

# Popular culture

*presented by*

Sonia Mata, MD, MSc

Saturday, April 26th  
Douglas Park  
Community Centre  
Vancouver



- a glimpse at the challenges facing young people today. Ways in which the Internet & drugs influence our children. Some parenting tips on how to counteract these influences by empowering our children so they dare to be different !

Sponsored by the PACIFIC INSTITUTE OF FAMILY EDUCATION

We believe the task of educating children is the parents' most important business and we endeavour to provide the tools to take it on with professionalism and finesse. [www.pife.ca](http://www.pife.ca)



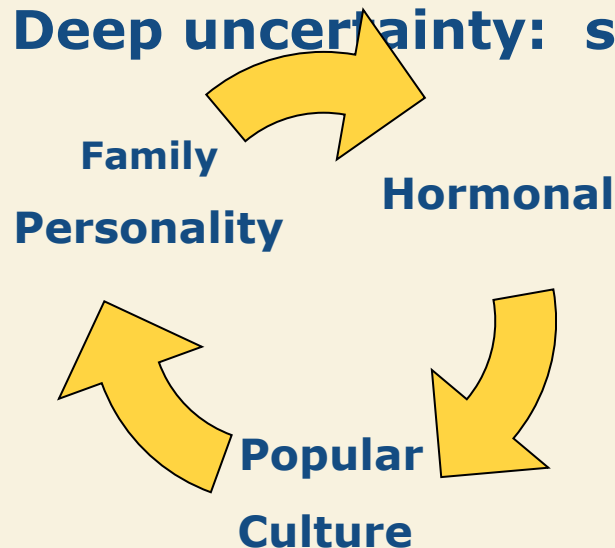
# Overview of the session

- 1. Underpinnings of today's culture**
- 2. Manifestations of these influences**
- 3. Parenting tips & tools**



# Adolescence 101 : Biological Autism

- **Transition from Childhood (dependence) to Adulthood (independence);**
- **Desperate need to “fit-in” “to be included” i.e number of friends**
- **Crisis: loss of self, wholeness is shattered by the chaos of the adolescence;**
- **Their behavior is:**
  - **Contradictory**
  - **Exploratory**
  - **Opposition**
  - **Deep uncertainty: stubbornness**

