

## Peer Support Groups for Pregnant and Parenting Teens

### Tips on Planning Peer Group Sessions:

- ❖ Involve teen participants in planning group meetings and identifying topics they want to discuss at meetings.
- ❖ Give location, date, and time of group meetings (e.g. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays 6-8 p.m. in Public Library meeting room).
- ❖ Decide who will attend group meetings (ie. only teen parents or include fathers, boyfriends).
- ❖ Arrange transportation and child care for meetings.
- ❖ Teens love food - have nutritious snacks and drinks available.
- ❖ Have some open groups when teens can share current concerns.
- ❖ Discuss and list “Group Ground Rules.”
- ❖ Vary format of meetings to include interactive exercises, learning games, videos, and parent-child activities.
- ❖ Bring in other professionals to help lead some group sessions (e.g. school social worker, nurse, or counselor, health educator, parent educator, male professional); ask volunteers to help plan socials, transport teens, provide child care, bring food.
- ❖ You may want to have incentives to promote regular attendance at group meetings, such as gift certificates or a special end-of-year trip?
- ❖ Plan a few special events like a Christmas Party and summer picnic that include everyone - teen parents, their children, teens’ parents and siblings, fathers and/or boyfriends, and volunteer mentors.
- ❖ You may want to have a recognition event and give awards to teen participants (for best school attendance and performance, best attendance at group meetings): recognize each teen for an accomplishment or unique skill or talent, and thank volunteers, staff, and funders for their contributions to the program.
- ❖ Conduct simple evaluations to evaluate group meetings and use for future planning.
- ❖ HAVE FUN!

### Topics for Peer Support Group Sessions:

#### **Goal: Complete high school**

- ❖ Your legal right to an education and your responsibilities as a student
- ❖ Tips on succeeding in school: getting settled back into school, developing good study habits, getting along with other students and teachers
- ❖ Balancing parenthood, school, work, home, and personal needs

- ❖ Taking control of your life: school success and peer pressure
- ❖ Finding quality child care for your infant or toddler

**Goal: Delay Repeat Pregnancy**

- ❖ How do I know if I'm really in love?
- ❖ Making positive decisions about relationships and sex (decision-making, refusal skills practice, and contraception and STI protection)
- ❖ 101 ways to say "I love you" without having sex
- ❖ A teen's guide to HIV/AIDS and common sexually transmitted infections
- ❖ My plan to delay a 2<sup>nd</sup> pregnancy
- ❖ Remember the Pain (See exercise recalling impact of first pregnancy)
- ❖ Taking control of your relationships with guys (self-respect, how to say no and keep your boyfriend, protecting yourself from abuse and date rape)
- ❖ Risky business: Alcohol, drugs, and sex

**Goal: Improve Maternal and Infant/Child Health**

- ❖ Amazing pregnancy facts (what's happening to my body and how can I take care of myself)
- ❖ How to have a healthy baby (prenatal care, labor and preterm labor, weight-gain, and risks of smoking, alcohol, and marijuana)
- ❖ Preparing for a new baby: cribs, clothes, diapers; visiting a hospital, birthing clinic, and newborn nursery
- ❖ The benefits of breastfeeding for you and your baby
- ❖ Health care, well-baby checkups and immunizations, and common childhood illnesses
- ❖ Child safety (car seats, sleep on back, poisons, CPR, safe toys and furniture)

**Goal: Improve parenting skills/ avoid abuse/neglect of child and self**

- ❖ Tips for new moms (what's happening to your baby and you the first year, becoming a parent and making decisions about your baby)
- ❖ Tips for new dads (taking care of your baby, establishing paternity, being parents together, taking care of yourself and your future)
- ❖ Infant care: sleeping, feeding, bathing, soothing a crying baby
- ❖ Child development 101 (see parenting curricula for how your baby grows)
- ❖ Tips on parenting
- ❖ What's the difference between discipline and child abuse

- ❖ How to share parenting responsibilities with the baby's father and your parents
- ❖ How to improve your child's potential to learn
- ❖ How to have healthy relationships (improving communication skills with parents, baby's father, or boyfriend)
- ❖ Healthy ways to reduce stress and dealing with depression

**Goal: Improve life management skills**

- ❖ Taking control of my life and dealing with peer pressure
- ❖ Sources of financial support (e.g. TANF, establishing paternity and child support, employment)
- ❖ Tips on budgets, bank accounts, and spending wisely
- ❖ Summer job opportunities: interviewing and other job hunting skills
- ❖ Finding community resources for my child and myself (health, social services, housing, child care, prenatal and parenting classes, family resource centers, parks and recreation centers, and Hispanic, African American, and Native American support centers.
- ❖ Fun things to do with my baby and my friends
- ❖ Looking good – feeling good (positive self esteem, makeup demonstrations)

**Goal: Plan for future employment**

- ❖ Reflections and advice from a panel of professionals (in relevant careers)
- ❖ Life after high school (college opportunities, job training, and career)
- ❖ Counseling 101 – How to identify my interests and skills and get a job with higher earning power
- ❖ “Keys to Success” from a panel of adults who had been teen parents

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