

# POWER TO DECIDE

the campaign to prevent unplanned pregnancy

## Power to Decide's Culture Change Work What we do and why it matters

### Shaping Storytelling for a Generation

[Power to Decide, the campaign to prevent unplanned pregnancy](#), is a non-partisan nonprofit working to ensure that all young people, no matter who they are, where they live, or what their life circumstances might be, have the power to decide if, when, and under what circumstances to get pregnant and have a child. Since its founding in 1996, Power to Decide has made culture change a foundational element of its work. We reach audiences where they are through the influential voices they trust, informing and activating audiences and storytellers for a generation.

As part of its overall integrated effort, [Power to Decide's pop culture partnerships](#) have helped drive historic declines in teen and unplanned pregnancy over the past two decades, shifting the norm away from a "prevention" frame and toward the positive message that all people should have the power to decide if, when, and under what circumstances to get pregnant and have a child. But progress is not victory: we have more work to do, particularly in advancing health equity and supporting people of color, people with low incomes, and people in rural communities.

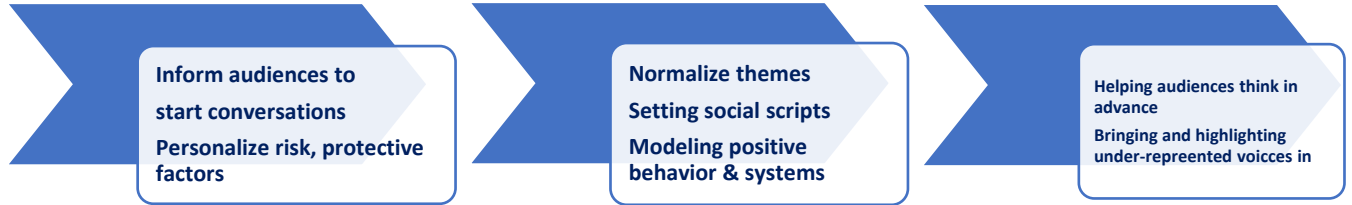
**2 out of 3 young people age 12-24 agree that one reason for the decline in teen pregnancy is that it's a more frequent topic in pop culture.**

Power to Decide grounds its pop culture work in social science principles while navigating the "real world" of the media industry. We are inclusive of a wide range of voices and understand what audiences and storytellers want and need. We have built hundreds of partnerships with TV shows, magazine brands, and influential voices to inform storytelling, provide science-based information, and create [discussion starters](#). We work to shift social norms and support individuals by increasing information, access, and opportunity to ensure that all people have the power to decide their futures. and opportunity to ensure that all people have the power to decide their futures.

### Eight principles that guide our culture change work at the individual and systemic levels:

1. **Informing** audiences.
2. **Sparking** meaningful conversations.
3. **Personalizing** risk and protective factors so audiences relate to characters and situations.
4. **Normalizing** important themes (contraceptive use, abortion care, and health equity).
5. **Setting** social scripts about the power to decide and reproductive well-being.
6. **Modeling** positive behavior/systems in relatable scenarios; showing audiences what consequences of inequity look like.

- 7. **Helping** audiences think about how they would handle a situation before they're in it.
- 8. **Bringing** underrepresented voices and perspectives in to shape the conversation.



**1) Informing audiences; improve knowledge about contraception and reproductive health while audiences are receptive and attentive.**

