents were obtainable in 2006.

Chapter Five presents the bulk of the evaluation data TSA has been involved in, resulting from a qualitative longitudinal research design involving telephone interviews with a total of 40 parents who had completed **fpa** generic Speakeasy course. The parents who formed this sample had completed the Speakeasy course either in spring or summer 2005 and were interviewed by telephone during November 2005 in the first instance (see Appendix B for interview schedule). These parents were contacted for interview again in 2006 and 2007 (see Appendices D and E for the interview schedules used).

Individuals were recruited by **fpa** who telephoned them to request their informed consent and permission for their contact details to be passed on to the TSA. Parents were then phoned by a researcher from the TSA and asked to confirm their consent before taking part in a 20-30 minute telephone interview about their experiences of the Speakeasy course.

Prior to beginning the interview participants were asked for their consent to have the interview recorded under the assurance that the researcher would be the only person to listen to the recording. All participants freely gave their consent. Participants' responses to each question on the interview schedule were summarised during the interview and hand recorded by the researcher. The researcher then reviewed the summary and used the recording to transcribe sections of interview which were deemed of significance.

Chapter Six presents the findings of telephone interviews with males attending the Speakeasy course (See appendix E for interview schedule). Again **fpa** made initial contact with the participants and gained informed consent prior to a researcher from TSA conducting interview. The methods detailed for the longitudinal research above were applied to this evaluation strand.

Further detail on the sampling and recruitment of the parents contributing to the focus group discussions are outlined in Chapter Seven.

2.2 Sample

Prior 2005 Sample (n = 5)

The five parents forming the first sample completed Speakeasy prior to 2005, and were selected for interview by fpa. All those in the sample had been interviewed previously for Burn's 2004 Speakeasy evaluation and were purposively selected to represent the demographic of the sample as a whole and then randomly selected from within these demographic categories. The telephone interview schedule (Appendix A) included a number of questions designed to collect social demographic data from participants. Data revealed that all five parents were White British, female, and without disability. Further details pertaining to age and religious beliefs can be seen in Table Two.

| Age | N | % | Religion | N | % | Ethnicity | N | % |
|--------|---|-----|--------------|---|-----|---------------|---|-----|
| 30-34 | 1 | 20 | Catholic | 1 | 20 | White British | 5 | 100 |
| 35-49 | 2 | 40 | Christian | 2 | 40 | | | |
| 40-44 | 2 | 40 | Spiritualist | 1 | 20 | | | |
| TOTALS | 5 | 100 | TOTALS | 5 | 100 | TOTALS | 5 | 100 |

Table 2. Age, Religion and Ethnicity Data for Parental Sample (N = 5)

Fpa targets the Speakeasy course in areas of high multiple deprivation. In order to gain an indication of geographical and socio-economic background of the interviewees, postcode data were analysed using the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) from the Office for National Statistics¹. Data revealed that all five parents were from geographical areas representing areas of significant social and economic disadvantage (band one).

2005 Sample (n = 40)

For the larger interview sample, parents were selected by fpa from their database of all individuals who enrolled in Speakeasy in either spring or summer 2005, and who had previously agreed to be interviewed. The sample was purposively selected from specific strata to ensure that certain groups were included in the evaluation² and

¹ Based on postcode data, the IMD can provide an individual score for the area based on where each parent lives. This score is a ranked overall measure of deprivation based on a number of factors such as income, employment, education, health, skills and training, barriers to housing and services and crime. A low score (e.g. 1) indicates great deprivation whilst a higher score indicates the least deprivation (e.g. 32,482). For the purposes of this evaluation, the IMD scores which can range between 1-32,482 were categorised into four 4 quartiles to give an overview of the kinds of areas participants were drawn from.

² BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) groups who were not proficient in English, refugees, and asylum seekers were not included in the sample.

then randomly selected from within these groups. Consequently, the final sample of 40 parents was intended to be diverse in a number of ways including:

- ❖ Gender
- ❖ Ethnicity
- ❖ Parents with children under 12yrs and those aged 13yrs and over
- ❖ Parents of children with special needs
- ❖ Different geographical and socio-economic positions

Similar to the sample of five parents, the interview schedule (Appendix B) included a number of questions designed to collect social demographic data from participants in order to ensure the diversity of the sample.

- ❖ Despite **fpa's** attempt to recruit more fathers on to the Speakeasy course, only three fathers were contactable meaning 93% of the sample were mothers (n = 37).
- ❖ 90% of the parents described their ethnic group as White British (n = 36), the remainder of the sample were Pakistani, Fijian, and Chinese; see Table Three.
- ❖ 50% (n = 20) of parents interviewed were married, 22.5% were single, 17.5% were living with a partner, and the remaining 10% of parents said they were divorced.
- ❖ 15% (n = 6) of parents reported having a step family
- ❖ On average, parents reported 2.3 children in the household (mode = 2). 35% of parents reported 3 or more children in the family.
- ❖ Over half of parents interviewed categorised their work duties as being a house-person (57.5% or n = 23). 17.5% of parents reported working part-time (n = 7), and the remaining parents reported they were students, unemployed, or involved in voluntary work. For 5% of the sample, data were not available.
- ❖ 37.5% of the sample was aged 30-34yrs. There was a reasonably good spread of ages making up the remaining 62.5% (see Table Three)
- ❖ 95% of participants enthusiastically agreed to take part in a further follow-up interview at some point in 2006/7.

More detailed breakdowns relating to gender, age, religion, and ethnicity can be seen in Table Three.

| Age | N | % | Religion | N | % | Gender | N | % | Ethnicity | N | % |
|-------------|----|------|--------------|----|------|---------|----|----|---------------|----|-----|
| Under 25yrs | 3 | 7.5 | Catholic | 7 | 17.5 | Females | 37 | 93 | White British | 36 | 90 |
| 25-29 | 6 | 15 | Christian | 7 | 17.5 | Males | 3 | 7 | Pakistani | 2 | 5 |
| 30-34 | 15 | 37.5 | Methodist | 2 | 5 | | | | Fijian | 1 | 2.5 |
| 35-49 | 6 | 15 | Mormon | 1 | 2.5 | | | | Chinese | 1 | 2.5 |
| 40-44 | 5 | 12.5 | Muslim | 1 | 2.5 | | | | | | |
| 45-49 | 2 | 5 | Pentecostal | 1 | 2.5 | | | | | | |
| 50-54 | 3 | 7.5 | No religion | 20 | 50 | | | | | | |
| | | | Missing Data | 1 | 2.5 | | | | | | |
| TOTALS | 40 | 100 | TOTALS | 40 | 100 | | | | TOTALS | 40 | 100 |

Table 3. Gender, Age, Religion, and Ethnicity Data for Parent Sample

Postcode data were analysed to gain an indication of geographical and socio-economic background of the 40 interviewees using the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). Data revealed that the majority of parents (57%) were from geographical areas falling into Band One representing areas of significant social and economic disadvantage (see Table Four).

| | IMD Quartile | Frequency | % |
|----------------|---------------------------|-----------|-----|
| Most Deprived | Band 1 (1-8120) | 23 | 57% |
| | Band 2 (8120-16,241) | 12 | 30% |
| | Band 3 (16, 242 – 24,361) | 2 | 5% |
| Least Deprived | Band 4 (24, 362 – 32,482) | 3 | 8% |

Table 4. Index of Multiple Deprivation Based on Postcode Data

2.2 Data Analysis

Quantitative

The database provided by fpa in the form of an Excel spreadsheet was imported into the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) for ease of analysis. Simple analyses were then performed upon the data.

Qualitative

The qualitative material generated by the individual interviews were prepared and analysed in the following way:

- i) *Interview Summaries:* The researcher made detailed notes of the participant's responses to the interview questions. This provided the main data set. Any striking comments or areas where interesting data were suggested were then transcribed verbatim from the interview recording. At the end of each interview the researcher recorded their post-interview-reflections noting any striking features of the interview, themes, or surprising elements. Through this process an analytical and interpretive process for the main data analysis was initiated.
- ii) *Thematic Analysis:* Following from this process, the interview summaries were inspected through iterative reading to facilitate familiarity with the data. The researcher then identified both general and unique themes for all the interviews relating to the key desired outcomes of **fpa** Speakeasy programme. Hand-recorded verbatim quotes were available through transcription of the interviews and were frequently referred to during the process of developing themes to ensure the ecological validity of the findings.

Finally, two further points are important to note. Firstly, Thematic Analysis recognizes that the author is an integral part of the research process and in the generation of the data, bringing to the analysis their own values and theoretical positions. It is necessary to recognise that the interpretation of the data is viewed in these terms (see Stanley and Wise, 1993). However, by constantly comparing the interpretation of data with verbatim quotes the researcher can, to a certain extent, ensure the findings reflect the data. Secondly, in the qualitative analyses throughout the evaluation report, reference is made to numbers which are used to help give an idea about the strength of comments being made (see Silverman, 2001, p. 35). Phrases such as 'all' (meaning all), 'many' or 'most' (meaning $\frac{3}{4}$ or more), 'half'

(meaning approximately ½) 'several' (approaching ½) and 'a few' (meaning ¼ or less), are used in the empirical sections that follow. These are not intended to claim statistical generalisability, but as a simple way to indicate the strength of the theoretical points being made.

2.4 Ethical Considerations

The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with TSA's ethical guidelines (see Appendix F). These guidelines cover a number of issues such as informed consent, care of participants, confidentiality, anonymity (where relevant and appropriate), disclosure, and feedback. All members of the TSA research staff hold current CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checks.

In their initial contact with the parents, fpa gained fully informed consent from potential participants in regards to their taking part in a telephone interview conducted by TSA. At the time of interview, a researcher from TSA made an additional check to see if consent was still provided given that on occasion a number of weeks had passed between **fpa's** first contact and the interview itself. Parents were then informed of the aim of the research, how their views were valued and confidential and how they would help the aim to be achieved. All participants received a £10 voucher per interview in recognition of their assistance in the research.

Chapter 3: Impact Evaluation: Quantitative Analyses of Pre and Post Course Monitoring Forms Completed by Parents Attending during the period 2002-2007

Since 2002, and at the time of writing, approximately 6500 parents have completed the Speakeasy course. Of these, the records of 2367 are held in a database. The database records details about the socio-demographic profile of attendees and, critically for the evaluation, findings from the pre and post course questionnaires which participants were asked to fill in. Copies of the pre and post course monitoring forms can be found in Appendix G.

It is important to note that with such a large percentage of the possible sample forming the database (approximately 36%) we can be confident that the conclusions drawn from data analysis are generalisable. However some caution should be exercised with the added consideration that the database does not include parents who attended shortened courses, parents who did not complete the course, those who had no intention of accreditation, most people for whom English was their second language, and those who had very recently completed their course with the data yet to be entered into the database. There were also frequent occurrences of missing data where participants had only completed some of the questions. The results of the analyses provide a percentage for those who gave a response to the question concerned and exclude the missing data.

The results of the quantitative evaluation are presented in the following chapter and are structured as follows:

- Socio-demographic characteristics of the Speakeasy course attendees.
- Findings from the pre and post course monitoring forms for the entire sample.
- Differential effects of Speakeasy for Welsh attendees compared to the sample as a whole.
- Differential effects of Speakeasy by a range of socio-demographic characteristics.

3.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of the Speakeasy course attendees

The 2367 attendees included in the dataset attended Speakeasy courses run in approximately 300 different venues, mainly in a range of different Sure Start centres, schools or family centres. The largest number of attendees in a location (of those whose information had been entered into the database) was 30.

The vast majority of attendees on the Speakeasy course were female forming approximately 95% of the sample. Only 110 males (or fathers) details were present in the database. The differential effects amongst males and females are reviewed later in this chapter. Chapter Six also reports an in-depth analysis of male experience on the course by presenting the findings from interview research conducted exclusively with men.

Just over half the attendees (52%) had one or two children, with a further 17% having no children, 16% had three children and 14% reporting four or more children. The average number of children per attendee was exactly two. Perhaps as expected, the sex difference in children was minimal, although boys formed a slightly higher percentage (less than four percentage points difference for the first child and

less than one percentage point difference for the second child). The average age of the first child was 9.5 years and 7.9 years for the second child.

Seventy-one percent of the attendees classified themselves as White-British. The largest other groups were; White-Other (3%), Black or Black British-Caribbean (3%) and Black or Black-British African (3%). This is likely to be an underestimate of the ethnic diversity given that, as noted above, this dataset did not include many of those people for whom English was a second language.

In terms of the work status of those attending the Speakeasy course, 12% were employed full-time, 27% were employed part-time, 29% were registered as unemployed and 32% were unwaged and not-seeking work.

Almost exactly 10% of the sample did not consider themselves 'able-bodied', which included those reporting learning support needs, non-registered disabilities and those who were registered disabled.

The percentage for whom Speakeasy was the first course they had taken since leaving school was 17.7.

3.2 Findings from the pre and post course monitoring forms for sample as a whole

The most informative data from the monitoring forms are derived from Questions 1-3 and concern self perceived confidence about discussing sex and relationships issues with their children (Q1), perceived knowledge in relation to puberty, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), contraception and keeping safe (Q2a-d), and attitudes towards sexual relationship education and further learning (Q3a-e).

The results from each of these questions will be outlined by comparing the pre and post course findings. For the first and second question, the findings were derived from 5-point scales. Parents were asked to rate themselves on a scale from one to five with one being 'not confident' or 'little knowledge' (in the case of Question 2) and five being 'very confident' or 'very knowledgeable'. Therefore, a positive effect of Speakeasy would be reflected in an increase in the average score for each question.

Parents were asked to rate their confidence in response to the question 'At the moment how confident do you feel talking to your children about sex and relationships'. Table Five shows the self report scores of parents in response to the statement both before and after the course.

| Before-course average out of 5 | After-course average out of 5 | % change in average score |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2.99 | 4.40 | +47.0% |

Table 5. Parents self-rated confidence in talking to children about sex and relationships

A 47% increase in the average self-rated confidence score is a very encouraging finding and suggests that the course has significantly affected parental confidence in talking to children about sex and relationships.

Four Questions measured parental knowledge in relation to sex and relationships. These focused on how much knowledge parents felt they had to talk to their children about; changes during puberty, STIs, contraception, and staying safe (child protection).

Table Six outlines the findings for the four knowledge questions. The results suggest that the course had a positive effect on parents. Significant score increases are observable in all knowledge areas. Of particular significance is the dramatic increase in knowledge about STIs. These individual knowledge scores relate directly to an overall increase in knowledge from an average score of 3.07 before the course to a score of 4.47 after the course, or a raise of 45.6%. This is a very significant increase and suggests that the Speakeasy course is achieving its aim of increasing factual knowledge around sex and sexual health.

| Knowledge | Pre-course score | Post-course score | Score change (%) |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Changes during puberty | 3.02 | 4.44 | + 1.42 (+47.0) |
| STIs | 2.59 | 4.33 | + 1.74 (+67.2) |
| Contraception | 3.30 | 4.56 | + 1.26 (+38.2) |
| Staying safe | 3.37 | 4.56 | + 1.19 (+35.3) |

Table 6. Parents self rated knowledge scores and % score change pre and post course

Question three consisted of five statements which parents were asked to consider and rate their agreement with. Parents scored themselves on a five point scale between strong agreement with the statement, and strong disagreement with the statement. The Statements covered two of the key aims of the Speakeasy course, to assist parents in having a more open approach towards discussion of sex and also to provide a step towards further learning. These aims will be considered separately. Table Seven shows the percentages of parents who 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with statements relating to openness both before the course and again after the course had been completed.

| Statement | Before course findings (%) | | | After course findings (%) | | |
|---|----------------------------|-------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------|-------------------------|
| | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly agree or agree | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly agree or agree |
| I want to talk with my children openly about sex. | 57.3 | 34.6 | 91.9 | 68.4 | 28.0 | 96.4 |
| I feel able to talk to my children openly about sex. | 21.1 | 39.8 | 60.9 | 56.3 | 39.2 | 95.5 |
| I am aware of opportunities to raise issues with my children. | 17.0 | 52.1 | 69.1 | 55.9 | 40.8 | 96.7 |

Table 7. Before and after course percentages of parents 'strongly agreeing' or 'agreeing' with statements relating to openness about sex and sexual relationship education.

The findings presented in Table Seven continue to show a positive response to the course. For all five statements the percentage of parents 'strongly agreeing and agreeing' show increases after the course. The most notable swings in responses are in relation to talking to children openly about sex (from 60.9% 'agreeing or strongly agreeing' before the course to 95.5% after the course) and being aware of the opportunities to raise issues with their children (from 69.1% agreeing or strongly agreeing before the course to 96.7% after the course).

The final two statements of Question Three related to the Speakeasy aim to provide a step towards further learning. The parent's self-rated scores both before and after the course are shown in Table Eight.

| Statement | Before course findings (%) | | | After course findings (%) | | |
|--|----------------------------|-------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------|-------------------------|
| | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly agree or agree | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly agree or agree |
| I feel confident about learning as a member of a Speakeasy course. | 43.2 | 47.4 | 90.6 | 68.6 | 28.6 | 97.4 |
| I have been considering going back to learning/further education. | 32.2 | 35.3 | 67.6 | 43.4 | 29.6 | 73.0 |

Table 8. Before and after course percentages for parents 'strongly agreeing' or 'agreeing' with statements relating to confidence as learners and consideration of further education.

From the table we can see that the percentage of people who strongly agreed or agreed that they felt confident as learners on the course rose from 90.6% to 97.4%. The percentage of parents strongly considering or considering going back to education rose from 67.6% to 73%. Looking closely at the results shows that there is a significant proportion of parents who moved from the 'agreeing' category to strong agreement in respect to their confidence as learners on a Speakeasy course - prior to the course 43.2% strongly agreed that they felt confident as learners, after the course this figure had risen to 68.6%.

Although these findings again show a positive increase in scores they are dramatically lower than scores relating to the other key aims of the Speakeasy course. Whilst this may suggest that the Speakeasy course is not as successful in achieving this aim the complexity of the area needs to be taken into consideration. Findings relating to the other aims need not take into account confounders. However, a person may be encouraged to continue with their education by the Speakeasy course but feel that they cannot consider this due to family responsibilities or work commitments. Increases in knowledge, openness and confidence are not dependent on these external influences. Indeed this is suggested further by the significant increase in people who felt confident as learners on the course (indicated by 'strongly agreeing'). Whilst this figure increased significantly, suggesting that the Speakeasy course encouraged people as learners, the proportion of people who felt that they would consider going back to education (which takes into account confounders) received only a small increase.

Parents were also asked whether they were intending to do any courses at college or an adult education centre this year or next year, and if they were intending to gain an OCN credit from completing the course. It must be kept in mind that cases that were initially excluded from the database included those who had no intention of accreditation, and this creates bias in the results. However, the findings are shown in Table Nine.

| Question | Before course (%) | | After course (%) | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| | Yes | No or not sure | Yes | No or not sure |
| Intending to do any courses? | 61.4 | 38.6 | 63.7 | 36.3 |
| Intending to gain OCN credit? | 71.1 | 28.9 | 64.9 | 35.1 |

Table 9. Percentages of parents intending to go on further courses and gain an OCN credit for completion the Speakeasy course.

From Table nine we can see that the percentage of people intending to go on further courses is not significantly increased after the course. There is almost no change in the percentage of people considering gaining credit for the course, indeed the figure is slightly reduced after the course.

The results from the analysis so far show that Speakeasy is achieving its aims of openness, confidence and increasing factual knowledge. It is not so clear concerning the aim of providing a step towards further learning, however as discussed, this area is confounded by external variables.

The monitoring forms also collected data relating to wider attitudes towards educating children about sex and relationships. Prior to the course, people thought parents had the main responsibility for telling children about sex and relationships (75.1%), followed by 'others' at (21.2%), with other response options including teachers, school friends and other family members. After the course, the responses were very similar and still in favour of parental responsibility.

Finally, the monitoring forms contained three further open-ended questions about aspects of the course which parents had enjoyed and found more difficult, and intentions to use the OCN credit. The final section of this part of the evaluation considers these questions in turn, providing verbatim examples of responses.

In respect to the question addressing the aspects of the course which people had enjoyed the most, the most frequent response was that of a general positive regard for the experience.

“Fun and educational”

“I enjoy everything about the course. The subjects that we discuss were very interesting and it gave me more confidence to talk to my children about sex related issues.”

"I enjoyed the professional but fun way the course was run. I learned a lot of things on the subject and feel better equipped to answer any question that may arise in the future."

People also expressed enjoyment of specific topics covered during the course and activities they took part in.

"Doing the collage, it really made me think and raised my awareness of influences".

"Enjoyed talking about different terms used for body parts (very funny)."

"All of it, being aware of how important it is to let my children know how important it is to take care of themselves."

People were also very positive about the group work, with the opportunity to meet new parents and discuss sensitive issues.

"Being able to discuss in group gives more confidence. Feel better equipped to speak with children on sex issues."

"Group discussions because it has made us more confident and that I will be able to talk to my child about sex."

"Meeting other parents and being able to chat openly about sex issues and learning all information to enable me to feel comfortable talking to my children about the issues surrounding sex and growing up."

Of particular importance, people generally felt that the course had instilled them with confidence to address issues around sex and relationships.

"Gaining the knowledge and confidence to be able to talk openly to my children about sex, relationships, keeping safe etc."

"Gave me more confidence to talk to my children about sex and relationships."

"Giving me the confidence to be able now to speak to my daughter about periods, pregnancy etc. I don't think I would have been able to do that six months ago, and to give me the confidence for the future when my children are older."

On a contrasting note, there were some comments in relation to aspects which attendees did not enjoy. These were mostly comments about the writing, paperwork and homework involved in the course.

"Having to bring homework home and complete, found I didn't have time to do it, also the other mothers on this course had the same problem. Wish we could have spent a whole day on the course so didn't have to take it home, as it was only on once a week."

"Homework was hard in my home as I found it hard to concentrate with the children. As I live in a flat I found it hard to get my own quiet space to do my work. I feel I did more work while in the group."

There were also some comments about the sensitive topics addressed around child protection and abuse although people recognised that it was essential information to cover.

“Child protection was a little uncomfortable, some saddening stories were shared. But you can understand why it needs to be covered.”

There were also a few isolated but nonetheless significant points about the level of information for children of a certain age. For example:

“I did feel that on the time lines some of the information would be too much for younger children. I wouldn't want to take away their innocence. Children can have too much information that they just don't understand and mixed messages will confuse them.”

Nonetheless, it is important to note that this question generated far less response than the things that attendees did enjoy. Also, some responses were very positive to this question, with numerous accounts of people saying that there was ‘nothing’ about the course they did not enjoy, apart from the time restriction on the course and that they would like to have had more. For example:

“I cannot say there is anything I didn't enjoy. This is a very worthy course and is of great benefit. The only thing I would ask for is an extra week to sit and conclude the course, tidy up any issue that may arise.”

“Nothing. Everything I learned was essential and I will use in the near future.”

For the final open-ended question, people were asked how they were intending to use the credit they had gained. Most people were unsure how they would use their credit, but were confident that it would come in use in the future:

“Originally I did the course to help my own children by educating myself in today's puberty and adolescence, but now I feel it may help towards future employment if I include it in my CV.”

“Would like to go onto further courses if possible, if I pass, it is a good qualification to add to my CV.”

“At the moment, being a full time mam, I am just grabbing the opportunity to add to my CV as I'm not sure whether I want to go straight back to work or go back to college when my kids go to school.”

3.3 Differential effects of Speakeasy for Welsh attendees compared to sample as a whole

The previous section gave an overview of findings amongst the entire database, this section details findings from the 48 attendees (47 women and one man) at Speakeasy courses run in eight different venues in Wales. At the outset it is important to mention that the small size of this sub-sample means that the

percentage findings should be treated with a degree of caution and may not be representative.

Of the attendees, 10% had no children, 21% had one child and 46% had two children. The average number of children was 1.9. Slightly more of the first and second born children were girls (55%) and their average ages were 9.5 and 7.7 respectively. The majority were White-British or Welsh and were either unwaged (42%) or employed part-time (21%). Eight percent described themselves as not being able-bodied. As expected, the sample was very similar in profile to that of the parents in the general Speakeasy database.

