

# Young People

in

# Canada

Trends and  
Challenges

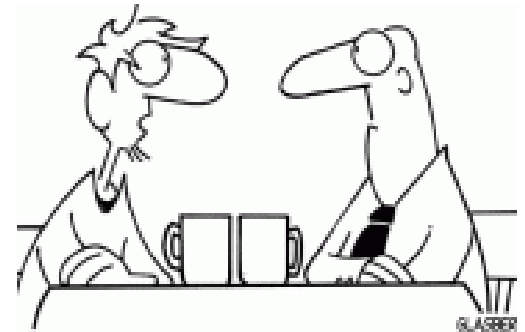
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## Adolescents have many potential challenges

- Family Relationships
- Homelessness
- Socioeconomic factors
- Peer Relationships **The Good the Bad and the Ugly**
- LGBTTQQI
- Relationships **Boy + Girl; Boy + Boy; Girl + Girl; Girl + Boy**
- Dating Violence and Sexual Assault
- Health Risk Behaviours **Sex, Drugs, Alcohol & Smoking**
- Emotional and Mental Health

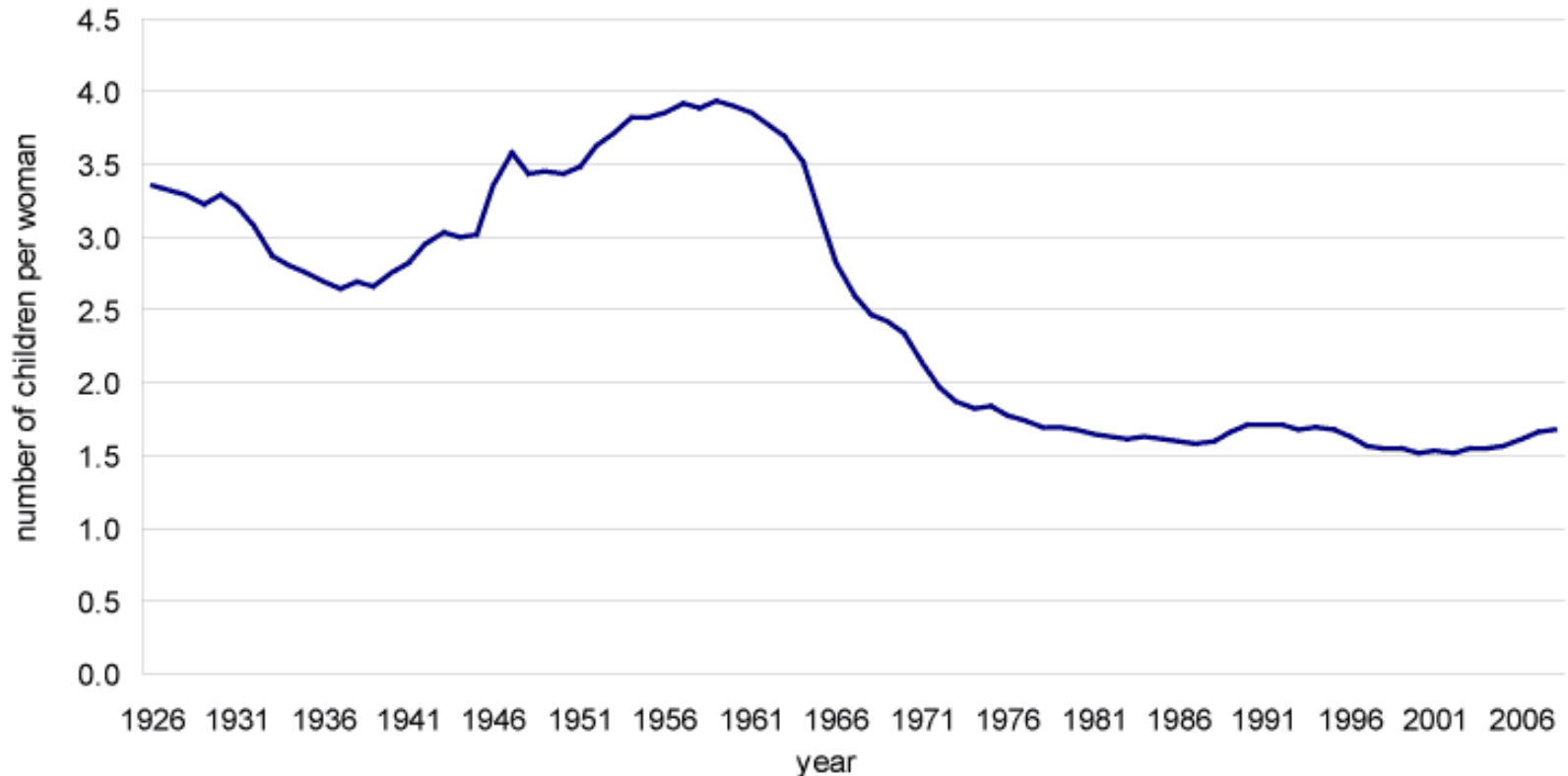
