



Public Relations

Communicating with the public about your work can generate awareness, motivate action, spur funding, and keep a community focused on the bottom line—reducing teen pregnancy.



Goal Setting



Campaign Planning



Strategy

# TALKING THE TALK: CREATING A COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY—A GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY-WIDE TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION INITIATIVES



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The ideas outlined here are meant to inspire, spark ideas, and get you started.



Time Management



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Effective Content

BY JESSICA SHEETS PIKA, BECKY GRIESSE, JENNIFER DRIVER, AND KATY SUELLENTROP



Community Outreach



Viral Media



Core Messaging



Crisis Management



Surveys

## Talking the Talk: Creating a Communications Strategy—A Guide for Community-Wide Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiatives

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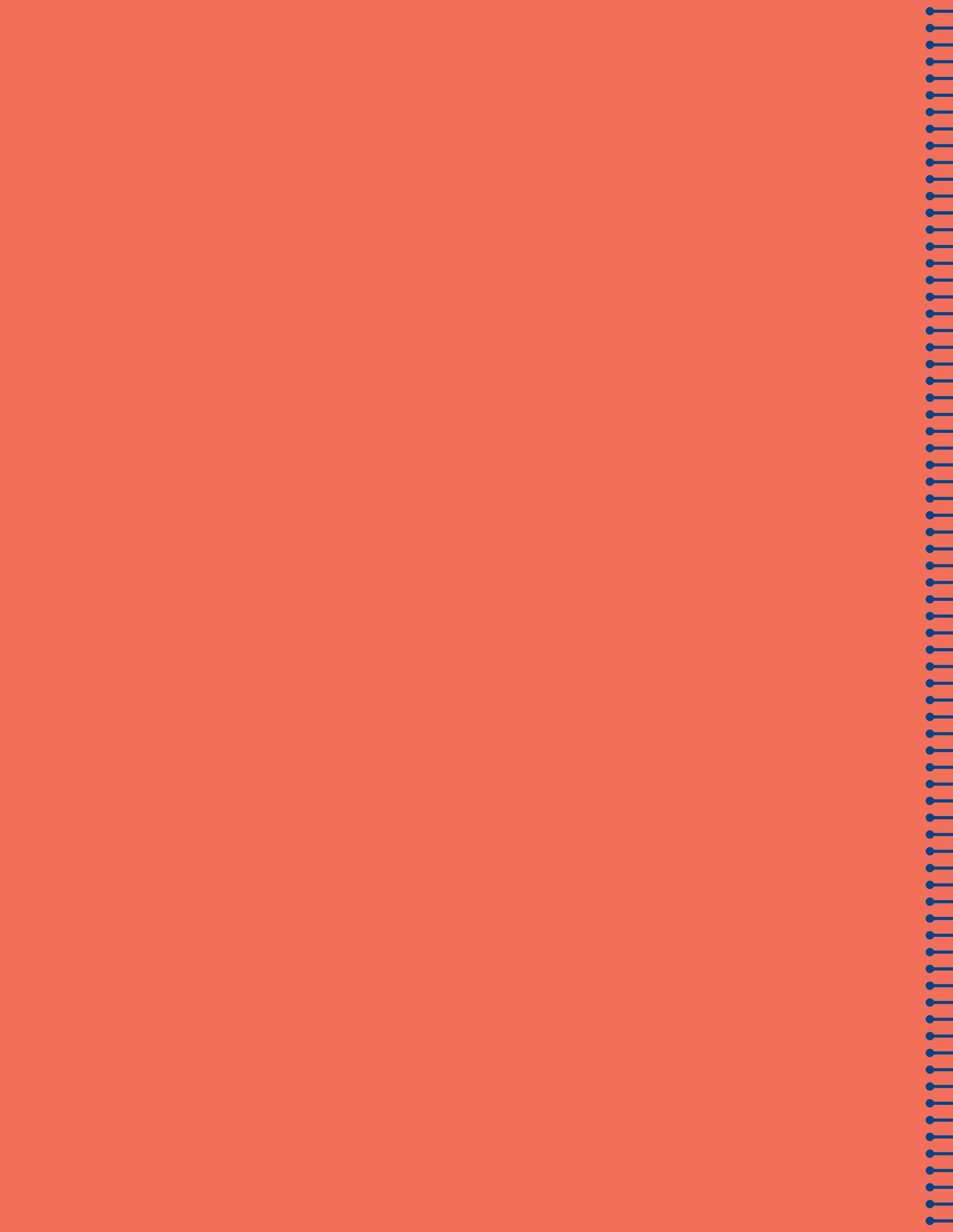
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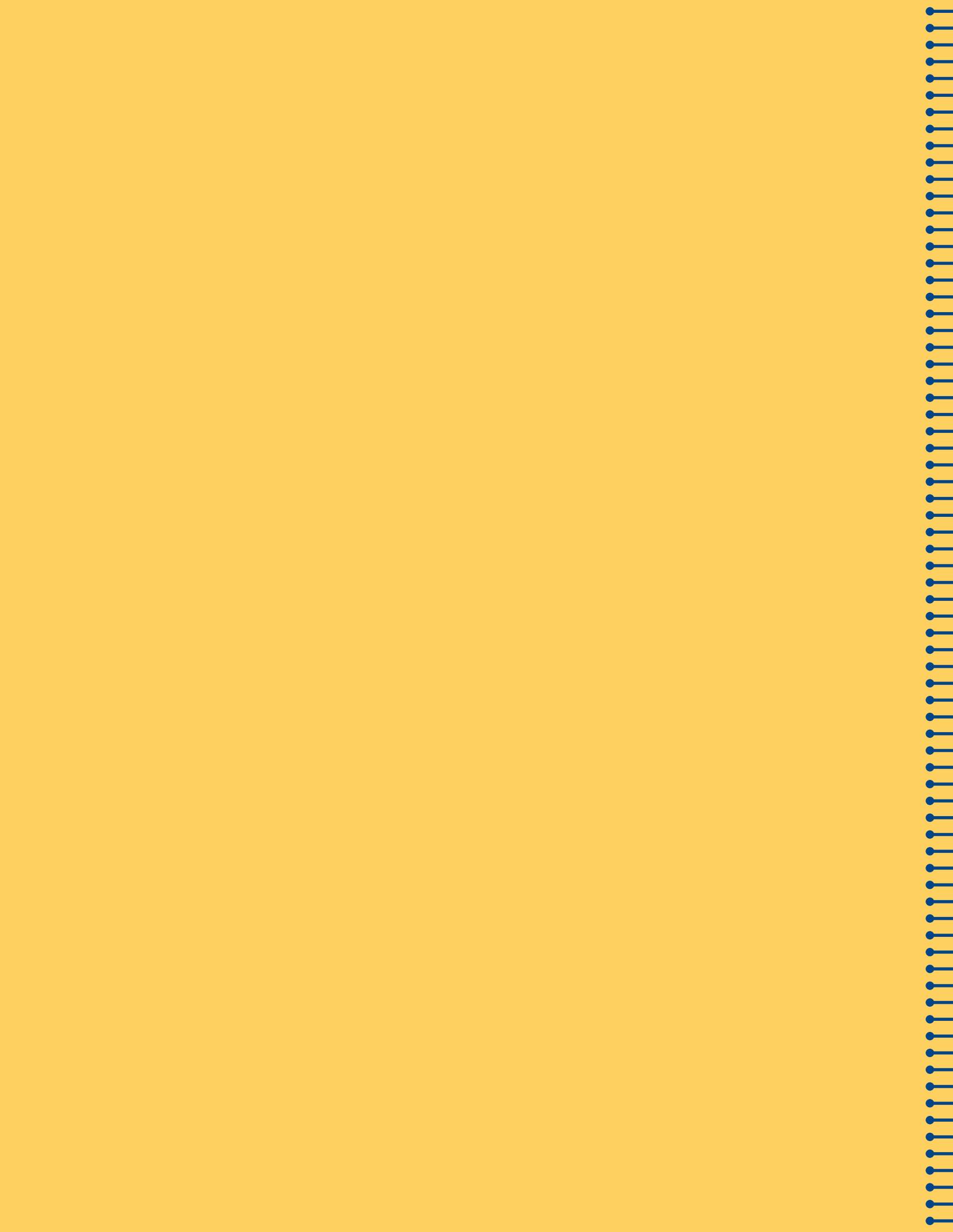
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

