



# Involving Males in Teen Pregnancy Prevention

## Best Practices

**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

Sonenstein, F.L., K. Stewart, L.D. Lindberg, M. Pernas, and S. Williams. (1998.) Involving Males in Preventing Teen Pregnancy: A Guide for Program Planners. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute. (202) 857-8687.

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