

Bridging the Gaps: Eliminating Disparities in Teen Pregnancy and Sexual Health

June 4-6, 2014

A Cultural Adaptation of an Intervention to
Strengthen Coparenting and Increase Father
Involvement in Teen Parents

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Workshop Objectives

- **Objective 1:** At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to describe the relevance of coparenting for teen parent families, and how the coparenting relationship plays a role in father involvement.
- **Objective 2:** At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to identify the components of cultural adaptations of evidence-based interventions.



Definitions

1. Fathers

- a. **Biological** vs. Social
- b. Resident vs. **Non resident**
- c. Divorced vs. **Never married**

2. Teen Fathers

3. Father involvement (*Lamb, 1987*)

- a. Engagement
- b. Accessibility
- c. Responsibility



Non Resident Fathers

- More likely than resident fathers to be: younger, less educated, unemployed or underemployed, use alcohol or drugs, be ethnic minorities
- Low-income non resident fathers often have contact with their children
 - Barriers: limited financial resources, limited knowledge/skills, relationship with child's mother (*Dubowitz, et. al., 2004; Julion 2007*)
 - Involvement tends to decrease over time (*Lewin, et. al., 2011; Cabrera, et. al., 2004*)

Father Involvement and Child Outcomes

Quality of father-child relationship
associated with:

- Increased academic outcomes (*Coley, 1998; Howard, et. al., 2006; Hernandez & Coley, 2007*)
- Increased language competence (*Black, 1999*)
- Decreased internalizing and externalizing behavior problems (*Amato & Gilbreth, 1999; Black, 1999; Choi & Jackson, 2011*)
- Decreased delinquency (*Coley, 2007*)



Father Involvement and Other Outcomes

- Positive effects on mothers
 - Decreased parenting stress (*Harmon & Perry 2011*)
- Positive effects on fathers
 - More responsible, less risky behavior
(*Devault, 2008; Hayes, et. al., 2010*)
- Positive effects on mother-father relationship
 - Father engagement (9 mos) predicts decreased coparenting conflict (24 mos)
(*Fagan & Cabrera, 2012*)



Young Fathers

- Young fathers have lower education, come from lower SES families, greater delinquent behaviors and psychological problems (*Bunting & McAuley, 2004*)
- Many young fathers are involved with their children:
 - 59% of fathers maintained some contact over first 8 years (*Howard, et. al., 2006*)
 - 46% “highly involved” at infancy, 34% at 12 months, 40% at 24 months (*Lewin, et. al., 2011*)



Young Fathers

Effects of involvement on child outcomes:

- Low father contact over first 8 years associated with higher externalizing problems at age 10
- Higher father contact associated with lower externalizing problems and, when mother was higher risk, lower internalizing problems at age 10
- Higher father contact associated with higher math and reading scores for boys at age 10
(Howard, et. al., 2006)



Research Questions

- Causality?
- Mediated through mother's parenting?
- Protective against maternal depression or other maternal risk?
- When is father involvement not positive?
- How do we increase positive father involvement?

Predictors of Father Involvement

- Demographic

- Education (*Johnson, 2001; Coley & Chase-Lansdale, 1999*)
- Employment/Income (*Rienks, et. al., 2011*)
- Age (*Castillo, Welch, & Sarver, 2011*)
- Race/Ethnicity (*King, et. al., 2004; Cabrera, et. al., 2008*)
- Religious involvement (*Rienks, et. al., 2011*)

- Psychological

- Depression (*Davis, et. al., 2009; Bronte-Tinkew, et. al., 2007*)
- Relationship with own father (*Guzzo, 2011*)
- Past stability in relationships (*Coley & Hernandez, 2006*)



Predictors (continued)

Relationships!

- Repartnering/new partner fertility
(Tach, Mincy, & Edin, 2010)
- Prenatal involvement
(Cabrera, Fagan, & Farrie, 2008)
- Romantic relationship with mother
(Lewin, et. al., 2011)
- Positive coparenting relationship
(Coley & Chase-Lansdale, 1999; Cabrera, et. al., 2004; Rienks, et. al., 2011; Paulson, Dauber, & Leiferman, 2011; Fagan & Cabrera, 2012; Waller, 2012)



Coparenting

- Coparenting relationship is separate from romantic, sexual, legal, financial aspects of the adults' relationship
- Coparenting does not imply that parenting roles are equal in authority or responsibility
- Coparenting (cooperation/conflict) associated with:
 - parental well-being
 - parenting behavior
 - child outcomes



