Community Assets and Barriers Related to Teen Pregnancy: An Evaluation

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Evaluation Goal

• To enhance our understanding of teen pregnancy related to services and other demographic variables offered in the city of Fitchburg

• To identify community assets that promote healthy youth development and barriers leading to risky behaviors such as teen pregnancy

• To guide the Montachusett Opportunity Council’s (MOC) Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program (TPP) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health planning for current and future intervention strategies
Evaluation Methods

Consisted of five components:

• Youth online survey

• Focus groups with parents of teens

• Community stakeholder interviews

• Interviews with teen mothers

• GIS asset and demographic mapping
Process

• MOC staff and the evaluation team collaborated on the development of the assessment tools

• IRB approval

• MOC staff were trained on focus group and interview methods
Youth Perspective on Community Assets and Barriers an Electronic Online Survey

- An online questionnaire link and request was distributed by MOC’s peer leaders to other teens in places where youth spend time after school

- The intention was to reach 250 local teens and a total of 221 (88% of target) were reached
• Only basic demographics such as age, gender, and race and ethnicity were asked.

• Elimination of any identifiable information that could link a teen to the survey.

• No adult teacher or counselor was involved in the marketing the survey.
Teen survey results

• 221 teens ranging in age from 11 years to 19 years responded to the survey

• 45.8% Hispanic, 34.6% White, 14.5% African American, 4.7% Asian, and 0.5% American Indian

• 60.4% female, 39.6% male
Where do you get information about sex and the risk of pregnancy?

- 56.4% school,
- 51.8% family
- 48.2% friends
- 32.1% doctor/clinic/nurse
- 21.6% Facebook
- 20.2% Community organization
- 15.1% web pages
- 8.3% Twitter
- 6% other
- 4.1% email
- 3.7% other blog sites
Does the city offer pregnancy programs or services to teens?

- 73.6% yes
- 23.6% I don’t know
- 2.7% no
86.3% stated that condoms and other forms of birth control are available to teens. According to the teens, condoms are available at:

If so, where are condoms available? (Check all what you know)

- **Drug store/pharmacy**: 68.6% (142)
- **Clinic**: 57.5% (119)
- **Home**: 24.6% (51)
- **Doctor’s office**: 41.1% (85)
- **Friends**: 39.6% (82)

(所以他，避孕套在哪里可用？(选择你所知道的所有)
Where do you think teens should be able to get contraceptives?

- 72% doctor’s office
- 68.3% clinics
- 45% school/nurse
- 43.1% drug store
- 17.4% home
- 14.7% friends
- 1.4% other

Do you believe teaching teens about abstinence will reduce the number of teen girls that get pregnant?

- 47.7% yes
- 45.4% no
- 6.9% I don’t know
How involved do you think your school is in teaching teens about sex and the risk of pregnancy?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is being a teen mother acceptable in your community?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• 62.3% acceptable</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• 37.7% not acceptable</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Who should be the source of information for questions about sex?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 85% parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 52.7% teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 51.8% clinic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 50.5% nurse in clinic at school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 32.7% brother/sister</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• 23.2% peers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• 10.5% coach</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Do you think parents talk to their teens about sex and the risk of pregnancy?

- **60.6% too little**
- 33% just about the right amount
- 6.4% too much

**Why not?**

- 57.1% Parents think their child is too young
- 54.7% Parents are uncomfortable or embarrassed
- 34.4% Parents lack a clear idea of exactly what to say and what not to say
- 32.1% Parents think talking about sex will lead a child to think that being sexually active is okay or expected
Would hearing from teens who have dealt with the difficulties of pregnancy help prevent future teen pregnancies?

- 77.6% yes
- 22.4% no
Parents Focus Groups

- A total of (2) focus groups containing 4 to 9 participants, totaling 13 parents, including male and female parents to adolescents ages 15-19, were conducted.

- A semi-structured questionnaire was utilized to guide focus group discussions.

- Parents are aware of the problem of teenage pregnancy.
• Open and honest relationship with open communication along with accurate sexual education is important to reduce teen pregnancy

• Sexual content in media, internet, cultural norms and lack of stability in home life or absent parents as factors that increase the risk of teenage pregnancy
• A combination of interventions may assist with the prevention of teenage pregnancy

• While parents believed that sex education is important to prevent pregnancy and STD’s, many were resistant to the schools taking a large role in teaching it to teens

• Some of the parents preferred this content be taught at home. However, they also acknowledged that discussion of sex education with teens is difficult and often challenging for parents
• Supported sexual education geared toward parents to engage teens. However, they believed that attendance would likely be low for high-risk populations.

