

## **Teen Pregnancy Prevention: Needs Assessment Results, Ontario Service Providers**

Best Start Resource Centre, June 2006

### **Overview**

The Best Start Resource Centre is funded by the Ontario government to support service providers in addressing preconception, prenatal and child health. Best Start develops new resources and provides networking, training and consultation opportunities for service providers. The focus of Best Start's work conforms to the changing needs and interests of Ontario service providers. With increasing attention to issue of teen pregnancy, Best Start chose to investigate the needs of Ontario service providers in the area of teen pregnancy prevention.

Teen pregnancy is a complex social issue, and prevention can be difficult. Some strategies require tremendous ongoing efforts. Service providers want to choose approaches that are effective in reducing the rate of teen pregnancy. They need access to new research and current strategies, in order to continue to adapt and design initiatives that are appropriate for their community. They need information about approaches that are respectful and effective, prior to selecting or renewing a commitment to specific prevention strategies.

The Best Start Resource Centre conducted an Ontario service provider needs assessment in June 2006 on the topic of teen pregnancy prevention. The results of the needs assessment and input from an expert advisory group will be used to inform and guide Best Start as it explores and plans service provider supports related to teen pregnancy prevention. This report shares the results of the June 2006 teen pregnancy prevention needs assessment.

The questionnaire was circulated electronically through the Best Start listserv, the CAPC/CPNP web board, and through the Ontario Early Years listserv. It asked Ontario service providers about their learning needs and about the need for additional training and resources on teen pregnancy prevention in Ontario.

Best Start received 67 completed forms. Participants included public health (33%), CAPC or CPNP (21%), OEYC or childcare staff (13%), health care professionals (9%), sexual health clinic staff (4%), health promotion workers (3%), community development workers (2%) and other employment backgrounds (15%).

Respondents indicated an almost unanimous support for additional training and additional resources on the topic of teen pregnancy prevention. The highest areas of interest were in the development of new teaching tools and a manual of effective prevention strategies as well as the provision of regional skill-building workshops. Many individuals also identified the pressing need for training and resources about how to care for pregnant teens and teen parents, although this information is not the focus of this report.

### Information Needs:

The questionnaire asked Ontario service providers about their information needs, within the area of teen pregnancy prevention. Over half of the respondents indicated that they wanted to learn more about effective strategies, new research, Ontario initiatives, intended and unintended teen pregnancies and/or school based sexual health education.

| Information Need                     | % Respondents |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Effective strategies                 | 85%           |
| New research                         | 70%           |
| Intended teen pregnancy              | 70%           |
| Initiatives across Ontario           | 69%           |
| Unintended teen pregnancy            | 61%           |
| School-based sexual health education | 57%           |
| Access to birth control              | 37%           |

Many respondents also added that they wanted to learn more about prevention of subsequent teen pregnancies (17%). Additional comments and suggestions indicated that some service providers wanted to learn more about:

- Peer based programs.
- Increasing sense of worth, confidence and goal setting in teens.
- Supports and services for teens at higher risk.
- Community mobilization.
- Prevention strategies outside the education system.
- Education tools designed for elementary school.
- Engaging teens.
- Birth control methods that are cost effective.
- Impact of socioeconomic status.
- Diversity issues i.e. cultural and educational expectations, gender differences. For example teen pregnancy and prevention tools for Aboriginal people are different than that of mainstream.
- Strategies for rural areas where there may be a lack of youth opportunities as well as challenges around confidentiality.
- Incorporating preconception information for both males and females, i.e. readiness for parenting and preparation for pregnancy and parenting.

### Resource Needs:

The needs assessment asked Ontario service providers if they could benefit from additional teen pregnancy prevention resources. The response (99%) showed almost universal respondent support for the development of new teen pregnancy prevention resources.

