

PREGNANCY & PARENTING

Lesson 1

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LEARNER OUTCOME¹ P12:

Examine aspects of healthy sexuality, sexual wellness and responsible sexual behavior.
Assess the consequences of being sexually active.

MATERIALS:



1. HANDOUT: Scenario [Problem Solver](#)
2. CARDS: [Making Choices Scenario Cards](#)
3. FACTSHEET: [The Cost of Raising A Child](#) from the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD)

INTRODUCTION:

The Comprehensive School Health model stresses the need for students to make decisions and respect the decisions and values of others. Perhaps one of the hardest decisions a teen could ever have to make is if she or he was faced with an unintended pregnancy. While there is a decline in pregnancy and live birth rates among teenagers aged 15-19 in Alberta², provincial rates are still higher than the national average.³ The abortion rate for teens has also steadily decreased since 1996.⁴

Having a baby too young can have significant adverse impacts on the health and well-being of the mother, the baby, the father and society. Teen pregnancy is associated with increased school drop-out rates, low socio-economic status and increased likelihood of repeat pregnancies. Health risks to the baby may include pre-term birth, low birth weight and infant death⁵.



It can be challenging to create a balance between prevention and positive messages related to motherhood and pregnancy outcomes. Prevention programs must consider different views and perceptions to be effective. Some cultures support earlier pregnancies and in these cases delaying pregnancy could alienate these Canadians from their culture. Addressing teen pregnancy is two-fold: interventions focusing on prevention and interventions addressing relevant support and services for effective and positive health outcomes for young parents and their children.⁶

Students will then be asked to think about what it means to be a parent and the physical, emotional, lifestyle and financial changes that come with parenting.

Teachers need to understand the objectives and be aware of personal biases when discussing teen pregnancy. It may be useful to complete the [Your Values Quiz](#).



APPROACHES/STRATEGIES:

A. Ground Rules

Ensure ground rules are established before beginning this lesson. For classes that have already established ground rules, quickly reviewing them can promote a successful lesson.

B. Making Choices

Students use problem-solving skills to determine what choices could be made when a teen discovers they are pregnant.

1. Distribute the handout: Scenario Problem Solver, one to each student.
2. Divide students into small groups.
3. Provide each group with a Making Choices Scenario Cards.
4. Allow each group to read the scenario.

It is important to explain that each person who is faced with an unintended pregnancy is dealing with their own unique situation. It should be emphasized that the choice is ultimately the personal decision of the young woman who is pregnant. However, the boyfriend or partner of the young woman and their families will have feelings and be impacted by the situation and decision as well. Making the decision about what to do can be very difficult and stressful. Some women may not have the non-judgmental support of a partner, family or friends. Agencies and counseling services can help. A list of agencies and resources is included in Community Resources on our website.

5. Give groups time to discuss and fill in the handout Scenario Problem Solver
6. Debrief by having each group present their scenario and respond to the class. Write the possible choices across the board:
 - PARENTING
 - ADOPTION
 - ABORTION

The following background information will enable you to provide the group with information about the three basic options.

Parenting

NOTES:

(5 - 15min)

(25 – 30 min)



Making a decision about an unintended pregnancy can be difficult and stressful. It is important to be aware of feelings this lesson may evoke for students related to personal or family situations either now or in the past and to use sensitivity.



Be aware that various community agencies and groups have different philosophies and beliefs about pregnancy options. Certain cultures and religions also have differing views on pregnancy options. Students may raise these types of issues in this class. It is important to be prepared to answer questions in a factual way. If questions regarding personal values arise, it is important to redirect the students to resources that may help them in their self reflection on these topics rather than stating your values.

Having a baby involves lifestyle, emotional, physical and financial implications. While parenting is a joy, it is also hard work. Some questions to ask yourself about parenting and what it means to be a parent include:

- How will raising a child affect my current lifestyle and the lifestyle I want to have? Am I ready to change my lifestyle to meet my child's needs?
- Do I like children? How do I feel about having a child around all the time?
- Do I know enough about raising children? Which skills can I share with and teach my child?
- Have my partner and I talked about how we would manage parenthood? What do we know about parenting? How do you learn to be a parent?
- Is it important to have a partner involved? If a partner is not involved, is parenting still an option?
- What type of support do I need to help me raise my child? Does that support exist in my life right now? Is it possible for me to get that support?
- What are my reasons for wanting to have this child?
- Can I handle a child and school or work at the same time?
- Can I afford to support a child right now? In the future?

Parents are not born, they are created. Whether you parent with a partner, on your own or with the support of family and friends, the most powerful thing you can do is to give your child loving, consistent and supportive care⁷.

Adoption

Choosing to place your child for adoption can be very difficult. Some questions to consider include:

- How would I feel about continuing the pregnancy and giving birth but not keeping the child?
- Could I live with the idea that someone else is raising my child?
- How would adoption impact my child's life? Am I able to provide for him/her?



