

# SPEAK OUT



# 1998

Final Report

# Speak Out Lexington 1998

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***SPEAK OUT LEXINGTON 1998:***

What's Going on with Young People in Our Community?

**Final Report**

## **A NOTE TO READERS:**

This report describes the results of 90 meetings of Lexington-Fayette County citizens held early in 1998. Each session addressed the topic, "What's Going on with Young People in Our Community?"

You may find it useful to read the Summary Report for *Speak Out Lexington 1998*, produced as a separate four-page document, before reading this report. The Summary Report provides an overview of results and a brief report on the Citizen Symposium.

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## *A Brief History of Speak Out Lexington*

*Speak Out Lexington* offers citizens of Lexington-Fayette County an annual opportunity to meet together and talk about public issues that matter to our community. *Speak Out Lexington* has these purposes:

- To encourage public discussion of issues that matter to residents of Lexington-Fayette County;
- To help shape the Urban County Government budget and to give neighborhoods, civic groups, nonprofit organizations, private businesses, and other citizens a source for ideas.

The Mayor and Urban County Council started *Speak Out Lexington* in 1992. The 1,609 participants in 1992 responded to a set of questions about how things were going for their work and for their families. Participants in 1992 expressed concerns about their families that were even stronger than their worries about work security. As a result, in the following year the format of *Speak Out Lexington* focused on engaging citizens in talking through questions about strengthening their families, neighborhoods, and communities. A total of 1,029 participated in 1993.

*Speak Out 1994* invited session organizers to choose from two types of topics instead of the single topic available in previous years. One topic, “What Kind of Community Do We Want?,” continued the two year tradition of inviting open-ended discussion about what citizens want for their community, while the second topic, “How Do We Build a Safer Community?,” presented participants with the opportunity to discuss this specific community issue in some depth and to develop strategies to address it. A total of 1,312 people participated in 1994.

In 1995, *Speak Out* participants addressed the topic “How Can We Heal Racial and Other Divisions in Our Community?” The main innovation of *Speak Out Lexington 1995* was the addition of a culminating celebratory event, the Unity Festival. *Speak Out 1995* also witnessed a significant increase in participation, with a total of 2,329 people involved in the sessions.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In 1996, *Speak Out Lexington* undertook something new, joining forces with New Century Lexington, an effort devoted to developing a shared community plan for the local economy. Groups were invited to choose from among three topics related to community prosperity: diversity and inclusiveness; jobs and economic foundations; and education. A total of 1,295 people participated in 1996.

The format for *Speak Out Lexington 1997* also differed from that of previous years by asking participants to think about how our community goes about making decisions about issues we face rather than about a specific issue facing our community. The *Speak Out* sessions consisted of three sections: Community Bonds; Public Spaces; and Big Decisions. A total of 478 people participated in 1997. In 1997, a Citizen Symposium was added to *Speak Out's* sponsored activities. A group of citizens met regularly to assist with the design of *Speak Out* and to consider the issues in greater depth.

#### *Speak Out Lexington 1998*

In 1998, *Speak Out Lexington* returned to its original format of asking open-ended questions about a specific issue facing our community, and retained the Citizen Symposium. This year, participants at *Speak Out* sessions were asked to discuss the topic "What's Going on with Young People in Our Community?" The organizers of *Speak Out 1998* made an extended effort to include those who are the closest to this issue and whose input is especially relevant -- young people themselves. As a result, groups consisting of young people -- whether in the context of school classrooms, community programs, or church youth groups, among others -- comprised a larger percentage of *Speak Out* groups than in previous years. A larger number of student moderators and reporters also helped to bring the *Speak Out* sessions closer to the views of young people than ever before. A total of 1,339 people participated in 1998.

This report presents a multi-generational view of Lexington as it exists for young people. It reveals many differences in perception between young people and adults, as well as presents concerns about young people that are shared by people of all ages. This report also offers suggestions from participants for ways to address concerns about young people.

Although much in this report applies to other communities as well as to Lexington, the report highlights how pressing these concerns about young people are to our own community, how our own citizens uniquely interpret these issues, and how citizens struggle to find the appropriate means with which to address them.

Reports from the moderators and reporters for *Speak Out 1998* sessions indicate that there was a great deal of interest and energy around this year's topic. Their reports also indicate that many of those groups that consisted of both adults and young people were enlivened by the opportunity for a conversation across the age difference. In some instances, adults were surprised by the kinds of concerns the young people expressed and by the level of concern expressed by young people on certain topics. Other reports from these mixed groups indicate that the presence of adults seemed to inhibit the youth in their comments, or conversely, that the adults let the young people dominate the discussion. Whether mixed by age difference or not, most groups appreciated the opportunity to talk together and think together about this important topic, and indicated that there are few opportunities for such conversations.

Although the topic for *Speak Out 1998* did not define "young people" in terms of specific ages or age groups, most participating groups focused on teenagers and pre-teens rather than on young people still in elementary school. Except for three elementary school groups, the young people groups consisted of either middle school or high school students. As a result, the concerns and suggestions presented in this report are directed primarily towards youth ages 13 to 18, although they also apply to younger children in many cases.

The *Speak Out 1998* sessions reveal a common vision of Lexington both as it stands now and how it could be better in the future for young people. Nearly all participants expressed their desire for Lexington to be an all-inclusive environment that values young people and produces healthy, safe, active, responsible, and productive citizens. Their varied responses and suggestions also reveal that citizens in Lexington are committed to young people and to the solution of seemingly insurmountable problems and concerns. The conversations from *Speak Out 1998* demonstrate that continued

communication between adults and young people is one key to opening the door to a better future for all of Lexington's citizens.

The groups that participated in *Speak Out Lexington* in 1998 are placed into three categories: adults, young people, or mixed adults and young people. A total of 46 young people groups, 20 mixed groups, and 24 adult groups participated. The report offers some comparisons between adult groups and young people groups. For example, one of the frequent responses in the adult groups to the question of what it is like to be a young person in Lexington was: "not enough boundaries or discipline." In the young people groups there were no responses of this kind. In the mixed groups, there were ten such responses. It is reasonable to presume that the responses in the mixed groups came from the adults in those groups rather than from the young people.

The narrative that follows presents a description of the responses to each of the questions asked in the *Speak Out* sessions. Many groups, especially those in which young people were involved, held an abbreviated session. These groups started with the third question, or asked the questions in a different order. Consequently, not every group followed the same format or responded to the same questions. This description of responses to the questions is followed by a report on the results of the Citizen Symposium.

A tabulation of frequencies of responses from the *Speak Out* sessions is presented in Appendix A.