## Family trends

- Marriage rates are down, common law and single parent families are increasing
- But, most teens live with both their biological parents - **7 in 10**
- Teens are living in families that are **smaller** than those born pre 1970s
- **44 to 47%** of teens approve of same sex families, with a higher proportion of girls approving
- **90%** of teens say family influence is strong



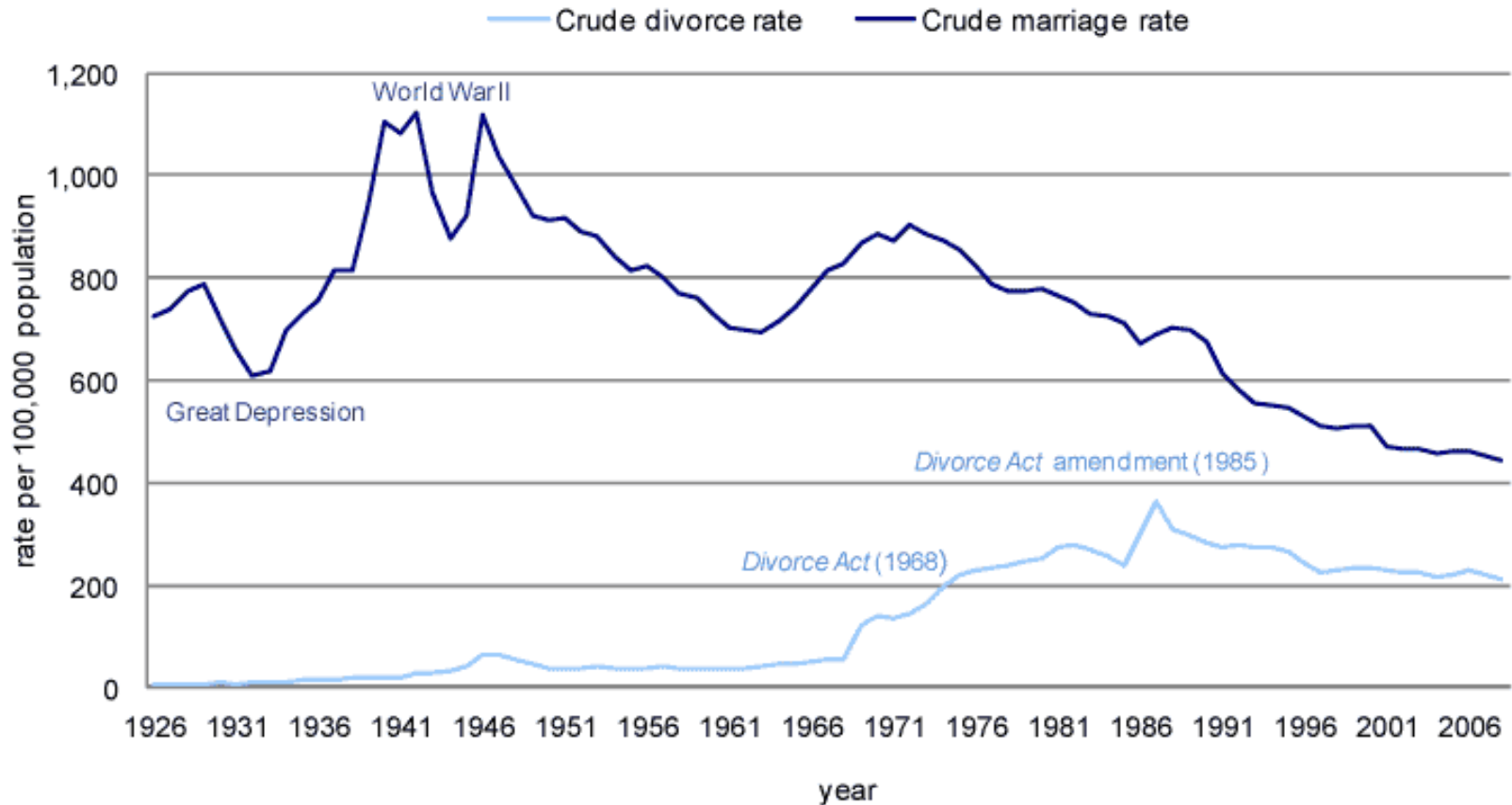
My prof says I should do something I love, and I love living at home with you and mom...

