I: In this interview I will ask you to talk about AIDS. I want you to know that you don't have to answer all my questions. If you don't want to answer a question, just let me know and I will go on with the next one. You can also ask me to stop the interview at any time. In this interview you will be asked to talk about everything you know about AIDS. I will first ask you to tell me everything you know about AIDS, then I will ask you some more specific questions. I may ask the same question more than once. I do this to make sure that you tell me everything you know and that I understand everything you say. Please don't worry about whether your answers are right or not, just tell me everything that comes to mind. You don't have to talk about yourself or your behavior. No one else will hear the tape but myself and the other researchers from Carnegie Mellon. And we will not be reporting to the people here what you said.

My first question is: Please tell me everything you know about AIDS?

S: I know it's a disease that affects your immune system. It causes [inaudible] on your immune system or whatever. It can make you die from simple illnesses. Like a common cold or something because your immune is not able to fight it off. And hum, I know you can get it from sexually transmitted or through sharing drug needles. Or any kind of blood contact or body fluid contact. You can't get it through hugging or anything like that or touching a person that has AIDS. That's about it.

I: You told me that AIDS is passed on through sharing needles or sexually transmitted. Can you tell me more about that?

S: Like I mean, if someone has AIDS and they're using a needle and then you share the needle with them, and some of the fluids are on there, you can get the AIDS virus, or HIV. And then hum, or through sex, if someone has HIV infected or whatever, then if the body fluids are transmitted to another person, then you can contact it too.

I: What do you mean when you talk about bodily fluids?

S: Blood, semen, anything like that.

I: Does it matter how often a person shares a needle or has sex?

S: Well, no.

I: Imagine that a person may share needles or have sex once, what are the chances of a person getting HIV or AIDS. If they have sex or share needles many times?

S: There is a great chance if they are not protected or anything.

I: Can you tell me how a person can prevent getting AIDS if they are sharing needles or having sex?

S: When needles, or whatever, clean the needle, make sure it's sterilized. And hum, through sex, use condoms. Ah, just use condoms and other contraceptives, well not contraceptives, that's for pregnancy. But other things yeah. That won't allow the fluids to go back and forth.

I: How well do you think this would really protect a person from getting AIDS?

S: I'd say about...I don't know 50/50 cause there's always that possibility that something like the condom would break or something.
I: What do you think may lead a person to share needles or have sex?
S: What might lead a person to it?
I: (Yes)
S: That's their decision they make. Maybe if it's not their decision, it could be pressure, peer pressure or something.
I: Imagine that a person goes out planning not to share needles, or planning not to have sex. What do you think may mess up these plans?
S: If they are with friends and they are sharing needles. Or if they are with a date or something or they force them to have sex or something like. Or they go along with it, but they're not, they just didn't plan it.
I: What effect does alcohol have on people?
S: It messes up the way they think, the way they are able to do things like, being uh, I can't think of the word, you're not focusing or something.
I: Does drinking make much of a difference in a person's risk of getting AIDS?
S: Well, if they are drunk or whatever and if they do the act not really knowingly, under the influence, yeah.
I: Does it matter how often a person is exposed to AIDS?
S: How matter, meaning, is exposed to, as what? A person has AIDS?
I: (Yes)
S: No, not really unless, I don't know, if it, I don't know if the person has AIDS and they like keep going on and they like contract people that has AIDS. Then they can hum, speed up the, like knock down their immune system faster. That's what I heard. I don't know if it's true or. I heard it from like my parents. I didn't hear it from a teacher or anything.
I: Is the risk of getting AIDS different for people who drink a little bit every day, compared to people who drink a lot every weekend?
S: No.
I: Can you tell me what happens when a person gets infected with the AIDS virus?
S: Well, most of them don't know it unless they get a blood test or something, or something comes up and they. Like a doctor or whatever say that they have the HIV positive. Then hum, they might not notice it for awhile or they might not even get sick for a long time, or whatever. And it can like be from 3 months to 10 years before they know or get sick or anything. Then when they get sick or after it's like working on their body like knock down their immune system causing them not to fight off diseases and then they'll get like colds and they die from little diseases. Pneumonia and stuff. It gets worse and worse.
I: Can you tell me about what happens when a person develops AIDS?

