

THE SCOPE OF TEEN PREGNANCY – A PROJECT FOR PREVENTION

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THE SCOPE OF TEEN PREGNANCY – A PROJECT FOR PREVENTION

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By

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Abstract

The Scope of Teen Pregnancy – A Project for Prevention is a curriculum designed for the middle-school-age preteens and teens. This project was developed at this level to reach the teens before they reach high school with the goal to help teen pregnancy to continue to decline. Though teen pregnancy has declined since the 1990's, the rates are still high, thus indicating prevention programs are needed.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

According to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy there has been a decline in teen pregnancy since the 1990's. Despite the decline in teen pregnancy the rates in the U.S. are still too high. Thirty percent of the teenage girls get pregnant at least once before they reach age 20 (National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2006). Instead of becoming comfortable with knowing the teen pregnancy rate is declining, prevention programs need to continue as well as change with the changing trends.

Statement of the Problem

Seventy-five out of 1,000 females between the ages of 15-19 become pregnant according to the U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics. Research has shown that teens that become pregnant may come from disadvantaged backgrounds. They may come from backgrounds with single parent homes, poverty, substance abuse, uneducated or miseducated parents or a history of teen pregnancy and low self-esteem, to name a few. (Teenpregnancy.org) Being miseducated by peers or even family members may be a contributing factor in teen pregnancy. With low academic performance and no long-term goals teens will be more susceptible to becoming pregnant.

Purpose of the Study

Objective of the study:

1. To create a program to address common issues that may lead to teen pregnancy.
2. To address prevention.
3. To lower teen pregnancy in disadvantaged neighborhoods.
4. To help build life skills for success.

Significance of Study

Teaching abstinence is not likely to be the most effective approach to preventing teen pregnancy. There are underlying issues in the lives of teen parents that make abstinence difficult. Learning self-esteem and establishing goals will allow teens to build confidence that they will have a brighter future if they continue their education.

Assumption of the Study

It is assumed that education, early intervention, self-esteem, goals and values will lower teen pregnancy. It is assumed that teens should participate in this program at the middle school level. It is further assumed that parents and school officials will accept a teen prevention program that also addresses self-esteem, goal setting and values.

Methods and Procedures

This research will review literature and prevention programs. The author will review existing programs to determine what has proven to be a successful prevention curriculum. A review of literature will support that the majority of teens who become pregnant have underlying issues, such as low self-esteem, lack of goals and coming from a disadvantaged background.

Delimitations

This project is limited to teens at the middle school level and focuses on promoting values, self-esteem and goal setting.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Teen Pregnancy

Teen pregnancy is on the decline, but it still remains a concern. Teen births make up 13% of the births each year. (Ventura, Mathews & Curtin, 1999). There continues to be a need for teen prevention programs to educate teens as well as parents. Parents have more influence on their teens than they realize. According to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy 47% of teens say their parents influence their decision about sex more than their friends.

Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs

Prevention programs need to inform teens of all areas of prevention in order to be effective. Teaching just abstinence is not enough. Effective programs to reduce adolescent sexual risk-taking behaviors should include:

- A focus to reduce high-risk behavior.
- Be age appropriate.
- Concentrate on proper contraceptive use and strategies for prevention of pregnancy.
- Actively involve all participants.
- Teach appropriate communication skills to avoid social pressures that influence risky sexual behavior.
- Apply social influence theory or cognitive-behavior theory.

Physicians

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the American Medical Association (AMA) advise physicians to

provide adolescents with guidance on sexuality and sexual decision-making. (Kirby, 2001)

Key messages for physicians who provide clinical services to teenagers:

- Many teens are sexually active, sometimes at quite early ages.
- Teenagers may not spontaneously raise questions about their sexual health concerns.
Be proactive: Ask all teenaged patients about sexual activity, use of contraception and need for information about other sexual health issues.
- Prepared “scripts” can be helpful when talking to teenagers about sexual health.
- Contraception should be provided when indicated.
- Abortion counseling and referral should be provided when needed.
- Many adolescents have the emotional and cognitive maturity to receive confidential sexual health services, but many are not aware that they are entitled to patients’ confidentiality.
- If pregnant teenagers choose to continue to term, exemplary care should be provided before, during and after delivery. (Langille, 2007).

