

# PLACE MATTERS:

## Youth Perspectives on Teen Pregnancy & Their Environment

### VIDEO DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR YOUTH



This video was a project of the JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. Working with Diverse Communities component in collaboration with the following Integrating Services, Programs, and Strategies Through Communitywide Initiatives grantees:

Hartford Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative,  
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Youth First, Massachusetts Alliance on Teen Pregnancy



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## INTRODUCTION

As part of the President's Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative (TPPI), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) partnered with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Assistant Secretary of Health (OASH)/Office of Adolescent Health (OAH), and Office of Population Affairs (OPA) to reduce teen pregnancy and address disparities in teen pregnancy and birth rates. The TPPI is supporting public and private entities to fund medically accurate and age appropriate evidence-based or innovative program models to reduce teen pregnancy.

The purpose of the CDC/OASH program was to demonstrate the effectiveness of innovative, multicomponent, communitywide initiatives in reducing rates of teen pregnancy and births in communities with the highest rates, with a focus on reaching African American and Latino/Hispanic youth aged 15-19 years. A communitywide model is an intervention implemented in defined communities (specified geographic areas) applying a common approach with different strategies. Communitywide approaches are tailored to the specified community, and include broad-based strategies that reach a majority of youth in the community (i.e., through communication strategies and media campaigns); and intensive strategies reaching youth most in need of prevention programming (i.e., through implementation of evidence-based programs and improved links to services). Additional information is available at: [cdc.gov/TeenPregnancy](http://cdc.gov/TeenPregnancy).

JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. (JSI) was one of five national organizations funded to provide training and technical assistance to the nine communities funded by the CDC to implement communitywide teen pregnancy prevention initiatives. JSI's component, "Working with Diverse Communities", aimed to build the capacity of grantees to raise awareness with community partners about the relationship between teen pregnancy and social determinants of health, to identify determinants that are feasible to change, and to ultimately integrate a "social determinants approach" into their teen pregnancy prevention efforts. Additional information is available at: [rhey.jsi.com](http://rhey.jsi.com).

### ABOUT THE VIDEO

*Place Matters: Youth Perspectives on Teen Pregnancy and Their Environment* hereafter called "Place Matters", features eight youth leadership team (YLT) members from Hartford, Connecticut and Springfield and Holyoke, Massachusetts. YLT members were trained by teen pregnancy prevention programs to help their peers make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. YLT activities include peer outreach and education. The video highlights YLT members' perspectives on the unique contexts where they live, learn, work, and play, and the influence these community factors have on teen pregnancy.

The purpose of the video is to educate diverse audiences about community factors that may influence teen pregnancy.

Suggested uses:

1. Provide a platform for the youth voice to be heard.
2. Share with youth as an educational tool and conversation starter.
3. Train youth service providers to better understand the complex factors that influence teen sexual health decision-making.
4. Start conversations and raise awareness throughout the community on the social determinants of teen pregnancy.

## **USING THIS GUIDE**

While JSI anticipates this video can be used with diverse stakeholders (e.g., youth, parents, school staff, youth service providers, healthcare providers, and community members), this guide is designed to be used with youth.

Questions in each section correspond with the main themes addressed by YLT members in the video, including:

- What their community and family mean to them,
- Challenges they face,
- Recommendations as to how their communities can better support them, and
- Their hopes and dreams.