S: When they develop it, like it's hard to treat and hum they just get sick and die.

I: Can you tell me more about the time between when a person gets the AIDS virus and when he or she gets AIDS?

S: At the time.

I: Yeah, the time between when they get the AIDS virus and they get virus.

S: It like varies between different people. Just not really a certain set time. But it depends on the person and how they are treated. Like if it's detected early, then they might like have a longer chance.

I: Does it take longer for some people then for others?

S: Yeah.

I: How can some one learn whether he or she has AIDS? Or the AIDS virus?

S: Well, if you are sexually active or whatever, you are not being protected, it's good to go get a check-up every once in a while, maybe, every month or so. Depending on how active you are. And you should know then. Like if the doctor says it comes back positive or something. Or if you have any risk of using a needle or whatever. You should always go.

I: What would make you think that a person has the AIDS virus?

S: If someone told me they did or if they are doing anything like, that will like any risk of having AIDS or anything. Or if they've been contacted. I mean people don't like tell you but, you can't really tell. Unless they tell you themselves. Unless you know that person. But you can't tell by looking at them, or they could just be sick or something.

I: What kinds of people have a lot to worry about from AIDS?

S: All kinds of people. Kinds of all races.

I: When can people stop worrying about AIDS?

S: Whenever they don't use needles and don't have sex, or don't come in contact with anyone else and they know that they don't have it.

I: Do you think people are making too big a deal of AIDS?

S: No.

I: Why?

S: Because there's, more people are getting it. It's becoming epidemic and it's like killing off a lot of more people and people are noticing it more than what they did. It's probably been around for a long time but it's just coming up and it's more like in young people and stuff. And I think they are making, not too big a deal. They should. Cause some people don't know. Then people who don't know if they are making a big deal then it will be all over. Then like their friends or whatever can tell them. Or parents or whatever. They have more ways to show parents how to tell their children
and stuff.

I: Where have you learned about AIDS?

S: I read everything, I read a lot. And hum, every time we talk about it, we talk about it a lot in school. Teachers, I've been in shelters and stuff and they always talk about it. Basically reading. Every time I go to like [inaudible] clinic or whatever, I always pick up one of those pamphlets and read it.

I: What things do they skip about AIDS in health classes at school?

S: I guess they skip the part on telling you how it's like so real, people, like they talk about it in school and they think well, it will never happen to me. Cause teachers don't put it out there that it will happen if you don't, you know. And it can happen to anybody. People think it just happen to gay people and stuff. But they don't put it out there enough that it happens everybody and anybody who is not careful.

I: Do you think you know enough about AIDS to protect yourself from it?

S: Yeah, I think I know enough.

I: Is there anything more you would like to know about AIDS?

S: I mean there's a whole bunch I want to know. Like cures and stuff. I want to know everything, but you know, I don't know.

I: Ok. I'm going to ask you a few more specific questions. AIDS is caused by a virus called HIV, what does that tell you about it?

S: Nothing really.

I: What does safe sex mean?

S: Hum, protecting yourself. Taking precautions from pregnancy and diseases.

I: Can you tell me more about condoms. Like what are the safest condoms to use for protection against AIDS?

S: Latex, I think, I don't know. Like hum, don't use the life styles and stuff. Those cheap names like breakable, leak and stuff.

I: What else do condoms protect you against?

S: Pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Gonorrhea, syphilis, chlamydia. I don't know.

I: What does IV drug use mean?

S: Put it in the vein. When you put it, the IV drugs in your veins or in the needle.

I: Do you think needles can be cleaned?

S: They can be sterilized, yes. By usually hospitals and stuff, no, you can't do it yourself you won't get it 100%.

I: Ok.