

ADJUSTMENT PHASE FOR YOUNG ADULTS - PHASE III
PROJECT TALC (TEENS AND PARENTS LEARNING TO COMMUNICATE)

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SESSION 13: PREGNANCY AND PARENTHOOD

OBJECTIVES:

1. Youth will connect bereavement and risks for early pregnancy.
2. Youth will improve their decision-making skills around early pregnancy.
3. Youth will understand that the decision to have a child is also a decision to be a parent.
4. Youth will increase their family planning skills.

RATIONALE:

While we are interested in reducing adolescent pregnancies in this group, over half of the youth are already likely to be parents. Thus, the emphasis cannot be one that tries to induce guilt or disparages them for having become pregnant or fathered a child. The goals here are (1) to help youth see how grieving can make them more vulnerable to pregnancy, (2) to increase the recognition that pregnancy not only leads to having a child, but leads to becoming a parent, (3) to develop a planned way to consider when in their lives is a desirable time to have a baby or an additional baby, and (4) to assist them in one problem-solving step: identifying advantages and disadvantages of having a baby or an additional one. We are taking advantage of having a group of both parents and non-parents by having the parents give advice about having a child based on their experiences.

SUMMARY OF EXERCISES:

1. Introduce the participants, facilitators, and session topics. Distribute "Thanks" and have a lottery. Review "between-session goals." (20 minutes)
2. Have a panel of parents share their experiences with being new parents. (20 minutes)
3. Have the group first explore the risks to the child of having adolescent parents and then identify the advantages and disadvantages to parents of having a child. (20 minutes)
4. Practice decision making on deciding whether or not to have the baby. Have the parents give advice to the non-parents on having a child. (20 minutes)
5. Practice developing a plan for when would be the optimal time to have children. (20 minutes)
6. End the session with selecting new "between-session goals" to accomplish and giving group

appreciation.

MATERIALS:

"Thanks"

Newsprint and marking pens

Lottery tickets

Lottery prize

Goal cards

Script: Time for a Baby

Script: What Is the Problem?

Young parent's resource list (including parenting classes, Head Start)

Family Planning Questions

Exercise 1: What Has Been Happening?
(20 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to encourage goal setting, group cohesion, active participation, and trying out new behaviors. Introductions, review and a script were used here.]

Welcome back!

Today's session is on pregnancy and parenthood.

As you introduce yourselves, give your name and, if you are a parent, what is your strength as a parent.

If you are not a parent, tell us what you think your strength as a parent would be.

Someone might say, My name is Gloria, and my strength as a parent is that I am patient.

I'll start.

My name is _____ and my strength as a parent is _____.

REMINDER: FACILITATOR'S PARTICIPATION IN THIS INTRODUCTION IS TO MODEL THE ACTIVITY FOR THE GROUP MEMBERS. THE FACILITATOR SHOULD REMEMBER TO KEEP SELF-DISCLOSURE WITHIN APPROPRIATE LIMITS.

HAVE EACH YOUTH GIVE HIS/HER NAME AND A PARENTING STRENGTH.

Thank you.

Here are your "Thanks" for the day.

#GIVE EACH YOUTH 20 "THANKS."

Remember to let people in the group know that you liked what they said or did.

To show you we appreciate your being here today, we are going to do another lottery.

Put your names on the tickets, and then we will draw one and give out a prize.

#GIVE OUT LOTTERY TICKETS, HAVE YOUTH WRITE NAMES ON THEM. COLLECT THE TICKETS, MIX THEM UP, DRAW ONE, AND SELECT A WINNER. GIVE OUT THE PRIZE.

Here is a little scene to start the session off.

I need two volunteers (girls) to read the parts.

SELECT THE VOLUNTEERS. GIVE THEM THE SCRIPT. HAVE THEM READ THE PARTS.

TIME FOR A BABY

SABRINA: Wow! You are so big!

PATRICIA: Yes, I'm really pregnant.

SABRINA: How did you and Donny decide to have a baby?

PATRICIA: We didn't. It just happened.

SABRINA: You got careless.

PATRICIA: I guess so. We didn't always use a condom. I thought I was too young to have a baby, and besides we didn't do it very often.

SABRINA: Maybe your mind was on something else.

PATRICIA: My mom died a few months before.

SABRINA: Quite a coincidence.