Twenty two percent of the Welsh sample reported that the Speakeasy course was the first course which they had attended since they left school, this is a slight increase upon the 17.7% reported for the whole sample.

In the following section comparisons will be made with between the Welsh sample and the sample as a whole in relation to the three key questions as detailed in the previous section.

| | Before-course average out of 5 | After-course average out of 5 | % change in score |
|--------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Whole sample | 2.99 | 4.40 | +47.2 |
| Welsh sample | 2.90 | 4.54 | +56.6 |

Table 10. Comparison of Welsh and whole database samples' self-rated confidence scores pre and post course.

| Knowledge area | Whole Sample | | Welsh sample | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Before-course average out of 5 | After-course average out of 5 | Before-course average out of 5 | After-course average out of 5 |
| Changes during puberty | 3.02 | 4.44 | 2.98 | 4.56 |
| STIs | 2.59 | 4.33 | 2.55 | 4.54 |
| Contraception | 3.30 | 4.56 | 3.26 | 4.67 |
| Keeping safe | 3.37 | 4.56 | 3.29 | 4.69 |

Table 11. Comparison of Welsh and whole database samples' self-rated knowledge scores pre and post course.

The two tables above illustrate that the positive effects found in the whole sample are extended to those who attended courses run in Wales. There is some evidence to suggest a slightly greater effect upon knowledge scores in the Welsh sample. Again, improvements in knowledge in relation to STIs are the most noticeable change.

| Statement | Sample | Before course findings (%) | | | After course findings (%) | | |
|---|--------------|----------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| | | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly agree or agree | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly agree or agree |
| I want to talk with my children openly about sex. | Whole | 57.3 | 34.6 | 91.9 | 68.4 | 28.0 | 96.4 |
| | Welsh | 41.5 | 48.8 | 90.2 | 74.4 | 23.1 | 97.4 |
| I feel able to talk to my children openly about sex. | Whole | 21.1 | 39.8 | 60.9 | 56.3 | 39.2 | 95.5 |
| | Welsh | 17.9 | 53.8 | 71.8 | 71.8 | 23.1 | 94.9 |
| I am aware of opportunities to raise issues with my children. | Whole | 17.0 | 52.1 | 69.1 | 55.9 | 40.8 | 96.7 |
| | Welsh | 10.3 | 56.4 | 66.7 | 64.1 | 35.9 | 100.0 |

Table 12. Comparisons of responses to openness statements.

Table 12 further demonstrates the positive effects of Speakeasy for the Welsh sample. Of particular importance are the dramatic improvements after the course in people who find that they are, 'Able to talk to children openly about sex', (from 71.8% to 94.9%) and 'Aware of opportunities to raise issues with children' from 66.7% to 100%

| Statement | Sample | Before course findings (%) | | | After course findings (%) | | |
|--|--------------|----------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| | | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly agree or agree | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly agree or agree |
| I feel confident about learning as a member of a Speakeasy course. | Whole | 43.2 | 47.4 | 90.6 | 68.6 | 28.6 | 97.4 |
| | Welsh | 58.5 | 36.6 | 95.1 | 71.8 | 25.6 | 97.4 |
| I have been considering going back to learning/further education. | Whole | 32.2 | 35.3 | 67.6 | 43.4 | 29.6 | 73.0 |
| | Welsh | 35.9 | 23.1 | 59.0 | 71.8 | 25.6 | 97.4 |

Table 13. Comparisons of responses to 'learning' statements.

Table 13 shows parents' responses to the learning statements both before and after the course. From the table we can see that the findings from the Welsh sample in regards to consideration of returning to further education are more notable than the findings from the sample as a whole. However given the small sample size in the Welsh group it is important not to generalize from this finding.

Prior to the course the Welsh attendees thought that parents had the main responsibility for telling children about sex and relationships (85.4%), followed by 'others' at (12.2%). After the course, the responses were very similar and still in favour of parental responsibility. This finding was similar to the finding for the sample as a whole.

Results of attendee’s interest in taking further education and achieving an OCN credit are shown in Table14 alongside the findings from the whole sample. As can be seen, the main differences between the samples are a significant increase in intention to do further courses after the completion of the Speakeasy course, and a higher interest in taking an OCN credit at the outset:

| Question | Sample | Before course (%) | | After course (%) | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | | Yes | No or not sure | Yes | No or not sure |
| Intending to do any courses? | Whole Welsh | 61.4 48.5 | 38.6 51.5 | 63.7 62.1 | 36.3 37.9 |
| Intending to gain OCN credit? | Whole Welsh | 71.1 85.4 | 28.9 14.6 | 64.9 81.3 | 35.1 18.7 |

Table 14 Comparison of responses to further learning intentions.

The form also provided an opportunity for parents to provide comments about the course. The responses from the Welsh sample were very similar to those of the whole sample. There were numerous accounts of how positive the Welsh attendees felt the course was. Some examples of the aspects of the course that people enjoyed are shown below:

“Learning about everything from sex to STIs, I'm now more confident talking to my children.”

“Satisfaction on being able to answer any questions that may arise with my children.”

“The openness and clarity discussing all the various topics (as well as the education we gained).”

“The way the course was delivered to us was very informative and enjoyable.”

“I enjoyed the information given from other members of the group and the relaxed friendly atmosphere.”

Again, showing similarity to the whole sample, there were minimal negative comments about the course but some reference was made to difficulties with the writing and paperwork. In terms of the credit gained, people were not certain how they would use it, but felt it had given them the confidence and ability to help talk to their children more openly about sex and relationships:

“I don’t intend to use it at the moment but it is very useful to have hopefully gained a credit.”

“Show my children that I have achieved something, talk to my children more and hopefully to go on to something else. Thank you.”

“It will help me to speak to my child about related issues and also to any other children if need be. It will also help me to understand what my son is going through and how to help him.”

3.4 Differential effects of Speakeasy by a range of socio-demographic characteristics

In this section, the differing impacts of Speakeasy by a range of socio-demographic characteristics are examined through focus on the first three most informative questions in the monitoring forms: attendee’s perceived confidence about discussing sex and relationships issues with their children (Q1), perceived knowledge in relation to puberty, STIs, contraception and keeping safe (Q2a-d), and attitudes reflected by a series of different statements (Q3a-e).

The socio-demographic characteristics for comparison are as follows:

- Gender of attendee (male or female)
- Disability of attendee (able-bodied or not able-bodied)
- Ethnicity (White-British or non White-British)

Sex of attendee

Of the attendees included in the dataset, 95% or 2251 were female and 110 were male. Gender variations in regards to the first three key questions on the monitoring forms are focused upon here whilst an in depth qualitative examination of male experience is made in Chapter Six.

| Samples | Before-course average out of 5 | After-course average out of 5 |
|---------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Male | 3.13 | 4.59 |
| Female | 2.99 | 4.39 |

Table 15 Comparison of self reported ‘Confidence’ scores in male and female parents.

Table 15 shows the level of confidence about talking to children about sex and relationships by gender. Confidence levels are raised by an almost identical value in males and females.

Table 16 shows significant increases in knowledge on the selected topics, with this most pronounced in relation to STIs. Again, with the lack of differences by sex, these findings show that the positive impacts of Speakeasy are extending to both male and female attendees.

| Samples | Males | | Females | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Before-course average out of 5 | After-course average out of 5 | Before-course average out of 5 | After-course average out of 5 |
| Changes during puberty | 2.89 | 4.39 | 3.02 | 4.44 |
| Sexually transmitted infections | 2.74 | 4.38 | 2.59 | 4.33 |
| Contraception | 3.32 | 4.61 | 3.30 | 4.56 |
| Keeping safe | 3.29 | 4.53 | 3.37 | 4.56 |

Table 16. Comparison of 'Knowledge' scores between males and females.

Table 17 shows the scores for male and females on questions relating to openness with children about sex and sexual relationships.

| Statement | Sample | Before course findings (%) | | | After course findings (%) | | |
|---|--------|----------------------------|-------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------|-------------------------|
| | | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly agree or agree | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly agree or agree |
| I want to talk with my children openly about sex. | Male | 44.7 | 46.8 | 91.5 | 66.7 | 26.7 | 93.4 |
| | Female | 57.8 | 34.2 | 92.0 | 68.5 | 28.0 | 96.5 |
| I feel able to talk to my children openly about sex. | Male | 29.8 | 46.8 | 76.6 | 66.7 | 28.9 | 95.6 |
| | Female | 20.9 | 39.6 | 60.5 | 56.0 | 39.5 | 95.5 |
| I am aware of opportunities to raise issues with my children. | Male | 25.5 | 46.8 | 72.3 | 54.5 | 38.6 | 93.1 |
| | Female | 16.8 | 52.3 | 69.1 | 55.9 | 40.9 | 96.8 |

Table 17. Comparison of male and female self rated scores in relation to Openness statements

Interestingly, before the course it is notable that the male attendees were more likely to say they felt able to talk to their children about sex. After the course, significant improvements for both males and females were seen in the ability to talk to their children about sex with over 95% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement after the course. This was most noticeable for the females given their lower response before the course.

Table 18 Shows comparisons between men and women relating to the 'learning' statements. Males show a lower interest in returning to education both before and after the course was complete. An examination of the demographics of men attending the course shows that they are likely to be retired, or attending the course for work, this may have bearing on the result.

| Statement | Sample | Before course findings (%) | | | After course findings (%) | | |
|--|--------|----------------------------|-------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------|-------------------------|
| | | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly agree or agree | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly agree or agree |
| I feel confident about learning as a member of a Speakeasy course. | Male | 37.0 | 52.2 | 89.2 | 77.8 | 20.0 | 97.8 |
| | Female | 43.5 | 47.3 | 90.8 | 68.5 | 28.9 | 97.4 |
| I have been considering going back to learning/further education. | Male | 22.2 | 31.1 | 53.3 | 32.6 | 30.2 | 62.8 |
| | Female | 32.6 | 35.5 | 68.1 | 43.6 | 29.6 | 73.2 |

Table 18. Comparison of male and female self-rated scores in relation to 'learning' statements.

Disability of attendee

The information provided by the database shows that 160 people did not consider themselves 'able-bodied', these included those with learning support needs, non-registered disabled and those registered disabled. This section presents the findings of comparisons between able-bodied and disabled members of the Speakeasy course.

| Samples | Before-course average out of 5 | After-course average out of 5 |
|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Able-bodied | 2.97 | 4.41 |
| Disabled | 3.17 | 4.47 |

Table 19 Comparison of self rated confidence scores for disabled and able-bodied participants.

Table 19 shows almost identical increases in confidence between the able-bodied and disabled attendees.

Table 20 shows significant increases in knowledge after the course. In keeping with other findings this is most pronounced in relation to STIs. Able-bodied and disabled groups both reported increases in knowledge, although it is interesting to note that both the before, and after-course knowledge for the disabled groups were slightly higher than the able-bodied groups. There is no obvious explanation for this difference, however with the similar raise in scores it does show that the effectiveness of Speakeasy is extended to all groups irrespective of their disability.

| Samples | Able-bodied | | Disabled | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Before-course average out of 5 | After-course average out of 5 | Before-course average out of 5 | After-course average out of 5 |
| Changes during puberty | 3.01 | 4.45 | 3.14 | 4.52 |
| Sexually transmitted infections | 2.52 | 4.33 | 2.76 | 4.42 |
| Contraception | 3.23 | 4.53 | 3.43 | 4.67 |
| Keeping safe | 3.30 | 4.54 | 3.46 | 4.68 |

Table 20. Knowledge scores for disabled and able bodied participants

| | Sample | Before course findings (%) | | | After course findings (%) | | |
|---|----------|----------------------------|-------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------|-------------------------|
| | | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly agree or agree | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly agree or agree |
| I want to talk with my children openly about sex. | A-Bodied | 60.2 | 33.6 | 93.8 | 70.4 | 26.3 | 96.7 |
| | Disabled | 57.1 | 33.9 | 91.1 | 76.0 | 20.2 | 96.2 |
| I feel able to talk to my children openly about sex. | A-Bodied | 19.8 | 39.4 | 59.3 | 57.5 | 38.5 | 96.0 |
| | Disabled | 29.7 | 45.9 | 75.7 | 63.5 | 30.8 | 94.2 |
| I am aware of opportunities to raise issues with my children. | A-Bodied | 15.7 | 51.3 | 67.0 | 57.0 | 39.6 | 96.6 |
| | Disabled | 20.9 | 56.4 | 77.3 | 58.3 | 40.8 | 99.0 |

Table 21. Openness scores for disabled and able-bodied participants

For some openness questions the disabled attendees provided a more positive response than able bodied participants prior to the course beginning, for example, in relation to, 'I feel able to talk to my children about sex' and 'I am aware of opportunities to raise issues with my children'. The scores for these statements are shown in Table 21. Nonetheless, both the disabled and able-bodied groups reported a more positive agreement to each of the statements after the course. The disabled groups showed a less dramatic increase in scores, this may be due to their earlier higher responses. These findings clearly show that the impact of Speakeasy is spread across all groups, irrespective of disability.

| Statement | Sample | Before course findings (%) | | | After course findings (%) | | |
|--|----------|----------------------------|-------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------|-------------------------|
| | | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly agree or agree | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly agree or agree |
| I feel confident about learning as a member of a Speakeasy course. | A-Bodied | 41.7 | 48.3 | 90.0 | 69.2 | 27.9 | 97.0 |
| | Disabled | 45.0 | 42.3 | 87.4 | 72.1 | 26.9 | 99.0 |
| I have been considering going back to learning/further education. | A-Bodied | 30.7 | 33.1 | 63.8 | 39.9 | 29.7 | 69.6 |
| | Disabled | 37.6 | 35.8 | 73.4 | 60.8 | 20.6 | 81.4 |

Table 22. Comparison of self-rated scores for further learning.

Table 22 shows a comparison of scores for ‘learning’ statements. The disabled group shows more interest in further education both before and after the course. Findings for confidence as a learner were similar to the sample as a whole.

Ethnicity

Seventy-one percent (or 1670) of the attendees were self-classified as White-British, with 29% (or 697) classifying themselves as being from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) group. In this study, BAME groups are classified as all those people who did not define themselves as White British. The largest BAME groups were White-Other (3% of total sample), Black or Black British-Caribbean (3%) and Black or Black-British African (3%). A further 45 groups were included in the BAME attendees.

| Samples | Before-course average out of 5 | After-course average out of 5 |
|---------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| White-British | 2.98 | 4.42 |
| BAME | 3.03 | 4.33 |

Table 23 Confidence scores in talking to children about sex and relationships by ethnic grouping.

Table 23 shows an increase in confidence, almost identical in the White-British and BAME samples.

Table 24 shows significant increases in knowledge amongst BAME attendees after the course on the selected topics. Again this is most pronounced in relation to STIs. Interestingly, like the disabled samples, the BAME groups reported slightly advanced knowledge before the course compared to the White-British. Importantly, all groups reported increases in knowledge with the resultant scores after the course almost identical for the White-British and BAME groups.

| Samples | White-British | | BAME | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Before-course average out of 5 | After-course average out of 5 | Before-course average out of 5 | After-course average out of 5 |
| Changes during puberty | 2.99 | 4.44 | 3.10 | 4.41 |
| Sexually transmitted infections | 2.52 | 4.32 | 2.83 | 4.34 |
| Contraception | 3.29 | 4.56 | 3.33 | 4.55 |
| Keeping safe | 3.34 | 4.55 | 3.47 | 4.58 |

Table 24 Comparison of knowledge scores between ethnic groups.

Results for the openness statement questions for White-British and BAME groups are shown in Table 25.

| Statement | Sample | Before course findings (%) | | | After course findings (%) | | |
|---|--------|----------------------------|-------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------|-------------------------|
| | | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly agree or agree | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly agree or agree |
| I want to talk with my children openly about sex. | W-B | 60.0 | 35.2 | 95.2 | 70.2 | 26.6 | 96.8 |
| | BAME | 49.7 | 33.0 | 82.7 | 63.4 | 31.9 | 95.3 |
| I feel able to talk to my children openly about sex. | W-B | 21.9 | 38.2 | 60.2 | 57.7 | 38.3 | 96.0 |
| | BAME | 18.9 | 44.2 | 63.1 | 52.4 | 41.8 | 94.2 |
| I am aware of opportunities to raise issues with my children. | W-B | 16.5 | 51.4 | 68.0 | 58.3 | 38.2 | 96.5 |
| | BAME | 18.4 | 53.8 | 72.3 | 48.9 | 48.3 | 97.2 |

Table 25. Comparison of openness scores between ethnic groups

Before the course it is notable that the BAME groups showed slightly less agreement towards wanting to talk to their children openly about sex (82.7% strongly agreeing or agreeing compared to 95.2% of White-British attendees). This was the largest difference in the findings both before and after the course. However, in examining the after course findings, this agreement had increased to a figure similar to the White-British attendees. Again, and as for gender and disability, the impacts of Speakeasy clearly extend to all groups irrespective of their ethnicity. This conclusion is in regards to when BAME groups are treated as a whole as opposed to individual ethnic minority groups. It is still possible that variations may occur within individual ethnic groups.

Table 26 Shows the self-rated scores for the learning statements.

| Statement | Sample | Before course findings (%) | | | After course findings (%) | | |
|--|--------|----------------------------|-------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------|-------------------------|
| | | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly agree or agree | Strongly agree | Agree | Strongly agree or agree |
| I feel confident about learning as a member of a Speakeasy course. | W-B | 41.8 | 48.8 | 90.6 | 69.1 | 28.3 | 97.5 |
| | BAME | 47.3 | 43.2 | 90.5 | 67.8 | 29.4 | 97.2 |
| I have been considering going back to learning/further education. | W-B | 29.2 | 35.6 | 64.8 | 40.0 | 29.5 | 69.4 |
| | BAME | 40.8 | 34.4 | 75.2 | 53.0 | 30.0 | 83.0 |

Table 26. Comparison of self-rated 'learning' scores between ethnic groups

Of further interest, and as shown in Table 26 the post course finding of 83% reporting an interest in returning to education among the BAME groups is notably higher than White-British groups.

Summary.

It is clear from this extension to the analysis of the database that the positive impacts of Speakeasy extend across all attendees, irrespective of their gender, disability or ethnicity.

Chapter 4: Impact and Outcome Evaluation: Analytical themes from repeat interviews with five parents attending prior to 2005, who were interviewed originally in 2004, and again in 2005.

This section details the findings from the telephone interviews with five parents who completed the Speakeasy programme between 2002-2004. As a reminder, these parents were selected by fpa and formed part of Burn's (2004) original interviewee cohort of parents who were interviewed in the summer of 2004. Therefore, the interviews conducted in 2005 were amongst five parents who had already been interviewed on one occasion.

Although the intention was to re-interview these parents again in 2006 and 2007, none were available and hence this chapter reports findings from the 2005 follow-up interviews alone.

The findings presented in this section are based around aims of the Speakeasy course and are structured as follows:

- Memories of the course
- Increased confidence and communication skills
- Increased factual knowledge around sex and sexual health
- A more positive and open approach to discussions of sex, sexuality and sexual health
- A step towards further learning/professional development
- Suggestions for Improvement and final comments

4.1 Memories of the Course

Given the time gap between finishing the course and taking part in the telephone interviews, parents were initially asked about their memories of fpa Speakeasy course and to talk about anything that really stood out. It was hoped that this would help jog people's memories of Speakeasy, and provide a gentle introduction to the interview process, providing an opportunity to build rapport and a chance for any spontaneous feedback to arise.

All five parents reported that they remembered studying STIs and that this was a topic of particular value and use to them. Key learning points were an increased awareness concerning '*what is out there*' and the kinds of treatments available. Other topics parents recalled included contraception, media portrayals of sex and sexual issues, and learning the age-appropriateness of certain sex and sexual health knowledge. All five parents enthusiastically reported that completing the Speakeasy programme had been a very positive experience and that they would recommend the course to others. For example, two parents commented:

'It was a very positive experience, and I had a great time and lots of fun. The aims of the course were fully met and I would definitely recommend it to other parents, in fact I still do!'

'The course was a very positive experience, it was really helpful and I got a lot out of it. I've already recommended the course to my friends whom hadn't heard about it, and to other parents at the local Family Centre.'

Although parents reported a number of aspects of Speakeasy that were particularly positive, a common theme was having the opportunity to talk with and share experiences of sex and sexual health issues with other parents. As one parent stated:

'I really enjoyed the discussion aspect of the course, having the opportunity to talk about things I wouldn't normally get to...because my children were young when I did the course I really appreciated the chance to talk through things with parents of older children about stuff which might come up later.'

Four out of the five parents interviewed said they experienced some anxiety or apprehension in the early Speakeasy sessions. Two parents reported that this was due to not knowing anyone in the group which was experienced as 'nerve wracking'. One parent described initially feeling uncomfortable disclosing personally sensitive information, and one parent reported worries about the idea of portfolios being assessed, and homework. However, all four of these parents' narratives revealed that this initial apprehension quickly diminished as the course progressed and that this process was assisted by the group facilitators and the support of other parents on the course.

4.2 Aim one – Increased Confidence and communication skills

In the original fpa Speakeasy evaluation, Burns (2004) reported that 100% of parents interviewed as part of the longitudinal survey (n= 42) said they were more confident talking to their children than they had been before the course. The findings from this research reveal a similar trend in that all five parents taking part in the telephone interviews said their confidence in either approaching or talking to their children about sex and sexual health had increased as a direct result of completing the Speakeasy course:

'I'm loads more confident now - I was never terribly not confident but am now much more confident in comparison.'

This was also expressed by one parent who, although her children had not yet been asking questions about sex and sexual health, reported that she felt confident for the future when such issues could arise:

'Although my children are not really asking many questions yet, I feel confident enough to have a go at answering their questions about when they do arise in the near future.'

Parents described their increased confidence as being due to a number of factors. These included; increased factual knowledge of sex and sexual health, less embarrassment through having talked about sex in a group, discussions with 'strangers', and opportunities to share experiences and potential scenarios with other parents:

'I'm much more confident because I have more knowledge and have learnt ways of expressing and communicating that knowledge – it has empowered me to communicate with my children and feel less embarrassed when I do.'

Interestingly, and similar to the findings of Burns (2004), parents also reported that their increased confidence in talking about sex and sexual health meant they were also more confident in talking generally with the children, and more able to talk about other often difficult issues within the family. As two parents commented:

'I haven't just learnt concepts, I've also learnt how to help a child ask questions and be able to recognise when they are being defensive. I've now learnt strategies to talk to them more generally, not just about sex.'

'As sex is so personal and I can now talk about it with other people and my children, I feel that I can talk about anything. Other topics are relatively easy to talk about!'

4.3 Aim Two – Increased factual knowledge around sex and sexual health

When asked how they thought their knowledge of sex and sexual health had changed as a result of completing the Speakeasy programme, parents commonly described their knowledge as *'changing a lot'* over the duration of the course. Specific changes included an increased awareness of the prevalence of STIs, but also knowledge of the range of STIs, the symptoms, effects, and treatments available:

'I feel much more familiar with the types of STIs in existence. The course really raised my awareness and understanding of the issues including how common they are, the symptoms, and ways to prevent getting them in the first place such as using condoms.'

All five parents commented on the usefulness of learning about the range of different methods of contraception available. Other parents said they enjoyed learning more about body parts, particularly learning the correct medical names, whilst others reported being more aware of the pressures children face from their peers in terms of having sex or announcing the onset of sexual activity. One parent in particular, stated that in relation to information on STIs and drugs, Speakeasy helped her to be, *'More honest in answering questions about sex and sexual health'*. This parent reported that before Speakeasy she used to ignore her children's questions or try and change the subject because she did not know how to answer or have enough factual knowledge to answer them. At interview, this parent reported that:

'I will now tackle questions head-on rather than ignoring them or changing the subject. I try to answer as well as I can and in as much detail as I can.'

These findings support those of Burns (2004) who found that parents reported a considerable increase in factual knowledge following the completion of Speakeasy for parents.

4.4 Aim Three – A more positive and open approach to discussions of sex.

In the survey conducted by Burns (2004), parents were asked an open question about how useful the course had been to them, this elicited a number of responses suggesting parents felt more open, less embarrassed, and had learnt new strategies to approach their children. In the current evaluation a similar method was adopted where parents were asked what impact they felt Speakeasy had on their ability to

talk to their children about sex and relationships. In addition, parents were asked to describe a specific incident when this was particularly noticeable.