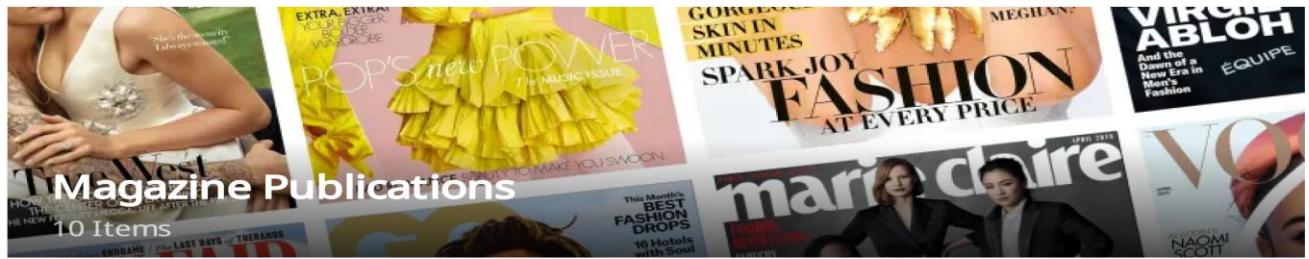
**The Bold Type:** We supported a story line and social content about emergency contraception (EC). Viewers learned new and relevant information. We saw increased traffic to our resources when shared by the show.

**75% of The Bold Type viewers say they learned something new** about EC from the show.

**Weekly live tweets resulted in an average 320% increase** in engagement with Bedsider and **459% increase** in engagement with Power to Decide.

Pop culture media outlets inform audiences about access to birth control, abortion, and more.





## 2) Sparking meaningful conversations.

**#ThxBirthControl:** Each November and throughout the year, we lead a national effort to mobilize people to speak positively about all that birth control makes possible.

**#ThxBirthControl, our signature campaign, helps normalize** open conversations about the positives of birth control.

**Sentiment for the campaign has grown to 99% positive.** There were 3 million engagements with the hashtag in 2020, a 361% increase over 2019.

Hundreds of media brands and influencers including *Cosmopolitan*, *Marie Claire*, *Refinery 29*, *MTV*, and *The Bold Type* helped keep the conversation going.

**#TalkingIsPower:** An integrated communications campaign aimed at empowering parents, champions, and mentors in a young person's life to start conversations and share accurate information on sex, love, relationships, and contraception.

**More than half of young people have had a helpful conversation with parents/trusted adults about sex, love, relationships, and contraception because of something they read or viewed in popular**



Between May 7 and 31, 2020, there were 21 million potential impressions and views close to 70,000 across multiple channels.

**Sentiment for the hashtag was 100% positive.**





**Unexpected (TLC):** For four consecutive seasons, Power to Decide is the show's lead educational partner, creating custom discussion guides, blog posts, social, and digital content. Our goal is to help viewers use the show to start conversations about unplanned pregnancy with the young people in their lives.

**TLC shares our information and partner page with its 1.2 million social followers and press.**

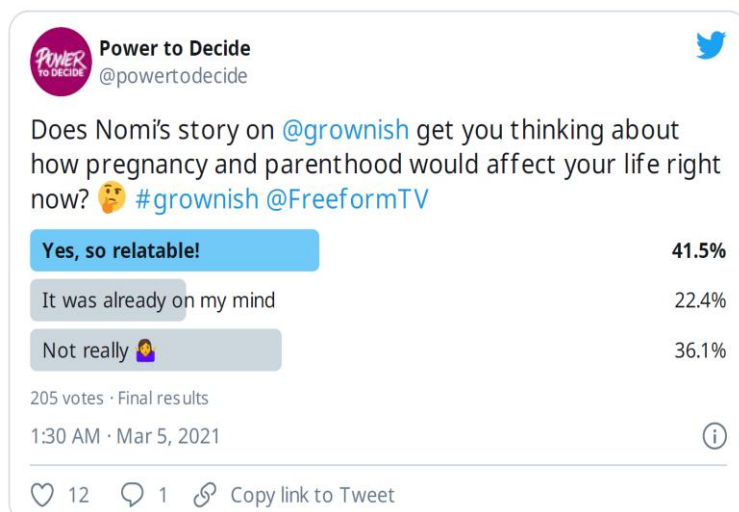


**Traffic to our dedicated resource page for Unexpected increased 300%** in March 2021 over previous months thanks to TLC's active promotion to viewers.

**3) Personalizing risk and protective factors, when audiences relate to characters and situations.**

Through Twitter polls shared by our media partners, viewers say they relate to characters and situations involving sex and pregnancy.