Peer Pressure

Peer pressure can play a big role towards a teen’s decision to participate in sexually risky behavior. Sooner or later a teen is going to be faced with peer pressure. Peer pressure can bring on thoughts such as: Everyone is doing it. Virgins aren’t cool. My parents did it. My friends won’t like me if I don’t. He’ll dump me if I say, “No.” Teens need to be prepared ahead of time to handle such pressures. They need to know where they stand with on risky sexual behavior before they are approached with it. Prevention programs should begin before high school.

Parents

Parents can further assist their teen in abstaining from sex or influencing positive decisions by talking to their children about premarital sex, pregnancy and contraceptive. It will be important to be honest, open and support in school prevention curriculums. Also keep teens busy with after school programs, employment, homework and volunteering.

Parents and children should create limits and goals together. Curfews and limits have to be enforced. Parents have to pay close attention to what their children watch on television, surf on the internet, what they read, who their friends are, who they associate with and parents should always have active listening skills. “Teens who are close to their parents and feel supported by them are more likely to abstain from sex, wait until they are older to begin to have sex, have fewer sex partners and use contraception more consistently.” (Miller, 1997)

Chapter 3: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, this paper focuses on the importance of teen pregnancy prevention programs. Although teen pregnancy has declined, teens and their parents need to be educated. Parents have a bigger influence on their teen's decisions about sex than they may realize.

The existing literature on the topics leads to the following conclusions. Research has shown that teen mothers are at risk of not completing high school and, more than likely, rely on welfare for financial assistance. This put the children of teen mothers at risk of living in poverty, growing up in a single parent home, and possibly suffering abuse and neglect.

Effective programs can delay teens' beginning to have sex and improve the use of contraceptive for those who are sexually active. Successful programs focus on specific goals, have clear messages, provide activities that require communication, and are age appropriate. They take place over an extended period of time to cover all information needed to deliver the appropriate messages. Effective programs must provide appropriate training to facilitators. Facilitators must be committed to presenting and capable of providing consistency for the duration of the program. Facilitators must stay on task. Some topics may be sensitive, but it is important to stick to the topic in order to attain a positive outcome. Evaluations should be a routine part of the program. Data from the evaluations will help presenters modify the curriculum to keep it effective.

In addition, a program alone will be more effective with others supporting it. Supportive parental influence is particularly important. Parents must stay involved. They must be supportive of participation in these programs. They must serve as advocates for their children and vote to keep programs to prevent teen pregnancy going.

However, parental support alone is not enough. Some teens may be hesitant to talk to their parents. This is where school counselors, nurses and physicians need to do their part to be the listening ear, to recommend such programs and to support participation.

Although teen pregnancy is a sensitive topic, physicians must do their part by talking to all teen patients about pregnancy prevention. School counselors and school nurses can also be available for teens that need information and someone to talk to.

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Appendix

The Scope of Teen Pregnancy: A Prevention Project

The Scope of Teen Pregnancy is a project designed for the middle school aged teens, thirteen to fifteen years of age. This is a twelve-session project that meets once a week. Each session lasts for an hour and fifteen minutes. The group size should be ten to twelve students.

Needed Material:

Poster board	Markers	Paper	Pre-test
Post-test	Pencils/Pens	Dry erase board	
Old magazines	Phone directory	Student daily log	
Mechanical babies	4x4 Blank index cards	1 Facilitator	

Room Setting:

Room size should be 12x12 with tables arranged into a half circle with chairs around the outer side of the table. This will give the students the chance to see everyone with a space in the center for the project facilitator.

