

# Get Involved

**VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2**

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## Greetings!

Harrisonburg-Rockingham Teen Pregnancy Prevention is dedicated to delaying sex and avoiding pregnancy among teenagers.

We hope that this newsletter will provide you with the latest news concerning teen pregnancy, both locally and nationally.

*Thank You  
For Your Support*



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## Teen Girls and the “Older Guy”

For countless teenage girls, dating an older guy is “cool.” They feel attractive and mature, so the fact that he’s a few years older shouldn’t matter, right? Well, some questions about these relationships should be asked before that can be answered accurately.

First, why do many young girls want to date older guys? Teen girls oftentimes cite these males’ “experience” and “maturity” as reasons. These same qualities, however, can be negative aspects of dating older men as well. Next, what is the nature of relationships between teen girls and adult men? Unfortunately, in many cases, the answer is a sexual and illegal one. Finally, how can these inappropriate relationships be avoided? Prevention and intervention are the main strategies being employed to stop teen-adult dating and sexual situations. Let’s look at some of the main issues with these relationships and how to avoid them.

Already dealing with adolescent issues, young girls are especially vulnerable during their teenage years. This vulnerability creates opportunities for men to take advantage of them. Young females are regularly targeted by adult men who can easily manipulate them into unwanted and unprotected sex. Although not all relationships between older males and younger females

result in sexual contact, much of them do. A girl is more likely to engage in sexual activities when she is in a relationship with an older man.

**Sex with a minor is illegal and punishable by jail time and a fine.**

According to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, the majority of sexually experienced teen girls had their first sexual contact with a male one to three years older than them. Additionally, males in their early twenties father most children born to teenage girls. Another concern for these girls is the risk of contracting a sexually transmitted infection. Because older men are more likely to have had several sexual partners, there is a greater chance they have, and thus can pass on, an STI. It seems older males’ “experience” can be not such an attractive quality for young girls after all.

It is important for all adults to understand that sexual activity between an adult and adolescent is unacceptable and *unlawful*. Each state has its own laws regarding the prohibition of sex with people under a certain age. Virginia’s statutory rape laws are as follows when sexual activity is not forced:

**Ages:** two minors, 3+ yrs. age difference  
**Charge:** Class 6 Felony

**Ages:** 18+ & 13-14 yrs.  
**Charge:** Class 4 Felony  
**Jail time:** 2-10 yrs.  
**Fine:** up to \$100,000

**Ages:** 18+ & 15-17 yrs.  
**Charge:** Class 1 Misdemeanor  
**Jail time:** up to 1 yr.  
**Fine:** \$2,500

Although jail time and fines are appropriate punishments for getting caught with a minor, prevention and intervention are key. In order to protect teen girls from the risks that accompany dating an older guy, action needs to be taken. Parents and teachers must educate girls about the risks involved with dating older men. If a teen girl is already involved with an adult male, explain why the relationship is inappropriate. Lastly, report men who are in violation of Virginia’s sexual assault laws.

While dating an older man may seem appealing to young girls, it can have some pretty un-appealing consequences. Increased likelihood of sexual activity, pregnancy, and catching an STI are just a few. Help protect young girls and spread the knowledge.

Sources: Healthy Teen Network, Health-Comm Interactive, Virginia Dept. of Health

# What About Teen Fathers?

For many years efforts aimed at preventing adolescent parenthood have focused on the consequences teen mothers face. Teen fatherhood, on the other hand, has not received nearly as much scrutiny, yet it carries many of the same negative consequences as teen motherhood. These consequences affect not only the teen father, but his child as well. Among these, financial, educational, health, social, and socioeconomic disadvantages are prevalent.

## Financial

After fathering a child, teenage boys are subject to many financial struggles. They often face employment challenges, finding it difficult to obtain and keep a job, while at the same time adjusting to being a new father. According to the Healthy Teen Network, as a result of these employment challenges, adolescent fathers have low family income. Additionally, paying child support costs can further lower a teen father's financial status.