## PREPARATION

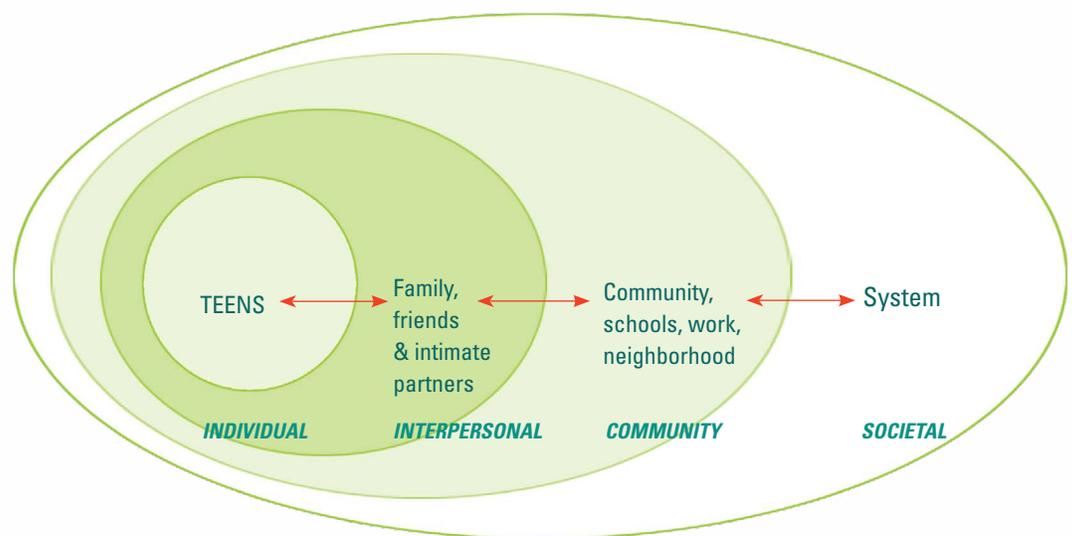
You should feel free to select the order in which they cover the different topics. You should set aside 45-60 minutes for watching the video and convening the discussion. Offering refreshments, child care, or extra credit in an academic setting may provide incentives for people to view and discuss the video.

### UNDERSTANDING WHY “PLACE MATTERS” IN TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION

Many of our youth today live in stressful environments where unemployment may be high, violence and substance use may be present, and housing conditions poor. These social determinants of health can impact how youth perceive their future, or lack thereof, and consequently their sexual decision-making and behavior. The Social Ecological Model (Figure 1<sup>1</sup>) recognizes that teen health is a product of interacting factors occurring at several levels:

- **Individual Level**  
Biological and personal history factors and developmental stage
- **Interpersonal Level**  
Relationships with family, friends, and peers
- **Community Level**  
Where teens live, attend school, work, and play
- **System Level**  
Social economic, political, and cultural systems

**FIGURE 1.**  
**SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL MODEL OF HEALTH**  
*Health Starts Where We Live, Learn, Work, and Play*



<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Violence Prevention. *The Social-Ecological Model: A Framework for Violence Prevention*. [http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/SEM\\_Framework-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/SEM_Framework-a.pdf)

The relationships demonstrated by the Social Ecological Model are complex and multidirectional. Considering the social determinants of that influence where teens live, learn, work, and play, will lead to a better understanding of factors and underlying causes of teen pregnancy in a community.<sup>2</sup>

*Additional resources can be found on the RHEY website in the Social Determinants Section: [rhey.jsi.com/social-determinants](http://rhey.jsi.com/social-determinants).*

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

### BEFORE WATCHING THE VIDEO

#### *Welcome and Introduction to Video (10 Minutes)*

1. You should introduce yourself and set a couple of ground rules for the discussion and thank participants for coming to the event/training. If you have a group of less than 20 participants, use an icebreaker to facilitate introductions and allow participants to share their interest in teen pregnancy prevention. If you have more than 20 participants, consider breaking up into smaller groups and allow time for each group to report back to the full group.
2. Ask participants to take a minute and write down what they think of when they hear the term social determinants of health. Ask for volunteers to share what they wrote and provide additional examples that are teen pregnancy related.
3. Briefly introduce the video and provide the definition of social determinants of health, relating back to any community risk or protective factors participants shared by the group.

This introduction will allow the group to have a common understanding of the concept before watching the video, and give you an opportunity to see how much prior exposure participants have had to these concepts.

<sup>2</sup> Solar O, Irwin A. A conceptual framework for action on the social determinants of health. *Social Determinants of Health Discussion Paper 2 (Policy and Practice)*. World Health Organization. 2010.

### Social Determinants of Health:

The conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, including the health system. These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources at global, national, and local levels, which are themselves influenced by policy choices.

