Engaging Adolescents

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Objectives

• Understand the adolescent mind
• Tips to communicate with adolescents
• Activities to engage adolescents
Disclosures

- I am NOT a professional speaker
- I am NOT an expert on adolescents
- Absolutely NOTHING
Adolescent Brain
What is Remodeling??
Inside the Adolescent Brain

Use It or Lose It: The Adolescent Brain

[Image of a brain exercising with dumbbells and puzzle pieces]
Brain Under Construction

Anatomy of a Teenager's Brain

- Embarrassed by parents section
- Sensorimotor area
- Ability to remember the lyrics to offensive hip hop song...
- Prefrontal
- Have no idea...
- Girls are suddenly fascinating section
- Ability to listen to extremely loud base tracks
- School Work (smallest section of the brain)
- Cars, cars, cars, cars, and... oh, yeah, girls...
What is a Parent to Do?

Welcome to being a parent of a teenager. Prepare for a large amount of eye rolling, emotional outbursts, and thoughts of running away. And that's just the parents.

If you feel crazy, then you're doing it right.
Tips for Parents

• Let the child take some **healthy** risks
• Help the child find new creative and expressive outlets
• Talk through decisions
• Use family routines
• Provide boundaries
• Offer frequent praise
• Be a positive role model
• Stay connected
• Talk with the child about his developing brain

(Raising Children Network, with the Centre for Adolescent Health, 2017)
Heads Up!! Teen in the Clinic!
Tips to Communicate with Teens

• Ask how they are doing
• Make it about them
• Let teens teach you
• Use culture
• Do something active
• Get them to perform
• Give them a choice
• Set them a challenge
• Technology is not a subject
• Be yourself

(Hudson, n.d.)
Teaching Teens about Sexuality

• Today's teenagers do need access to contraceptive and STI information
• Teenage males as well as female adolescents need counseling in the area of sexual conduct regarding the prevention of pregnancy and STI’s
• Teenagers continue to have misconceptions concerning pregnancy and birth control despite in-school sexual development/health classes
How to be an Effective Family Planning Educator

- Listen
- Be approachable
- Be sincere
- Overcome discomfort
- Be sensitive
Important Counseling Points

- Effective teaching and counseling as preventive measures are critical
- Sensitive listening and open communication are important elements
- It is important to be aware of your own personal attitudes and biases regarding human sexual conduct, and these personal views should not be imposed on teenagers
- A sensitive, open, and non-judgmental approach is necessary with adolescents
So why am I Here?

• Russell County had a 50.7% teen pregnancy rate in 2009 for teens aged 15-19
• In 2016, the teen pregnancy rate was 11.0%
• Why??
  – Talk to the freshman class every semester
  – Family Planning program allows birth control options for teens
How?

- Invite school officials to be part of the advisory committee
- Visit with the principal
- Visit with the health teacher
Activities/Methods I use to Engage Adolescents

• Interactive activities
• Show pictures
• Show examples
• Show videos
• Provide pamphlets and printed information that is directed at adolescents
COLOR CODE

- Plain **Blue**=Condoms or Dental Dams
- Plain **Green**=Trichomoniasis
- Plain **Yellow**=Gonorrhea
- Plain **Red**=Chlamydia
- Plain **Orange**=Syphilis
- Peanut **Green**=HIV
- Peanut **Red**=Hepatitis B
- Peanut **Orange**=Herpes
- Peanut **Yellow**=HPV
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References