## Health

In relation to adolescent fathers' decreased financial stability, both their children's and their health is at risk. They are often unable to afford health insurance or even provide sufficient nutritional sustenance. Mental health is also affected; many teen fathers have high stress levels. Finally, studies have concluded that increased drug use is common among teenage fathers as well.

## Educational

Teen fathers' educational problems begin with disruptive school behavior, states the Dept. of Justice. Next, academic performance reportedly lowers, often ending in early school dropout. In an extensive study of teenage fathers by William Marsiglio, it was found that they are *significantly* more likely to drop out of school prematurely than their childless peers.

## Social

Having a child at such a young age can drastically affect a teen boy's social well-being. He is likely to display antisocial behaviors, associate with deviant peers, and

may eventually participate in criminal behaviors. According to a Department of Justice study, fathering a child is associated with an even greater increase in delinquent behavior for teen boys. High arrest rates for these fathers, then, can be understood.

## Socioeconomic

Taking into account their monetary struggles, likelihood not to graduate high school, and possible delinquent behavior, it is no surprise that socioeconomic disadvantages are common among teen fathers. Many of these young boys live in neighborhoods characterized by poverty. This disadvantaged living situation leads to future problems for their own children as well.

Obviously becoming a teen father has many negative effects. In order to avoid these devastating consequences, teen boys, not just girls, need to learn pregnancy prevention. Teach your boys early and help them avoid the consequences.

# Get Connected: Helpful Websites for Parents & Teachers

## Harrisonburg-Rockingham Teen Pregnancy Prevention [www.findyourreason.org](http://www.findyourreason.org)

- Local statistics on teen pregnancy rates for the Harrisonburg-Rockingham area
- Helpful information for parents, teens, health providers, and our community concerning teen pregnancy prevention
- Descriptions of local teen pregnancy prevention programs

## Virginia Department of Health [www.vdh.virginia.gov](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov)

- Disease information, including STI prevention tips
- Virginia's teen health stats and facts

## The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy\*

### [www.teenpregnancy.org](http://www.teenpregnancy.org)

- Teen pregnancy prevention info for parents and professionals
- Link labeled "parents" connects parents to information about how to talk to their children about pregnancy prevention
- Contains link to the "Parent Power Quiz" used to test parents' knowledge of what their kids are actually thinking

## Healthy Teen Network

### [www.healthyteennetwork.org](http://www.healthyteennetwork.org)

- Multitude of facts and helpful info for both parents and educators regarding teen health
- "Fast Facts" about adolescent health issues

## Advocates For Youth

### [www.advocatesforyouth.org](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org)

- Provides info for professionals, parents, and youth on adolescents' reproductive and sexual health
- Focuses on 3 Rs: Rights, Respect, Responsibility
- Sex Ed for Parents—tips for talking to your kids about sex

## Kids Health\*

### [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

- Provides doctor-approved information about children, pre-birth through adolescence
- Answers frequently asked questions for kids, teens, and parents

## The Alan Guttmacher Institute

### [www.guttmacher.org](http://www.guttmacher.org)

- Extensive health stats on teenagers and their reproductive health
- Reliable research-based information

## Central Shenandoah Health District

### [www.thehealthdepartment.org](http://www.thehealthdepartment.org)

- List of local health services
- Teen health info for members of the Central Shenandoah valley

## Centers for Disease Control and Prevention\*

### [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

- Guide to info on diseases and various other health conditions
- STI facts

\*Available in Spanish

## Advantages of Abstinence

Ever wonder how to talk to teens about choosing abstinence? Simply telling them what to do is not good enough, and can ultimately lead them to rebel. Instead, discussing the positive aspects of abstaining will help them understand the importance of waiting. The following is a list of some of the numerous benefits accompanied by choosing abstinence that can be shared with teenagers:

### PREGNANCY PREVENTION

- The only way to 100% effectively prevent pregnancy is through abstinence

**The ONLY way to fully prevent pregnancy is through abstinence**

### STI & AIDS PREVENTION

- Abstaining from oral, vaginal, and anal sex is the only way to completely avoid contracting an STI or the HIV virus

