

**NWX OS OGC RKVL (US)**

**Moderator: Tish Hall**

**February 24, 2014**

**3:56 pm CT**

**Coordinator:** Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time, all participants will be in a listen-only for the duration of today's call. Today's call is being recorded. If you have any objection, you may disconnect at this time. I will turn the meeting over to Miss Tish Hall. You may go ahead.

**Tish Hall:** Good afternoon and welcome to a webinar sponsored by the Office of Adolescent Health. Today, thank you for joining us to listen to "What's Love Got to Do with It? Health Romantic Relationships and Teen Pregnancy Prevention." Today we have the honor of having Dr. Mindy Scott, who is a senior research scientist at Child Trends in the areas of parenting and family dynamics and reproductive health and family formation.

She will present information today about healthy relationships and how they are incorporated into teen pregnancy prevention as some of the - identify some aspects of healthy and unhealthy adolescent romantic relationship. Thank you and Mindy, you may have the floor please.

Mindy Scott: Hi, thank you Tish. Good afternoon and welcome to today's webinar. As Tish mentioned, my name is Mindy Scott and I'm a senior research scientist at Child Trends and I'll be your main presenter during today's webinar. Today we'll explore a number of positive and negative aspects of adolescent romantic relationships and we'll learn how healthy relationships and teen pregnancy prevention are related and can be integrated into programs for you.

This webinar will consist of three different segments and across these three segments, we hope to first identify aspects of healthy and unhealthy adolescent romantic relationships with a focus during the second segment on what teens themselves believe are important aspects of a healthy relationship. We also hope to learn how to recognize the role of healthy romantic relationships in preventing teen pregnancy and other risky behaviors and to identify linkages between relationship education and teen pregnancy prevention program.

We built in a couple of interactive features into today's webinar to help maximize participation. First, we'll conduct a number of polls through the presentation which will give us a better sense of the types of populations served by your programs and the extent to which you are focusing on healthy romantic relationships. I will walk you through each poll when we get to them.

Also, at any time, you can enter questions or comments you may have in our Q&A feature on the webinar, which is located in the upper left hand corner, where it says Q&A. We'll address all of these questions and comments at the end of the webinar.

To get us started, we want to start with quick poll to learn a little bit more about the (unintelligible) teams that are participating today. The poll question

is what age group does your program serve? And you'll have five response options. I'm going to move to the poll feature now and I'll walk you through how to complete this poll.

So here the poll is presented before you. And like I said, you have five choices. And again, the question is what age group does your program serve? And the polls are now open so you can begin responding. I'm going to close the polls in about five seconds, so if you haven't responded yet, please get your answers in. All right. The poll is closed. If we look at the results, we should be able to see the results on your screen now.

Fifty-five percent of you answered that your program is serving high school aged youth in schools, so quite a bit of school based programs are being older adolescents. And we'll focus on this particular group in a number of different ways throughout the webinar. And going back to the presentation, we want to start today's discussion with the general notion that positive relationships are important for the development and well-being of all youth.

Relationships matter intrinsically. They are important for the healthy development of children and youth and they matter at all stages of development -- from infancy to adolescence as well as into young adulthood and adulthood. Today we want to focus specifically on romantic relationships among adolescents.

The romantic relationships that adolescents form earlier in life can set the stage for later romantic relationship by helping youth develop the skills they need to establish and maintain healthy relationships, even as adults. In fact, research suggests that the skills that are required for positive adolescent romantic relationships can be important for helping youth make positive decisions about many other aspects of their lives.

Knowing how to manage these relationships can make a difference in (unintelligible) decisions related to school, employment, establishing more positive peer relationships, and especially decisions about pregnancy prevention.

An important component of establishing and maintaining healthy romantic relationships are the social skills that youth develop as part of these relationships. Children with positive social skills are more likely to have high self-esteem, have positive relationships with peers, and achieve in school. On the other hand, deficits in social skills can lead to more aggressive behavior, such as bullying, fighting, and delinquency.

One other important finding to note is that there's evidence that social skills are malleable for adults, making them important targets for intervention. Social skills are often an important component of both teen pregnancy prevention and relationship education programs, which foster social skills by supporting positive interactions between peers by teaching effective communication skills and teaching teens how to set boundaries in the relationship.

