



Teen Pregnancy and Child Bearing

The Power of Partnerships with Parents!

Fall, 2011

Today's Speaker



Barb Flis
Founder of Parent Action
For Healthy Kids

Barb Flis, Founder of Parent Action for Healthy Kids. Barb has more than 15 years of experience working with parents, schools and community organizations in the arena of HIV and sexuality education. She has advanced training and experience in effective professional development for adult learners. Barb has provided training and technical assistance to sex education trainers in every corner of the state of Michigan. She is a nationally recognized expert, keynoting conferences for professionals working in school health, teen pregnancy prevention, education professionals, and parent education. Her work coordinating the former Michigan Governor's ***Talk Early & Talk Often*** parent program has been sited in national press including Newsweek. In 2010, Barb was one of ten participants invited to Washington D.C. to provide input in the development of the parent web site component for the First Lady's **Let's Move** initiative.

Webinar Objectives

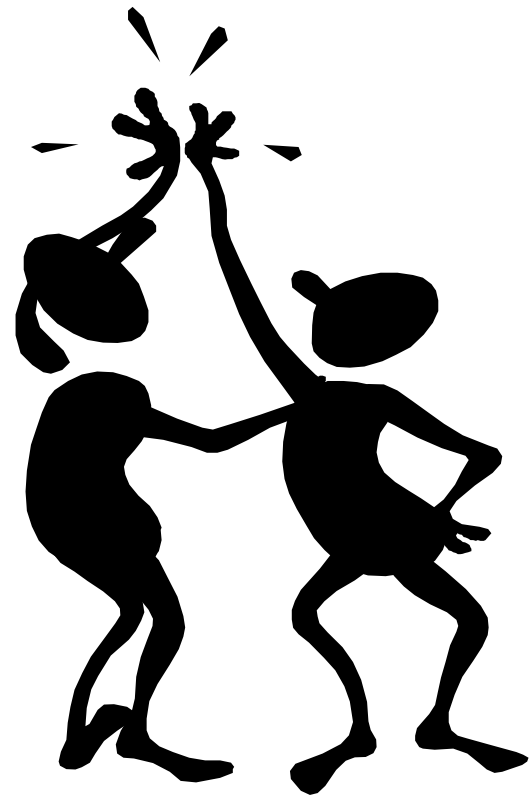
- Identify what parents need to know about adolescent sexual health and teen pregnancy prevention programming;
- Distinguish between effective and ineffective communication with parents; and
- Describe innovative ways that communities and schools can more effectively engage parents as partners.

The Power of Partnerships with Parents

**Defining Parent Engagement
How do you see it?**

Defining Parent Engagement

How do you see it?



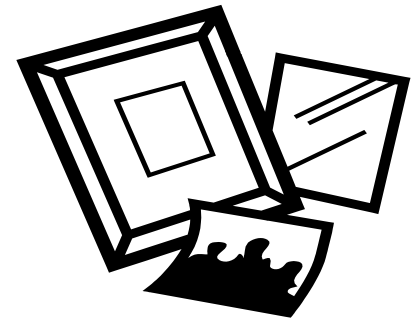
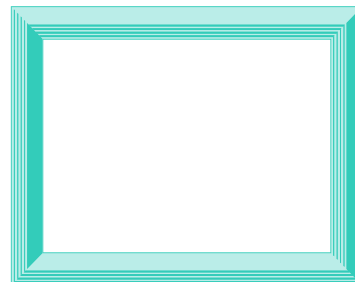
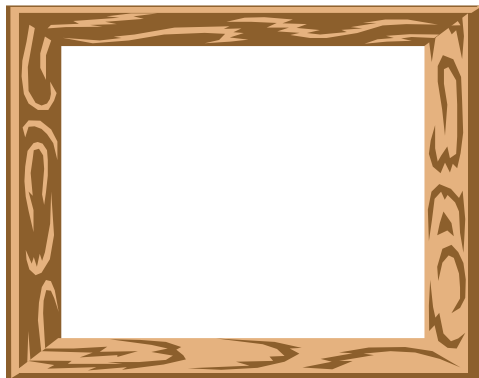
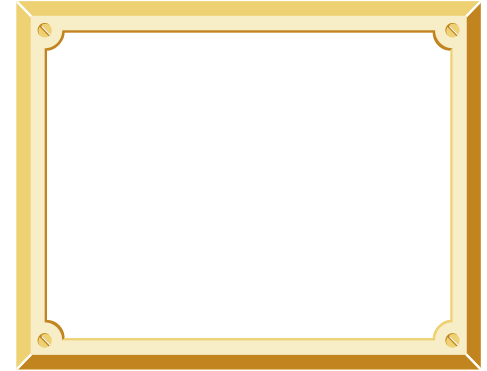
What about those parents?? Throw away your troubles!