**2 out of 3 young people say that when there is a story about teen/unplanned pregnancy that they can relate to in popular media it makes them think more about their own risk.**

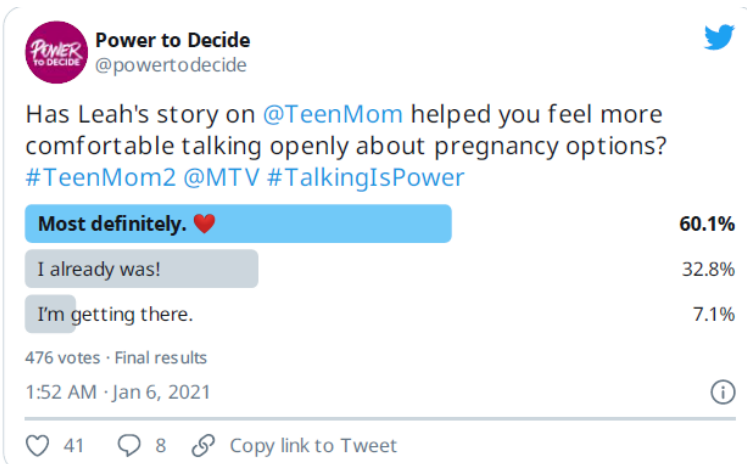


**grown-ish (Freeform):** Multiple twitter polls shared by the show in Season 3 confirmed that Nomi's unplanned pregnancy storyline helped a majority of respondents think about how a pregnancy would affect their lives right now.

**50% of teens say they've never thought about how a pregnancy would affect their lives.**

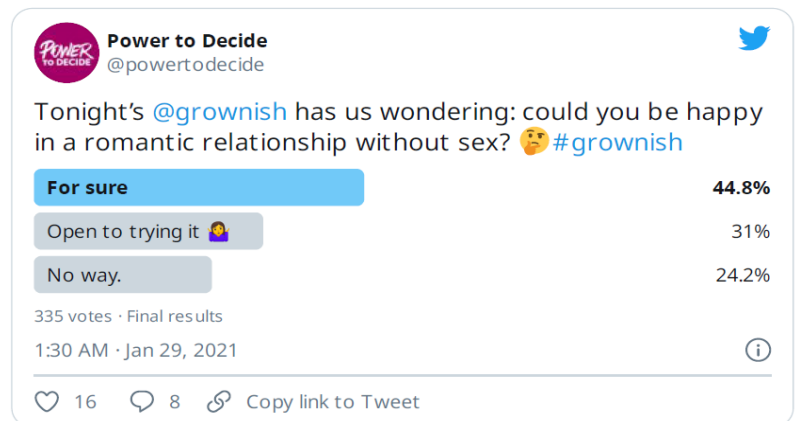
**4) Normalizing important themes like contraception, abortion care, honest conversations and what health equity looks like.**

**Unpregnant (HBO Max):** This movie tells a positive story about a young woman seeking an abortion and explores the many barriers she faces. The film won critical acclaim for its portrayal of abortion as a normal part of health care. We supported the creators and the network through storytelling and social collaboration and featured an exclusive interview with the producer.



**Teen Mom OG (MTV):** 6 in 10 viewers said that Leah’s story line helped them feel more comfortable talking openly about pregnancy options, helping to normalize abortion.

**Anna’s story in grown-ish** helped viewers think about what they would do in a similar situation, and helped normalize the idea that you can choose to be sexually active or not in each relationship.



**The Bold Type:** We supported a story arc about pregnancy loss to help educate and reduce stigma. The show shared our resources with its 56,000 followers with the message that they are not alone.

**As a result, we saw high engagement and increased traffic** to our resources about pregnancy loss.

**5) Setting social scripts about reproductive well-being and having the power to decide your future.**

**East Los High:** Throughout the life of the series, we see **condom wrappers on the nightstand** or other signals that birth control use is assumed and expected. We worked with script writers, digital/social media producers, set designers, and cast members to bring relevant birth control information into every aspect of the show.



