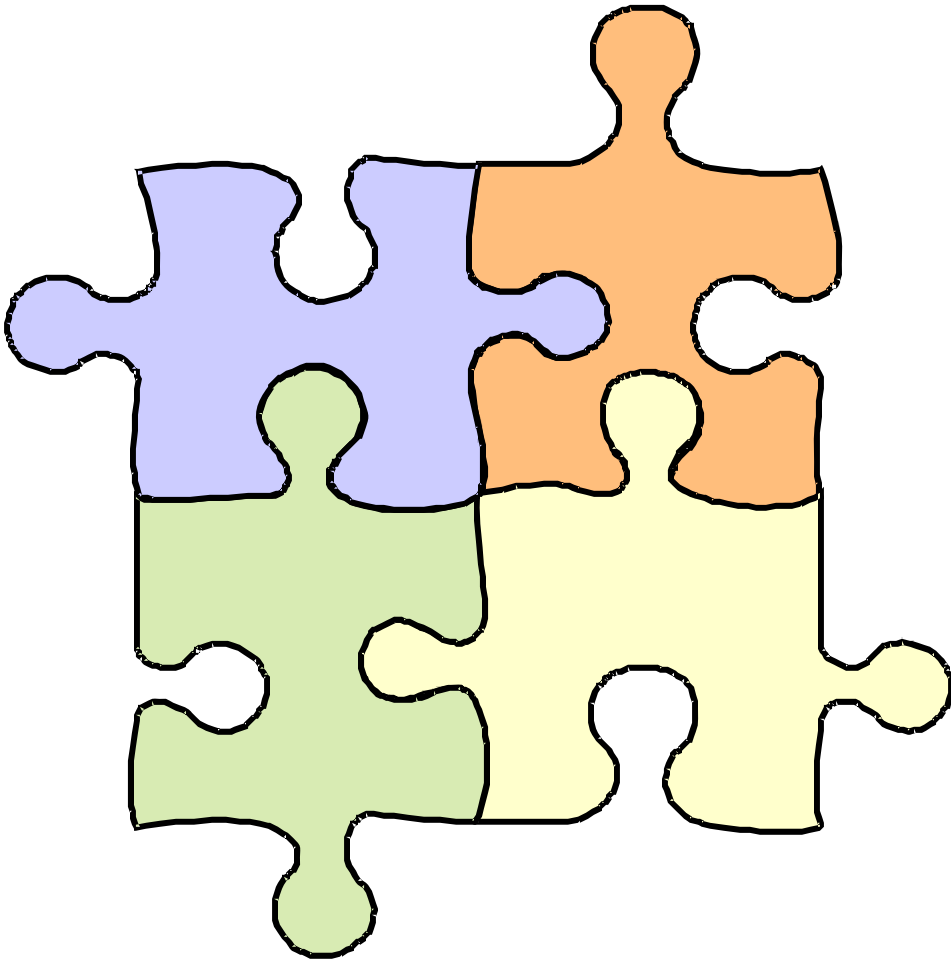


# **The Latina Project: Executive Summary**



**Planned Parenthood of Central Washington  
Central Washington University  
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Teen pregnancy rates are at record low levels in the United States. Boonstra (2002) reported that in 1990, the rate of teen pregnancy was 117 pregnancies per 1,000 women aged 15-19. The rate had declined 19% in 1997 (93 pregnancies per 1000 women). In 2000 the rate of teen childbearing had declined to an all time low of 49 per 1000 women. The U.S. teen abortion rate in 1997 was 33% lower than the rate a decade earlier. Yet the United States continues to have the highest teen pregnancy rate of developed countries.

Although teen pregnancy rates have experienced a steady decline across the population in the United States, pregnancy rates among Hispanic teens have remained steady or risen in some areas. Close to half of U.S. Latino high school students are sexually active (MMWR, 2000).

Understanding the perceptions of the Hispanic teen population is an important first step in developing teen pregnancy prevention programs for this population. The purpose of this study was to gain information on

the perceptions of Hispanic adolescents and parents of Hispanic adolescents of teen pregnancy prevention programs. Of particular interest were their perceptions of individuals who they felt safe and comfortable talking with about their problems compared with the opinion of parents. A third issue was what information Hispanic teens were seeking in pregnancy prevention programs designed for their parent.

Finally, researchers asked “gatekeepers” within the Hispanic community in Yakima, Hispanic adolescents, parents of Hispanic adolescents, and pregnant and parenting Hispanic teens to complete a sexuality knowledge and attitude survey. Results of the focus groups were generated. Frequency data were tabulated for the surveys.

A review of the literature revealed that understanding and assessing developmental assets can assist in planning successful programs that support positive youth maturation. The Search Institute (1998) reported that “external assets are the networks of support, opportunities, and people that stimulate and

nurture positive development in youth (and that) internal assets are the young person's own commitments, values, and competencies." (p.1) With these definitions in mind, the researchers also attempted to formulate a baseline of understanding of contributions to the developmental assets possessed by this adolescent population.

#### METHOD

Researchers chose a focus group design for one portion of this formative study. Specific objectives of groups were to a) gain an understanding of who adolescents feel safe or comfortable talking with about their problems, b) understand adolescents' perceptions of critical components of teen pregnancy prevention, c) establish parents' understanding of who teenagers feel safe or comfortable talking to about their problems, and d) ascertain parents' attitudes toward components of sexuality education. Additionally, researchers wanted to assess the perceptions of both older

teens and parents regarding the provision of sexuality education.

The second portion of this formative study was to ascertain the knowledge and attitudes on various sexuality topics of both adolescents and parents. To that end, participants were asked to complete a survey following the focus groups. Participants were also given the option of completing just the survey in lieu of focus group participation, or were asked to complete a survey if they arrived too late for inclusion in the focus group.