At the end of each session students will take ten to fifteen minutes to write a reflection. Reflections are for each student to put their feelings and thoughts on paper. They will be

collected after each session to be compiled into a personal booklet that will be presented after the twelve weeks with each student's certificate of completion.

SESSION 1

Introduction/Pre-test

Material needed: Ice Breaker cards, Pretest, pencils

Learning Objectives:

- Students will learn something about their fellow group members.
- Students will reflect on their thoughts and feelings.
- Students will complete a pre-test to see what they know about teen pregnancy.

The group will sit in a half circle for the introductions. Everyone will give a brief introduction of her or himself, stating their name, why they are in this group and what do they hope to accomplish in this group. After introductions there will be an icebreaker. Each group member will receive a card with a question to answer. Students are to listen to each other's answers with openness and respect.

Icebreaker Questions

Who is your best friend? Why?

What is your favorite movie? Why?

What was the best day of your life? Why?

Who is your favorite singer? What type of music do they sing?

What is your favorite TV show? Why?

What is your favorite season? Why?

Who would you like to get to know better? Why?

What would you like to be doing in five years?

Pre-Test

Pass out the pre-test. Instruct students to be honest and assure them that their answers will be kept confidential. The pre-test is to be compared to the post-test given after the completion of this project. This will measure if the student has learned from the project and/or changed their way of viewing teen pregnancy.

Pre-Test

1. Do you think teen pregnancy is increasing? (Why/Why not?)
2. Are you comfortable talking to your parents/guardian about sex? (Explain your answer)
3. Are you comfortable learning about teen pregnancy prevention with a group of your peers? (Explain your answer)
4. Have you ever participated in a prevention group with your peers? (If yes, when and what program?)
5. On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate the importance of a teen pregnancy prevention curriculum? (1 being least important and 10 being the most important.)
6. What topics do you think should be covered in a teen pregnancy prevention curriculum?
7. Do you plan on having children?
8. Do you know what abstinence is? (Give your best definition.)
9. What age do you feel a teen should become sexually active, if they should at all?
10. Are there kids your age who have started dating?
11. Have you started dating? If you answered no, what age do you feel you would like to start dating? If you answered yes, what age did you start dating?

12. What concerns do you have about getting pregnant?

13. Do you know anything about contraceptives? If so, what do you know?

During the final 10 – 15 minutes students will complete a reflection to be collected at the end of this session.

SESSION 2

Values

Needed Material: Poster Board, Marker

Learning Objectives:

- **Students will define values.**
- **Students will express their feelings about values.**
- **Students will learn why values are important.**

Group will be seated in a half circle with poster board and facilitator in the middle.

Facilitator will ask the students, “What are values?” Wait for responses from students and write the responses on the poster board. Next suggested questions can be, “How did you decide these were values?” (Were they instilled in them by their parents, grandparents...?) Once the facilitator completes the questions with the students, the group will work together to put the list in order of importance. At this time if the facilitator has any comments or values to add they may be added at this time. The final question will be, “Do you feel values are important? Why or why not?” At the end of the group facilitator will discuss why it’s important to have values and the benefits of believing in and having values.

During the final 10-15 minutes students will complete their reflections to be turned in at the end of this session.

SESSION 3

Abstinence

Needed material: Poster board, Marker, paper and pen/pencil

Learning Objectives:

- **Students will learn the definition of abstinence.**
- **Students will know alternatives to becoming sexually active.**
- **Students will compare love and sex.**

The facilitator will begin group with the question, “What do you think abstinence means?”

The facilitator will write the students’ responses on the poster board. After responses have been written on the poster board if more information needs to be added or clarified, facilitator may add on at this time.

The facilitator will give students tips on getting started if they decide to be abstinent:

- Be honest about your feelings.
- Think positive.
- Don’t wait until you’re in the middle of an intimate moment.
- Discuss the difference the difference between love and sex. (You can love without sex.)
- Waiting can be a fun time to spend together and get to know each other.
- Abstinence is a 100% effective way of not becoming pregnant.
- Deciding what to do if there comes a time that you think it will be hard to say no.

