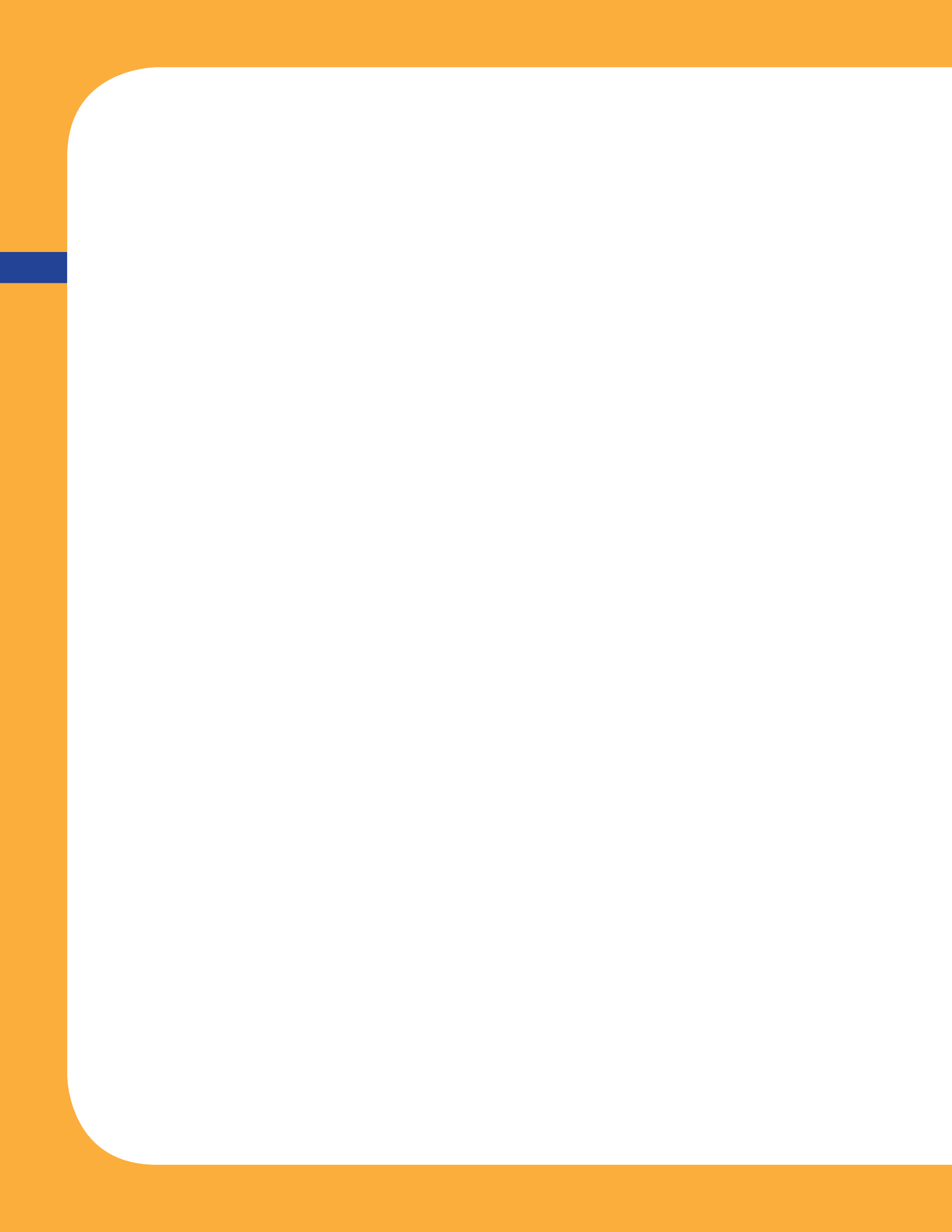


Health Starts Where We Live, Learn, Work, and Play

# Conducting a Root Cause Analysis and Action Planning Process: Facilitator's Guide

Assisting Organizations to Address Social Determinants of Health that Impact Teen Pregnancy





## **INTEGRATING SERVICES, PROGRAMS, AND STRATEGIES THROUGH COMMUNITYWIDE INITIATIVES: THE PRESIDENT'S TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION INITIATIVE**

As part of the President's Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative (TPPI), CDC is partnering with the federal Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH)/Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) to reduce teenage pregnancy and address disparities in teen pregnancy and birth rates. The OASH/OAH 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 this program is 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 will be tailored to the specified community, and will 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: <http://www.cdc.gov/TeenPregnancy>.