The Perfect Parent? *It's an ILLUSION!!!*

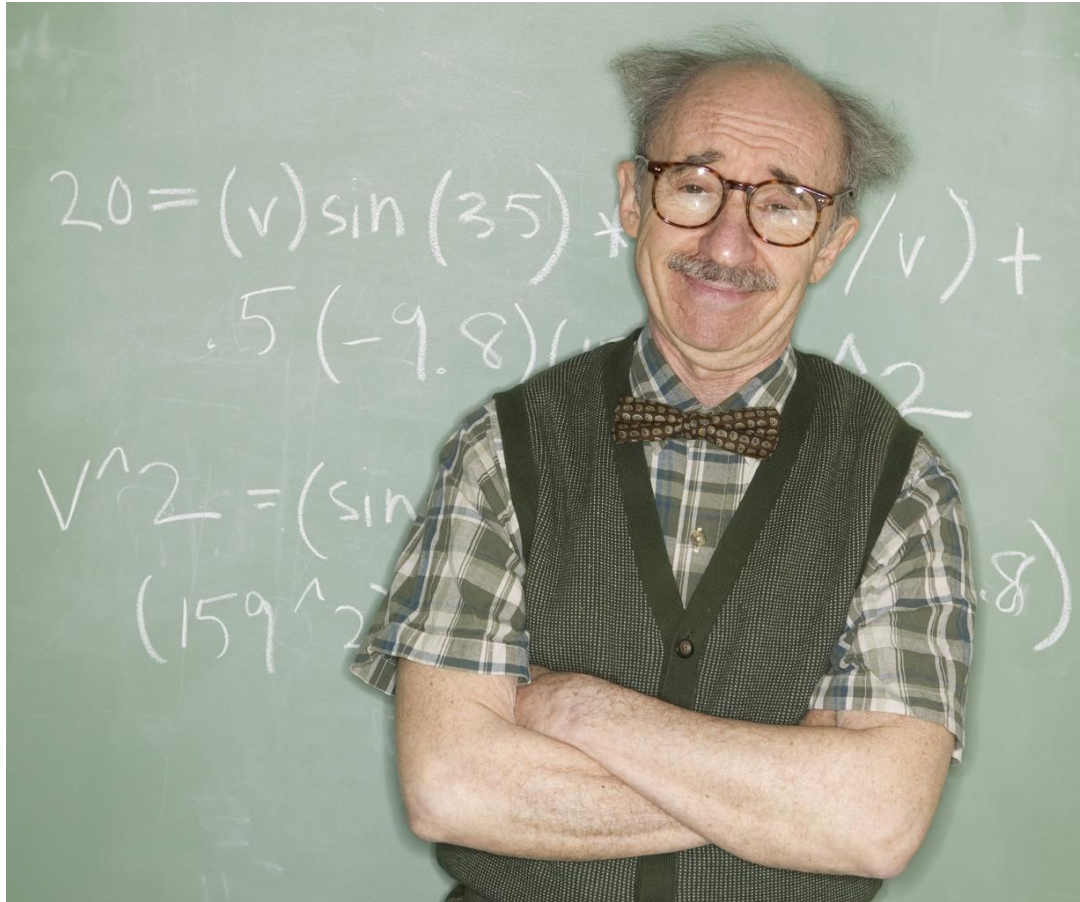


Re-Framing our Perception of Parents



Parents Support for Sex Education

Let's do the math...



Parent Support for Sex Education in School

- **California – 82%.** N.A. Constantine et al. / Sex Education: The Parent's Perspective. May, 2007
- **Michigan – 78%.** EPIC MRA Your Child Statewide Survey of Parents, May, 2004
- **Minnesota – 89%.** M.E. Eisenberg et al. / Journal of Adolescent Health 42 (2008) 352-359
- **North Carolina – 91%.** Journal of Adolescent Health 39 (2006) 634-641

Let's take a poll!

What do you want parents to do?

