

Integrating Healthy Relationship Education in High School and College

Webinar Transcript

February 11, 2016

Operator

Good day, and welcome to the “Integrating Healthy Relationship Education in High School and College” call. Today’s presentation is being recorded, and at this time, I’d like to turn the conference over to Stephanie Vester. Please go ahead.

Stephanie Vester

Thank you and welcome, everyone. Thank you for joining us today for the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families webinar focused on integrating healthy relationship education in high school and college. My name is Stephanie Vester, and I will be assisting with this webinar today along with my colleague, Trevor Hoffberger. So before we get to the agenda and the content for today’s webinar, we are going to go through just a few webinar logistical items.

The webinar today will be an hour and a half, ending at 3:30 p.m. Eastern Time. Audio for the webinar will be broadcast through your computer, so please make sure your speakers and volume are turned on. If you have any technical issues throughout the webinar or problems seeing the slides or hearing the presentations, please send us a message in the Q-and-A pod that you should see located on the bottom right-hand corner of your screen, or feel free to call us at 1-866-916-4672, and we will be sure to assist you.

After the presentations today, we will have an online Q-and-A session. We encourage you to type in questions you think of at any time while presenters are presenting, by typing them in the Q-and-A pod. Again, it’s located on the bottom right-hand corner of your screen. We will collect questions that are submitted, and then address those during the Q-and-A session at the end as time permits. If your question is for a specific presenter, please reference that when typing in your question, if possible.

Throughout the webinar, you can browse our Web links by clicking on any of the links in the Web Links pod in the top right-hand corner of your screen, and you can download materials by selecting files in the File pod on the right-hand portion of your screen.

We will also be conducting several poll questions throughout the webinar that we really encourage you to participate in. We are very excited for the content that will be shared on today’s webinar. As you can see, the webinar agenda includes several things: Logistics and brief introductions of our speakers; welcome and opening remarks; an overview of the Resource Center and its resources related to youth populations; research overview linking family and origin to perpetrations of sexual assaults; program examples from the South Carolina Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy; and a Q-and-

A session as I mentioned before that we will have following the presentation. So next up, we have our presenters for the webinar today.

- First we have Millicent Crawford. Millicent is a Family Assistance Program Specialist at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration of Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance. As part of her role, she oversees the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families.
- We have Robyn Cenizal. Robyn is the Project Director for the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families.
- We have Evin Richardson. Evin is a doctoral candidate at the Department of Human Development and Family Science at the University of Georgia where she studies family systems within high-stress contexts, with a particular focus on the marital and co-parenting relationships of foster and adoptive parents, parents of a child with a disability, and military families. She is also interested in the resiliency of these families and how family life education may improve well-being.
- And lastly, we have Shannon Lindsay. Shannon joined the South Carolina Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy in February 2014 as the Training Coordinator. She is responsible for the development, planning and implementation of all in-house, off-site and online South Carolina campaign educational events. Before coming to the Campaign, Shannon was the Transition Specialist for the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department and a state-wide transition coach for the Office of Exceptional Children of the South Carolina Department of Education.

So again, welcome to all of our speakers and thank you, everyone, for joining us on this webinar today. Now I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to our first speaker, Millicent, to get us started with some opening remarks.

Millicent Crawford

Good afternoon again, everyone. Again, my name is Millicent Crawford. I'm a Family Assistance Program Specialist within the Office of Family Assistance, the Healthy Marriage Responsible Fatherhood program. So our program, the Healthy Marriage Relationship Education program through our office, is designed to develop knowledge to build relationship skills and help improve behaviors that will ultimately enhance relationships and reduce problems affecting couples, individuals and high school-age students.

The Office of Family Assistance recognizes the importance of relationship building and getting started early with interventions with our youth, so that ultimately, we can try to mitigate problems from occurring in the future.

OFA is especially excited about our partnership with the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families. It's through their hard work and coordination of experts and other leaders in the field, through webinars and other information platforms like these, that have a far and wide reach to many of our constituents like many of you on the call today. The information that they share and the resources they provide serve to list our office priorities, which ultimately is for our whole agency to improve the outcomes for children and families. With that being said, I'm going to pass it on Robyn Cenizal.

Robyn Cenizal

Thanks, Millicent, and thank you for your support of the Resource Center. Welcome to all of you who have joined us today. I think you're going to really enjoy today's presentation. I'd like to start by telling you a little bit more about the Resource Center specifically, and then I'm going to turn it over to our presenters and let them share some really exciting information with you.

Let's get started with a poll question so that we have a better sense of who all is joining us today. The question is, "How familiar are you with the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families?" And if you would just indicate on the poll whether you're very familiar, somewhat familiar, not at all familiar or no vote. [pause]

All right, great. So it looks like we have an interesting mix of participants today. A good number of you are somewhat familiar with the Resource Center. Some are very familiar, and then there are some new folks to the conversation today. So that's really great. I'm excited to have you folks joining us who have not been involved in some of our activities in the past, and I hope that you will visit the website. As you'll notice, in the middle of your screen there are some Web links -- one that takes you directly to the National Resource Center, another to our Virtual Training Center -- and there are also some files that can be downloaded down in the center, so I hope you'll take advantage of those.

The purpose of the Resource Center is to support ACF's mission. We have two main purposes. We serve as the national repository for healthy marriage and relationship education. We gather, we develop, and we disseminate timely, relevant research tools and other resources on the topics that are of interest to a wide array of stakeholders, practitioners, researchers and policy makers. And we also provide training and technical assistance to human service agencies who are interested in actually integrating healthy relationship education skills into their programs as part of a holistic approach to strengthening families.

So we have those kind of two sides of the house. We serve as a repository, which brings up an excellent time for me to mention to you -- if you are aware of resources that should be in our library, please feel free to go to our website, and there is a library submission process. Just submit those to us. We would love to add additional resources always to our library.