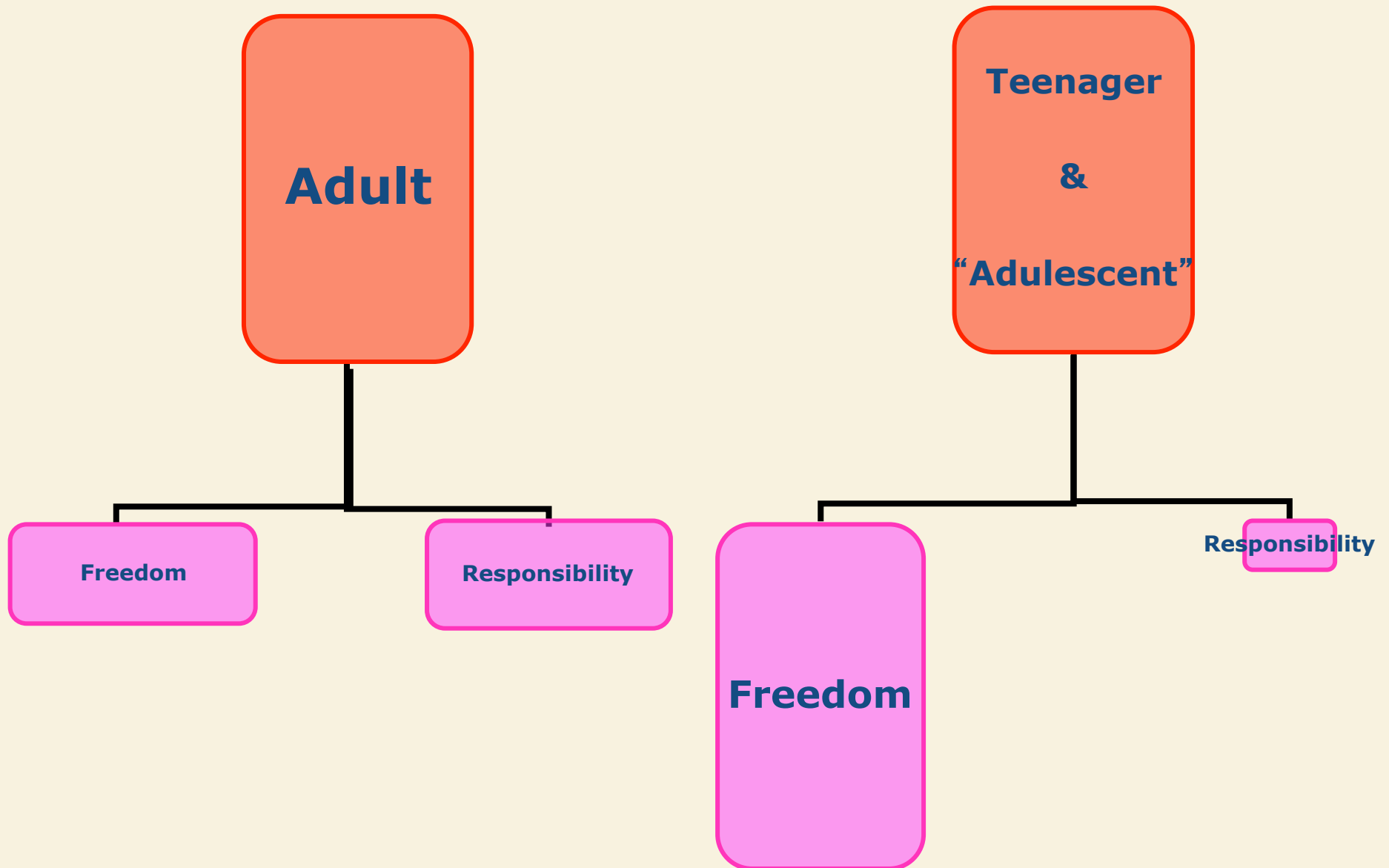


# 1. Underpinnings of today's culture

# Underpinnings of today's culture

- Misunderstanding of Freedom;
- Quest for success – neglecting value of failure;
- Sentimentalism: blurs faith and decision making;
- Virtual reality: manipulation of reality to suit my whims/dreams; control “my” second life.
- Girls: tyranny of niceness (wanting to please – today's Ophelia);
- Lost sense of the sacred;

# Finding the right balance



# Awareness of influences in popular culture

- Cultural influences in last 5-`0 years dramatically impact on teens.
- Mind and will of our teens are shaped by popular culture:
  - music,
  - videos,
  - Internet (chat rooms/facebook),
  - trivializing: drugs (escape)/sexuality;
- 3 Options:
  - Controlled environment: Stay with like-minded people;
  - Let society shape their minds;
  - **Equip teens' minds and wills with tools to live their values & influence society: controlled exposure – damage control.**



