Over a third of young people in Britain have felt pressured into having sex – findings from leading youth charity The Mix

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A new poll commissioned by youth charity The Mix, has found that a concerning number of young people (35%) say they have felt pressured into having sex with someone. Almost two thirds (65%), also said they were not confident when asking for sex with people they are not in a relationship with.

Run by YouGov online, the research surveyed 500 16-24 year-olds and has been released to coincide with the conclusion of a nine-month storyline on Hollyoaks that has followed several characters affected by rape. The Mix has worked closely with Hollyoaks for the past year to build the storyline and accurately reflect the experiences of young people affected by sexual assault and rape.

As a response to these worrying trends, The Mix – a digital support service for 25s and under – has been working to change the negative perception around talking about sexual consent and make it a positive part of all sexual experiences. The Mix ran the campaign "Let's Talk Consent" to improve young people's communication skills in the bedroom (as well as all the other places that young people are having sex). Over two thirds (67%) of the young people polled think sex is, or would be, better with good communicators.

For the past year, The Mix has released innovative digital solutions (such as a chat bot, a Facebook live Q&As; and new videos) to help young people practice better and safer sex through the promotion of healthy relationships, good communication and positive sexual experiences.

Spokesperson for The Mix, Zoe Bailie said: "When The Mix and Hollyoaks began our partnership, confusion about sexual consent was widespread among young people. Over the last year, we have worked together to build an incredibly powerful and relevant storyline, raising awareness and educating millions of young people about what consent is.

However, our recent poll shows there is still much more to do around improving young people's sexual communication skills, confidence and even knowledge about the legal age of consent.

At The Mix we are committed to supporting young people in how they communicate with their sexual partners, empowering them to have sex that is a positive experience - fun, safe and always consensual."

Spokesperson for Hollyoaks, Charlotte Pattullo (Head of Research) said: "Hollyoaks worked closely with The Mix in the crafting of our consent storyline. The storyline inspired a great deal of debate amongst viewers but The Mix's poll results show that there is still work to do educating young people about consent."

The research found that:

- 35% of respondents said that they had personally felt pressured into having sex.
- 65% are not confident asking for sex with people they are not in a relationship with.
- 67% think sex, is or would be, better with good communicators.
- Woman feel more confident communicating about sex. Yet, both genders are equally likely to have had sex unsure of whether their sexual partner has given consent.
- When it comes to advice and support on matters of consent, online resources like The Mix are critical, with 50% citing this would be a tool they would want to use, alongside friends (55%).

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