This lesson focuses on the three options for a pregnancy: parenting (either as a single parent or with a partner), adoption and abortion. You may also wish to include a brief discussion about the importance of maintaining good health during pregnancy, including

- accessing good prenatal care from a physician or midwife;
- avoiding alcohol, smoking, drugs and other substances that could cause fetal harm;
- eating a healthy diet; maintaining a healthy body weight,
- taking a multivitamin containing folic acid; and
- regular exercise.



For more information about adoptions in Alberta contact your local Child and Family Services Authority:
http://child.alberta.ca/home/local_offices.cfm

- Do I have the support I need to continue the pregnancy and make an adoption plan?
- What about my partner and family's feelings about adoption?
- Which kind of adoption would be best for me? Do I want to meet the adoptive parents?
- How would making this choice impact my life in the long run?

There are three ways to place a child for adoption in Alberta:

1. **Government (Ward/Closed) Adoption:** Ward adoption involves placing a child for adoption through the government social services. These are closed adoptions meaning that birthparents and adoptive parents are not given identifying information on each other. It also means that the child does not know who his or her birthparents are while the child is growing up.
2. **Licensed Private Agencies (Open Adoption):** Through a licensed agency the birthmother has the right to choose the adoptive family by looking at files, meeting the family she has chosen and having ongoing contact with the family before and after the placement of her child.
3. **Direct Placement:** A direct placement adoption is one where the birthmother places the child with a friend, family friend or relative.

Even if you choose to place a child up for adoption, maintaining good health for you and your growing baby throughout your pregnancy is important.

Abortion

Abortion means choosing to terminate (end) a pregnancy. There are many reasons women choose to have an abortion. An unintended pregnancy may have been a result of not using contraception or contraception failure (e.g. condom breakage); Some women discover genetic defects as a result of tests on the fetus and choose this option. A woman may have been sexually assaulted or became pregnant because of sexual coercion. Sometimes a woman may experience changes in her life situation that makes her re-evaluate the pregnancy. It is important that a woman make the decision that is right for her.

Abortion is a safe surgical procedure when performed by a qualified doctor. If the abortion is performed safely without any



Surgical abortion is the most common abortion procedure performed in Canada and is performed by a doctor in either a clinic or a hospital¹¹.

complications there is no affect on the ability to become pregnant again in the future⁸.

In Alberta, surgical abortions are offered from 5 weeks -20 weeks⁹ . If the pregnancy is less than 7 weeks a woman can choose to have a medical abortion. The type of abortion procedure a woman has depends the duration of the pregnancy and services offered by the clinic or hospital. .

A surgical abortion takes about 5-15 minutes but a woman can expect to stay in the clinic or hospital for 2-3 hours as the visit will include counselling, an ultrasound if needed, and recovery time¹⁰. The cost of an abortion is covered by Alberta Health Care.

In Alberta, a parent's consent is not needed to have an abortion. Consent is based on the ability to understand the procedure and its risks¹⁰. **It is always recommended for young women to talk to their parents/ guardians or a trusted adult. .**

Some questions to consider include:

- Do I have spiritual or moral beliefs that may impact my decision to have an abortion?
- Do I have people in my life that will support me with my decision?
- How will making this decision impact my life? What about my partner's feelings?

C. 'Cheeseburgers and Parenting'

Students recognize the importance of skills and characteristics needed for parenting, and the value of acquiring them before becoming a parent.

Procedure:

1. Write the word "REQUIREMENTS" on the board and ask students what "requirement" means (something that must happen, not "it would be nice if...").
2. Read the following scenario to the students: "Imagine you own a cheeseburger stand and don't want to run it. You need to hire someone to run it for you and at the end of each month they will bring you the money. You will pay them a certain amount and keep the rest."
3. Ask students what the "requirements" are for the person they hire? Teachers can list the class responses on the blackboard.
4. Ask students why some of the requirements or characteristics would be important. (For example, trust is important because the person will be handling your



Medical Abortion uses medication

rather than surgery to end a pregnancy; it can only be used in early pregnancy – up to 7 weeks from the first day of the last menstrual period¹². Medical abortions require at least 2 visits to the clinic and if the treatment fails a surgical abortion will be required¹³.

(15 – 20 min)



Refrain from using the terms "good parenting" or "bad parenting. Being a great parent is a process. Student parents should not view themselves as failures or decide that their own parents have failed. Instead focus on the skills of parenting.



This quote may promote group discussion:
"What troubles me is when another girl finds out that I have a

money, reliability is important because the person must show up for work, etc.)

5. Ask students if the person they hired doesn't have most of the skills or characteristics listed, what would happen to their business? (The business would most likely fail.) Certainly, a person can learn on the job but there might be some bad cheeseburgers and a loss of some customers.
6. Ask students to think about what the "requirements" are in our society to become a parent? (There are no requirements.)
7. Ask students to think about the importance of running a cheeseburger stand compared to parenting. Does this make sense?
8. Ask students to make a list of "requirements" to be met before becoming a parent. Compare this list to the cheeseburger list. Ask students why some of the characteristics would be "required".

daughter and she says "that is so neat." A car is neat, an outfit is neat, a baby is not. They take a lot of time and work. When you become a mom, you become responsible (physically, emotionally, and financially) for a child for the rest of your life".¹⁵

D. Discussion 'Dollars and Sense!'

Students further examine the commitments required to raise a child.