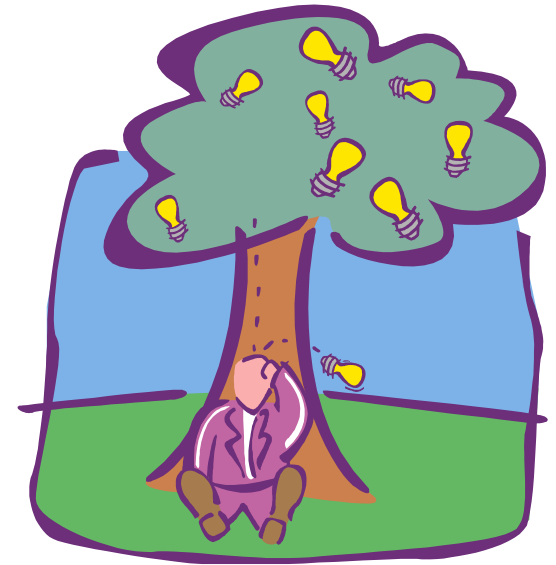
1. Talk to their adolescents about sex
2. Come to workshops and educate themselves about adolescent sexuality
3. Know what is taught in the program so they can continue the conversation at home and support your work
4. Stay out of the business of educators so effective teen pregnancy prevention programs can be taught with fidelity

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Are Parents Listening?!
Listening is a two way street!

Something to Ponder

***For people in distress
will sometimes prefer
a problem that is
familiar to a solution
that is not.***



Source: Neil Postman, *The End of Education*

Understanding Parent Emotions

Judged

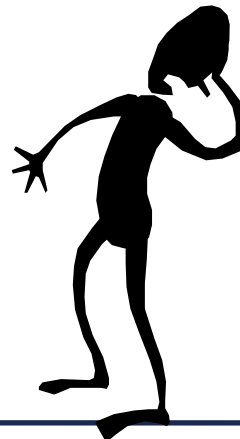


Inadequate

Shame



Frustration



Loser

Choose Words Carefully

Need to



Want to

Have to



Choose to

Should



Would like to

Source: Medicine of the Cherokee by Garrett, J.T. & Garrett, M.

Important to remember ...

Emotions

Language

Clarify

Process

Keep it simple

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**Sex Education “101”
Helping parents be good consumers!**

Show of hands! Did your parents do a good job talking to you about sex?



Why is Quality Sexuality Education Important?



- ✓ Because we are all sexual beings.
- ✓ Because sexuality can either be a positive or negative force in our lives.
- ✓ Because there are many health risks associated with sexual activity including HIV, other STD's and unintended pregnancy.
- ✓ Because of the health, social and economic costs, the consequences of sexual activity are often significant.

Why is Quality Sexuality Education Important?



- ✓ Because young people are overwhelmed with conflicting and powerful messages about sexuality.
- ✓ Because young people need facts and skills to make healthy decisions
- ✓ Because sexuality education will happen with or without adult guidance.
- ✓ Because we want our youth to grow up to be sexually healthy and responsible adults.
- ✓ Because today's youth become tomorrow's parents and mentors.

Sexuality Key Concepts Birth through 12th Grade

- Human Development
- Relationships
- Personal Skills
- Sexual Behavior
- Sexual Health
- Society & Culture



Source: Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education, www.siecus.org

Student Needs

Youth Risk Behavior Survey

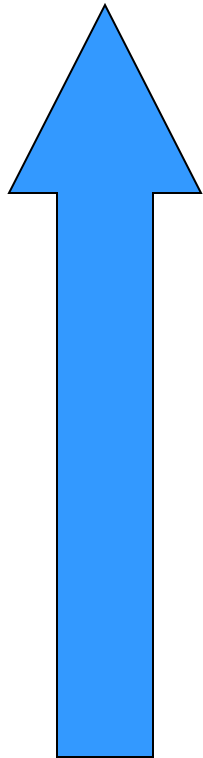
Teen Pregnancy Rates

Student Focus Group

HIV & STD Rates

Knowledge ≠ Behavior Change

Better Indicators



Behavior

Intention

Knowledge

Remember that what people **know** may not determine what they **do**.