All five of the parents interviewed reported that they now felt more open and able to discuss issues relating to sex, relationships, and sexual health following completion of the Speakeasy course. For example, two parents commented:

'I do feel much more open now than I did before the course. I used to get embarrassed and feel uncomfortable talking about sex, but now I just feel confident in talking about it and passing on what I learnt to my children.'

'I now feel more able to approach topics and discuss sex with my children. Although I don't always use the proper words, I've started to use them now and will do more and more as they get older.'

Parents reported that Speakeasy had a direct impact on their ability to confidently respond to their children in an age-appropriate way in situations where before the course they would not have felt able to do so. For example, one parent commented:

'My son has been asking what sperm is and how it's made - I told him as much as I could - like the purpose of sperm, where it's stored and stuff, but I didn't know how it was made. Before the course I would have been embarrassed and probably tried to ignore the question, now I am able to tell him that although I don't know the answer, I now know where I can get the information. I still don't know the answer, but he knows that as soon as I find out I will tell him.'

A particularly common theme amongst the five parents was that more open and positive communication with their children had developed as a result of not only learning specific strategies to approach difficult topics, but also from an increase in self-confidence and factual knowledge about sex and sexual health. Furthermore, parents said that completing Speakeasy had also indirectly impacted on their children in terms of them being more willing to approach them with questions about sex:

'My children seem much more confident and happy to approach me with me questions now because they know they will be answered.'

Four of the five parents said they had used the course materials to start discussions. For instance, one parent reported that her children often saw her doing her homework and she would use their curiosity as a way of starting a discussion about sex and relationships:

'My daughter, having seen other girls' bodies changing, asked when hers would start to change. I used the diagrams from the course folder with the picture of a boy and girl, and asked her to draw what she thought would happen. It was really useful and I'm pleased I can now talk to my daughter about sex which was something my parents couldn't do with me.'

4.5 Aim Four – A step towards further learning and professional development

As noted in the introduction, one of the clear aims of Speakeasy is to act as a step towards further learning or professional development for traditionally excluded

groups of parents. In her report, Burns (2004, p.28) notes that there are two main indicators that can serve to evidence this aim:

- Participants gaining and benefiting from OCN credits
- Participants deciding to go on other courses where they had not planned to do so at the start of the course

Supporting the encouraging findings from the first evaluation (Burns, 2004), in this research all five parents successfully submitted a portfolio to gain OCN credits at level two. For two parents, Speakeasy was the first course they had completed since leaving school and this was described as:

'A huge confidence boost in doing other courses, and doing things that I would never have done before.'

'It feels like new doors are being opened and I now have choices that I never had before.'

Both of these parents said although they were initially apprehensive about doing the course and in particular being assessed, they now wished to do other courses in the near future. For the three parents for whom Speakeasy was not the first course they had completed since leaving school, all described Speakeasy as being beneficial but not having had an impact in terms of their ideas for further learning and development as they already felt confident in this respect.

4.6 Suggestions for improvement and final comments

All parents were asked whether, based on their experiences, they had any suggestions for how the course might be improved and whether they had any final comments about their personal Speakeasy experience. Responses were generally very positive to these questions with parents commenting:

'The course should be more available across the country; everything else about the course was good.'

'Every parent should complete the Speakeasy course when their child is at primary school to prepare them for things to come. The course was a very positive experience and would be helpful for all parents.'

'It was a great course and I wish every parent could go on it!'

Only one parent had a slight criticism which was aimed more at the nature of evidence based learning to gain OCN credits rather than the course itself:

'Can't think of anything that should be changed, the discussions were great. I did find the filling in paper to provide evidence of learning a bit laborious but don't really see how this could be changed...'

Following Burns (2004), the remaining parents' recommendations were mainly concerned with publicity and marketing issues, and how to attract more parents to the course. For example, one parent suggested the timing of the course may exclude some fathers from attending and that this should be revised to encourage more men to attend.

Chapter 5: Impact and Outcome Evaluation: Analytical themes from repeat interviews at three time points between 2005-2007 with 40 parents who attended Speakeasy during 2005

This section details the findings from the telephone interviews with 40 parents who completed fpa Speakeasy programme during 2005. The findings in this chapter arise from interviews conducted with parents for the first time in 2005, then repeated amongst the same parents in 2006 and 2007. As for the previous chapter, these findings are structured around the main aims of the Speakeasy course, with the repeat interviews in 2006 and 2007 concentrating on areas that confirm earlier findings and the following 'innovative' areas of exploration (see Appendices D and E for the interview schedules used in 2006 and 2007):

- With the progressive time-lag between the course and interview, what memories and impacts of the course stand out the most – asking parents the 'top three' learning outcomes of the course in 2006 and the 'most significant learning outcome' in 2007.
- Whether the increased factual knowledge noted overwhelmingly in 2005 was sustained, or whether some parents felt they needed 'refresher training'.
- Reported examples of where parents' learning was 'put into practise' with their children (through recalled instances of communication, openness, etc).
- Possible direct impacts of the course upon their children – including children's confidence in raising topics with their parents and potential impacts upon children's developing sexual relationships including sexual behaviours.
- The widening impact of Speakeasy to other parents and members of the family through time.
- Further learning and professional development of the parents - for example, whether the OCN credits had prompted further learning and development.

The structure of the following is shown below.

- 5.1** Memories of the course – 2005 interviews
- 5.2** Parental experiences – 2005 interviews
- 5.3** Aim One: Increased Confidence – 2005 interviews
- 5.4** Aim Two: Increased factual knowledge around sex and sexual health - 2005 Interviews
- 5.5** Aim Three: Openness – 2005 interviews
- 5.6** Aim Four: Further learning and development – 2005 interviews
- 5.7** Main benefits of Speakeasy
- 5.8** Confirmatory and innovative findings from the 2006 interviews
- 5.9** Confirmatory and innovative findings from the 2007 interviews
- 5.10** Suggestions for improvement from 2005, 2006 and 2007 and final comments.

5.1 Memories of the Course (2005 findings)

At the start of the telephone interview parents were asked about their memories of the Speakeasy course and to talk about anything that really stood out such as a particular topic, theme, or activity. It was hoped that this would help to jog parents' memories of the Speakeasy experience, provide a gentle introduction to the

interview process, and provide an opportunity for any spontaneous feedback to arise.

In their narratives, parents reported a number of topics and activities that were of particular value and which were distinctive for them. Easily the most commonly mentioned topic was STIs. Half of the parents interviewed (n = 20) commented on studying STIs in terms of their prevalence, symptoms, and treatment. Of the 20 parents whom did not mention STIs when asked about their memories of the course, five still brought the topic up at some point during interview.

Approximately one third of parents (35% or n = 14) interviewed revealed that learning about the age-appropriateness of sexual information was a particularly memorable part of the course. For example, one interviewee stated that the 'washing-line' activity (where parents had to place cards with sexual information at different age points along the line to indicate when they thought was an appropriate time to talk about the issue in question) was a real 'eye-opener' for her:

'The discussions about when and how much to tell your children was really good, I enjoyed it and found it useful. I never would have thought about telling the children about some things like anal sex and masturbation!'

A similar number of interviewees (30% or n = 12) reported that studying different methods of contraception was a topic that was really distinctive for them, whilst a further one quarter of parents (25% or n = 10) said that exploring how the media portrays sexual messages through routes such as magazines stood out. Other topics parents remembered included exploring local schools' Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) policy, learning about puberty, drug and alcohol awareness, and discovering where and how to get information pertaining to sex and sexual health.

Whilst the majority of parents recalled quite specific memories of their Speakeasy experience, a small number of parents were more general (and positive) in their narratives about the course:

'It was fun, lots of games and refreshments, everyone had a good laugh. All the topics stood out because they were so good.'

'It was a real eye-opener. Good to know that there are people out there who care about parents. It's good that parents can get involved and educate other parents.'

'Even though there were only two people on the course, it was quite funny and open but embarrassing in parts, it was a real eye-opener.'

'[The course] was very informative, I learnt loads I didn't know before! I really feel I have gained loads from doing the course.'

5.2 Parental Experiences (2005 interviews)

In addition to asking parents about their memories of completing Speakeasy, interviewees were also asked which aspects of the course they found most useful and which, if any, were especially positive or difficult and challenging. The following list is not exhaustive but rather provides a flavour of the kinds of topics and experiences parents enjoyed and appreciated:

Useful Topics and Activities

- Learning where to get information from
- STIs
- Contraception
- 'Body board' activity
- 'Washing-line' on age-appropriateness of information
- Recognising the signs of puberty
- Strategies to approach children and prompt discussion
- Sex and relationship education policy in schools
- Learning young people's slang terms
- Peer pressure
- Biological knowledge of sexual organs

Positive Experiences

- Course 'library' where parents could borrow books from the facilitators
- Sharing experiences with other parents
- Social aspect of the course - '*getting together*' with other parents and making new friends
- Talking about sex in a way that you don't normally get to do with other adults
- Having frequent group discussions
- The knowledge that other parents have the same worries and concerns
- Being able to express opinions in a 'safe space'
- Discovering that the course was unlike school, very relaxed and informal environment
- The 'hands-on' approach to learning

Encouragingly, 48% (n = 18) of parents explicitly stipulated that there were no negative aspects about the course at all. As a number of parents commented:

'There were no negatives at all, I want to nip that question in the bud! Whilst some bits were not as interesting as other parts, it was all relevant.'

... 'I couldn't fault it really.'

'It was a positive experience, I enjoyed it and would recommend it. I liked getting to know new people, there were no negatives really.'

'I enjoyed the whole course. There were no negatives at all.'

Despite the overwhelmingly positive perceptions of the Speakeasy experience, over one-third of parents (35% or n = 14) did find some aspect of the course quite difficult or challenging. These difficulties mostly related to feeling uncomfortable, embarrassed, or unsure about talking so openly in front of 'strangers' at the start of the course. However, for parents whom cited this as 'difficult' or 'challenging', all reported that these feelings diminished quickly as the course progressed, and that this was due to the skill of the facilitators and getting to know other parents on the course better.

Difficult or Challenging Experiences

- ❖ Feelings of embarrassment at the start of the group
- ❖ Feeling uncomfortable with role play
- ❖ Difficulties talking in a group about sensitive subjects
- ❖ Concern that the group size small, larger groups would be more beneficial
- ❖ Facilitator not informing parents at the start of the course about submitting a portfolio
- ❖ A lot of writing from leaflets and repetition
- ❖ Finding time to complete homework
- ❖ Location of crèche sometimes meant there were interruptions during the sessions
- ❖ Disliked that abstinence is not encouraged as an option

Based on their experiences of the programme, parents were also asked whether they would recommend Speakeasy to others. The responses from interviewees were impressive with 100% of parents enthusiastically reporting that it had indeed been a positive experience, and they would recommend the course to others and in many cases, already had:

'...definitely a positive experience and I have already recommended it to others who have since taken up the course.'

'The course was great fun; I would definitely recommend it to other parents.'

'It was definitely a positive experience, a truly brilliant course, informative, excellent! I would definitely recommend it other parents, as it may well help to reduce teenage pregnancy like it has in the US.'

'I enjoyed the course, had a laugh, lots of funny discussions in the group...there were no negatives about it. I have done lots of courses and this one was the best and would probably recommend it. Problem is I don't know if it is happening anywhere now to recommend parents to it!'

'It was very very much a positive experience...I would definitely recommend the course because in ethnic minority communities, sex should be taught properly - many communities don't teach it and people need to be more aware.'

5.3 Aim One – Increased Confidence (2005 findings)

In line with Burns' (2004) evaluation of Speakeasy, the large majority of interviewees (99%) reported that they now felt more confident about talking to their children than they did before the course³. Parents were asked how confident they now felt as a result of completing the Speakeasy course. Examples of quotes from parents' narratives include:

'I'm a lot more confident now as I have been able to talk in front of people I didn't know, now I can do it in front of my children.'

³ Only one parent reported not being more confident as a result of the course. She attributed this to her professional background as a nurse and consequently already felt very confident about discussing difficult or sensitive issues.

'I feel very confident - it really brings you out of your shell. I didn't realise before how important stuff was.'

'I now feel very confident in talking to my children and this is all due to doing the Speakeasy course, all of it, the whole lot was useful in increasing my confidence.'

Parents revealed that their increased confidence was due to a number of factors such as having increased factual knowledge, feeling less embarrassed, knowing where to find out further information if needed, and being able to talk to other parents about their experiences and discuss possible responses to different scenarios:

'I would say I'm 8 out of 10 confident, so very confident really'. This has been because I've now got more knowledge to talk about things, having knowledge to back-up what I am saying. I've realised I need to discuss certain issues at certain times, so can now talk more confidently about these things than I could before I did the course.'

'I'm very confident...being from a family of girls I wasn't sure how to address things with boys, now I feel I can address things with him when he's older. I think my confidence has come from having more factual knowledge, but I also feel less embarrassed than I did before the course.'

'[I] feel much more confident now...we talked about so many things, things you probably wouldn't normally talk about in everyday conversations. It gave us the chance to think about what [pause] what would I say if my little boy said this or that, just thinking about the sorts of questions they might ask, and being ready to deal with the kinds of questions they might ask.'

As noted by Burns, (2004, p.24), one of the implicit 'hopes' for Speakeasy was that by achieving the aim of increasing confidence in talking about sexual matters there would be a knock-on effect in parents confidence in talking to their children more generally. Parents' narratives in the current evaluation suggest that this effect was evident in a number of cases. Moreover, a number of parents revealed that Speakeasy had not only impacted on their own levels of confidence but also on their children's confidence in terms of them being more willing to approach them and ask questions. As one parent commented:

'We can talk about anything now, I am sort of more confident with him...since the course he came and asked me what 'impotent' means whereas he wouldn't have asked such questions before. Before he wouldn't ask questions because I would go shut-up, go away, but now he now knows I can and will answer his questions, he doesn't care, he will just come out with it.'

5.4 Aim Two - Increased Factual Knowledge around Sex and Sexual Health (2005 findings)

When asked if they thought their knowledge of sex and sexual health had changed as a result of completing the Speakeasy programme, all 40 parents interviewed (100%) said their knowledge had changed in some way. Parents commonly described their knowledge as '*changing a lot*' over the duration of the course, and '*being more aware*' than they were before. Interestingly, over one third of parents

(38% or n = 14) revealed that they were surprised just how little they really knew about sex and sexual health:

'[My] knowledge has changed completely. Before the course I thought I already knew it all, but it really opened my eyes.'

'Changed without a doubt, definitely. I thought I was clued up but there was really lots of stuff that I didn't know...it was quite scary to realise how common STIs are.'

'It's changed drastically actually – there were lots of things, lots of things I didn't know – I was really surprised.'

'My knowledge is much better now, I always thought I would be confident talking about sex, but was really surprised to find I didn't know as much as I thought I did. For example, in the washing-line activity of age-appropriate knowledge, it brought up so many other issues, not just sex, but also relationship - lots of things I would have left until my daughter was much older and so I was surprised how much could and needed to be talked about earlier.'

More specifically, parents commonly talked about their increased knowledge of STIs and in particular their ability to recognise symptoms, their increased awareness of prevention and treatments, and knowing where and how to get more information should they need to:

'I have a lot more knowledge, especially on STIs such as Chlamydia...I didn't realise there were so many diseases and now I know how to recognise them and where to go. Now feel I can spot them if they happen and how to be protected.'

Similarly, it was clear from the data set that many parents had benefited significantly from learning about contraception, its availability, the positives and negatives associated with use, and the many different forms:

'[My knowledge has] definitely changed. I'm much more able to talk to my older son now than I could before. My confidence has also increased because my knowledge has increased like learning the terminology - using the right names for the right bits - also knowledge of contraceptive methods, the fors and againsts. I can now give more detailed information to them so they are informed about choice.'

A number of parents also commented that in addition to an increased knowledge base, they had also learnt more about how to communicate their knowledge in an age-appropriate way:

'My knowledge has changed a lot, the key thing I learnt was using every opportunity as a learning opportunity. Also that sex and sexual health should be a fun topic, and two-way communication is important. I found the stuff on contraception handy and the booklets were useful, how to develop relationships with your child, group discussions and the chance to listen and talk with other parents.'

Furthermore, in one narrative a father reported that having learnt more about the physical aspects of sex and sexual health, and consequently feeling less embarrassed talking about it, he also felt more able to talk to his children more generally, about other wider issues:

'I've developed new knowledge, more factual information. As a Muslim, middle class males are too shy and discouraged from talking about sex, especially to women and girls in the religious community. I feel it's my responsibility to pass my knowledge and I wanted to learn to be able to talk in more depth...I now feel confident and less embarrassed because I know more about body parts and I can talk about it now...I am also more confident in talking about other issues as well such as politics, and social and economic issues.'

However, it is important to note that not all parents felt they had increased their factual knowledge of sex and sexual health. Some parents described the course as more of a 'refresher' for their already existing knowledge although usually admitted that their knowledge had been extended in areas such as increased knowledge about the range of STIs and methods of contraception:

'I don't know if it has changed that much really, except for STIs which I didn't know much about. The course acted as a useful refresher in terms of knowledge.'

It [my knowledge] hasn't changed at all except for knowledge of STIs and contraception. I knew some of them but not all. It was good to explore them in-depth.'

The views in the previous extracts were very much in the minority and tended to arise from parents whom already had a good knowledge of sex and sexual health through their vocations (e.g. nursing) or through previous education (GNVQ Health and Social Care and degree courses). In these circumstances, parents still reported that Speakeasy was of benefit to them albeit in other ways such as developing confidence, and learning more about where and how to find information should they need it.

Finally, and regardless of their individual prior knowledge levels, nearly all parents reported that they found the course materials (folder) and leaflets particularly useful as a point of reference or learning tool to use with their children and other family members. A typical example of a comment in this regard is shown below:

'The leaflets given out on the course were fantastic, absolutely brilliant – they covered everything young people would want to know, where to find contraceptives, very eye-catching!'

5.5 Aim Three – Openness (2005 findings)

In Burns evaluation (2004), parents interviewed as part of the longitudinal study were asked an open question about how useful the course had been to them. This elicited a number of responses suggesting parents felt more open, less embarrassed, and had learnt new strategies to approach their children. In the current evaluation a similar tactic was adopted. Parents were asked what impact they felt Speakeasy had on their ability to talk to their children about sex and relationships, in addition, parents were also asked to describe a specific incident when this was particularly

evident or noticeable. The response to this question was overwhelmingly positive with all 40 of the parents interviewed reporting that they now felt more open and able to discuss issues relating to sex, relationships, and sexual health following completion of the Speakeasy course. For example, two parents commented:

'Since doing the course, I feel much less embarrassed and more able to answer questions...I can explain things in an age-appropriate way without giving too much or too little information.'

'It has helped me to discuss things more openly than I could before.'

Whilst interviewees were not asked about their reasons for doing the course, these were perhaps inevitably elicited as the interviews progressed and parents recalled their original motivations.

'I feel less embarrassed talking about sex than I used to. My parents were very closed with me and the has helped me realise that I want to be more open with my own family than my parents were with me.'

'I took the course very frankly – tried to recognise my weaknesses and then fill in the gaps through the course.'

The first quote reflects a particularly common sentiment amongst many of the parents interviewed, namely that because their experiences of sex and relationship education were so poor, they wanted their children's experiences to be very different.

During the interviews parents were asked whether they thought Speakeasy had impacted upon others within both their immediate, and wider circle of family and friends in terms of being more open and willing to talk about issues surrounding sex, sexuality, and sexual health. An encouraging number of parents (45% or n = 18) stated that the course had impacted others including spouses, their own parents, neighbours, and friends. Perhaps the most common response from these 18 parents was that Speakeasy had impacted upon their partners in favourable ways. For example, parents often reported that their partners would read through their course notes or look at materials whilst they were doing course homework, which often prompted discussions. One parent revealed in her narrative that her husband used to feel uncomfortable talking about sex and was initially quite 'shocked' by the material she was studying but that discussions prompted by the course material had helped him become more comfortable with some of the issues surrounding sex and sexual health:

'I think my husband is more open because I shared quite a lot of the stuff we had done. At first he was a bit shocked by some of it, but then as we talked we realised it's something we wouldn't have talk about for years. We talked about not making sex this really mysterious thing but trying to give him information bit by bit, and we decided it was a good way to do it. My husband has now taken that on board...so the course has definitely impacted on him, definitely.'

5.6 Aim Four - Further Learning and Development (2005 findings)

As noted in the introduction, one of the clear aims of the Speakeasy programme is to act as a step towards further learning and professional development for traditionally excluded groups of parents. In her report, Burns (2004, p.28) notes that there are two main indicators that can serve to evidence this aim:

- Participants gaining and benefiting from OCN credits
- Participants deciding to go on other courses where they had not planned to do so at the start of the course

Supporting the encouraging findings from the first evaluation (Burns, 2004), in this research all 40 parents reported that they had submitted a portfolio to gain OCN credits at level two. However, at the time of writing no data are available with regards actual accreditation figures. Parents were also asked whether their OCN credits had been useful to them or might be in the future. The findings were that:

- 10% (n = 4) said the credits has been useful so far
- 60% (n = 24) said that it was too early to tell or that it might be useful in the future
- 5% (n = 2) said they had not used it and did not think they would use it in the future.
- For the remaining 25% (n = 10) of parents, data were not available.

Of those parents who said the course and accreditation might be useful in the future (i.e. n = 24), a large proportion revealed that they were planning to use it towards further learning, job applications, or career development including:

- Applying for further and/or higher education courses
- Putting on CV for job applications
- Voluntary work (e.g. being involved in community projects)
- Working with children
- Training to be a teaching assistant
- Training to be a play worker

Attitudes to further learning

Towards the end of the telephone interview, parents were asked a number of questions concerning their previous educational experiences (e.g. if they had done any courses since finishing school). Parent's previous educational experiences ranged considerably from having done no courses before Speakeasy since school (23% or n = 9) to those who have completed a number of both vocational and academic programmes (70% or n = 28). For the 23% of parents for whom Speakeasy was the first course they had completed since finishing school, the programme provided a relaxed, informal, and safe-space in which they could re-engage and develop confidence in learning. As two parents stated:

'It [Speakeasy] was the first course I'd done since A-levels and I was worried about going back to school and doing courses – it was scary 'cos I have visions of the teacher at the front telling us things and us having to remember everything that was said. Speakeasy was different, both facilitators and parents were

relaxed, it was nothing like school. I now feel much happier about doing more courses and will do more in the future.'

'Doing the course really increased my confidence. After my second child I had post-natal depression and found things very difficult, especially going out of the house. Going to Speakeasy gave me the confidence and reason to get out and about, and to go on and do other courses'

Indeed, over half of all parents interviewed (55% or n = 22) said completing the course had been a real 'confidence boost' for trying out new courses in the future. Interestingly, about one-third of parents (38% or n = 15) commented that whilst the course had been valuable and beneficial to them in a number of ways, for example, providing increased factual knowledge about sex and sexual health, it had not influenced them in terms of their persuasions towards further learning and education because they were already confident learners. The majority of these parents had already completed a number of vocational and academic courses prior to Speakeasy. However, this did not mean Speakeasy had not impacted upon them in other ways related to further education, learning, and training. For example the following passage reveals how for one parent, the course had a number of benefits in terms of raising confidence and knowledge, but also developing and reinforcing his desire to conduct further study at university and get involved in community related projects:

'I've done lots of courses such as first aid, soccer skills, local courses for voluntary work, lots of workshops and stuff. Because I have been off-sick for five years, in the first two years I didn't do anything and felt really bad about myself. Recently, I've been doing lots of courses to try and keep my mind more active and I now feel much better about myself...When I go on courses it reinforces that I want to do further learning. Speakeasy increased my desire to get into further education and do a degree at the Open University...Speakeasy has also really helped me because it's given me knowledge and confidence to get involved in other things. I've been involved in a lot of community projects and I also take part in local environmental meetings, things I wouldn't have done before.'