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**About This Tool:** This tool is intended to increase understanding of a root cause analysis and how to facilitate one in a community. Considering the concept of social determinants of health—of where youth live, learn, work and play—will help stakeholders think more broadly about the root causes that impact teen pregnancy in their community and develop a plan to address those factors.

The first section of this tool provides an overview of a root cause analysis, including what it is and why it is done. The second section provides a step-by-step guide to facilitating a root cause analysis and an initial planning process with a community to identify the factors that impact teen pregnancy.

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## Overview of Root Cause Analysis

### ***What Is A Root Cause Analysis?***

A root cause analysis is a process used to identify the contributing factors and underlying causes of a problem, event, or health issue, such as teen pregnancy.

### ***Why Use A Root Cause Analysis?***

Addressing the root causes of an issue is more effective and efficient than addressing the symptoms of a problem. A root cause analysis helps to identify how and why something happened, with the goal of preventing it from recurring. By conducting a root cause analysis, stakeholders, including non-traditional stakeholders, can begin to understand the complexity of teen pregnancy in their community.

A root cause analysis coupled with an action planning process can be used to bring stakeholders to a shared understanding of teen pregnancy and its influences within a particular community, and spur innovative ideas and strategies guided by best practice for addressing the factors and underlying causes that impact teen pregnancy in that community.

### ***How Do You Conduct A Root Cause Analysis?***

In essence, a root cause analysis can be conducted by simply asking the question “why?” as many times as it takes to identify the root causes of an event or issue. Facilitating a root cause analysis and planning process will generally take about 4 hours or half a day. The process involves:

## Benefits of a Root Cause Analysis

*Facilitating a root cause analysis on teen pregnancy in your community will help to:*

- ▶ Identify and categorize the underlying factors that impact teen pregnancy in a community.
- ▶ Provide direction to a planning process for developing and prioritizing strategies to address the causes and factors that impact teen pregnancy.
- ▶ Reveal potential problems related to the strategies suggested for addressing the causes of teen pregnancy.

1. Convening appropriate stakeholders to have a brainstorming session about teen pregnancy in their community.
2. Identifying the root causes of teen pregnancy guided by a series of “why” questions.
3. Prioritizing the root causes and developing an action plan.

## Social Determinants of Health and Teen Pregnancy

What do social determinants of health have to do with teen pregnancy? Research shows that where individuals live, learn, work, and play influences their decisions and health. These influences are referred to as social determinants of health. By understanding the concept of social determinants of health, stakeholders will think more broadly about the root causes that impact teen pregnancy in their community.

The Social-Ecological Model provides a framework for understanding how factors that impact health and teen pregnancy are interrelated. Factors can be protective factors (+) that reduce the chance of teen pregnancy or risk factors (-) that increase the chance of teen pregnancy.<sup>3</sup>

