



MLCPC 111:

Care and Counsel:

The Family, the Church and the Community

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Abstract

This session will discuss the issues surrounding a crisis pregnancy and the ways in which the family, church, and community may help the women experiencing such life change. Participants will learn strategies for coaching and ways in which they may assess the unique needs of the individuals affected by an unplanned pregnancy.

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will investigate the scope of the unplanned pregnancy problem.
2. Participants will apply the knowledge of the issues faced by women in crisis pregnancies to their coaching sessions.
3. Participants will learn the roles of the community and church at large when dealing with crisis pregnancy situations.

I. The Problem

A. Statistics in the Larger Culture:

1. According to the March of Dimes, 30% of women younger than 20 years old will have a baby at least once in their life.¹
2. Nearly one-half of all high school students report having sexual intercourse at least once.²
3. 7% of high school students report having sex before they turn 13.³
4. Health problems of the babies of teen moms:⁴
 - Higher rates of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
 - An overall higher death rate than babies born of older moms
 - According to Med Line Plus, the younger the mother is the more likely her baby will die before the age of one.
5. According to the Mayo Clinic, the personal effects of teen pregnancy may include⁵:
 - A higher risk of poverty
 - A higher risk of domestic violence
6. The emotional impact of teen pregnancy may also take a toll on the teenager's mental state.⁶
7. Babies of teen moms are more likely to rely on public health care throughout their lives because they have more chronic medical conditions.⁷
8. Unemployment and incarceration are high among children of teen moms.⁸

B. Statistics in the Church:

1. According to the Faith Matters Survey, 31% of 12th graders who are highly involved in congregational life have had sexual intercourse.⁹
2. The church must become active and involved!

II. Reasons for Coaching

A. These women are experiencing a crisis, which involves:

1. The woman who is having the baby
2. The birth father
3. The families
4. The church family or those in the community involved with the woman

B. Reassure the woman that while this is a crisis and it will change her life, it is not the end of the world; there is hope, and there are solutions, so she can live her life in a very positive way from this point on.

C. Typically, teens lack a lot of the skills necessary to deal with a baby.

D. Crisis pregnancy situations can lead to impulsive behavior:

1. The attempt to self-abort
2. Suicide
3. The urge to get an abortion

I. Eating habits

J. Depression

K. Finances

L. Peer relationships

IV. Coaching Strategies for the Family

- A. It is important for coaches to encourage clients to tell their family about the pregnancy as early as possible.

- B. It is important to help parents deal with their own emotions while still communicating with their daughter.

- C. The birth father may need help in telling his family about what has happened. He also may need help in figuring out his role.

- D. The family needs to be involved in the pregnancy.

- E. It is important that coaches assess family support.

- F. The family may need to be involved in the doctor visits.

- G. Family members should continue to address the issues of loss surrounding the pregnancy.

- H. The family needs to be helped with anger and stress management issues.

- I. Coaches should focus on encouraging constant communication between family members.

- J. Coaches should help the family make a plan.

V. Coaching Strategies for the Church

- A. Teens say that they wish that their religious leaders would give more direction to them.

- B. It is not enough to just say, “Just say NO.” Teens also want to know **why**.

- C. The church needs to engage in pop culture to spark conversations about how to deal with these issues from a biblical worldview.

- D. The church needs to be a safe place for teens to talk about sexuality.

- E. The church needs to have some kind of a support network.
- F. The church needs to help families with conflict and communication.
- G. The church should provide services that address the needs of these moms.
- H. The pastor should preach about the culture and sexuality.
- I. The church should encourage teens to be involved in the youth group to learn from one another their own age.

VI. Coaching Strategies for the Community

- A. Coaches should visit community centers to see what the community has to offer and to create referral sources.
- B. Coaches should find financial, medical, and educational services in the community that can help take some of the burden off these women and families.

VII. The Role of Coaching

- A. The role of coaching is to calm down the crisis.

- B.** Coaches should help these clients to create a plan.

- C.** Coaches should also assess the need for referral.

- D.** Coaching is about hope, the future, and understanding what God can do.

Endnotes

¹“Teenage Pregnancy,” *National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy: Why It Matters*, accessed January 12, 2009, https://www.marchofdimes.com/professionals/25079_1159.asp.

²“Sexual Risk Behavior: HIV, STD, and Teen Pregnancy Prevention,” *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, accessed September 7, 2012, <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/sexualbehaviors/>.

³“Troubled Teen Statistics,” *Students Against Destructive Behavior (SADD)*, accessed September 7, 2012, <http://www.troubledteens.com/information-and-statistics/troubled-teens-statistics-teen-help-for-troubled-teens.html>.

⁴“Teenage Pregnancy,” *Med Line Plus: A Service of the National Institutes of Health and National Library of Medicine*, accessed September 7, 2012, <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/teenagepregnancy.html>.

⁵“Teenage Pregnancy: Consider the Options,” *Mayo Clinic*, accessed September 7, 2012, <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/teen-pregnancy/MY00820/NSECTIONGROUP=2>.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Richard R. Tisei, “The High Social Costs of Teen Parenting,” *The Reading Advocate*, March 14, 2007, accessed September 7, 2012, http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/costs/pdf/MA_ReadingAdvocate.pdf.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Steve Clapp, Kristen Leverton Helbert, and Angela Zizak, “Faith Matters: Teenagers, Sexuality, and Religion, Executive Summary,” *Christian Community, Inc.*, accessed September 7, 2012, <http://www.heart-intl.net/HEART/100507/FaithMatters.htm>.