## QUESTION 1

### *What is it like to be a young person in Lexington?*

Most people are most concerned about the kinds of opportunities that are available to young people in terms of work, community involvement, extracurricular programs, and entertainment that is attractive, affordable, and wholesome. In nearly all young people groups and in most of the others, the words "boring" and "frustrating" emphatically topped the list of responses. While both young people and adults recognize that there are some opportunities available for youth in Lexington, these opportunities are seen as significantly limited. Often, opportunities that exist are seen as too expensive and inaccessible to those young people who do not have

transportation, especially those who live in outlying areas of the city. Additionally, certain opportunities are considered to be lacking in terms of diversity and are seen by young people and adults alike to cater to youth of a certain race, class, or age rather than to all youth.

Participants in all groups also discussed the intense pressure that young people experience from their peers, their parents, and society at large. People in the mixed groups especially felt that young people's lives are increasingly stressful and that they are bombarded by expectations and demands from all directions. Concerns about safety and violence are also a big part of what it is like to be a young person in Lexington. Although some adults believe that this depends on where one lives, most participants suggested that this is an issue that faces all young people in their daily lives, including their time at school.

Other responses to this question reflect the traditional gap between young people and adults about the kinds of things that are of importance. Participants in the elementary and middle school groups were more likely to say that Lexington is a great place to grow up, while young people in general were more likely to say that there is less trust in authority than there used to be and that there are too many restrictions on their behavior and freedom of expression. On the other hand, adults were more likely than young people to cite the fact that there are not enough boundaries or discipline, to say that there are more opportunities now than ever before, and to cite the fast pace of young people's lives.

***What do adults not know about young people that they need to know?***

Nearly all participating groups expressed their belief that adults do not know enough about young people's activities, where they are, who they are with, their state of mind, or their feelings. Participants feel that adults need to be more aware and more involved in young people's lives in order to provide support, prevent or solve problems, and to simply know more about them. Many young people indicated that adults need to keep track of young people's activities and who they hang around with so as to intervene in the appropriate manner when problems arise, such as drug use or poor school performance. In addition to these tangible things, participants believe that

## **QUESTION 2**

adults need to know more about young people's mental health and their feelings in order to foster stronger relationships and better communication between parents and children.

The responses of many participants also suggested that adults do not know enough about peer pressure or contemporary problems. For example, adults do not know about the extent of drug use or drinking among young people. They also do not understand that young people become sexually active at increasingly younger ages. Adults and young people alike feel that adults do not know enough or understand enough about peer pressure, such as the need for acceptance and belonging, and the pressures to dress and act in a certain way. Many participants suggested that young people often do not get the support they need as a result of adults' ignorance or lack of understanding of these critical issues, and that adults need to realize that times have changed.

Young people were more likely than adults to cite the need for adults to know more about what goes on in Lexington's schools. They feel that adults do not know enough about relationships between teachers and students, particularly the way that teachers treat students. Young people also believe that adults are not aware of the physical environment at their schools and their feelings of insecurity or neglect.

Young people also want adults to realize that all youth are not the same and that they are not all troublemakers. They feel that many adults label all youth as lazy or "slackers," even though youth differ among themselves as much as adults. As such, young people want to be recognized by adults as unique individuals. Additionally, young people want adults to understand that they need more freedom, more privacy, and more space for their activities. Many stated that youth know more and care more about the world than their parents or other adults think they do, and that they do not need to be "babied."

These responses suggest that young people are keenly aware of the gap that exists between young people and adults, and that they feel young people are not well understood by the adult population. Their answers indicate in part that young people feel they are stereotyped by adults and are presumed to be part of an overall youth culture that adults do not view positively. Young people cite the fact that adults do not know much about teen fashion, popular music, or "what's cool" as evidence of

this generation gap. While some of the responses indicate an interest in being more connected to the adult-dominant culture, other responses suggest that young people need more time by themselves, more privacy, and more ability to do what they think is important.

In terms of adults' relationships with young people, participants -- particularly those in mixed groups -- suggested that adults need to listen more and attempt to communicate on the level of young people. The responses from these groups also indicate that adults need to realize that trust works both ways between youth and adults, and that adults' own behavior influences young people. Additionally, these groups believe that adults need to realize that young people learn from experience, and that sometimes all the admonitions in the world from adults will not influence youth to act differently.

These responses indicate that adults need to become more responsible and more active partners in their relationships with young people, and that adults must present themselves as empathetic, interested, and willing to listen if they truly wish to improve the level and content of communication between adults and young people. Adults must also allow young people to make their own decisions and to make mistakes without becoming ambivalent or detached from young people's lives.

***What are your major concerns about young people?***

The great variety and great number of responses to this question indicate that participants' concerns about young people expand into many different realms. These range from concerns about physical safety to internal mind set, from personal apathy to stereotyping, and from lack of responsibility and disrespect to a lack of community support or encouragement. Not surprisingly, concerns about violence and crime, drugs and alcohol, and sex and teen pregnancy surfaced as among those most pressing to Lexington citizens. Nearly every participating group listed these issues among their major concerns about young people. Additionally, most groups mentioned boredom and a lack of opportunities, activities, and information as one of their major concerns about young people.

Young people were much more likely than adults to mention that jobs are hard to find for teens, especially for those younger than 16. Young people also expressed concerns that directly reflect t

## **QUESTION 3**

their daily lives, such as restrictions on curfew, restrictions on driver's licenses, and injustice from the authorities. Concerns about having a safe place to hang out, being stereotyped by other youth, adults, and the media, peer pressure, discrimination, and lack of diversity additionally top the list of concerns that young people expressed.

Adults were more likely than young people to mention their concern about the influence of deteriorating family life that young people face, voicing particular concerns about child abuse, latchkey kids, a lack of parental influence and supervision, absentee fathers, and support for parents with difficult children. Adults are also more concerned about such issues as the quality of education and whether young people are being prepared for the world of work in a way that is appropriate. Many adults mentioned their concern that young people are not prepared for the "real world," a condition which adults see as tied to young people's sense of apathy regarding the future and the consequences of their actions.

Adult and mixed groups were also more likely to express concerns about a lack of community support or encouragement for young people, a lack of good role models, and the communication gap between generations. Many participants mentioned the relationships among these concerns about young people, such as the connection between drugs and violence, or the relationship between a lack of opportunities and crime or apathy, and indicated that many of these concerns cannot be addressed in isolation or separate from one another.

## QUESTION 4

***What are your top three major concerns about young people?***

A majority of both adult and young people groups focused on "gangs and violence" and "drugs and alcohol" as one of their top three concerns about young people. Differences between the adults groups and the young people groups reflected some of the differences in the concerns that they expressed in question three. For example, "not enough activities" was a top concern for eleven young people groups but for only three adult groups, while the concern about "family life" was a top concern for eight adult groups but only three young people groups. There was also a split where the adults focused more on education and school topics, along with their concerns about community support for youth, while young people focused

more on sex and its related issues, on race relations, and on stereotyping.