• Parents recommended alternative methods to promote groups like this such as:
  • Teens encourage parents to attend,
  • Meetings in a familiar environment
  • Peer mentors available to teens or parents as needed to disseminate accurate information.
Community Key Informants Interviews

• A 14 question interview guide was utilized

• The interview guide was used to assess the awareness of teen pregnancy in Fitchburg and availability of prevention programs

• Stakeholders from key agencies include the: YMCA, LUK Inc., Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts (PPLM), and Cleghorn Neighborhood Center (CNC)

• Most of these not-for-profit agencies are dedicated to improving the lives of youth and their families
• The key stakeholders in the community were aware of the services offered in the city

• They supported teen empowerment as a method to prevent teen pregnancy

• Career planning and college preparation would focus teens on reaching positive goals

• They supported the development of groups for parents support
Teen Mothers Interviews

• A total of 6 teen mothers were interviewed
• Ages ranged from 17 to 21
• Reported race and ethnicity was 100% White Hispanic
• 66% completed some high school education
• An Interview guide was used to guide the evaluation
• Most of the girls thought that having children would be easy. Two thought it would be fun.

• Half of the moms expressed significant change in their social life after they became pregnant. They had “no more me time”, “no friends”, “unable to go and party” and “had to put life on hold”.

• Most of the girls never had a conversation with their partners about the possibility of pregnancy.

• Most of the girls expressed difficulty with school and two dropped out.
• Participated in some sort of pregnancy prevention program and no difficulty obtaining birth control

• Positive attitudes towards the pregnancy came from family support and the negative attitudes came from peers and society

• A negative reaction from society: “Society looked at it like another teen pregnant”, “Society does not approve of teen pregnancy, felt awkward in College with a belly, people assume unable to care for child”
• Peers made comments such as: “too young to have kids”, they “lost friendships, being criticized”

• Religion and expectations had significant negative affect on their thoughts about pregnancy including the religious belief that you should be “married before children” and that they “were too young”

• All of these moms knew of other teen friends or family members who had pregnancies and a few “feel its becoming a contest to get pregnant”
GIS Mapping

• GIS, an acronym for Geographic Information System

• The power of GIS is its ability to identify relationships among features on different map layers based on where they are located in relationship to one another

• The major objective of this evaluation was to enhance our understanding of teen births related to services and other demographic variables offered in the city using the GIS
• Birth rate/counts at census tract level Fitchburg females ages 15-19 was obtained from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health

• The data is presented in an aggregate rate form and no individual-level identifying information was obtained

• In addition, for each tract data was compiled between the years of 2008-2011 to ensure confidentiality

• Block group level population data for Fitchburg was downloaded from U.S Census Bureau Census 2010 This data is free to the public for use
• The population data included race/ethnicity, income, and poverty status

• Data about health services locations (health agencies/health organizations,) in Fitchburg was collected and coded by type of services

• All data was imported, organized, and managed in ArcCatalog – data management tool in ArcGIS 9.2 for use in geocoding and map creation in ArcMap—editing, spatial analysis, and map creation tool in ArcGIS 9.2
Type of related services in the Community

Prevention and teen empowerment services are of a higher proportion among the services in Fitchburg.
Service Location
Teen Birth Rates and Median House Income

- Geographic areas in the center of the city with lower median household income show higher rates of teen births.

- The results are not consistent across Fitchburg. There are areas in town where the median household income is relatively high with median high rates of teen pregnancy.
Teen Birth Rates Households Below Poverty Line

- Geographic areas in the center of the city with high and medium rate of families below poverty line show higher rates of teen births.
Teen Birth Rates Hispanic Population

- Geographic areas in the center of the city with high concentration of Hispanic population show higher rates of teen births

- The results are not consistent across all Fitchburg. There is an area in town where there is a medium concentration of Hispanic population with median rates of teen birth
Teen Birth Rates Caucasian Population

- Geographic area with high concentration of Caucasian population shows relatively lower rates of teen births
Conclusions and Recommendations

• MOC has implemented teen pregnancy prevention programs over the past 40 years in collaboration with various community organizations.

• As a result of the effort teen birth rate in Fitchburg declined by 46.1% in the past ten years from a teen birth rate of 60.5 in 2000.

• The services in the city prioritize teen empowerment and prevention along with support for pregnant teens. GIS mapping provides a tool to not only to assist with visualizing the location of high-risk populations, but also for planning of location of services.
• Parents, teens and key informants all recognize the existing problem of teen pregnancies in the community.

• Teens noted that being a teen mother is acceptable in the community (62%). They expressed the need for improved communication with their parents along with sexual education from their schools.

• Teens knew about the prevention programs in the city and thought they were accessible. They believed one of the methods of prevention would be hearing from teens that had a personal experience.
Parents expressed the same needs. They admitted that the topic might be difficult and challenging to communicate with their teens. They too support the need for groups geared towards parents.

The key stakeholders in the community were aware of the services offered in the city.

They supported teen empowerment as a method to prevent teen pregnancy.

Career planning and college preparation would focus teens on reaching positive goals. They too supported the development of groups to support parents.
Thank you!

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