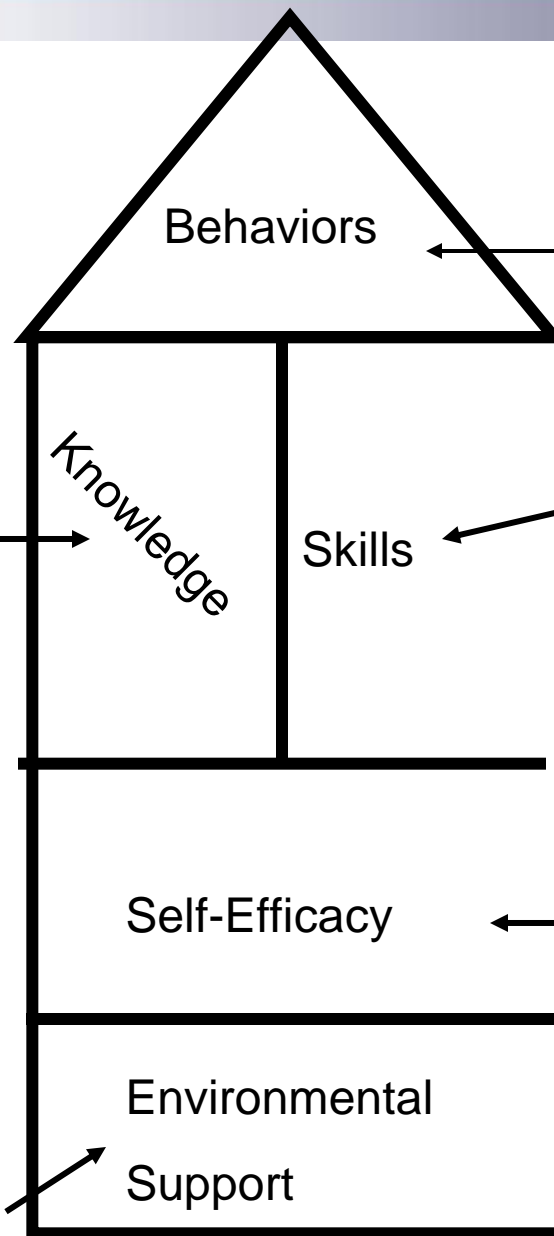
Example:



Facts to make responsible decisions

Understand the risks and benefits

Peers, school, home, community support and reinforcement for healthy behaviors



Behaviors

Knowledge

Skills

Self-Efficacy

Environmental Support

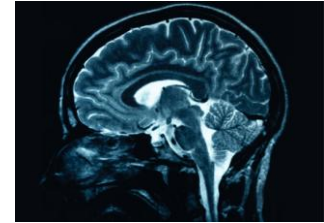
The most important predictors of current and future health status