Students will have an in class assignment. The assignment is about having goals; the students will write their responses on paper.

In Class Assignment Questions

1. Where do you want to be a year from now?
2. What are your parent's goals for you?
3. Do you want to go to college?
4. What do you want to be when you become an adult?

During the final 10-15 minutes students will complete their reflections that will be turned in at the end of this session.

SESSION 4

Contraceptives

Needed Material: Poster board, markers, pencil/pen and paper

Learning Objectives:

- **Students will learn what contraceptives are.**
- **Students will know the various contraceptives and how effective they are.**

Facilitator will ask students, “What are contraceptives?” Responses will be written on the poster board and the students will help complete a list of the contraceptives they know.

Facilitator will add to the students’ list following the list below:

Hormonal Method

The pill

Vaginal Ring

The patch

Progestin-Only Method

IUD

POP

Depo-Provera

Implanon

Emergency Contraceptives

(EC, ECP’s, Pot Coital)

Barriers

Spermicides

The Sponge

Male Condom

Female Condom

The Diaphragm & Cervical Cap

IUD

Behavioral

Natural Planning/Fertility Awareness Method

Withdrawal

Continuous Abstinence

Permanent

Sterilization

(Tubal Ligation, Vasectomy)

Descriptions

The Pill: Small pills taken daily. A prescription is needed from a doctor (92-99% effective).

The Vaginal Ring: A soft clear ring that is inserted into the vagina. The ring can stay in place for three weeks and taken out for the female's monthly cycle (92-99% effective).

The Patch: A band-aid like patch placed on the skin once a week for three weeks and not worn during the fourth week for a female's cycle. The patch may be worn on the buttocks, upper arm or stomach (92-99% effective).

IUD: Plastic and "T" shaped, inserted in the uterus by a doctor or a nurse. The IUD may last for five years and is 99% effective.

POP: (Progestin Only Pill) Mini pills taken daily. These pills need to be taken at the same time daily and are 92-99.7% effective.

Depo-Provera: The Depo shot is given every three months (97-99.7% effective).

Implanon: A small plastic rod that releases hormones into the females system for three years. The Implanon is placed under the skin in the inner part of the upper arm (96.9% effective).

Emergency Contraceptives: This pill stops a female's body from releasing eggs. It changes the inside of the uterus so the egg can't start a pregnancy. Works best within the first three days of unprotected sex, but can work up to five days (75-89% effective).

Spermicides: Foams, creams, jellies, suppositories and film. They contain chemicals that kill sperm. When used, spermicides are inserted into the vagina each time before intercourse (71-82% effective).

The Sponge: A small pillow-shaped sponge that contains spermicide that contains spermicide that kills sperm. Absorbs sperm before it enters the vagina. Last up to 24 hours, but has to remain in the vagina at least six hours (68-91% effective).

The Male Condom: Rubber, plastic, or animal skin worn on the male's penis during sex or sexual contact. Put on an erect penis before contact. The condom collects the sperm so it can't reach the female's egg (85-98% effective).

The Female Condom: A pouch with rubber rings at each end that is worn by women. It is inserted into the vagina before intercourse. It catches the sperm so it doesn't reach the egg (79-95% effective).

During the final 10-15 minutes students will complete a reflection to turn in at the end of this session.

SESSION 5

Group Project

Needed Material: Dry erase board, phone directory, paper and writing tools.

Learning Objectives:

- **Students will learn to work together as a group.**
- **Students will learn how to role-play.**
- **Students will practice critical thinking.**

Students will break off into four groups of three. Each group will have a topic and create a skit to role-play. Each group will share their skit with the group.

Topics

- **Why should I wait?**
- **Everyone is doing it...**
- **I will be dumped if I don't...**
- **That's how you prove that you love me.**

Take home assignment: Students will write an essay on one of the following topics. Minimum of two pages in length and facilitator will assign topics to each student.

