Floormate leads reckless life

Dear Alice:

There is a woman living on my floor who I think is living a reckless life. Within the first couple of weeks of school, she has already had two one-night stands with two different men – one of whom she met at a fraternity party and who was ten years older than she is and who has children. Now you ask how I know all of this? Well, she told me along with all my other floormates. The disturbing thing is that she brags about these sexual encounters and acts so nonchalant about them. In fact, she had to use PCC (post-coital contraception or emergency contraception) when she had sex last time because the condom broke on her and "her friend." I'm beginning to think that she is insecure with herself and that she uses sex as a means to overcome her insecurities. The sad thing is that my floor is disgusted with her and her behavior. She is not only putting herself in danger, but also all the other unsuspecting people who have sex with her or her partners.

Somebody needs to speak with this woman and tell her that she is being stupid and reckless with her health. By the way, if she is reading this, I want her to know that our floor doesn't consider her more mature than us just because she's had more sex than us. Rather, we consider her stupid, insecure, and whorelike.

?Affected

Answer

Dear Affected,

You may have more insight into this woman's situation than she does, and you definitely have a better idea of how her behavior is looked upon by others. If you choose to approach her, be aware of your motivations. If you can do it, approach her clean and clear of your own judgments, and solely with concern for her. You cannot speak for everyone, and getting a group together to talk with her about her behavior might put her too much on the defensive. You can only speak for yourself, and your concern for how she is treating herself.

What can you say? Be honest and sensitive. If she is so insecure, she doesn't need the extra paranoia of thinking everyone on the floor is talking behind her back. Confront her gently and voice your concern. "I'm concerned because you seem to be reckless about your sexual health." "I'm concerned about your liaisons with guys because of the threat of HIV and AIDS these days. Do you feel like you're being safe?" "Hey, have you gotten any of the new information about sexual communication and STDs? It's really helpful if you're sexually
active." Or, "If you're being selective and safe, I think it's better if you keep your sex life private because it shows more respect for yourself and to others."

Talk with your resident adviser (RA) about having some educational programs on your floor about sexual communication and safer sex. Your RA can mention to the speaker that the floor is concerned about one person's behavior, so that the program can be tailored appropriately. That way, you wouldn't have to confront her directly and make it a personal thing between the two of you. This might be the wisest approach to avoid alienating her from the rest of the floor, and to give her a chance to get some good information about her sexual health.

Alice!
Category: Roommate Rumblings [2]
Published date: Oct 01, 1994
Last reviewed on: Apr 28, 2008

Go Ask Alice! is not an emergency or instant response service.

If you are in an urgent situation, please visit our Emergency page to view a list of 24 hour support services and hotlines.

Source URL: http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/floormate-leads-reckless-life#comment-0

Links