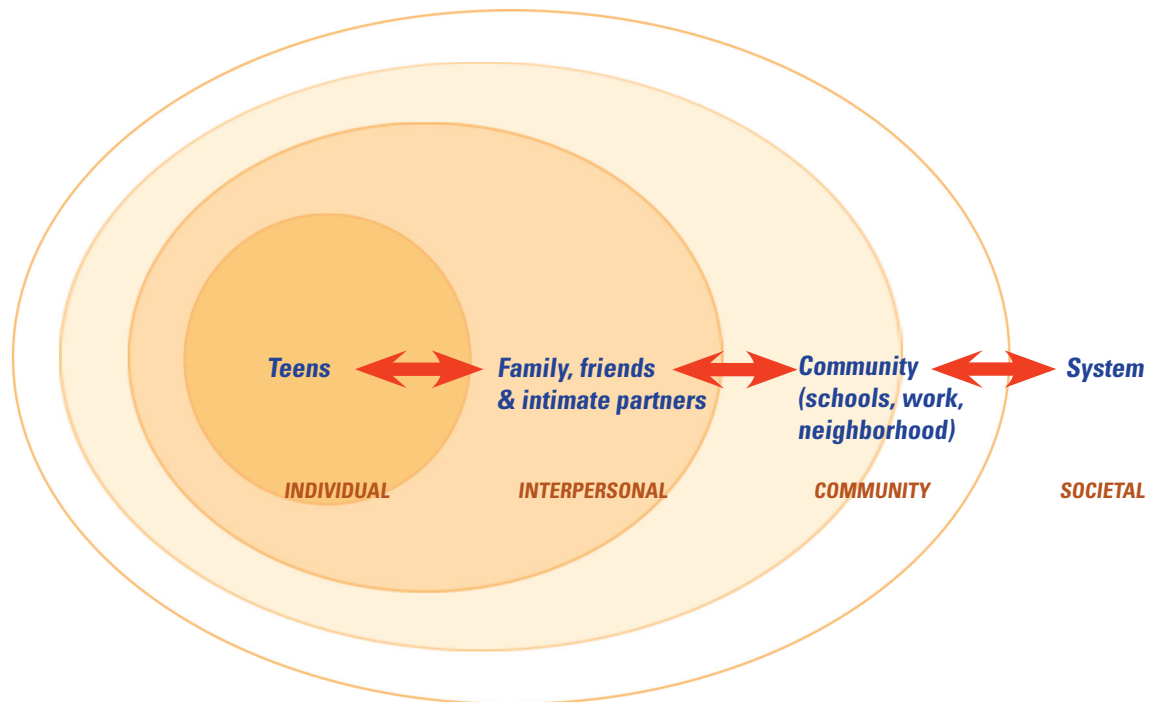
### Social Determinants of Health Defined

- ▶ The social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age, including the health system. For example, social determinants of health are factors that increase or decrease our chance of a health outcome such as teen pregnancy.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ Social determinants of health are the cultural, economic, environmental, and social conditions that influence health. For example, the social determinants of health are why some people are healthier than others or why some people are not as healthy as they could be, genetics aside.<sup>2</sup>

The model in Figure 1 recognizes that teen health is a product of interacting factors occurring at several levels: the **individual level** (i.e., biological and personal history factors and developmental stage); the **interpersonal level** (i.e., relationships with family, friends, and peers); the **community level** (i.e., where teens live, attend school, and work); and the **societal level** (i.e., social, economic, political and cultural systems). These relationships are multidirectional, each level influencing the other levels.<sup>3</sup>

## FIGURE 1. Social-Ecological Model of Health

HEALTH STARTS WHERE WE LIVE, LEARN, WORK AND PLAY



Considering social determinants of health and the influences of where teens live, learn, work, and play will lend to a better understanding of the factors and underlying causes of teen pregnancy in a community.

## Facilitating a Root Cause Analysis and Action Planning Process

This section provides guidance on how to facilitate a root cause analysis and an action planning process with community stakeholders to address teen pregnancy. The process involves the following steps:

- I. Identify and Invite Stakeholders
- II. Schedule and Prepare
- III. Set the Stage
- IV. Identify Root Causes: Factors that Increase the Risk of Teen Pregnancy
- V. Identify Root Causes: Factors that Reduce the Risk of Teen Pregnancy
- VI. Develop an Action Plan to Address Root Causes of Teen Pregnancy

### ***I. Identify and Invite Stakeholders***

It is essential to invite and engage a diverse, multisector group of stakeholders in the root cause analysis and planning process. Consider inviting non-traditional stakeholders, such as representatives of businesses, social service agencies, faith-based organizations, and departments of parks and recreation, to broaden the perspective and knowledge of the group. This group of stakeholders will form a team that will be involved in each stage of the process. Convening a diverse stakeholder team from multiple sectors will ensure a deeper assessment of the community's context, social norms, and culture and will lead to a comprehensive understanding of the root causes that impact health and teen pregnancy. This team composition will also help to identify diverse strategies to address teen pregnancy.