Through the Resource Center, we offer outreach through our conferences. We're on Twitter. You'll notice our hashtag down at the bottom corner of the slide, so please feel free to follow us on Twitter. We also put out a monthly newsletter. If you signed up for our listserv, you will receive the monthly newsletter. You'll receive announcements about webinars, but we do try not to overload your inbox. We all get a lot of email ourselves, so we try not to do that.

We also develop stakeholder-specific products. We've developed over 60 products over the last few years that are stakeholder-specific. It really takes excellent research like some of the information you're going to hear today, and turn it into practical application information -- so here's the research, here's what it says, and here's what you can do to apply this research in your program. We think that's really an important role that the Resource Center plays, because there's tons of research out there. But if you don't

actually have the mechanism to take and turn it into practical information, it's not so helpful sometimes.

I mentioned our training and technical assistance. We also offer state-level Integration Institutes, and we're working with some of the TANF regional events to help make sure that we're getting this information out as far and as wide as possible. We also have a technical assistance request form on our website, so if you could use support in integrating relationship education skills, let us know.

As I mentioned, our website has tons of research-based resources in the library. We have the Virtual Training Center that has six courses available, and if you complete those courses, you can get a certificate of completion which can be used for CEUs. By the way, we can now apply for a certificate of completion for participation in webinars, so that's an important point to keep in mind if you are someone who likes to collect credits for CEUs.

We also have a media gallery. We realized that sharing information in different formats is important. We have some videos, some podcasts. Some of our videos have companion research pieces that go with them, which is indicated in the media gallery as well. All of our webinars as well as our newsletters are archived, so you can always go back and catch up on something you missed. So I hope you'll do that.

When we talk about healthy marriage and relationship education skills, the Resource Center focuses on four core skill areas. We do this because these are the interpersonal skills like communication and conflict resolution, and these are skills that transfer from your interpersonal relationships within the family, couple relationships, parent-child relationships to the workplace, to schools, to the community. So it's important to focus on those interpersonal skills and understanding that conflict resolution and communication are key skills in the workplace, along with the critical skills, parenting and financial education.

We focus on these as critical skills because these are two of the number-one stressors that impact families. Issues with parenting and children and finances affect families across socioeconomic lines, so we feel like these are really important skills to focus on. All of these skills can be successfully integrated individually, as for example, a financial education class or a parenting class, or collectively as part of a more holistic healthy relationship education program that can be beneficial to reduce stress and improve communication, in the workplace and in the home.

So today -- oh, where's my poll question? Here it is. So today, we're going to talk specifically about integrating healthy marriage and relationship education into existing middle and high school programs. We're going to talk about high school and college as well. But I want to hear from you guys. What do you think it can impact? Increased sexual acting out among middle and high school students, decrease dropout rates among most at-risk students, include the likelihood that adolescents will be prepared to make wise decisions and handle relationship challenges, or none of the above? [pause] We need to get the "Jeopardy" music for the poll question.

All right. It looks like I didn't fool anybody with this question. Ninety-three percent of you believe that it will increase the likelihood that adolescents will be prepared to make wise decisions and handle relationship challenges. That is correct.

As you'll see here in some of this information, relationship education really does matter to youth. Adolescents' early experiences with romantic relationships do frame their outlook on future relationships. And those who have more serious relationships in high school may actually perceive a greater likelihood of getting married. Integration in middle and high school programs has shown to increase adolescent preparedness to make wise relationship decisions, and to handle relationship challenges effectively. These interpersonal skills that are learned in healthy relationship programs at this age are also helpful in multiple contexts and situations. Think about communication and conflict resolution skills within the schools when you think about issues of bullying and so forth. So being able to better communicate can be very helpful in a lot of ways for young people.

Also, for high-risk youth, studies have indicated that relationship education for high-risk youth has shown gains in relationship knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes toward couple violence. Increased relationship knowledge -- also improvement in communication and conflict resolution skills -- decreased the demand, withdrawal and mutual avoidance patterns of communication. And also, [youth were] more likely to seek and engage in healthier romantic relationships.

So all of these are important reasons for offering healthy relationship education for youth. And what you're going to hear from our presenters today, first you're going to hear from Evin. And Evin is going to share with you some really interesting research on the correlation of inconsistent parenting and issues with youth as they get older. We're going to hear about how healthy relationship education can actually be helpful to those youth as well as to helping parents better understand the importance of these issues whenever they're dealing with their kids.

I'm going to turn it over to Evin, and I will come back later and talk with you then.

Evin Richardson

Thank you so much, Robyn. I am so excited to be speaking on this webinar today. My name is Evin Richardson, and I am a doctoral candidate and a graduate research assistant at the University of Georgia in the Department of Human Development and Family Science. What I'm going to be talking about today is some statistics related to sexual coercion on college campuses, and then some family of origin experiences that research shows is related to sexual coercion. We'll also be talking about individual characteristics that have also been found to be related to sexual coercion. Then I'm going to be talking about a study that my colleagues here at the university worked on [where] we found really interesting findings, and we're also going to be discussing the implications of those findings.

We have another poll question: "What percent of male college students report perpetrating sexual assault," if you were to guess? [pause] All right, so about 20 percent, 30 percent, 40 percent or about 50 percent? [pause] All right. It looks like the majority of you thought about 20 percent. Actually, surprisingly, the number is about 50 percent.

About 50 percent of male college students across research studies have reported perpetrating sexual coercion. That is surprising in that these are self-reports, and so we think that the actual number is actually a little bit higher than 50 percent.