We'll hear more about how teen pregnancy prevention and the relationship education program foster these types of skills and promote healthy romantic relationships a little later on.

I think I'm actually going to move to a second poll if you didn't have a chance to respond to the first one, we're going to start another one right now. Let's get this set up on your screen. (Unintelligible). We want to know whether the majority of teens in your program are involved with someone romantically. And this doesn't necessarily mean they're in sexual relationships. But I know

it may be sometimes hard to tell the relationship status of the youth in your program, but just give your best guess.

I'm going to give people another five seconds or so to respond. Okay, I am going to close the poll and we'll look at the results. Here I think we got a large majority of those listeners today report that the teens that they serve are involved with someone romantically, so this just really highlights the importance of understanding what these relationships look like and identifying healthy aspects of relationships for these teens.

Because they are, you know, certainly behaving in these relationships and to the extent that we can support them in developing healthy relationships it will be quite beneficial for a lot of different reasons that I'll actually talk about in the next part of the presentation.

Moving on, over the next few slides, I'm going to present some statistics and other research findings that help to describe adolescence romantic relationships and how they are linked to teen pregnancy and other behaviors. First one describing dating among teens, most teens do say that they are single. Casual dating is more common for younger teens and peaks around age 16 or 17, but by age 18 or 19, more teens who are dating consider themselves to be in serious relationships.

When looking at how many teens date, this chart reflects what we just saw in the poll, that dating during adolescence is very common. In 2011, 47% of eighth graders, 62% of tenth graders, and 66% of twelfth graders reported that they ever date. And these numbers represent dating that's either casual or more serious across different ages.

However, recently dating among older adolescents, for example those in twelfth grade -- which is depicted by the green line in this chart -- has declined. Although the drop we see may be partly due to a change in terminology since some teens may not describe their behaviors as dating, but also some possible changes in behavior, including more casual dating or more intermittent dating since this chart focuses only on frequent dating, which is on a weekly basis.

The proportion of tenth graders who date frequently also declined looking at the red line, but less dramatically than that for twelfth graders. And frequent dating among eighth graders -- the blue line -- has stayed about the same over time.

It is also not uncommon for adolescents in dating relationships to have sex. In 2011, 47% of high school students reported ever having had sex, which is down from 54% in the early 1990s. A persons' first sexual experience typically occurred in a dating relationship, and most sexually active adolescents report that they first had sex in a steady, serious relationship. However, a small proportion of adolescents have sex for the first time in the casual relationship and these adolescents are less likely to use contraception, which places them at a higher risk of pregnancy and STDs.

So given how common dating is among teens, it is important to know what healthy teen relationships look like and how they influence teens' decisions about sex and pregnancy. First it is important to keep in mind that dating is part of a normal adolescent development and there are many healthy aspects of these relationships. For example, receiving support and affection from a partner can contribute to youth's self-esteem and can promote more communication between partners and more effective conflict management.

However, there can also be unhealthy aspects of teen dating relationships. For example, having multiple short-term relationships or engaging in relationships that are not marked by high levels of aggression have been linked to greater alcohol and drug use, poor academic performance, and lower self-esteem.

We also need to consider violence that may occur within adolescent romantic relationships. This is an extremely important topic to consider when addressing adolescent relationships in programs, and in fact in 2012, President Obama declared February to be Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month, which really highlights the importance and severity of this issue in our country.

Teen dating violence is common. Some estimates show that 4 in 10 teens report experiencing dating violence, and 1 in 10 teens report committing an act of sexual assault. And half of these teens blame the victim. Among teens, males and females are equally likely to report dating violence perpetration and victimization. This is true for teens in same sex and heterosexual relationships.

However, the type and severity of abuse does differ for males and females. For example, teen males are - more often report perpetrating sexual abuse, while teen females more often report perpetrating physical abuse.

Dating violence is associated with a number of other negative experiences. For example, teens experience dating violence are more likely to be involved in abusive relationships as adults. Dating violence has also been linked to poor academic performance, lower self-esteem, eating disorders, depression, suicidal behavior, sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy.

Cyber abuse is another aspect of teen dating violence that is important to consider. Technology has created a new platform for dating violence to occur, and this type of abuse is fairly common. Between 10% to 25% of dating youth experience cyber abuse in their relationship. Some examples of how this occurs include sending threatening or emotionally abusive texts or e-mails, posting sexual photos online, or monitoring phone calls, e-mails, and use of social media.

