

A STEP AHEAD FOUNDATION

YOUTH COUNCIL PARENT TOOLKIT

A GUIDE TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR
TEEN ABOUT BIRTH CONTROL



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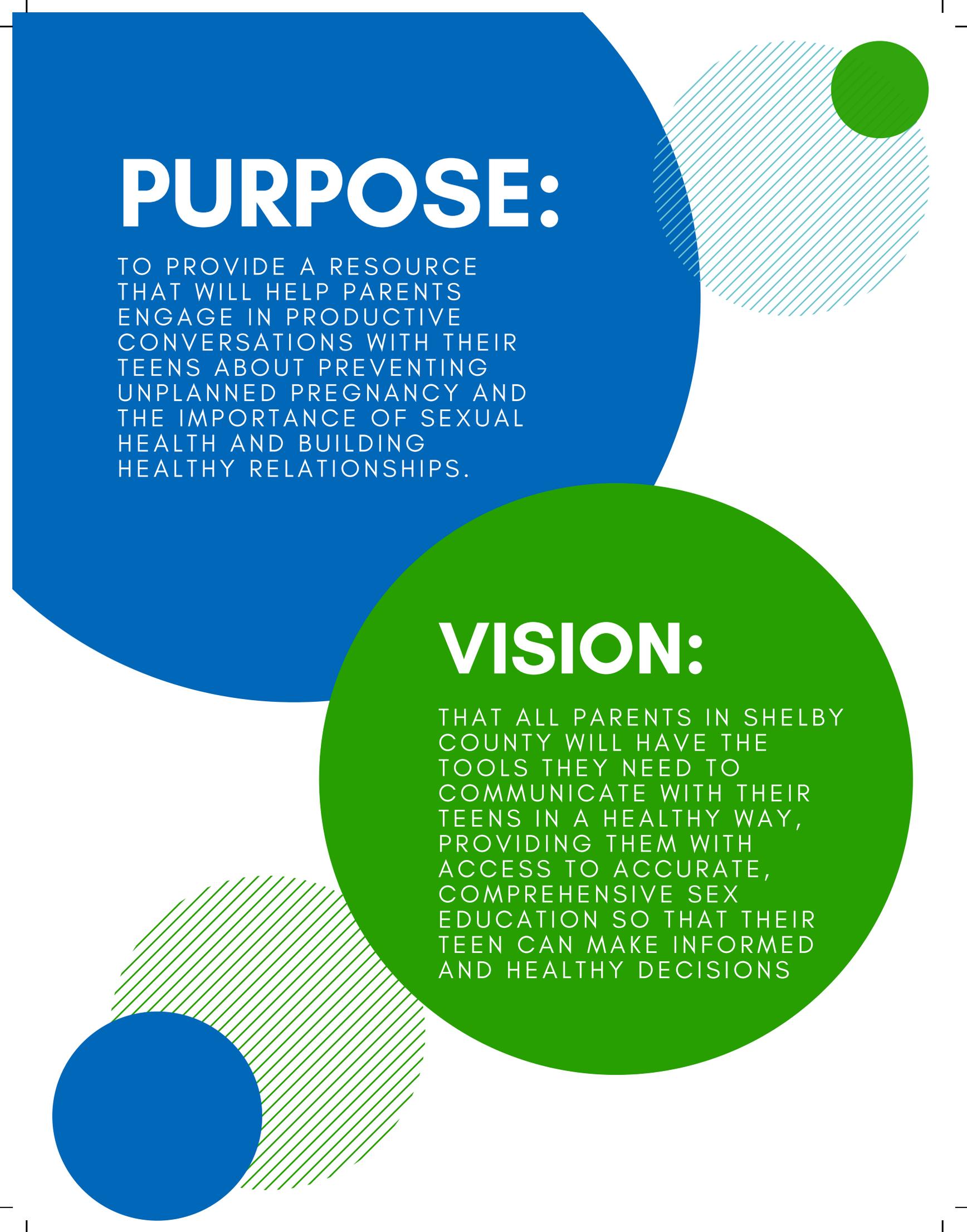
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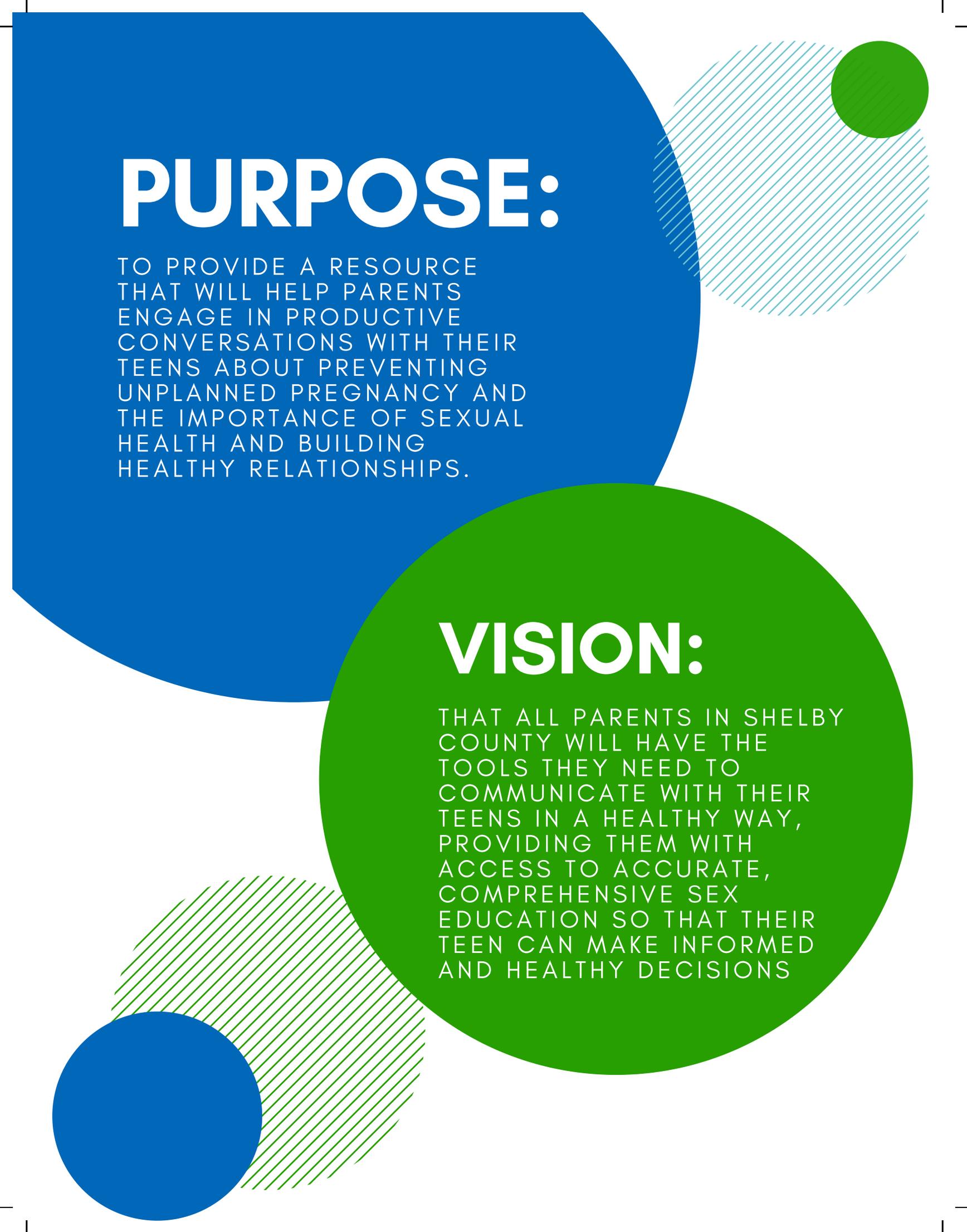
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PURPOSE:

TO PROVIDE A RESOURCE THAT WILL HELP PARENTS ENGAGE IN PRODUCTIVE CONVERSATIONS WITH THEIR TEENS ABOUT PREVENTING UNPLANNED PREGNANCY AND THE IMPORTANCE OF SEXUAL HEALTH AND BUILDING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS.



VISION:

THAT ALL PARENTS IN SHELBY COUNTY WILL HAVE THE TOOLS THEY NEED TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEIR TEENS IN A HEALTHY WAY, PROVIDING THEM WITH ACCESS TO ACCURATE, COMPREHENSIVE SEX EDUCATION SO THAT THEIR TEEN CAN MAKE INFORMED AND HEALTHY DECISIONS

THE FIGURES

70
PERCENT

OF TEENS SAID THAT THEIR PARENTS WERE THE BIGGEST INFLUENCER OF THEIR SEXUAL EDUCATION ACCORDING TO A RECENT SHELBY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT STUDY

1 IN 4

MALES IN MEMPHIS REPORTED HAVING THEIR FIRST SEXUAL ENCOUNTER BEFORE AGE 13 ACCORDING TO YOUTH RISK BEHAVIORS SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM

62
PERCENT

OF YOUNG WOMEN SURVEYED SAID THAT THEIR FRIENDS WERE ONE OF THEIR SOURCES FOR LEARNING ABOUT SEX ACCORDING TO A RECENT SURVEY BY POWER TO DECIDE.