Sexual coercion is the act of using pressure, substances or alcohol or force to have sexual contact with another person against their will. For an example, an individual gets there and they get drunk or stoned with the intention of having sexual contact with them against their will. They may threaten to terminate their relationship if the other person doesn't agree to have sexual contact with them. There are various forms of sexual coercion that can be used. As we saw in the poll question, nearly half of male college students report perpetrating sexual coercion of some sort.

We also know that approximately 30 to 50 percent of female college students have reported experiencing some form of sexual coercion, and 10 to 20 percent of female college students have reported being forced to engage in sexual intercourse. In other words, 10 to 20 percent have reported experiencing rape.

We know that sexual coercion is not always male-to-female, but we do know from research that it is a lot more frequent that the sexual coercion occurs from male-to-female. We know that the consequences for the victim are much more severe for females -- not to downplay sexual coercion against males, because it is definitely also an issue -- but we do know that it is more frequent when it is male-to-female.

We know that victims of sexual violence also experience negative effects associated with the assault, including self-blame and psychological distress, embarrassment, trouble sleeping, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, alcohol and substance abuse, suicidal thoughts, lower self-esteem and lower sexual functioning. Those are a lot of the negative effects. They also might experience an unwanted pregnancy or a sexually-transmitted infection.

In addition to the negative effects for the victim, another concern of these high rates of sexual coercion is that studies have shown that there is an escalation of violent behavior of the perpetrators. Studies show that sexual coercion exists on a continuum, and that perpetrators usually start with less violent strategies such as using alcohol to ply their date. But when these tactics fail, they may escalate to forceful, violent behavior, using verbal threats or physically overpowering their partner.

So it is a large concern on college campuses as well as other places. Researchers and policymakers and administrators have been trying to figure out some ways to learn more information about this to hopefully prevent these types of things from happening on multiple levels.

One of the arenas that researchers have looked at is family of origin experiences, looking at relationship quality and different parenting behaviors. If you think about relationship quality, we know from research that hostility between parents is a possible family of origin factor that might be associated with the perpetration of sexual coercion later in life. As these young men are seeing their parents having hostile interactions with one another, they're more likely to perpetrate sexual coercion.

We know that inter-parental relationship quality impacts parenting qualities, and that parents that have high levels of hostile conflict do not have as much energy to put

toward their child's needs. We also know that parents who have high levels of hostile conflict are also likely to disagree about child-rearing practices, which impacts their co-parenting relationship.

We also know that how parents interact with each other spills over into other parts of the family system. Children and adolescents who observed the conflict in their parents' relationships are more likely to experience difficulty in their own relationships, whether it be their current relationships -- so if they're an adolescent and they might be dating someone, they might experience difficulty in that relationship -- but also with peers and siblings and other relationships that they have. It also impacts future relationships, possibly with someone they're dating during adulthood or a spouse.

Adolescents who observe high levels of conflict between their parents are more likely to experience high levels of aggression in their own romantic relationships, and they're more likely to believe that aggression is tolerable in those relationships. They use verbal or physical aggression to coerce their partner into sexual contact.

If we look at some of the parenting behaviors that researchers had examined when looking at these family of origin experiences, one of the ones that is most studied is harsh parenting. When a parent-child relationship is characterized by harsh physical punishment or other harsh parenting behaviors, male offspring have been more likely to perpetrate dating violence and sexual coercion during adolescence and young adulthood.

Two variables that haven't been studied as much are overparenting and inconsistent parenting. Overparenting has been a topic of interest in the media and in research in recent years. You may have heard it termed "helicopter parenting." I know there is a lot of articles and news reports in the popular media about helicopter parenting. Overparenting occurs when a parent is determined to create a happy, successful life for their child without taking into consideration their developmental needs. This might include overindulgence or over-permissiveness, over-domineering or overprotection, just some forms of overparenting.

Overparenting can be harmful to all children, but it is especially harmful in later developmental stages -- adolescents and young adulthood. Adolescents who are overparented have been found to experience feelings of privilege, and come to expect that they will receive what they want and that all problems will be solved for them. Research has suggested that overparenting teaches a child to take and not to give, which leads to egotism, feelings of entitlement, and exploitation of others. Adolescents and young adults who are overparented may come to feel that they are special and entitled to what they want, which might include sexual contact with an unwilling partner.

The last parenting behavior that has been looked at in research is inconsistent parenting. The co-parenting relationship is a central component of the family system. The co-parenting relationship, if the parents are married, is between the two parents, or it might include a mom and a grandmother or a dad and a grandfather -- the people that are involved in raising the child that are working together to raise the child. That co-parenting relationship is separate from the couple relationship in that the co-parenting

relationship only has to do with the child, making decisions for the child, all those types of things. We know that it is a central component of the family system.

Consistency between parents is an important component of healthy co-parenting and has been found to be a central component of family functioning and child outcomes in many family structures, including married parents, foster families, divorced families, blended families. In many family structures, research has shown that the co-parenting relationship is very important.

When dissimilarities in child rearing lead to inconsistencies between parents in responding to their children, we see triangulation, which is when one parent forms an alliance with the child and then undermines the other parent's authority, allowing the child to do something that the other parent disagrees with. When a child is inconsistently parented, they may question the boundaries and expectations that are in place for their behavior. They learn that while rules are strict with one parent, they can still break the parent's rules without consequences since the other parent allows them to do so.

These types of behavior can teach the child that "no" doesn't always mean no, and that the situation can be manipulated in order for the child to get their way. In adolescence or young adulthood, this may lead to the belief that they can manipulate a partner into sexual contact, that "no" doesn't always mean no. This is a parenting behavior that might be related [unintelligible] of sexual coercion.

Then we also looked at individual characteristics of entitlement. When a child is taught that he or she is special, when they are taught that they don't have to solve their problems on their own or when a child is not held to a certain standard of behavior by the authority figures in his or her life, that child may come to believe that he or she deserves special treatment, and therefore may develop feelings of entitlement.