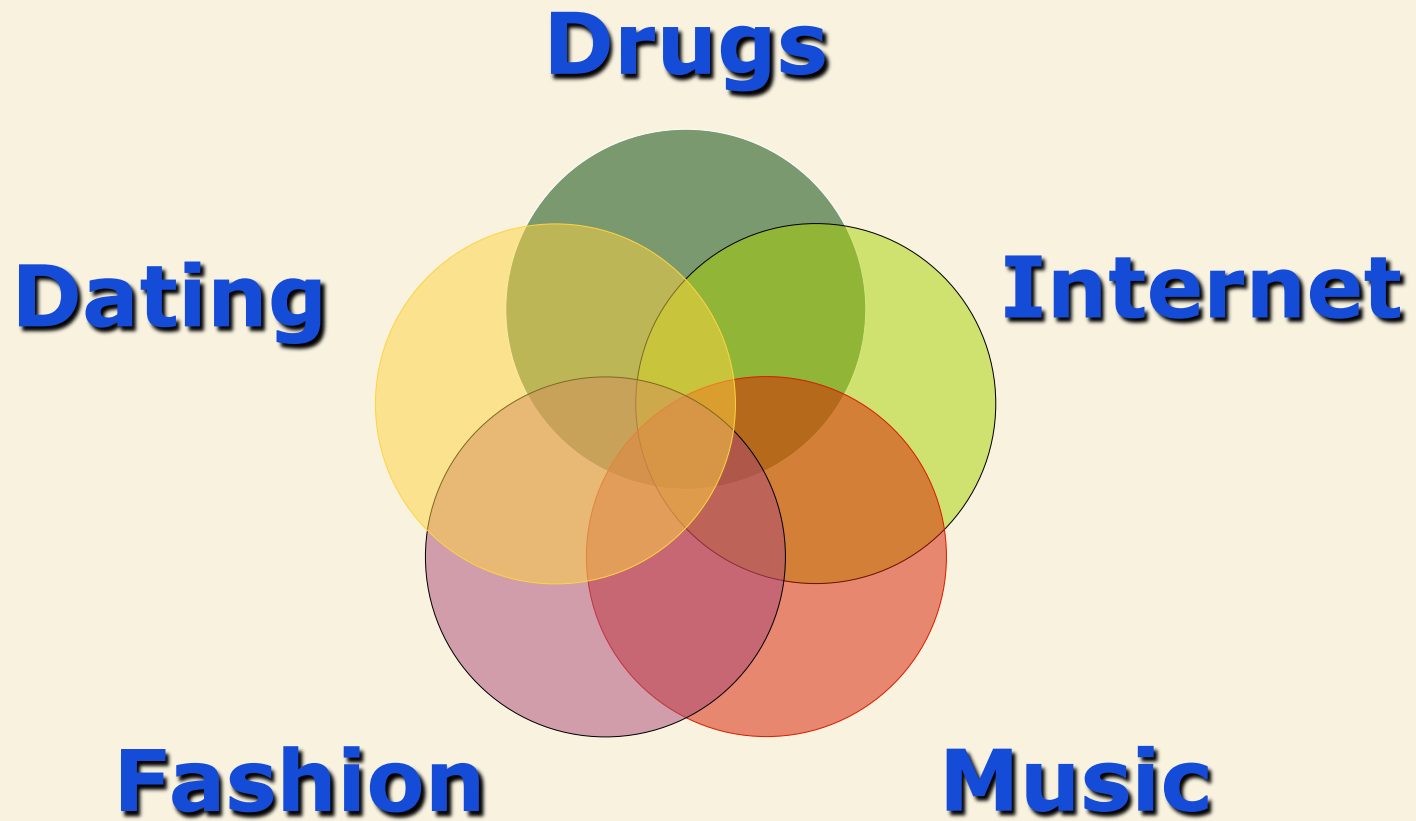


## 2. Manifestations of cultural influences





# Some Manifestations of cultural influences



*Did you know...?*

## Annual Use of Drugs Among Teenagers (%)

1. Alcohol
  2. Tobacco
- "legal"

Increasing  
with age.