***What would you like to see happen with regard to your three major concerns about young people?***

This section of the *Speak Out Lexington 1998* sessions presented participants with the opportunity to offer suggestions and ideas for ways to address their concerns about young people in Lexington. Many of these suggestions are not restricted to one concern, but rather apply in some way to all of the concerns that participants expressed during their group sessions. Suggestions such as improving communication within families, teaching better parenting skills, encouraging more parental involvement, expanding mentoring programs, and providing more activities for youth appeared in most groups, regardless of the three major concerns participants' chose to discuss in depth. Other suggestions and ideas addressed specific concerns and reflected the participants' individual interests and experiences.

Under the concern of family life, which 15 groups chose as one of their three major concerns, participants mentioned ideas such as more family activities, more spiritual/religious outlets, an enhanced sense of community, and more positive role models as ways to address this issue. Participants in a few groups also suggested the modification of existing child abuse laws so that parents are not afraid to discipline their children. Support groups for parents, where parents and families have an opportunity to discuss their problems and share ideas, and child care at the workplace also appeared as suggestions for improving family life in Lexington.

On the topic of education and other school related issues, participants want to see better teachers who relate to students and respect students' differences. They suggested teacher sensitivity training, increased monitoring of teachers, and more frequent evaluations of teacher performance as ways to address their concerns. Participants also want to see smaller classes, expanded tutoring and after-school programs, and more parental involvement in schools. They feel that changes in the curriculum are necessary so that it includes more diversity, and they would like to see schools encourage their students to volunteer in the community. Groups that addressed this concern also believe that teachers should make learning more

## **QUESTION 4a**

enjoyable and that they should make sure that young people are on the appropriate level before they pass to the next grade. Participants in *Speak Out 1998* sessions want all children to be given the chance to succeed in school and want schools in Lexington to create an open, warm environment where such success is possible.

The 34 groups that addressed the topic of violence, crime, guns, and gangs as one of their top three concerns offered ideas such as reducing the amount of violence shown on television and other forms of media, stronger gun control, and an increased, improved police force as ways to remedy this issue. Participants of all ages also suggested teaching non-violent conflict resolution at schools and in the home, and indicated that creating more job opportunities, more after-school programs, and more activities would help reduce the amount of violence and crime committed by and against young people and would clean up our streets. Other suggestions related to this concern include more counseling services, more “safe houses,” a teen crisis line, stricter punishments for offenders, and expanded neighborhood watches. One young people group proposed a forum where former gang members talk to teens about their experiences and the lessons they have learned. These various responses reflect participants’ recognition that addressing violence and crime requires community-wide effort and attention.

The participants who chose to address the topic of sex and teen pregnancy all suggested the expansion and improvement of sex education so that it is appropriate to the age level of its audience. Several young people groups proposed condom distribution in schools and the early promotion of abstinence. Other groups suggested more counseling for females and classes for parents to increase their awareness of the sexual activities of teenagers.

In order to address their concerns about drugs, alcohol, and smoking, groups suggested tougher sentences for offenders, more education programs in schools that are appropriate to different age levels, and stricter enforcement of the rules against selling cigarettes and alcohol to minors. Participants also suggested that the city of Lexington should provide youth with more alternatives to drug use, such as more jobs, free concerts, and more entertainment. Some participants proposed more intervention and help for youth that are already using

drugs, while other participants suggested that former drug abusers should talk to young people about the effects that drugs had on their lives. Adult and mixed groups in particular indicated that youth need to receive more support and encouragement from their parents not to use drugs, smoke, or drink. They felt that an improvement in communication within families is a good place to start any efforts aimed towards reducing substance use and abuse by young people.

The 11 young people groups that selected “not enough activities” as one of their three major concerns offered such ideas as a zoo, a museum, a skateboard park, street fairs, more public sports facilities, and underage clubs as solutions. Both young people and adults suggested creating a youth center that is centrally located, accessible, and affordable and can provide a number of different services as something that would benefit all of Lexington’s youth. Young people groups also discussed better curfew rules and the possibility of bringing more concerts to Lexington. Along with their suggestions of actual activities to create, young people discussed the need for more transportation options to these activities.

*Who are the most influential people in young people’s lives?*

Most groups did not have time to discuss this optional question. Those groups who did respond to this question listed parents, peers, and teachers/coaches/other adults at school as some of the main influences in young people’s lives. An overwhelming number of young people groups produced lists of celebrities, including musicians, film stars, TV actors and actresses, rappers, and athletes, as among the most influential people in young people’s lives. Clergy, relatives, politicians, the media, and older teens also surfaced in these discussions as influences in young people’s lives.

**QUESTION 5**

## THE LEXINGTON CITIZEN SYMPOSIUM

### **Report from the *Speak Out Lexington* Citizen Symposium**

The *Speak Out Lexington* Citizen Symposium brings together a diverse group of people who have expressed a desire to learn and talk about the *Speak Out* topic in greater depth than a one-time session provides. Symposium membership includes veteran *Speak Out* volunteers, as well as newcomers, who sign on for this extra opportunity. This year, Symposium members read current materials on youth development and met four times to talk about these materials.

Discussions at the Citizen Symposium always have been lively and sometimes passionate; this year was no exception. The participants at the four meetings found many areas of agreement, such as their deep desire to help young people lead meaningful and purposeful lives. They also found some issues on which they did not agree, including child discipline, the role of religion in public life, and the teaching of values. As one example of an area of disagreement, Symposium members talked at length about whose job it is -- families, schools, religious organizations, or youth programs -- to transmit good values to young people. They finally decided to “agree to disagree” on this question, but felt they benefitted from such a discussion. The participants in the Citizen Symposium agree that the lack of consensus on this issue did not keep them from finding common ground in other areas. The issues on which they agree are set out below.

#### **Lexington must become united on the importance of youth issues.**

Many divisive factors, such as economic or social position, ideologies, and race, often prevent citizens from reaching unity on the importance of youth issues. As one example, many people think of youth violence as a racial issue rather than a general problem. The Symposium members believe that people must focus on our community as a whole, rather than in terms of separate segments.

Too often the Lexington community lets differences in values get in the way of trying to reach common ground on youth issues. The Symposium members believe the community can agree that it is important to teach children the value of treating people with respect, dignity, and equality. They also believe

that Lexington should place higher value on families and do more to support them.

**Lexington's adults and young people must continue the dialogue on youth issues.**

Symposium members believe that the community conversation about youth issues must not end with the conclusion of *Speak Out Lexington 1998*. This issue has enormous unifying potential, as nearly all community members care deeply about young people. As a community, Lexington's citizens must find a way to sustain and build on this concern. Young people must be included in the dialogue about their needs, and should be consulted about the development of programs for meeting those needs.

Symposium members believe that the community conversation on youth issues should include such broad questions as what values we as a community should transmit to our young people, and such specific questions as how we can provide more safe, self-directed, non-structured, creative, and fun opportunities for young people.