PATRICIA: Isn't it weird? One life leaves the world, and another one enters. I kind of feel sometimes that my baby has my mother's spirit.

SABRINA: I don't believe in that stuff. What would your mom have said about your baby?

PATRICIA: She would have loved it.

SABRINA: But would she have thought it was the smart thing to do?

PATRICIA: Probably not. She had me when she was a teenager. She wouldn't have wanted me to go through what she went through. It was hard raising me, paying the bills and all that stuff.

SABRINA: Her life was kind of messed up - drugs and getting sick.

PATRICIA: She really loved me.

THE END

Thank you! That was great.

#GIVE THE PLAYERS "THANKS."

Do you think that Patricia unconsciously wanted a baby to take her mother's place?

Or was it just chance? Did the two things have nothing to do with each other?

Could Patricia's mother have planted the idea of having a baby in Patricia's head before she died?

What is going on here?

#ENCOURAGE A DISCUSSION TO EXPLORE THE RELATIONSHIP
OF GRIEF AND PREGNANCY. RAISE THE ISSUE OF
VULNERABILITY IF THE GROUP DOESN'T MENTION IT.

There is no way we can ever know what happened, but grief can express itself in many ways and in many areas of a person's life.

Next we are going to take a few minutes to explore the demands of parenthood.

Exercise 2: What Is It Like Being a Parent?
(20 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is help youth gain insight into the fact that having a baby means becoming a parent. This understanding is helpful in decision making about having a child. Using a panel is the approach used here.]

We need a panel to help us explore this a little further.

Will three people who have children please be our panel members?

#SELECT THE PANEL MEMBERS AND HAVE THEM SIT FACING THE GROUP. CHOOSE MALES AND FEMALES. IF FEWER THAN THREE GROUP MEMBERS HAVE HAD CHILDREN, HAVE TWO PARTICIPANTS AND ONE FACILITATOR ROLE PLAY AN ADOLESCENT PARENT.

You are the experts.

Many young adults don't recognize that having a baby means becoming a parent.

There is a lot that goes with becoming a parent.

It is probably the world's toughest job, and yet we get no training - no instruction in how do to it.

As experts, will you please tell us what being a parent has been like for you?

What was hard about it?

What was challenging?

What surprised you?

What was rewarding?

What was disappointing?

What was pleasing?

What made you angry?

Each panel member will make an opening statement about what it is like to be a parent, and then we will open it up to the audience for questions.

#HAVE EACH PANEL MEMBER MAKE AN OPENING STATEMENT.

That was very good.

Now let's have the audience ask their questions.

#ENCOURAGE THE AUDIENCE TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PANEL'S PARENTING EXPERIENCES.

We don't have the time to do a whole parenting course, but it can be very useful to enroll in one.

Everyone needs support, new ideas and assistance.

Has anyone ever been to a parent support group or parenting class, and if so, did you find it helpful?

HAVE GROUP MEMBERS REPORT BRIEFLY ON EXPERIENCES WITH PARENTING PROGRAMS. TRY TO EMPHASIZE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF PARTICIPATION, EVEN IF EXPERIENCES WERE MIXED.

Here is one bit of advice and one resource.

This is the kind of thing you might work on in a parenting support program.

The advice is that when you pay attention to your child's behavior you increase the chance of the child doing it again.

This happens even if your attention is negative - a swat, a curse, sitting in the corner.

But you want your child to act in a certain way.

So, first ignore the undesirable behavior.

Re-direct the child's behavior to what you want.

When the child acts that way, reinforce the child.

So, remember the three key words: **Ignore, Redirect, and Reward.**

The resource is this list of places that have good and inexpensive parenting classes.

HAND OUT "YOUNG PARENT'S RESOURCE LIST."

Next we are going to look at some of the issues that having a baby as a young person can bring.

Exercise 3: What Are The Advantages and Disadvantages of Early Pregnancy?
(20 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to improve decision making by having youth determine the advantages and disadvantages to early pregnancy.]

We are going to follow Sabrina and Patricia.

As you remember, Patricia is pregnant.

Here is another brief scene.

First I need two new volunteers to play the parts.

#SELECT THE VOLUNTEERS. GIVE THEM THE SCRIPT. DECIDE WHO WILL PLAY EACH PART, AND HAVE THEM READ THE SCENE.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

SABRINA: When is your baby due?