The stakeholder team should involve at least 10-12 people. Potential stakeholders include:

- Direct service providers (health care providers, educators, youth serving organization staff)
- Representatives of the Core Partner, Community Mobilization, and Youth Leadership teams (as well as other program advisory boards)
- Youth representing various populations in the community (such as high school students and foster youth)
- Community residents directly impacted by teen pregnancy such as parenting teens, their parents and grandparents
- Informal community leaders

### The Facilitator Should:

- ◆ Understand the goal of root cause analysis
- ◆ Be able to clarify terms and processes when asked
- ◆ Probe appropriately for richer information
- ◆ Re-focus the group discussion if it goes off-track.

- Non-traditional stakeholders (such as business leaders, social service agencies, community/leaders/gatekeepers, faith-based organizations, ethnic and cultural organizations)
- Others (such as interested community members)

## II. Schedule and Prepare

- Set a date, time, and location to convene the stakeholder team.
  - ▶ The root cause analysis and planning process will generally take about **4 hours or half a day.**
- Prepare to facilitate.
  - ▶ On a white board or large piece of paper recreate the Social-Ecological Model shown in Figure 1. To help start the conversation when facilitating the root cause analysis, you can add example determinants of teen pregnancy or root causes of teen pregnancy identified in your needs assessment to the model you create (see Figure 2 on page 8). Include both the risk factors (-) that could increase the likelihood of teen pregnancy and the protective factors (+) that could reduce teen pregnancy. For example, having sex with multiple partners or without using contraception are individual level risk factors of teen pregnancy, while positive self-esteem and social engagement are individual level protective factors of teen pregnancy.
  - ▶ Print copies of the following for the stakeholder team:
    - Priority Needs Filter (Appendix I)
    - Root Causes of Teen Pregnancy Action Plan (Appendix II)
  - ▶ Bring flip chart paper and markers
- Provide all participants with a common base of information.
  - ▶ Prior to the meeting, send out to stakeholders all relevant data and information you have collected on teen pregnancy in the community, including findings from the community needs and resources assessments and teen pregnancy and birth statistics for the community. Be sure to summarize the data in a clear and concise way and highlight key findings for the stakeholder team.

## III. Setting the Stage

- Greet the stakeholder team and introduce yourself.
- Have the stakeholders introduce themselves.



- Review the purpose of the meeting with the stakeholder team:
  - ▶ To identify the contributing factors and underlying causes of teen pregnancy in their community.
  - ▶ To plan and prioritize strategies to address the root causes of teen pregnancy in their community identified by the stakeholder team.
- Review the definition of a root cause analysis.
  - ▶ A root cause analysis is a process used to identify the contributing factors and underlying causes, or root causes, of a problem or event, in this case teen pregnancy.
  - ▶ Root cause analysis helps to identify new ways and places for a community to intervene in an effort to reduce teen pregnancy rates.
- Review the concept of social determinants of health.
  - ▶ Discuss the definitions of social determinants of health (see Section I). Explain that the purpose is to think broadly about root causes of teen pregnancy in order to identify the contributing factors at the individual, interpersonal, community, and societal levels.
- Summarize data and information sent to the stakeholder team prior to the meeting
- Ask the stakeholder team if they have any questions about the purpose of and process for the meeting.

#### **IV. Identify Root Causes: Factors that Increase the Risk of Teen Pregnancy**

1. Review the Social-Ecological Model on display. Start the conversation by asking the group to think about the individual-level risk factors identified from your needs assessment. (Some examples of individual-level factors identified during the needs assessment may already be included on the model.)
2. Guide a group brainstorming process by asking the stakeholder team to discuss and identify risk factors at each of the upper levels (i.e., interpersonal, community and societal) of the Social-Ecological Model. Use questions such as those below to spark the conversation.
  - ▶ What *interpersonal* factors (i.e., family and peer relationships) may increase the risk of teen pregnancy? Why?
  - ▶ What factors within a *community* (i.e., school, work, health care) may increase the risk of teen pregnancy? Why?
  - ▶ What *societal* factors (i.e., oppression, poverty, inequity) may increase the risk of teen pregnancy in community? Why?
3. Write in the risk factors that the group identifies and agrees on for each level. Figure 2 (on page 10) provides an example of what your model might look like as you begin.
4. Be sure to ask the stakeholder team to review all of the determinants identified as risk factors and ask if there is anything missing.