	8 <sup>th</sup> - Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> - Grade	12 <sup>th</sup> - Grade	Manitoba (a)	Ontario (b)
Alcohol	41.9	63.5	73.3	80.4	80.0
Cigarettes	12.2*	21.3*	29.5*	39.5	36.3
Any Illicit Drug	19.5	37.2	41.4	~39.7	43.6

\*Reported use within the last 30 days

(a) % all High School students surveyed. Substance Use among Manitoba High School Students. David Patton et al. October 2001  
([www.afm.mb.ca](http://www.afm.mb.ca))

(b) % all 12<sup>th</sup>-Grade students surveyed. Drug use among Ontario Students 1977-2001. Findings from the OSDUS. Adlaf EM and Paglia A. Centre for Addiction and Mental Health ([www.camh.net](http://www.camh.net))

# Annual Use of Drugs Among Teenagers (%)

	•8 <sup>th</sup> - •grade	•10 <sup>th</sup> - •grade	•12 <sup>th</sup> - •grade	•Manitoba	•Ontario
•Marijuana	•15.4	•32.7	•37.0	•37.9	•43.5
•Ampheta- •mines	•6.7	•11.7	•10.9		•10.4
•Inhalants	•9.1	•6.6	•4.5	•2.3	•3.9
•Hallucino- •gens	•2.5	•5.2	•8.4	•~15.1	•20.5
•Cocaine	•2.5	•3.6	•4.8	•4.5	•3.5
•Heroin	•1.0	•0.9	•0.9		•~1.0