However, technology plays a significant roles in adolescent relationships in general and can be used in positive ways. In fact, adolescents spend more time using traditional and new media sources than engaging in other type of activity. Social media allows teens to connect with their romantic partners in a number of unique ways. Social media can also serve as a valuable resource where teens can receive positive messages about relationships.

Many programs are already using social media to engage the participant. Some examples include the use of Twitter chats on specific topics related to relationships and pregnancy, maintaining Facebook pages or Tumblr accounts, and posting blogs.

As we've heard, there are a number of positive and negative aspects of adolescent romantic relationships that are important. I'd like to change gears a little bit now to present some findings from a qualitative study conducted by Child Trends that explore what teens themselves think about their relationships. Having a better understanding of teens' ideas and beliefs about romantic relationships, especially what makes a healthy relationship, may help program providers target their effort to improve adolescent relationship behaviors and thus improve reproductive health outcome.



This study is teen perspectives on healthy romantic relationships among racial ethnic minority. It was conducted by colleagues at Child Trends, Lina Guzman, (Erin Necromula), Jennifer Manlove, and Kristin Peterson. And the study was funded by Office of Population Affairs.

A number of principles that reflect much of the key issues that we have discussed so far guided this work. First, as I mentioned earlier, the teen years represent a critical phase of development and they guide healthy romantic relationships into the adult years. Number two, research suggests that characteristics of adolescent romantic relationships may influence when teens first have sex and whether they use contraception. Therefore, we need a better understanding about what constitutes a healthy relationship.

Additionally, much of the prior research on healthy romantic relationships has concentrated on adults. However, we know little about how teens themselves define and think about healthy romantic relationships. We do know that teen relationships differ from adult relationships in a few ways.

For example, they tend to be shorter term, they involve less commitment, and less communication. And also because of relatively high levels of early sexual activity, teen childbearing and STDs among racial and ethnic minorities, we've chose to focus this study on African American and Latino teens.

Based on the principles that I just reviewed, we developed (unintelligible) questions. First, we examined what are the different types of teen romantic relationships and what characteristics distinguish them? We also looked at what are the critical dimensions of healthy adolescent romantic relationships as defined by teens and we asked whether there are critical dimensions of healthy adolescent romantic relationships that are comparable to those of adults.

This study was fairly exploratory in nature. We conducted focus groups with teens recruited from after school programs across Washington D.C. We had a total of seven focus groups, two of which were among males and five of which were with females. We segment the groups by gender and age, talking to 12 to 14-year-olds separately from 15 to 17-year-olds to facilitate discussions within the group and to explore issues that we felt might be unique to age and gender groups.

The participants were mostly African American and only about 1/3 lived with two parents. And closer to 3/4 of the participants have ever been in a romantic relationship with someone of the opposite sex. We identified general overarching themes and patterns across the group with some variation by age and gender. I'd like to focus on four major themes today which are supported by a number of quotes from the focus group participants.

First, we found that teens use a rich, complex language to describe romantic relationships. This language reflects variation in the intensity of the relationship, expectations held about the various levels of relationship, and the behaviors exhibited in different relationships. For example, one 15 to 17-year-old girl commented that, "If somebody's really serious about you, they may call you wifey. Or 'That's my hubby,' if they're really, really serious. On another level, a lot down is 'my boo.' Another level is 'my girl', 'my dude.'"

We have a number of quotes like this throughout today's webinar and I've asked a couple of colleagues from Child Trends to read them so we can hear some different voiced describing the teens' perspectives. In the interest of time, we won't be reading all of the quotes shown on the slide, but we'll hear a nice representation of quotes to support each major theme.

The varied language that teens use to describe relationships reflects a wide spectrum of relationships with distinct levels and clear endpoints. Participants placed different terms and labels they used to describe their relationships in a spectrum that went from least to most serious. Here we see an example of a relationship spectrum from a group of girls ages 15 to 17. And we see a very rich and varied language for different relationship types.

For example, we see terms like, 'booked', 'friends with benefits,' 'junior,' and 'stamped.' It's worth noting that in all the groups, there was a much more varied language to describe the left-hand of the spectrum where things are less serious. This may reflect in part due to the familiarity with these relationships since their relationships tend to be less serious.