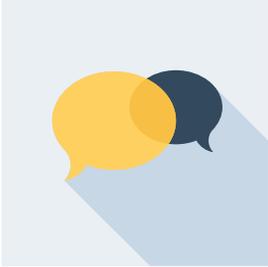
INTRODUCTION	7
CREATING A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN	9
DETERMINE YOUR COMMUNICATIONS GOAL	11
DEFINE YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE	13
STUDY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE	15
DEVELOP YOUR CORE MESSAGES	17
SELECT THE APPROPRIATE MEDIA STRATEGY	19
EARNED MEDIA	20
PAID MEDIA	24
OWNED MEDIA	27
TESTING AND MONITORING YOUR MESSAGES	33
USING STORYTELLING TO ACHIEVE FUNDRAISING GOALS	35
HANDLING A CRISIS	37
CONCLUSION	39
APPENDIX	41
APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE	41
APPENDIX B: WORKING WITH A PR FIRM	44
APPENDIX C: SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE	45
APPENDIX D: SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY	46
APPENDIX E: SAMPLE CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN	47
WORKSHEETS AND TEMPLATES	49
WORKSHEET 1: CREATING A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN	49
WORKSHEET 2: DETERMINING YOUR COMMUNICATIONS GOAL(S)	51
WORKSHEET 3: DEFINING YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE	53
WORKSHEET 4: DEVELOPING CORE MESSAGES	55
WORKSHEET 5: DEVELOPING A COMPELLING STORY	57
WORKSHEET 6: SAMPLE CRISIS SCENARIOS	59





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# INTRODUCTION



Communicating with the public about your work can generate awareness, motivate action, spur funding, and keep a community focused on the ultimate goal—reducing teen pregnancy. Communication can be the activity that makes the rest of your initiative’s work come together and can show what a difference your organization is making on the issue in the community and in the lives of young people.

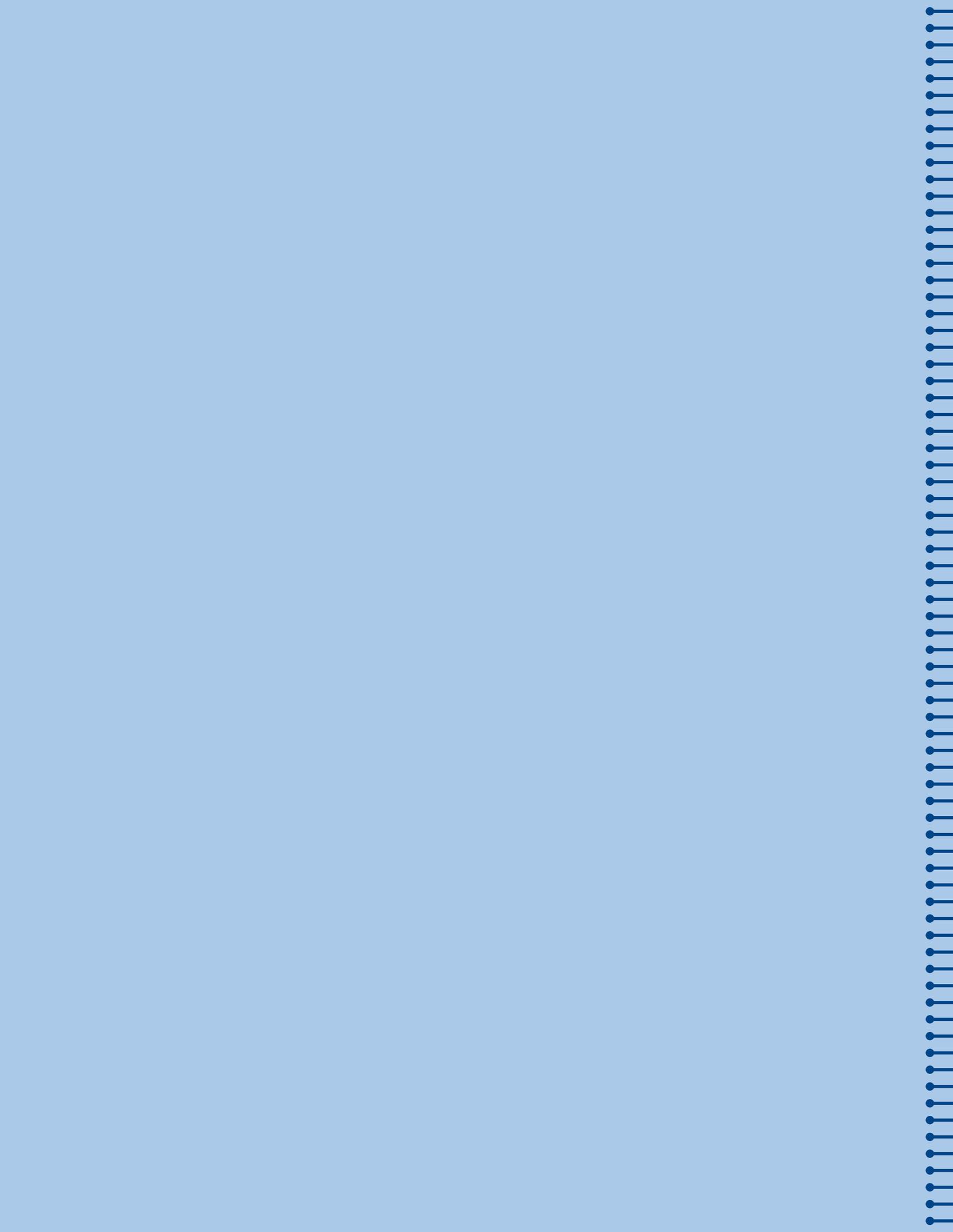
Developing a strong communications strategy, however, can be challenging. Even with the best planning, unexpected events occur. Funding for a particular project can run out, other issues can intrude, or a message may not work as well as the research suggested it would.