KNOW THE FACTS

Sex Ed Classes Can Differ From School to School

Don't assume that your child's school is covering everything. A SIECUS State Profile report done for Tennessee in 2018 showed that only 3.2% of 6,7, and 8th grades in secondary schools in Tennessee and 27.8% of 9,10,11, and 12 grades in secondary schools in Tennessee reported teaching all 19 of the critical sexual health education topics that are recommended by the CDC.

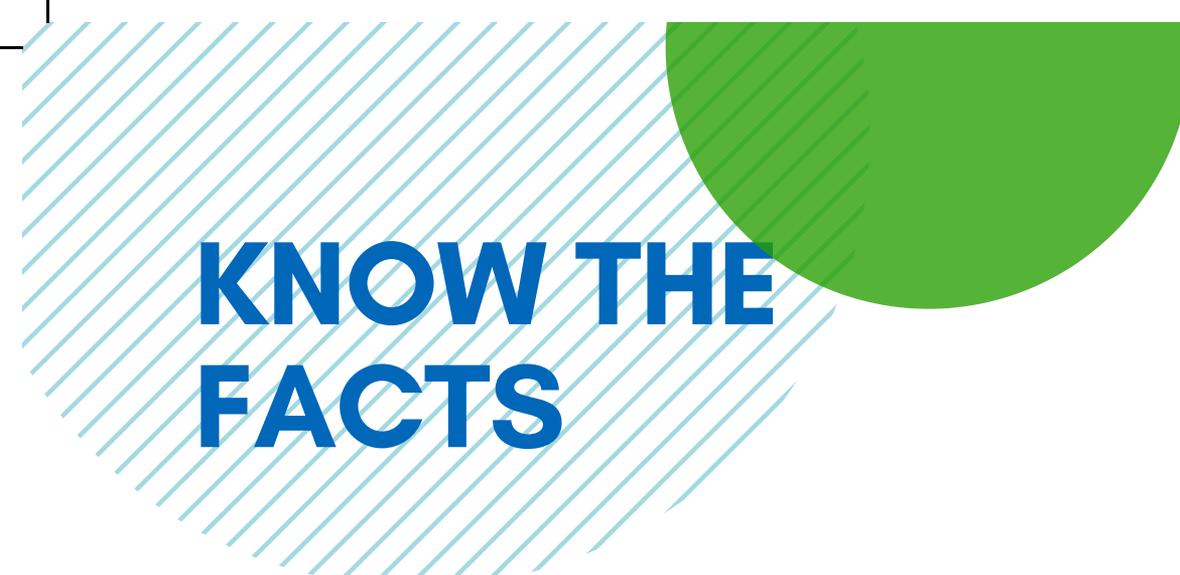
As Children Get Older, They Get Information From More Than Just Their Parents.

A "Parent Power" survey conducted by The Power to Decide showed that children between 12 and 15 reported that their parent is the number one influencer in their decisions about sex. However, by the time they reach the 16-19 age bracket, their friends' influence shoots up to just 4% behind the parents'. With other influences gaining importance to teens as they grow, it is important to start the conversation with them early while your influence is strongest.

According to the CDC, teens who talk to their parents about sex are more likely to delay having sex and to engage in less risky sexual behaviors if they do choose to have sex.

Comprehensive Sex Ed Has Several Positive Outcomes for Teens

Sex Ed that covers a wide range of topics is consistently shown to produce positive outcomes for teens like delaying intercourse, reducing the frequency of intercourse, reducing the number of sexual partners they have, and increased use of condoms and contraceptives if they do start having intercourse.



KNOW THE FACTS

In The State of Tennessee, Abstinence-Based Education is the Standard in Public Schools

Abstinence is extremely important to talk about when discussing sex with teens; however, it is equally important to inform your teen about safe sexual practices so that they can be prepared and protect themselves from pregnancy and STDs should they choose to engage in intercourse.

Adults agree that teens should have a trusted adult to guide them from engaging in risky behaviors

In a survey done by The National Campaign, adults across the board said that they believe young people should have adult guidance when it comes to topics of love, sex, relationships, and birthcontrol. However, even though adults agree that it is important, and kids repeatedly say that they look to their parents for guidance on these topics, parents feel skeptical about the role that they play in their teen's eyes.