More generally, the various types of relationships described as less romantic appear to represent two types of classic needs. One set of relationships included physical intimacy without any commitment, and an example of that is friends with benefits. However, another type or relationship was more about getting to know the other person before becoming too serious, and examples of those types of relationships are talking, friends, or friendships, and hanging out.

Boys also showed a variety of labels for different levels of seriousness. And one notable difference from the girls that we see in this relationship spectrum is that boys also included computer relationships in their labels, and this was referred to as a virtual date.

Before moving on, we want to hear from the participants about what the teens in their program call their significant others. We have set up another poll for this. Here the question is how do teens in your program -- or teens you know if you're not a provider -- refer to their significant others? The categories are

boyfriend/girlfriend, hubby/wifey, boo, friend, or other. And definitely if there are other kind of more common terms that are used, please feel free to send us a message in the Q&A box with some comments and some examples of some other terms. We'd love to hear what teens in your programs are kind of are calling their partners.

Okay, we'll leave the poll open for another five seconds or so. I'm going to close the poll and put up the results. You can really see that 61% actually - it's boyfriend and girlfriend. So a lot of the teens in your programs are referring to their partners as boyfriends and girlfriends. And there's a little bit of variation, also hubby/wifey and boo were also checked. Okay, I'm going to continue with our findings from our qualitative study.

The second key finding is that teens have a clear understanding of what defines a healthy romantic relationship. Teens, especially older girls, needed very little probing on this issue and were very articulate in describing the characteristics of a healthy relationship. We found that the most important factor for a healthy relationship -- according to teens in the study -- was respect, which was mentioned in all of the focus groups among both boys and girls.

The following quote demonstrates the importance of respect in teen relationships among girls. "I said respect because you got to have respect before anything, because you can't just walk up to a girl and be like 'Hey, yo, come here.'" Boys also highlighted the importance of respect. For example, one 15 to 17-year-old boy noted, "Respect is like the most important - is the key of the whole relationship. You all got to have respect for each other in order for a relationship to work."

Among boys in particular, discussions about respect also included the concept of self-respect, setting it as a precursor to respecting others. For example, one older boy commented that, “Some girls get treated bad and get called names and stuff and they still go back to the same guy. Is that respect? You’ve got to respect your own self in order to be with somebody that you actually love.”

We also found that the public face of relationships was important for teens, for boys and girls alike. However, our analyses revealed that this public face is conceptualized differently by boys and girls. We found that girls were more concerned with how their partner behaves toward them and how their partners talk about the relationship in public, especially among friends.

A conversation between two 12 to 14-year-old girls illustrates this point. “Like if I’m here talking and you see one of your friends and you just walk off while I’m sitting here, talking. Or if he tells you how much he likes you and then when he gets around his friends, he’s like ‘I never did like you.’” On the other hand, boys are more concerned with how being in a relationship defines their own personal image. “You just want to look cool in front of your friends -- all your friends. All they talk about is ‘Who got that last night?’”

Interestingly, among girls, love was rarely mentioned and in many groups, never mentioned at all. But it did come up among the boys. The older boys even listed love as - on their top three most important characteristics of a healthy relationship. However, despite its high ranking, boys were quick to qualify their definition of love, noting that love was often insincere and defined by physical intimacy alone.

This following statement demonstrates boys’ understanding of love, “They think that love is like being with a girl, having sex with a girl, and then leaving her. They think that that’s love when there’s not.” Girls on the other

hand were more pragmatic in their discussions about love. They commented that they were too young to know what love is and that even if they love their boyfriends, it would be different from the love experienced in adult relationships.

For example, “I think we need to be more focused on what we need to be doing to get by in the future. I think for teenagers, you can have a committed relationship, you can love your boyfriend, but I don't think you would be on adult terms. It would be simple.”

Okay, now we'll talk about the importance of sex in teen relationships based on the focus groups' responses. When discussing teen relationships, boys almost always brought up sex as being an important part of relationships. Girls on the other hand did not bring this up. For example, one boy commented, “Sex is important because if you don't have a good sex relationship with that person, then you won't feel some sort of connection.”