**black-ish (ABC):** We helped the show raise the issue of gender inequity and model productive conversations about how to recognize and stop it. The episode reached more than three million viewers and shared our resources with 337,000 followers via live tweets.

Our live tweet with black-ish **increased social engagement by 385%** over our daily average.

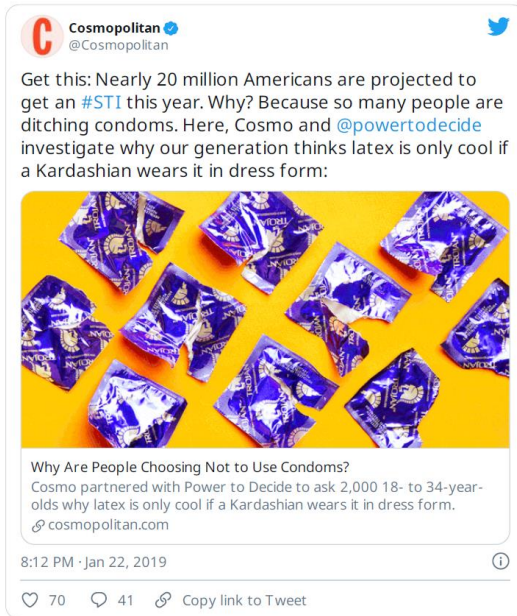


**82% of respondents agreed: "Tonight's episode of @blackish makes me want to break the double standard when it comes to talking to young people about sex."**



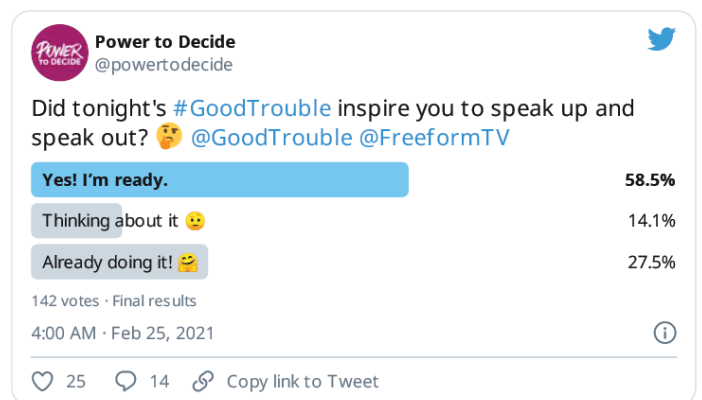
**6) Modeling positive systems and behaviors in relatable scenarios (e.g., condom negotiation, self-efficacy in relationships, etc.); show what consequences of systemic inequity look like.**

**Cosmopolitan: Condom Survey and Feature Package.** Power to Decide collaborated with *Cosmopolitan* editors on an exclusive survey about condom use and why it matters. Survey results were shared throughout other publications and in social media, providing advice for how to insist on condom use or find a better alternative.



**Good Trouble (Freeform):** We supported story lines and social content focused on encouraging people to speak up for what they really want in their relationships.

Multiple Twitter polls over Season 3 demonstrated that the majority of viewers related strongly to that message: **7 in 10 say the show inspires them to speak up and speak out.**



## 7) Helping audiences think about how they would handle a situation before they're in it.

### Teen Mom OG (MTV):



MTV informed viewers that **pregnancy loss is not their fault** and that they are not alone, generating high engagement with Bedsider's information to support those who may personally need it or know others who do.

