



## Fathers avoid discussing relationship issues with their sons

### The issue:

The White Ribbon Trust is an organisation dedicated to ending violence against women. Each year, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November, they organise White Ribbon Day, promoting important ideas to help reduce this violence.

This year, the White Ribbon Trust has focused its attention on the importance of fathers discussing relationship issues with their teenage sons so that they develop respectful relationships with their girlfriends, and women in general. An important aspect of this is obtaining consent and knowing when it is OK or not OK to engage in sexual activity. The Trust has, for some time, been concerned that this might be a subject topic that fathers are avoiding.

In order to measure the extent to which this was the case, Research New Zealand conducted a poll on behalf of the White Ribbon Trust between 04 October and 22 October 2016, with a sample of men who had teenage sons, nephews and/or grandsons.

### The poll questions:

The following questions were asked:

1. *On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is 'Not at all comfortable' and 10 is 'Very comfortable', how comfortable would you be discussing the following topics with your teenage son/nephew/grandson?*

*The importance of doing well at school*

*Politics and the importance of voting*

*Managing money and finances in general*

*Finding a job*

*The importance of being **respectful** in relationships*

*The importance of **consent** and knowing when it is OK or not OK to engage in sexual activity with someone*

Men were considered “comfortable” discussing each topic if they gave a rating of 7 to 10.

2. *How often, if at all, do you talk to your teenager {nephew/grandson} about any of these topics?*

The options were:

*Never*

*Sometimes*

*Regularly*

*Don't know*

**Key results:**

- ◆ Table 1 shows the extent to which men stated they were “comfortable” talking to their teenage sons, nephews and/or grandsons about each topic, as well as how “regularly” they did this.
- ◆ This table shows that, in comparison to all other subject topics, relatively fewer men stated they were “comfortable” discussing “the importance of consent and knowing when it is OK or not OK to engage in sexual activity with someone” with their sons, nephews and/or grandsons (61 percent).
- ◆ Furthermore, the table also shows that, next to “politics and the importance of voting” (15 percent), relatively few men “regularly” discussed “the importance of consent and knowing when it is OK or not OK to engage in sexual activity with someone” (22 percent).



Table 1: How comfortable men with teenage sons, nephews and grandsons are to discuss relationship-related topics, compared to how regularly they actually discuss these.

*Q. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is 'Not at all comfortable' and 10 is 'Very comfortable', how comfortable would you be discussing the following topics with your teenage son/nephew/grandson?*

*Q. How often, if at all, do you talk to your teenager (nephew/grandson) about any of these topics?*

	Males interviewed in October 2016 omnibus survey, who have teenage sons, nephews or grandsons
Base=	99* %
<b>The importance of being respectful in relationships</b>	
% stating they were comfortable discussing this topic with their son/nephew/grandson.	90
% stating that they regularly discuss this with their son/nephew/grandson.	51
<b>The importance of consent and knowing when it is OK or not OK to engage in sexual activity with someone</b>	
% stating they were comfortable discussing this topic with their son/nephew/grandson.	61
% stating that they regularly discuss this with their son/nephew/grandson.	22
<b>The importance of doing well at school</b>	
% stating they were comfortable discussing this topic with their son/nephew/grandson.	93
% stating that they regularly discuss this with their son/nephew/grandson.	66
<b>Politics and the importance of voting</b>	
% stating they were comfortable discussing this topic with their son/nephew/grandson.	71
% stating that they regularly discuss this with their son/nephew/grandson.	15
<b>Managing money and finances in general</b>	
% stating they were comfortable discussing this topic with their son/nephew/grandson.	88
% stating that they regularly discuss this with their son/nephew/grandson.	39
<b>Finding a job</b>	
% stating they were comfortable discussing this topic with their son/nephew/grandson.	93
% stating that they regularly discuss this with their son/nephew/grandson.	46

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

\*These questions were asked of male respondents who stated they had a teenage son, nephew and/or grandson.



**Comment:**

“Although the sub-sample of men who were interviewed for this poll is relatively small, the results that we see here are significant. They clearly point to the need for more fathers to get involved and broach the topic of consent with their sons. Only in this way can we start to tackle this insidious problem of violence against women,” said Research New Zealand Director Emanuel Kalafatelis.

*The Research New Zealand poll of 501 people aged 18 years and over was conducted by telephone between 04 October and 22 October 2016, and 99 of these people were males with teenage sons, nephews, or grandsons. The maximum margin of error for this sub-group is +/- 11.6 percent (at the 95 percent confidence level). The data has been weighted to ensure it is an accurate representation of the general population of New Zealand.*

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