Finally we also found that healthy romantic relationships were often defined by the absence of negative characteristics. For example, not cheating or lying, no abuse, not calling them names, and not hitting each other.

Our third main finding is that teen relationships typically fall short of teens' own high standards for healthy relationships. Teens describe typical relationships as being plagued with cheating, disrespect, poor communication, and also sometimes physical or verbal violence. There was also pessimism about adult relationships. So the girls with high standards for healthy relationships, they didn't see much in the way of examples among the adults in their lives.

And this idea of having a positive example to role model will come up in a few more slides as an important aspect of promoting healthy relationships among teens that we'll discuss more.

The quotes shown here demonstrate this sense of - the sense that healthy qualities were atypical in teen relationships. For example, 15 to 17-year-old girls discussed whether one relationship could have all of the healthy qualities they identified. "Like for example, okay, one boy can be, you know, honest, respectful, and you have a connection, but then he'll be violent or something."

Boys and girls talk about the lack of faithfulness in relationships. Both sides said it was because of cheating among the boys. For example, "You can't find faithful in none of them -- in none of the guys nowadays." "Because you might have a girl who be going with another girl." Cheating appears to be so commonplace in relationships that the teens talked about it in a very matter-of-fact tone anticipating that it would most likely occur in their relationship.

Verbal and physical violence also came up frequently in the focus group without the moderator of the group even mentioning it. However, in nearly all of the groups, teens were quick to point out the difference between play fighting and violence. Play fighting was mentioned as something that was typical and common within teen relationships. However, teens noted that play fighting could become a prelude for violence.

For example, one 15 to 17-year-old boy commented that "Because sometimes you're like, you just be playing, but then when you start going for real and hitting each other on the face and the neck, then you want to fight. You just be like 'Chill out.'"

We also found that girls are just as likely as boys to be the perpetrators of relationship violence. After further probing on this issue, we learned that girls use violence as a way to express their anger and frustration. For example, one 12 to 14-year-old girl mentioned that violence was “...more like play fighting, but like in an argument. You just want to get out your frustrations, so you hit him and he hits you back. That sort of fighting.”

So given that we saw that the typical teen relationships did not demonstrate a lot of healthy aspects, we wanted to explore why these relationships weren't typically seen as healthy. And one group of older girls provided insight in this area and they cited the main cause as being the lack of role models, especially fathers. For example, “Most females, if they don't have a father figure in their life, they don't have these qualities. Or if they do have a father figure, they have little evidence.”

A lack of positive examples of healthy adult relationships may help to explain why teens have such low hopes of ever having a healthy relationship themselves. For our (unintelligible), we found that there are high levels of congruence in the way that teens and adults define healthy romantic relationships.

In the last part of the focus groups, the moderator asked teens to compare their list of healthy relationship qualities to a list of eight qualities of a healthy marriage developed by Child Trends researchers. These eight qualities are listed on the slide. We found that although teens do not always use the same language as adults, their constructs closely mirrored those of adults.

We also asked the teens if all of the constructs on the adult list were relevant for teen relationships. Boys agreed that all of the factors were important and girls agreed that some but not all were important. The girls identified the



bottom four factors on this slide as not being as important for teens. And these dimensions include commitment, conflict resolution, time together, and satisfaction.

I'm going to review a few limitations of the study. We had a relatively small sample, which consisted of mostly girls and African Americans, all from D.C. area. Given this select sample, we acknowledge that our findings were not necessarily generalizable (unintelligible) representative sample of teens. However, despite these limitations, this study provided important insight into teen perspectives on healthy romantic relationships among racial ethnic minority. And had a number of important implications for practiced policy makers and parents as well.

The findings are encouraging in that they suggest that teens know what makes a relationship healthy, that they know what they should be looking for in a partner in a relationship. At the same time, the reality was that teen relationships do not live up to these standards and risky factors such as infidelity and violence are common in many teen relationships, as noted by the teens themselves.

(Unintelligible) our findings suggest several implications for the role that parents and mentors can play in promoting healthy relationships in youth development. For parents and program providers alike, our findings highlight the importance of being aware of and prepared to discuss the full range of teen relationships, and also of the importance of promoting healthy relationship ideals from an early age. For example, we found that even among the 12 to 14-year-olds, there was pessimism about healthy relationships.