**Lexington's citizens must emphasize strengths, stay hopeful, and keep their eyes on the big picture.**

Although the issues facing young people are usually interrelated, youth-serving agencies tend to focus on isolated programs. Simply increasing communication among unrelated programs is not enough; as a community, we must keep our sights on a larger vision.

We must emphasize the positive aspects of what young people are doing so that we can communicate a sense of hope. We must also focus on those strengths we want to help young people build, rather than on their perceived deficiencies. All young people need attention and support, not just those who are troubled.

**APPENDIX A**

**GROUP FREQUENCIES FOR RESPONSES**

## APPENDIX A

### GROUP FREQUENCIES FOR RESPONSES

Following is a tally of the number of groups in which someone gave a particular response to one of the main questions. The charts show the frequency of response by type of group. Of the 90 groups, 24 were groups of adults, 20 were mixed groups of adults and young people, and 46 were groups of young people.

#### Question 1: What is it like to be a young person in Lexington?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Adults and Young People</b>	<b>Young People</b>
Some opportunities/activities (extracurricular, jobs, civic, volunteering) but still not nearly enough (especially in the realm of entertainment and in terms of diversity and equality of access)	18	38	28
Lots of pressure/stress (from peers, parents, society)	10	30	2
Boring, frustrating	7	24	10
Safety/violence are concerns	9	11	14
Miscommunication (or lack of communication) with adults/stereotyping of youth (especially in the media)	6	12	6
Not enough boundaries/discipline (too much freedom, not enough responsibility)	8	10	0
Great place to grow up	3	3	12
Drugs are common	3	10	2
Fast pace (kids grow up quickly)	4	7	0
Lack of (public) transportation causes lots of difficulties for youth	2	9	1
Too many restrictions on behavior, free expression	1	5	3

<b>Response</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Adults and Young People</b>	<b>Young People</b>
Education is a big issue (grades, school life and environment, lots of deficiencies in these areas)	0	6	4
Less trust in authorities	0	4	4
Hard	1	3	3
More opportunities than ever before	6	1	2
Family life has changed	1	6	0
Depends on where you live (gap between rich and poor)	5	0	2
Too expensive	2	4	2
Not enough community leaders/role models	1	4	0
Need good legal system	0	0	3
Depends on race (lack of diversity in what is available)	2	2	0
Different values/priorities than parents/adults (religion, clothes, materialism)	2	0	0
Not enough support for gay/lesbian/bisexual youth	1	1	0
Lack of respect	1	0	0
No trust	0	2	0
Intolerant of differences	1	3	0

**Question 2: What do adults not know about young people that they need to know?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Adults and Young People</b>	<b>Young People</b>
Adults do not know enough about youths' activities, where they are, who they are with, their state of mind, or their feelings	21	21	34
Adults do not know enough about peer pressure or contemporary problems (drugs, violence, crime, sex)	15	22	24
Teachers and parents need to be more aware of the school situation (relationships among students and between teachers and students, general atmosphere)	5	12	17
Young people need support, attention from parents and other adults (strong family life, better parenting)	11	10	12
All youth are not the same/all youth are not troublemakers or slackers (often negative portrayal by media)	2	9	16
Times have changed	6	8	13
Teens need more freedom, more privacy, more space, and above all, more activities	3	10	18
Trust works both ways between youth and adults	2	18	4
Youth know more and care more than parents think ("we're smarter than they think")	0	6	14
Adults need to listen more, communicate on youths' level	3	11	5
Adults' behavior influences youth (they need better role models)	4	8	1
Adults know nothing about fashion, popular music, what is cool (clothes do not define people)	1	3	10
Adults do not realize that youth need to learn from experience	1	8	3

<b>Response</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Adults and Young People</b>	<b>Young People</b>
Adults do not know what youth want (now or in the future)	3	5	1
Young people need more discipline, more consequences for their actions	3	0	2
Things are not that different from when adults were young	3	2	0
Parents are not always right	0	3	2
They are still kids (and make mistakes)	1	3	2
Adults do not know about the problems of racial conflict and the prevalence of race issues	0	4	1
Kids want to have fun	0	1	3
Parents are teaching youth too much about their rights	2	0	0
Adults do not know the reasons for youth suicide	0	1	1
Things are so expensive	0	2	1
Young people do not respect older people	0	2	1
Adults do not know how hard it is for youth to get jobs	1	0	0

**Question 3: What are your major concerns about young people?**

<b>Concern</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Adults and Young People</b>	<b>Young People</b>
Violence, guns, crime, gangs	24	26	44
Boredom/ lack of opportunities, activities, information (not enough places to go or things to do)	20	16	31
Drugs, alcohol, smoking	21	22	32
Sex, teen pregnancy, abortion, STDs, AIDS	15	21	29
Family life (child abuse, working moms, lack of parental supervision or influence, assistance with difficult children)	22	14	14
Overall school environment (teachers, control, physical conditions, lunches, high school starting times, homework)	14	15	13
Quality of education (performance, grades)	18	11	13
Preparation for the “real world” (work ethic, goals, motivation, commitment)	17	13	4
Peer pressure	10	12	12
Discrimination/lack of diversity (racism, sexism, sexual orientation)	12	9	9
Disrespect (displayed both towards adults and by adults)	8	8	8
Suicide, depression (lack of positive self-concept)	9	14	4
Jobs hard to find for younger teens and teens in general	1	4	16
Stereotyping (by other youth and by adults, especially in the media)	6	8	7
Safety (especially a safe place to hang out)	4	9	6

<b>Concern</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Adults and Young People</b>	<b>Young People</b>
Apathetic about the future and the consequences of their actions	5	11	1
Lack of good role models	8	10	0
Lack of community support or encouragement (tied to condition of neighborhood)	10	4	2
Lack of resources (food, shelter, health care, related housing issues)	4	8	3
Dropouts	4	3	6
Religion not as important to youth	4	3	2
Rules/discipline	1	5	2
Communication gap between generations	6	2	3
Curfew	1	2	4
Juvenile justice system	3	3	0
Money and materialistic issues	4	2	1
Health issues (physical and mental)	5	1	2
Freedom/free time (maybe too much)	4	1	0
Rumors	0	4	1
Restrictions on driver's license and related driving issues	0	3	3
Fast pace of life (younger kids trying to be teens too soon)	2	1	4
Injustice from the authorities	0	1	3
Morals, values	2	2	0
Athletics (scheduling of events, accessibility to all youth)	1	2	1

<b>Concern</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Adults and Young People</b>	<b>Young People</b>
Too much TV, video games, computers	4	1	1
Looks, style, individuality	1	2	2
Lack of transportation	3	2	1
Popularity	0	2	2
Youth don't know who they can trust	1	0	1
Career and college	0	0	3
Environmental concerns	0	0	2
Youth are too competitive	1	0	0
Gentlemen's clubs (prostitution)	0	0	1
Youth are not taught to deal with anger or conflict	1	0	0
Profanity	0	1	0
Gap between rich and poor	1	0	0
Loud music	0	1	0

**Question 4: What are your top three major concerns about young people?**

(Each group was asked to combine any related concerns that were generated under Question 3 as the participants deemed appropriate. The groups then identified the top three concerns from all concerns the group listed in Question 3 through a process of voting.)