We know that entitlement is a major component of narcissism, and it involves the attitude that one is generally more deserving than others. It's been found to lead to greed and aggression, a lack of forgiveness and empathy, hostility toward others and [unintelligible]. With a lack of empathy, entitled individuals may feel that they deserve sex when they want it without considering the wants, needs and desires of the other person. Narcissism and feelings of entitlement have been found to be associated with sexual coercion, especially date rape among college students. Those who feel entitled often use coercive measures to achieve a desired goal. This can include sexual coercion of an unwilling partner if that partner is seen as an obstacle to achieving the desired goal of sexual contact.

My colleagues and I at the University of Georgia, Dr. Leslie Simmons in the Department of Sociology and Dr. Ted Futris here in the Department of Human Development and Family Science, conducted a study looking at these links between feelings of entitlement, family of origin experience, and the perpetration of sexual coercion for male college students. The purpose of the study was to understand what family of origin experiences may be associated with the perpetration of sexual coercion in young adulthood, and then examine feelings of entitlement as a way to partially explain this relationship. We were interested in knowing what a family of origin experiences lead to

the development of a sense of entitlement, and then, in turn, if entitlement was related to the perpetration of sexual coercion.

We used data from a sample of 326 male undergraduate college students to conduct the study. This was quite a large survey, but the items that were related to this particular study asked about the participants' observations of their parents' relationship quality when they lived at home, as well as their parents' interparental consistency while living at home. Then they were asked whether or not their parents did things for them that they could do for themselves during the last six months. This would be overparenting.

Some examples of things they were asked were if their parents called to wake them up for class -- they're in college and they're not living at home anymore, and their parents are calling to wake them up for class; bought them things that they wanted but didn't necessarily need; either put money in their bank account when they were about to overdraw; things that didn't allow for natural consequences of behaviors, like spending too much money or oversleeping for class. We also asked them about their feelings of entitlement, and specific sexually coercive behaviors that they had engaged in.

This study had several findings and implications that are important to understanding the potential impact [of] family of origin experiences on later perpetration. First, the study found that observing hostility between parents is directly associated with those feelings of entitlement and perpetration of sexual coercion during young adulthood. Second, overparenting during young adulthood was directly associated with feelings of entitlement, and was indirectly associated with the perpetration of sexual coercion through feelings of entitlement, which means that males who felt entitled because of being over parented were more likely to perpetrate sexual coercion. Third, interparental inconsistency during the child's time at home was directly associated with feelings of entitlement and directly associated with sexual coercion through feelings of entitlement, meaning that males who felt entitled because of their parents' inconsistent parenting were more likely to perpetrate sexual coercion.

It's [the] implications that are important to family life education. If we think about healthy marriage and relationship education, we know that conflict is normal in all couple relationships. It's not whether you experience or don't experience conflict in your romantic relationship, but how you manage the conflict that really matters, not only for the health of the relationship, but also for the well-being of children in the home. Even when couples have consensual interactions with each other in front of those children, parents who manage their conflicts in a healthy way model healthy conflict management to their children, which can help strengthen the child's healthy relationship skills.

Since hostility between parents has been found to be associated with both feelings of entitlement and the perpetration of sexual coercion, among other negative outcomes, those who are providing healthy marriage and relationship education to parents -- whether that be through a social service delivery system or through standardized education or other programs -- the facilitators should emphasize the importance of healthy conflict management, and then teach participants skills and strategies to use when inevitable conflict arises. Reducing hostility and increasing warmth between parents, even to co-parents who are no longer in a relationship, has strong implications for the well-being and future behaviors of the children.

Social service providers or relationship repair educators who work with separated or divorced parents should also discuss the importance of overall health of the co-parent relationship, whether it's romantic or not. And co-parents who are in a healthy relationship and practice healthy communication and respect for one another are more likely to be better co-parents.

Putting up a united front is really important and having that consistency for children is very important -- letting your child know that you work together as a team when it comes to decision making about what they do in all households, whether parents are married or not. This allows a child to know that they can't coerce one parent into giving in when the other parent said "no." When children know both of their parents are on the same page and the parents work together as a team to make child rearing decisions, and the parents are also committed to never undermining their co-parent, children learn that coercive measures, such as going to the other parent for a different answer, will not be fruitful, which will reduce the likelihood of using coercive measures later in life, including with romantic partners.

Finally, if we think about relationship education for adolescents and young adults, we think that it can reduce the frequency of perpetration of sexual coercion. I know that Shannon is going to be talking about this a little bit later, but it's important to understand that relationship education for young people should emphasize the difference between a healthy relationship and an unhealthy relationship, and that healthy relationships are not ones that include coercion. It should also emphasize the importance of healthy conflict management and respect for one another's boundaries in all areas, including the sexual relationship, and pointing out that aggression is never acceptable in a romantic relationship. I would also emphasize the importance of this respect.

As far as implications for parenting education, providing parents with strategies for healthy, authoritative parenting is an important implication of this research. Parent educators should teach parents how to establish rules that both parents will stick to, teach them how to work together as a team, and provide consistency and boundaries for a child. When parents agree not to override a decision made by the other parent in front of the child, the parents are putting up a united front and telling the child that they are working together as a team. Clearly establishing behaviors and standards of behavior and boundaries, explaining the reasons for those rules to their children, explaining the consequences that there are for violating those rules, and then applying the rules and responding to violations in a consistent manner -- those are some things as a strategy that parents should be taught in order to create consistency in the home.

We know that authoritative parenting allows for verbal give-and-take between the parent and child, but that the parent should retain authority in the relationship. Parents may choose to relax a certain rule in certain situations. For example, if the parent extends the curfew because the bus is getting back late from an away game, those are things that are logical and we know that parents might relax the rules. By creating an environment of consistency between parents, parents do not allow the child to coerce the parents into giving in to his request, teaching him that coercive strategies are not acceptable.