1. What do children need? Think about everything it takes to raise a child from 0-18 years of age. Encourage students to think of both direct (food, clothing, school supplies, income for activities, childcare, and child support) and indirect (time, education, income or career opportunities)
2. Think about how much it costs in Canada to raise a child 0 – 18 years of age. Take bids and then refer to the fact sheets: [The Cost of Raising a Child, 2004](#)¹⁴
 - Prospective parents need to be financially prepared for the costs involved in raising a child. Estimates suggest that over \$10,000 is needed to support a child in the first year of life.¹⁹ Many factors influence the cost of child-rearing, including the child's individual needs, family circumstances and values and the resources or supports available in the community.

(10 min)



For students who require more reinforcement, you can turn this into a larger activity. You may ask students to brainstorm what a baby would require. Then you can have them visit a store and price out how much each item would cost. Compare this to *The Cost of Raising a Child, 2004* and see how close they are. Further, expand by estimating current earning power and other expenses (rent, utilities, transportation, own needs, etc.)

For the latest edition of CCSD report exploring profiles of Canadian families, visit <http://www.ccsd.ca/factsheets/family/>



QUESTION BOX:

(10 min)

Introduce the question box. You could have students fill out questions every lesson, or have students begin to think about questions that they might ask next lesson. Start the next lesson by answering one or two of the questions.



SELF REFLECTION:

- During the lesson, were:
- Ground rules being followed?
 - Good practices established regarding discussion?

What will you change for future classes with this group?

What will you change for future use of this lesson?



STUDENT ASSESSMENT:

During the lesson, did students:

- Knowledge:**
- Identify skills and characteristics needed for parenting?
 - Outline the importance of learning about parenting?
- Skills:**
- Use problem-solving skills to determine what to do when a teen is faced with an unintended pregnancy?
 - Describe options available to pregnant teens?
- Attitudes:**
- Recognize that it is the personal right of every pregnant woman to choose what to do with her pregnancy?

¹ Alberta Education. (2002). *Career and life management guide to implementation*. Retrieved from: <http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/health/resources/calmguide.aspx>

² Alberta Health and Wellness (2007). *Health Trends in Alberta: A Working Document*. Retrieved from <http://www.health.alberta.ca/documents/Trends-2007-Health.pdf>

³ McKay, A & Barrett, M. (2010). Trends in teen pregnancy rates from 1996-2006: A comparison of Canada, Sweden, USA, and England/Wales. *Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, 19 (1-2): 43-52

⁴ Statistics Canada.(2006). *Pregnancy Outcomes 2003*. Ottawa: Ministry of Industry. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/82-224-XIE/82-224-XIE2003000.pdf>

⁵ Best Start. (2007). *Update report on teen pregnancy prevention*. Retrieved from: http://www.beststart.org/resources/rep_health/pdf/teen_pregnancy.pdf

⁶Public Health Agency of Canada. (2011). *The chief public health officer's report on the state of public health in Canada, 2011: Youth and young adults – Life in transition*. Retrieved from <http://publichealth.gc.ca/CPHOreport>

⁷ Alberta Health Services (2010). *Growing Miracles: The First Six Years with Your Child*. Alberta Health Services.

⁸ Canadian Federation for Sexual Health. (2008). *Abortion FAQs*. Retrieved from: http://www.cfsh.ca/Your_Sexual_Health/Abortion/abortion-FAQs.asp

⁹ Alberta Health Services, Abortion Services. Retrieved from <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/services.asp?pid=service&rid=2131>

¹⁰ Kensington Clinic. (2010). *Frequently asked questions*. Retrieved from: <http://www.kensingtonclinic.com/faqs.php#howlong>

¹¹ Canadian Federation for Sexual Health. (2008). *Surgical abortion*. Retrieved from: http://www.cfsh.ca/Your_Sexual_Health/Abortion/surgical-abortion.aspx

¹² Canadian Federation for Sexual Health. (2008). *Medical abortion*. Retrieved from: http://www.cfsh.ca/Your_Sexual_Health/Abortion/medical-abortion.aspx

¹³ Kensington Clinic. (2010). *Medical abortion*. Retrieved from: <http://kensingtonclinic.com/services.php?service=medical>

¹⁴ Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (2004). *The costs of raising children*. Retrieved from <http://home.gicable.com/~jqgregg/Cost%20of%20raising%20children.pdf>

¹⁵ The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. (2002). *Teens tell all about...the reality of being a teen parent*. Retrieved from <http://teenpregnancy.org/resources/teens/voices/teenrent.asp>