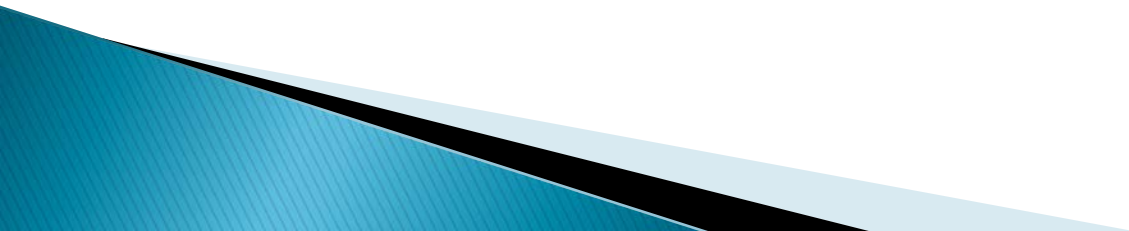


# Presentation at the 2015 International Congress on Qualitative Inquiry

Davidson, J. (2015). Sexting: Gender and Teens. Paper presentation at the International Congress on Qualitative Inquiry, May 2015, University of Illinois, Champaign, Illinois.



# Sexting: Gender and Teens

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# Sexting: Gender and Teens Sense Publications -- 2014



# Secondary Analysis of Data Collected in the:

Building a Prevention Framework to  
Address Teen “Sexting” Behaviors.

- (Grant #2010-MC-CX-0001).  
Office of Juvenile Justice and  
Delinquency Prevention Office of  
Justice Programs. U.S. Dept of  
Justice. (2011-2013)
- P.I. Andrew Harris, Dept of  
Criminal Justice, UMass Lowell

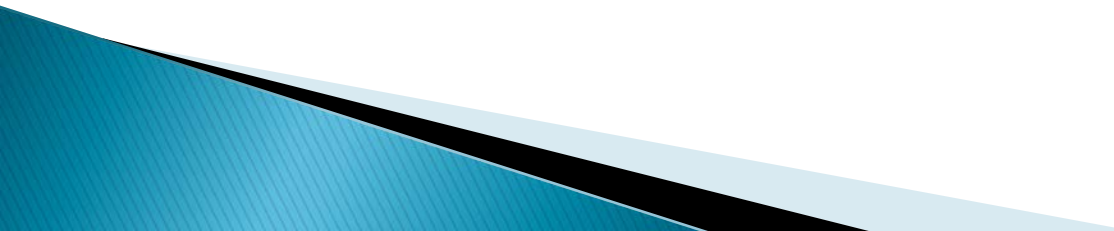
# Characteristics of the Data from the First Study

- ▶ Mixed Methods: Focus group interviews and surveys
  
- ▶ Data Parameters:
  - Three States: MA, OH, SC
  - Teens: 123 total
    - 44.7% male; 55.3% female
    - 18 gender segregated focus groups
  - Parents and Other Caretakers: 92
    - 9 focus groups
  - Other Adults: 117
    - Variety of groupings including educators, law enforcement, and community leaders

# At the end of the first study I possessed:

- ▶ A very well structured digital data base of the project materials organized in Nvivo.
- ▶ The materials had been examined through through multi-layered qualitative research processes.
- ▶ Significant questions remained for me about the issues of gender that had not been resolved by the project report.
- ▶ As an Associate at the UML--Center for Women and Work, I couldn't ignore these questions.

# Questions guiding the secondary study:

- ▶ In talking about the subject of teen sexting, how do teens, and the adults who care about teens and work with them, describe the role of gender in regard to sexuality and intimacy? What are the implications of their beliefs about gender for the future lives of youth?
- 

# Sexting:

Definitions

Motivations

Consequences

Interesting Differences

In this Presentation...