Topics

- **Why should I wait for marriage to have sex?**
- **How will values help me say, "No?"**
- **What are the consequences of becoming sexually active as a teenager?**
- **How do I make the right decision about sex?**
- **How can I resist the pressure to have sex?**

- **How do I know if I am ready for sex?**
- **What are my plans for the future?**
- **Possible sacrifices of a teen parent.**

During the final 10-15 minutes students will complete a reflection to be turned in after this session.

SESSION 6

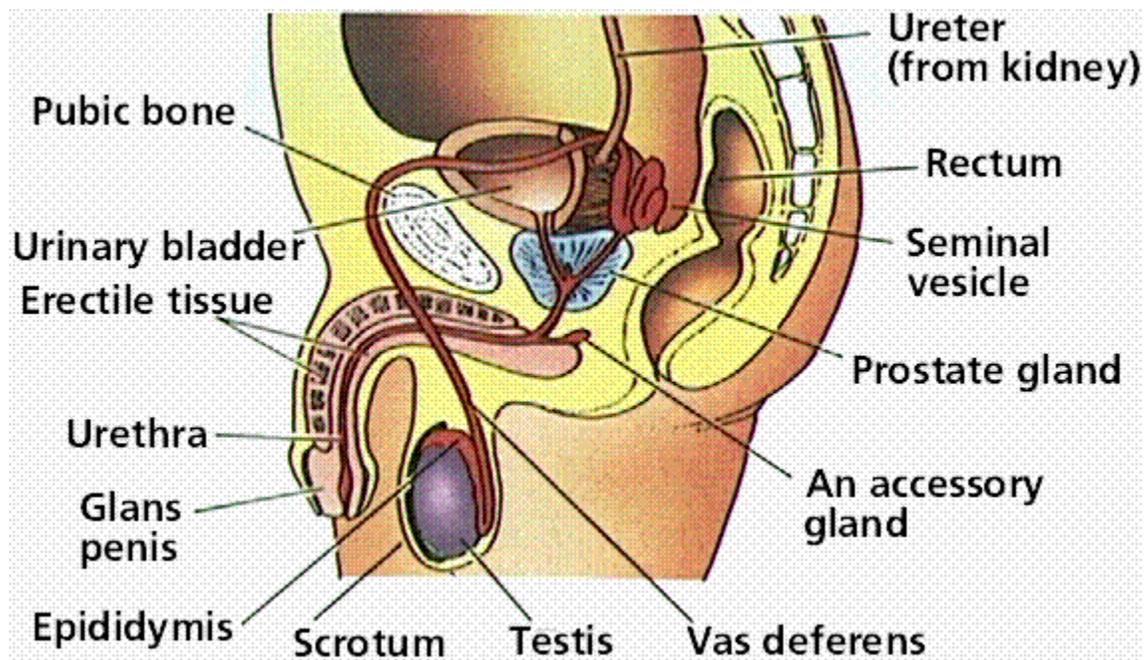
My Body

Needed Material: Poster board, flip chart of reproductive system and marker.

Learning Objectives:

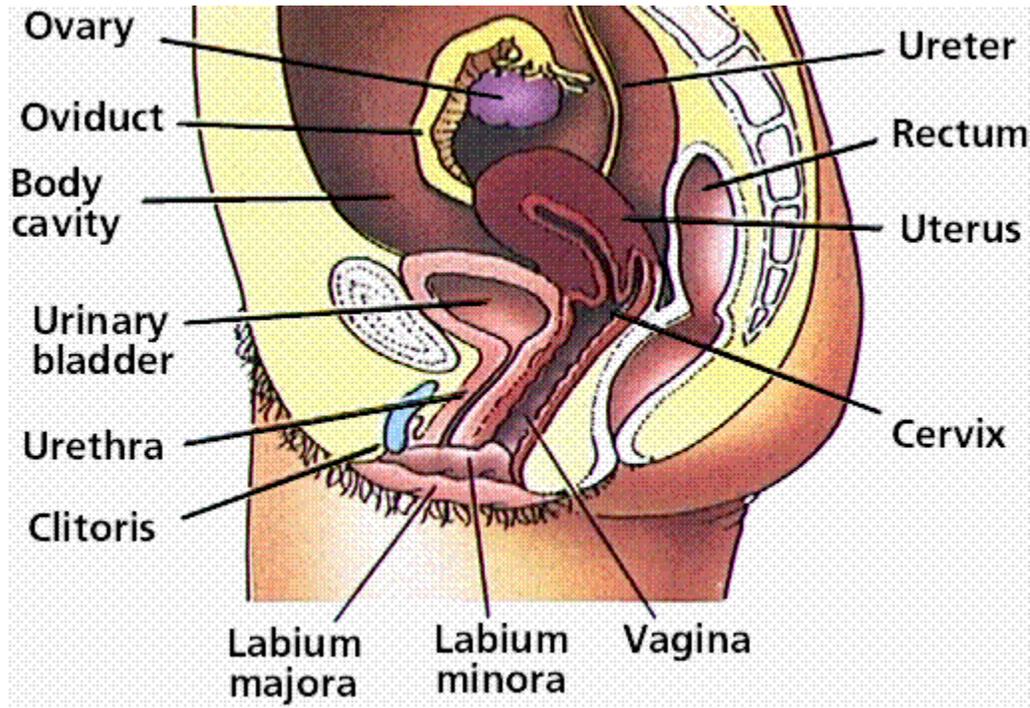
- **Students will learn about the reproduction system.**
- **Students will learn why their body is changing.**

The facilitator will discuss with the students the male and female reproductive system.



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The facilitator will discuss the female reproductive system.



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The facilitator will explain that the male produces the sperm once the male reaches puberty and the female produces the eggs. When partners become sexually active fertilization may occur when the sperm and egg unite. Males may have what they call; “wet dreams” and the female begins menstruation. The facilitator will give students a chance at this point to ask questions and make sure the students understand what is being discussed and the terms.

During the final 10-15 minutes students will complete reflection that will be collected at the end of this session.

SESSION 7

Self-Esteem

Needed Material: Poster board and marker

Learning Objective:

- **Students will learn the importance of feeling good about themselves.**
- **Students will understand what it means to have self-esteem.**
- **Students will learn to build self-esteem.**

In order for teens to be strong and confident about the important decisions they make in their lives they need self-esteem. The facilitator will start the group out by asking, “What is self-esteem?” The students’ responses will be written on the poster board. The next question would be, “How can you build self-esteem?” The responses will be written on the poster board. At this point the facilitator can discuss how the media portray weight and beauty in advertisements to attract attention to products, movies etc. Students will discuss how this makes them feel and whether this affects how they feel about themselves. Does this cause sexual tension and have an effect on the decisions they make? The final discussion will encourage students to love themselves the way they are.

Take home assignment: Students will have to create an inspirational quote to share with the group. These will be compiled into a booklet that each student will receive at the end of the 12th session along with certificate of completion.

During the final 10-15 minutes students will complete a reflection that will be collected at the end of this session.

SESSION 8

Mechanical Baby/ Take Home

Needed Material: Mechanical Baby and Daily Log

Learning Objectives:

- **Students will become familiar with the demands of a baby.**
- **Students will practice responsibility.**

Each teen will be given a mechanical baby and daily log to take home for a week. The facilitator will explain the functions of the mechanical baby to the students. Students will be given time to become familiar with the mechanical baby and ask any questions they may have. The daily log that the students have to keep will be handed out before the end of this session. The daily log is to be completed each day and handed in with the mechanical baby during session 9.