**Source:** World Health Organization. *Social Determinants of Health*. 2011.

#### PROTECTIVE FACTORS:

Individual, interpersonal, community, and societal factors associated with a lower likelihood of an adverse health outcome (such as teen pregnancy).

#### RISK FACTORS:

Individual, interpersonal, community, and societal factors associated with higher likelihood of an adverse health outcome (such as teen pregnancy).

## AFTER WATCHING THE VIDEO

### *Initial Discussion (10 Minutes)*

Listed below are some suggested conversation starters. Since every group is different, select questions that you think may encourage open discussion about the social determinants of teen pregnancy discussed in *Place Matters* and your own community. Ask participants to write down their responses on the worksheet (Appendix A) and then share with group.

- What is your initial reaction after watching *Place Matters*?
- What challenges do youth in your community face today?
  - > How are those challenges similar or different to what the teens in *Place Matters* described?
- What do people in your community think about teen pregnancy?

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### **Briana says:**

*"I don't have a reason to be nervous walking home or walking to work."*

### **Anessa says:**

*"I had a lot of friends that got pregnant"*

### **Joshua adds:**

*"I come from a cycle of teen pregnancy. My mother was one, my grandmother was one. I realize my friends are going through the same cycle too, being teen moms."*

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### **Specific Questions for Youth** (25-35 minutes)

**Objective:** Participants will have better understanding of social determinants of health in their community and become more aware of the context in which they live.

1. A supportive community can make a difference. Where youth live, learn, work, and play matter in teen pregnancy prevention. In *Place Matters*, YLT members described what they like about their communities.
  - What community factors discussed in this video reflect your community?
  - What role do teens play in creating a supportive community?
  - What can teens do to ensure their peers feel safe?
  - What programs are already underway that can improve teen sexual health outcomes, including teen pregnancy?

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#### **Shannon says:**

*"Teens are scared... they don't want to tell anybody, they don't want to get judged."*

#### **Janitza says:**

*"They become pregnant because they don't know about their bodies."*

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2. Substance use, gang activity, lack of sex education, the cycle of teen pregnancy (i.e., being children of teenage mothers), and other community risk factors can impact how teens perceive their future and increase their risk for teen pregnancy. In *Place Matters*, YLT members talked about the challenges teens face in their communities.
  - What issues in your community do you find most compelling?
  - Do teens feel empowered to address these issues?
  - What do you think are the best ways to address issues of substance use, gang violence, and teen pregnancy?
3. Communities that support their teens can potentially reduce teen pregnancy. Additionally, trusted adults can influence the lives of teens and the decisions they make. In *Place Matters*, YLT members discussed gaps for teens in their communities and speak about adults whom they trust.
  - Does your community offer teen programs you have an interest in being involved in?
  - Are there opportunities for you to be a leader in your community?
  - What organizations would you like to see offer opportunities for teen leadership?



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**Yahaira says:**

*“Being a teen and having a leadership role is very impactful, very powerful because I always end up listening to my friends, or vice versa. So, I feel like if we have more youth taking on a leadership role, and continue that cycle instead of a teen pregnancy cycle, it will go from there.”*

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4. Teens who are supported at home, at school, and throughout the community are more likely to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. In *Place Matters*, YLT members described how they are supported in their communities, and talked about their hopes and dreams for the future.
- What are your goals?
  - Do you think focusing on your goals helps influence the choices you make?
  - Do you feel that your goals and aspirations are attainable?
  - Do you have trusted adults in your life that support you on your journey to reach your goals and dreams?

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### Janitza says:

*“My goals and dreams is to ultimately be successful.”*

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### **Conclusion and Call to Action** (15 minutes)

Ask participants to consider what actions they will take to decrease teen pregnancy or how they can support their peers. Ask participants if they would like to share their action item. This time could also be used to discuss action items proposed in the video which are listed below and complete the worksheet.

### **ACTION ITEMS PROPOSED IN PLACE MATTERS**

1. Identifying and addressing social determinants influencing teen pregnancy in their community,
2. Supporting sexual health education that includes the proper use of condoms and effective methods of birth control,
3. Encouraging open communication about sexual health,
4. Supporting teen-friendly clinical services,
5. Engaging teens in conversations about teen pregnancy prevention, and
6. Creating opportunities within the community for youth to realize their hopes and dreams.