Participants. There were 29 adolescents aged 11-14 and 44 parents of that age group and 45 adolescents age 15-19 and 11 parents of that age group that participated in the focus groups. A total of 85 youth participated in the focus groups, and 111 completed the survey. Pregnant and parenting female teens were also sampled, with 20 teens both participating in a focus group and completing the sexuality survey. A total of 70 parents participated in a focus group, with 88 completing the survey. A

total of 20 gatekeepers participated in a focus group, with 34 completing the survey. See Appendix A for sample sizes and distribution.

Participants were treated ethically, and Central Washington University's Institutional Review Board approved the study prior to initiation of any research involving human subjects.

Recruitment. Participants were recruited via Hispanic radio stations and flyers posted in community centers around the neighborhoods with high Latino populations. Volunteers were asked to call a toll free number for more information. A Spanish-speaking researcher staffed the phone, answered questions, and randomly assigned participants to a focus group meeting place and time. All participants were required to sign informed consent forms in accordance with procedures outlined by the Central Washington University Human Subjects Review Committee.

### FOCUS GROUPS

Researchers chose a focus group design for this formative study. Specific objectives of groups were to

a) gain an understanding of who adolescents felt safe or comfortable talking with about their problems, b) understand adolescents' perceptions of critical components of teen pregnancy prevention, c) establish parents' understanding of who teenagers felt safe or comfortable talking with about their problems, d) ascertain parents' attitudes toward components of sexuality education, e) identify who adolescents report provided them sexuality education, and f) identify who parents report provides sexuality education to their child.

Researchers also asked questions concerning certain developmental assets available in the community for adolescents to tap. These results have not yet been analyzed.

Participants. Participants were divided into focus groups by gender and by roles (parent-child). Researchers felt that the discussion of sensitive issues in mixed gender settings might compromise the reliability of the data. Focus group questions were generated by

researchers from a review of the literature available on Latino adolescent teen pregnancy. Please refer to Appendix B for a list of questions used. A bilingual moderator facilitated questions and discussion. A second bilingual moderator took notes, ran audio taping equipment, and attended to logistical issues that arose. The majority of adolescent groups were conducted in English. The majority of the parent groups were conducted in Spanish.

Analysis. Audio tapes of the focus group discussions as well as notes from the second moderator of the groups were transcribed. The groups held in Spanish were transcribed into English by professional Spanish transcriptionists familiar with the local dialect. A systematic review of the transcripts took place, with coding following general content analysis procedures.

Adolescents Age 11-14  
Mixed Gender Focus Group  
Summary

A total of four focus groups were held with adolescents age 11-14 in Yakima County. These were held on three different dates throughout the summer of 2002. A total of twenty youth participated in these focus groups. Groups were gender specific, and a bi-lingual moderator and person to take notes were utilized.

Researchers solicited input from this group to help better understand the dynamics that happen in Hispanic families related to teen pregnancy. Following the Developmental Assets Model, researchers asked questions of participants ranging from their perception of what they like to do after school, whom do they talk to about their problems, to what can the community do to support better sexuality education efforts.

#### **Question One: Introductions**

#### **Question Two: How do you spend your time when you are not in school?**

These young teens seem to participate in a wide variety of activities in Yakima County. Most teens reported that they were active with their friends; whether going

shopping, to the park, or just hanging out. Many revealed that they enjoyed playing various games such as Nintendo<sup>tm</sup> or a game called “2 Cuadros.” This game involves two people standing in assigned squares, and each person hits the other.

Sports were a very popular activity for the males in the groups. Soccer, basketball, and football were popular sports. Only a few females reported being active in a sport (basketball). Females seemed more interested in going to the mall, shopping, going to the movies, listening to music, drawing, and watching television.

Both groups mentioned that they spend time on homework and studying.

**Question Three: How do you choose what to do?**

Participants revealed that few use a formal decision-making process. Most reported, “I just do it.” and “...I am very bored so I decide to call my friends or just shoot hoops or something.”

Most teens reported that they make these decisions over the phone. Plans are made either at

home or at school. There was disagreement between and among groups on where decisions are made.

One teen did report a very organized decision process when he revealed, “We choose three games and then vote on one.” Other members and groups did not support this statement.

**Question Four: How do you choose (decide) whom to spend your time with?**

It seems that groups shared a common theme of trust. Teens decided that they would spend time with people that they trusted. One revealed, “Because he is my best friend and because he is really a nice person and I know he won’t get into other stuff. Other bad stuff.” Another reported, “And somebody that I know and trust and I feel comfortable with then I play with them.”

Other teens reported that they simply decided to spend time with their friends. They decided early in the school year who would be their friends. One revealed, “Well it depends on who you start hanging

out with at the beginning of school like who you talk with that's how we become friends. That's how I do it." Another teen stated, "Well I just call all my friends and see what they're doing, if they are going somewhere they might invite me or something."

**Question Five: What other activities do you think should be available for youth 11-14 years old in Yakima County?**

These teens revealed several suggestions for increased activity in Yakima County. One common theme was more opportunity for parties. The teens stated that they want more safe opportunities. This can best be illustrated by one teen, who stated, "Things that you could go to just have fun and not have other people encouraging you to do stuff you don't want to. Parties that your parents can trust you to go to and not do naughty things." When probed about the meaning of "naughty," the teen stated that meant "bad things" like "drugs, smoking pot, drinking, and things like that."

Females seemed to be more interested in having more opportunity for practice and participation in

"feminine arts." Fixing nails and hair, dancing, and opportunity for purchasing low-cost clothing was discussed at great length. They also expressed a desire to be able to spend more time with their friends just hanging out. One reported that she "...just keep[s] the house clean and like cook and take care of my sisters." Another stated, "I clean. If I get bored, I just, whatever I do I just organize so probably that is my really only thing because I get bored and I clean."

Males tended to focus on more opportunity for sports participation. They reported that they feel there are enough activities for people their age. One male did reveal, however, that he felt there was too great an opportunity for negatives as well. He continued by stating, "We don't like to have gangs. We have too many in Yakima. They fight a lot at night." This was supported by another teen who stated, "They fight in front of my house. They are our neighbors."