<b>Concern</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Adults and Young People</b>	<b>Young People</b>
Gangs, violence, guns, crime	8	9	17
Drugs, alcohol, smoking	6	10	20
Education/school topics	12	8	4
Not enough activities	3	0	11
Sex (teen pregnancy, abortions, AIDS, sex education)	3	6	14
Peer pressure, stress	4	5	5
Family life	8	4	3
Safety	4	4	3
Community support for youth (valuing youth and their abilities)	6	2	0
Disrespect	5	2	0
Apathy about future responsibilities and consequences of actions	4	2	0
Race relations	0	1	5
Religious values (faith in God, spirituality)	3	1	0
All forms of discrimination (“isms”, the need for diversity and equality)	3	1	1
Suicide and depression (lack of positive self-concept)	1	3	1
Health issues (physical and mental)	2	1	1
Stereotyping	0	1	4
Employment (availability of jobs for teens)	1	0	2

<b>Concerns</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Adults and Young People</b>	<b>Young People</b>
No role models	3	0	0
Misplaced priorities (materialism)	2	0	0
Dropouts	0	0	2
Money, car, career	0	1	2
School start times	0	1	0
Restrictions on driver's license and other driving issues	0	1	1
Housing issues	0	1	0
Government programs and related issues	0	1	0
Gossip	0	1	0
Lack of trust	0	0	1
Lack of transportation	0	0	1
Younger kids growing up too soon	0	0	1
Gap between rich and poor	1	0	0

**Question 4a: What would you like to see happen with regard to your three major concerns about young people?**

(For this question, participants were asked to discuss their top three major concerns about young people and then to make suggestions or comments about what they would like to see happen in their designated areas of concern. This table presents those concerns that five or more groups selected as one of their three major concerns and these groups' frequent suggestions regarding each concern.)

<b>Concern</b>	<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Adults and Young People</b>	<b>Young People</b>
<b>Family life</b>	Better communication within families	1	2	1
	Take child abuse laws off the books so that parents aren't afraid to discipline their children	1	1	0
	More positive role models (at schools, Big Brother/Big Sister program)	1	2	0
	More family activities	1	2	1
	More sense of community	1	1	0
	Teach better parenting skills	3	0	1
	More spiritual/religious outlets	2	2	1
<b>Education/ School Topics</b>	Better teachers that relate to students	3	4	2
	Teacher sensitivity training	3	2	0
	More evaluation/monitoring of teachers	0	2	0
	More age appropriate material to make learning more enjoyable	1	2	0
	Remove labels from kids/give them second chances (as troublemakers or as certain kinds of students)	2	1	1

<b>Concern</b>	<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Adults and Young People</b>	<b>Young People</b>
<b>Education/ School Topics</b> (continued)	Change the curriculum so that it includes more diversity	5	1	1
	Encourage volunteerism	2	0	0
	Hire more teachers, counselors, social workers (more money for schools)	3	0	0
	Make sure kids are on the appropriate level before they pass to the next grade	3	0	0
	Expanded tutoring programs and after-school programs	5	0	0
	Make classes smaller	3	1	0
	More parental/community involvement in schools (also a suggestion for improving family life)	4	1	0
<b>Race Relations</b>	Teach diversity all year to learn about differences and to learn to respect others	0	2	2
<b>Community Support for Youth</b>	More activities/facilities for youth	1	2	0
	Families/parents should get together to discuss problems and share ideas	1	1	0
<b>Violence Crime Gangs Guns</b>	Lessen amount of violence on TV and in other media	1	3	3
	Teach non-violent conflict resolution (in school and at home)	3	3	1
	Teach better parenting skills, communication between parents and kids	2	3	2
	Stronger gun control	1	3	3
	More/better police	0	4	7

<b>Concern</b>	<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Adults and Young People</b>	<b>Young People</b>
<b>Violence Crime Gangs Guns</b> (continued)	More job opportunities for youth/mandatory work	1	2	2
	More after-school programs	0	5	4
	More counseling services	2	1	2
	Clean up our streets	0	2	2
	Stricter punishments for offenders	2	0	6
	Expand neighborhood watches	2	0	3
<b>Safety</b>	More police	1	0	1
	More designated safe houses	2	1	1
<b>Sex</b>	Expand and improve sex education	0	5	10
	Teach abstinence early	0	0	5
	Condom distribution	0	0	10
	More counseling for girls	1	1	2
	Classes for parents of teenagers	2	1	1
<b>Disrespect</b>	Teach youth at an early age to respect others	1	1	0
	Adults need to respect and listen to youth	0	2	0
	Better parenting	1	1	0
<b>Peer Pressure</b>	Better communication	0	1	2
	We need to take responsibility as a society for the messages that youth receive	1	2	0
	Emphasize the positive things about young people	3	1	0

<b>Concern</b>	<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Adults and Young People</b>	<b>Young People</b>
<b>Apathy About the Future and the Consequences of Their Actions</b>	Mentoring programs	1	1	0
	Career exploration, work study, vocational training	2	2	0
<b>Drugs Alcohol Smoking</b>	Enforce the rules against selling to minors	3	5	4
	More encouragement from adults to not use drugs, smoke, or drink (parent education, family values)	2	4	2
	Tougher sentences for offenders	1	4	0
	Encourage youth to speak against friends who use drugs	0	4	3
	More education programs in schools (appropriate to age level)	1	6	4
	Provide alternatives to drug use (free concerts, more jobs)	2	2	6
	More intervention, help for youth that are already into drugs	0	3	3
	Implement a driving service for drunk teens	0	0	3
	Have former drug users talk to kids	1	0	3
<b>Not Enough Activities</b>	Street fairs	0	0	3
	Create a youth center (centrally located and accessible)	2	0	5
	Provide transportation to activities	1	0	2
	Bring more concerts to Lexington	0	0	3
	Underage clubs	0	0	4

<b>Concern</b>	<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Adults and Young People</b>	<b>Young People</b>
<b>Not Enough Activities</b> (continued)	More public sports facilities	0	0	2
	Better curfew rules	0	0	2
	Advertise parties and put in a central location	0	0	2

**Question 5: Who are the most influential people in young people’s lives?**

(Question 5 was optional. Five groups of adults, six mixed groups, and 15 groups of young people answered this question. Most participating groups had multiple responses. Stars indicate those types of influences in which participants mentioned a number of different people that fell within the same category. For example, each individually named musician, athlete, or actor counted as one response within the category of celebrities.)

