Involving Males in Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Be knowledgeable about the needs of the community and the population to be served before implementing your program.
- conduct a formal needs assessment or collect informal feedback from participants
- engage in extensive consultation with community members from the first stages of planning to get input on goals and activities and to allay concerns

Collaborate with other agencies to provide services and to get referrals.
- recreation and field trip opportunities
- “expert” speakers to address particular topics
- identify and recruit additional male participants

Male program staff is essential, as are male adults from the community.
- serving as positive role models and mentors
- designing and implementing activities
- slightly older male peers (five to seven years older) are among the most effective people to deliver messages to teen men

Increase your success in recruiting males by offering employment training, or recreation services, and then provide reproductive counseling and education.
- messages of male involvement in pregnancy prevention have often been incorporated into a larger program agenda that may be more immediately appealing to men

Be flexible and willing to test new approaches.
- sticking to strategies that work and being open to trying new ideas is important for keeping a program fresh and interesting for staff and participants

Approach the subject of pregnancy prevention with males in a playful, entertaining, and nonthreatening way. The information has to be real and accessible.
- approach the subject in ways that empower young men to be involved in the prevention process
- use messages that appeal to hopes and dreams rather than terms of blame and irresponsibility
- incorporate group activities, group discussion, and/or peer facilitation
- present information in clear, concise, and concrete terms, free of technical or scientific jargon
Take care to develop a good relationship with the community in which you are developing programs.
- respecting the values and wishes of the larger community is essential to gaining trust in the program
- consider enlisting the support and interest of influential community members
- convene a community group of adolescents and adults to communicate the needs and concerns of the larger community to the program providers
- community involvement and support also help ensure program longevity

Choose lengthier rather than briefer contact with program participants.
- establish a consistency and reliability in relationships that may be otherwise missing in participants’ lives
- establish trust and a comfort level that allows the males to let down their guard and develop a true interest in the subject matter

Tailor different messages and approaches for different ages and developmental stages.
- messages of abstinence and postponing sexual involvement are more likely to effectively reach younger teens not yet in high school
- older teens already in high school are more interested in the nuts and bolts of preventing pregnancy and STDs
- emphasizing STD prevention may have greater impact on young men’s behaviors than concentrating solely on pregnancy prevention

Remember that satisfied participants and collaborators are the best source of positive program publicity.
- word-of-mouth recruitment is identified as the most successful way to recruit participants, although most programs also use outreach strategies
- establish a good reputation within the environment where the program operates (i.e., with surrounding institutions, programs and resources)

Recognize that active parental involvement is difficult to achieve.
- incorporate parents through special events or take-home assignments
- use a community-wide approach to encourage parents and other adults to speak plainly about sexual and contraceptive matters

Be prepared to be resourceful in keeping your program funded.
- diversify funding sources to ensure continuity

Sources

Compiled by Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention, and Parenting for more information call (651) 644-1447 or toll-free in Minnesota (800) 657-3697