One teen suggested that a center be available for help with homework and tutoring. He

suggested “I think that they should open up a place instead...like having their time studying. Some part of their time doing homework. Because some kids their parents don’t know that they come from different places and they don’t understand what the language or what the stuff all the stuff in America is like because they speak another language than Hispanics do. So they should have a place where they can help the kids do their homework.”

**Question Six: Who do you feel safe or comfortable talking to about your problems?**

All groups revealed that they feel safe or comfortable talking with their mothers. This was especially evident when asked specifically whom they feel safe talking to about their health problems. Males and females both reported overwhelmingly it was their mother. Family members such as fathers, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, cousins, and godmothers were also mentioned.

Adults such as teachers, guidance counselors, and pastors were also mentioned by the teens.

One teen, when asked directly if there was more comfort with the parent or the school stated simply “My parents.”

Friends are also trusted confidants. One teen revealed “I call my friends about everything.” Other group members supported this.

**Question Seven: Are there any adults who you feel comfortable talking to or spending time with?**

The respondents followed the same comments and reasoning for this question as they did in the previous question. Teens trust parents, family members, friends, and teachers. Family members, even extended family, were trusted by the teens.

Several females revealed that they would feel embarrassed talking with their father about personal issues. One revealed that she felt “They don’t understand your feelings.” Others simply stated that they would feel “uncomfortable.”

Trust was a variable mentioned as important by the groups. They felt that they must trust others before they confide in

them. Another factor appeared to be related to knowing a person well. They felt that they would feel more comfortable talking with someone who knew them for a long time, and whom they knew for an extended time.

**Question Eight: What do you think you will be doing in five or ten years?**

The overwhelming majority of these young teens stated that they would be in college in five or ten years. Several stated that they would like to become doctors or lawyers. One teen illustrated this by revealing, “If I graduate from high school and try to go to college and try to go to lawyer school. I want to be a lawyer. That has always been my dream to become a lawyer.” Other teens revealed that they would like to be a policeman, be in the Army or Navy, or study automobile manufacturing.

Many stated that they wanted to earn a “lot of money” in the future. If not in college, the teens stated that they would be working.

These groups expressed high hopes and aspirations for the future.

A few stated that they would be married. The also stated that they would continue with their education through college even if they were married.

**Question Nine: Imagine that you are the teacher for a sexuality education program for your parents. What would it consist of?**

These younger teens struggled with this question. They stated that their parents should know everything. They also stated their parents need to know nothing more than they know right now. Several participants stated clearly they did not know what information was needed, because they have not been taught about sexuality yet—either at home or at school.

I feel that this population might have been too young to fully address this question.

Adolescents age 15-19  
Mixed Gender Focus Group  
Summary

A series of focus group were held in Yakima, Washington that involved adolescents age 15-19 years. Three

groups were held with males, and three with females. A total of 23 males were interviewed, and 22 females were interviewed. A bi-lingual moderator conducted all groups, with a note taker who was also bi-lingual. Six males and four females elected to take the survey only.

### **Question One: Introductions**

#### **Question Two: When you were 11-14 years old, how did you spend your time when you were not in school?**

Most of the respondents stated that they would play outside with their friends. Sports were a part of their lives, as were parks (Miller Park and the Greenway) and various Community Centers (the Y and Southeast). Many teens reported that they were trying to assert their independence by getting away from home as much as possible.

A few respondents stated that they liked to do quiet things alone like reading and watching TV. This seemed to be a minority of responses.

Two groups (males) also stated that they would cruise around

in cars with friends and look for girls. These two groups also stated that they would consume alcohol and other intoxicants. It is interesting to note that the female groups did not mention alcohol at this age.

#### **Question Three: When you were 11-14 years old, how did you choose what to do?**

Most respondents stated that they didn't consciously choose what to do. They would go outside their house and look for friends that were doing an activity that looked like fun. Only one group mentioned peer pressure.

One group believed strongly that at that age (11-14) they were not given a choice in activity. They felt that their parents dictated their activities.

Most groups reported that it was a matter of what friends were already doing. Peer pressure seemed not to be involved. The decision was made based in part on the current activities of friends.

#### **Question Four: When you were 11-14 years old, how did you choose whom to spend time with?**

Groups were fairly equally split on this issue. One facet of deciding

whom to spend time with had to do with perception of “coolness.” Several teens wanted to spend time with older teens, or teens who had access to transportation. If, in the teen’s mind, the person was cool, then that was whom they chose to spend time with. If interests were similar, such as sports or organized athletics, that became an avenue for meeting and forming friendships.

The importance of family can be easily seen in this question. Several teens reported that having cousins similar in age made the choice easy. They also felt an obligation to talk with family even when they didn’t feel comfortable doing so.

Related to this is the geography of the neighborhood. Many teens revealed that they did not have a choice in whom to spend time with. This choice was pre-determined by geography. “Well, you kind of did not get the choose much, as you do now because {sic} is like your neighbors or something, who ever lives around you.”

**Question Five: When you were 11-14, what other activities would you have liked to be available?**

Again, two main themes cam out in these groups: sports and dancing. Many teens feel that organized athletics should be started at an earlier age. A wider variety of sport options would also appeal to both males and females.

Dancing also was requested. The participants felt that having a place to dance without “direct” adult supervision would be desirable. They also felt that having a place where dancing could be taught to younger teens would be utilized.

One teen stated that she “...wish she was exposed to more like what kids like to do in crafts. Artistic crafts.” This was tied in directly with after school programs. More school-sponsored programs that involve teens such as camping and hiking were seen as lacking and the addition would be positive.

**Question Six: When you were 11-14 years old, who did you feel safe or comfortable talking to about your problems?**

There was great agreement on this question. Most respondents stated that they felt comfortable talking with their parent(s). It is interesting to note that while most

teens stated that they would talk to their parent, many also expressed concern about the potential response a parent might bring. "...then you tell them something then they are freaking out then go tell your dad." One group specifically mentioned the difficulty expressing love in the "Mexican" family. One participant stated "{sic}The Mexican family. They are like afraid like you tell their kids that they love them, I bet you had our parents, we have never heard that they love us. They just tell us that by working; that takes over the love part. That hurts you too. You have to grow up thinking that parents love you. You know they do but you have to hear it. They are just like 'no, no' They don't want to tell you."