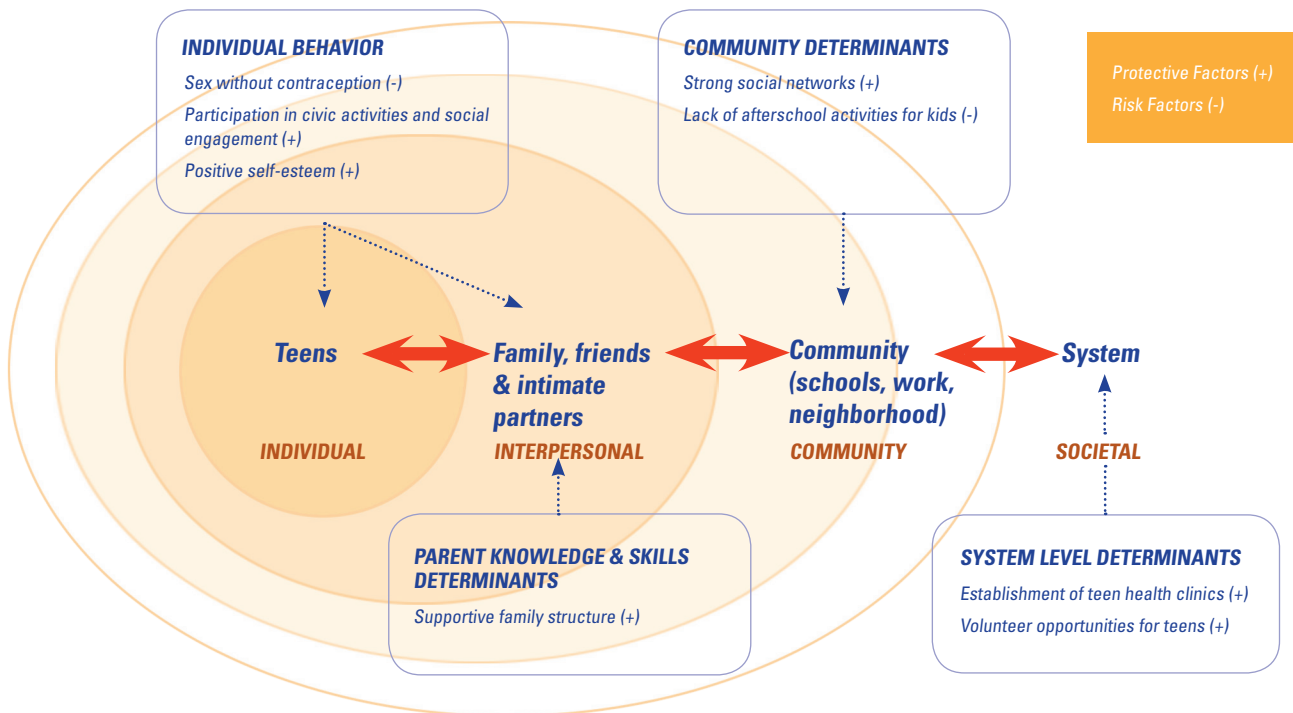
**TIP:** Always ask probing 'why' questions to get the group to delve deeper into the reasons for the causes they initially identify. For example, if a participant states that teens in their community have a sense of hopelessness about their future, ask 'why' to probe further. Participants may then connect the sense of hopelessness teens feel with low school attachment or poor future prospects.

## ***V. Identify Root Causes: Factors that Reduce the Risk of Teen Pregnancy***

Continue the brainstorming session with the team to identify protective factors that reduce the risk of teen pregnancy. Start by reviewing the individual level protective factors identified from your needs assessment (previously added to the social-ecological model by the facilitator). Then add the protective factors identified by the stakeholder team to the model. In some instances, the protective factor identified will be the corresponding opposite of a risk factor identified.