Intervention: Family Foundations

- Eligibility:
 - First-time parents
 - Living together
 - Over 18 years old
- Integrated into childbirth preparation classes
- 4 prenatal group sessions, 4 postpartum group sessions
- Content includes: communication skills, conflict management, strengths of coparenting team, attachment, child temperament, problem-solving, division of labor



Family Foundations: RCT findings

Child Age 6 mos		Child Age 12 mos		Child Age 3 yrs	
Outcome	Effect size	Outcome	Effect size	Outcome	Effect size
Coparenting	d=.54	Mother positive	d=.34	Coparenting	d=.18
Maternal depression	d=.56	Father positive	d=.45	Harsh reactivity	d=.35
Mother/child interaction	d=.34	Coparent competition (m)	d=.51	Corporal punishment	d=.36
Father/child interaction	d=.70	Coparent competition (f)	d=.36	Depression (unmarried)	d=.72
Infant attention	d=.34	Father negative	d=.60	Behavior problems (boys)	d=.81
Infant soothing	d=.35	Child soothing	d=.46	Social skills	d=.43



Coparenting in teen parents?

Social support is protective for teen mothers and their children, and fathers may be an underappreciated source of support

BUT....

Teen mothers less likely to live with child's father, maternal grandmother may be gatekeeper, fathers more likely to engage in antisocial behaviors

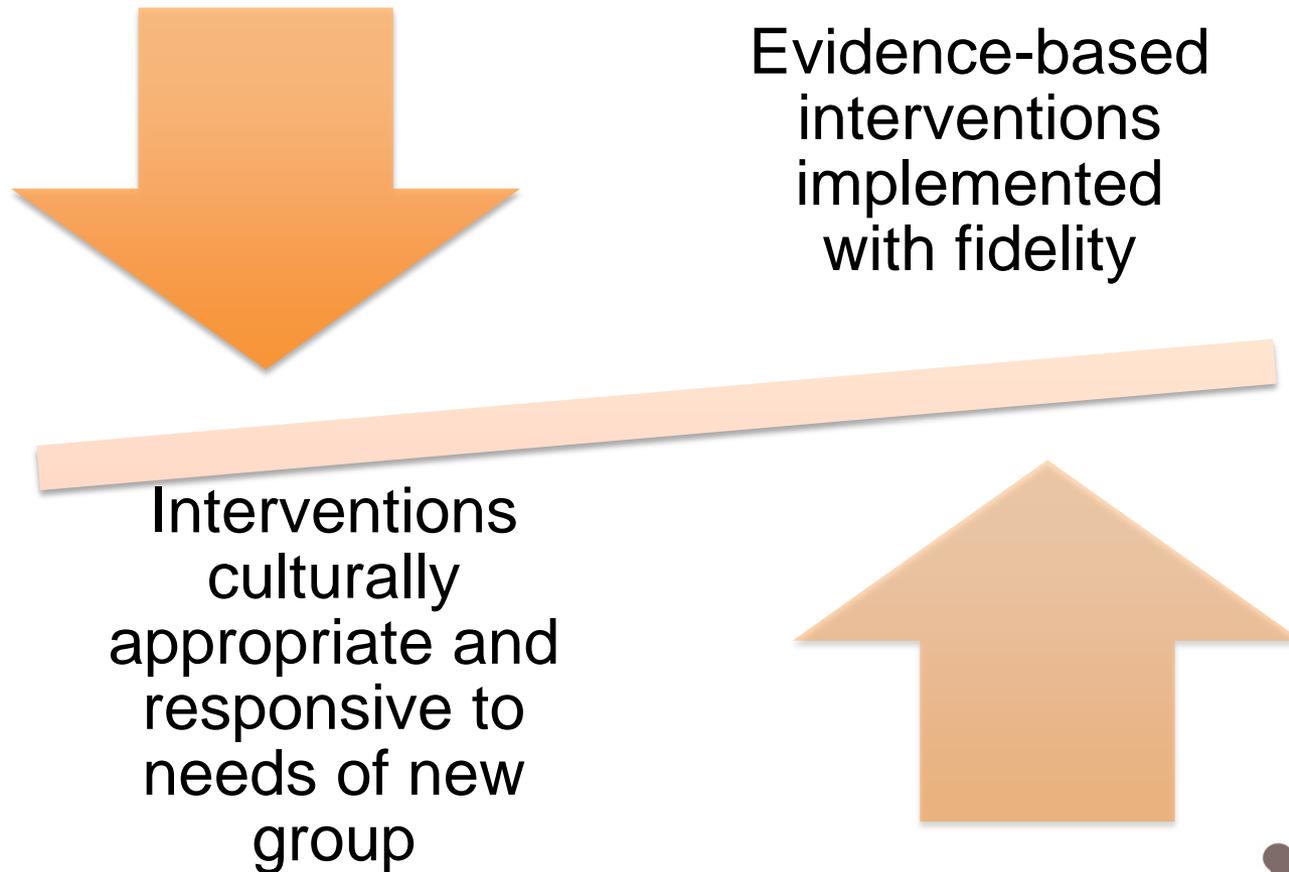
Romantic/positive relationship between young parents is strongest predictor of father involvement with children

BUT....