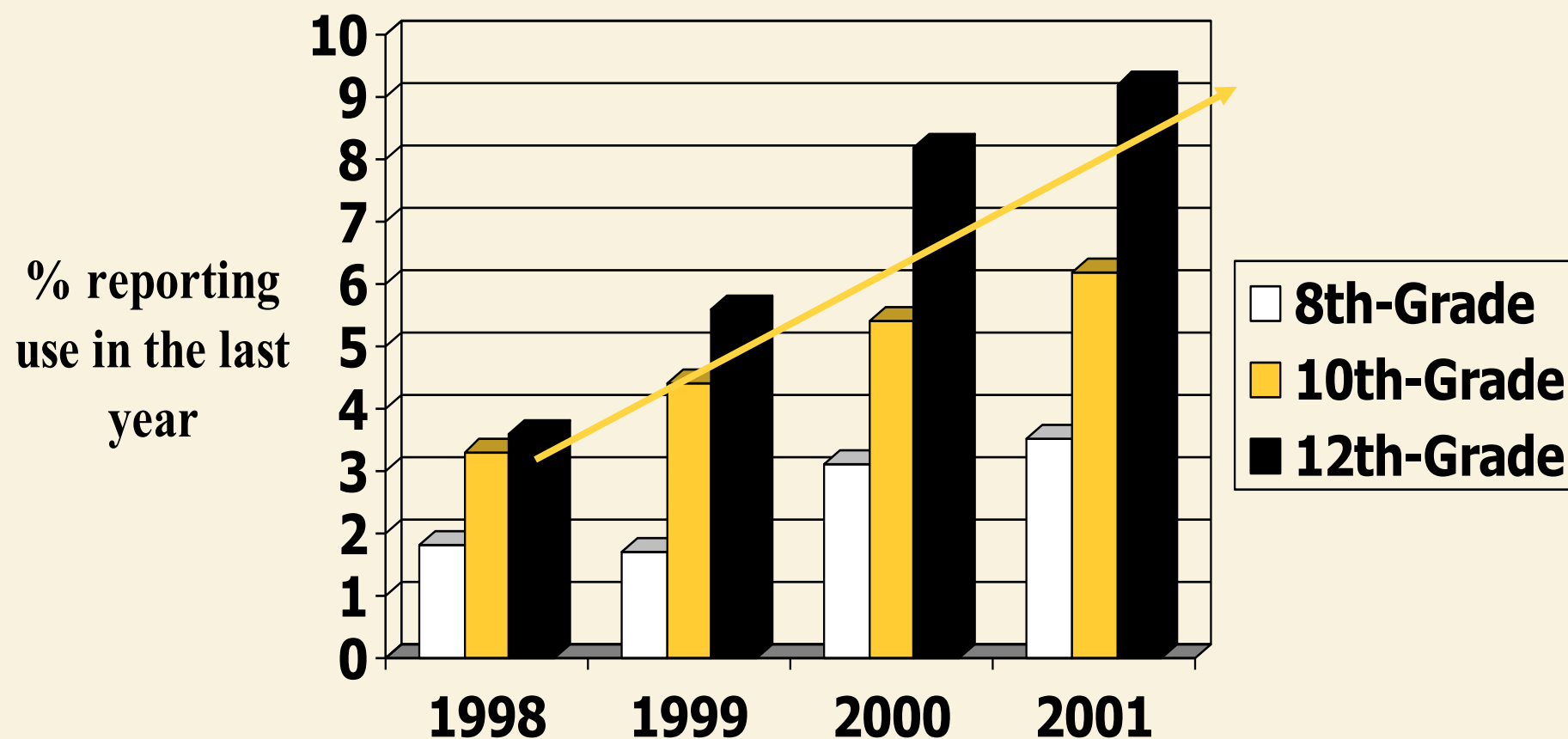
# Use of Crystal Meth

- **Crystal Meth is a very pure, smokeable form of methamphetamine.**
- **It is an extremely addictive stimulant.**
- **Clear crystal chunks, like ice.**
- **Usually smoked, sometimes snorted or injected.**
- **Its short-term effects: similar to cocaine but longer lasting. Long-term effects can include coma, stroke or death.**
- **can be manufactured literally in a person's backyard from relatively inexpensive, (cold medicine, as well as paint thinner, cat litter and lighter fuel)**

[www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org)



# Trends in Annual Prevalence of MDMA (Ecstasy) Use



# What to do to prevent drug use?

## **1.Be involved in your children' s lives:**

- 1. Know your child' s friends and parents**
- 2.Focus beyond the high school years: lofty ideals**
- 3.Discuss: wanting to escape; wanting a high; not wanting to be different**
- 4.Listen, listen, listen: students reports much less drug involvement if parents present and care: boost self esteem**

## **2.Be aware of what is in the “market”:**

- 1.only 20% parents think their kids may be offered illicit drugs vs 80% teens report having been offered.**
- 2.Know the order: alcohol – cigarette – marihuana**

*Courtesy U.S. Department of Education: Growing Up Drug-Free: A Parent's Guide to Prevention - 1998*



# *The US National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign's Behavior Change Expert Panel* **recommends**

- 1. Ask the Right Questions: Who, What, When and Where**
- 2. Be More Involved**
- 3. Be Prepared & Know the Facts**
- 4. Make Your Position Clear**
- 5. Make Clear Rules**
- 6. Setting the Rules**
- 7. Enforcing the Rules**
- 8. Help With Peer Pressure**
- 9. Practice Role-Playing to Address Peer Pressure**
- 10. Help Your Teen Develop Refusal Skills**
- 11. Reduce Access to Some Media**
- 12. Praise Positive Behavior**
- 13. Be Honest**
- 14. Show Love**
- 15. Be a Good Role Model**



## **Study: “Exposure to degrading vs non-degrading music lyrics and Sexual behavior among youth” (Martino et al. August 06, *Pediatrics*)**

1. Adolescents (12-17 years) listen an average 1.5-2.5 hours of music a day;
2. 40 % songs reference to romance, sexual relationships/behavior
3. Direct relationship: amount of music early sexual behavior leading to teen pregnancy/ STDs/ Worrisome implications for future relationships (girls dependent & male reckless behavior).
4. Study recommends: to set limits on what music their children purchase/download.
5. Talking with their children about music's sexual content can also give parents a chance to express their own views about sex, and may prompt teens to think more deeply about the ways in which sex is portrayed.