If teens would not talk with a parent, then a brother or sister would be next in line. Several teens stated that they would talk with a good friend. Only two respondents stated that they would talk with a counselor at school, and only then if it were a problem related to school.

Several teens stated that they would not share their problems with

anyone. One teen stated that the problems he has are his problems, and would choose to keep it to himself. Several stated that if they couldn't tell a mom or close friend, then they would not share at all.

**Question Seven: When you were 11-14 years old, were there any adults who you felt comfortable talking to or spending time with?**

Similar the question number five, these teens felt comfortable talking with family first, then teachers and church leaders. Family ranged from parent(s) to aunts, uncles, and cousins. A few teens mentioned teachers and church leaders, but others in the group did not support these statements.

A few teens stated that they did not feel comfortable talking with or spending time with adults in general. They felt that adults would respond in a judgmental way.

**Question Eight: Who provided sexuality education to you?**

This was a lively discussion question in most groups. Opinions differed, and the teens were not afraid to state their opinion.

Several teens stated that the requisite sexuality education provided (to most) in the fifth grade was not taken seriously. Males stated that they were uncomfortable in a mixed sex group. They would have preferred a “one-on-one” educational approach. Females stated that childbirth films were not age-appropriate, and they felt that the content was presented much too early.

Several teens stated that they learned about sexuality from their friends. Several teens also reported that they learned about sexuality from a younger or older sibling. The groups were split on parental involvement, with several stating that they did talk to a parent, and several stating that the parent refused to talk about sexuality, simply saying, “You will learn about that after you are married...or after you have children.”

Teens also revealed that they wish content would include the following topics: more birth control information, more information on condoms, more information on HIV/AIDS, and more information on male responsibility.

**Question Nine: Imagine that you are the teacher for a pregnancy prevention program. What would make a successful teen pregnancy prevention program for your Hispanic community in Yakima?**

Many teens reported that parental involvement is a key component to a successful teen pregnancy prevention program. It was suggested that parents take classes to learn how to better communicate with their children. It was also suggested that parents need current information that is factual about sexuality. One teen stated, “But see, it starts of with the parents. It is all about them. You guys are going backwards.” Another supported this by stating, “See cause it starts about them...’cause they are our models and you first have to talk to them.”

Several teens expressed that they believed that having young Hispanic females who already have children talk to young women who are not yet pregnant might help prevent pregnancy. They stated that if they better understood what it was like to raise a child, what the

difficulties were, and what these young women felt that they had to give up might help with the prevention effort. All focus group members did not agree on this point. Several revealed that they felt it would not make a difference.

Other teens expressed an interest in being exposed to the “Baby Think It Over” dolls. They stated that they believed that if they were forced to deal with a child for several days, that it would make a difference. Again, not all members of the groups agreed that this would be a good idea. Others stated that they knew of girls who were exposed to this, and still “ended up pregnant.”

One group expressed that a perceived lack of self-confidence was a contributing factor to teen pregnancy. A boost in self-confidence might inoculate against the verbal manipulation by boyfriends.

The overall language used in answering this question seemed to reflect a degree of resignation. Teens could not state in certain terms what they believed were major contributing factors to teen

pregnancy, and thus what they might suggest for its prevention. Ideas were discussed, but lacked any sense of conviction and energy.

**Question Ten: When you were 11-14 years old, what did you think you would be doing in 5 or 10 years?**

Many teens felt that they would still be going to school, either high school or on to college. Several stated that they thought that they would have a nice apartment, a good job, and a nice car. Others stated that they believed that they would continue with a sport such as soccer or basketball. Still others believed that they would go to parties and have fun.

Some teens, however, revealed that at that age they already felt a sense of futility. One stated, “I don’t think I will be alive in five years.” Others revealed, “You live like she just said, one day at a time for me at that age.” Still another reported, “I don’t think I am going to be going to college because I am going to have to be working.”

It is important to note that many of the teens could not answer this

question. Several reported that they "...have not thought about it." or that they are "still thinking about it." A few teens reported that they already have quit school, or are delinquent. They seem to express a mixed bag of remorse, futility, and resignation.

A few teens expressed a desire for greater parental support and appreciation for their efforts. One stated that she lives in a continuing cycle of care giving for younger siblings. She stated that her older sisters took care of her and younger siblings. They left home early to end the repression. Now she stated that it is her turn to care for even younger siblings. Her younger sister is already experiencing behavior problems and has run away from home, expressing a strong desire not to become the next caregiver. This young person blamed her mother for caring about her own needs more than the needs of her children.

Another teen expressed a negative coping strategy to deal with the perceived lack of love and support at home. She stated that she gets a strong sense of love and belonging from members of her

street gang. She stated that she had not planned on this; only that she felt it was her only choice to have her psychological needs met.

**Question Eleven: Imagine that you are the teacher for a sexuality education program for your parents. What would it consist of?**

Teens were very vocal on this response. Many stated that they felt that some type of educational program to teach parents how to communicate with teens would be most helpful. The program did not necessarily have to be held as a formal class. It would be enough if parents could get information about resources for their child.

Another important component would include information on the skills of parenting. The teens stated that the factual information about sexuality was not enough. If a program for parents is to be successful, it must include information on appropriate ways to discuss sexuality with your child, communication, and reducing the "moralizing" about sexuality. One teen stated that his father would try to discuss sexuality with him by

“...always joking around about it.” This teen concluded “It didn’t really help any it just made me want to have sex more because I wanted to make my dad happy.” Another stated, “Not try and force them to not have sex because when you can’t do something, you just want to do it more.”