In addition, one parent who reported having completed a number of vocational courses since leaving school (including health and safety, first aid, food and hygiene, and sign language), said that although she already felt confident about learning she didn't know what career she wanted to do. She revealed that she was now planning to do more courses and that Speakeasy had given her the confidence to go and find out about other courses and see what was available where she would not have done so before:

'I did loads of courses because didn't know what career I wanted – before [Speakeasy] I wouldn't phone places up to find out about courses, whereas now I would. Now I have the confidence to find out about what courses are going on and am intending on doing more in the future'

In general, it was clear from parents' narratives that taking part in fpa Speakeasy for parents programme was influential in changing attitudes to further learning and development. Whilst it is not possible from the data to see whether this was a real change in attitude from prior to the course, the findings are certainly encouraging in

suggesting Speakeasy has an important impact on many parents' perceptions of learning and education.

5.7 Main Benefits of Speakeasy (2005 findings)

Towards the end of the telephone interview parents were asked to summarise what (if any) had been the main benefits of completing the Speakeasy course. This was intended to provide a useful synopsis of each parent's Speakeasy experience. Similar to the findings of Burns evaluation (2004), 95% (or n = 38)⁴ of parents interviewed said they benefited in some way from the Speakeasy course. Even parents who said their children were too young for them to have seen any real benefit reported increases in factual knowledge, confidence, and feeling 'equipped' to tackle issues when they arose in the future. Easily the most commonly mentioned benefits for parents (mentioned by 85% or n = 35 of interviewees) included increased confidence in talking about sex, sexuality, and sexual health with their children, and developing greater factual knowledge, particularly in terms of STIs and contraception. Other areas in which parents said they benefited from the course included: learning where to get information and/or advice; developing relationships with their children; meeting and hearing other parents' experiences; acquiring skills and strategies to initiate discussions; becoming less embarrassed and more open, and; improving communication with children more generally.

5.8 Confirmatory and innovative findings from 2006 interviews

Of the 40 parents interviewed in 2005, 28 (70%) were successfully re-interviewed a year later in 2006. In the context of longitudinal interview-based research, this was considered to be an encouraging follow-up rate. As in the first interviews, fpa approached each person to gain their consent for interview and to also let them know in advance that a researcher from TSA would be contacting them to arrange a time for interview in the next few days. Of the 12 people who were not re-interviewed, two did not provide their consent for interview, and the remainder had either moved away or were non contactable after six attempts over the course of two weeks.

5.8.1 Confirmative Findings

The interviews in 2006 reported a highly positive opinion of the Speakeasy course sustained throughout the year since the last interview. Again, the course was found to be memorable, enjoyable and highly beneficial. In more detail, parents' noted the following as the most positive aspects of the course:

- In general, a very open course, 'a good laugh' and highly positive experience, for example,

'Just a really positive experience, I learnt a lot.'

'I enjoyed all aspects of the course.'

'I always try and promote the course, because it's so good.'

- Getting to know other parents and talking about experiences, especially to those with older children because they can discover which issues they are likely to face when their children are older.

⁴ Data were not available for the two remaining parents

- Increased confidence about talking about sexual matters.
- Learning about contraception types and STIs.
- The exercise about the media pressure on young people, especially girls.
- Learning how sexually provocative media is.
- Informal, relaxed and not like a normal course, for example,

"The course was fun, it gave parents an equal opportunity to get rid of inhibitions and talk about things. It wasn't cloak and dagger, there were no holds barred."

5.8.2 Innovative Findings

Aside to generally confirming the positive benefits of Speakeasy identified a year earlier, there were a number of more innovative findings to report.

Increased communication

With a year in between interviews, the follow-up provided an opportunity to explore whether parents' feeling of being 'equipped' to broach topics around sex and relationships (evidenced by the 2005 interviews and through examination of monitoring forms) had actually been put into practice. This was of key importance in the 2006 interviews, providing the opportunity to discover not just whether parents felt that the Speakeasy course had benefited them but if it had actually been of use in their daily lives. Encouragingly a number of examples of use were mentioned as follows:

"I just told him about anal sex, and I didn't even get embarrassed! I remembered from the course to say that some people do it and that's ok, but he doesn't have to!"

"Abortion is a difficult subject, and before I probably would've just brushed it under the carpet, and avoided telling him."

"You know, she's started asking why hasn't she got a boyfriend, because all her friends have. I think it's good she can talk to me about how she feels, and I think I know more about how to answer her and make her feel better."

"I knew I could explain why not, so I did and I didn't feel uncomfortable. In the past I wouldn't have know what to tell him, what reason to give. I would've been embarrassed. I explained it in a different way."

"My 6 year-old asked where babies come from and I could answer in a way he would understand for his age. I wasn't embarrassed at all! And now I know there are books in the library, I know what's available."

"We went to the toilet and my son said 'how come you don't have a willy?' I would've been embarrassed and not known what to say, but it's easy when you have someone to tell you."

"Before I would have changed the subject and felt flustered [about where babies come from], but it was fine."

"He asked me why I didn't have a penis, and I didn't mind answering that question. And he accidentally saw a condom in the house and so I explained that to him too."

"My son asked about hard-ons, and how many hairs he's gonna get! My daughter's asked about where the eggs are going, and stages of a baby's growth. I just tell them straight now, I don't mind."

"My 6 year-old asked why his willy gets big, & before I would've told him to ask his dad! But now I know how to tell him, in the right way and I think he understood."

Parents felt that this increased communication about sexual matters also helped their children to be more confident in asking questions. For example;

"Now he knows he won't get a giggly answer or a 'ask your dad' answer. If I don't want my daughter to hear I'll say 'I'll come and have a chat with you later about that', and I always do."

These discussions were not always necessarily connected to sex, and suggested that the Speakeasy course had fostered a more relaxed and 'open' relationship between parents and children.

"They know they can ask me pretty much anything, and I'll give them straight answers. I won't fob them off."

For those parents whose learning had not yet been put into practice, most felt they were confident about responding to any questions which previously would have posed a problem. For example;

"I feel like I'm ready, willing and waiting to be asked... I'm armed with all the facts but I just don't think he'll ask me anything. If I tell him it's in one ear, and then he forgets. So, I mean I wish he'd ask in a way... He's doing about sex at school at the moment, but schools don't tell you about what they're learning."

"The course has taught me to take opportunities and address things 'as and when', and not just when they ask questions."

Widening Impact of Speakeasy

A further innovative finding of the interviews was that the benefits of the course were extending to other members of the family and also to friends. Parents reported that people around them felt more confident about talking about sex and sexual relationship issues, and this in turn, reinforced their own confidence in their learning.

Although some people reported that they were unsure if the effects had extended to others, most people said that others had noticed the difference in their ability and confidence (especially their own mothers, sisters, cousins and friends) and on occasions this had inspired friends and members of the family to look at the course file, although the direct impacts of this are difficult to specify. In terms of influence upon children, some people reported that their children's friends would either talk to them directly or their children would ask questions that their friends wanted answering. An interesting finding concerned change in the husband or partner of the attendee where, on occasion, a clear increase in confidence was reported:

"He wouldn't have discussed it before, but discusses it now like it's normal."

Responsibility for sex education

It was interesting to note that some of the females on the course assumed sex education was their responsibility, rather than their male partners' responsibility. This was especially the case when dealing with questions raised by their daughters. This responsibility seemed to be reinforced where females often perceived a resistance from their male partner to raise issues connected to sex and relationships.

Retention of Information

One potential concern relating to the time-delay between the course and these interviews was whether most of the information had been retained. When asked if they felt that any information had been forgotten, most agreed to a certain extent, but reported that they had kept the folder from the course where they could look up any information they needed when required. Only two parents recommended a 'refresher' course.

Further Learning

Finally, around one-half of those interviewed had taken additional courses since their Speakeasy course. These included homeopathy, art and design, money management and various GCSEs. Many attributed the confidence gained through Speakeasy as a factor in increasing their confidence towards other courses. The remaining parents who had not undertaken any courses often reported that they were planning to do so either at a later date or at a time when they had more money (to fund the course or childcare) or time available.

5.9 Confirmatory and innovative findings from the 2007 interviews.

In 2007 20 of the parents and guardians from the original sample were successfully re-interviewed. These 20 accounted for 83.3% of the possible pool of 24 parents details provided, 71.4% of the 2006 sample and 50% of the original sample of 40 parents who were interviewed in 2005. This is an encouraging retention rate at a three year follow up.

As in previous years fpa approached each parent or guardian and obtained fully informed consent for interview. Fpa let each parent know that a researcher from TSA would be contacting them to arrange a time for interview. TSA were provided with the details of 24 parents who provided consent for interview. The parents who were not interviewed were non-contactable after six attempts over a period of two weeks.

5.9.1 Confirmatory Findings

Consistent with previous findings, the 2007 interviews found a highly positive opinion of fpa's Speakeasy course amongst parents who attended:

"We had a right laugh".

"It was fun as well, learning but it was fun at the same time".

Parents remembered the course as being relaxed and informal. It was often recalled that possibly embarrassing topics were dealt with successfully in a way which minimised embarrassment:

"It wasn't embarrassing, I mean there was a man that took the course with us but it wasn't embarrassing or, you know what I mean, it was just, ask what you want, you don't have to, you know what I mean, it wasn't you've gotta answer this".

"Can be slightly embarrassing at times so, but again with it being such a relaxed atmosphere it wasn't such a big deal, talking about sexually transmitted diseases, things like that, that's a bit 'icky', but at the same time because it was such a good atmosphere it was very easily done".

In many cases Speakeasy was not what was expected from a course:

"I thought it would be more formal but it wasn't, it was just laid back, a friendly atmosphere sort of thing".

"That it was quite informal, wasn't like school, which was a factor which was worrying me rather".

Parents placed great value on the opportunity to get together and discuss intimate issues with other people who were in a similar situation as them or who had children of different ages and from whom they could learn:

"Getting together with other parents and talking and them giving their experiences cause obviously I've got one child and most of my friends their children are younger than mine so I've got no one else... I didn't really know how to deal with children my daughter's age, from the age of five it gets quite difficult".

There was some suggestion from a few participants that the course work occasionally presented problems. Some found it challenging or that their commitments prevented them from being able to give it their full attention. One parent interviewed reported that she had recently discovered the reason that one of the people on her course had dropped out was because she felt unable to cope with the written work. Another parent reported that someone on her course had cheated and that she had felt upset about this as she was putting a lot of effort into her assignments and felt they were devalued through this action. However, on the whole people felt that the course had very few negative points even when asked to think about them directly.

Previous years have shown that the Speakeasy course was useful in increasing confidence in discussing sex and sexual relationships with children. The 2007 interviews were no exception, and given that parents attended the course three years ago this is a positive finding suggesting Speakeasy has an enduring effect which does not diminish with time:

"Before I went on the Speakeasy course I was able to talk to people but I can talk more openly to people now, it's confidence really".

"Yeah definitely, definitely was, there were a lot of things I wasn't very comfortable, I didn't know how to approach the subject with my daughter, how to talk about sex, it's still not that easy but I've done it and it's better" [Did Speakeasy help with this?] "Yeah definitely".

"I still have ever so slight moments of like squirminess when you think what do I say to this but it has made us more relaxed in how I view her questions and approach answering".

In common with other years, the evaluation found that knowledge had been increased by the course, even in those people who felt that prior to the course they had a good knowledge of the topics.

"You do think you know everything and obviously you don't and it opens your eyes".

"She'll say, 'why', 'what', you know, and it's gave me better knowledge to be able to answer her questions and not be uncomfortable about it as well".

Increased openness and communication

In 2007 participants reported many examples of an increased openness and communication with children about sex and sexual relationships. This occurred frequently in every day situations and shows an enduring effect of the Speakeasy course:

"I wonder whether I would have been more, again, reluctant to talk about it and maybe change the subject because, 'oh no she's too young for this she's too young to talk about this so I'll change the subject and we'll deal with it later', where as now I think that, oh she's interested she's asking and I'll answer her honestly to the best of my abilities about it, and I think that she's happy with that as well, it's like any other conversation we have in the house".

*"She suddenly decided to start telling me about babies and we ended up having a talk about when she was in my tummy the other day, she was next to me on the sofa and she suddenly started saying about erm, she put her hand on my tummy and said why do mummies tummies get so big when they have babies, so we had to explain about it"
Course helped with this? "I do because I think before I would have been a bit more reluctant to actually get into that kind of conversation with her."*

When there's something a bit rude on telly they'll ask about it 'why was that man near that woman's bum' and S's happy to tell them about it but sometimes will ask when it's not appropriate - 'on the bus' but 'you'll say, oh I'll show you a little leaflet".

"I had to have an internal so she says well why did they do that so I said well to make sure it was alright inside'...And obviously why'd you get your tubes tied and I said obviously so I don't have no more babies cause I don't want anymore".

"So I had to buy some at the shop [sanitary towels] and she said well why are you buying them and I said cause when I have my tubes tied I might bleed and so she said ah right and then she said to us last night she said why aren't you wearing them anymore and I said well I don't need them now and she went well can I have one and I said no you don't need them, not till you're a bigger girl".

"It's funny you should say that, he comes back from school a couple of days ago and he says, 'I like this girl you know' and I thought, here we go! ... He wants to take her out and I was on about being safe you know and everything".

Further learning and professional development

Many parents felt that by taking part and completing the Speakeasy course their confidence in learning had increased:

"I'd gone in with the idea thinking not only is it going to be quite boring and sort of really hard going but, it's, you don't want to appear thick, and what happens if you can't do it? Whereas, the fact that there was no sort of right or wrong, it was very open and easygoing, you were made to feel at ease, that you just thought, 'Yeah, you know, I can do this'".

Many also viewed the Speakeasy course as an important step towards further learning and future employment:

"The Speakeasy course was a stepping stone sort of on to that to build my confidence enough for me to actually go on and do another course".

"Well I have [gone on to do other courses] the past couple of years I've been doing an adult literacy course and now I've just got my certificate in that".

One parent mentioned that she suffered from panic attacks and that Speakeasy had been very useful in getting her comfortable in groups of people, so much so that she now felt able to pursue a career in nursing:

"Helped me getting out, and being with other people and just doing something useful...when I had that every week to go to I used to look forward to it".

Another frequent finding was that the Speakeasy course was especially useful for mothers who were at home with young children. It was viewed as a way to reconnect with adults and learning:

"I liked it having been at home. I was just at home at that the time with the children and it was just nice to have interaction with hu...adult humans and to know that you were worth talking to and had something to offer".
[Do you think it got you back out there?] *"It did a bit yes, it did, yes, in fact I went on to, somebody else had organized that course but I went on to organize a drug awareness course at school".*

"I think it can [be a boost to confidence], even though I'd been to Uni and done lots of other stuff, when you're a mum and you're at home and full-

time, even though I'd been out to work and stuff before, I think you can lose your confidence a bit, it's kind of not the real world but you know you kind of just get used to being surrounded by children and baby things so it was good for my confidence, it was a good challenge to go and learn new stuff".

Some parents reported that they had returned to work since the Speakeasy course and viewed it as having helped in this process:

"Yeah it probably did [increase confidence to learn] because um I think that was the stage when I started, cause obviously I was at home with children with no confidence blah blah blah do you know what I mean? And I think, I mean, look where I am if now! If someone had said this to me two three years ago I'd have laughed I'd have said yeah right do you know what I mean? So all the training and all the courses have certainly given me self-esteem and confidence and that would include speak easy cause that was when I was at home, a mum and not really doing anything".

Several of the parents reported that the accreditation that they received was valued and something that they had pride in having achieved. One lady reported that at a time when she found the course hard going the fact that she would be getting OCN credits for it motivated her to stay on the course:

"I always put Speakeasy down as well [on application forms], I don't know if it helps with my applications but I always put it down".

5.9.2 Innovative findings

A number of new questions resulted in original data being generated by the 2007 interviews. The following section addresses the themes that arose from the parent's narratives and focuses on how, three years on, the learning from the course has been put into practice.

Refreshing memories.

Most parents reported that they felt they believed that they had forgotten some of the information they had learnt on the Speakeasy course. Almost all parents reported that they now thought a refresher course would be a good idea. Parents who had children who were very young when they took the course felt the refresher would be particularly beneficial. These parents felt that they had focused on what they needed to know for the age their children were when they attended the course and would get much more from the course now that their children were older:

"Yes I do, especially because it's an evolving thing especially in my household, my children are getting older and maybe then I'd bring things that are more relevant to me now than they were then, that would be lovely".

However, as is shown in the following quotes, when parents were required to deal with situations in their day to day lives the information often came back to them and they were still able to draw from specific aspects of the course:

"Even when she was saying to me about babies growing in my tummy my first thought was what do I, how do I, age appropriate sort of, you have a flash sort of in your, it's a silly thing, but you have a flash in your head of

doing that time line thing and thinking oh right am I expecting that question around now'?

"We did have a girl, I think it was last year, and she was 15 and we found out she was pregnant so we took her down the family planning, which was mentioned in the Speakeasy talk you know, which I found was really interesting. So what I heard on the Speakeasy course really interacted with that you know and I thought that was quite useful".

"The next day then he said to me about, what did he say, he said me and Rebecca are going to get married and ...we were talking about what it means when you get married and he said but she is my girlfriend and we were talking about what that means and that's stuff that we covered on the course as well".

Practical application of Learning.

It is important to establish parental views of the course and also important to establish what is remembered. However, it is even more vital to establish how attending the course impacts on real life. The findings from the 2007 interviews establish that there has been an enduring change in the way parents communicate with their children about sex and that **fpa's** Speakeasy course has helped and continues to be an important reason for this.

Enduring Relevance

A strong finding was the relevance of the course to daily life. Frequent reference was made to very recent situations where specific learning had been utilized in everyday life. The following quotes show examples of recent use:

"Even just this week it's been quite appropriate um yeah I was just thinking about it all this week cause one of the little one of my son's friends had been saying to another little girl about two children in his class having sex I knew he didn't have a clue what on earth he was saying so I've been trying talk to my son a little bit this week. Oh, how this mum, when she heard, reacted! And she was shocked and she said 'don't you ever say that word, it's a very bad word' and so and I just thought, if I hadn't been on the course - I'm not saying I would have reacted like that and I understand exactly why she did - it was very embarrassing in front of everybody - it's just I think it's taught me not to react, not to be shocked by anything'.

"Even this week she's been asking me about, we've been talking about babies again so we've ended up sort of, funnily enough it's sort of cropped up again, she was talking about where, how, babies are born in being in your tummy..."

"I do foresee it being something that's going to crop up all the time".

*"I got my tubes tied last week and they were asking why do you get your tubes tied and what happened and obviously I explained what happened".
[Did speakeasy help?] "Yes definitely I think I would have just avoided it otherwise".*

“Well actually I’ll tell you what I did say to them the other day, I said, if anybody like touched you down below well you’ve got to tell us, like mam or dad”.

Tools and Techniques the course provides.

The course had been very useful in a variety of situations over time and people predicted it would continue to be so. The course had provided parents with tools and techniques to deal with situations in a way they felt they would not have been able to do before the course:

“The fact that I used some of the techniques to be quite frank and open with my daughter regarding puberty and sex in a way that my parents never were with me... There’s nothing now that she feels like she can’t ask, I’ve let her know that the subject of sex isn’t a taboo thing you know, it’s not something that you have to feel like you can’t bring up with parents”.

“Yeah well her going through puberty, so some of the sheets that I’ve actually done, I’ve actually shown her what I’ve done, you know like labelling parts of the body and changes she’s going to go through and the way, how she’s going to feel and teaching her about the opposite sex”.

“She can’t store too much in her brain, you can’t elaborate on anything you have to be straight to the point and that’s what we did so if I hadn’t been on the course I wouldn’t of thought of that and I’d have been terribly stuck”.

“A bit about how boys and girls are different and where babies come from things like that it’s not something that I’ve had to go into a lot of detail cause they’re not old enough to understand it all but yeah it’s helped me cause it made you thing about things it sort of made it clearer how much information to give to them at certain times, yeah it’s dead easy to talk about”.

“My step daughter like she’s fourteen she started periods a few months back and it helped with that because of all the leaflets that I got as well from the course which I had kept hold of, it helped to go through things with her and it made it easier for me as well cause I was a bit, ‘how do sort of tell them about things like that’”.

“He was playing with himself I was watching telly and pulled his pants down ‘look at this he said mummy and I was like oh yeah, I handled that, I was still a bit shocked but...’.

A growing confidence in children

Many of the participants observed a changing confidence in their children. Parents felt that this was as a result of their increased confidence in dealing with situations. This is perhaps only available for us to see through the nature of the longitudinal research and highlights the importance of follow up study:

“I think maybe as he got a bit older and started asking more questions I think I probably would’ve have been a bit embarrassed and tried not to talk about it which then I guess in turn would have made him the same”.

"I think it's helped both of us cause obviously I feel confident in bringing up issues with her, because I'm confident I think she feeds off me and it's helped her as well".

"Maybe cause he's learnt that I'm cause sometimes I know that he knows that he says things that maybe will shock me a little bit...I think maybe if he's learnt that I'm not going to over react".

Affected child's confidence? *"Yes definitely, he knows I'm not embarrassed or shy... He's asked us questions about condoms and things and all sorts".*

"He knows we're not going to laugh or take the mickey".

"It is nice, it's a relaxed thing, I know that anything that pops into her little head she'll come up she'll ask".

There was an occasional suggestion evident mainly in parents whose children were at an older age when they attended the course that whilst they were now comfortable talking about sex, their children sometimes became embarrassed:

"I said I'm going to get some condoms and he said 'don't' be so stupid and I said yeah but you never know'.

"She get's much more embarrassed than me at the minute she's like 'mum, for god's sake!'".

Most of the participants interviewed expected and hoped that their children's future relationships would be affected by their having been on the Speakeasy course. There was some indication that this may be a realistic expectation, it was often reported that children were now willing and comfortable discussing sex with those around them. However, few conclusions can be drawn at present being that most of the children of the parents being interviewed were considered too young to be developing sexual relationships.

"I like to hope that when he gets to the age where he is going to have that kind of relationship that he knows that he can come to us, I've always said to my husband there'll be a draw where there's condoms in that he just takes them when he wants them he hasn't got to tell us".

"Because we haven't made anything like a real taboo subject she doesn't see a problem with discussing things quite openly with other people".

He'll have respect for the girl or whoever, he'll know about being careful".

Wider effects of Speakeasy

An important finding of the 2007 interviews was the way in which information gained through attending the Speakeasy course was passed on by word of mouth. Perhaps due to the significant time gap, in general, people had not recommended the course to others very recently. This was often due to people being unsure if the course was still being run. However, the evidence in 2007 suggests that Speakeasy still has a positive impact upon people who have not attended the course. Parents reported giving advice to friends, children of friends, and also to relatives. As in previous

years several participants felt that their spouses had also been affected by the course. An important and novel finding of the 2007 interviews was the passing of information between children. Whilst only mentioned by a few parents this finding was significant in that it provided evidence that peer education was occurring:

“The leaflets do pop up a lot anyway, cause my son’s thirteen, so he asks for different stuff... he’ll just say ‘you got one of those leaflets’?... he’s even shown them to his mates”.

“I’ve put them down and he knows exactly where they are and a couple of his friends have come in and they’ve picked up the book and they’re sitting there reading it”.

“My sister was going through some problems with her daughter and er and I did pass some information on to her you know just talked over what I’d done and gave her one of the leaflets, it was about changes that happen for girls’.

“Even this week a friend of mine who’s got teenage children, and I was telling her about what had happened at NAME’s school and she was saying ‘oh I think I need, I should have really been more open with my children and we were just talking about making sure that we don’t, as much as we want our children to be informed and be able to make sensible choices, I don’t want them to grow up thinking it’s a bad thing”.

“Gave me a bit of confidence [in their work with teenagers] to say, ‘look you need to keep yourself safe, this is why, we’ve got this this this’, do you know what I mean, to protect yourself”.

“Word soon spreads when I think of other people who I know here that have got younger children, and I’ll often get a phone call you know, “my son’s seven years old and he’s just asked me so and so, what do I say”? Well actually if you go on the speakeasy course it might actually help”.

Sex Education Policy

About half of the parents were aware of the school’s policy on sex education and had approached the school as part of the Speakeasy course. Parents felt that this had highlighted the importance of knowing what children are taught in schools:

“It made you think you know when your child starts school it’s important to find out what that particular school does”.