Youth: Girls and Boys

Adults: Caregivers of Teens and  
Those Who Work with Teens



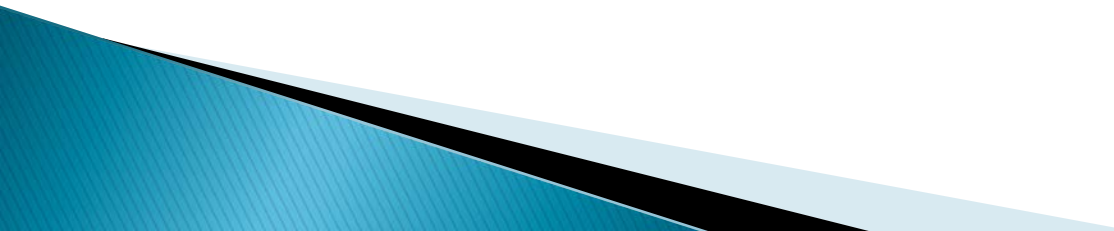
# Youth: Sexting Definitions

- ▶ Sexting is a term imposed upon youth by adults. Youth had great difficulty defining sexting
- ▶ Youth regard sexting as a range of practices in which intimate relationships, desire, and sexuality are expressed.

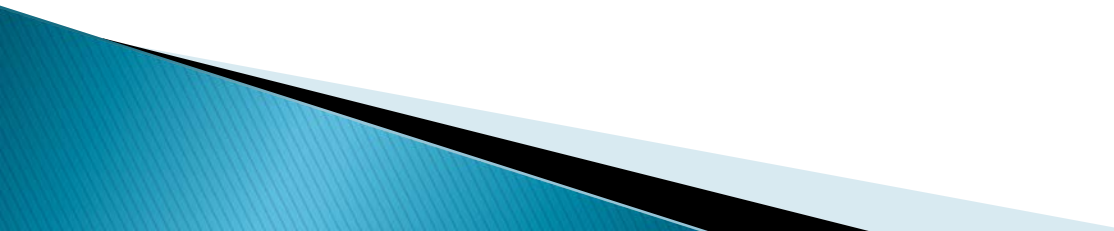
# Youth: Motivations for Sexting

- ▶ Girls assert they want romance and one-to-one intimacy.
- ▶ Boys assert they are swayed to participate by a desire to shine among male peers.
- ▶ Some youth believe that sexting is not sex, because it does not include direct physical contact, and they see moral and practical benefit in that fact.
- ▶ Some youth believe that if you are truly in love with the other person, then sexting is not sexting—it is romantic intimacy.

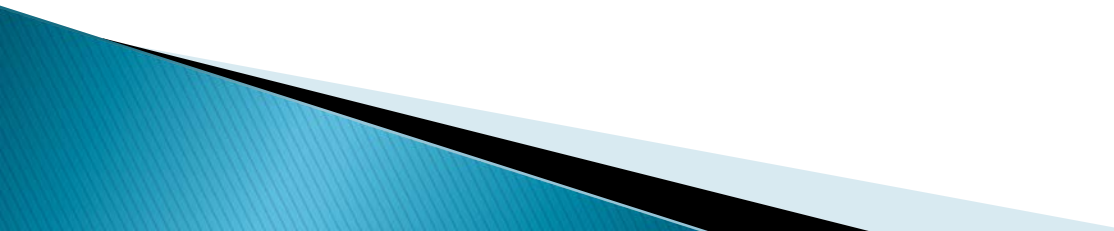
# Youth Consequences: Boys are Guilted.

- ▶ Girls and boys recognize that boys will likely gain “bragging rights” from their sexting activities.
  - ▶ Boys face embarrassment, not shame, for their involvement in sexting activities (if such activity does not merit legal response)
- 

# Youth Consequences: Girls are Labelled

- ▶ Girls who are identified as engaging in sexting are labelled “whore”, “slut”, “bus”, “flip” and other derogatory terms, suggesting they have low moral standards.
  - ▶ There are no similar terms to be applied to boys.
- 

# Youth Consequences: Girls are shamed

- ▶ Girls and boys recognize that girls will likely be shamed by others if they are found to be involved in sexting.
  - ▶ The shaming of a girl comes from peers, family members, and other adults, such as teachers, school administrators, and neighbors.
  - ▶ The family members of a girl who is shamed may also face shaming from others in the community.
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# Acknowledgements

- ▶ Center for Women and Work