As far as overparenting, I know that most parents want their child to be happy and healthy, and they want to give support to their children. But parents often, while

behaving with the best intentions, it is important to help them understand the unintended consequences of some well-intentioned behaviors. While it's common to want to keep one's offspring from experiencing hardship, sometimes it is developmentally appropriate to experience natural consequences of their actions. So just teaching parents that what's developmentally appropriate is a really important implication of this research.

Now I'm going to turning it over to Shannon Lindsay to talk about teen pregnancy prevention. Thank you.

Shannon Lindsay

Thanks, Evin. So as Evin told you, my name is Shannon Lindsay, and I'm the Training Coordinator at the South Carolina Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. My part of today's presentation is to discuss how the South Carolina Campaign has integrated healthy relationship education into our current work. But first, I feel like I should give you all just a little bit of background about the South Carolina Campaign.

Our mission as an organization is to improve the health and economic well-being of individuals, communities, and the state of South Carolina by preventing teen pregnancy. Our approach we call "the Four Cs": Communication with target market, Customization of our approaches, Capacity-building at all levels of the community, and Commitment to research and evaluation and a long-term investment.

We have excellent news to report. We actually just released the most recent teen pregnancy data here in South Carolina back in December. Since we've been collecting the stats, South Carolina has seen a 61 percent decrease in the teen birth rate. That's over 23 years. So from 1991 to 2014, we've seen a 61 percent decrease in our teen birth rate. That's certainly something to be celebrated. In particular, when you look at the population of 15- to 17-year-olds, that decline has been more dramatic. It's declined 71 percent since it peaked in 1991.

What you'll see on this graphic, though, is our hashtag for this year. It says, "Start Early, Stay Late SC." What that says and how that relates to our work is that in South Carolina, birth to young women ages 18 to 19, older teens, is what drives our birth rate. So we've done an excellent job in targeting the population that is in school, in middle and high school. It's those young people that are leaving school and moving into adult life that are still not technically not teens that are still driving our birth rate. So we have some strategies to help us stay late, so to continue to provide education and access to those young people that are driving our rates.

That brings me to my first poll question, and I'm going to -- there it is -- hopefully it will appear on the screen. My poll question is, "As of 2014, what is the rate of teen births per 1,000 teens in the United States?" [pause] Wonderful. It looks like a lot of you are experts on the teen birth rate. You're absolutely right. The teen birth rate in the United States is 24.2, that is 24.2 births to young people ages 15 to 19 per 1,000 teen girls. That's the way that statistic is reported.

What you'll see on your screen is a comparison between South Carolina and the United States data. I've already mentioned our 61 percent decrease in birth rate here in South Carolina. That one is the blue line on top. There's been a 10 percent decrease in the birth rate just in the last year that data was available, so that would be 2013 to 2014. The

yellow line is the U.S. teen birth rate. What you'll see, I hope, is that South Carolina, although we have a higher rate, we are keeping up with the decline that the entire United States is having. The full United States decrease in the last year was nine percent, so we actually exceeded the decrease in the United States as a whole. The difference between our birth rate here in South Carolina and the U.S. birth rate is actually the smallest that it's ever been since we started collecting this data. And that's a lot for us to celebrate.

However, we know we still have a lot of work to do here, and that's part of what I'm going to be talking to you about today. So the South Carolina Campaign's role is to build capacity across our state to do the work of teen pregnancy prevention. We do that through these strategic imperatives that you see here on the screen. These strategic imperatives -- increase engagement to maximize impact, impact systems to create sustainable change, push innovation to respond to a changing environment, and be accountable to our mission and best practices -- these imperatives are what drive our work. It's through these imperatives that we believe we can continue to decrease the teen pregnancy rate in South Carolina.

This takes us to our next poll question. My question to you is, "What strategy or strategies does the South Carolina Campaign currently use in its teen pregnancy prevention work here in our state?" [pause] You all got me, too. So you'll see there are several different strategies here and, in fact, we use all of the above as we do our work here in South Carolina.

The next slide is an overview of a two-year study that concluded this time last year. It was conducted here in South Carolina with the support of the Duke Endowment. It was the first-of-its-kind study to determine a path forward to teen pregnancy prevention efforts that would maximize resources and target communities most in need, taking a nod towards the technical package approach that's been put forth by the Centers for Disease Control. That technical package approach, described as effective public health programs, consists of a number of high-priority, evidence-based strategies packaged together for maximum effect.

The South Carolina Campaign proposes the technical package that you see on your screen. These four evidence-based strategies are designed to decrease teen pregnancy by promoting abstinence and the consistent use of effective contraceptive methods including condoms among sexually active youth. That package consists of widespread implementation with fidelity, evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs; expanded availability of quality, teen-friendly family planning services for adolescents that includes access to LARC -- LARC stands for Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives; increasing the number and utilization of teen-friendly condom access points in local communities, and improving the educational and information offerings for parents to increase parent-child communication about relationships, love, and sex. It's really in that fourth piece of this technical package that our focus will be on today.

The Campaign participated in an Integration Institute here in South Carolina right about this time last year. It was actually the 12th of February last year. The folks that came to the table were a wonderful group of individuals who have previously worked together in some capacity. They included members of an organization in our state called The

Children's Trust, our fatherhood initiative in South Carolina; our health and human services agency; [and] SCCADVASA which is our South Carolina Coalition [Against] Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. There was this very diverse group of folks together.