“I think it’s just knowing what they’re taught in school so to know what input to put at home and to know what stuff isn’t being covered at school so you can talk about things if you want to as and when they come up”.

However this involvement was not enduring. When asked in 2007 if they were aware of sex education policy, most parents reported that they did not. Some reported surprise that they did not, and the interview served to remind them that it was something that they could or should do. One parent reported that it might be something they would find out on a refresher course indicating that whilst it had been an important part of the course it had not been internalized as something which they could do by themselves.

"We found out they don't teach about contraceptives until fifteen and we think, well they should be teaching it a long time before that".

"Has it changed"?

"I suppose that's something we'd find out if we did this refresher".

"Now at my daughter's school I can kind of ask them for an SRE policy".

"Have you done that then"?

"I haven't actually done that yet but it's something else to think about you know".

"Do you know what I don't to tell you the truth which is quite crap really isn't it, well I don't know cause I know sex ed will be covered at some stage but is that primary or secondary I don't know actually so it might be worth me finding that out you know, when you said that I was like oh I don't know and when you've got a child you want to be knowing really don't you".

As an exception, one parent who was actively involved in community and volunteering work approached a school independently. This participant had a positive effect on the school's attitude to policy and seemed quite proud and empowered after having seen the effect and with the realization that he motivated and prompted change:

"I went up there to interview the headmaster and he was quite shocked and he got out of it by saying, 'we're just on the verge of updating our sex education policy'... and I said to him, can I see what you're working on now, you know? And it was just the very very basics, but they have in the last year updated it, you know, to more graphic details, which is really good actually'.

This suggests that it could be beneficial for parents if facilitators make it clear that parents have a right to know what their children are being taught and that they should feel able to approach their children's schools whenever they feel the need to without being a member of a Speakeasy course.

5.10 Suggestions for Improvement

2005 Suggestions

In 2005 all 40 parents were asked whether, based on their experiences, they had any suggestions for how the course might be improved and whether they had any final comments on anything further they wished to mention about their Speakeasy experience. Responses were overwhelmingly positive to these questions with 48% (n= 19) of parents commenting that either the course should not be changed or that there was nothing to change:

"Absolutely not, I wouldn't say anything should be changed, course has been wonderful, great as it was!"

"Don't think it can be improved, how it was run was good, a very relaxed environment and very informal and that was important."

“Everything was good, it covered a lot of material in a short space of time, and I was very happy with that – very glad I did the course. The course not only helps people in big ways, but also in more subtle ways too, in everyday life with things that are related like relationships, emotions and dealing with other issues like bullying and school.”

“Nothing really, covered everything that I wanted and it’s been a brilliant course to be honest’.

“It was fantastic; I praise it all the time.”

“No, it was perfect, it was brilliant...lots of parents should do the course, really enjoyed it as well as learning new stuff. Everyone was really friendly, and even though it was the course facilitators first time running the course, they were both really good.”

45% (n = 18) of parents did propose some change to the course but similar to Burns (2004), these recommendations were mainly concerned with publicity and marketing issues, and how to attract more parents (particularly fathers) to the course. For example, one parent suggested the timing of the course may exclude some fathers from attending and that this should be revised to encourage more men to attend.

“There needs to be more men, more daddies on the course. At the moment the timing of the course conflicts with many men’s work. Course times should be changed to encourage more fathers to go.”

One parent suggested that there is a need for greater understanding about Muslim communities and that the Speakeasy course should be extended or revised to specifically target Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups (BAME), perhaps through taster sessions in schools or local community centres:

“There is a need to understand Muslim communities more, people are very close knit, and once they know how good the course is, many would be at the door waiting to do the course...[Speakeasy] could perhaps try ‘taster’ sessions at parents evenings to get parents, especially ethnic minorities interested in the course – then they will know how good the course is and want to continue the rest of it.”

A range of other issues arose including:

- Greater group sizes to promote discussions and diversity
- Development of a ‘resource pack’ which parents can buy which would be based on Speakeasy principles and aimed specifically at teenage children
- Increased use of external speakers
- Extend course session time and duration (i.e. number of weeks)
- Ensuring the crèche (where provided) does not disturb the group sessions
- Need to advertise more in local schools
- One parent-child session where parents and children can work on activities collaboratively
- More information on becoming a Speakeasy peer trainer

2006 Suggestions

Most of these recommendations were echoed by the 2006 interviewees. With the time-delay between the course and the 2006 interviews, the recommendations mentioned could be indicative of the most important changes to the course. The following recommendations were mentioned:

- Improved access for dads
- Make the course less rushed
- Provide more opportunities to practise answers
- Make more mention of celibacy and consent issues
- Ensure rapport is built within the group at the start
- Consider different faiths
- More different language courses
- More hands-on activities rather than overloading with paperwork.

2007 Suggestions

Suggestions from the 2007 interviews included those from the previous years. The 2007 interviews also provided some novel findings.

As mentioned in previous years, some parents found that the paperwork, or getting time to do the paperwork, was difficult. In 2007 a few parents revealed that they had discovered that some of the parents on their courses had dropped out because of the amount of paperwork.

Due to the nature of the Speakeasy course, sensitive areas concerning child safety are often raised. One parent raised a potential ethical dilemma for the course concerning a lady who had a past involving sexual abuse. This lady made people feel uncomfortable and was also gossiped and laughed about behind her back. This suggests that it is important to have support for vulnerable people on the course and to foster an atmosphere of understanding and respect within the group. Another parent echoed these concerns and suggested that counselling be made available for vulnerable people:

"I do think that one of the things that maybe they could think about is actually providing somebody who's a qualified counsellor...For this particular young woman, I mean she was 19, you know it would have been a real step forward for her you know if she could have actually discussed it and come out of herself a little bit more, perhaps she would have continued with the course".

A quite frequent suggestion, especially from parents with older children, was that it would be beneficial to run a course for children or a session where parents and children could work together.

"I've been there when they've been taught it [at schools] The talks that they have aren't anywhere long enough, there for something stupid like fifty minutes, how on earth can you pack so much of a wealth of information into fifty minutes"?

"I don't agree with the way that they actually teach it in schools to be honest, I think it would be an absolutely brilliant idea if they could modify the speakeasy course for the kids, get them to do the silly games and the word association... it would get rid of this embarrassment and you know this taboo situation... and I

just think if you got kids involved with it on that level, make it fun make it so as it's an everyday thing and then it doesn't become an issue".

"I think it would be very good if they had maybe a course running for children, teenagers or even before teenagers, sort of my daughters age I mean it would be good if there was somewhere they could go maybe with a mixture of girls and boys or I'm not sure if it would be girls and boys or just girls and just boys but it's good for them to find out things like this".

An important concern made very strongly and competently by one parent and echoed by a few others was that of the need to tailor courses appropriately for the target audience. This parent attended a Speakeasy course aimed at parents of children with special needs. Whilst echoing the general positive statements made about the course it was felt that the course had not been adapted enough for the needs of this group of parents. As such the suggestion for improvement is that more advice be made available to those trainers who wish to provide courses for specific groups.

Chapter 6: Further insights: Interviews with males who attended the course between 2002 and 2007.

This chapter presents the findings from 13 telephone interviews with males who attended fpa Speakeasy course. The participants in these interviews had not previously been interviewed by TSA in relation to the Speakeasy course. The schedule for these interviews can be found in Appendix E.

Initial contact with the sample came from fpa who selected and approached each participant, obtaining fully informed consent for interview. Fpa let each participant know that a researcher from TSA would be contacting them to arrange a time for interview. Of the original pool of 20 participants 13 were successfully interviewed. Of the participants who were not interviewed four did not provide consent, one was deemed not suitable for interview, having never attended a Speakeasy course, and the remainder were non contactable after six attempts over a period of two weeks. Thus 65% of the potential sample were interviewed, or 68.4% of the people who had attended the course.

As in the previous evaluations the interview questions were structured around the main aims of the Speakeasy course for parents, which are as follows:

1. Increase parents **confidence and communication** skills with their children
2. Help parents show a more **positive and open approach** to discussions of sex, sexuality and sexual health
3. Increase parents **factual knowledge** around sex and sexual health
4. Provide a **step towards further learning/professional development** for excluded groups of parents

The findings presented in this section are largely influenced by these aims and structured as follows:

- 6.1 Introduction. Setting the research in context
- 6.2 Memories and impacts of the course
- 6.3 Increased factual knowledge around sex and sexual health
- 6.4 Increased confidence and communication skills
- 6.5 A more positive and open approach to discussions of sex, sexuality and sexual health
- 6.6 Further learning and professional development
- 6.7 Widening effects of Speakeasy
- 6.8 Suggestions for Improvement
- 6.9 Being a male on the Speakeasy course
- 6.10 Summary

6.1 Introduction – Setting the research in context

Why are we interested in males who attended the course?

Males form a distinct minority of people who attend the course. Since 2002 approximately 6500 parents have completed the Speakeasy course, of these the records of 2367 are held in a database. Analysis of the database shows that the

overwhelming majority of people attending the course are female, accounting for 95% of the attendees. Of persons who attended and of whom records are held, only 110 are male.

Despite **fpa** attempts to recruit more males on the Speakeasy course only 7%, or three, of the 40 interviewees participating in longitudinal research were male. In the research to date men have been assimilated into the general pool of participants. Little attention has been paid to their potentially different experiences on the course. This section aims to address and examine these.

What can these findings tell us?

This research is able to provide a valuable male perspective on **fpa's** Speakeasy course and how it could be improved for males. However it is unable to give full insight into why there are so few males who attend the course. By researching males who have been on the course we cannot establish why men attend the course in such low numbers. We are in effect examining a very biased pool of participants who may have very different attitudes towards parenting, responsibility for sex education and attending courses.

Indeed it became evident through discussion with the interviewees that they were a non representative group, with a large percentage attending the course due to requirements as a foster parent, active volunteering, or work with children. There were very few males who were on the course purely out of interest and a desire to improve their parenting skills.

Despite this it is still vital to understand the experiences of these males. Their opinions and experiences are important and through interviews we can understand how suitable the course is for males and perhaps how it could be made more appealing.

6.2 Memories and impacts

All of the participants reported that going on the Speakeasy course had been a positive experience for them.

"I thoroughly enjoyed it, I thought it was very informative, very well presented and it's one of the things I'm glad I took part in."

"I would put it right up there, you know, very very interesting".

"I liked it all actually, it was a good laugh"

"That it was quite enjoyable, mostly, it was a nice chance to sit down and talk to, at the time I still had one child at home, and it was a nice chance to sit and talk to adults, but it was erm, it was an interesting course actually".

The participants were asked whether they would recommend the course to other people and specifically to other men. All of the participants agreed that they would, and on occasion had, recommended it, although some were unsure if it continued to be run in the area and cited this as a reason for not having recommended it to others:

"If it comes up we always recommend it".

"It was an excellent course and I'd recommend it to anybody".

Participants were encouraged to consider if there were any challenging or negative aspects of the course. The interviewer emphasized that this was important to find out in order to help fpa improve the course in the future, particularly for men. The majority of participants reported that there were no negatives associated with the course:

"I wouldn't say challenging, no"

"No, no, it was alright".

There were, however, occasional suggestions where improvements could be made:

"Because our son is special needs, there probably wasn't, children with disabilities were probably not addressed, that was an area that perhaps could have been touched upon".

"The only thing that I think was probably a little limited in it's use as far as I was concerned was that we did this sort of ... collage where you cut out of newspaper and magazines, and I don't quite know what the idea of that was or the usefulness of that, it was a bit of a laugh but I think that was about all".

"Funny names of contraceptives, writing it down, difficult to spell".

One of the participants stated that being the only man on the course had been a problem. The experience of being a man on the Speakeasy course is examined further in section 6.7.1.

"What stood out was that I was the only man there, and that was really embarrassing ...even the trainers were women".

A common finding from the research was that the participants appreciated the opportunity to learn from other people's experiences and the chance to get together with other adults and talk about topics which are not normally discussed:

"The input that everyone was able to put into it that was the most useful".

"It was fun actually to be able to talk to people and say no hang on a minute I don't think that's right, be in a situation where you could challenge people's thoughts".

"There was very little, 'this is what happens', it was more a case of lets all talk about this and see if we can come to some kind of consensus".

6.3 Increased factual knowledge

Most of the participants reported that the course increased their knowledge substantially. This was of vital importance to the male participants who frequently reported that this had been the best aspect of the course for them:

'Lots of information lots of things I didn't know'.

"Never realized young people were so inventive". [with names that young people had given to illegal substances]

"Never thought about children's sexual development...It's not something you tend to think about, you're so busy changing nappies and getting the food to go in and stay in that you don't think about much else for years on end".

It was occasionally reported that knowledge had not been significantly increased by the course. Participants in this situation still found the course to be extremely useful but in different ways such as, providing techniques or ways to address issues with children and reinforcing confidence in parenting techniques.

"There wasn't necessarily an awful lot I didn't know, it was just putting it together in ways I hadn't thought of."

"I thought well, I know what I know if I find out stuff and er its helpful then fine if I know it then it can reinforce stuff you know it maybe a new skill technique that I could pick up to help in the future I mean that's how I looked at it, you know, not a negative it was always going to be a positive, to get something positive out of it, and I did."

Specifically, whilst by no means an exhaustive list, the following learning points were reported to have been of great benefit.

- STIs
- Contraceptives
- How to talk to teenagers
- Increased confidence.
- Collage – media pressures.
- Visit from the sexual health nurse
- Everything

Participants had completed the course at various different times between 2002-2007. As such it is difficult to compare how the course is remembered over time. There were varied opinions over the amount of knowledge that had been retained.

"When the occasion arises I know it'll be there. Because of the way it's taught it's not the sort of thing where you come away with a series of facts, it's more a case of you come away with changed attitudes and different confidence levels."

"It's a course what you can't forget really cause there's that many shocking details of what you didn't know about."

"Yeah probably a lot has got lost."

In general whilst there were still many who thought that a refresher course would be a good idea, the males in this sample were not as enthusiastic about their need for a refresher as the participants in the longitudinal research. When responding in negative, participants explained that they had all they needed to know in their files. This may suggest a slightly different way in which males and females are using the course, males drawing the main benefit through increased knowledge and confidence – which they retained through access to course materials - and females placing greater value on the social learning opportunities provided through Speakeasy.

"No because I have the notes you see to accompany the programme we had notes which I still have which are in my file now so if there were anything that I did want to have a look at you know I could get that information from the notes."

"I don't think I'd need one." [refresher]

"Well I suppose it's always good to... always useful to go on a refresher."

6.4 Increased confidence

Most men reported that they had become more confident in discussing sex, sexuality, and sexual health with their children, even when they had not had a chance to put it into practice:

"Before I went on the Speakeasy course I was able to talk to people but I can talk more openly to people now, it's confidence really."

"I think it's probably just a lot more openness and a lot more willing to discuss it".

"Just the confidence to be able to talk about it, mostly it was just the confidence to be able to talk openly".

This increase in confidence was attributable to increased knowledge, the opportunity to discuss issues in a group and through having learnt strategies to approach children.

6.5 Increased openness and communication

The participants provided evidence to suggest that learning from the Speakeasy course was being put to good use in daily lives. However there was some suggestion that males were presented with fewer opportunities to put in to practice what they had learnt. This could be due to the small number of fathers who were on the course simply to improve their parenting skills. Many of the sample were play workers, volunteers or foster parents and may not have been presented with an opportunity.

"I haven't used a huge amount of the information...yet."

"My daughter's already started doing 'where's babies come from' it wasn't difficult we just got on and dealt with it and it was probably a lot easier because I just thought I've got to get on with this."

"At the time that we did the course we did have a teenage girl with us a fourteen year old and she wanted some information so we gave her some information from the books that were provided to us."

"We did have a girl, I think it was last year, and she was 15 and we found out she was pregnant so we took her down the family planning, which was mentioned in the Speakeasy talk you know, which I found was really interesting. So what I heard of the Speakeasy course really interacted with that you know and I thought that was quite useful."

"It's funny you should say that, he comes back from school a couple of days ago and he says, 'I like this girl you know' and I thought, here we go! ... He wants to take her out and I was on about being safe you know and everything."

"Good to fall back on the poster what I did on the Speakeasy course."

"Couple of times with my son yep... Trying to explain that er you know um although it might seem appropriate for him to touch himself in front of people whether he's getting himself comfortable or whatever it's not appropriate in certain situations and you have to be just a little bit more careful about where you do it I mean you know, in front of mummy and daddy is fine you know but in front of other people you know try not to do it or if you need to go to the toilet or whatever, try to do it there... That type of thing has cut right down and it was as far as I was concerned quite a successful little talk that I had learnt."

"My daughter thought that she could embarrass us but she couldn't...I give them some"!

6.6 Further Learning and professional development

One of the aims of the Speakeasy programme is to act as a step towards further learning and/or professional development for traditionally excluded groups of parents. It is difficult to draw conclusions in this area due to the small sample size and the knowledge that many of the fathers in the sample were used to going on courses because of their positions as foster parents or volunteers. However, there was still some positive feedback on the use of OCN credits and a real sense of increased confidence was evident in those fathers for whom Speakeasy was their first course.

"It was quite good actually [getting credits] the only thing was you had to wait about eight months before they sent you the credits, which is quite a long time".

"I was quite happy to get them and if I was going to follow on with other courses or whatnot then it would be helpful, I know two ladies from my course said they was going to, that it was going to be helpful to them.. . because it all added together or something."

"It did with us, we've done a few courses, I've started doing a classroom course." [Speakeasy helped with confidence to go on further courses]

"It gives you confidence, it's a confidence boost sort of thing."

6.7 Widening impact of Speakeasy

Around half of the sample talked of situations where they had been able to pass on their learning to other adults, including friends and relatives. This is an important finding and shows that the effects of Speakeasy are widening with time.

"I think that if you've got stuff you know, it's not to say to people that this is the be all and end all, this is the gospel, just say I've picked up this it might be helpful to you, if it's not don't use it, you know but er I've used it a couple of times and it works for me".

"I find that when I'm talking to adults about sex I use specific names more, whereas I must admit, I wouldn't have done"...If you say it enough then people seem to pick it up and then copy you".

"Well I passed on pearls of wisdom which I picked up to other people, like friends with kids".

"Oh yeah, mine's had this or mines shown me up by doing this, so 'have you tried doing this way', and they said 'well I can't talk to them like that' I said 'why? I know it's embarrassing and stuff' but 'no my mum never talked to me like that' I said 'well you're not your mum you know' it's the 21st century, you know, spit it out. Whether it worked or not I don't know but I have passed on a few pearls that I was passed on through by the teachers".

"I did ask them what the sex education policy was, the infant school one was pretty well non existent, um the junior school one was a lot better but since I'm a governor there it's not surprising".

Impacts upon children

Only a few of the males interviewed felt that the Speakeasy course had definitely directly impacted upon their children and gave examples of this occurring. Again this may be due to the bias in the sample and also that many of the participants' children were too young to be developing sexual relationships and in several cases had not begun to ask questions about sex. This highlights the need for continued longitudinal research, through which we could begin to see if growing confidence is observed in the children of male parents who attended the course as it has been shown in the children of participants in the longitudinal research (Chapter 5).

'I'm waiting for it, it's coming round'

“He’ll quite happily come and ask things if there’s something he doesn’t understand, and he has once or twice and that’s been fine”.

He’s fifteen and he loves girls”.

“It’s probably going to come into action in fact we may have to have a little brush up on it and just um refresh the memories”.

“Explain that he hasn’t got a girlfriend at the moment he may get one in the future but it’s nothing to worry about”.

“She seems quite happy to ask”.

One Participant raised an interesting issue when the following exchange was observed.

Interviewer: *“She was quite happy talking to you about this”?*

Parent: *“Not to me personally but my wife, yes”.*

This quote hints at the stereotypical assumption that females are responsible for sex education within the family. Whilst males may attend the course and as a consequence feel happy discussing sex and sexual relationships children may be more reluctant to discuss issues with their fathers. Fpa promote the Speakeasy course to parents of children at any age, it may be important for fathers to attend the course early on in the child’s development before they have adopted stereotypical assumptions about responsibility for sex education

6.8 Suggestions for improvement

Men enjoyed the course and felt they had benefited by attending. There were very few suggestions for things that needed to be improved on the general Speakeasy course, although attention was drawn by one participant to the need to make sure that when specific groups were targeted, such as parents of special needs children, then the course needs to be adequately adapted. Other suggestions for improvement were to encourage more men on to the course, have shorter and more intensive courses, run courses in the evening, and have less homework.

6.9 Being a male on the Speakeasy course

The only man

Unsurprisingly due to the low numbers of men attending Speakeasy, participants often had the experience of being the only male in a group of women. The interviews explored this to discover if this raised any issues.

Somewhat surprisingly due to the sensitive nature of some of the material discussed, only one man reported any type of difficulty in being the only male in a group of women. It is worth noting however, that this embarrassment was keenly felt.

“If there would have been another man there I’d have been ok”.

The vast majority reported that they found no difficulties associated with being a man on the course and that they were happy and comfortable in the situation.

Generalisations should not be drawn from this finding as most of the sample were used to attending courses and being the only male in the group.

“For me it was fine, for somebody else it might be a nightmare, you know six or seven women”.

“That’s ok cause I get on better with women anyway”.

“I’ve been on a lot of courses... often I do end up being the only one”.

However, males were often concerned about their presence on the course in respect to the females, and often reported that though they were comfortable in the group they felt the need to check that the women on the course were happy to have them there. In almost all cases the males did not perceive any concern from females about having a male on the course.

The best mix

Some participants expressed disappointment at being the only male in the group.

“I can’t understand, I was quite surprised when they said oh you’re the only bloke that’s applied, um, so, a little bit disappointed but er hopefully more men will take it”.

In an effort to understand how males could be encouraged and made more comfortable on the Speakeasy course participants were asked about the make up of the groups and how they felt they could have been improved. None of the participants felt that an all male group would be completely beneficial, although did acknowledge that it may be less embarrassing for some men.

“An all male group would be awful...All male groups are no fun at all”.

“It is a good idea but then you miss out on the input of the female which is important you know, it’s nice to have a mixed group.”

The overriding finding from this line of enquiry was that males believed that an equally mixed group would be most beneficial. This was felt to be important because it would allow different perspectives to be shared.

Men enjoyed the opportunity to learn from the experiences of women but often felt under pressure as the provider of the only male perspective on the course. One participant reported that having other men on the course would not only reduce the pressure on him to present the male perspective but would also be a valuable experience for him to be able to see if what he felt or believed agreed with other male perspectives.

“Well actually think that it helped on occasions cause they would quite often say well what do men think about this”.

A few of the participants attended a course where there was an equal mix of males and females, these men commented on the benefits of having a mixed group:

"I thought it was a good course and I thought it was all the better for, there were about half a dozen of us I think, and there were two other men... there were three couples and I think we were all foster parents".

However, a significant minority of the men reported they felt that if there were more than one or two men in a group they would worry that it could be threatening for the females on the course.

"I think if you had more men it would have been, I don't think people would have opened up so much".

"It dissolves into a brag session". [if too many men]

Some other interesting findings arose during this line of questioning which did not relate to gender in groups but are important to discuss.

One of the frequently mentioned reasons for attending the course was that a wife or partner had encouraged them to join. However, attending the course with a partner may be problematic, as shown in the following extract and quote:

Interviewer: "You and your wife both went on the course together?"

Parent: "Yeah, unfortunately yeah"

Interviewer: "Was that unfortunate".

Parent: "Oh yes"

Interviewer: "Do you think... [interrupted]"

Parent: "Um, yeah, it's lucky she's in the other room! I think it can be restricting"

Interviewer: "So do you think it would be better to be anonymous?"

Parent: "Yeah, because for me it wasn't so bad cause I'm a little bit more open um but I know she found it difficult getting feelings out and explaining".

"If she was too embarrassed to say things maybe it's better to do it to strangers".

So whilst encouraging females to bring their partners to courses is an important route for recruitment of males to the Speakeasy course it may be beneficial to ensure that partners are split up when group work occurs where people may feel more comfortable discussing things anonymously.

One participant made another point which is important for consideration:

"I think because we were all more or less of the same age as well, so we were all comfortable or something, from the same era".