<b>Influence</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Adults and Young People</b>	<b>Young People</b>
*Celebrities (musicians, athletes, actors and actresses)	5	10	41
Peers, friends	5	7	13
*Teachers, coaches, other adults at school	5	5	18
Parents	5	5	13
Relatives	2	4	7
Clergy, other church members	2	3	4
Older siblings, older teens	2	4	5
Politicians	0	1	7
God	0	4	2
Guardian	0	0	3
Media	0	1	3
Colleges in community	0	1	0
A listener	0	1	0
Scout leaders	1	0	0
Anybody who has contact with young people	0	1	3
Drug dealers/drugs	1	0	2
Gangs	0	0	1

**APPENDIX B**

*SPEAK OUT LEXINGTON* GROUP PARTICIPANTS

## APPENDIX B

### *Speak Out Lexington* Group Participants

\* Held more than one session

Anthem Blue Cross Employees

\*Girl Scouts Wilderness Road Council

Baptist Ministers' Wives and Widows  
Support Group

\*Good Shepherd Episcopal Church

Beaumont Middle School AP English Class

Habitat for Humanity Homeowners  
Association

Bluegrass Central Labor Council

Jessie Clark Middle School 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

\*Bryan Station High School Law and  
Justice Classes

Jessie Clark Middle School 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>  
Grades

Center for Training and Employment

KYTECH Head Start Parent Committee

Claymont Neighborhood and Mary Queen  
of Holy Rosary Church

\*Lafayette High School Law and Justice  
Classes

Democratic Women's Discussion Group

Lafayette High School Psychology Class

Diocesan Religious Women of Fayette  
County

Lafayette High School Spanish Class

\*Dunbar High School 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Citizenship  
Classes

Lexington Arts & Culture Council Member  
Groups Committee

Dunbar High School Psychology Class

Lexington Breakfast Optimist Club

Faith Lutheran Church

Lexington Catholic High School

Family Care Center

Lexington Citizen Summit Participants

Fayette School

Lexington Friends Meeting (Quakers)

Gay & Lesbian Service Organization

Maxwell Street Presbyterian Church

Generation X Group and Parents

Metropolitan Community Church

Mt. Calvary Baptist Church Youth

Woodhill and Idle Hour Neighborhoods

Parks and Recreation Extended School Program

Parks and Recreation REAL program

Pew Civic Entrepreneurs

READY program

Russell School MIAMI 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

\*Second Presbyterian Church

\**Speak Out Lexington* Moderators and Reporters

Southern Hills Methodist Church

Superintendent's Student Advisory Committee

SWAT- Service Work and Training Class (LCC)

Tates Creek Middle School

Teen Court

Teen Leadership Club

Twin Pines Christian Church Disciples of Christ

Unitarian Church Interweave

\*Unitarian Universalist Church

Unitarian Universalist Church Youth Group

Winburn Community Academy

\*Winburn Middle School

**APPENDIX C**

*SPEAK OUT LEXINGTON*  
MODERATORS AND REPORTERS

## APPENDIX C

### *Speak Out Lexington* Moderators and Reporters

Sister Emily Appleton	Jane Gibbs
Stareka Austin	Sandy Godecker
Amy Bailey	Abby Gorton
Kenda Ball	Angie Greene
Van Berry	Richard Greissman
Don Beile	Marcia Gross
Camille Bochenek	Tracy Haney
Evelyn Bologna	Traci Hardin
Diane Bonfert	Anthony Hawkins
Joan Brannon	Roger Hemken
Freddie Brown	Beverly Henderson
Marsha Byrd	Cierra Henderson
Tamara Byrd	Susan Stokes Hill
Jim Capillo	LeAnn Hodges
Julie Carlisle	Randolph Hollingsworth
Robert Carter	Jeffrey Howerton
Kim Christopher	Brad Hufnagel
Meredith Clark	Corey Hunter
Betty Trapp Coleman	Debbie Jackson
De'Nay Coleman	Angela Johnson
Aaron Cox	Larry Johnson
Mary Crone	Phillip Jones
Sue Crone	Erica Jones
Bryan Crutchfield	Steve Kay
Hasan Davis	Christina Keifer
Faith Eastwood	Marge Keller
Janet Eaton	Lydia Keys
Mike Eaton	Marilyn Kremnitzer
Rachel Ezrine	Richard Kuhn
Natasha Fain	Joyce Lancaster
Karen Faulkner	Amy Lawson
Christy Fitch	Rebecca Lewis
Bob Fleming	Brenda Lindon
Aurelius Flynn III	Helen Liu
Raymond Forgue	Bobby Jean Looper
Jackie French	Steven Madison
Martha Fuston	Greg Malais
Arnold Gaither	Abby Marlatt
Linda Gates	Annette Mayer
Lillian B. Gentry	Vicki McCurry

Kristy McDaniel  
Starsheka Miles  
Jon Minton  
Richard Mitchell  
William Moment  
Mattie Morton  
Barbara Murray  
Becky Naugle  
Betsy Neale  
Amy Nigoff  
Mark Onishi  
Shaleica Overstreet  
Carol Owens  
James Pruitt  
Carlos Rangel  
Crystal Ratliff  
Atiya Ravens  
Wyteria Reed DeJarnett  
Robin Reid  
Sue Rhudy  
Esther Rigby  
Rona Roberts  
Jessica Runyons  
David Samford  
Aliceann Sanders  
Carly Schnur  
Fred Shafer  
Michael Shill  
Maiya Shur  
Linda Shyrock  
Ari Smith  
Barbara Sutherland  
Courtney Tate  
Chanda Taylor  
Diedra-Jeanette Taylor  
Gail Taylor  
Della Thomas  
Jennifer Thompson  
James Thurman  
Cori Tillerson  
Jessica Tzou  
Donald Van Erden  
Charlene Walker  
Lee Anne Walmsley  
Ja'Shae Watts

Alayne White  
David Whitehouse  
William Whitehouse  
Adalin Wichman  
Clarissa Williams  
Angene Wilson  
Gary Wilson  
Jack Wilson  
Wanda Wilson  
Pamla Wood  
Kelly Woodall  
Haley Wright