These early teen years may represent a key learning period for establishing and promoting healthy relationship norms and ideals. Consequently,

adolescents in this age range may be a critical group for programs and parents to target. In the absence of parents or in addition to parents, other adult mentors can serve as important role models for teens. Also mentoring programs may want to incorporate discussions and activities that focus on how to establish healthy relationship patterns.

Okay, before we move on to our third segment, I first want to thank (Lizzy) and (Peter) for their help in reading those quotes. That was nice to hear some new voices for that. And we also have a poll that I'll set up now. For this poll, we want to know whether the themes that I just reviewed from this qualitative study accurately reflect the relationships that you hear about from the teens in your own program.

And we definitely encourage listeners to again send comments over the Q&A, you know, with examples of how the findings match up with what they see in their programs day-to-day or if there are some different themes or some different topics that you've seen emerging in the relationships among your - the youth in your program. That would be great to learn about some other ways to think about this too. Okay, we'll give you about five more seconds. I'm going to close the poll and we'll look at the results.

And everyone that answered the poll actually said yes, the themes from the study accurately reflected the relationships that they hear about from some of the teens in their program. So that's promising, we're glad that, you know, our findings -- even though they're a bit limited -- are, you know, relevant for teens in programs across the country.

Okay, moving on to the next segment, for the last portion of the webinar, we want to spend some time thinking about how we can better integrate interventions that focus on healthy relationships and teen pregnancy

prevention. I'll focus on some common relationship education and teen pregnancy prevention intervention approaches that have been developed and I'll highlight the similarities and differences between these types of interventions with some suggestions for how they may be better integrated.

First we want to define relationship education, so the broad goal of relationship education for adolescents is to impart some (unintelligible) knowledge, values, and skills that are viewed as necessary for establishing healthy romantic relationships. Relationship education interventions are offered in a wide range of (unintelligible). Many are listed here and these include schools, juvenile corrective systems, foster care, independent living facilities, programs for pregnant and parenting teens, different camps and retreats for youth, group homes, and afterschool programs.

Some different types of relationship education interventions include basic or general relationship and marriage education, family and consumer science classes -- which often include material on interpersonal relationships and are often required in high school -- and abstinence education programs also often address healthy relationships as part of their curricula.

And the fourth type of relationship education programs are communicate based initiatives, which include efforts at the national or community level to improve relationship outcomes, which are sometimes the primary objective, but oftentimes a secondary objective of targeting at risk youth.

Now I'm going to go to another quick poll. We want to hear from the participants on the webinar whether they are currently incorporating relationship education into their programs. I'm going to close the poll in about five seconds. Okay, we'll show the results here and for those of you who

responded, 72% said yes, you are currently incorporating relationship education components in your programs and about 1/4, 27% said no.

So this is a good sign that a lot of the programs right now are already addressing aspects of relationship education and healthy relationships in their programming. Okay, so in thinking about relationship education and teen pregnancy prevention, we see that many of the key objectives of these two types of program approaches are the same. Both types of programs share a similar goal of promoting positive adolescent development, both types of programs also promote and foster resilience among youth.

For example, both types of interventions provide teens with the skills they need to identify accurate information, either about their relationships or about (unintelligible) and pregnancy. Also skills such as common negotiation or conflict resolution help teens realize that they can overcome obstacles in their lives and these types of skills are particularly important for highly vulnerable teens, and these teens could benefit from relationship education and teen pregnancy prevention programs that overlap and build on one another in order to more effectively serve youth.

Not only do relationship education and teen pregnancy prevention programs have similar goals, they often target similar populations of youth. For the information that I'll present in the next two slides, we reviewed evaluation studies of teen pregnancy prevention and relationship education programs. The teen pregnancy prevention studies were drawn from a list of the Office of Adolescent Health Evidence Based Programs and the relationship education evaluation studies were drawn from an extensive review that Child Trends conducted as part of a study on the relationship education for youth in foster care.

Since this information is drawn only from programs that have been evaluated, we aren't able to consider all possible programs that are being implemented and all of the populations targeted by these programs. Also, the evidence base for relationship education programs for youth is not as rigorous as for teen pregnancy prevention programs, so these programs have not been tested with as many populations.