Communicating about teen pregnancy is a complex balancing act. A program and/or organization’s communications strategy should advance its own agenda but also respond to new developments in real time. The strategy should allow the program and/or organization to control its message but disseminate it broadly. It should generate “buzz” about the message but also exercise enough control to maintain credibility. It should target specific messages to narrow audiences but not overlook other important segments of the community.

Developing effective messages about preventing teen pregnancy can be tricky as well. In general, clear and one-dimensional messages are most effective, but it is not easy to simplify such a complicated issue. Emphasizing one or several messages in the interest of simplicity and repetition risks defining the issue too narrowly (teen pregnancy is an issue for schools to deal with, for example), and may inadvertently exclude other key groups (policymakers, for example). In addition, programs and communities differ and there is no one message that will work for all communities. Messages related to teens and sex, contraception, pregnancy, and childbearing can create controversy and many communities find they must change their messaging in order for it to be publicly distributed.

Despite these difficulties, the most important step in communicating about teen pregnancy is finding strong core messages. In order to be most effective, these messages will need to be repeated frequently and in different settings so getting the messages right is a critical first step.

The purpose of this toolkit is to guide you in developing your communications strategy and to help you determine which media channels are the best fit for disseminating your core messages to your target audience. The ideas outlined here are meant to inspire, spark ideas, and get you started.



# CREATING A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN



An effective communications strategy should be based on a concrete plan that reflects strategic thinking about your program’s overall objectives and the ways in which you will achieve them. In other words, you will need to:

- determine your communications goal;
- define your target audience;
- study your target audience;
- develop your core messages;
- select the most appropriate media channel for each audience and message;
- test and refine your messages with the target audience; and
- monitor your progress.

You should expect to work through these steps several times before you end up with a satisfactory plan. You will likely find that, as one part of the plan becomes clearer and more defined, other parts of the plan will fall into place. Don’t force the process—let your plan evolve over time.

One way to help pin down these moving parts is to use the rubric on this page to determine an answer for each of the steps above; using the example in Figure 1, you can see how a communications strategy might unfold for a particular organization. Follow the template at the end of this toolkit (*Worksheet 1: Creating a Communications Plan*) to assess your overall project goal, specific communications goal, target audience, media channels, key messages (or core messages), and supporting program data.