Daily Log

- **Each student will write down the time the baby cried, what calmed the baby (was the baby hungry, wet...)**
- **Record each time the baby's diaper is changed.**
- **Record each time the baby is fed.**
- **Record each time the baby takes a nap and how long did the baby sleep.**

During the final 10-15 minutes students will complete their reflection that will be collected at the end of this session.

SESSION 9
Mechanical Baby Result

Needed Material: Mechanical Baby and Daily Log

Learning Objectives:

- **Students will react to responsibility.**
- **Students will share experiences and express their feelings.**

Students will turn in the mechanical babies and daily logs. The group will discuss the feelings that they experienced over the week they had with the mechanical babies.

Possible Questions for Discussion:

- **Was it real? What made it real or not?**
- **Was this experience stressful? Why/why not?**
- **Did you need any help? If so when? If not why not?**
- **Did this assignment help influence your decision to hold off on having a baby?**
Why/why not?

During the final 10-15 minutes students will complete a reflection that will be collected at the end of this session.

SESSION 10
Teen Parent Panel

Needed Material: Teen Panel

Learning Objective:

- **Students will learn first hand from teen parents what their life is like now that they are parents.**
- **Students will learn how demanding a baby can be.**

A panel of teen moms and dads will talk to the students about their experience as a teen parent. The panel will be selected by the facilitator from a local teen parenting group. The panel will be volunteers who want to share their story in hopes to prevent other teens from becoming parents too soon.

The panel will sit at a table in front of the students so everyone can see each other. Once the teen parents tell their story students will have a chance to ask questions.

During the final 10-15 minutes students will write their reflection that is to be collected at the end of this session.

SESSION 11

Your Future

Needed Material: Old magazines, newspaper, color pencils, markers and poster board.

Learning Objectives:

- **Students will think about their future.**
- **Students will set their future goals and share them with the group.**

During this session students will have to think about their future and make a collage of where they see themselves five and ten years from now. This will force them to concentrate on a future and set goals.

Information to think about to include in collage: Where do you see yourself five years from now? Where do you see yourself ten years from now?

The areas to cover: College? Career? Marriage/Single? Children? Where would you like to live? In your home state? Hometown?

The group will take pictures they find from magazines and newspapers that best illustrate their goals and they will share their collage and tell their story.

During the final 10-15 minutes students will complete their reflection that is to be turned in at the end of this session.

SESSION 12

Conclusion

Needed Material: Certificates, Reflection Book, Inspirational Quotes, Pre-test, Post-test, pencils.

Learning Objective:

- **Students will reflect on their group experience.**
- **Students will compare their feelings from session 1 through session 12.**

The facilitator will pass out the post-test for the students to complete before they receive their certificates. Students will be instructed to be honest and assure them that their answers will be kept confidential. Once the students complete the post-test they will be allowed to compare their post-test to their pre-test that was given in session 1. Comparing the two tests the student and facilitator will measure if the student has learned from the curriculum and/or changed their way of thinking.

Post-Test

1. Do you think teen pregnancy is increasing? (Why/Why not?)
2. Are you comfortable talking to your parents/guardian about sex? (Explain your answer)
3. Are you comfortable learning about teen pregnancy prevention with a group of your peers? (Explain your answer)
4. Have you ever participated in a prevention group with your peers? (If yes, when and what program?)

5. On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate the importance of a teen pregnancy prevention curriculum? (1 being least important and 10 being the most important.)
6. What topics do you think should be covered in a teen pregnancy prevention curriculum?
7. Do you plan on having children?
8. Do you know what abstinence is? (Give your best definition.)
9. What age do you feel a teen should become sexually active, if they should at all?
10. Are there kids your age who have started dating?
11. Have you started dating? If you answered no, what age do you feel you would like to start dating? If you answered yes, what age did you start dating?
12. What concerns do you have about getting pregnant?
13. Do you know anything about contraceptives? If so, what do you know?

Students will receive their certificate of completion and their reflection books. Each student will have the chance to share their feelings on their experience in this group. Students will be encouraged to share what they have learned and take out of this group.