# Fertility Trends



1. What do you notice about the overall trend?
2. Where are the bumps in the trends? What does that mean?
3. What has started to happen most recently?

# Divorce & Marriage Trends



1. What do you notice about the overall trend?
2. Where are the bumps in the marriage rates? Do you think they correspond with the fertility trends? If so how?
3. What has happened to divorce rates? Where does it peak? What has been happening lately?

# family concerns

- 4 in 10 do not feel understood by their parents
- 3 in 10 worry about their parents' marriages and relationships
- the boomers –many teens parents generation- have the highest rate of divorce in the country – 1 in 4
- 40% of teens disapprove of divorce
- 3 in 10 are worried about lack of money
- 1 in 4 say that having parents that affects them
- 6% feel unsafe at home



- There were gender differences in terms of relationships with parents
- **Girls...**
  - girls reported more strains in family relationships than boys
  - older girls reported having more trouble talking to their fathers
  - felt less understood by their parents
  - were less satisfied with their home life
  - girls reported more arguments with their parents and a greater desire to leave home
- **Boys...**
  - Report better relationships at home, but do not seem to enjoy school as much
- Having a good relationship with parents was related to higher life satisfaction in both genders and served as a protective factor against involvement in risk taking behaviours such as smoking, drinking, using marijuana



# homelessness

- According to a 2006 government report on teen homelessness in Canada, on any given day there are **150 000** teens on the street (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2006)
- Most have dropped out of school
- Most leave because of family violence, emotional or physical abuse, poverty, or an unstable home
- They are more vulnerable emotionally and physically – more at risk for STIs, sex before the age of 13, 11 xs more likely to die from a drug overdose or suicide
- Between **12 and 32%** resort to prostitution
- Their prospects are lower with no formal education
- There are agencies trying to provide support particularly to try to work with families early on
- Suggestions include providing adequate services and working with schools to try to prevent youth from leaving in the first place







One in nine Canadian children, more than a million, live below the poverty line according to the 2008

Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Canada (Jain, 2009)

- Childhood poverty increases risk of poor health, poor academic achievement, fewer recreational opportunities, sub-standard housing, higher injury rates, teen pregnancy, gang violence, higher school drop-out rates, and poor health in adulthood.
- Countries with reduced child poverty have achieved their goals by having effective child benefits, quality childcare practices, more childhood education for parents and national affordable housing systems.

## peer relationships



- having friends is key to development
  - girls have an easier time talking to their friends about problems
  - communicating with the opposite sex gets easier for older students
- 
- boys spend more time with peers after school and in the evenings
  - students who are well integrated socially and had positive peer influence report higher life satisfaction and fewer risk taking behaviours than kids with less friends or negative peer influence

# LGBTQQI

- **One in seven** students who completed the EGALE survey from schools across Canada, self-identified as **LGBTQ (14%)**
- According to this study, almost **two thirds (64%)** of LGBTQ students reported that they feel unsafe at school.
- Hardly any LGBTQ students reported that they never heard homophobic comments from other students (1% of trans students; 2% of female sexual minority students; 4% of male sexual minority students).
  - This suggests that if you are a sexual minority student in a Canadian school, it is highly likely that you will hear insulting things about your sexual orientation.
- More than **one in five (21%)** LGBTQ students reported being physically harassed or assaulted due to their sexual orientation.
- The situation is worse on all counts for female sexual minority students and youth with LGBTQ parents and even worse for trans students.
- Many students, especially youth of colour, do not have even one person they can talk to about LGBTQ matters.

