

GEN.M

GENDER MATTERS

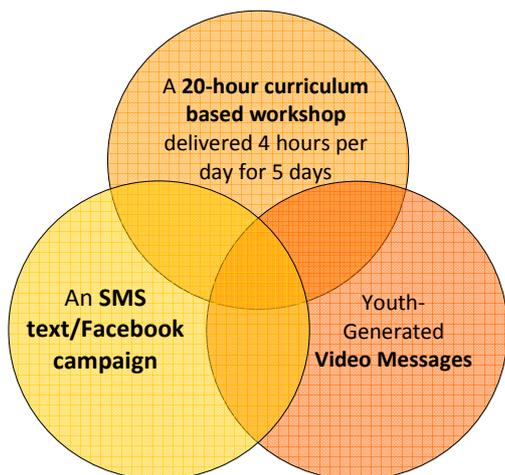
PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Gender Matters project is an innovative, science-based intervention that incorporates cutting-edge research on gender-based attitudes and behaviors to prevent teenage pregnancy. The intervention, led by EngenderHealth, a global reproductive health organization, targets youth ages 14 to 16 participating in the Travis County Summer Youth Employment Program. The majority of youth reside in the 12 zip codes with the highest rates of teen pregnancy in Travis County, placing them at high risk of becoming a teenage parent.

The project aims to reduce the rate of teenage pregnancy in Travis County, and seeks to achieve three behavioral outcomes with youth participants:

- ▶ Youth delay the onset of sexual intercourse
- ▶ Youth increase the use of the most effective contraceptive methods, including hormonal contraception and the IUD
- ▶ Youth increase consistent and correct use of condoms

The project takes a 3-pronged approach in order to optimize the program's key messages about sexual behavior, progressive gender norms, and building community and peer support:



CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

- **SESSION ONE: UNDERSTANDING GENDER AND ITS INFLUENCE ON SEXUAL BEHAVIOR**
This session helps youth become aware of, question, and redefine gender norms in ways that promote equitable relationships and promote health and well-being.
- **HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS**
This session helps youth understand the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships while building skills to ensure that their own relationships are fulfilling, enjoyable, and healthy.
- **ARE YOU READY TO BECOME A PARENT?**
This session helps youth understand the challenges of being a teen parent and build skills to delay sexual activity.
- **SKILLS FOR PREVENTING PREGNANCY**
This session teaches youth about pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections and builds their skills in preventing both through the consistent and correct use of condoms.
- **TAKING ACTION TO PREVENT TEEN PREGNANCY**
This session teaches youth about the most widely accessible hormonal and long-acting contraceptives and where to obtain them. It also asks youth to identify personal behaviors that they intend to sustain or change in order to prevent pregnancy.



STATEMENT OF NEED

Pregnancy is a serious public health issue for young people living in Texas today, with the 3rd highest teen pregnancy rate in the nation. That's more than 73,000 girls who become pregnant each year. What's more, Travis County has an even higher teen pregnancy rate, 29.1 per 1,000 girls aged 13-17, compared to a rate of 26.0 for the state, making this issue a serious concern for the citizens of this community. The Gender Matters project aims to address this concern by targeting youth who reside in the 12 zip codes in Travis County that represent 80% of the county's teen pregnancies, which also happens to be home to the lowest median family incomes in the county.

FUNDING

The Gender Matters project is the recipient of a 5-year research and demonstration grant issued by the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Adolescent Health, to develop, replicate, and test a new and innovative teen pregnancy prevention strategy. The project is part of a larger effort instituted by HHS to implement contracts and grants to public and private entities to fund medically accurate and age appropriate programs that reduce teenage pregnancy. The teen pregnancy prevention program addresses rising teen pregnancy rates by supporting both the replication of evidence-based models and demonstration programs to develop and test additional models and innovative strategies.

ABOUT ENGENDERHEALTH

The Gender Matters Project is led by EngenderHealth, a leading international reproductive health non-profit organization working to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in the world's poorest communities. EngenderHealth is an established leader in the field of gender. Through its groundbreaking Men As Partners® (MAP) program which began in 1996, EngenderHealth engages men to play constructive roles in promoting gender equity and health in their families and communities. The organization works in partnership with governments, institutions, communities, and health care professionals in more than 20 countries around the world. For more information, visit: www.engenderhealth.org

PROGRAM PARTNERS

The Gender Matters project implementation partners are SafePlace and the Travis County Summer Youth Employment Program. As well, Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health is conducting a comprehensive and rigorous evaluation study of the project. All three organizations are uniquely qualified and bring a heightened level of expertise in working in youth risk prevention.

SAFEPLACE

SafePlace exists to end sexual and domestic violence through safety, healing, prevention and social change, and accomplishes this goal by offering a breadth of programs and services, including case management and counseling services, supportive housing and emergency shelter, and the notable Expect Respect program which provides school-based support groups and counseling, youth leadership activities, and educational programs in schools and community settings. Last year, SafePlace successfully provided 804 people with emergency shelter; 1,197 survivors with individual, group or phone counseling, and 11,269 middle and high school students with sexual and domestic violence prevention education. For more information, visit: www.safeplace.org



TRAVIS COUNTY

The Travis County/City of Austin Summer Youth Employment Program is a work-based youth development program that places youth between the ages of 14 and 17 in meaningful, community enhancing work which develops positive work habits and prepares them for a future as productive citizens. The summer youth employment program serves approximately 750 youth each year, including 200 youth with disabilities, at nearly 200 work sites throughout the city. With each youth working 100 hours over the summer, the program brings 75,000 work hours to Travis County each summer. For more information, visit: www.co.travis.tx.us

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Gender Matters is partnering with Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health to conduct a comprehensive and rigorous evaluation study of the project. A vital part of one of the world's greatest universities and medical centers, Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health pursues an agenda of education, research, and service to address the critical and complex public health issues affecting the nation, and the world. A global presence built on local excellence, the School has faculty members pursuing research and service projects in more than 100 countries. Whether promoting the health and well-being of America's impoverished families and children, working in resource-limited communities to improve reproductive health for women, or developing models of care and treatment for HIV-infected people in northern Manhattan or Africa, the School is committed to meeting the health needs of underserved populations in all corners of the world. For more information, visit: www.mailman.columbia.edu



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