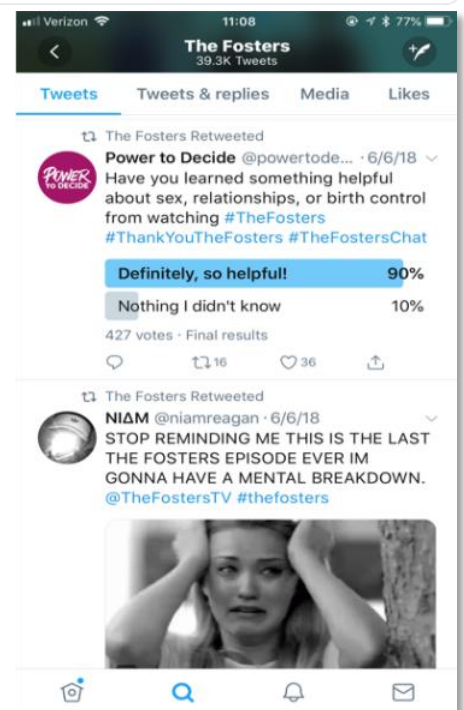
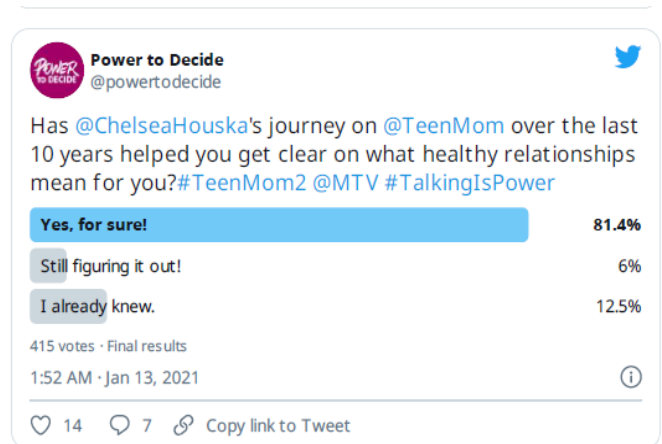
**8 in 10 viewers** say Chelsea's journey over her 10 years on Teen Mom helped them get clear on what healthy relationships mean to them. Audiences watched Chelsea grow up from her days on the original 16 and Pregnant in 2009.

## 8) Bringing under-represented voices and perspectives in to shape the conversation.

We provide authentic voices and resources to elevate under-represented youth voices and enhance portrayals of a wide range of experiences.

**The Fosters (Freeform):** The Fosters followed the lives and relationships of two foster moms and their five teenage foster children. We supported storylines on LGBTQ-inclusive sex education and teen pregnancy among foster youth—as well as birth control and abortion—and collaborated on weekly live tweets.

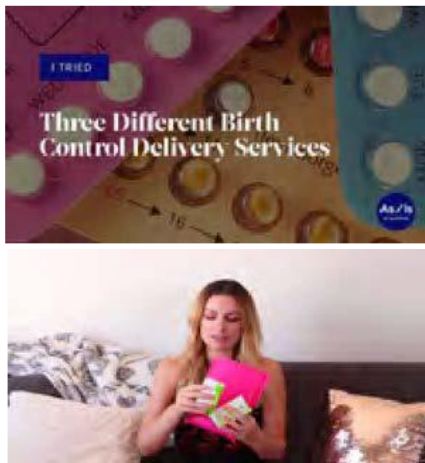
Power to Decide's social engagement **increased by an average of 365%** each week and **90% of viewers learned something useful** about sex, relationships, or birth control from The Fosters.





**Being Mary Jane (BET):** We helped shape story arc about a young Black mom of two who chooses tubal ligation for her future, defying assumptions and pressure from family and doctors. The story line emphasized the importance of ensuring that all people have the power to decide if, when, and under what circumstances to get pregnant and have a child.

**Buzzfeed:** Digital host Chloe Zak shared our Contraceptive Deserts map, spotlighting the fact that more than 19 million women in need do not have reasonable access to the full range of birth control methods.



She walked viewers through the process of ordering birth control by mail and demonstrated how to use and donate to BC Benefits, our Contraceptive Access Fund, to help viewers of all income levels understand their options.



**Power to Decide's CEO, Dr. Raegan McDonald-Mosley, addresses racism in health care and what must be done to advance equitable access for all.**