- 80% of LGBTQ students from schools with anti-homophobia policies reported **never** having been physically harassed versus only 67% of LGBTQ students from schools without anti-homophobia policies
- 46% of LGBTQ students from schools with anti-homophobia policies reported never having been verbally harassed due to their sexual orientation versus 40% of LGBTQ students from schools without anti-homophobia policies.

# relationships

- Maintaining a healthy relationship requires awareness, balance and choices
- Awareness is being able to recognize signs of an unhealthy or abusive relationship – and knowing your own boundaries
- Balance refers to being in synch with your boyfriend or girlfriend – not being in a one sided relationship where one person has more control than the other – open and clear communication is important
- Conscious choices include being able to decide what the next step in a relationship is, making sure things don't "just happen," choices means choosing what is okay for you or what is not\_
- A healthy relationship is built on communication, trust and respect

# dating violence

- According to Stats Canada, dating violence, which often involves “common assaults” such as verbal threats, pushing, slapping, punching and any injury that requires first aid, is up across the country (Bielski, 2012)
- It happens in all intimate relationships boy & boy; boy & girl; and girl & girl – but more often boy & girl
- Victim numbers doubled to 17,028 in 2010 from 8,596 in 2004. In 2010, victims of dating violence surpassed those of spousal violence: 54,100 to 48,700, respectively.
  - Most commonly, it occurs at the victim’s home, but younger victims aged 15 to 19 were more likely to be assaulted in public – on a street, or at school.
  - Campus culture can be dangerous for girls who may find themselves in situations they were not planning on being in
  - Some girls think ‘If he pursues me in an aggressive and relentless way, he must really like me’ and not see it as a bad thing

Does it  
matter?



- "Past behaviour is a good predictor of future behaviour..."
- If teens fail to achieve optimal development it can cost the individual and society as a whole



# risky behaviour



Smoking  
Drinking  
Substance Use  
Sex

- Experimentation is normal but regular use and engaging in risk behaviours is the primary cause of disease and death for teens



# smoking

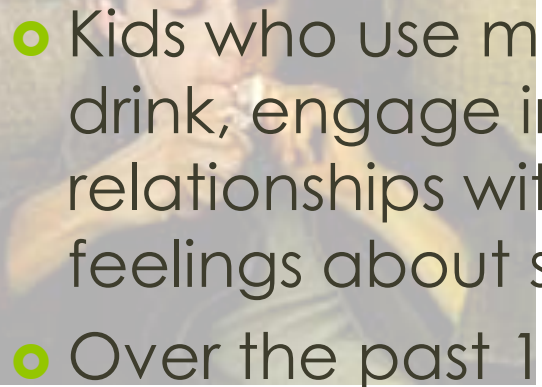
- Is linked to an increased number and severity of respiratory illnesses, decreased lung growth and capacity, higher resting heart rate and affects physical performance and endurance
- Use is associated with alcohol & substance abuse
- More boys smoke than girls, and smoke more often
- In one study grade 10 girls smoking decreased to 11% from 21% between 1998 and 2002
- There is a correlation between teens who smoke & having a parent who smokes



# drinking

- Among Canadians 15 years and older, the prevalence of past-year alcohol use was 78.0%, not statistically different from previous years.
- Less than three quarters of youth (70.8%) reported consuming alcohol in the past year. This is a decrease from 2004 when 82.9% of youth reported past-year use of alcohol.
- Drinking can affect performance at school, and result in psychological impairment, drunk driving risks and lessened ability to make clear decisions
- Almost as many girls and boys report binge drinking – and over indulging may be a feature of teen social events
- Teens drink to have fun with friends, experiment, to feel good, to taste, and to relieve tension
- Drinking is one of a cluster of risk behaviours
  - heavy drinking is linked with smoking and substance abuse