PATRICIA: Three months.

SABRINA: Aren't you worried?

PATRICIA: About what?

SABRINA: Well, are you sure you want to hear?

PATRICIA: Of course.

SABRINA: Well, babies born to teenage mothers have a much greater chance of being low birth weight. That means they might be retarded, they can have more serious illnesses, and they have more physical problems. They do worse in school. Many of them are in Special Ed. They get into more trouble. The list goes on and on.

PATRICIA: Don't try to scare me.

SABRINA: I'm not, but all those things keep me using some birth control methods - no matter what.

PATRICIA: I know plenty of young mothers whose kids are OK.

SABRINA: They were lucky. Wait a few years and talk to them again. See what they say then. Oh, I forgot to mention that the mother can give the baby HIV also.

PATRICIA: Please. I don't want to hear this.

SABRINA: Also, it's not like you have any support from your family or anything. Your mother isn't even alive to help.

PATRICIA: I know. I wonder what I should do to make sure those things don't happen to my child.

THE END

That was great!

#GIVE OUT "THANKS" TO THE PLAYERS.

You have heard a few of the risks for the baby.

For those of you with children already, what are you going to do so these kind of problems don't affect your child?

Look at the "Young Parent's Resource List." Think about using some of the resources so that your child can maximize his or her potential.

GET SOME REACTIONS FROM PARENTS TO THE SCRIPT. FIND OUT WHETHER PARENTS HAVE USED ANY RESOURCES THAT MIGHT ADDRESS THE CHILD'S HIGH-RISK STATUS BECAUSE OF HAVING A TEENAGE/ADOLESCENT PARENT.

Now let's think about the advantages and disadvantages of a teenager having a baby, thinking about the risks we heard about.

Remember that many of these births are not planned.

What are the good things a girl gets out of having a baby?

What are the good things a guy gets out of it?

What are the disadvantages of having a baby for men and women?

You call out your ideas and I will write them up here on newsprint.

#MAKE TWO COLUMNS ON NEWSPRINT: ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES. WRITE DOWN THE YOUTH'S SUGGESTIONS. POSSIBLE IDEAS FOLLOW. IF THE YOUTH DO NOT MENTION SOME OF THE IDEAS LISTED BELOW, RAISE THEM FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION.

ADVANTAGES

SOMEONE TO LOVE YOU
PARENT GOT TO BE A GRANDPARENT BEFORE SHE/HE DIED
HELPS YOU DEAL WITH YOUR GRIEF
PEOPLE PAY ATTENTION TO YOU
CAN GET RESPECT
SIGN OF BECOMING A REAL WOMAN OR MAN
SIGN OF ADULTHOOD
BIND YOUR BOYFRIEND OR GIRLFRIEND TO YOU
CAN MOVE OUT OF THE HOUSE
CAN GET PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND OTHER BENEFITS
FRIENDS APPROVE OF IT
HELPS A PERSON CHANGE THEIR BAD WAYS

DISADVANTAGES OF EARLY/TEENAGE PREGNANCY

MORE COMPLICATIONS DURING PREGNANCY AND DELIVERY
EARN LESS MONEY OVER TIME
LESS WELL EDUCATED COMPARED TO OLDER PARENTS
MORE LIKELY TO BE ON WELFARE LONG TERM
MORE LIKELY TO LIVE AT HOME
MORE LIKELY TO BREAK UP WITH PARTNER
LESS LIKELY TO GET MARRIED
IF MARRIED, MORE LIKELY TO GET DIVORCED
GREATER SUICIDE RISK
MORE LIKELY TO ABUSE THEIR CHILD
PARENTING IS HARD WORK
DON'T GO OUT MUCH ANY MORE
NO TIME FOR SELF
INCREASES THE SENSE OF HAVING NO CONTROL OVER LIFE

That's a great list.

What do you think of this list?

#ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION OF THE LISTS OF ADVANTAGES
AND DISADVANTAGES. DON T TRY TO REACH CONSENSUS.

Where does the father come into all this?

There are guys out there who try to get as many girls pregnant as possible.

What's up with them?

#ENCOURAGE A BRIEF DISCUSSION ON WHY A GUY MIGHT
WANT TO MAKE A GIRL PREGNANT.

There are also guys out there who don't want to take on the father's role.