**APPENDIX D**

**LEXINGTON CITIZEN SYMPOSIUM PARTICIPANTS**

## **APPENDIX D**

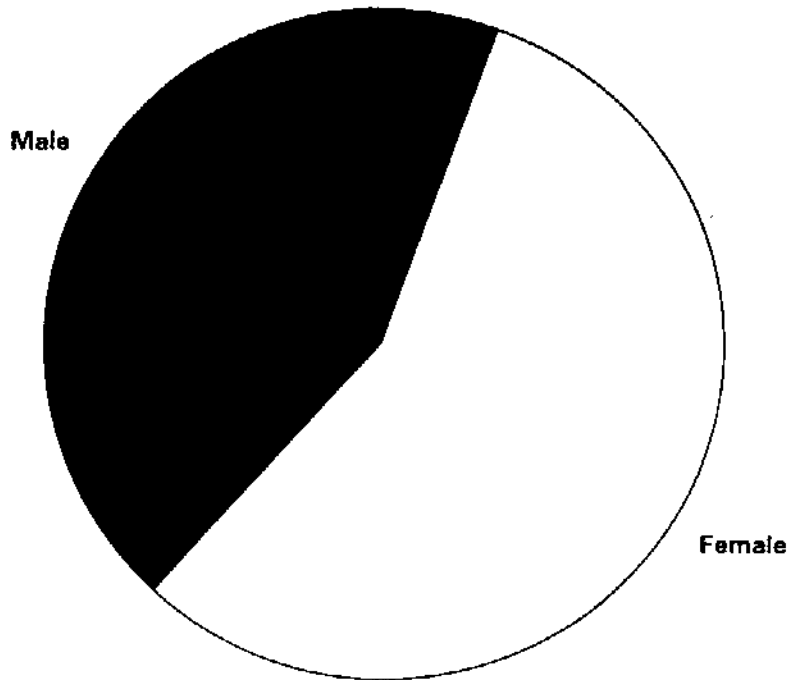
### Lexington Citizen Symposium Participants

Amanda C. Elliott  
Robert Fleming  
Lillian B. Gentry  
Jake Gibbs  
Richard Greissman  
Susan Stokes Hill  
Larry Johnson  
Steve Kay  
Annette Mayer  
Ted McCormick  
Aliceann Sanders  
Barbara Sutherland  
Gail Taylor  
James Thurman  
Sue Weant

**APPENDIX E**

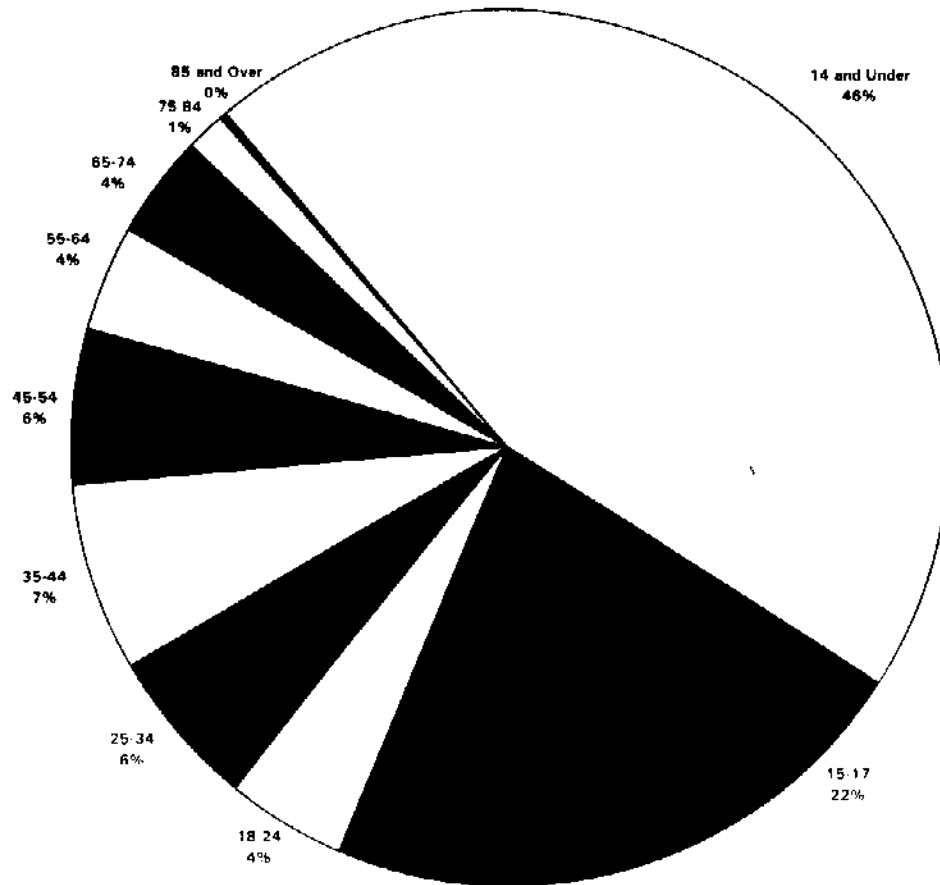
*SPEAK OUT LEXINGTON* VITAL STATISTICS

**1998 Speak Out Lexington Participants, by Gender**



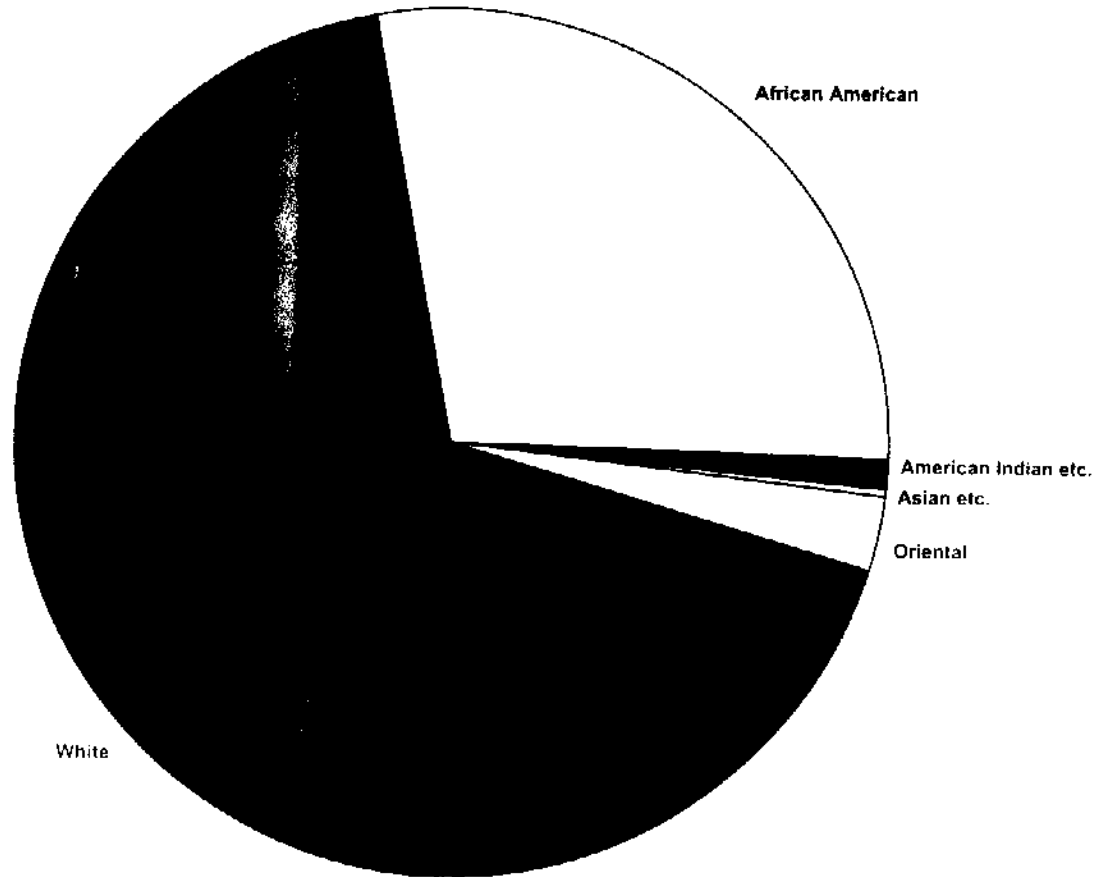
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Female	754	56.31%
Male	585	43.69%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1339</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### 1998 Speak Out Lexington Participants, by Age