What happened here at the Campaign, as a result of our participation in that Integration Institute -- We brought Robyn back to South Carolina. She was here in February last year. We asked her to come back, and she came and spent some time with us in June and presented at our annual Summer Institute. Our Summer Institute is one of the largest teen pregnancy prevention conferences in the United States. It's high quality, something that I take a great deal of pride in, and it was wonderful to have Robyn come and present to our local partners all across the state about the importance of integrating healthy relationships in their work with young people and parents.

We also have a Third Thursday webinar series. Every third Thursday of each month, we produce a webinar and, over the last year, we've integrated content about healthy relationships and some content about identifying what unhealthy relationships look like, because I think that's a huge component of understanding of what healthy looks like. You have to know what unhealthy looks like as well. So we've had webinars on reproductive coercion among youth. We've had a webinar on the impact of alcohol and drugs on sexual risk-taking behavior for young people. We've had a webinar on trauma-informed care. We've had a webinar on sexual trafficking here in South Carolina. In December we had a webinar on sexting and cyberbullying. This month -- that will be next Thursday if anybody is interested in joining us -- we actually have a webinar on effective co-parenting.

You're hearing me mention some of the strategies that Evin mentioned in her research, and there are things that we've picked up on and have tried to integrate into our work to provide good quality information and resources to our partners here in South Carolina. We've also as an organization spent some time learning and better understanding the ACES study, the Adverse Childhood Experience Study, and we've integrated some of that information into our training. We've gotten group feedback from that and have in our minds to continue to do that.

We have also conducted some trainings in our state with foster parents and youth services providers that has been focused on increased communication with young people, and specifically on the context around being an askable adult. That's important because as an agency, we don't do a lot of work directly with young people. Our focus has usually been on the adults and service providers that work with young people. So being able to actually touch parents and foster parents in particular with this content has been a wonderful opportunity.

We've had, through our participation in the PREP Grant. PREP is the Personal Responsibility Education Program. Many of you are probably familiar with that -- that is supported by FYSB. Healthy relationships are one of six components, three of which have to be integrated into the work of the PREP Grant in your state. So we've been fortunate that we've worked on the PREP Grant and have focused, through that grant, on several evidence-based interventions, or EVIs, we call them, for teen pregnancy

prevention that already incorporate healthy relationship components. We're looking in 2016/2017 at having a more intentional focus on that aspect as well.

We focused on and emphasized the relationship and communication components in evidence-based curricula trainings that we do all over the state, as well as having improved conversations both internally and externally with partners about healthy relationships and the impact on teen pregnancy and teen pregnancy prevention. I mentioned SCCADVASA, the South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. They actually presented one of those Thursday webinars, as has Sexual Trauma Services up in Midland. So we've seen an increase in collaboration and shared training around concepts that are supportive of healthy relationship education.

I'd be remiss if I didn't also mention, although you won't see a slide on it, that we've collected resources and shared them on our youth focus website. We have a website called <http://www.notrightnowsc.org/>. There is a component on that website specifically for young people, and it focuses on helping them have conversations with their partners about initiating or abstaining from sexual behavior. The model that's there is, "Think about it, talk about it, and make a plan." And there are resources on that website that we share with young people all across the state to help them have conversations with their partners. At its heart, our work is based on those conversations and based on empowering young people to take a role in their decision making about engaging in sexual behavior. We certainly believe and share that abstinence is the best way to prevent an unplanned pregnancy, but if you're going to be sexually active, it should be within the confines of a healthy relationship.

That's how the work has been moving here in South Carolina and with that, I am going to turn it back over to Stephanie for questions.

Stephanie Vester

Thank you so much, Shannon. I just want to remind everyone on how to ask a question. You can ask a question by typing it in the Q-and-A pod that's located on the bottom right corner of your screen and clicking Enter. So we are just going to wait a couple minutes to give participants time to submit questions for all of the presenters, and then we'll move over to our Q-and-A session. So if you have a question, feel free to type it in now.

Trevor Hoffberger

Okay, our first question is for Evin and the question reads, "Why did you choose to use the term 'sexual coercion,' and what is the difference between using that term and saying 'sexual assault' or 'rape?'"

Evin Richardson

Thank you for your question. So the reason we chose sexual coercion is because the measure that we used in our study measures sexual coercion and not rape or sexual assault. It does measure that but not only that. Some of the questions that were used in the survey were asking things that didn't necessarily lead to sexual intercourse, but other sexual contact. It was using verbal things like threatening to terminate their relationship, that sort of thing. So it wasn't always sexual assault or rape, so that's why we used the term sexual coercion. It's more of an umbrella term for the questions that we asked.

Stephanie Vester

Great, thanks. [pause] And we have another question that's come in, and it's for Shannon.

Trevor Hoffberger

The question reads, "Have you seen teen pregnancy prevention strategies change with social media?"

Shannon Lindsay

That's a great question. Actually, I was sitting here as Evin was talking, thinking through how social media actually might even impact her work. I definitely think that some of the teen pregnancy prevention efforts have changed. There are a lot more resources available online and available through social media. We, in a previous project when we conceived of and developed our youth-focused website, <http://www.notrightnowsc.org/>, we did a lot of our advertising through social media and continue to do that.

We've seen some great results out of North Carolina for a project that they have using a text line to provide information to young people. I definitely think there's been a change, and I honestly think that we can use social media to our advantage. We can leverage it to provide information to young people in new and novel ways and ways that they access more readily, because there's a level of anonymity to it, which obviously comes with social media.

So I hope that answers your question. I do think it's changed -- I think it's changed the way young people relate to one another, and I certainly think that we'll continue to see that impact on our work as we move forward. Young people today, much to my chagrin and dismay, are not at all like young people were when I was young. I have a 13-year-old daughter, and she's growing up in a very different world than I did. Social media is responsible for that in many, many ways.