Abilities to act in healthy way

Belief that one can use the skills to change life

Source: Rivertown Consultants

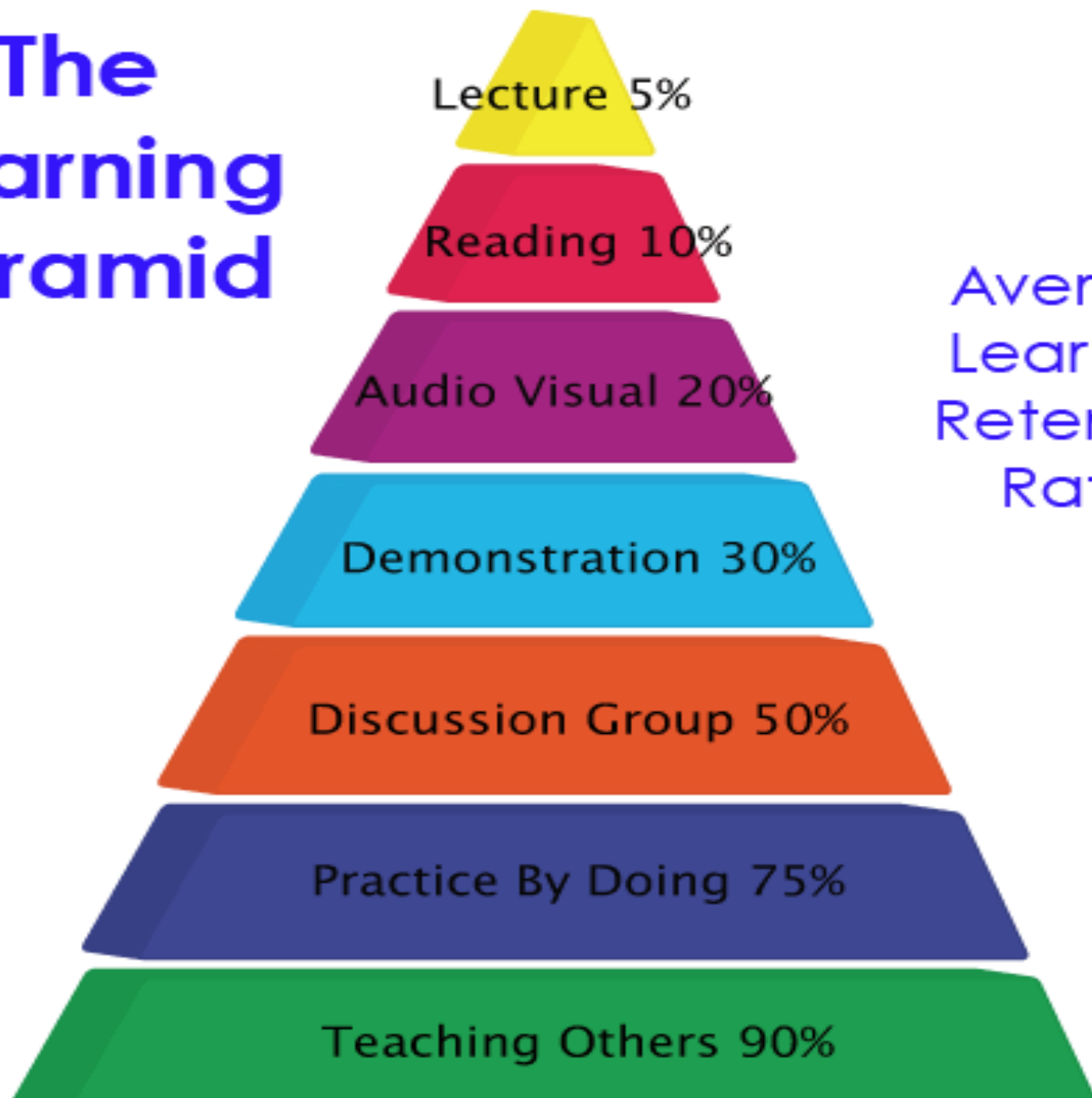
Brain Development



- During early adolescence there is a dramatic neurological growth & change (infancy is the only other time the brain achieves such strides)
- Cortex – CEO of the brain where judgments are made and emotions are regulated.
- Limbic system – Where emotions originate and send out gut reactions such as anger and fear. Limbic system is going full blast without the counter balance of a mature prefrontal cortex

The Adolescent Brain: A Work in Progress – www.teenpregnancy.org

The Learning Pyramid



Average Learning Retention Rates

Adapted from NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science

Teaching with Fidelity and Baking: Similarities



Standards

Ingredients:

Flour

Sugar

~~Oil~~

~~Eggs~~

Goals of Successful Programs

Sex Education programs may have many goals:

- Provide accurate information
- Promote a positive sexual identity
- Increase communication between youth and trusted adults
- Equip young people with skills to maintain positive relationships
- Foster healthy behaviors

Primary Goal:

- **Prevent sexual behaviors that may result in negative consequences, such as unplanned pregnancy, unhealthy relationships, or infection with HIV/STD.**

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Engaging Parents as Partners!?

Key Issues for Parent Engagement

- Any HIV or sex education program for youth will be less effective if it is not supported and reinforced by parent(s).
- Young people want and need messages regarding healthy sexuality and relationships from parents or trusted adults.
- Parents are often an “**after thought**” in program planning rather than an integral part of program design and implementation.
- Educators/providers **attitudes** towards parents can be the biggest barrier in reaching them.

Parent Input

- A curriculum is unlikely to be implemented or effective unless it is consistent with what **most** parents want for their children
- The best way to find out what parents want for their children is to ask them in the form of a brief, straightforward **parent survey**.



Tips

- View parents as a blessing rather than a burden
 - Less is more
 - Ask parents for what you need
 - Building relationships with parents takes time
 - Have open and honest dialogue
 - It is okay to respectfully disagree
 - Parents are looking for expertise and leadership.
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Talk Early & Talk Often



- A workshop for parents of middle school youth. The initiative was designed to support parents as the primary abstinence and sexuality educators of their children

Lessons learned



- Parents are thirsty for this information
 - Parents appreciated the “parent-to-parent” style of the workshop.
 - Parents appreciated the respect shown for their value system and honoring them as the primary educator.
 - Many parents requested the “situation cards” so that they could practice at home.
 - The role play was often the first conversation parents have ever had on the topic.
 - Parents came to the workshop feeling powerless over their adolescent’s outside influences
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Challenges

- Participation
- Attitudes toward parents
- Sensitivity of topic
- Fear of conflict
- Scheduling
 - Short lead time to plan
 - Conflicts with holiday's and school activities



Tips For Working With Parents

- No shaming, blaming or judging
- Be positive
- Use simple language
- Be sensitive toward differences
- Have fun
- Listen
- Be real



Questions?





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Thank You!
Barb Flis, Founder
Parent Action for Healthy Kids
barb@parentactionforhealthykids.org