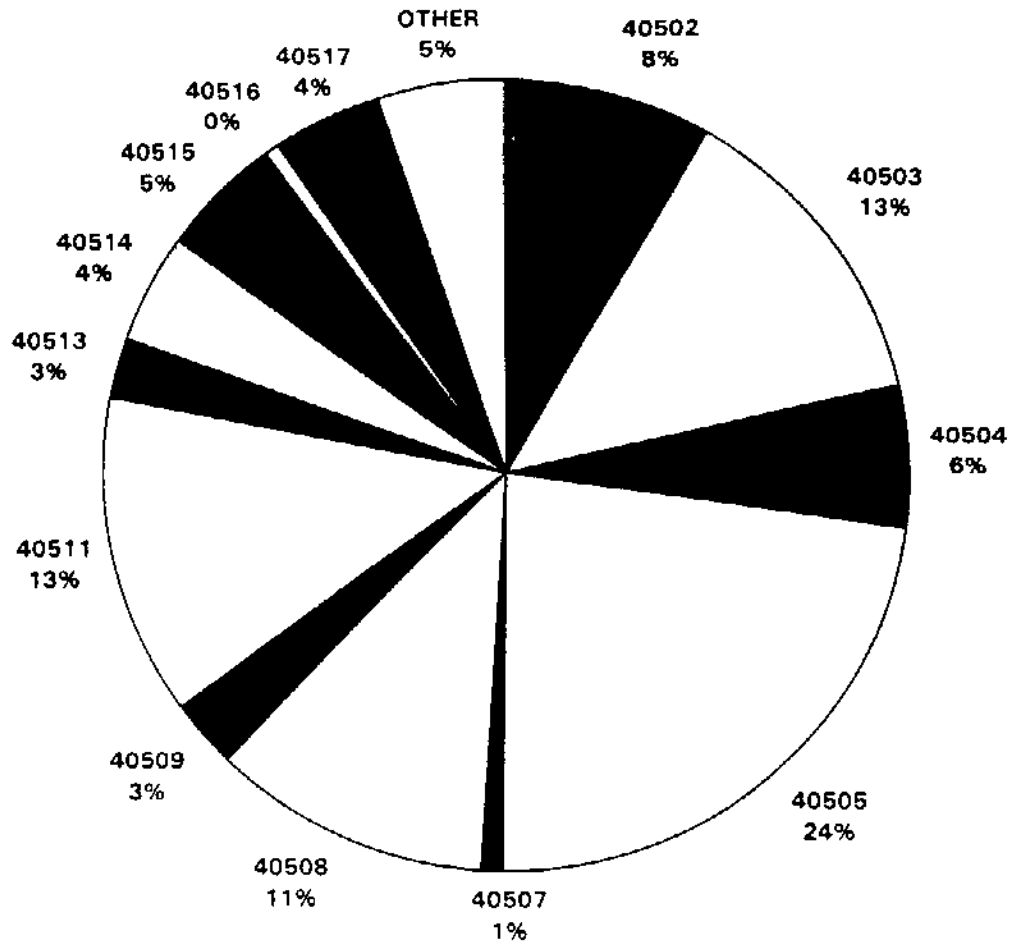
Age	Number	Percent
14 and Under	604	45.28%
15-17	295	22.11%
18-24	59	4.42%
25-34	81	6.07%
35-44	91	6.82%
45-54	79	5.92%
55-64	62	3.90%
65-74	50	3.75%
75-84	19	1.42%
85 and Over	4	0.30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1334</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**1998 Speak Out Lexington Participants, by Race**



<b>Race</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
African American	371	28%
Asian or Pacific Islander	13	1%
American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	4	0%
Oriental	39	3%
White	882	67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1309</b>	<b>100%</b>

**1998 Speak Out Lexington Participants, by Zip Codes**



Zip Code	Number	Percent
40502	110	8.37%
40503	172	13.08%
40504	75	5.70%
40505	304	23.12%
40506	1	0.08%
40507	10	0.76%
40508	147	11.18%
40509	34	2.59%
40510	3	0.23%
40511	171	13.00%
40513	33	2.51%
40514	57	4.33%
40515	66	5.02%
40516	6	0.46%
40517	59	4.49%
40526	3	0.23%
OTHER	64	4.87%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1315</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## 1998 Speak Out Lexington Participants by Number of Years Lived in Lexington

Years in Lexington	Number	Percent
0	81	6.92%
1	15	1.28%
2	35	2.99%
3	31	2.65%
4	36	3.08%
5	31	2.65%
6	31	2.65%
7	30	2.56%
8	23	1.97%
9	19	1.62%
10	47	4.02%
11	54	4.62%
12	98	8.38%
13	128	10.94%
14	115	9.83%
15	96	8.21%
16	51	4.36%
17	38	3.25%
18	20	1.71%
19	9	0.77%
20	16	1.37%
21	10	0.85%
22	14	1.20%
23	2	0.17%
24	6	0.51%
25	12	1.03%
26	2	0.17%
27	6	0.51%
28	5	0.43%
29	3	0.26%
30	12	1.03%
31	3	0.26%
32	7	0.60%
33	5	0.43%
34	2	0.17%
35	8	0.68%
36	4	0.34%
37	2	0.17%
38	1	0.09%
39	2	0.17%
40	12	1.03%
41	2	0.17%
42	6	0.51%
43	7	0.60%
45	3	0.26%
46	2	0.17%
47	2	0.17%
48	3	0.26%
49	2	0.17%
50	5	0.43%
52	5	0.43%
55	2	0.17%
58	1	0.09%
64	2	0.17%
65	1	0.09%
67	1	0.09%
68	1	0.09%
69	1	0.09%
74	1	0.09%
81	1	0.09%
<b>Total</b>	1170	100.00%