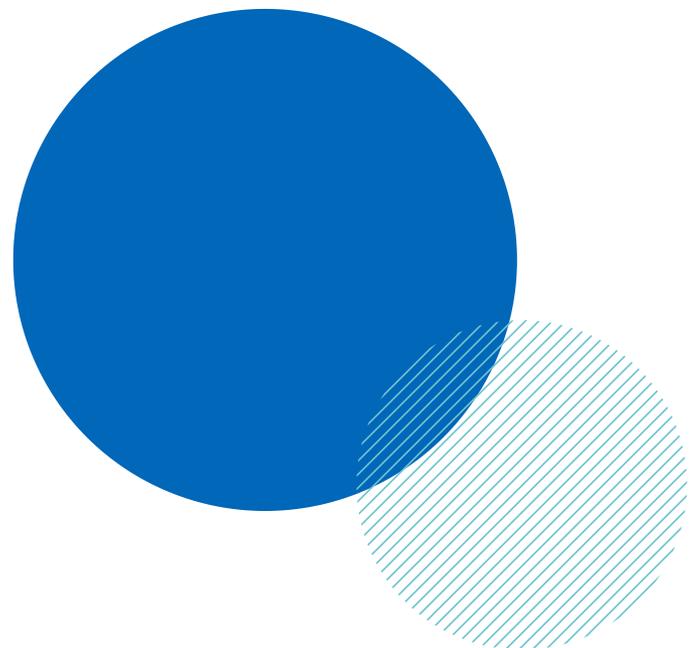
Shelby County's STI Rates are the Highest Compared to Any Other County in Tennessee.

Teens Between the age of 15-19 have the second highest rates of STI than any other age group in Tennessee.



THE CDC'S 19 CRITICAL SEX-ED TOPICS

- | | | | |
|-----------|---|-----------|--|
| 01 | Communication and negotiation skills | 13 | Methods of contraception other than condoms |
| 02 | Goal-setting and decision making skills | 14 | How to access valid and reliable information, products, and services related to HIV, STDs, pregnancy |
| 03 | How to create and sustain healthy and respectful relationships | 15 | How HIV and other STDs are transmitted |
| 04 | Influences of family, peers, media, technology and other factors on sexual risk behavior | 16 | Health consequences of HIV, other STDs, and pregnancy |
| 05 | Preventive care that is necessary to maintain reproductive health and sexual health | 17 | Importance of limiting the number of sexual partners |
| 06 | Influencing and supporting others to avoid or reduce sexual risk behaviors | 18 | Sexual orientation |
| 07 | Benefits of being sexually abstinent | 19 | Gender roles, gender identity, or gender expression |
| 08 | Efficacy of condoms | | |
| 09 | Importance of using condoms consistently and correctly | | |
| 10 | Importance of using a condom at the same time as another form of contraception to prevent both STDs and pregnancy | | |
| 11 | How to obtain condoms | | |
| 12 | How to correctly use a condom | | |





FROM OUR YOUTH COUNCIL: WHY IS IT DIFFICULT TO TALK TO PARENTS ABOUT THESE TOPICS?

"Sometimes, there's pressure to ask parents questions because they may assume their teen is having sex or thinking about having sex just because they're asking."

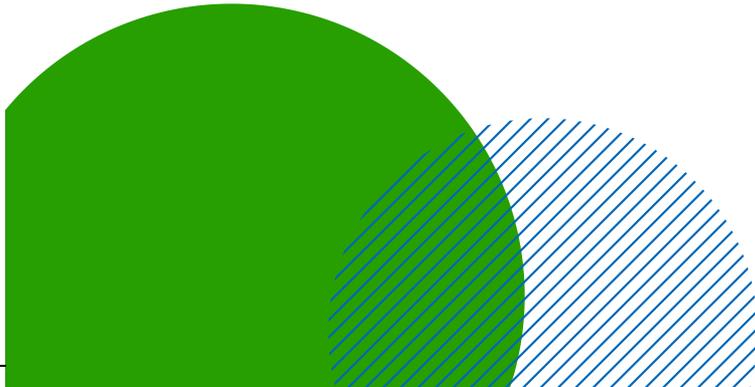
"It can be difficult to have the conversation when the parent and the teen have different communication styles."

"Religious and cultural influences at home can affect the way people approach the conversation."

"It's stressful to ask questions about sex because of fearing how the parent might react to the question."

"There's always a fear that you will be judged by the parent. And asking questions about sex can be embarrassing"

"When there is a single parent with a teen of the opposite sex, it makes having that conversation even more difficult because they don't completely understand what the teen is going through."





