

# TAMMY SEX VIDEO: Chic or Cheap?

The widespread but mixed response to the case makes us re-think our attitude towards sex



In February 2006, Tammy, 17, a cheerleader from a local polytechnic made the news when a video clip of her having sex with her 21-year-old boyfriend was uploaded on the Internet. The clip, recorded in her mobile phone, was uploaded to a website without her knowledge after her phone had been stolen. The person responsible also emailed the video clip to the lecturers and other students. The 10-minute long video showed the couple having sex in various positions.

Now Tammy is so "famous" that there is even merchandise like T-shirts, bags and caps with her name on it being sold. The response of youths and adults to this video has been mixed. Many youths had a surprisingly lenient and forgiving attitude towards the couple. Joanne, 18, a polytechnic student, said, "If Tammy has a steady boy friend and wants to marry him, and if they wanted to make the video as a private record of their young love, I think it's all right to make such a video."

"It definitely should not have been shown to the public, but they did not intend to do this in the first place." Her schoolmate, Danny, 17, had a similar stance. He said, "Whatever Tammy likes to do in her personal life is none of our business. If she finds making a sex video with her boy friend exciting and fulfilling, it is her personal choice. It was unfortunate that her video clip was stolen and made public."

Their views mirror those of the majority of

youths who were polled for their response to the video by The New Paper in February. The newspaper reported that about 72 per cent of the 107 youths polled said they did not think Tammy did anything wrong. In fact, nearly 1 in 6 said they would consider making a similar

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sex video, although all of them said they had never done this before. The youths who were polled were mainly junior college, polytechnic and university students between the ages of 17 and 25.

According to the report, only a minority of the respondents felt what Tammy did was wrong. A 20-year-old female student said that Tammy was hurting her own dignity by

making the video clip, while her boyfriend was exploiting her ignorance. An 18-year-old male student said that it was wrong of all youngsters, including Tammy and her boyfriend, to have premarital sex.

A polytechnic student we interviewed, Annie, 17, was among this apparent minority. She exclaimed, "I am very surprised at this case. I am of Tammy's age myself. But I am totally disgusted with such disgraceful behaviour. I think she recorded it so as to re-enjoy that 'special moment' she had with her boyfriend. Tammy is still a student. This incident might affect her academically and emotionally. It's hard for her or even our society to forget about this. This is something she might need to carry for the rest of her life."

An older youth, Celeste, 22, who is currently completing her honours degree in a local university, gave her version of why Tammy made such a video. She explained, "More families have both parents working nowadays. Their children, especially if they are teenagers, are usually left on their own. As a result, there is no one around to guide them. It is therefore not surprising that they tend to adopt the values which they see on television and the Internet."

"This is probably how a polytechnic student like Tammy could have got the idea of making a sex video with her boyfriend. Such kind of permissiveness is not common in our society, but the mass media, especially the Internet, is



**The youth programmes of HOPE worldwide (Singapore) centre on helping youths to believe in themselves, building their self esteem and character, and giving them support and guidance through hard times. The organisation runs several Family Life Centres in primary and secondary schools. These centres aim to provide a safe avenue for youths to come and get help with their family or personal problems.**

**Hope worldwide (Singapore) also has a youth volunteer group, in partnership with NUSS, which goes to youths' homes and teach computer skills. In addition to these programmes, it provides one-to-one counselling and family counselling as well.**

**Hope worldwide (Singapore) can be contacted at tel: 6312 9671 (Ms Esther Sui). Other organisations and hotlines that provide advice and assistance on youths' sexual problems are:**

- Family Service Centre Hotline – tel: 1800 838 0100
- aLife (help for fertility, sexuality and pregnancy related problems) – tel: 6258 8816
- Care Corner 800 Hotline (in Mandarin, for anyone in crisis) – tel: 1800 353 5800

changing all that. Kids can surf porn sites and download videos like the Tammy sex clip with impunity, without the knowledge of any adult. In a way, the lack of parental guidance and the accessibility of sex-related information might have contributed to the Tammy case."