Teens expressed a desire for their parents to understand that sexuality is a normal part of being human. They concluded that the best approach would be to tell kids “how to deal with it and be protective.” Several stated that when their parents push them too hard not to engage in a behavior, it actually has the opposite effect. Teens also expressed a desire for their parents to acknowledge their current level of sexual experience when trying to inform them. One teen revealed, “Let them understand that at that age their kids already had sex so telling them not to have sex is not going to help because they already did it.”

Finally, teens expressed a strong desire for their parent to express love toward them. One teen stated

this clearly when she said, “I would have to include parenting...the trouble stuff that is not just money and food and house. Their feelings and conversation and care for their kid...love.” Another supported this by revealing, “All you have to tell your kids not just by saying ‘I love you.’ But by actually showing them.”

#### Parents of Adolescents 11-14 Years of Age Focus Group Summary

A total of four focus groups were held to solicit input from parents of adolescents age 11-14 in Yakima, Washington. Three groups were held with mothers, and one group was held with fathers. A total of 30 females participated, and 19 males participated. The groups were held at convenient locations in Yakima. Bilingual moderators and note-takers were utilized with this predominately Spanish-speaking sample.

Researchers solicited input from this group to help better understand the dynamics that happen in Hispanic families related to teen pregnancy. Following the

Developmental Assets Model, researchers asked questions of participants ranging from their perception of what their children like to do after school, whom do their children talk to about their problems, to what can the community do to support better sexuality education efforts.

Following is a summary of the questions asked, and comments received from the participants:

### **Question 1: Introductions**

#### **Question 2: How does your child 11-14 years old spend his/her time when he/she is not in school?**

The most common response to this question in all four groups was “watch television.” Interesting comments were made surrounding television. One participant reported that she would rather her son watch television instead of “going around on the street.” Other parents defended their child’s television behavior by stating “I don’t let her watch television when she wants” and “I supervise what she watches.”

Other popular responses involved community activities such as church

activities, sports programs, playing with friends at the park, and supervised play outside. Several parents noted that their child helps them at home with chores and housework.

Parents expressed concern that programs available in the community in which their child might participate were too expensive. (the YMCA for example.) They also expressed concern that these programs might not supervise their child’s activities closely enough.

It is interesting to note that the mothers reported several activities listed above, but the fathers expressed a very negative view of how their child spends time after school. Comments such as “being mischievous, being licentious, drinking, breaking windows, doing drugs, always in gangs...” were common in the group. This negative evaluation of free time activities needs to be explored further.

#### **Question 3: How does your child 11-14 years old choose what to do?**

Parents felt that their child chose what to do based predominately on what their friends do. Comments such as “Under their friend’s influence. For example, what they see their friends do, they want to do.” and “They see what others do.” were common across both fathers and mothers. All groups supported this idea.

**Question 4: How does your child 11-14 years old choose whom to spend his/her time with?**

Most parents seem to be torn between letting their child choose his/her friends and activities, and controlling their external activities. One parent revealed, “I tell her that if she needs to go somewhere I need to go with her.” And yet another stated, “They choose what they like. I don’t let her go with friends. I tell her that she needs to study.”

There appears to be resignation in the parents that their children do determine what they will do with their time. Several parents again brought up the problem of gang involvement with their child. One parents reported, “At that age they can become delinquent.” Another

revealed, “My son learns a lot of things on the streets. He learns on the streets and on television.” Parents seem to understand the relationship between quality time spent with their child, and positive social outcomes. They seem to understand this best, however, by looking back at what they have done wrong. One parent reported, “My son’s babysitter was the television. That is what took care of my son.”

It appears that parents understand the need for supervision, yet lack the skills in communication. They understand the need for supervision yet lack the economic resources that make staying at home an option. Several parents reported the desire to better control the activities of their child, but there is a disconnection between what they express as desirable, and what they indeed do to bring about the desired outcome.

**Question 5: What other activities do you think should be available for your child 11-14 years old in Yakima County?**

The groups offered a mix of suggestions for activities to be in

place in Yakima County. Again, however, a major concern was that of cost. Many parents stated that the cost of summer programs and sports programs was too high. Parents also revealed that they would like programs to be “family programs” and not just individualized sports programs. They also revealed that access issues other than money prohibited them from participating. Several parents reported that a nursery or childcare would help them access programs.

Other suggestions encouraged more sports equipment in the parks that are closer to the Hispanic community. “That would help a lot. We don’t have to take them far.” Was heard by one parent. Other topic areas for activities included educational classes for youth, handcrafts, carpentry, sewing, piano, and counseling programs. It is interesting to note that the parent’s suggestions in these areas followed a stereotyped gender role expectation; “...tell the girls 13 to 14 years old about sex...” and “For boys, carpentry, so they can grow.” were comments that were made.

Parents also seemed to express a desire to have role models available for their children during activities. Several suggested having a larger police presence in the parks not only to enforce, but to educate.

Several parents also suggested a mentoring program with skilled volunteers. These suggestions were integrated with the idea of having a center where doctors and psychologists were available to help parents better raise their children. Several parents discussed having programs available to educate and help parents better deal with their children.

Also discussed was the idea of promoting a work ethic in youth. One parent stated “I think we should give chores to the kids for them to learn how to earn money and how to spend it. Not only sports, otherwise they think about playing only.” Parents in this group felt strongly that teenagers should be “put to work.”

**Question 6: Who does your child 11-14 years old feel safe or comfortable talking to about his/her problems?**

The majority of parents felt that their child came to them with his/her problems. Parents discussed the need for their child to have trust in them. Several parents discussed the issue of gender. Fathers stated that fear of the father motivates the child to go to either friends or the mother. One father revealed, "That is why the father tells the mother. That is why they blame the mother when she is not to blame." Mothers also expressed a desire for trust to be in the father. They expressed a desire for the father to be viewed as both a father and friend.

Family members were also named as a trusted confidant of children. Brothers, uncles, sisters, grandmothers and godmothers were all mentioned as adults in whom children trust.