### FIGHT SEXUAL PRESSURE

- Already choosing abstinence aids teens in dealing with future pressure to have sex

### BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

- Waiting to have sex encourages adolescents to build relationships in other ways
- Showing caring through other methods allows positive, healthy relationships to grow

### INFERTILITY & CANCER

- Women who wait to engage in sexual contact until their 20s are less likely to become infertile or develop cervical cancer

### PROVIDES TIME

- Teens who choose abstinence give themselves time to decide when they are ready for sex later in life
- Abstaining allows boys and girls to wait for a healthy time to have sex and the results of such activity

### PURSUE GOALS

- Without having to worry about becoming pregnant or getting an STI, adolescents can focus on their present and future goals
- School and sports activities provide great reasons to wait for sex

### SEXUAL HEALTH

- Teens who decide to abstain make sexual health a priority
- They don't risk their sexual health by engaging in sexual activity

### WHO TRULY CARES

- By waiting to have sex, teen boys and girls realize who really cares about them
- Those who pressure sexual activity or tease teens about their decision to wait are obviously not concerned with their personal wishes

Sources: Advocates for Youth, Planned Parenthood

## Keep 'em Active: Afterschool Activities

Today's youth are spending more time unsupervised after school than any generation before them. This lack of supervision has contributed to America's problem with teenage pregnancy.

Research shows that adolescents who participate in afterschool extracurricular activities are less likely to become teen parents. Teenagers who do not participate in afterschool programs are 37% more likely to become parents than

their involved peers.

To reduce teen pregnancy, parents are encouraged to suggest afterschool programs to their youth. Involvement in extracurricular activities not only helps prevent pregnancy, but is beneficial in a variety of other ways too. Playing sports builds physical health, being in a club provides leadership opportunities, and volunteering promotes community improvement. Whether it's the drama

club, football team, or youth group, any activity is better than sex. It makes sense that when kids are busy, and engaged in their school and community they are less likely to use drugs or alcohol, participate in gang activity, or engage in early sexual activity. Help teens find an activity that meets their interests and skills.

Source: Afterschool Alliance  
www.afterschoolalliance.org

## 6 Quick Facts

- 822,000 teen girls get pregnant every year in the United States
- Adolescents make up 1/4 of the sexually active population
- The Youth Risk Behavior Survey reported in 2005 that 46.8% of all high school students said they have had sexual intercourse
- Every year 3 million teenagers contract an STI
- \$9 billion- the cost of teen pregnancy to the U.S. annually
- 8 out of 10 adolescent pregnancies are unintended and 81% are to unmarried parents

Sources: Teen Health FX, Healthy Teen Network, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

# Pregnancy Prevention Programs

Harrisonburg-Rockingham Teen Pregnancy Prevention has created several programs to serve the community. *Vision of You* is a program for high school and middle school-aged students that focuses on making healthy decisions. *Healthy Choices Presentations* are designed to address the consequences of alcohol and drug use, as well as sexual behavior among teenagers. *FutureBuild*, geared toward young adults, promotes healthy, responsible attitudes and behaviors.

## Vision of You

The slogan "Are you who you want to be?" sums up this TPP program. Throughout the ten sessions that compose *Vision of You*, students are presented with various activities that allow them to answer this question. The goal is to help the students, through discussion and hands-on activities, improve their decision-making abilities. While developing these skills the teens are encouraged to make healthy choices for their futures. Topics covered include future goals, sexual decision-making, media, resisting pressures, and developing relationships. By teaching youth valuable

decision-making skills, they will be better prepared to make responsible choices.

## Healthy Choices Presentations

This energetic, straight-forward presentation calls attention to significant life choices adolescents have to make. Students learn that every choice has a consequence. Behaviors such as alcohol and drug use, along with sexual activity, are highlighted. Emphasis is put on making good *future* choices even if past ones have been bad. The content is flexible and is designed around each specific request. TPP also provides presentations dealing with teen pregnancy issues, the local problem, and how to talk to teenagers about sex to educators, providers, youth leaders and parents.

