

Teen Pregnancy Prevention

WHAT CAN YOUTH SERVING ORGANIZATIONS DO?

How Can I Help?

Teen pregnancy is a complex problem that requires a community-wide solution. It takes a comprehensive, collaborative approach—parents, policy makers, faith leaders, health care providers, school officials, the business community, and youth serving professionals—to make a difference. As a youth serving organization, you have a unique opportunity to engage young people in conversations and activities that provide the foundation they need to make informed decisions about their futures so they can prevent pregnancy and become successful adults. Consider the following.

Learn about the issue and why it's important.

- Oklahoma has the 2nd highest teen birth rate in the nation among 15-19 year old females.¹
- 50% of high school students in Oklahoma say they have had sex.²
- Teen mothers are less likely to finish high school and complete career and life goals.³

Learn how to implement a teen pregnancy prevention program that works.

- Evidence-based programs are those that have been proven effective; choose one that works best for your youth.
- Provide opportunities as they become available for your staff to become trained as facilitators for evidence-based programs.
- Commit to professional development for you and your staff. It is normal to feel uncomfortable talking about love, sex and relationships with young people. Attend trainings, host a workshop and increase your comfort level.

Provide an environment where sexuality, intimacy, and relationships are discussed openly and honestly.

- Provide a safe place where young people are free to discuss their concerns about love, sex and relationships.
- Ensure young people are receiving consistent messages from all adults within your organization.
- Take advantage of opportunities to use teachable moments (i.e. popular culture, media) to educate young people.

Engage parents and other caring adults.

- When adolescents are close to their parents, they are more likely to consider family values in sexual decision making, more likely to delay having sex, and more likely to use birth control if they do have sex.
- Make it convenient for parents to participate in your organization's programs and activities.
- Help parents become more comfortable by giving them resources on how to talk to teens: www.parentfurther.com.

Increase community resource sharing and collaborations.

- Know what youth serving programs and opportunities are available locally, share resources, and make referrals.
- Form partnerships within the community. Linked programs can convey consistent and healthy messages and provide youth with access to a wide variety of services which is critical for pregnancy prevention.

¹Martin JA, Hamilton BE, Osterman JK, et al. (2013). Births: Final data for 2012. National vital statistics reports; vol 62 no 9. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2013.

²Oklahoma State Department of Health. (2014). 2013 Oklahoma Youth Risk Behavior Survey: Sexual Behaviors. Retrieved from <http://www.ok.gov/health2/documents/Sexual%20Behaviors-%20YRBS%202013.pdf>

³Shuger, L. (2012). Teen Pregnancy and High School Dropout: What Communities are Doing to Address These Issues. Washington, DC: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and America's Promise Alliance.



Creating a State of Health

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Adapted from the

SOUTH CAROLINA
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TEEN
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