However, we did see some important overlap in the types of populations that have been targeted by both types of intervention. And those populations are shown in the middle of the figure where the circles overlap. It's also important to note that the populations examined include pregnancy prevention evaluations -- in the dark red circle -- represent critical populations that are (unintelligible) of greater relationship education support.

We also found that teen pregnancy prevention and relationship education intervention often had similar program components, even if the intended outcomes of the programs may differ. For example, many teen pregnancy prevention programs include program components that address healthy relationships. These include communication with partners and parents, (unintelligible) negotiation, gender and power dynamics, and dating violence.

Also many relationship education programs that have been evaluated include teen pregnancy prevention related content, including ways to avoid risky sexual behaviors, STD and HIV prevention, pregnancy prevention, choosing a healthy partner, and again dating violence. And note that dating violence appears frequently in both relationship education and teen pregnancy prevention programs. This is because dating violence is a clear indicator of an unhealthy relationship and because dating violence puts teens at significant increased risk for becoming pregnant.

Here we have a list of some of the most common outcomes examined in evaluations of teen pregnancy and relationship education programs. Although the outcomes don't often overlap, you can see how the skills learned through relationship education programs -- such as how to recognize healthy - unhealthy relationships, learning conflict resolution skills, and learning effective communication strategies -- can play an important role in helping youth navigate their sexual relationships and decisions.

Based on the common goals, program components, target populations, and outcomes shared by some teen pregnancy prevention and relationship education programs, we identified a number of specific teen pregnancy prevention and relationship education curricula that exhibit crossover. These lists are definitely not meant to be a complete representation of either type of intervention, but our goal is just to highlight a few teen pregnancy prevention curricula that include relationship education program elements and a separate set of relationship education curricula that include teen pregnancy prevention program components.

Although there is some crossover between relationship education and teen pregnancy prevention programs, more integration of these two types of interventions could result in more effective services for youth. A more integrated approach may also allow programs to use resources more efficiently and may possibly result in more successful recruitment, retention, and engagement strategy.

We're going to do one final poll with everybody. I'm going to set that up now. For this poll, we want to know how important do you think relationship education is or could be for your program? We'll keep the poll open for another five seconds or so. I'm going to close the poll. And here we can see the results that a vast majority of the listeners today thought that relationship

education was very important or critical to their program, so again just highlighting the very important nature of healthy relationships and relationship education as part of preventing teen pregnancy and other sexual reproductive health outcomes for teens.

Okay, there's a couple more slide that we want to present. So we really want to think about future relationship education and teen pregnancy prevention intervention and highlight a few gaps that future programs may address. First I want to again highlight the important role of social media and technology in teen relationships. There are a number of ways that this growing use of technology can be incorporated into programs and many programs have already started doing this.

I want to also highlight a few understudy populations that are in need of additional relationship educations and teen pregnancy prevention programming. For example, LGBT youth experience more dating violence than their heterosexual peers, yet teen pregnancy prevention and relationship education interventions that address the specific needs of this population are fairly limited. Focusing more on racial and ethnic minority groups would also be valuable, as well as focusing on youth in foster care.

Overall, these types of populations face greater risk of experiencing unhealthy relationships and teen pregnancies and would benefit from more targeted interventions that better integrate teen pregnancy and relationship education program components.

I wanted to share with you one potential resource that can be used to inform the development of relationship education programs to a more vulnerable populations, like youth in foster care. And this is part of our work on relationship education for youth in foster care in which we developed a Logic

model that depicts the key program elements that we identified as critical for successfully improving relationship skills and other related short-term and long-term outcomes, which include childbearing and parenting for youth in foster care. However, many of these components can be extended to other groups of youth as well.

We hope that this model can serve as a useful tool for designing, planning, implementing, and even evaluating existing or future relationship education programs for vulnerable populations of youth.

So at this time we want to open up the discussion for questions and answers and any comments you may have. As a reminder, you can enter questions or comments in the Q&A box that's in the upper left hand corner, where it says Q&A. And while we start to sort through the questions, I want to also point you to a couple of resources and references pages that we have here, so you can - there's links to various reports and other resources that we used as part of our presentation. And the last slide has my contact information if you want to e-mail me with any follow-up questions or comments or any other requests for information.

(Unintelligible) question. Oh, I see a comment here that the polls, you were unable to select more than one category for some of them, and I do apologize for that. Some of them did have - we did ask you to check all that apply and I apologize that you were not able to do that.

