

## LESSON: Teen Pregnancy and Media Influence

### Overview

In 2010 Candies Foundation (an organization that partners with celebrities and dedicates itself to preventing teen pregnancy) joined forces with Seventeen magazine to conduct a survey of girls 14 to 18 to examine how the media influences them on subjects of sex, pregnancy and parenting.

Also, the results of a national longitudinal study of youth reported in Pediatrics in 2008 pointed out that teens who watch a great deal of sexual content on TV are twice as likely to become (or get someone else) pregnant before age 20 as those who watch very little sexually explicit content on TV. This study was reported throughout the media; here are just a few of these reports: KidsHealth.org, The National Campaign, MSNBC

This lesson encourages students to consider the results of the study reported in Pediatrics in addition to the results of the Candies/Seventeen survey and then write an article for a particular target audience addressing these survey results and possible actions that could be taken to avoid these types of media influences.

A key feature to consider when writing this article will be to offer their advice to the target audience they have selected. It's important that the students pick their target audience from one of two choices: a) students younger than they are or b) the parents of these younger students.

#### Important note:

Important note: A much more comprehensive examination of the issue of media influence can be found in the Policy Statement released by the American Academy of Pediatrics in September, 2010.

### Objectives:

- Provide media examples that illustrate the findings of the survey
- Discuss the implications of the survey findings
- Consider possible actions that could be taken to curb or reduce these influences
- Write an article about media influence that is designed to reach students younger than themselves or the parents of these younger teens.

**Level:** Middle / High School

**Time:** 1 class period

### Preparation and Materials:

- White Board
- Handout: *Survey Findings*

### Procedures

1. Present the findings of the Candies Foundation and Seventeen magazine's 2010 survey to the class:

Results of the survey concluded:

- Nearly half (48%) of teen girls get their information on sex, pregnancy, and parenting from TV shows.
- 55% of teens surveyed think TV shows and movies encourage teenagers to have sex.
- The shows that teen girls think most encourage teens to have sex are Gossip Girl and Jersey Shore.
- 31% of teens surveyed think TV shows and movies make teenagers want to have a baby.
- 20% of teen girls say TV shows and movies make teen motherhood seem normal

2. Also discuss the results of the study reported in Pediatrics in 2008 and noted above in the overview to this lesson.
3. Ask the students to break into teams of 2-3 and give the teams a few minutes to come up with some good media examples from movies, TV programs, music videos, etc. they may have seen in recent months that could be used to help illustrate the results of this survey.

## **Activity**

1. Reconvene in a large group and discuss and list some of the examples on a white board.
2. Then ask the students to write an article that is intended to provide advice to one of two target audiences.
  - Students younger than themselves (e.g. if they are in high school, write the article for middle school students or if in middle school)
  - Parents of younger students
3. Inform the students that they should write their article with the idea that it could reach students by appearing on a school website or on a site such as Stay Teen produced by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy. If they write an article for parents, they should consider that their article could appear on a popular website particularly designed for parents of teens.

## **Assessment**

Assessment is based on the article. Among the questions one might ask would be how is the article structured? Does it demonstrate well organized development of key points along with strong supporting detail? Does it offer examples and provide any attempt to analyze/evaluate these examples to further illustrate the points being made? Does it demonstrate any attempt to reflect on the subject matter, offering personal insight; are the grammar, spelling, etc. correct?