



Managing Controversy and Responding to the Media

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Unplanned Pregnancy

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Objectives for today

- Understand how to proactively pursue community relationships and strategies that can help protect programs from controversy;
- Feel more comfortable responding to the public, through media and other outlets, when approached for information about projects and/or teen pregnancy in general; and
- Understand “crisis communication” techniques that can be used to manage controversial situations and help promote program goals in the process.

What we'll cover

- Strategies for being proactive and avoiding controversy
- Publicly responding to different groups when a crisis occurs
- Practice responding to the media
- Q & A

Before we get started...let's get to know one another

- Name
- Agency/Organization
- Program

Preventing Controversy

- Being proactive
- Building relationships
- Parents, schools, policymakers, press



Responding in a crisis

- Get the details and fully analyze
- Engage stakeholders if appropriate
- Acknowledge areas of agreement
- Respond rationally
- Highlight your good work in the process

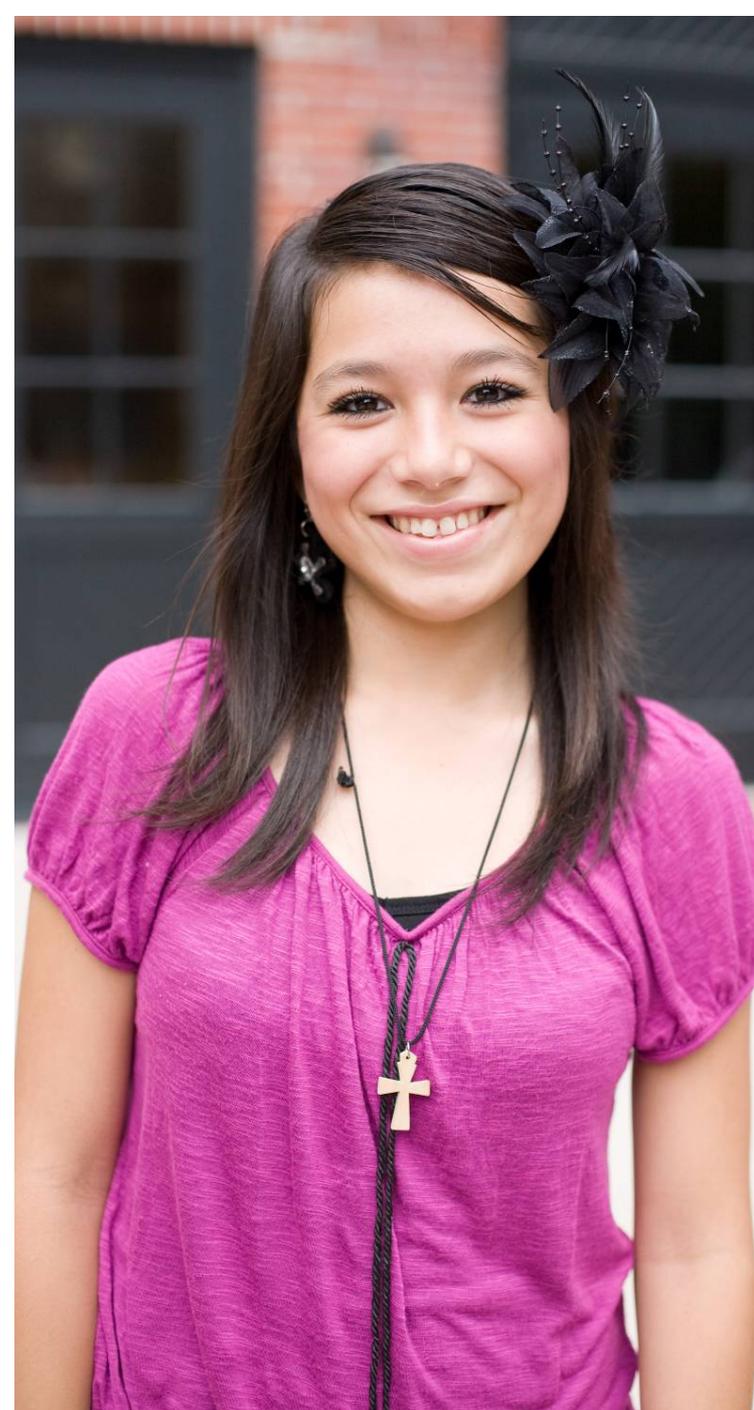


Parents Activity

The school you're working with forgot to send home the parental consent form before the students began your program. One parent – who happens to be involved in the PTA and is well-known and active – finds out that sexual health information is being taught in his child's 8th grade class when the student comes home and asks a question about what was presented in class. The parent posts an angry message on the school's listserv for parents, and after some email discussion, a small group of parents presses school administrators to hold a parent conference about this issue.

Parents cont'd

- Consent: passive vs. active
- Invite parents to an open house
- Formally include parents in your program
- Keep them in the know



Schools Activity

Unexpectedly, a news story breaks that at a school in your state, which happens to be one where you're planning to run a program as part of your TPP project, more than 100 of the 700 female students are pregnant or parenting. The principal and superintendent are looking to you for guidance in responding to the community about this issue.



Schools cont'd

- Getting clear on roles
- Use data
- This takes time

Policymakers Activity

The school district where you implement your evidence-based program has a list of programs that are allowed in its public and charter schools, including the curriculum your organization is using. The schoolboard approves this list every year. This year, in response to complaints from a local advocacy group, one schoolboard member has introduced a proposal to revamp the district's list to mostly focus on those without evidence of helping teens change their behavior or helping to prevent teen pregnancy.

Policymakers cont'd

- Know your agency's policies and rules
- Think beyond the legislature
- Evidence is on your side
- Transparency





Press

- Get clear on the policies within your agency/organization
- Still about relationships
- Opportunities to be proactive

5 Tips for working with the media

- Answer the phone
- Don't panic
- Ask questions
- “Off the record”? Not an option.
- Be honest



Press Activity

- Your state releases teen birth data, and the rate went up for 15 – 19 year olds.
- The governor releases a statement announcing that his teenage daughter is pregnant.
- A local advocacy group is organizing to oppose the community-based program you run, because it contains a condom demonstration.

The End

Questions?

Ideas?



★★ Thank you! ★★

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