So we have one comment that for some programs, relationship education is not incorporated into their evidence based programs, but they are replicating (unintelligible) it's part of their other programs. So that does raise an issue of, you know, whether or not to kind of add on relationship education to an existing teen pregnancy prevention program that's an evidence based program



that doesn't necessarily have a relationship education component and, you know, there's some options for how to add on those components and kind of how to select the right curriculum that will work best with your program.

I also know that there are a number of teen pregnancy prevention programs that already address a number of (unintelligible) healthy relationships and kind of other types of relationship related curricula.

I have another question that's related to relationship education curricula. There are a number of curricula out there that are very specifically focused on relationship education and these - some of them - the more successful programs that have shown some positive effects -- even if they haven't been evaluated -- really are developed specifically for youth. And so they tend to take into consideration youth's personal relationship experiences, they try to reflect experiences that may occur in youths' everyday lives, and to make the material very relatable to youth.

So also a lot of the curricula include a lot of interactive type of features, media features, and some of these things include role playing, video, social media applications as I mentioned, and, you know, just kind of incorporating aspects of youth culture as well. And some of these things can include making sure that the terminology that is used in the curricula is relevant, that, you know, considering certain slang words and dialect, aspects of media that might be common and popular among youth.

So I think in general, relationship education curricular that really have thought about how best to serve youth themselves and how to kind of tailor their program components to teens will be the most successful. And can take into account the kind of everyday lives of youth. Related to that, another question

that came in was what are some innovative strategies for engaging youth in a relationship education or teen pregnancy prevention program.

And building on what I was just saying about making the content relevant for teens, some successful strategies have been to really engage teens in the process. And so, you know, developing things like teen leadership programs, teen panels, teen advisory groups as a way to really include some outreach to other students and other teens and to help the teens in the program apply the concepts and skills they are learning.

Some other kind of more innovative strategies include having a parent component where you're engaging parents in program activities. And this, you know, can center on two focuses. It can increase engagement of participants -- of youth themselves -- if their parents are involved, but it also helps youth to sort of practice the skills that they're learning with family members.

So another thing I wanted to mention based on the work that we did on relationship education for youth in foster care is that we had a recommendation for integrating relationship education programs into existing services for youth, rather than providing them as a standalone program. And in other words, relationship education could be incorporated almost as a tiered approach, which would help to address the multiple needs of at risk youth, including youth in foster care. That's another kind of example of how to integrate relationship education in a sort of more positive, innovative way with existing programming.

We had another question come in, what age is too early for relationship education or is it appropriate for any age? And most of the programs and (unintelligible) that are out there are targeting high schoolers. But there are -

there's a growing number of programs that are targeting middle school youth and for a number of reasons.

You know, one reason is because, you know, we want - we hope to sort of prevent unhealthy relationships and prevent unhealthy sexual (unintelligible) behaviors and so targeting them earlier, you know, could be an effective strategy given that we see that even the 12 to 14-year-olds that we talked to already had some negative ideas about relationships. They had - they didn't think that the ideal relationship was possible for them, so really targeting middle school youth could be effective in teaching them the skills they need before they even start to develop really serious relationships.

However, the content of the curricula could be quite different. So, you know, middle school, they'll also, you know, programs may focus more on relationships in general, relationships with peers, relationships with parents, kind of setting the stage for the skills that they would need. And then focusing in high school more on romantic relationships as well as integrating topics about sex and pregnancy in relationships.

Okay, we had a question about whether the PowerPoint would be available after this, and yes, the slides will be available on the (unintelligible) Health Web site as well as recordings of the full webinar and a full transcript. That should be available shortly on the (unintelligible) Web site.

All right. Definitely keep sending those questions if you have them or any other comments that you have about these two subjects. Oh, and I also wanted to remind you that you will be getting an evaluation form for the webinar shortly, so please fill that out and give us your feedback on how you thought today's webinar went. That would be greatly appreciated.

Okay, well if there are no further questions, I think we'll wrap that up. I thank you all for your comments and your questions and your participation. I hope that you enjoyed today's webinar and this concludes today's presentation. Thank you very much.

Coordinator: That concludes today's conference. You may now disconnect at this time.

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