Several parents, educators and adults that we spoke with felt that the Tammy sex video was a disturbing symptom of local youths' attitude towards sex. Ms Patrice Lee, a Family and Youth Counsellor from Hope worldwide (Singapore) said, "The Tammy sex video case saddens me because the youths are probably adopting a more liberal attitude towards sex than what we can imagine."

A parent, Mr Lee Teck Ming, added: "The episode did surprise me. I guess Tammy and her boyfriend must now be prepared to be 'battered' by the public. Something done in private may be exposed and bring shame to the protagonists."

Patrice elaborated, "The case shows that there is a lack of true self respect among those youths who are engaged in such behaviour. Someone who feels the need to push the line of acceptable behaviour (in this case having sex and video taping it) is often grasping for something to hold an empty relationship together. Or, the person is looking for a way to feel 'special' because the relationship is too shallow and there is no true meaning of 'love'."

"Anyone, teen or adult, who needs to 'spice up' a relationship by doing such acts does not have enough self respect to understand that the relationship is already flawed. In Tammy's case, once the 'thrill' of making the video wears

off, what will they do next to try and make their relationship work? What will they need to do in their next relationship to make one another feel special?"

Mr Lee added, "Instead of trying to make their relationship unnaturally exciting, they can learn from their parents or other adults on how to have a healthy marriage relationship with one's life partner. The sexual act itself is very personal and should be an integral part of a marriage relationship. Sex is not just physical, and this is where much of the misconception starts."

"I think it is also important for youths to understand the different perspectives on relationships and physical intimacy that girls and guys have. Generally, for guys, sex is more a physical expression, while girls often see it in the context of a meaningful romantic relationship. Many girls are exploited by their partners and made to do things they would not want to, so as to feel needed and special. This could be one of the reasons for Tammy wanting to make the sex video."

"Guys take advantage of this because they are more physically driven in their desires. Unfortunately, girls don't understand this and mistaken 'sex' for 'love'. Guys also don't understand this and think that girls can have sex casually just like them. Guys don't realise the deep emotional trauma they are inflicting on their girlfriends or partners because they don't operate on this level."

"If guys and girls can be educated about their different response to physical intimacy, maybe they would have more self respect and

also more respect for each other. If a guy really loves a girl, he wouldn't want to damage her emotionally by pushing for sex before marriage. And if a girl really loves a guy, she wouldn't want to reduce their relationship to just satisfying their sex drives."

Some of the youths we interviewed wanted Tammy and her boyfriend to be more careful with their private video clips in future, rather than advise them against their cavalier attitude towards sex. A 19-year-old male student said that, while he found the making of such a video acceptable, he took issue with her careless attitude towards something so private as her sex video.

Mr Lee has this advice for the couple, "I do not think our teens, including Tammy and her boyfriend, like to intentionally publicise sex. In this case, they were innocently trying out something new without thinking carefully about the danger that could arise from it. I would like them to realise that not everything new and trendy is harmless. We need to be careful about our choices and actions. All actions will have consequences, including those that we think nobody knows about."

By publicising Tammy's sex video to her lecturers, students and the public, the person responsible may have ironically prompted them to re-examine their attitude towards sex, and take heed of the advice from the many who sincerely expressed their concerns about having a promiscuous relationship.

As some readers have pointed out, youths should use their judgment and they should not readily accept the licentious sexual values portrayed in Internet websites and the media as desirable and something to be adopted. While the media may portray that making a sex video of you and your partner is common and acceptable nowadays, this is not true.

Your action will have consequences, whether good or bad, and some of them may last for a long time. So, when you develop your relationship with your partner, make responsible choices. ☺

This is the first article of a new series on youth-related issues supported by Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports. Visit [www.family.gov.sg](http://www.family.gov.sg) for family life education programmes.