They may not have wanted to make their girlfriend pregnant, but once she is, they refuse to act like a father.

How do you explain their behavior?

#ENCOURAGE A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF WHY MANY GUYS
DON'T WANT TO BECOME A TEENAGE/ADOLESCENT FATHER.

You made a lot of good points in those discussions.

Now let's look at what you learned from experience.

Exercise 4: What Should I Do If I Am Pregnant?
(20 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to increase decision making skills concerning being pregnant and to profit from previous experience. The pros and cons of keeping a child, giving a child to adoption, and abortion are listed. Youth who have experienced being pregnant give advice.]

First we are going to look at the choices that a couple has when pregnancy occurs.

Then we are going to ask those of you who had a pregnancy to give advice to those youth who have not experienced it.

Let's say a girl discovers she is one month pregnant.

She doesn't know what to do.

Three obvious choices appear.

The first is to keep the baby.

The second is to give the baby up for adoption.

And the third is to have an abortion.

Is there any other choice we want to consider?

#SEE IF THE GROUP HAS A FOURTH ALTERNATIVE THEY WANT TO EXPLORE.

Let s list the pros and cons of having an abortion.

Think of the consequences of having an abortion.

#WRITE THE PROS AND CONS OF HAVING AN ABORTION ON NEWSPRINT AS THE GROUP IDENTIFIES THEM. NOTE THAT THE RESEARCH LITERATURE INDICATES THAT THERE ARE

NOT USUALLY LONG-TERM NEGATIVE MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH ABORTION.

That's a good set of pros and cons.

Now let's do the same for giving the baby up for adoption.

What are the consequences?

#WRITE ON NEWSPRINT THE PROS AND CONS OF GIVING A BABY UP TO ADOPTION AS THE GROUP IDENTIFIES THEM.

Great!

The third alternative was to keep the baby and raise it.

What are the pros and cons of this alternative?

#WRITE ON NEWSPRINT THE PROS AND CONS OF KEEPING THE BABY AS THE YOUTH IDENTIFY THEM.

Thank you.

How does having had your parent get sick or die affect the decision making process?

HAVE GROUP DISCUSS HOW HAVING A PARENT GET SICK OR DIE CAN AFFECT THE PREGNANCY DECISION-MAKING PROCESS. SOME ISSUES MIGHT BE THAT YOUTH GET PREGNANT EARLIER SO PLWA CAN EXPERIENCE GRANDPARENTHOOD, AND THAT YOUTH WHOSE PARENTS DIE MAY NOT HAVE ADEQUATE SOCIAL SUPPORT AND STABILITY.

Each couple has to figure out what is best for them in their circumstances.

The group does not have to come to a decision that is best for the whole group.

People have different values.

What do you think of the pros and cons we listed?

Does anyone want to argue for one decision over another?

Let's hear your opinions.

**#ENCOURAGE A DISCUSSION OF THE ADVANTAGES AND
DISADVANTAGES OF THE CHOICES.**

Now I want to make two groups.

In one group are the women who have been pregnant and the men who have made a girl pregnant.

In the second group are the rest of you - those who have not experienced pregnancy.

I want the pregnant group to come up with three recommendations for the non-pregnant group.

What advice would you give to them?

I want the non-pregnant group come up with two questions you have for the pregnant group.

You have four minutes to work on your task.

**#ALLOW FOUR MINUTES FOR THE GROUPS TO COMPLETE
THEIR TASKS.**

Now let's hear what you came up with.

The pregnant group will go first.

#HAVE THE PREGNANT GROUP GIVE THEIR ADVICE.

Now what are the questions that the non-pregnant group has to ask?

#HAVE THE NON-PREGNANT GROUP ASK THEIR QUESTIONS.
THE PREGNANT GROUP RESPONDS.

What are your reactions to the advice and questions?

#ENCOURAGE A DISCUSSION OF THE ADVICE AND QUESTIONS.

That was very good.

Most young people's pregnancies are unplanned.

They occur because protection wasn't used.

These pregnancies did not happen because the couple wanted a baby.

To make sure you don't have an unwanted pregnancy you must always use protection.

You practiced preventing pregnancy and disease in earlier sessions.

When would you want to have a baby and become a parent, or have another baby?

Exercise 5: What Are My Plans for a Family?
(20 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is increase family planning skills. Developing a written plan and discussing it are the approaches used.]