Trevor Hoffberger

Thank you so much. The next question is back to Evin. "In addition to educating parents, can healthy relationship education be incorporated on college campuses for students who may already be experiencing feelings of entitlement, and you think it would be helpful for them?"

Evin Richardson

Absolutely. I am a firm believer that healthy relationship can make a huge difference in someone's life and the way that they think or the way that they behave. I think that might be a good way to maybe prevent some of these occurrences of sexual coercion. I actually haven't thought about that in detail, but I think that providing healthy relationship education and providing the strategies to dealing with these feelings of entitlement and what that actually means and changing how we behave, can make a huge difference on college campuses, yes.

Stephanie Vester

Thanks.

Trevor Hoffberger

Our next question is open to anybody. It reads, “What is the best way to approach a local public high school about relationship education for youth?”

Shannon Lindsay

I’ll take part of it. My hope is that, depending on what state you’re in, that you have laws or state standards for health education that mandate, in some way, that young people are receiving comprehensive sex education. Certainly from my perspective, the approach should be through whoever the coordinator is in the district, of the health and wellness education in the district, to ask, are you using the curricula? Is it evidence-based, and does it integrate a healthy relationship information? Here in South Carolina, our domestic violence and sexual assault organizations provide healthy relationship training in our school district, so there’s already a mechanism for an inroad into some of these organizations and some of these districts, but that might be a place to start. Evin, I don’t know if you or Robyn have any other suggestions for that.

Evin Richardson

Based on another project that I’ve worked on here at the university, here in Georgia they are implementing relationship education with sex education in some of the school districts. We know in a lot of states that sex education is happening in the high schools and in the middle schools, but I think that’s the perfect place for relationship education to be included. Robyn, I don’t know if you have anything else to add, but I think that maybe approaching a school or a school district with the suggestion of integrating it with the sex education -- there’s a lot of research that shows that that’s helpful, and that students’ well-being is increased and their strategies for having healthy relationships increase.

Robyn Cenizal

This is Robyn. I would just add that there are a number of states who have integrated healthy relationship education skills into their high schools. For example, Utah has integrated it and they have a specific curriculum that is taught consistently throughout the high schools. In terms of how to approach, each school district and each state are slightly different. What I have heard from some is that the best place to start is to start with the principal at the school, but that works in school districts where principals have a little more flexibility in terms of how things are done. In other districts, it’s more important that you start with the school board, for example, and get the school superintendent on board with what you’re trying to offer.

In some states, we’ve found that family life education, what used to be called “home ec.,” those classes are another venue for offering healthy relationship education skills versus just the health classes. Some of the challenges in some states is that healthy relationship education may be offered, but it’s often offered as an elective, and it’s not always seen as the “cool” class, so it doesn’t always get as much interest from some of the young people. So marketing is a big piece of how are you going to sell the idea, first to the schools, but also to engage the young people and get them interested in participating. We do have some resources in the Virtual Library that talk about Utah and also the p.a.p.a Curriculum, which has been integrated into high schools in Texas, so you might want to check those out.

Stephanie Vester

Great, thanks.

Trevor Hoffberger

Okay, our next question is actually a two-part question for Shannon. The first part, someone asked how to sign up for the Third Thursday webinar series. And the second part is, “How does South Carolina share information about their youth website, and what info do they find is the most popular?”

Shannon Lindsay

Great questions and obviously, as the Training Coordinator, I'd love to have you join us next week. You can visit our Web page, and our corporate Web page is <http://www.teenpregnancysc.org/>. If you go to our Events and Trainings page, you can scroll down there and find next week's webinar. Click on Register, register, and join us next week. We'd love to have you. Can you repeat the second part of that question?

Trevor Hoffberger

I sure can. “How does South Carolina share information about their youth website, and what information do they find is the most popular?”

Shannon Lindsay

Okay. So we have done a lot of marketing. The website was a byproduct generated from our most recent Center for Disease Control grant that just wrapped up at the end of September of 2015. We developed and tested the website in two communities, and then shared that information through youth leadership teams in both communities. We've been very fortunate to be the recipient of two new federal grants that began on October 1st. In both grants, we have youth leadership teams as a component of the local organizations that are partnering with us. We share the website with those young people.

We actually are in the initial stages of planning a youth summit this summer. We will be bringing in representatives from all of those youth teams, and I suspect -- I can't promise, but I suspect a good bit of that will include publicizing the availability of notrightnowsc.org.

We have tons and tons and tons of what we call, here at the Campaign, “swag.” We give away a lot of stuff that has our website address on it and lots of information that's been published and created in youth-friendly ways. Every year in May, we do what we call a road show. We take our work on the road and spend time in local communities and in local school districts. Last year we had some fantastic presenters, and their goal was to work with young people around our notrightnowsc.org website. We use social media. We use Twitter. We use iHeartRadio and Spotify. We do ads on a lot of those platforms as well as a way to generate knowledge and draw folks to the website.

To tell you which parts of it are the most popular, honestly I can't tell you that. I'm not responsible for the website, but I know it gets lots and lots of hits. I suspect that we'd have a clinic locator on that website. I suspect that might be a fairly popular option on the website, but it doesn't tell me when I look and see who's been -- I can't tell if it was a

young person or an adult. I certainly visit it quite regularly. Every time I go, it counts me again. There's tons of information there. There's information there for parents as well, so we send the parents there, too. Our goal is to help parents have open, honest conversations about relationships, love and sex with their young people, and the best way to do that is to initiate a conversation. Not have a talk, but actually have a conversation.

We've done a lot of public awareness campaigns across the state as well with that "Not Right Now" logo, so hopefully it's been fairly well saturated and people know it. If they don't, that work will continue.

Trevor Hoffberger

Great. Thank you, Shannon. I just want to point out that we have added the link to www.teenpregnancysc.org to the Web Links section of the webinar, so if you'd like to sign up for that Third Thursday webinar series, you can access it through that site.