**Montreal Dawson College shooting:** Music – Gothic all day long, finish for believing: you are what you listen to.

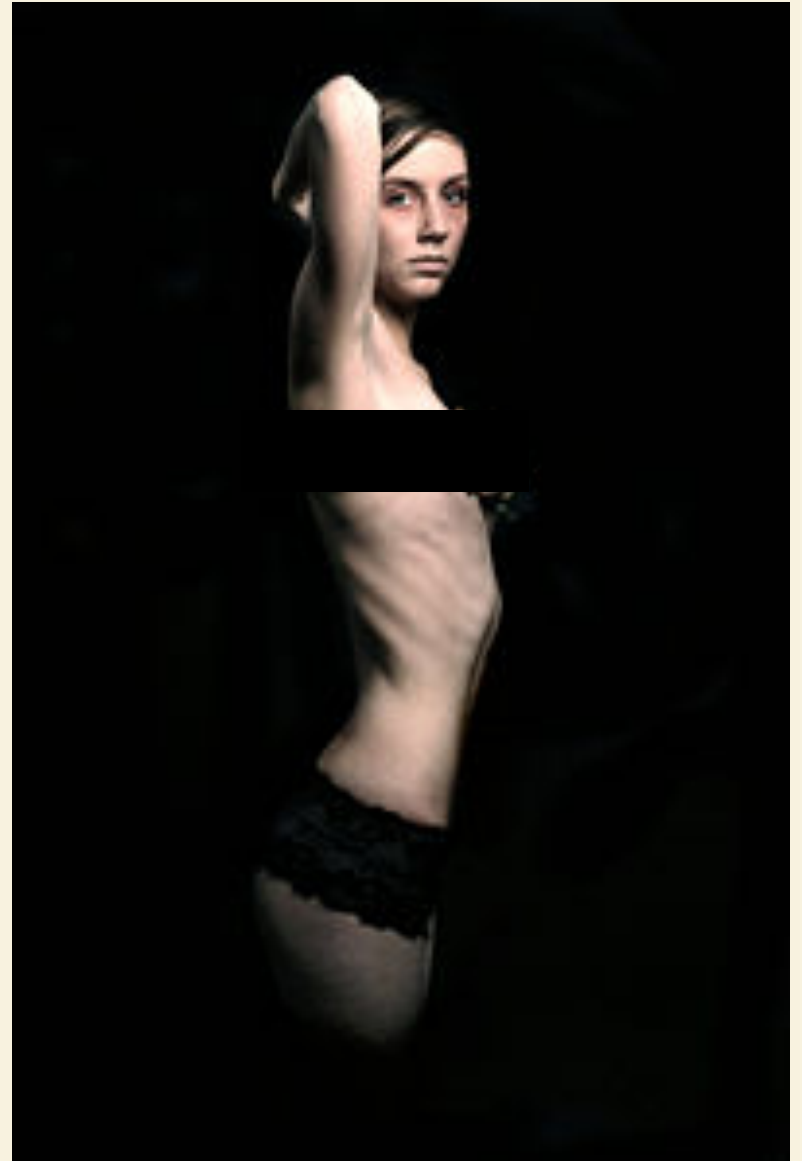
# Influences on Teen & tween fashion

- Mirroir, mirroir (P. Bouchard, 2004. University of Laval, Chair of women issues):
  - Marketers & industry are tapping into a new costumer group: 8-12 years old known as “power girls” or “Lolitas”;
  - Products designed for this group: Magazines (up to 100 in US directed to girls <15), music (iPods); video clips; fashion.
  - Shopping power: teens & tweens are malleable, they become what the advertising market wants them to become.
  - Persuasion techniques: Negotiating; slipping items into the basket; Nagging – “pestering power”.

# Webstarvation: a secret society!

**Pro-ana:** promotion of anorexia nervosa as a lifestyle choice rather than an eating disorder. It is often referred to simply as "ana" and is sometimes affectionately personified by anorexics as a girl named Ana.

- **Godess Ana (Psalm)**
- **pro-mia:** bulimia nervosa.
- *Thinspiration: quest for perfection, beauty, glamour, control in thinness*
- Counteracting: Death Ana!