I want you to work on planning for a family.

I will give you a worksheet to fill out and then we can discuss it.

#GIVE OUT THE FAMILY PLANNING QUESTIONS AND GO OVER THEM. THEN HAVE THE GROUP FILL OUT THE WORKSHEET.

FAMILY PLANNING QUESTIONS

WHEN I HAVE MY FIRST (OR NEXT) BABY AND BECOME A MOTHER OR FATHER, I WANT TO:

1. BE _____ YEARS OLD.

2. HAVE COMPLETED (Check one)

 JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL _____
 HIGH SCHOOL _____
 TWO YEAR COLLEGE _____
 FOUR YR COLLEGE _____
 GRADATE SCHOOL _____

3. HAVE AN INTERESTING JOB THAT PAYS. (Circle one) YES NO

4. HAVE _\$_____ DOLLARS IN THE BANK.

5. BE LIVING (Check one)

 WITH MY PARENT OR FAMILY MEMBER _____
 WITH MY PARTNER _____
 ALONE _____
 OTHER _____

6. BE LOCATED IN THE: (Check one and fill in)

 CITY _____ WHERE _____
 SUBURBS _____ WHERE _____
 COUNTRY _____ WHERE _____

7. HAVE A PARTNER THAT LIVES WITH ME. (Circle one) YES NO
8. HAVE A PARTNER THAT SHARES CHILD REARING DUTIES WITH ME.
(Circle one) YES NO
9. BE SURE THAT I AM ABLE TO BE A GOOD PARENT. (Circle one) YES NO
10. HAVE A PLANNED PREGNANCY. (Circle one) YES NO

THE END

Go ahead and fill out the family planning worksheet.

ALLOW 6 MINUTES FOR FILLING OUT THE WORK SHEET.

Now I will divide the group into pairs, and I want you to share what you wrote.

#DIVIDE THE GROUP INTO PAIRS AND HAVE THEM SHARE THE RESULTS OF THE WORK SHEET.

Let s talk about how you filled out the Family Planning Questions.

Are there other questions you would have added?

When would you want to have a baby and become a parent or have another baby?

#ENCOURAGE A DISCUSSION OF FAMILY PLANNING.

That was a good discussion.

Remember that a key to family planning is protecting yourself .

That means not having sexual intercourse or always using a condom or other birth control when you do have it.

Exercise 6: What Are My Between-session Goals ?

(20 minutes)

The purposes of this exercise are to build group cohesion and to apply what was learned in the session to back home. Setting goals and giving group appreciation are the approaches employed.]

It is time to set some goals that you will accomplish before the next session.

We worked on issues related to pregnancy today.

We emphasized that having a baby meant becoming a parent.

We looked at the advantages and disadvantages.

Your goal might be to contact a parenting class, to find ways to take care of yourself and unborn baby, and to develop a family plan with your partner.

Before you select your goal, are there other examples of goals that you might choose from?

#ENCOURAGE OTHER EXAMPLES OF GOALS.

Take a few minutes and select a goal for yourself.

#ALLOW A FEW MINUTES FOR SELECTING A GOAL.

We will go around the room and hear from you what your goal was.

#HAVE EACH YOUTH REPORT ON HIS/HER GOAL. USE GOAL CARDS AND THE GOAL SUMMARY FORM. GOAL SUMMARY FORM IS FOUND IN THE HANDOUTS FOR SESSION 1.

Now is the time to get up, move around the room, and let others know you appreciated what they said and did.

#ENCOURAGE GIVING GROUP APPRECIATION. MAKE SURE NO ONE IS LEFT OUT.

That was a very good session today.

I will see you next time at _____(time and location) on ____ (day and date.)

END OF SESSION 13 - YOUNG ADULT CURRICULUM

TIME FOR A BABY

SABRINA: Wow! You are so big!.

PATRICIA: Yes, I'm really pregnant.

SABRINA: How did you and Donny decide to have a baby?

PATRICIA: We didn't. It just happened.

SABRINA: You got careless.

PATRICIA: I guess so. We didn't always use a condom. I thought I was too young to have a baby, and besides we didn't do it very often.

SABRINA: Maybe your mind was on something else.

PATRICIA: My mom died a few months before.

SABRINA: Quite a coincidence.

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THE END