Friends also made the list of trusted people. One parent expressed a balanced approach in garnering the trust of their child. She stated, "In my case I think we need a person outside the home, outside the problem." Another followed, "Because my daughter may have

things that she is not capable to tell me, I ask for help to my godmother."

If a child had a problem with school, parents felt that their child talked with the teachers or counselors at school.

**Question 7: Are there any adults who your child 11-14 years old feels comfortable talking to or spending time with?**

Many people made this list. They include "me, " older brother, friends, aunts, godmother, grandmother, nephew, dad, brothers-in-law, teachers, boy scouts, coordinators, cousins, and sisters. It is interesting to note that several parents expressed their child may be uncomfortable discussing sexuality information with them. One parents stated, "Maybe she doesn't feel comfortable talking about sex with me. She doesn't feel like asking questions about that." A father simply stated, "Maybe somebody who is not the father." Parents tried to explain this by stating that it is "because I work all of the time and can't give him the time he needs."

**Question 8: Has anyone provided sexuality education for your child**

**11-14 years old? (Only three groups summarized for this question. Audiotape difficulties.)**

Parents readily discussed this question. It is important to note that the language and words they used to describe sexuality information and education revealed a general discomfort with the topic. Several used words such as “it” for sexuality information, and “that” for intercourse. Several parents stated explicitly, “It is embarrassing.” and “As parents we are embarrassed to discuss this subject.”

The parents were almost evenly split between those who teach their child themselves, and those that rely on the school or clinic to educate their child. Those parents who freely discussed sexuality with their child feel “I preferred to do it myself so she will get the right answers.” They also expressed that their parent had educated them as children about sexuality.

Those parents who rely on the school had a rather mixed opinion of what the school did teach. Several parents believe that “...they tell them to go have sex.” and “they should wait until they are older.” Others

stated “I agree with the school; it is better than learning other places.” It is encouraging to note that several parents stated that the school encouraged the children to discuss the topic with their parent. Several parents did support this idea.

A disturbing note: a few parents stated that their child learned about sexuality from the streets, and “through the media, such as adult movies.”

**Question 9: Imagine that you are the teacher for a pregnancy prevention program. What do you think makes a successful teen pregnancy prevention program in our Hispanic community here in Yakima County? (Only three groups summarized for this question. Audiotape difficulties.)**

The parents expressed that they, as parents, need to be involved in a successful program. One parent did, however, express this concern: “I realize that the majority of Hispanic parents have a taboo. It is impossible to talk about sex.” Suggestions included educating the parents so that they might better inform their child, educating the parents from the school setting (offering a class just for parents),

and helping parents better understand the information. These strategies could all be used to overcome the taboo.

Parents also expressed supporting the ideals of abstinence, risk/harm reduction, consequences, and disease information. Parents also felt that the church and biblical teachings should be supported.

Other parents support the idea of information and advise instead of condom distribution. They felt that the schools lacked substance, and instead supported active sexuality by providing condoms alone.

**Question 10: Would you be willing to take part in a teen pregnancy prevention program for parents? (Only three groups summarized for this question. Audiotape difficulties.)**

All parents that participated in the focus groups stated that they would be willing to participate in a program. Several expressed that time and jobs were potential barriers. Several stated that the schools should actively inform the parents about upcoming programs instead of relying on the child. They stated that many

times the child will “scare” the parents out of attending.

Parents also expressed a desire to have more programs available via television. This might be an alternative way of bringing programs to parents (via community television and local access programs).

**Question 11: We have been asking children 11-14 years old about what they will be doing in the next 5-10 years. What are some ways that parents can help their children plan for the future?**

Parents revealed a strong desire for their children to succeed. They felt that they could best support this by encouraging them to stay in school, respect their teachers, give them support, and “Trust they will make progress.” They also expressed a desire to communicate more with their child and an understanding of the importance of participating in their child’s life.

One parent summed up this question by simply stating, “Love more our children...”

Focus Group Discussion: Both adolescents and parents agreed that

mothers were their most trusted confidants. Other family members followed. While younger adolescents did not appear willing to discuss components of sexuality education programs in focus groups, older adolescents disclosed that sexuality education programs should not moralize, but recognize their sexual experience. Older teens wanted programs for parents to include information on communication and parenting skills. Parents wanted programs to focus on consequences, protection, and responsibility. Parents wanted church and biblical teachings to be supported. They did express a willingness to be more involved in the education of their child. Older adolescents stated that they received sexuality information from friends first, then family members. Most parents reported that they believed they were the ones to discuss sexuality with their child. Some parents revealed that they felt too embarrassed to discuss the topic with their child.

Hispanic families tend to share a tight bond (Schust, C., 1997). It is

not surprising to find that both adolescents and parents in this study reported that the mother was the first person young people talked to when discussing their problems. This study confirms a recent study by Acklard and Neumark-Sztainer (2001) who reported that parents were the preferred confidants of teens. Hispanic family unity is a strength that can be built upon in designing successful teen pregnancy prevention programs.

While both younger and older adolescents stated that they confided in their mother when discussing their problems, many older teens indicated that they did not receive sexuality information from their parent. Most parents, however, stated that they taught their child about sexuality. This divergence of opinion may indicate that parents are not providing enough information to their children, possibly because they may be too embarrassed to discuss sexuality openly. This finding supports traditional Hispanic values that imply that sexuality should be discussed only between a husband and wife

(Schust, C., 1997; Garcia-Preto, 1996). Since many parents expressed an aversion to discussing sexuality with their child, we should support the important role of schools and clinics in providing comprehensive sexuality education that is available to all.

Since teens revealed they obtain sexuality information from friends, peer education programs may be successful with this population. Friends were mentioned by teens as trusted confidants and as a source of sexuality information. Parents also recognized the importance of friendships in the life of their child. Peer sexuality education programs may help bridge the gap of information between parent and child. Educators can provide the content suggested by parents utilizing the communication channels preferred by adolescents.