Whilst a variety of different ages on a course may offer a wider breadth of experience to learn from it is possible that people may feel more comfortable discussing issues amongst people of a similar age to themselves, indeed one participant felt uncomfortable and naïve when comparing his knowledge with the knowledge of some of the younger people on the course.

Why do men need to attend?

The males in the sample felt that the Speakeasy course was of great benefit to them and recommended that more men should attend. They identified that in general men often tried to avoid involvement in sex education and felt that this needed to change.

"I think it's something that more men should go on...um because I don't know whether it's a taboo subject with men or they don't like to show emotions or talk about emotions or talk about sexual things to their kids or what not but it's something that has to be done and it's something that has to be, you know, there's a way of handling it and a way not to handle it and it's not as easy as it seems."

"They're parents too!"

Men often mentioned that prior to the course they would have felt able to talk to their sons about sex but did not think that they would be able to talk to their daughters. The Speakeasy course helped the males in the sample to feel comfortable with this and is an important learning point which could be used to promote the Speakeasy course to men.

"A lot of males just can't talk to their daughters".

How can we encourage men?

Although it is difficult to gain insight into why men do not attend Speakeasy from a group of men who have successfully completed the course, some interesting points were made about men's reticence to join. Whilst the men in the sample were comfortable being in a group with only females the following quotes are important in highlighting that this may not be the case for other males:

[On a different course – men in foster care] "A lot were saying how they wouldn't go on it because it's always women on the course, you seem to be out numbered."

"Men are frightened to go on it."

"If they could get half women and half men it would be a lot better."

"I imagine a lot of men find it very hard to talk about sex in front of a load of women."

As previously mentioned men felt that an important route to getting males to participate was through encouraging women to bring their partners to the course.

"They need a wife to push them on to it."

"You've gotta get them women that's been on the course to get their partners in to it, that sort of thing."

"Tell the women who've done it to send their partners, would be a good way of doing it, say you know, you've done it now send your partner."

One parent who was actively involved in the community shared a strategy which he used to engage local people and which had previously been successful for him:

"I would have said schools, would be the best way of doing it, parents talk to teachers, parents get letters home from school and they tend to read them, notices on the local community centre boards and the like very often don't get read. Um but schools, school playground if you want to go and talk to people ask the headmistress if you can stand in the school playground and talk to the parents before they come, while their waiting for the kids to come out, it's by far the best way of getting hold of the local parents".

"Someone standing in the playground and handing out leaflets and talking will almost always attract attention and you get a chance to talk to people and actually hand them a leaflet and explain... There are a surprisingly large number of men collecting children from school."

A few of the men reported that a taster session, prior to signing up to the course, and with no 'strings attached' would have been of great benefit and may encourage men to the course:

"You can always come along just to the first one and see how you feel."

During the interviews all of the participants were asked if they felt that having more male facilitators would encourage men on the course. The majority of men felt that the gender of the facilitator did not matter as long as they were well trained and knowledgeable. All the men reported that this was the case with their facilitators.

"I don't think it makes much difference, I mean they have the same information to impart and they have the same skills of drawing information out from the people who are there I don't think it matters."

"It depends on how good they are at what they do."

A couple of men did suggest that a male facilitator would help men on the course, providing a more equal balance of perspective and a role model.

"Two types of argument" [if there is a male and a female]

However, a few men objected quite strongly to male facilitators on the Speakeasy course, believing that if a man were in a position of authority as a facilitator, it could make men on the course feel inferior and lacking in knowledge.

Finally, a significant number of males expressed disappointment that it was so difficult to get men on the course.

"I don't think you should have to encourage men, I think they should want to."

Why don't men attend?

Most of the men who have completed the course are retired, work as foster parents or volunteers and thus have the opportunity to go on the course during the day. Men who work can often not attend the Speakeasy course because of this. To encourage men to attend evening courses should be promoted:

"If it were on during the evening it would have been better".

"I don't think it's so much scared, I think partly they don't have the opportunity because they're working a lot of dads still do work, um but also it's rearing children is often seen as a women's job, as it happens I'm doing most of it so that's fine by me, I don't care, I'm rarely bound by stereotypes."

"Well an evening one, yeah, I mean I know you've go the situation ' I've been at work all day I don't wanna go out and do some training' but you know if you care for your kid then you know... it's not going to kill you if you do it. The thing is I think the experience would be a positive one for them because they'd get stuff out of it. It doesn't matter what you know, I thought I knew a lot and I still learnt stuff and it was worthwhile."

Some men suggested that an intensive Speakeasy course would be more beneficial and that men were more likely to attend if they knew their commitment to the course would not be for a number of months:

[Two hours over eight weeks] "A bit much...If they could do it in two days... I think it would be a lot better."

The most significant finding in this area is the suggestion that males are concerned that by attending a Speakeasy course they are showing vulnerability and admitting that they are lacking in knowledge.

"A man wouldn't like to be shown up for his lack of knowledge or experience or skills or do you know just basic explaining of things, if he didn't know what a body part was called or something, maybe there's ego's there or what not?"

"And you know, you don't want to say something and you get told that it's wrong."

"A lot of men's egos are very fragile."

This hints at a possible strategy for marketing the Speakeasy course to males who may be discouraged by the emphasis on improving their own skills. If an approach was adopted where the emphasis was on how children are difficult to talk to and how people need strategies to do so men may feel more inclined to attend being that it would not amount to an admission of inferior knowledge or skills on their part.

6.10 Summary

The men who attend Speakeasy draw the same benefits as women who attend the course. This is shown both in the quantitative analysis of males monitoring forms and in the qualitative research upon which this chapter has focused.

The research suggests that for men the most important aspect of the course is the increase in knowledge and the materials which they are able to keep and use in the future. The men who attend the course are comfortable in the groups and find no difficulties associated with being a man on the course. The course content is suitable for men.

Very few men attend the Speakeasy course. The most important issue to address, if men are to be encouraged on the course, is the time at which Speakeasy courses are run. There should also be consideration of the way in which the Speakeasy course is promoted and whether this may be discouraging men from attending.

Chapter 7: Speakeasy Graduations: Newcastle 'parents' Focus Group

In addition to the longitudinal research and interviews conducted with fathers, a focus groups discussion was conducted. By approaching the evaluation through a variety of different methods a more complete and valid picture of the effects of Speakeasy can emerge. Appendix H provides an outline of the discussion schedule used during the focus group.

The focus group took place in February 2006 with a group of five parents attending a Speakeasy graduation event from the North East region (Newcastle).

The purpose of this group discussion was to explore the impact and outcomes for parents who had successfully completed the generic Speakeasy course. All parents were White British, and either married or living with a partner. Parents had three children on average, all of whom were aged 12 years old or under. Three parents described their work status as being house-persons, one said they were unemployed, and one parent reported doing part-time work. Parental ages ranged between 22 and 44 years.

The duration of focus group was approximately 30 minutes and held in a room specifically allocated for the purpose. The focus group leader asked broad questions to facilitate discussion, which covered a range of issues such as sexual health topics, confidence, positive and negative experiences, recommendations, and course accreditation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the evaluation so far, responses in the focus group were primarily positive with all five participants reporting favourable experiences of the Speakeasy course:

"It was really good, really enjoyed the whole experience."

"I'm pleased I did the course 'cos we did loads of things that I didn't realise I knew myself."

"I've been wanting to do lots of courses for a while now but not really had the confidence before – I feel much more confident now and feel that I can and want to do more, it's been really good."

"Having a crèche helped a lot, 'cos having two small children I couldn't have afforded to pay for childcare whilst I was studying."

Despite the overwhelmingly positive experiences, one parent did report that they had been unhappy at the start of Speakeasy due to the unsuitable setting within which the course took place. However, this was addressed later on during the course with the venue being altered:

"It wasn't good where we did ours, 'cos there were bit glass windows where other people using the centre could see what we were doing like – like when we were doing anatomy and a condom activity - and people were walking in and out – they were watching what was going on, they needed to stop people looking in to feel more comfortable."

At the start of the discussion, parents were asked about their reasons for doing the course, which generally involved issues around wanting a better knowledge-base and being able to communicate and be open with their children's questions about sex and sexual health. Some specific responses from parents included:

"I wanted to get a better understanding of my nine-year old daughter – I wanted to know about sex education and hormones and that - I now have a better understanding and I think I'm ready now for the any questions they might want to ask me, like where do babies come from."

"I wanted to do the course, because I didn't know how to start talking to my daughter about these things."

"I thought it would be a good idea to find out a bit more – I didn't realise how much I didn't know."

Parents were also asked how they thought their knowledge of the topics they studied on the Speakeasy course had changed, and whether any topics stood out for them in some way (e.g. particularly enjoyable, difficult, or interesting). All five parents in the focus group enthusiastically reported that learning about STIs had been both the most salient and most useful aspect for them. Similar to the earlier narratives with 45 parents, individuals in the focus group were often surprised by how little they really knew about STIs:

"I didn't even know what half of them were - didn't know you could catch some of them without even having sex!"

"Yeah, it did really open my mind."

"I realised I knew very little, and it's helped me – I kept all the information so I can look at it when I need to...I can sympathise with my children now which is really really good."

Perhaps attesting to their enjoyment of the course, parents said that they felt that the course was not long enough and that they would have liked time to discuss some of the topics more thoroughly. In some cases people felt that this would enable group members with quite different perspectives (e.g. open vs. relatively closed) to mix and discuss their differences in opinions:

"I didn't think it was long enough, could have done with a few more sessions to talk about things – some of it came as quite a shock."

"There were some people in the class were quite open, and others that weren't – it would have been good to spend more time together to discuss things...it was a real eye-opener!"

Parents also reported some favourable outcomes of the course in terms of being more open and communicative with their children about sex and sexual health. There was some discussion in the group about how for some individuals, their views of sexual health had changed quite considerably from being quite closed at the beginning to being much more open at the end of the course:

"I can talk to him now, to my little boy – and I can listen now."

"I was quite closed-minded before the course, but I have changed quite a bit now."

"I feel a lot more open with my son."

"I let him know that I am here for him to tell me whatever it is he wants to tell me, be open for him - but now I need to try and get my partner to be able to do the same."

During the focus group discussion parents were also asked whether they felt that Speakeasy had impacted on other family members in terms of being more open and positive in discussing sex and sexual health issues. Parents reported that partners were often very traditional in their views, and this meant that sex and relationship talks were more often than not left to the female, with the male suggesting it was 'their job to talk to the children':

"I've got two daughters, and 'cos I went on the course, it would have been my place to teach them 'cos they are girls, and I'm the mum...I cant get him to understand, he's being very closed off about it, that it's both our responsibilities and they might want to talk to their dad as well as their mum"

Several other parents agreed with this particular response saying it was difficult to encourage their partners to share the responsibility of talking about sex and sexual health issues. This was reflected in some of the reports from the longitudinal evaluation and may suggest that these 'traditional' views may be one of the reasons that males are in a minority on the course.

Towards the end of the focus group parents were asked if, based on their experiences, they had any suggestions for how the Speakeasy course might be improved. All five parents agreed that some form of re-fresher course might be particularly useful following the successful completion of the Speakeasy programme:

"They should do some re-fresher courses, just to, basically keep your mind active and keep you up-to-date with information..."

"Yeah, yeah, it would be good - would definitely be a nice top-up."

"Even if you only learned a bit more of something new on a re-fresher, it would be worth it."

Another major thread of discussion following from the comments about possible re-fresher courses involved ideas about creating opportunities for parents to keep in touch with each other after the Speakeasy course. Parents suggested that there could be some form of network whereby they could keep up to date with sexual health information, continue to share experiences, and support each other as their children developed over time:

"Would be able to ask parents with older children, like you know my boy is doing this, what did yours do – just someone to be able to ask questions and share experiences."

“There could be some way that parents can get back together after the course, like a network or something so they can keep in touch and talk to each other when things arise.”

“It could be a website, or newsletter or something with up-to-date information and contacts to keep in touch.”

Finally, parents were asked whether the OCN accreditation had been useful to them yet. Responses were interesting and diverse in that parents talked about wanting to develop further and do more qualifications, but some parents said that they did not realise or understand what OCN level two accreditation actually meant until just before their graduation:

“We didn’t realise until today that what we did equates to like a GCSE level in 7 weeks...we were quite impressed – ‘cos we didn’t really know what we had, like three credits at level three.”

“It’s always good for reference, y’know.”

“I want to do the next level, the facilitating, actually delivering the courses.”

“It should be able so that we can develop and study further.”

Summary

In the Newcastle focus group, perceptions of the course were very positive and often reported clear benefits in key areas such as confidence, knowledge, communication, and openness.

The narratives from the focus groups were generally supportive of the findings reported by the other evaluation strands carried out by the TSA. This increases the validity of the findings and allows us to be more confident in concluding that the Speakeasy course is a very successful and appreciated course which is achieving its aims of increasing parents’ confidence, knowledge and openness and providing a step towards further learning.

Chapter 8: Summary and Conclusions

This report represents the Trust for the Study of Adolescence's findings in an ongoing evaluation of the impacts and outcomes of the fpa Speakeasy course. The main focus of the research so far has been to quantitatively and qualitatively explore progress towards achieving the first four main stated aims of the Speakeasy course, and to provide qualitative insights into how the course has benefited parents in terms of sustained changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours. This has been accomplished in five ways: first, by interviewing five parents who participated in the course between 2002-2004 and who were previously interviewed for the original evaluation of Speakeasy (Burns, 2004); second, by interviewing, in 2005, 2006 and 2007, a cohort of 40 parents who completed the course during 2005; third, by interviewing a cohort of 13 males who attended the Speakeasy course; fourth, by exploring group experiences of parents graduating from Speakeasy (in a focus groups discussion); and finally fifth, by analysis of monitoring forms filled in by parents before and after the course.

The analysis of the monitoring forms shows that the Speakeasy course has a very positive impact on those who attend. The results suggest that the Speakeasy course is meeting its aims of increased factual knowledge, openness and confidence successfully, although less conclusive evidence was available for the aim of providing a step for further learning.

The findings from the sample of five parents suggest that Speakeasy aims with parents have been achieved, and that these outcomes are sustained in the years following completion of the course. Parents reported that Speakeasy was a very positive experience, informative, and a valuable opportunity to meet with other parents and discuss issues surrounding sex and relationships.

In terms of the larger cohort of parents who enrolled in Speakeasy during 2005 and the males who were interviewed in 2007, the findings are similarly favourable. They provide robust evidence that the Speakeasy aims are being achieved and that these outcomes are likely to be sustained. Perceptions of the course were strikingly positive and parents reported real benefits from the Speakeasy experience, particularly in terms of increased factual knowledge and increased confidence in talking about sex, sexuality, and sexual health issues. Importantly with the progressive time lapse this longitudinal research highlighted the continued relevance and use of learning from the Speakeasy course. It has also shown that Speakeasy has a widening impact; parents show increased communication with friends and family about sex and sexual relationships, children are beginning to increase in confidence and share information with their peers, parent's confidence as learners has improved, and their interest in further education has developed.

In regards to the focus group discussions, findings generally supported those generated from the telephone interviews conducted among the 45 parents. This adds weight to the conclusions drawn so far and allows us to be confident that the conclusions which have been drawn are accurate and ecologically valid.

Finally, whilst some attention toward attracting more fathers to the course is perhaps warranted given the current low levels of participation, on the whole the qualitative outcomes of Speakeasy are impressive. For many parents Speakeasy has drastically influenced their confidence, communication skills, knowledge, and attitudes towards further education and learning.

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APPENDICES

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|------------|---|
| Appendix A | 2005 Telephone interview schedule for interviews with parents attending speakeasy prior to 2005 (5 parents) |
| Appendix B | 2005 Telephone interview schedule for parents attending Speakeasy in 2005 (40 parents) |
| Appendix C | 2006 Telephone interview schedule for parents attending Speakeasy in 2006 (26 parents) |
| Appendix D | 2007 Telephone interview schedule for parents attending Speakeasy in 2005 (20 parents) |
| Appendix E | 2007 Telephone interview schedule for males attending the Speakeasy course (13 parents) |
| Appendix F | Trust for the Study of Adolescence Ethical Guidelines |
| Appendix G | Pre and post course monitoring forms |
| Appendix H | Focus Group Discussion schedule used at Speakeasy Graduations |



Appendix A - 2005 Telephone Interview Schedule for Repeat Interviews with Parents Attending Speakeasy prior to 2005 (5 parents)

'fpa Speakeasy' Telephone Interview Schedule

Reminder of main objectives of interview (for the benefit of the interviewer):

The main focus of the interviews is to see whether Speakeasy is meeting its core outcomes:

- To increase parents confidence and communication skills with their children
- For parents to show a more positive and open approach to discussions of sex, sexuality and sexual health
- To increase parents factual knowledge around sex and sexual health
- That health and educational professionals given higher priority to work with parents following the Speakeasy model
- A step towards further learning/professional development for excluded groups of parents.

The interviews will therefore explore sustained changes in parents' (factual) knowledge, attitudes (e.g. confidence), and behaviours in talking to their children (e.g. actual experiences).

Introduction:

Thank you for giving up your time to be interviewed. Before we start, there are a few general things I need to tell you about:

- I work for an organisation called TSA (young people's charity – aims to help improve the lives of young people and families, does research, organises conferences, and produces publications).
- The reason we are doing this research is to evaluate the Speakeasy programme to find out if it has been/has not been effective in meeting its main aims (e.g. increasing parent's confidence, communication skills, and knowledge etc.)
- All the things that you and other parents tell us will be strictly confidential, and it will only be used in the research. Nothing you say will be told to anyone else and no parent will be individually identified.
- you don't have to answer any questions which you chose not to
- there are no right or wrong answers – we are just interested in your views and experiences
- I will be making written notes/ a verbal recording of our conversation –no one outside of the research team will see/hear them – it's just so I can remember what we have talked about. Is this ok?

There'll be 6 sections to the interview and it lasts for about 20-30 minutes. Before we start, I need to ask some questions about who you are, where you live, etc.

SECTION ONE - Social demographics

1. Sex: Female (1) Male (2)

2. Name: _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____

3. How old are you?

25-29 yrs (1) 30-34 yrs (2) 35-39 yrs (3) 40-44 yrs (4)

45-49 yrs (5) 50-54 yrs (6) 55-59 yrs (7) 60-64 yrs (8)

65-69 yrs (9) 70+ yrs (10)

4. How would you describe your ethnic group?

White

Asian or Asian British

Black or Black British

White British (1) Indian (4) Black Caribbean (8)

White Irish (2) Pakistani (5) Black African (9)

White (Other) (3) Bangladeshi (6) Black Other (10)

Other (7)

Mixed Race

Chinese or Other Ethnic Group

White & Black Caribbean (11) Chinese (15)

White & Black African (12) Other Ethnic Group (16)

White & Asian (13) Unknown (17)

Other (14) If Other please specify:

5. Do you have a religion that you follow or practice? Yes (1) No (2)

If yes, which religion: _____

6. Do you have a disability? Yes (1) No (2)

7. a) What is your marital status?

Married (1) Single (2) Living with partner (3)

Separated (4) Divorced (5) Widowed (6)

b) If you are married or living with your partner, is your family a step-family?

Yes (1) No (2)

8. a) How many children do you have?

1 (1) 2 (2) 3 (3) 4 (4) 5 (5) 6 (6)

7+ (7)

b) Of these children, are any your step-children?

Yes (1) No (2) If no go to question 9

c) If yes, how many of your children are step-children?

1 (1) 2 (2) 3 (3) 4 (4) 5 (5) 6 (6)

7+ (7)

9. How old are your children (birth and step-children) a) When you started Speakeasy?

- 12 yrs or under (1) 13 yrs (2) 14 yrs (3)
15 yrs (4) 16 yrs (5) 17 yrs (6) 18 yrs + (7)

10. What type of work do you do?

- Full-time work (1) Part-time work (2) House-person (3)
Unemployed (4) Student (5) Retired (6)

SECTION TWO – GENERAL REFLECTIONS AND FACTUAL KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING SEX AND SEXUAL HEALTH

11. When did you attend the Speakeasy course (month/year)?

12. Where was the course based?

13. How many times have you been contacted before in relation to Speakeasy?

- 1 (1) 2 (2) 3 (3) 4 (4) 5 (5) 6 (6)
7+ (7)

14. What can you remember about the Speakeasy course? For example, structure (different topic each week), content (i.e. puberty, what children need to know and when, stereotypes, contraception, STIs, SRE, safe from home), any themes, exercises and activities etc.

a) how do you think your knowledge of sex and sexual health has changed as a result of completing Speakeasy?

b) What topics were particularly useful to you? Are there any topics that you would like further information about?

15. Was completing Speakeasy generally a positive/negative experience? Is it a course you would recommend to other parents?

16. Were there any aspects of the course or experience you found particularly positive and enjoyable? Were there any aspects you found particularly difficult or challenging? (e.g. meeting others, speaking in front of the group, specific content etc).

SECTION THREE – PARENTS CONFIDENCE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS WITH THEIR CHILDREN

17. Is communication in the home concerning important issues (e.g. school, exams, friends, alcohol etc) with your child, solely your role or is it shared with your partner?

a) What about in terms of sex and sexual health? Is this your role or shared?

b) Has this changed since you completed Speakeasy?

18. Having completed Speakeasy, how confident do you feel now talking to your children about sex and relationships?

a) Do you think your levels of confidence have increased/decreased as a result of Speakeasy?

b) Why do you think this is the case (e.g. increased factual knowledge, support of others, feel less embarrassed etc.)?

C) Do you think you have also become more confident and better at communicating with your child more generally in terms of other wider issues (i.e. other than sex, sexual health) such as schooling, bullying, alcohol etc?

19. What impact has Speakeasy had on the way your child communicates with you? (E.g. is your child more confident about approaching/talking to you about sex and sexual health issues?).

a) Has Speakeasy also indirectly impacted on your child in other ways such as them being more confident talking to their girlfriends/boyfriends?

b) Have there been other noticeable effects on your child that we have not mentioned?

SECTION FOUR – POSITIVITY AND OPENESS IN DISCUSSING SEX, SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL HEALTH

20. Do you have any memories of talking about sex and sexual health with your child before you completed Speakeasy?

a) Were there any experiences that were particularly positive/negative?

b) When did this happen and can you remember what was said and how your child reacted?

21. How do you think Speakeasy has affected your relationship with your child in terms of being more open to discussing sex, sexuality, and sexual health issues. For example, has it helped you to feel more comfortable discussing difficult topics, being more able to answer embarrassing questions, more able to start difficult discussions etc?

a) Can you give me an example of your more recent experiences (after Speakeasy) of talking to your child about sex and relationships? When did this happen and can you remember what was said and how your child reacted?

b) How did the topic come up? Did you raise the issue or your child? Did you use any aids (as a result of Speakeasy) such as stories in the press, TV, or course materials, exercises, leaflets etc?

c) Did you feel well equipped? (e.g. appropriate knowledge, communication skills, confidence etc). How did Speakeasy help/not help with this?

d) Do you have another example of how Speakeasy has impacted on your relationship with your child in terms of being more open to discussing sex, sexuality, and sexual health issues?

22. Has Speakeasy impacted other family members in terms of being more positive and open in discussing sexual matters? For example, has it had an impact on both you and your partner and the ways in which you both interact with your child? If so, can you give me an example?

23. Has Speakeasy also impacted your child in more indirect ways? E.g. in terms of them passing on knowledge about sex and sexual health knowledge to their girlfriends/boyfriends?

a) Do you feel there has been a change, since completing Speakeasy, in your child's own confidence about sex and sexual health issues (e.g. knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours towards contraception or STIs?)

b) Do you feel more confident that your child is informed about sex and sexual health, and is, for example, more likely to take appropriate precautions?

SECTION FIVE – FURTHER LEARNING/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

24. Was Speakeasy the first course you completed since finishing school?

25. Have you done any other courses since you completed Speakeasy? Are you intending to do any in the future?

26. Has Speakeasy influenced the way you think about further study? For example, given you more confidence to explore new learning and try other courses?

27. Did you gain OCN accreditation for the course? If yes, has this been of use to you? (e.g. in applying for courses, jobs, voluntary work etc.). If no, can you tell me why you didn't want to do it?