Our next question is actually going to stay with Shannon, and Robyn, you may chime in as well: "Could you say more about the integration of adverse childhood experiences into training? How did it come about, and what has been the response?"

Shannon Lindsay

I talked a little bit about the training that we've done with foster parents and with youth service providers. We call that training "Askable Adult." We've modified the training and now have two versions of it based off some work that came out of New York, and we've adapted it and modified it for South Carolina. We've done this -- it's a full day. It's six hours. We've done it so many times, and every time we've done it we've changed it a little bit.

When we started working with foster parents, what we realized was that foster parents are foster parents for a reason. They want to provide love and safety to a young person who has maybe not had that. What we heard from those foster parents was that they didn't understand why kids were so isolated or cold or rude, especially teenagers. Part of what we did was we stepped back and said, "Okay, well, why might that be? Why might you be seeing resistance or anger?" And so we came back to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and adverse childhood experiences. That study, gosh, I don't even know how old it is, but it's been around a good long while from Kaiser Permanente out in California.

We've had David Walsh here to talk about parent-child connectedness, and he talked about adverse childhood experiences, and that piqued my interest. I have a wonderful coworker, Dana Bancroft, who was also interested in this information and she and I delved in a little bit, learned a little bit more, and then thought, you know it makes sense when we talk to folks about why you might see resistance in a young person, in a teenager, particularly if that young person is in the foster care system. They may be trying to meet a particular need in that hierarchy, and they have been exposed to some level of trauma, so our understanding of them may not be fully well-developed.

The last time we did the training and we presented those two pieces together, we got the best results we've ever gotten, and it will be something we continue to do. It has helped us, too, all of us here at the Campaign, develop a better understanding of why young

people may seek love and acceptance through sexual behavior. There's so much about it that just sets the light bulb on in my mind when I think about some of the reasons that young people find themselves in sexual relationships at young ages and either pregnant or parenting at young ages.

Trevor Hoffberger

Thank you. I have another question that is open to anybody. "Do you know of any evaluations of marriage and relationship education programs for youth that specifically look at the impact of avoiding violence in future relationships?"

Robyn Cenizal

This is Robyn. I believe that Healthy Relationship California just recently did some analysis of data on early interventions and healthy relationship education for youth. I am not sure if it specifically talks about the research as it relates to preventing violence, but I would imagine that that's probably in there. They have been a healthy marriage grantee and if anyone is interested in their contact info, if you'll email me, I'll be happy to get it for you. I know they just recently did a really nice piece on analysis of data as it relates to healthy relationship education and youth.

Stephanie Vester

Great. I think that is all the questions we have for speakers, so I think what we will do now is go ahead and just move over to closing remarks. So Robyn, I want to turn it over to you for closing remarks, but I did just want to let everyone know that as the webinar concludes, we do have a brief survey that's going to pop up on your screen. Please remember to provide your feedback using the survey, as it really helps us in planning for future webinars. I also wanted to just mention, Robyn talked about this before, but once you do complete the survey, there is a link for you to print out a certificate of completion for today's webinar for CEUs. If you're interested in that certificate, you need to make sure you complete our survey at the end of the webinar. I will now turn it over to Robyn for some closing remarks.

Robyn Cenizal

Thanks, Stephanie, and thank you to all of our presenters today. Evin, Shannon, thank you so much, and Millicent, thank you for joining us and for OFA's support of this work. It's really exciting to me to hear in today's presentation how it really kind of connects the dots around the importance of healthy relationship education for couples and healthy relationship education as it relates to parent-child relationships and the parenting component, and how it really is a circular sort of situation.

We heard Evin talk about [how] a lot of youth behaviors that are manifesting themselves on college campuses are the result of things that took place in the family of origin. We know that that's typically where people learn how to have relationships, how to communicate, how to resolve conflicts, how to parent and how to manage their money. Without having positive behaviors modeled for them, they're going off into the world with less than positive behaviors. I love the idea of healthy relationship education skills on college campuses as a way to reduce sexual coercion -- not just for those young people who feel that they are entitled and need to change their behaviors, but for those who

might be the victims of the coercion -- to better understand what healthy relationships are supposed to look like so that they understand, even if they grew up in an environment where that type of behavior was acceptable, that it is not acceptable in a healthy relationship.

So I love that, and I love how Shannon talked about engaging parents and encouraging parents to have honest conversations with their young people about their healthy relationship and sexual behaviors. I think it's really very timely information. We are working on a research to practice brief based on the research that Evin talked about, and that will be coming out soon, so everyone stay tuned for that.

But really, what we've got to do with this work as we try to move it forward, is we've got to change the culture. We live in a society where professional development is revered. People appreciate whenever people go for professional development. But the idea that you might go to a parenting class or a healthy relationship class or a healthy marriage class, it's perceived as though there must be something wrong. We've got to change that culture and make these skills available in ways and in places that are non-punitive, where families can access parenting education without feeling like there must be something wrong with me because I want to go to a parenting class.

I think that is really the work that we need to be doing -- continuing the great work that is happening in South Carolina, and continuing to feed the research into practice so that we can do a better job of all of this kind of stuff. I so appreciate everyone joining us and staying with us throughout the webinar today. I'll give Millicent a chance, if you'd like to say anything before we wrap up, and then we'll go to the survey.

Millicent Crawford

Again, I just want to thank everyone, the speakers and all of the participants on the call today, and again, this represents OFA's quest for knowledge, quest for healthy families and children. This is just one example of what OFA is doing through the National Resource Center to try to promote change and help children and families. So thank you again for everyone who was on the call and all of our speakers.

Robyn Cenizal

Thanks, and thanks to Stephanie and Trevor, too.