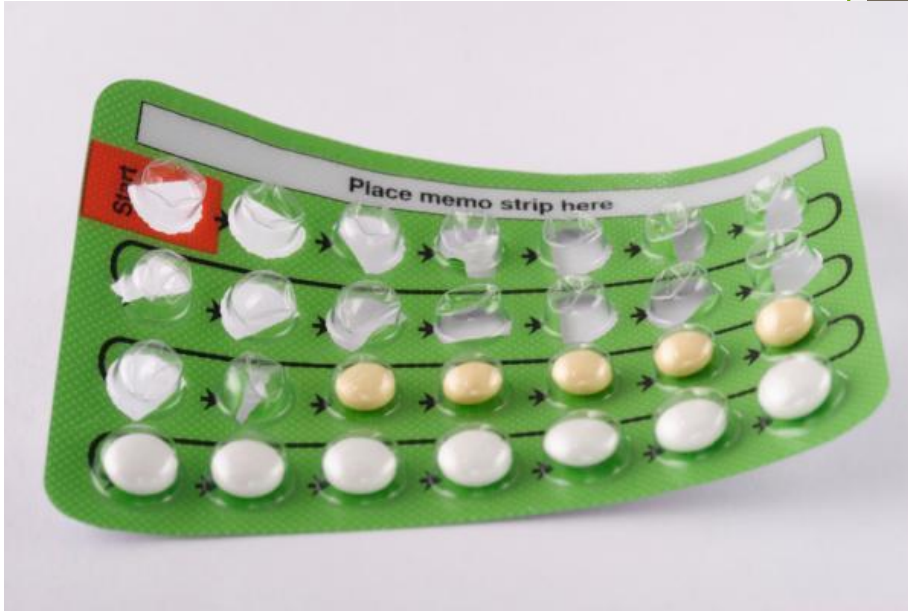
# marijuana

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- A young man with dark hair is shown in a close-up, looking down and smoking a cigarette. The image is semi-transparent and serves as a background for the first bullet point.
- Kids who use marijuana are more likely to smoke, drink, engage in sexual risk taking, report poor relationships with parents and have negative feelings about school
  - Over the past 12 years, experimentation with it has risen for grade 10 boys (50% but has leveled off for girls (40%))
  - Long term impact studies are inconclusive, but there is evidence that the damage is more severe on teen brains than adults
  - Some relationship between marijuana use and declining performance in school – decreased motivation and increased absenteeism

# risky sex

Typical population 1% failure rate

Teen population 15% failure rate



In Health Canada study, 2/3rds of teen used one the last time they had sex... which means 1/3 didn't

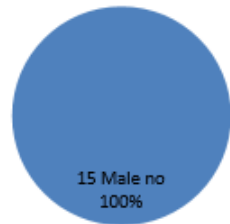
## more about sex...

- Unprotected sex can result in pregnancy and STIs
- In the Health Canada study of young teens,
  - 20% of grade 9s report having sex
  - 25% of grade 10s
  - 40% of grade 11 boys and 46% of grade 11 girls
- According to Bibby, by the age of 15 between 50 and 55% of teens are having sex [see FFSS study](#)
- We are doing better than the US, better access to contraception, higher quality sex education and shifting norms have contributed to a 36.9% decline in Canada's teen birth and abortion rate between 1996 and 2006 (Bielski, 2012)
- Its not that we are having more or less sex than teens 10 to 15 years ago, but we are better at using contraception

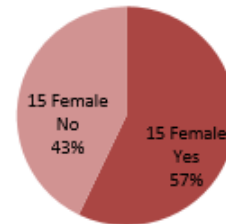
Small sample size and pretty informal...

But interesting to compare to Bibby's results et al

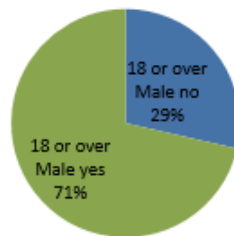
**15 YO M**



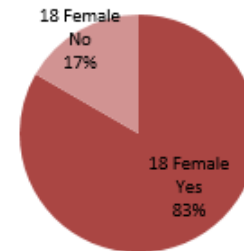
**15 YO F**



**18 YO M**



**18 YO F**





correlations

daily



frequent

or



or moderate



= more likely to be sexually active

# emotional health

- Most students report good emotional health
- 20 to 30% reported some form of emotional or psycho somatic (physical complaint linked to brain)
- Girls report higher levels of depression and headaches, which increases with age
- Students who report fewer psychosomatic symptoms are more satisfied with their lives
- Adolescence is a critical time for watching emotional and mental health as this is when some mental health issues emerge





## What does it all mean?

The most powerful determinants of youth physical and emotional health are gender, money, family support, school conditions, and the influence of peers on risk taking