Adolescents and parents differed on the preferred content of teen pregnancy prevention programs. Adolescents wanted information on sexuality in a non-judgmental or non-moralizing manner and expressed interest in programs that discuss

communication and parental roles. Parents preferred programs that emphasized abstinence, responsibility and consequences. This preferential divergence may be difficult to overcome. It seems that the most effective programs will have content that reflects the values and preferences of both adolescents and parents.

Further focus group data analysis will follow, with particular emphasis placed on community and developmental assets perceived available and necessary by both teens and parents.

Researchers will also further analyze responses from both pregnant and parenting teens, as well as gatekeepers. This data will then be compared with responses from both teens and parents.

## SURVEY

A total of 111 youth and 34 parents completed the sexuality knowledge and attitude survey. While reliability and validity data are not available on the survey used for this research, all items were gleaned from published surveys that were

previously determined to be both reliable and valid.

Those who participated in a focus group were asked to complete a survey. The survey was administered at the end of the group meeting, as to not influence the attitudes or opinions of the group members. If a participant decided not to participate in a focus group, he/she was asked to complete only the survey. If a participant arrived too late to participate in a group, he/she was asked to complete only a survey.

### Survey Results.

#### Youth Age 11-14 Compared To Youth Age 15 -19

Highlights of the data are presented below. For complete frequency analysis of the data, refer to Appendices C - D for data tables of highlighted results.

Of those surveyed:

- Only 47% of youth age 11-14 knew that birth control is available at family planning clinics.
- Only 29% of youth age 11-14, and 52% of youth age 15-19 knew

that a woman could become pregnant if she had sexual intercourse during her period, and 36% of that age group knew that a woman could become pregnant if she had sexual intercourse standing up.

- Only 21% of youth age 11-14 knew that the withdrawal method of birth control is the least effective, compared with 70% of youth age 15-19.
- 70% of youth age 11-14 could correctly identify male reproductive parts compared with 84% of adolescents age 15-19.
- Overall, scores on sexual knowledge were weakest for youth age 11-14 when compared with youth age 15-19.
- When asked, "Who is most important in forming a person's attitude toward sex?" sociologically meaningful results were observed. 65% of youth age 11-14, and 41% of youth age 15-19 reported that her/his parent(s) were most important followed by close friends (12% and 32% respectively).
- Only 62% of youth age 15-19 reported that they liked being in school either quite a bit or very much compared with 86% of youth age 11-14.
- Only 19% of youth age 15-19 reported a plan to earn an advanced graduate degree in school compared with 63% of youth age 11-14.

- When asked “If you need advice about a serious personal issue who is the first person you would ask?” 38% of youth age 11-14 reported that they would ask a mother or female guardian compared with only 9% a father or male guardian. Older youth age 15-19 reported that they would first ask a close friend (43%). Only 4% of youth in this age group would ask a father or male guardian.
- Youth age 11-14 reported that they would likely talk to a nurse/doctor (69%) or a parent or guardian (60%) about sex. Older adolescents revealed that they would likely talk with a friend of the same sex (81%), someone they are dating or a nurse/doctor (72% each) about sex.
- When asked to assess skill in making decisions, youth age 11-14 (44%) reported always doing what they feel at the moment. Only 28% of older adolescents reported this behavior.
- Only 32% of youth age 15-19 reported that most of their friends get along with their parents really well compared with 65% of younger youth.
- Younger youth were more active in outside endeavors. 44% of youth age 11-14 played on a sports team in the last month compared to 21% of older youth. 62% of youth age 11-14 went to other after school activities in the past month compared to 38% of youth age 15-19. 65% of youth age 11-14 volunteered in the past month compared with 38% of youth age 15-19.
- 16% of youth age 15-19 reported that in the past month they attended a gang activity compared with only 3% of youth age 11-14.
- Only 53% of youth age 11-14 reported that they agreed or strongly agreed with the need to use birth control if they were not ready for a child compared with only 62% of youth age 15-19.
- Younger youth age 11-14 reported more discussion of sexuality topics with a parent than did their older counterparts. Older youth generally reported more discussion of sexuality topics at school rather than at home.
- 90% of youth age 15-19 reported that they were satisfied with their current knowledge of things having to do with sexuality compared with 67% of their age 11-14 counterparts.
- 76% of youth age 15-19 reported that they would feel comfortable discussing sexual issues with their date compared to 45% of youth age 11-14.
- 86% of youth age 15-19 reported that they would feel comfortable discussing birth control with their date if they were going to have sex compared with 61% of youth age 11-14.

- 84% of youth age 15-19 reported that they would feel comfortable discussing sexual issues with friends compared with only 47% of youth age 11-14.
- 95% of youth age 15-19 reported that they would feel comfortable insisting on using some form of birth control if having sex compared with only 60% of youth age 11-14.

Parents of Youth Age 11-14  
(Parents of Younger Teens)  
Compared To Parents of Youth  
Age 15-19 (Parents of Older  
Teens)

Highlights of the data are presented below. Refer to Appendices F-G for data tables of highlighted results.

Of those surveyed:

- 50% of parents of younger teens believed that a woman could not become pregnant if she has sex during her menstrual cycle compared with 35% of parents of older teens.
- Only 53% of parents of older teens knew that pregnancy could result if sperm get near the opening of the vagina, even though the man's penis does not enter her body compared with 81% of parents of younger teens.
- 12% of parents of older teens believed that a woman could not become pregnant the first time

she has sexual intercourse. Parents of younger youth all knew that a woman can become pregnant the first time she has sexual intercourse.