1. Invite the team to identify factors at each level in the Social-Ecological Model that can help to prevent teen pregnancy. Write in the protective factors that the stakeholder team identifies and agrees on for each level. Use questions such as those below to spark the conversation.
  - ▶ What are the individual-level factors that could help to reduce teen pregnancy in your community (e.g., teens with a positive view of contraception)? Why?
  - ▶ What are the interpersonal-level factors that could help to reduce teen pregnancy in your community (e.g., good parent-child communication about sex, condoms, and contraception)? Why?
  - ▶ What are the community-level factors that could help to reduce teen pregnancy in your community (e.g., greater high school attainment among teens)? Why?
  - ▶ What are the societal-level factors that could help to reduce teen pregnancy in your community (e.g., accessible reproductive health care)? Why?
2. Be sure to ask the stakeholder team to review all of the identified protective factors and ask if there is anything missing.

**FIGURE 2. Social-Ecological Model of Health and Teen Pregnancy**



## VI. Develop an Action Plan to Address Root Causes of Teen Pregnancy

To develop an action plan to address the root causes of teen pregnancy that the stakeholder team has identified and entered into the Social-Ecological Model on the wall, lead the team in completing the Root Causes of Teen Pregnancy Action Plan table (Appendix II) to map out strategies and next steps.

1. **Consider leverage points:** Review the factors that increase risk and the factors that decrease risk identified within each layer of the Social-Ecological Model and ask the group to determine which factors are highly related or inter-connected with others. **The factors that are most directly connected to each other suggest points of intervention or “leverage points” that will be more likely to have an impact on preventing teen pregnancy.** For example, family support may be highly inter-connected with other factors, such as greater parent-child communication about sex and condoms or contraception, whereas good community relations with the police may not be as directly related to other factors.

2. **Prioritize feasible determinants.** After the group selects the most highly interconnected factors or “leverage points”, use the **Priority Needs Filter** (Appendix I) to filter out which factors the stakeholder team is able to act on or address and which are not feasible at this time. Determine which factors:
  - Are being addressed elsewhere,
  - You lack the resources to address,
  - Cannot be changed (e.g., biological factors including age, race/ ethnicity, gender), or
  - Are not linked to teen pregnancy.

This will help the team refine the list of factors that are feasible to address--i.e. “**priority factors**”. List the priority factors in the Root Causes/Contributing Factors column (column 1) of the *Root Causes of Teen Pregnancy Action Plan* table.

3. **Plan for action.** For each priority factor listed, ask the team to:
  - Consider potential strategies (Column 2) that could be implemented to address it
  - List the resources available (Column 3) to help implement the strategies
  - Specify additional resources (Column 4) and information (Column 5) that may be needed to implement the strategies, and
  - List next steps (column 6) to move strategies forward.

Use the *Root Causes of Teen Pregnancy Action Plan* (Appendix II) to record the stakeholder team’s ideas and plan. Figure 3 provides examples of what this table might look like for selected root causes/contributing factors.

**FIGURE 3. Root Causes of Teen Pregnancy Action Plan *Example***

Root Causes/ Contributing Factors (List)	Potential intervention strategies to address root causes/factors	Resources available to implement strategies	Resources not available but needed to implement strategies	What do we need to know more about?	Immediate Next Steps
Limited knowledge and understanding of a healthy dating relationship  <i>(Individual)</i>	Group sessions that increase knowledge and understanding of healthy dating relationships	Space to conduct group sessions with youth and experienced staff	Parents of teens from our target population who would be willing to participate in workshops	How much time staff have to conduct group sessions; how we can best reach and engage teens in this discussion	Talk with youth serving organizations (YSO), schools, parent teacher associations (PTA) to develop a work plan to guide program implementation
Greater parent-child communication about sex  <i>(Interpersonal)</i>	Parent workshops to build their communication skills around sexual and reproductive health issues with their teens	Space to conduct parent workshops and experienced staff	Parents of teens from our target population who would be willing to participate in workshops	What are some outreach strategies we can use to reach a diverse group of parents? Which community organizations can help us?	Follow-up with pastors of churches, YSOs and school representatives to develop parent outreach plan
Greater community awareness about the environmental factors that impact teen pregnancy  <i>(Community)</i>	Use of 'promotoras'/ community health workers to create a strong network of "community champions" and "askable adults" to disseminate information on teen pregnancy prevention	Community residents who could potentially serve as "community champions" and "askable adults"	Training for 'promotoras'/ community health workers/educators	How can we recruit and train community health worker/ promotora training around social determinants that impact teen pregnancy?	Follow-up with JSI to get information about promotora/ community health worker training
Greater community awareness about the value of positive youth development concepts; positive messaging about youth potential & contributions to the community  <i>(Societal)</i>	Social marketing campaign including radio, newspaper, community newsletters, social networks	Partnerships with YSOs and CBOs who utilize social networks and other media outlets/ venues	Partnerships with media; more information on social marketing campaigns	What is involved in developing a social marketing campaign? Where do youth and community members access information?	Follow up with JSI and The National Campaign about planning for a youth development social marketing campaign
Increased access to reproductive health services  <i>(Societal)</i>	Establish partnerships between clinics and Department of Transportation to provide bus/subway tokens to youth	Contacts at the Department of Transportation to identify key individuals within the Department to discuss tokens	Need to identify a staff person to dedicate time to this activity and develop a work plan.	Are there any subsidized transportation options or public funds available for teens currently?	Follow up with contact at Department of Transportation