SECTION SIX - Conclusions and next steps:

28. So, can you summarise what you think are the main benefits of having completed the Speakeasy course in terms of your knowledge, attitudes (e.g. confidence about talking) and behaviours in talking to your child (e.g. actual experiences)?

29. Based on your experiences, would you have any suggestions for how Speakeasy could be improved?

30. Is there anything else you would like to add or mention about the Speakeasy course?

So that's the end of the interviews and thanks very much for sharing your views.

Ask what voucher they would like and make sure have full postal details.

Does the parent mind being contacted next year if needed? Yes/No



Appendix B - 2005 Telephone Interview Schedule for Repeat Interviews with Parents Attending Speakeasy in 2005 (40 parents)

'fpa Speakeasy' Telephone Interview Schedule

Reminder of main objectives of interview (for the benefit of the interviewer):

The main focus of the interviews is to see whether Speakeasy is meeting its core outcomes:

- To increase parents confidence and communication skills with their children
- For parents to show a more positive and open approach to discussions of sex, sexuality and sexual health
- To increase parents factual knowledge around sex and sexual health
- That health and educational professionals given higher priority to work with parents following the Speakeasy model
- A step towards further learning/professional development for excluded groups of parents.

The interviews will therefore explore changes in parents' (factual) knowledge, attitudes (e.g. confidence), and behaviours in talking to their children (e.g. actual experiences).

Introduction:

Thank you for giving up your time to be interviewed. Before we start, there are a few general things I need to tell you about:

- I work for an organisation called TSA (young people's charity – aims to help improve the lives of young people and families, does research, organises conferences, and produces publications).
- The reason we are doing this research is to evaluate the Speakeasy programme to find out if it has been/has not been effective in meeting its main aims (e.g. increasing parent's confidence, communication skills, and knowledge etc.)
- All the things that you and other parents tell us will be strictly confidential, and it will only be used in the research. Nothing you say will be told to anyone else and no parent will be individually identified.
- you don't have to answer any questions which you chose not to
- there are no right or wrong answers – we are just interested in your views and experiences
- I will be making written notes/ a verbal recording of our conversation –no one outside of the research team will see/hear them – it's just so I can remember what we have talked about. Is this ok?

There'll be 6 sections to the interview and it lasts for about 20-30 minutes. Before we start, I need to ask some questions about who you are, where you live, etc.

SECTION ONE - Social demographics

1. Sex: Female (1) Male (2)

2. Name: _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____

3. How old are you?

25-29 yrs (1) 30-34 yrs (2) 35-39 yrs (3) 40-44 yrs (4)

45-49 yrs (5) 50-54 yrs (6) 55-59 yrs (7) 60-64 yrs (8)

65-69 yrs (9) 70+ yrs (10)

4. How would you describe your ethnic group?

White

Asian or Asian British

Black or Black British

White British (1)

Indian (4)

Black Caribbean (8)

White Irish (2)

Pakistani (5)

Black African (9)

White (Other) (3)

Bangladeshi (6)

Black Other (10)

Other (7)

Mixed Race

Chinese or Other Ethnic Group

White & Black Caribbean (11)

Chinese (15)

White & Black African (12)

Other Ethnic Group (16)

White & Asian (13)

Unknown (17)

Other (14)

If Other please specify:

5. Do you have a religion that you follow or practice? Yes (1) No (2)

If yes, which religion: _____

6. Do you have a disability? Yes (1) No (2)

7. a) What is your marital status?

Married (1) Single (2) Living with partner (3)

Separated (4) Divorced (5) Widowed (6)

b) If you are married or living with your partner, is your family a step-family?

Yes (1) No (2)

8. a) How many children do you have?

1 (1) 2 (2) 3 (3) 4 (4) 5 (5) 6 (6)

7+ (7)

b) Of these children, are any your step-children?

Yes (1) No (2) If no go to question 9

c) If yes, how many of your children are step-children?

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> (1) | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> (2) | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> (3) | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> (4) | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> (5) | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> (6) |
| 7+ <input type="checkbox"/> (7) | | | | | |
| 9. How old are your children (birth and step-children) a) When you started Speakeasy? | | | | | |
| 12 yrs or under <input type="checkbox"/> (1) | 13 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (2) | 14 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (3) | 15 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (4) | | |
| 16 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (5) | 17 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (6) | 18 yrs + <input type="checkbox"/> (7) | | | |
| 10. What type of work do you do? | | | | | |
| Full-time work <input type="checkbox"/> (1) | Part-time work <input type="checkbox"/> (2) | House-person <input type="checkbox"/> (3) | Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| (4) Student <input type="checkbox"/> (5) | Retired <input type="checkbox"/> (6) | | | | |

SECTION TWO – GENERAL REFLECTIONS AND FACTUAL KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING SEX AND SEXUAL HEALTH

14. What can you remember about the Speakeasy course? For example, structure (different topic each week), content (i.e. puberty, what children need to know and when, stereotypes, contraception, STIs, SRE, safe from home), any themes, exercises and activities etc.

a) how do you think your knowledge of sex and sexual health has changed as a result of completing Speakeasy?

b) What topics were particularly useful to you? Are there any topics that you would like further information about?

15. Was completing Speakeasy generally a positive/negative experience? Is it a course you would recommend to other parents?

16. Were there any aspects of the course or experience you found particularly positive and enjoyable? Were there any aspects you found particularly difficult or challenging? (e.g. meeting others, speaking in front of the group, specific content etc).

SECTION THREE – PARENTS CONFIDENCE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS WITH THEIR CHILDREN

17. Is communication in the home concerning important issues (e.g. school, exams, friends, alcohol etc) with your child, solely your role or is it shared with your partner?

a) What about in terms of sex and sexual health? Is this your role or shared?

b) Has this changed since you completed Speakeasy?

18. Having completed Speakeasy, how confident do you feel now talking to your children about sex and relationships?

a) Do you think your levels of confidence have increased/decreased as a result of Speakeasy?

b) Why do you think this is the case (e.g. increased factual knowledge, support of others, feel less embarrassed etc.)?

c) Do you think you have also become more confident and better at communicating with your child more generally in terms of other wider issues (i.e. other than sex, sexual health) such as schooling, bullying, alcohol etc?

19. What impact has Speakeasy had on the way your child communicates with you? (E.g. is your child more confident about approaching/talking to you about sex and sexual health issues?)

a) Has Speakeasy also indirectly impacted on your child in other ways such as them being more confident talking to their girlfriends/boyfriends?

b) Have there been other noticeable effects on your child that we have not mentioned?

SECTION FOUR – POSITIVITY AND OPENESS IN DISCUSSING SEX, SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL HEALTH

20. Do you have any memories of talking about sex and sexual health with your child before you completed Speakeasy?

a) Were there any experiences that were particularly positive/negative?

b) When did this happen and can you remember what was said and how your child reacted?

21. How do you think Speakeasy has affected your relationship with your child in terms of being more open to discussing sex, sexuality, and sexual health issues. For example, has it helped you to feel more comfortable discussing difficult topics, being more able to answer embarrassing questions, more able to start difficult discussions etc?

a) Can you give me an example of your more recent experiences (after Speakeasy) of talking to your child about sex and relationships? When did this happen and can you remember what was said and how your child reacted?

b) How did the topic come up? Did you raise the issue or your child? Did you use any aids (as a result of Speakeasy) such as stories in the press, TV, or course materials, exercises, leaflets etc?

c) Did you feel well equipped? (e.g. appropriate knowledge, communication skills, confidence etc). How did Speakeasy help/not help with this?

d) Do you have another example of how Speakeasy has impacted on your relationship with your child in terms of being more open to discussing sex, sexuality, and sexual health issues?

22. Has Speakeasy impacted other family members in terms of being more positive and open in discussing sexual matters? For example, has it had an impact on both you and your partner and the ways in which you both interact with your child? If so, can you give me an example?

23. Has Speakeasy also impacted your child in more indirect ways? E.g. in terms of them passing on knowledge about sex and sexual health knowledge to their girlfriends/boyfriends?

a) Do you feel there has been a change, since completing Speakeasy, in your child's own confidence about sex and sexual health issues (e.g. knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours towards contraception or STIs?)

b) Do you feel more confident that your child is informed about sex and sexual health, and is, for example, more likely to take appropriate precautions?

SECTION FIVE – FURTHER LEARNING/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

24. Was Speakeasy the first course you completed since finishing school? Yes/No

25. Have you done any other courses since you completed Speakeasy? Are you intending to do any in the future?

26. Has Speakeasy influenced the way you think about further study? For example, given you more confidence to explore new learning and try other courses?

27. Did you gain OCN accreditation for the course? If yes, has this been of use to you? (e.g. in applying for courses, jobs, voluntary work etc.). If no, can you tell me why you didn't want to do it?

SECTION SIX - Conclusions and next steps:

28. So, can you summarise what you think are the main benefits of having completed the Speakeasy course in terms of your knowledge, attitudes (e.g. confidence about talking) and behaviours in talking to your child (e.g. actual experiences)?

29. Based on your experiences, would you have any suggestions for how Speakeasy could be improved?

30. Is there anything else you would like to add or mention about the Speakeasy course?

So that's the end of the interviews and thanks very much for sharing your views.

Ask what voucher they would like and make sure have full postal details.

Does the parent mind being contacted next year if needed? Yes/No



Appendix C - 2006 Telephone interview schedule for parents attending Speakeasy in 2005 (26 parents)

‘Speakeasy’

Telephone Interview Schedule – September 2006

Reminder of main objectives of interview (for the benefit of the interviewer):

The main focus of the interviews is to see whether Speakeasy is meeting its core outcomes:

- To increase parents confidence and communication skills with their children
- For parents to show a more positive and open approach to discussions of sex, sexuality and sexual health
- To increase parents factual knowledge around sex and sexual health
- That health and educational professionals given higher priority to work with parents following the Speakeasy model
- A step towards further learning/professional development for excluded groups of parents.

Introduction:

Thank you for giving up your time to be interviewed. Before we start, there are a few general things I need to tell you about:

- I work for an organisation called TSA (young people’s charity – aims to help improve the lives of young people and families, does research, organises conferences, and produces publications).
- The reason we are doing this research is to evaluate the Speakeasy programme to find out if it has been/has not been effective in meeting its main aims (e.g. increasing parent’s confidence, communication skills, and knowledge etc.)
- All the things that you and other parents tell us will be strictly confidential, and it will only be used in the research. Nothing you say will be told to anyone else and no parent will be individually identified.
- You don’t have to answer any questions which you chose not to
- There are no right or wrong answers – we are just interested in your views and experiences
- I will be making written notes of our conversation –no one outside of the research team will see/hear them – it’s just so I can remember what we have talked about. Is this ok?

There'll be 3 sections to the interview and it lasts for about 20 minutes. Before we start, I need to update your details on who you are, where you live, etc.

SECTION ONE – SOCIAL DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Sex: Female (1) Male (2)

2. Name: _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____

3. How old are you?

25-29 yrs (1) 30-34 yrs (2) 35-39 yrs (3) 40-44 yrs (4)

45-49 yrs (5) 50-54 yrs (6) 55-59 yrs (7) 60-64 yrs (8)

65-69 yrs (9) 70+ yrs (10)

4. How would you describe your ethnic group?

White

White British (1)

White Irish (2)

White (Other) (3)

Asian or Asian British

Indian (4)

Pakistani (5)

Bangladeshi (6)

Other (7)

Black or Black British

Black Caribbean (8)

Black African (9)

Black Other (10)

Mixed Race

White & Black Caribbean (11)

White & Black African (12)

White & Asian (13)

Other (14)

Chinese or Other Ethnic Group

Chinese (15)

Other Ethnic Group (16)

Unknown (17)

If Other please specify:

5. Do you have a religion that you follow or practice? Yes (1) No (2)

If yes, which religion:

6. Do you have a disability? Yes (1) No (2)

7. a) What is your marital status?

Married (1) Single (2) Living with partner (3)

Separated (4) Divorced (5) Widowed (6)

b) If you are married or living with your partner, is your family a step-family?

Yes (1) No (2)

8. a) How many children do you have?

1 (1) 2 (2) 3 (3) 4 (4) 5 (5) 6 (6)
7+ (7)

b) Of these children, are any your step-children?

Yes (1) No (2) If no go to question 9

c) If yes, how many of your children are step-children?

1 (1) 2 (2) 3 (3) 4 (4) 5 (5) 6 (6)
7+ (7)

9. How old are your children (birth and step-children) a) When you started Speakeasy?

12 yrs or under (1) 13 yrs (2) 14 yrs (3)
15 yrs (4) 16 yrs (5) 17 yrs (6) 18 yrs + (7)

10. What type of work do you do?

Full-time work (1) Part-time work (2) House-person (3)
Unemployed (4) Student (5) Retired (6)

11. When did you attend the Speakeasy course (month/year)? _____

12. Where was the course based? _____

13. How many times have you been contacted before in relation to Speakeasy?

1 (1) 2 (2) 3 (3) 4 (4) 5 (5) 6 (6)
7+ (7)

SECTION TWO – GENERAL WARM-UP QUESTIONS

14. What can you remember about the Speakeasy course? For example, structure (different topic each week), content (i.e. puberty, what children need to know and when, stereotypes, contraception, STIs, SRE, safe from home), any themes, exercises and activities etc.

15. Was completing Speakeasy generally a positive/negative experience? Is it a course you would recommend to other parents?

16. Were there any aspects of the course or experience you found particularly positive and enjoyable? Were there any aspects you found particularly difficult or challenging? (e.g. meeting others, speaking in front of the group, specific content etc).

SECTION THREE – NEW QUESTIONS

17. With the time-gap between the course and this interview, what memories and impacts stand out to you the most? Can you name your 'Top 3' learning points?

18. When parents were interviewed in 2005, most said their factual knowledge had increased greatly. Do you still feel that you have this factual knowledge, or do you think you would benefit from 'refresher' training?

19. Do you have any examples of situations where you have put your learning into practice with your children (e.g. communication, openness etc.)? Have you had any communication with them recently about sex and sexual health issues?

20. Do you use any aids (as a result of Speakeasy) such as stories in the press, TV, or course materials, exercises, leaflets etc.?

21. Do you think it has affected your children's confidence in raising topics with you? If so, how?

22. Do you think the fact you've done the Speakeasy course has affected your children's developing sexual relationships and sexual behaviours (e.g. how they communicate with their girlfriends/boyfriends)? If so, how?

23. Has the fact you've done the Speakeasy course affected any other parents (e.g. friends) or members of your family? For example, do they ask you questions, do they want to do the course etc.? Do they communicate better about these issues?

24. If you received OCN credits for doing the Speakeasy course, has this made you do any further learning or development? If not, do you think you will do so in the future?

25. Is there anything else you would like to add or mention about the Speakeasy course?

So that's the end of the interviews and thanks very much for sharing your views.

(Ask what voucher they would like and make sure have full postal details.
Does the parent mind being contacted next year if needed? Yes/No)

Appendix D - 2007 Telephone interview schedule for parents attending Speakeasy in 2005 (20 parents)

‘Speakeasy’

Telephone Interview Schedule – September 2007

Reminder of main objectives of interview (for the benefit of the interviewer):

The main focus of the interviews is to see whether Speakeasy is meeting its core outcomes that are:

- To increase parents confidence and communication skills with their children
- For parents to show a more positive and open approach to discussions of sex, sexuality and sexual health
- To increase parents factual knowledge around sex and sexual health
- That health and educational professionals given higher priority to work with parents following the Speakeasy model
- A step towards further learning/professional development for excluded groups of parents.

Introduction:

Note that these parents have been interviewed before and also have agreed to be interviewed on this occasion. So you could start by saying:

“I’m a researcher calling from TSA about the speakeasy course you took some time ago now, and I believe you were ok about being able to answer a few questions about the course....are you still ok to do this? Are you ok to do this now or can we make a time to do this interview later? - should take about 15-20 minutes”

Thank you for giving up your time to be interviewed. Before we start, there are a few general things I need to tell you about:

- I work for an organisation called TSA (young people’s charity – aims to help improve the lives of young people and families, does research, organises conferences, and produces publications).
- The reason we are doing this research is to evaluate the Speakeasy programme to find out if it has been/has not been effective in meeting its main aims (e.g. increasing parent’s confidence, communication skills, and knowledge etc.)

- All the things that you and other parents tell us will be strictly confidential, and it will only be used in the research. Nothing you say will be told to anyone else and no parent will be individually identified.
- You don't have to answer any questions which you chose not to
- There are no right or wrong answers – we are just interested in your views and experiences
- I will be making written notes of our conversation –no one outside of the research team will see/hear them – it's just so I can remember what we have talked about. Is this ok?

There'll be 3 sections to the interview and it lasts for about 20 minutes. Before we start, I need to update your details on who you are, where you live, etc.

SECTION ONE – SOCIAL DEMOGRAPHICS

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Sex: | Female <input type="checkbox"/> (1) | Male <input type="checkbox"/> (2) |
| 2. Name: | _____ | |
| Address: | _____ | |
| Post Code: | _____ | |
| 3. How old are you? | | |
| 25-29 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (1) | 30-34 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (2) | 35-39 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (3) |
| 40-44 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (4) | 45-49 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (5) | 50-54 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (6) |
| 55-59 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (7) | 60-64 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (8) | 65-69 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (9) |
| 70+ yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (10) | | |
| 4. How would you describe your ethnic group? | | |
| <u>White</u> | <u>Asian or Asian British</u> | <u>Black or Black British</u> |
| White British <input type="checkbox"/> (1) | Indian <input type="checkbox"/> (4) | Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> (8) |
| White Irish <input type="checkbox"/> (2) | Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/> (5) | Black African <input type="checkbox"/> (9) |
| White (Other) <input type="checkbox"/> (3) | Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/> (6) | Black Other <input type="checkbox"/> (10) |
| | Other <input type="checkbox"/> (7) | |
| <u>Mixed Race</u> | <u>Chinese or Other Ethnic Group</u> | |
| White & Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> (11) | Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> (15) | |
| White & Black African <input type="checkbox"/> (12) | Other Ethnic Group <input type="checkbox"/> (16) | |
| White & Asian <input type="checkbox"/> (13) | Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> (17) | |
| Other <input type="checkbox"/> (14) | If Other please specify: | |
| 5. Do you have a religion that you follow or practice? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> (1) | No <input type="checkbox"/> (2) |

If yes, which religion: _____

6. Do you have a disability? Yes (1) No (2)

7. a) What is your marital status?

Married (1) Single (2) Living with partner (3)

Separated (4) Divorced (5) Widowed (6)

b) If you are married or living with your partner, is your family a step-family?

Yes (1) No (2)

8. a) How many children do you have?

1 (1) 2 (2) 3 (3) 4 (4) 5 (5) 6 (6)

7+ (7)

b) Of these children, are any your step-children?

Yes (1) No (2) If no go to question 9

c) If yes, how many of your children are step-children?

1 (1) 2 (2) 3 (3) 4 (4) 5 (5) 6 (6)

7+ (7)

9. How old are your children (birth and step-children) a) When you started Speakeasy?

12 yrs or under (1) 13 yrs (2) 14 yrs (3)

15 yrs (4) 16 yrs (5) 17 yrs (6) 18 yrs + (7)

10. What type of work do you do?

Full-time work (1) Part-time work (2) House-person (3)

Unemployed (4) Student (5) Retired (6)

11. When did you attend the Speakeasy course (month/year)? _____

12. Where was the course based? _____

13. How many times have you been contacted before in relation to Speakeasy?

1 (1) 2 (2) 3 (3) 4 (4) 5 (5) 6 (6)

7+ (7)

When was the last time you were interviewed? _____

SECTION TWO – GENERAL WARM-UP QUESTIONS

14. What can you remember about the Speakeasy course? For example, structure (different topic each week), content (i.e. puberty, what children need to know and when, stereotypes, contraception, STIs, SRE, safe from home), any themes, exercises and activities etc.

15. Was completing Speakeasy generally a positive/negative experience? Is it a course you would recommend to other parents?

16. Were there any aspects of the course or experience you found particularly positive and enjoyable? Were there any aspects you found particularly difficult or challenging? (e.g. meeting others, speaking in front of the group, specific content etc).

SECTION THREE – NEW QUESTIONS

17. With the time-gap between the course and this interview, what memories and impacts stand out to you the most? Can you name your 'Top 3' learning points / things that you learnt?

18. Of these learning points, which one stands out the most? And why?

19. When parents were interviewed in 2006, some said they still remembered much from the course while others said they'd forgotten a lot. Would you say you remembered most or forgotten a lot? If the latter, would you think a short refresher training day would be a good idea?

20. Do you have any examples of situations where you have put your learning into practice with your children (e.g. communication, openness etc.)? Have you had any communication with them recently about sex and sexual health issues? **REALLY IMPORTANT QUESTION**

21. Do you use any aids (as a result of Speakeasy) such as stories in the press, TV, or course materials, exercises, leaflets etc.?

22. Do you think it has affected your children's confidence in raising topics with you? If so, how? Not just related to sex necessarily but other topics also?

23. (DEPENDING ON AGE OF CHILDREN) Do you think the fact you've done the Speakeasy course has affected your children's developing sexual relationships and sexual behaviours (e.g. how they communicate with their girlfriends/boyfriends)? If so, how?

24. Has the fact you've done the Speakeasy course affected any other parents (e.g. friends) or members of your family? For example, do they ask you questions, do they want to do the course etc.? Do they communicate better about these issues?

25. Have you or are you aware of any fellow-speakeasy parents who have tried to influence schools in relation to their sex and relationships education? If so, please give some details...

26. If you received OCN credits for doing the Speakeasy course, has this made you do any further learning or development? If not, do you think you will do so in the future?

27. fpa, who run the course, are writing a book on the Speakeasy course and are looking for some parents to read a draft copy and provide some comments. Would you be interested in this? there's no commitment at this stage and you would receive a £10 voucher.

Yes or No

28. Would you be interested in being interviewed again next year? (as with the last question, there's no commitment at this stage).

Yes or No

29. Finally, is there anything else you would like to add or mention about the Speakeasy course?

So that's the end of the interviews and thanks very much for sharing your views.

(Ask them whether a £10 WHSmith voucher would be ok – if not, and only on exceptional circumstances allow the preference of another voucher)



**Appendix E - Interview Schedule for Males
attending the Speakeasy course (13
Males)**

**‘Speakeasy’
Telephone Interview Schedule – September 2007 FOR DADS**

**FOR THE DADS INTERVIEWS, I WOULD SPEED THROUGH EARLIER Qs
(EXCEPT q20) AND FOCUS ON NEW QUESTIONS (IN BOLD)**

**Reminder of main objectives of interview (for the benefit of the
interviewer):**

The main focus of the interviews is to see whether Speakeasy is meeting its core outcomes that are:

- To increase parents confidence and communication skills with their children
- For parents to show a more positive and open approach to discussions of sex, sexuality and sexual health
- To increase parents factual knowledge around sex and sexual health
- That health and educational professionals given higher priority to work with parents following the Speakeasy model
- A step towards further learning/professional development for excluded groups of parents.

Introduction:

Note that these parents have been interviewed before and also have agreed to be interviewed on this occasion. So you could start by saying:

“I’m a researcher calling from TSA about the speakeasy course you took some time ago now, and I believe you were ok about being able to answer a few questions about the course....are you still ok to do this? Are you ok to do this now or can we make a time to do this interview later? - should take about 15-20 minutes”

Thank you for giving up your time to be interviewed. Before we start, there are a few general things I need to tell you about:

- I work for an organisation called TSA (young people’s charity – aims to help improve the lives of young people and families, does research, organises conferences, and produces publications).

- The reason we are doing this research is to evaluate the Speakeasy programme to find out if it has been/has not been effective in meeting its main aims (e.g. increasing parent's confidence, communication skills, and knowledge etc.)
- All the things that you and other parents tell us will be strictly confidential, and it will only be used in the research. Nothing you say will be told to anyone else and no parent will be individually identified.
- You don't have to answer any questions which you chose not to
- There are no right or wrong answers – we are just interested in your views and experiences
- I will be making written notes of our conversation –no one outside of the research team will see/hear them – it's just so I can remember what we have talked about. Is this ok?

There'll be 3 sections to the interview and it lasts for about 20 minutes. Before we start, I need to update your details on who you are, where you live, etc.