## FutureBuild

Three programs make up *FutureBuild*. First, "Train the Trainer" provides adults and professionals information to educate customers and clients aged 20 through 29 about healthy living. Next, *FutureBuild* Community Classes are held for individuals living in Harrisonburg in the 20-29 age

range. Participants attend six hours of classes and receive information regarding healthy marriage, career, and family attitudes and behaviors. Incentives are given for successful completion of "Train the Trainer" or Community Classes. Finally, the "Workplace Initiative" is available to Harrisonburg companies and agencies. It is a one hour on-site training for employees and/or clients that combines "Train the Trainer" and Community Classes workshops.

## Mini Health Fairs

TPP also presents pregnancy prevention information at school and community-based events. Representatives spread awareness of local teen pregnancy issues, and knowledgeable staff members are available to answer questions. Recently TPP staff has conducted mini fairs on the following topics: friendship, bullying, and healthy relationships. The TPP staff is very flexible and programs can be designed around specific needs.

\*Contact Kim at 568-7083 or hartzlkm@jmu.edu if you are interested in any of the above programs.

## TOILET TALK

The Facts ABOUT ... Sexual Coercion

Sexual Coercion means being persuaded to have sex when you don't really want to. This often happens in unbalanced relationships where there is unequal power. Unwanted sex is not healthy physically or emotionally.

**If your partner uses any of the following pressures or threats, speak up and get help!**

- They say that "everyone's doing it"
- They say, "Sex proves you love me"
- They say, "You've had sex before, so you can't say no now"
- They threaten to leave you
- They put you down and make you have guilt trips
- They spend money on you and in turn try to make you feel as though you "owe" them sex.

**To avoid situations like the ones listed above, make sure you:**

- Trust your own feelings
- Recognize signs of possible sexual coercion
- Say "NO" firmly and leave
- Seek help
- Contact the Collins Center in Harrisonburg @ 540-434-2272, or New Directions Center in Staunton @ 540-886-6800 for more information, or if you just need to talk to someone.

Remember: If you don't feel comfortable in a situation, get out and get help!

Source: Family Violence and Sexual Assault's Training and Education of Lawyers and Forensic Professionals (2004)

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**Asking your parents sex questions might be hard – but there's a long-term payoff.**

Your Excuse	The Real Deal
"It's too embarrassing."	If you can't get past your embarrassment over getting talking about sex, you're probably not ready to actually do the deed either.
"I already know everything."	Even if you do, chatting your parents out of this important part of your life creates a barrier that may last your relationship with them.
"They'll kill me."	Chances are they'll be more afraid if you don't talk to them. Would you rather talk to them about a much bigger problem, like getting pregnant or getting an STD?

Source: Sexvibes Magazine, Dec. 2008

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**Did you know ...?**

A new vaccine, given through a series of three shots, can now protect females (ages 9-26) from four major types of HPV, which cause about 70% of cervical cancers and about 90% of genital warts.

Source: www.ydoyouthink.com

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**I CHOOSE NOT TO HAVE SEX BECAUSE I AM NOT 100% SURE THAT MY BOYFRIEND/GIRLFRIEND IS NOT INFECTED WITH AN STD. FIND YOUR REASON.**

www.findyourreason.org

Provided by the Central Shenandoah Valley Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative

Question? Contact us! Staunton: (540) 886-2177 (Student) or email: HealthDP@cei.org/centralvalley/taunton/rocksingham/568-7083 (King) or email: hartzlkm@jmu.edu

Approved by: J. L. Esquejeda

**teen pregnancy prevention**  
Central Shenandoah Valley

# Media Messages

Talk to your friends...



You'll find out that not everybody is doing it.

FIND YOUR REASON.

teen pregnancy prevention  
Central Shenandoah Valley

If you are interested in having copies of these posters for your business, agency or school, please contact Jennifer Rea at (540) 568-7083 or e-mail reajl@jmu.edu. Examples of all media materials are available on our website at [www.findyourreason.org](http://www.findyourreason.org)