Before closing the discussion ask participants if there is anything else they would like to discuss. Once discussion is complete thank participants for their attendance.

## GLOSSARY

**COMMUNITY REFERRAL NETWORK:** A community referral network for diverse youth is based on a set of multi-sector partnerships identified through a community needs assessment or root cause analysis. Formal referral networks and linkages among organizations create a community of support for youth.

**DIVERSE YOUTH:** Young people of different age, race, color, national origin, ancestry, creed, religious and political belief, gender, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, language, ethnicity, class, or cultural background.

**HEALTH EQUITY:** The attainment of the highest level of health for all people. Achieving health equity requires valuing everyone equally with focused and ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of health and health care disparities.<sup>3</sup>

**HEALTH INEQUITY:** A difference or disparity in health outcomes that is systematic, avoidable, and unjust.<sup>4</sup>

**PROTECTIVE FACTORS:** Individual, interpersonal, community, and societal factors associated with a lower likelihood of an adverse health outcome (such as teen pregnancy).

**RISK FACTORS:** Individual, interpersonal, community, and societal factors associated with higher likelihood of an adverse health outcome (such as teen pregnancy).

**SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH:** The conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, including the health system. These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources at global, national, and local levels, which are themselves influenced by policy choices. The social determinants of health are mostly responsible for health inequities – the unfair and unavoidable differences in health status seen within and between countries.<sup>4</sup>

**VULNERABLE YOUTH:** The term vulnerable has surfaced lately as one that encapsulates those youth for whom mainstream institutions are not readily available. Vulnerability can stem from several circumstances or events - life and family circumstances, such as poverty, violence, and job loss; discrimination through systems such as education and juvenile justice; and transitions inherent in adolescence (between schools, etc.).<sup>5</sup> This and other terms (disconnected or dislocated, disenfranchised, at-risk) attempt to describe a population of young people who, for many reasons, are not receiving the supports and services they need to grow up to be healthy, productive adult members of society.

<sup>3</sup> National Plan for Action Draft as of February 17, 2010. Chapter 1: Introduction. Available online: [www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/npa/templates/browse.aspx?&lvl=2&lvlid=34](http://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/npa/templates/browse.aspx?&lvl=2&lvlid=34).

<sup>4</sup> World Health Organization (WHO). Social Determinants of Health. 2011. Available online: [www.who.int/social\\_determinants/en/](http://www.who.int/social_determinants/en/).

<sup>5</sup> Pittman, K., Irby, M., Tolman, J., Yohalem, N., & Ferber, T. 2003. Preventing Problems, Promoting Development, Encouraging Engagement: Competing Priorities or Inseparable Goals? Based upon Pittman, K. & Irby, M. 1996. Preventing Problems or Promoting Development? Washington, DC: The Forum for Youth Investment, Impact Strategies, Inc. Available online: [www.forumfyi.org](http://www.forumfyi.org).

# APPENDIX A

## WORKSHEET

### While Watching the Video: Notes

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### After Watching the Video: Discussion Questions

What challenges do youth in your community face today?

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What parallels can you draw between what youth discussed in the video and issues in your community?

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### Action Items Proposed in the Video

Select four of the proposed action items and describe what this program might look like when implemented in your community.

- Identifying and addressing social determinants influencing teen pregnancy in their community

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- Supporting sexual health education that includes the proper use of condoms and effective methods of birth control

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- Encouraging open communication about sexual health

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- Supporting teen-friendly clinical services

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- Engaging teens in conversations about teen pregnancy prevention

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- Creating opportunities within the community for youth to realize their hopes and dreams

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Circle the two initiatives that are most feasible or current priorities in your community.

**Partnerships**

For each proposed initiative, list two youth serving organizations you may want to collaborate with.

Proposed Initiative #1:	
1.	2.
Proposed Initiative #2:	
1.	2.



## WORKING WITH DIVERSE COMMUNITIES COMPONENT

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