SECTION ONE – SOCIAL DEMOGRAPHICS

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Sex: | Female <input type="checkbox"/> (1) | Male <input type="checkbox"/> (2) |
| 2. Name: | _____ | |
| Address: | _____ | |
| Post Code: | _____ | |
| 3. How old are you? | | |
| 25-29 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (1) | 30-34 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (2) | 35-39 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (3) |
| 40-44 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (4) | 45-49 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (5) | 50-54 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (6) |
| 55-59 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (7) | 60-64 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (8) | 65-69 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (9) |
| 70+ yrs <input type="checkbox"/> (10) | | |
| 4. How would you describe your ethnic group? | | |
| <u>White</u> | <u>Asian or Asian British</u> | <u>Black or Black British</u> |
| White British <input type="checkbox"/> (1) | Indian <input type="checkbox"/> (4) | Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> (8) |
| White Irish <input type="checkbox"/> (2) | Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/> (5) | Black African <input type="checkbox"/> (9) |
| White (Other) <input type="checkbox"/> (3) | Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/> (6) | Black Other <input type="checkbox"/> (10) |
| | Other <input type="checkbox"/> (7) | |
| <u>Mixed Race</u> | <u>Chinese or Other Ethnic Group</u> | |
| White & Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> (11) | Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> (15) | |
| White & Black African <input type="checkbox"/> (12) | Other Ethnic Group <input type="checkbox"/> (16) | |
| White & Asian <input type="checkbox"/> (13) | Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> (17) | |

Other

(14)

If Other please specify:

5. Do you have a religion that you follow or practice? Yes (1) No (2)

If yes, which religion:

6. Do you have a disability? Yes (1) No (2)

7. a) What is your marital status?

Married (1) Single (2) Living with partner (3)

Separated (4) Divorced (5) Widowed (6)

b) If you are married or living with your partner, is your family a step-family?

Yes (1) No (2)

8. a) How many children do you have?

1 (1) 2 (2) 3 (3) 4 (4) 5 (5) 6 (6)

7+ (7)

b) Of these children, are any your step-children?

Yes (1) No (2) If no go to question 9

c) If yes, how many of your children are step-children?

1 (1) 2 (2) 3 (3) 4 (4) 5 (5) 6 (6)

7+ (7)

9. How old are your children (birth and step-children) a) When you started Speakeasy?

12 yrs or under (1) 13 yrs (2) 14 yrs (3)

15 yrs (4) 16 yrs (5) 17 yrs (6) 18 yrs + (7)

10. What type of work do you do?

Full-time work (1) Part-time work (2) House-person (3)

Unemployed (4) Student (5) Retired (6)

11. When did you attend the Speakeasy course (month/year)? _____

12. Where was the course based? _____

13. Have you ever been contacted before in relation to the Speakeasy project?

If so, how many times and when.....?

SECTION TWO – GENERAL WARM-UP QUESTIONS

14. What can you remember about the Speakeasy course? For example, structure (different topic each week), content (i.e. puberty, what children need to know and when, stereotypes, contraception, STIs, SRE, safe from home), any themes, exercises and activities etc. **Also, how many were male/female in the group and did this imbalance affect them in anyway?**

15. Was completing Speakeasy generally a positive/negative experience? Is it a course you would recommend to other parents? **What about specifically to other dads?**

16. Were there any aspects of the course or experience you found particularly positive and enjoyable? Were there any aspects you found particularly difficult or challenging? (e.g. meeting others, speaking in front of the group, specific content etc). **Was there anything difficult in relation to being a male member of the group?**

SECTION THREE

17. What memories and impacts stand out to you the most? Can you name your 'Top 3' learning points / things that you learnt?

18. Of these learning points, which one stands out the most? And why?

19. Would you say you remembered most or forgotten a lot of what you learnt? If the latter, would you think a short refresher training day would be a good idea?

20. Do you have any examples of situations where you have put your learning into practice with your children (e.g. communication, openness etc.)? Have you had any communication with them recently about sex and sexual health issues? **REALLY IMPORTANT QUESTION**

21. Do you use any aids (as a result of Speakeasy) such as stories in the press, TV, or course materials, exercises, leaflets etc.?

22. Do you think it has affected your children's confidence in raising topics with you? If so, how? Not just related to sex necessarily but other topics also?

23. (DEPENDING ON AGE OF CHILDREN) Do you think the fact you've done the Speakeasy course has affected your children's developing sexual relationships and sexual behaviours (e.g. how they communicate with their girlfriends/boyfriends)? If so, how?

24. Has the fact you've done the Speakeasy course affected any other parents (e.g. friends) or members of your family? For example, do they ask you questions, do they want to do the course etc.? Do they communicate better about these issues?

25. Have you or are you aware of any fellow-speakeasy parents who have tried to influence schools in relation to their sex and relationships education? If so, please give some details...

26. If you received OCN credits for doing the Speakeasy course, has this made you do any further learning or development? If not, do you think you will do so in the future?

27. This next few questions are really important and I want to try and find out what it was like being a male member from a mostly women group:

Was this easy or difficult?

Did it affect any of the group activities?

Did other members of the group treat you differently to others?

28. Would you have preferred a male-only group? If so, why?

29. Would you have preferred a male facilitator (group course leader)? If so, why?

30. Do you think men and women have an equal responsibility for talking to their children about sex and relationships?

31. Would you recommend that more men should attend Speakeasy? If so, why?

32. How could we encourage more Dads to come on the Speakeasy course?

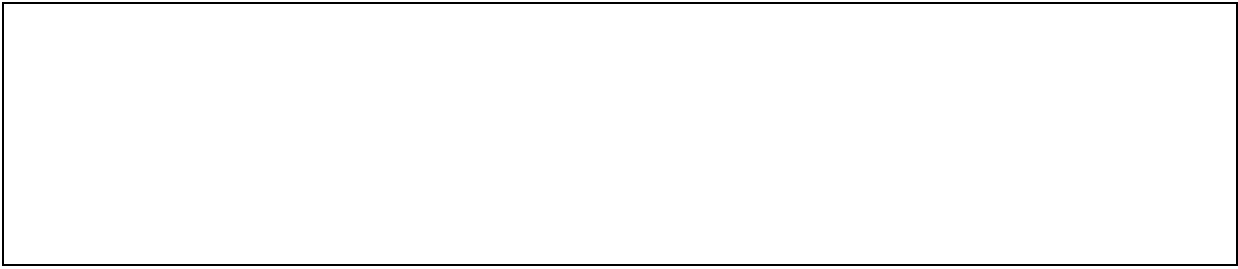
33. fpa, who run the course, are writing a book on the Speakeasy course and are looking for some parents to read a draft copy and provide some comments. Would you be interested in this? there's no commitment at this stage and you would receive a £10 voucher.

Yes or No

34. Would you be interested in being interviewed again next year? (as with the last question, there's no commitment at this stage).

Yes or No

35. Finally, is there anything else you would like to add or mention about the Speakeasy course?



So that's the end of the interviews and thanks very much for sharing your views.

(Ask them whether a £10 WHSmith voucher would be ok – if not, and only on exceptional circumstances allow the preference of another voucher)

Appendix F - TSA ethical guidelines

TSA aims to maintain the highest ethical standards in its research work, and regularly reviews its policies and procedures in this respect. These guidelines were developed by the research team following a review of the ethical statements of a variety of bodies involved in social research. The aim of these guidelines is to inform TSA's ethical judgements and decisions. The guidelines are presented in the following sections:

- Protecting participants in TSA's research
- Informed consent
- Confidentiality and the use of information
- Feedback
- Disclosure
- Expenses and payment
- Organisational matters.

Each of these issues should be reviewed when research work is being planned.

PROTECTING PARTICIPANTS IN TSA'S RESEARCH

A range of people are involved in TSA's research work, including practitioners, young people, and parents. Whoever is to be involved in a TSA research project, it is the responsibility of those involved in that project to think through the ethical issues involved. All researchers have a responsibility to ensure that the physical, social and psychological well-being of participants is not adversely effected by participating in research.

All researchers should ask themselves a number of key questions when embarking on a new research project at TSA. These include:

- What are the possible risks and costs to participants, in terms of time, inconvenience, distress, or intrusions on privacy?
- How will the project deal with participants who become distressed, who wish to withdraw from the project, or who disclose certain facts?
- How will issues of power and status be addressed in the research? How can a relationship of trust and relative equality be established?
- What issues are raised by the items below, such as informed consent and payment? What additional information or advice is needed?

The main issues to be considered are discussed in the following sections.

INFORMED CONSENT

Participants must be informed of the purpose and nature of research in as much detail as possible, in order for them to make an informed decision as to whether they wish to participate or not. Researchers need to recognise and uphold the rights of those who may not fully comprehend the aims or methods of a piece of research, and who might feel over-awed by a professional adult. Researchers must make clear to all participants that it is their choice as to whether or not to participate in research, and work to ensure that individuals do not feel pressured to participate. Ensuring informed consent must also include ensuring that participants realise that they can withdraw from the research at any stage, without needing to give a reason.

Where the participant is aged under 16, a decision must be made about whether the parent/carer of the young person should be informed about the research, and if so whether their consent for a young person to participate is needed. TSA has no fixed view about gaining parental consent, and believes the decision should be based on the competence of

the young person to make an informed choice about participation. In some cases, for example in schools, the school itself will make a decision about whether their pupils can participate in research, and will act in loco parentis in this respect. However, this does not replace the need to secure the individual consent of each young person involved.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND THE USE OF INFORMATION

Those who agree to participate in TSA research projects should be told that all the information they provide will be treated in confidence, and that their anonymity will be protected. A full explanation of what this means in practice should be given. This could include, for example, saying that in school-based research teachers will not be told what pupils have said; also in family research young people will not be told what their parents have said, and vice versa.

Participants must be told as early on as possible that there is one exception to this rule. This is where a participant discloses that they or someone else is at risk of 'significant harm'. Where this happens the researcher has a duty to inform another professional (see also the section on Disclosure below). TSA also has specific Child Protection guidelines which further address this issue.

Participants must also be told at the beginning of the research how the information will be used, for example as statistical information, individual quotes, or case studies. They should also be told in what format the information will be reported, for example as books, articles, and in conference presentations. In all such work, it is important to stress that this will be done in a way that ensures that the individuals concerned are not identifiable. Participants should also know that, in accordance with the Data Protection Act, they have a right to see any information that TSA holds in relation to them.

FEEDBACK

People who participate in TSA research should, wherever possible, be given feedback about the results of the research. The participants should be told about the nature of the feedback they will receive at the beginning of the project. At times it may be more appropriate to feedback to organisations rather than individuals, but it is the researcher's responsibility to ensure that all those who participated receive feedback if they want it.

DISCLOSURE

During the course of a research project, if someone discloses that they (or someone else) is at risk of 'serious harm', then the researcher has an obligation to inform another professional who can act to protect the individual. Where this happens the researcher must inform their line manager immediately, in order to agree the most appropriate person/ organisation to contact. The researcher should inform the young person what they are going to do, and what the next steps may be. As stated earlier, all participants must be told from the start that this will happen if they make a disclosure of this kind, so that they are aware of the consequences of disclosing during the research.

There may be times when a research participant is not considered at risk of immediate harm, but the researcher is concerned about their well-being. In this circumstance, the researcher should ensure that the participant receives information on helping organisations and sources of support. Note: TSA's *Child Protection guidelines* address these issues in greater detail, and all researchers are required to follow these procedures.

EXPENSES AND PAYMENT

All participants should receive reimbursement for any expenses incurred during the course of a research project, such as travel expenses. TSA has no fixed views on whether participants should be given a 'thank you' when participating in research. Where this is offered, it should ideally be in the form of a voucher. However, it is acknowledged that this decision cannot be made in isolation to the funding available for a particular project. There may also be practicalities involved, such as the large numbers of young people involved in school-based research – in these circumstances it may be appropriate to provide an organisational thank-you, such as by providing materials for the library. Ideally, payment should only be offered to participants after they have agreed to take part.

ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS

As a research organisation, TSA as a whole is responsible for maintaining the highest ethical standards in research. A number of organisational structures and policies aim to ensure that this is achieved. These include:

- All TSA's research applications/projects are considered by the Trustees' Sub-Committee on Ethical Standards.
- TSA is committed to employing qualified and competent researchers. All its researchers receive regular line management, to ensure that all ethical issues raised are discussed and addressed.
- All TSA's researchers are subject to checks by the Criminal Records Bureau.
- TSA is committed to ensuring the personal safety of researchers. It will ensure that researchers are protected in terms of personal safety, by such things as the use of mobile phones and identity cards, and the use of a monitoring system for checking researcher whereabouts and activities. (*See separate document 'Safety of Researchers During Fieldwork' for further details*).
- TSA is committed to following the ethical procedures of other bodies where appropriate, for example NHS Research Ethics Committee where appropriate.
- TSA is committed to protecting the security of all data collected, following the guidelines provided within the Data Protection Act (*see separate document*).
- Finally, TSA is committed to the regular review and updating of these guidelines, which will take place at least once a year.

TSA Research Team
Last updated November 4th 2005

Appendix G - Pre and post course monitoring forms

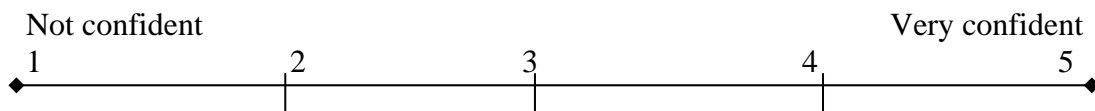
| | | | |
|-----|-------|--------------------------|--|
| FR6 | START | Code for office use only | |
|-----|-------|--------------------------|--|

Speakeasy evaluation

Names are not required on evaluation forms.

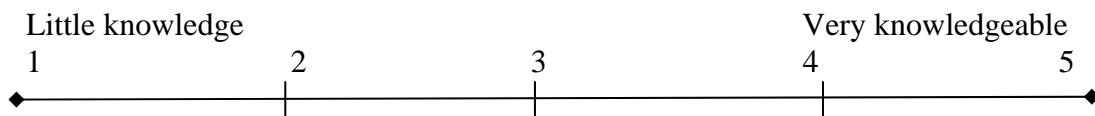
(Please circle a number in response to each question.)

1. At the moment how confident do you feel talking to your children about sex and relationships?

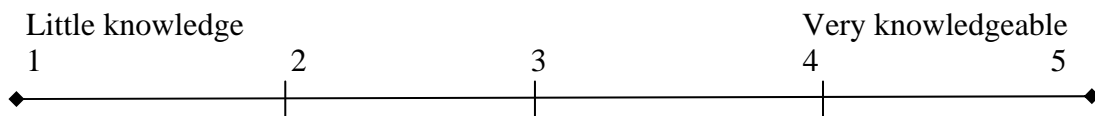


2. At the moment how much knowledge do you feel you have to talk to your children about the following aspects of sex and relationships?

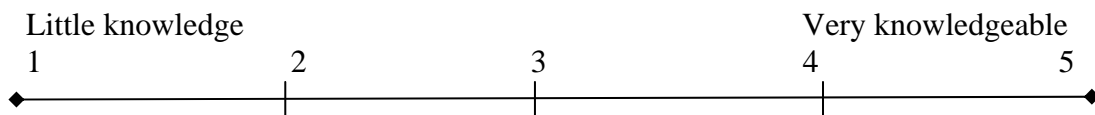
Changes during puberty



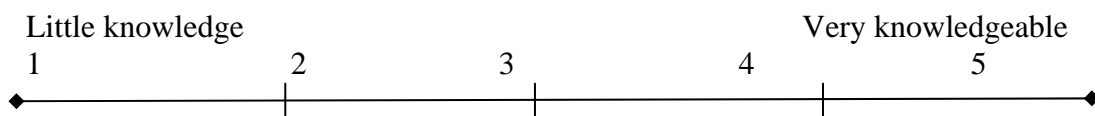
Sexually transmitted infections



Contraception



Keeping safe



3. Please tick to say to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements parents have made about talking with their children about sex and relationships:

| Statement | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| I want to talk with my children openly about sex. | | | | | |
| I feel able to talk to my children openly about sex. | | | | | |
| I am aware of opportunities to raise issues with my children. | | | | | |
| I feel confident about learning as a member of a Speakeasy course. | | | | | |
| I have been considering going back to learning/further education. | | | | | |

4. Is this the first course you have done since leaving school? Yes/No

5. At the moment who do you think has the main responsibility for telling your children about sex, sexuality, sexual health and relationships?

- Parents
- Teachers
- School friends
- Other family members
- Others (please state who):

6. Are you intending to do any courses at college or at an adult education centre this year or next year? If yes, what course?

7. Would you like to gain an OCN credit from the course?

- Yes
- No

If you answered 'no' please write your main reasons for not wanting to work towards a credit:

Note

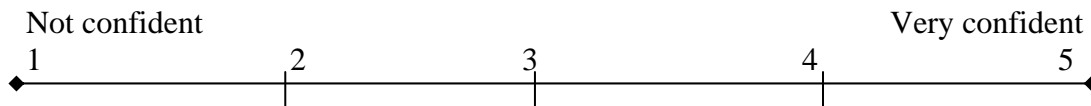
If there is anything your course facilitators should know that might mean you will need extra help during the course, or anything else you would like to say, please speak to one of the facilitators at the end of this session.

Speakeasy evaluation

Names are not required on evaluation forms.

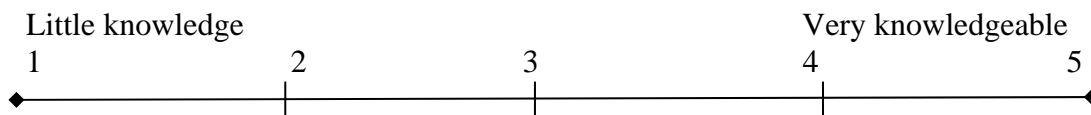
(Please circle a number in response to each question.)

1. At the moment how confident do you feel talking to your children about sex and relationships?

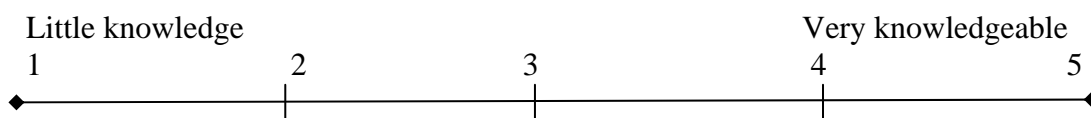


2. At the moment how much knowledge do you feel you have to talk to your children about the following aspects of sex and relationships?

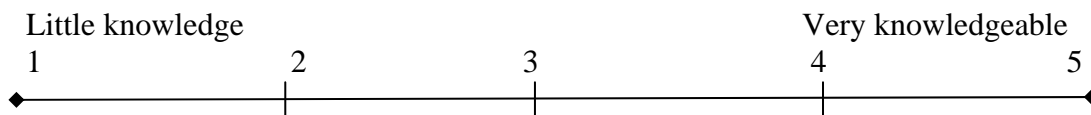
Changes during puberty



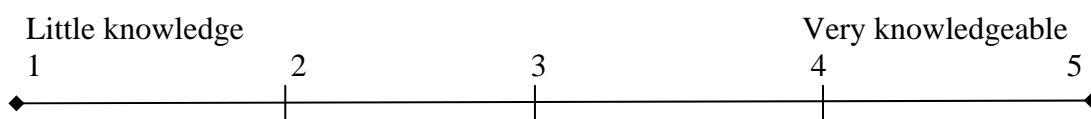
Sexually transmitted infections



Contraception



Keeping safe



3. Please tick to say to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements parents have made about talking with their children about sex and relationships:

4. Is this the first course you have done since leaving school? Yes/No

| Statement | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| I want to talk with my children openly about sex. | | | | | |
| I feel able to talk to my children openly about sex. | | | | | |
| I am aware of opportunities to raise issues with my children. | | | | | |
| I feel confident about learning as a member of a Speakeasy course. | | | | | |
| I have been considering going back to learning/further education. | | | | | |

5. At the moment who do you think has the main responsibility for telling your children about sex, sexuality, sexual health and relationships?

- Parents
- Teachers
- School friends
- Other family members
- Others (please state who):

6. Are you intending to do any courses at college or at an adult education centre this year or next year? If yes, what course?

7. Would you like to gain an OCN credit from the course?

- Yes
- No

If you answered 'no' please write your main reasons for not wanting to work towards a credit:

4. What two things about the course did you really enjoy?

5. Was there anything about the course you didn't enjoy?

6. Now that you have completed a Speakeasy course, how are you intending to use the credit you have gained?

Appendix H - Focus Group Discussion schedule used at Speakeasy Graduations

Reminder of main objectives of discussion (for the benefit of the discussion moderator):

The main focus of the discussion is to see whether Speakeasy is meeting its core outcomes:

- To increase parents confidence and communication skills with their children
- For parents to show a more positive and open approach to discussions of sex, sexuality and sexual health
- To increase parents factual knowledge around sex and sexual health
- A step towards further learning/professional development for excluded groups of parents.

The focus group will therefore explore changes in parents' (factual) knowledge, attitudes (e.g. confidence), and behaviours in talking to their children.

Introduction:

Thank you for giving up your time to take part in this group discussion. Before we start, there are a few general things I need to tell you about:

- I work for an organisation called TSA (young people's charity – aims to help improve the lives of young people and families, does research, organises conferences, and produces publications).
- The reason we are doing this research is to evaluate the Speakeasy programme to find out if it has been/has not been effective in meeting its main aims (e.g. increasing parent's confidence, communication skills, and knowledge etc.)
- All the things that you and other parents tell us will be strictly confidential, and it will only be used in the research. Nothing you say will be told to anyone else and no parent will be individually identified.
- you don't have to answer any questions you chose not to
- there are no right or wrong answers – we are just interested in your views and experiences
- I will be making written notes/ a verbal recording of our conversation –no one outside of the research team will see/hear them – it's just so I can remember what we have talked about. Is this ok?

The discussion will last for about 30 minutes. Any questions before we start?

Warm-up Qs

- Name tags
 - Congratulations on graduation
 - Outline purpose of focus group
 - Each person introduces themselves, name, organisation, reason for attending Speakeasy EarlyStart Training, and favourite food!
 - Recording of group/rules
1. Now you have all completed the course, was Speakeasy generally a positive/negative experience?
 - What topics were particularly useful, enjoyable or stood out for you?
 - Were there any topics the course didn't cover that you would have liked to have studied?
 - What were the particularly positive aspects of the course or experiences you found and enjoyable? (e.g. group work, meeting others etc)
 - Were there any aspects you found particularly difficult or challenging? (e.g. meeting others, assessment, venue, childcare issues etc)
 - Is it a course you would recommend to other parents?
 2. How do you think your knowledge of the topics you studied (e.g. puberty, STIs, contraception, keeping safe etc) has changed as a result of completing the Speakeasy course?
 3. How do you think your confidence in talking about the topics you studied (e.g. puberty, STIs, contraception, keeping safe etc) has changed as a result of completing the Speakeasy course?
 4. How has your knowledge and confidence changes, affected your communication and/or openness with your children? e.g. do you find it easier to start discussions, answer their questions, feel less embarrassed etc?
 5. Has Speakeasy helped you become more confident generally in terms of talking with your children about other, difficult and wider issues in the family such as schooling, bullying, alcohol etc?
 6. Has Speakeasy impacted on the way your child communicates with you? (e.g. is your child more confident about approaching/talking to you about sex and sexual health issues?). What about your children passing on what they have learnt from you to their friends or girlfriends/boyfriends?
 7. Has Speakeasy impacted other family members in terms of being more positive and open in discussing these matters? (e.g. puberty, STIs, contraception, keeping safe etc)
 8. In earlier interviews, many parents said that Speakeasy had influenced the way they thought about further study (e.g. increased confidence to try new courses and learning), would you agree with this? If so, have you now followed this up and started/completed new courses since you finished Speakeasy?
 9. Has the OCN accreditation been of use to you yet? (e.g. in applying for courses, jobs, voluntary work etc.).

10. Based on your experiences, would you have any suggestions for how Speakeasy could be improved?
11. Is there anything else you would like to add or mention about the Speakeasy course?

So that's the end of the interview and thanks very much for sharing your views
Further information on this evaluation can be obtained directly from
nsherriff@tsa.uk.com