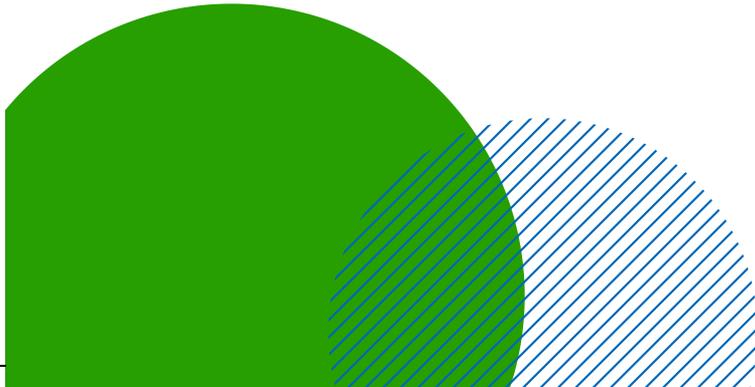
FROM OUR ASAF MOMS: WHY IS IT DIFFICULT TO TALK YOUR KIDS ABOUT THESE TOPICS?

"Some parents are insecure about how much they know about sex and birth control, and they want to make sure they are giving their children the right information."

"It is hard to determine the proper time to have a conversation of that nature with the child."

"Parents may feel awkward starting the conversation because they still see them as their babies. They're always our babies. And you don't want to think that they are doing anything sexual. But you have to tell them anyway because if they don't hear it from you, they'll hear it at school or from their friends. And you want to be sure that they are getting accurate information."

"It can be even more difficult for the parent who is trying to have the conversation with their child who is the opposite sex because they've had a different experience."



TIPS FOR STARTING THE CONVERSATION

1

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Make sure that you're up to date on what current research says, that you're familiar with the anatomy of the human body, and that you have answers to questions in each of the 19 categories.

2

TALK OPENLY, HONESTLY, AND OFTEN

The "one big talk" is a thing of the past. Sexual education should be an ongoing conversation and its never too early to start talking. Be honest about your feelings and opinions on the subject, but also be open and willing to hear your teen out without judgement so they can feel comfortable coming to you with questions in the future.

3

BE AN "ASKABLE" PARENT

Being askable means that you are listening to your teen as much as you are talking, that you're showing mutual respect and listening without judgement even if you disagree, and that you're opening the floor for your teen to be honest with you about what they are thinking and feeling. If you've succeeded in being an askable parent, your teen will feel comfortable to come to you with questions in the future, they will feel respected, and will feel heard.

TIPS FOR STARTING THE CONVERSATION

4

USE TV/MUSIC/MOVIES TO OPEN THE CONVERSATION

A character on a show having a conversation about birth control or pregnancy can be a good starting point for having a teachable moment with your teen and opening the floor to talk about sexual education.

5

GATHER FURTHER RESOURCES FOR YOUR TEEN TO LOOK TO

When you first open the conversation, your teen may not be completely comfortable asking you all of the questions they have just yet- so, give them an "at home resource library" of pre-approved, outside sources that they can search through if they have a question that they don't feel comfortable asking. This ensures that they will go looking through sources that align with your values rather than roaming free on the internet and finding sources that you don't approve of.

6

ITS OKAY TO NOT HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS

If you don't know the answer to one of your teen's questions, that's okay! Be honest and say, "You know what, let me look into that a little bit more and get back to you, I don't want to give you the wrong information." This shows your teen that you are being really honest, that having the most accurate information when it comes to sex-ed is important, and it opens up an opportunity for you to have a follow-up conversation about sex-ed in the future.

RESOURCES

At A Step Ahead Foundation:

Join Our Youth Council

Encourage your teen to join our youth council, where we cover the importance of goal-setting and planning for their futures, as well as educate them on the most effective forms of contraceptives on the market.

Come to a Mother Daughter talk

Call and find out when our next Mother Daughter Talk is scheduled, and bring your teen along! Talk about goal-setting and achieving in a safe and friendly environment with other moms and teens!

Find a Girl Talk Near Your Child's School/Boys and Girls Club/Community Center

Our Girl Talk program is a fun and educational program for girls ages 11-17 that focuses on abstinence, feminine hygiene, girl empowerment, and effective birth control.

Resources Used in this Document and for More Information:

The Power To Decide Campaign

An organization that provides trusted information, backed by research, on sexual health and contraceptive methods and that fights for access to accurate sexual health information for everyone so young people can make informed decisions.

Visit the "Materials for Parents" section on their website for great tools that you can use when talking to your teen.

Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States

SIECUS is another organization that advocates for everyone's right to accurate and comprehensive sexuality information, education and related health services.

Visit their website for annual reports by state as well as up to date reports on current legislation surrounding sexual education in Tennessee.



WORKS CITED

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