- Overall parent scores revealed a general lack of factual knowledge about sexuality issues.
- When asked, "Who is most important in forming a person's attitude toward sex?" 76% of parents of older teens reported his/her parents compared with 63% of parents of younger teens. 21% of parents of younger teens reported that society was most important compared with 6% of parents of older teens.
- 40% of parents of younger teens reported that they strongly agreed with the statement "Teens have sex as a way to get or keep a boyfriend or girlfriend" compared with 24% of parents of older teens.
- 88% of parents of older teens strongly agreed with the statement "It is important to begin discussing sexuality openly in early childhood" compared with 56% of parents of younger teens. 17% of parents of younger teens disagreed or strongly disagreed with the same statement.
- Parents of older teens believed more in the importance of teaching sexuality to provide accurate information (81%) and to help people make more informed choices (60%) than did parents of

- younger teens (60% and 46% respectively).
- Only 44% of parents of older teens reported that they believed their child would be comfortable discussing birth control with their date if they were going to have sex compared with 83% of parents of younger teens.
  - Only 55% of parents of older teens reported that they thought their child would feel comfortable telling a date what they want to do or not do sexually compared with 76% of parents of younger teens.
  - Only 65% of parents of older teens believed that their child would feel comfortable insisting on some form of birth control if they are having sex compared with 81% of parents of younger teens.
  - Only 44% of parents of older teens believed that their child would feel comfortable buying birth control at a drug store compared with 83% of parents of younger teens.
  - Only 44% of parents of older teens reported that their child would feel comfortable going to a doctor or clinic for birth control if they are having sex compared with 78% of parents of younger teens.
  - 39% of parents of older teens reported that they would feel uncomfortable talking with their child about male and female body differences compared to 17% of parents of younger teens.
  - 41% of parents of older teens revealed that they would feel uncomfortable discussing the correct names of genitals with their child compared to 15% of parents of younger teens.
  - 44% of parents of older teens reported that they would feel uncomfortable discussing with their child how someone gets pregnant compared to 12% of parents of younger teens.
  - 38% of parents of older teens revealed that they would feel uncomfortable discussing with their child how babies are born compared to 7% of parents of younger teens.
  - 15% of parents of younger teens reported that they would feel uncomfortable discussing birth control with their child compared to 13% of parents of older teens.
  - While parents expressed being uncomfortable talking to their child about sexual topics, both parents of younger teens and parents of older teens reported that the majority had discussed these topics with their child in the past.
  - The majority of parents of younger teens and parents of older teens revealed that they believed parents should have the primary responsibility for teaching youth about sexuality topics. While parents of older teens revealed a greater reliance on teachers (content of school word) and physicians and/or nurses to

assist in this educational endeavor, parents of younger teens revealed a greater reliance on professional sex educators or counselors to assist.

#### Teens Age 11-19 Compared To Parents of Teens Age 11-19.

Highlights of the data are presented below. Refer to Appendices E and H for data tables of highlighted results.

Of those surveyed:

- While both teens (49%) and parents (71%) felt that the parents were most important in forming a person's attitude toward sex, 25% of teens felt that friends were most important compared with only 6% of parents.
- 92% of parents felt that their child could tell them the way they feel about sexual things (compared with only 52% of teens who reported that they would be likely to talk with a parent or guardian about sex, and only 50% reported that they could tell their parent/guardian the way they feel about sexual things).
- Overall, 88% of parents and 88% of teens revealed that they were satisfied with their current knowledge about things having to do with sexuality.
- There is a large frequency difference between teens that reported they had discussed certain sexual topics with a

parent, and the parents report of discussion of the topic, with parents reporting much more discussion than teens.

#### Gatekeepers.

Highlights of the data are presented below. Refer to Appendix I for data tables of highlighted results.

Of those surveyed:

- 33% of gatekeepers did not know that some birth control methods could be obtained only with a doctor's prescription, and 12% did not know that some methods could be purchased over the counter at drug stores.
- 38% of gatekeepers believe that it was NOT possible for a woman to become pregnant if she had sexual intercourse during her menstrual period.
- One would expect these important role models and significant people in the lives of teens to be more knowledgeable about sexual health matters.
- When asked who is most important in forming a person's attitude toward sex, 68% of gatekeepers responded "His/her parents." 21% responded with "His/her peer group."
- 88% of gatekeepers agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement: "Teens have sex as a

way to get or keep a boyfriend or girlfriend.”

- 91% of gatekeepers believed that it was important to begin discussing sexuality openly in early childhood.
- While 97% of gatekeepers reported that they were satisfied with their current knowledge about things having to do with sexuality, the earlier mentioned lack of knowledge is a concern.
- Gatekeepers generally believed that parents should have primary responsibility for informing adolescents about sexual health matters. However, 32% believed that professional sex educators or counselors should have primary responsibility for discussing STD's, and 24% believed they should have primary responsibility for discussion of birth control.
- Gatekeepers did not often select teachers as sources of information.

## SUMMARY

During Spring and Summer 2002, researchers conducted a wide-sweeping formative research study concerning pregnancy prevention in the teen Hispanic population in Yakima County, Washington. Utilizing both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies,

researchers sought to explore Latina teen pregnancy prevention.

Researchers chose a focus group design for one facet of this formative study. Specific objectives of groups were to a) gain an understanding of who adolescents felt safe or comfortable talking about their problems, b) understand adolescents' perceptions of critical components of teen pregnancy prevention, c) establish parents' understanding of who teenagers felt safe or comfortable talking with about their problems, d) ascertain parents' attitudes toward components of sexuality education, e) identify who adolescents report provided them sexuality education, and f) identify who parents report provides sexuality education to their child.

Survey research methods were utilized to form a baseline of understanding about the sexual knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs of both Hispanic teens and parents.

Further study of pregnant and parenting Hispanic teens, gatekeepers, and interactions of knowledge and attitudes with

behaviors is warranted. Researchers will also examine further the role of fathers, peer group, parental education, and developmental assets within the Yakima Hispanic teen population.

To date, one paper has been published utilizing data collected from this study. Also, three national presentations, and one district presentation has been made utilizing this data as well.

#### DISSEMINATION

To date, results of this study have been presented in a variety of settings. One article has been published in the California Journal of Health Promotion in a special Hispanic issue. A copy of this article has been added to the end of this summary.

Researchers have presented results at the Southwest, Northwest, and Nevada combined Association for the Advancement of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance Conference in Reno Nevada in March of 2003.

Researchers are also presenting results at the American Public Health

Association national meeting at San Francisco, CA in November 2003.



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