# What can be done as parents (fashion)

## Mother

- Lead by her fashion;
- Beware of living vicariously through your daughter;

## Father

- Capital role!
- How man deals with – looks at and respects a woman.

## Parents Together

- Explain real meaning of beauty: Fashion;
- Offer alternatives;
- Work with the girl explaining: influences; double message; individual beauty.
- Challenge her to be different: balancing, fashion, weight and style.

# Dating: Single/in a relationship “state”

- Skipping friendship stages;
- Gardasil (HPV vaccine: as early as 10);
- Role of parents;
- Role of peers;
- Role of chat rooms and virtual romance: facebook!
- Early sexual activity: dependent women & reckless men;





# The Culture of Interaction: Internet



- The majority of teens report that their parents have no clue of their “Internet lives”
- Do you discuss with your pre-teen and teen about their Internet social lives?
- Do you have rules?
- Do you know what they are doing online?

# Pros of the Internet

- Education
- Communication
- Paying bills
- Maps
- Shopping
- Arranging travel
- News
- Public Opinion
- Communicating



# Cons of the Internet

- Time consuming
- Predators
- Addictive
- Illegal Drug selling
- Spreads gossip
- Cyber Bullying
- Photo sharing
- Pornography



# Do you know what they are doing online?

- Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game?  
MySpace, Facebook, Xanga..
- Video Gaming Consoles online?
- YouTube?
- iTunes?
- Watching TV shows?
- Downloading movies?



# Do you know what they are saying?

•lol	laugh out loud
•g2g	got to go
•plz	please
•ttyl	talk to you later
•ty	thank you
•PAW	Parents are Watching
•PIR	Parents in Room
•P991	Parent Alert
•POS	Parents Over Shoulder
•PAL	Parents are listening
•LMIRL	Let's meet in real life
•WYCM	Will you call me
•KPC	Keeping Parents Clueless



# What can we do about it?

- **Use filtering software**
- **Place the computer in a common area**
- **No computer or TV in bedrooms!**
- **Know their games**
- **Know their virtual communities**
- **Know the parents of their children's friends**





# Talk to them about:

- Discuss with them:

- type of sites that permissible and which are not
- Never give out personal information
- If you wouldn't say it to someone's face, don't type it in an IM or email to anyone

- Encourage them to come to you if anything scary

- Tell them:

- Anything posted on the Web is permanent
- Only post photos with permission from the person
- Practical jokes are inappropriate, they can be misunderstood or interpreted as cyber bullying
- Sexually charged language can be misinterpreted
- No un-moderated chat rooms

# Offer other forms of entertainment

- Start clubs
- Library, books
- Play board games
- Nature!
- Family fun nights
- Sports
- Swimming
- Knitting
- Painting
- Music
- Cultural events



# Enriching Activities

- Volunteering
- Nursing homes
- Soup Kitchens
- Projects for Africa
- Walk in the woods



# 3. Parenting tips & tools

# Some effective general parenting tools

- **Do not take “emotional rollercoaster” personally (special message for mothers);**
- **Plan ahead and act accordingly;**
- **Limits are necessary:**
  - **Teens are insecure;**
  - **Need direction;**
  - **Make a contract and live it;**
  - **Agenda/calendar;**
  - **Leave them room for exploring or for “bold statements” that have no consequences,**

by



# Some effective general parenting tools

- **Counteract “navel-gazing” tendency by promoting volunteer activities;**
- **Need of role-model: adult that inspires them vs. image;**
- **Listen/ask/listen and then talk (dishes, drive);**
- **Be demanding in studies: a little pressure is good;**
- **Girls: journal/ poetry.**





# Must-Watch



**FRONTLINE**

Introduction

Just how radically is the Internet transforming the experience of childhood?

**GROWING UP ONLINE**

WATCH THE FULL PROGRAM ONLINE

**Frontline's "Growing Up Online":**

**<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/kidsonline/>**





**Questions & Comments are  
welcome!**