Service providers were interested in resources that:

- Share Canadian data.
- Are practical and easy to use.
- Describe a range of strategies.
- Describe best or better practices.
- Are useful to the wide range of people who work with youth.
- Recognize the role of parents, and build on their skills.
- Use an appropriate literacy level.
- Share information about how to engage teens.
- Help to create an understanding of teens.
- Are teen friendly, sex positive and acknowledge teen perspectives.

Service providers were asked what type of resources would be most helpful in their teen pregnancy prevention work. Over half of the respondents indicated an interest in teaching tools, a strategies manual, fact sheets, tear off sheets and/or case studies of recent initiatives.

| <b>Recommended Resource</b>        | <b>% Respondents</b> |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Teaching tools                     | 81%                  |
| Manual of strategies               | 67%                  |
| Fact sheets                        | 63%                  |
| Tear off sheets                    | 58%                  |
| Case studies of recent initiatives | 52%                  |
| Poster                             | 49%                  |
| Brochure                           | 43%                  |
| Desk reference                     | 30%                  |

Some service providers mentioned the need for a few specific additional resources:

- Teen pregnancy prevention website.
- Database of existing tools with descriptions.
- Teaching strategies for elementary school.
- Lesson plans and resource sheets for schools.
- Newspaper articles, radio ads and school newsletter inserts.
- Brochures for teens.
- Pregnancy prevention material that is acceptable by the Catholic school boards.
- A resource that would help service providers select and design effective programs.
- Culturally specific resources.

### **Training Needs:**

Ontario service providers were asked if they felt there was a need for additional training in Ontario on the topic of teen pregnancy prevention. There was strong interest (97%) from the respondents in additional training on teen pregnancy prevention.

Service providers recommended specific content for training events, including:

- Effective strategies.
- Local, provincial and Canadian statistics.
- Adolescent developmental norms.
- Engaging, motivating, working with and talking to teens.
- New research and resources.
- Issues around self-esteem, confidence, relationships, communication skills and isolation.
- Underlying factors and strategies for intended teen pregnancy.
- Collaborative approaches.
- Common messages.
- Clients that are harder to reach and/or at higher risk.

Almost two thirds of the respondents indicated an interest in regional skill-building workshops, and almost half of the respondents were interested in local forums, local consultations and/or a provincial conference.

| <b>Recommended Training Format</b>    | <b>% Respondents</b> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Regional skill-building workshops     | 61%                  |
| Local forums to discuss issues        | 48%                  |
| Consultations tailored to local needs | 46%                  |
| Central provincial conference         | 45%                  |

A small number of service providers also commented on the need for local facilitated strategic planning opportunities involving other community partners. Some service providers suggested networking and sharing opportunities. A few service providers commented on the need to consider accessibility of training opportunities, especially for rural and remote communities.

### **Recommendations:**

Teen pregnancy is a complex issue with deep underlying factors. Respondents expressed the need for additional teen pregnancy prevention training and resources in Ontario. The results of this survey indicate a specific interest in:

- Learning about existing teen pregnancy prevention resources, training and related services.
- Learning about effective strategies that have been used in Ontario.
- Accessing new resources that provide teaching tools, effective strategies and current research. Respondents are interested in strategies to engage teens, and strategies to address intended, unintended and subsequent teen pregnancy. They want to learn more about contextual and statistical information about intended, unintended and subsequent teen pregnancy.
- Accessing training on teen pregnancy prevention through a variety of methods, with a primary focus on regional skill building workshops.

In the selection and development of teen pregnancy prevention initiatives, respondents encouraged Best Start to:

- Collaborate with the National Project to Reduce Teen Pregnancy in Canada.
- Consult with experts on teen pregnancy prevention.
- Consider different cultural approaches.
- Work in a manner that is teen positive, and does not increase judgmental attitudes towards pregnant teens and teen parents.

In the future, respondents encouraged Best Start to:

- Explore unmet service provider needs in the area of support to pregnant and parenting teens.

*Best Start would like to thank everyone who generously shared their views.  
Your input will help us choose and design initiatives that will assist  
Ontario service providers in the prevention of teen pregnancy.*

If you have additional questions or comments, please contact  
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