### **Next Steps**

After developing the action plan, ask for volunteers to form a sub-group to work on a strategic planning process to implement the action plan. Before the meeting is adjourned, schedule a date and time for the sub-group to meet and begin the strategic planning process. Be sure to collect contact information such as phone numbers and email addresses for follow up/reminder emails regarding the agreed upon date and time.

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### END NOTES

<sup>1</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.

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization. *Social Determinants of Health.* [http://www.who.int/social\\_determinants/en/](http://www.who.int/social_determinants/en/) Accessed August 17, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> 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)

## APPENDIX I: Priority Needs Filter

Process	Needs: Important Behaviors and Determinants to Change
1. <b>List</b> behaviors that need to change.	
2. <b>List</b> risk and protective factors (determinants) that need to change.	
3. <b>Cross out</b> any behaviors or determinants currently being addressed elsewhere.	
4. <b>Cross out</b> any behaviors or determinants that we lack the resources (time and budget) to confront.	
5. <b>Cross out</b> any behaviors and determinants that we choose not to address at this time.	
6. <b>Highlight</b> the remaining behaviors and determinants.  <b>These are our priority needs.</b>	
<b>Strategies: Possible Approaches to Address Priority Needs</b>	
7. What general approach could we take for maximum impact?	
8. Who will benefit from that approach?	

## APPENDIX II: Root Causes of Teen Pregnancy Action Plan

Root Causes/ Contributing Factors (List)	Potential intervention strategies to address root causes/factors	Resources available to implement strategies	Resources not available but needed to implement strategies	What do we need to know more about?	Immediate Next Steps





## About the Working with Diverse Communities Component

JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. (JSI) builds Part A Grantees' capacity to engage and serve diverse youth and youth in at-risk situations through teen pregnancy prevention programs, clinical services, and other partnerships that foster reproductive health equity. Because where youth live, learn, work, and play influences sexual and reproductive health behaviors, JSI assists grantees in raising awareness among community partners about the social determinants that have an impact on teen pregnancy and in creating feasible strategies to address them. This context, paired with evidence-based interventions that teach youth about pregnancy prevention and teen-friendly clinical services offers a holistic approach that actively engages communities in a process that supports and promotes positive youth development and healthy relationships and lifestyles. JSI supports grantees in using data-driven strategies and best practices to work with their diverse communities. This component focuses on building grantees' capacity to:

- Identify, reach, and serve hard to reach, marginalized, and diverse youth with TPP evidence-based programs and reproductive health services (e.g. African American and Latino youth, youth in the foster care and juvenile justice systems, GLBTQ youth, and pregnant and parenting teens).
- Engage and recruit a diverse group of community partners, including non-traditional stakeholders to collaborate in their community's TPP efforts.
- Ensure program facilitators and clinical providers have the necessary skills and knowledge to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate programs and reproductive health services.
- Ensure program facilitators and clinical providers provide diverse youth with culturally and linguistically appropriate programs and reproductive health services.
- Engage and educate a diverse group of stakeholders (e.g., community action team, other community members) on how social determinants of health link to teen pregnancy.
- Plan and implement within each component, based on community needs assessment and other relevant data, strategies guided by the Working with Diverse Communities' best practices (developed by JSI).

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## WORKING WITH DIVERSE COMMUNITIES COMPONENT

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### **JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc.**

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