Adolescents have less stable romantic relationships and less developed relationship skills



Can Family Foundations Work for Teen Parents?



Cultural Adaptation of EBIs

Framework developed by Barrera and Castro (2006):

1. Information gathering – literature review, focus groups, increased understanding of cultural group

2. Preliminary adaptation – culturally relevant recruitment strategies and modification of content

3. Pilot testing – recruitment, intervention, and assessment procedures

4. Modification and full evaluation



Information Gathering:

Coparenting in teen parents

- **Parenting outcomes:** Coparenting conflict in adolescents predicts harsh/hostile parenting behavior (*Moore & Florsheim, 2008; Lee & Guterman, 2010*)
- **Father Involvement:** Level of coparenting more strongly associated with father engagement for adolescent fathers than adult fathers (*Fagan & Lee, 2011*)
- **Child outcomes:** Coparenting conflict between teen parents predicts lower child social skills and increased child behavior problems (age 4) (*Lewin, et. al., 2012*)



Information Gathering

Qualitative Study:

- Both mothers and fathers want fathers to “be there” for their children
- The importance of a good relationship between the parents
- Unstable relationships jeopardize father involvement
- Interested in help resolving conflicts



Intervention for teen parents?

- Teen fathers and mothers are responsive to intervention
- Two published interventions to strengthen coparenting in teen parents:
 - Fagan (2008)
 - Florsheim (2012)
- Teen parents want to coparent!



The Generations Program

- Primary care clinic at Children's National serving teen parents and their children
- Three community-based sites
- "Teen-Tot" model
- Mental health services integrated into primary care medical home
 - Multidisciplinary team
 - Non-traditional model of mental health care



Adaptation

Modifications to Structure:

- Recruitment
- Pediatric setting/well-child visits
- Postpartum sessions individualized
- No homework

Modifications to Content:

- More active and experiential rather than didactic
- Role plays
- Added content on infant care, relationship instability, new partners, grandparents



Samples of Program Content

- Role plays
- Speak Out/Listen Up
- Traffic Light
 - Red: fight or flight
 - Yellow: cool down, negative story lines
 - Green: conversation start-ups



Pilot Testing

Pilot Sample (N=32 couples):

➤ Mothers:

- mean age = 17
- 83% non-Hispanic Black
- 90% in school
- 76% living with own mother

➤ Fathers:

- mean age = 18
 - 85% non-Hispanic Black
 - 55% in school
 - 35% employed
- 76% of couples in romantic relationship
- 66% of couples report some mutual physical or psychological aggression



Pilot Data

Program Engagement:

- Couples together attended average of 3.2 of 5 prenatal sessions
- At least one member of couple attended average of 4 sessions

Pilot Data

- Quantitative ratings: (scale = 1-5)
 - Very helpful (4.4)
 - Liked the class material (4.3)
 - Likely to use what they learned (4.2)
- Qualitative comments:
 - “No one has ever talked to us about this stuff!”
 - “I’m noticing how so many things can go wrong as parents but I feel like now I have positive ways to deal with it, not always being negative.”



Lessons Learned

- Recruitment
 - Building relationships
 - Overcoming stereotypes
- Engagement
- Cultural Relevance
 - Content
 - Process

Next Steps

- Following pilot sample
- Documenting lessons learned: recruitment, engagement, content
- Baseline analyses
- Additional modifications
- Funding for full-scale RCT
- Exploring school-based version



Thank You

- ❖ Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Programs, Office of Adolescent Health, DHHS
- ❖ Maternal and Child Health Bureau R40 Research Program, HRSA
- ❖ CNMC Center for Translational Science and CTSI-CN
- ❖ Dr. Mark Feinberg
- ❖ Damian Waters, Stacy Hodgkinson, Henry Prempeh, Stephanie Mitchell, Jasmine Gilmore, Bora Chang, and Lee Beers
- ❖ **The families of Generations and Strong Foundations**



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