

MIXED MESSAGES: THE CURRENT STATE OF TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION IN TRAVIS COUNTY, TX

OVERVIEW

From 2012-2015, a volunteer collaborative of Travis County service providers and researchers developed surveys and focus group questions to obtain a holistic and complete perspective of teen pregnancy in the Travis County community.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1 What are the barriers to teen pregnancy prevention in Travis County?
- 2 What are the strengths in teen pregnancy prevention in Travis County?
- 3 What recommendations does the community have to reduce the teen birth rate in Travis County?

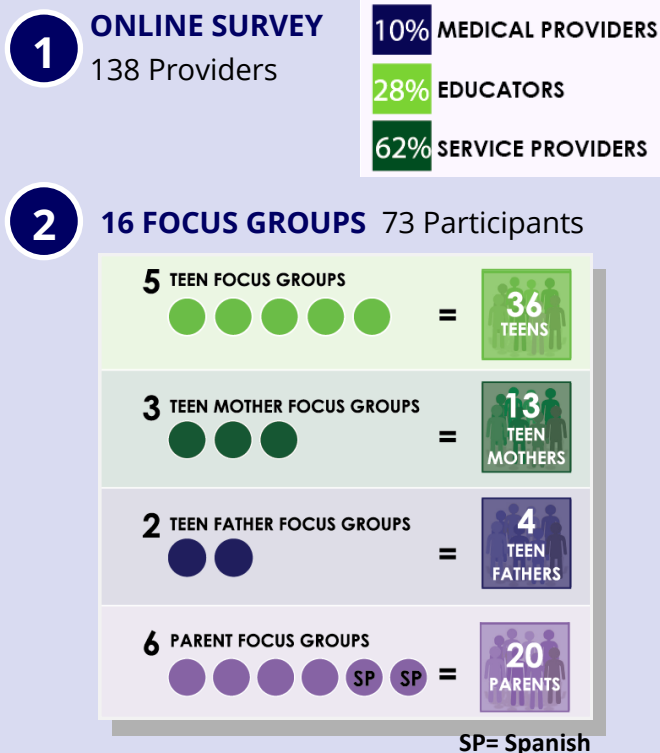
STATUS OF TEEN BIRTHS IN 2012

Travis County, Texas, and U.S. teen birth rates, 2012

Mother's Age	Travis County	Texas	United States
10-14 years	0.5	0.6	0.4
15-19 years	33.2	42.3	29.4

High
Teen Birth
Rates

MIXED METHODS APPROACH



KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Teens receive mixed messages about sex and pregnancy and they feel judged no matter what they choose. As a community we need to:

LISTEN to youth, and recognize youth as experts in adolescence.

TRANSFORM policies and practices to ensure every voice is heard and valued.

CLARIFY messages with open, honest communication throughout a child's lifespan

“ I just think the biggest thing is that—facilitate those conversations... in a safe place where people, like teens, whether male or female, feel okay to ask serious questions they might not know the answer to without being judged.

-Teen Participant



Working with youth

Adopt a **gender-transformative approach** to break down rigid, binary concepts of gender and gender stereotypes, and build in inclusive approaches for more advanced conversations around gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.

Provide **educational and occupational opportunities** that address realistic pathways for youth to achieve adult status.

Implement **youth-driven services** that involve peer educators.

Prioritize developing **teen-friendly policies and practices**, requiring or encouraging staff to participate in professional development around building trust and rapport with youth.

Working with caregivers

Provide caregivers with **direct education** on how to talk to their children about sex, utilizing a **sex-positive approach**.

Develop **community marketing campaigns** that focus on challenging caregivers to talk to their teenage children about sex and learn to become more comfortable with the notion that their teenage children are sexual beings.

Improving policies

Advocate for statewide and local school district policies that **encourage real, open, and honest communication** around topics of sexuality and sexual health.

Advocate for **funding dedicated to holistic approaches** to positive youth development and sexual health.

Advocate for policies that provide **support for teen parents**, both prenatally and postnatally.