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A Parent Focus Group to Inform Improving Access to Adolescent Reproductive Health Services and the Prevention of Teen Pregnancy: A Community Participation Study

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A PARENT FOCUS GROUP TO INFORM IMPROVING ACCESS TO ADOLESCENT REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES AND PREVENTING TEEN PREGNANCY: A COMMUNITY PARTICIPATORY STUDY

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INTRODUCTION
The Focus Group was part of a community participatory evaluation in collaboration with the Lowell Teen Pregnancy Prevention Taskforce (TPP), which is facilitated by the Lowell Teen Coalition from the Lowell Health Alliance. The overarching goal of this research is to improve the utilization of teen health services, to increase understanding of how parents and the Lowell community view teen access to reproductive health information and services and teen pregnancy prevention and to highlight non-economic barriers to accessing pregnancy prevention services.

METHOD

Sample size was limited and only included participants who were employed at the Lowell Community Health Center. However, this forum provided a basis for conducting a community survey involving parents of teens in the residential community of Lowell.

The focus group, a larger community survey and teen health services, to increase understanding of how parents and the Lowell community view teen access to reproductive health information and services and teen pregnancy prevention and to highlight non-economic barriers to accessing pregnancy prevention services.

SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

No incentives were given except the provision of a light lunch.

LIMITATIONS & NEXT STEPS

• Schools do not condone passing out condoms
• Fear of confidentiality breaking when confiding in counselors
• Fear of being seen getting help at a community resource center
• Fear of confidentiality breaking when confiding in counselors
• Schools do not condone passing out condoms
• Loss of services in community resource center due to funding cuts

CHANGES TO IMPROVE ACCESS & PREVENTION OF TEEN PREGNANCY

• Encourage parents to establish open communication with their teens
• Car Talk
• Backyard Sharing
• Discuss with early menses
• Discuss all forms of birth control
• Stress abstinence
• Informative conversation about peers who are pregnant
• Encourage educational classes to discuss with teens about sex and pregnancy prevention
• Maintain and/or increase services at Youth Build, Utech, and Teen Coalition
• Hold open forums for parents to educate them on the importance of allowing their teens to attend sex ed classes in school
• Provide books that stress self worth, i.e. The Caring and Keeping of You

The CTC conceptual model is a prevention model based on the risk-focused framework and provides structure in making informed decisions concerning prevention services and youth development programs through annual assessments. Researchers utilizing the CTC model have been able to identify interrelationships between varied adolescent risk behaviors and to replace them with positive youth development.

LIMITATIONS & NEXT STEPS

• Transportation
• Mobility
• Limited time for organized peer groups for younger teens
• Younger teens tend to go home after school
• Fear of diminished privacy
• Fear of family finding out if they seek help
• Fear of being seen getting help at a community resource center
• Fear of confidentiality breaking when confiding in counselors
• Schools do not condone passing out condoms
• Loss of services in community resource center due to funding cuts

PARENTS’ PERCEPTION OF WHY TEENS GET PREGNANT

• Parental acceptance/ peer pressure
• Go with the flow
• Means of keeping their mate
• Lack of sexual education
• See no evil, hear no evil mentality
• Today’s parents grew up not talking about sex
• Do not know how to use sexual contraceptives devices
• Do not know what types of contraceptives services exist
• Resistance to signing parental consent for student attendance in sex ed class
• Teens decline to attend sex ed class because their peers do not attend
• Parents shelter their teen by keeping them home
• Cultural influences trickle down to the next generation inhibiting open discussion of sex and protection
• Girls marry young in certain cultures
• Teen mentality that they are invincible
• Teen denial that they can get pregnant
• Teens’ misconception of sex and pregnancy influenced by media, TV, Internet, magazines, etc.
• Teens misguided with faulty information from friends and media

REFERENCES