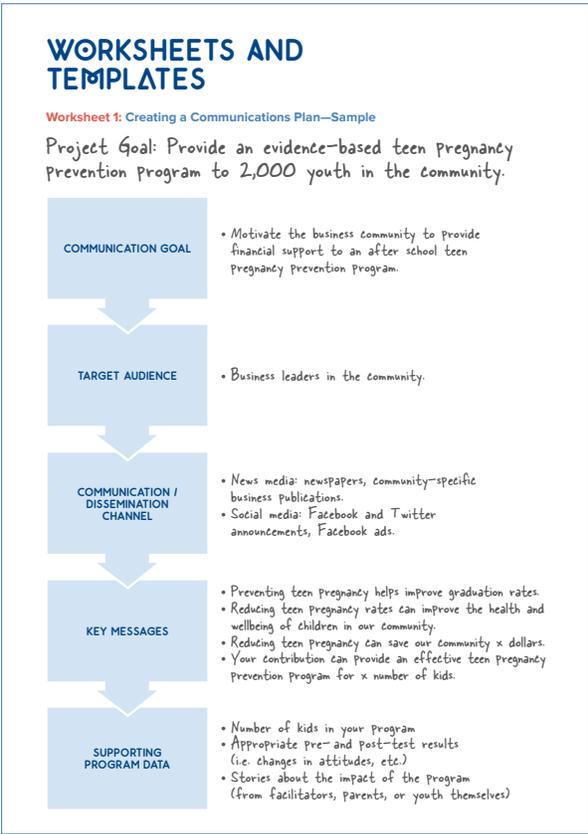


Figure 1: Communications Plan Template



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# DETERMINE YOUR COMMUNICATIONS GOAL



What do you hope to achieve through your communications work? Do you hope to increase what members of your community know about teen pregnancy? Change the attitudes of parents? Encourage teens to delay sex?

Spending time thinking about your goal (or goals) in great detail now will ultimately help your communications plan in the long run; the more specific your goal, the easier it will be to accomplish. Your goal should be reasonable and realistic as well as actionable and mission-focused. It is also important to learn what the community thinks. You should never start working in a community without first understanding its attitudes and sensitivities.

Generally, the goal of a communications strategy focused on preventing teen pregnancy falls into one of five categories (though others may also be appropriate):

**Increasing community awareness of teen pregnancy as a problem.** Teen pregnancy is a complex issue with often complex consequences and communicating about it requires delicacy, patience, and a well thought out strategy. In many communities, teen pregnancy is not even recognized as an issue and therefore does not get as much attention as other issues such as drug use, violence, or school failure. In such a situation, consider letting the target audience know how high rates of teen pregnancy and birth actually are *in your community* and what the consequences often are for individuals and for the community as a whole.

**Changing the behavior of individual teens or adults.** The ultimate goal of most prevention initiatives is to influence the behavior of teens, parents, or others such as policymakers. Sometimes the behavior you hope to change is directly related to pregnancy (“never have sex without birth control”); sometimes it is less closely related (“stay in school”). Whatever your goal, it’s important to tell people exactly what action you want them to take: “Go to this website.” “Talk to your children.” “Mentor a teen.” “Call for more information.”

**Promoting a particular service or program.** People can only use a service or get involved with a program if they know about it; your communications strategy is one way that the community can become educated about services available to them.

**Promoting change on an issue.** You may want to promote your point of view on important issues (this is often called media advocacy). For example, you might encourage support for a youth development agenda by publicizing the stories of successful young people who have completed a particular program. (Note: Be aware of federal and state regulations about lobbying activities.)

**Raising funds for a teen pregnancy prevention program or organization.** You may be raising money to support a specific project or your organization more broadly. As you are determining your goal, be sure to be realistic and explore new and innovative ways to raise funds. For example, the use of crowdfunding platforms like Kickstarter or Indiegogo can attract new funders that may not be a part of your community’s normal go-to resources. For an effective strategy, see *Using Storytelling to Achieve Your Fundraising Goal* on page 35.

You may find that you would like to work on all these fronts; that is certainly possible, but it requires patience. Making use of all five of these options will only work if you incorporate them gradually into your communications strategy and only if all five options support your overall organizational mission. A better approach is to decide which goal is your top priority, focus on that, and then work on the others in turn. See *Worksheet 2: Determining Your Communications Goal(s)* for a template that will help you determine your goal.



# DEFINE YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE



Along with determining your goal(s), you will need to define your target audience or audiences. Your target audience or audiences consists of those people whose behavior or attitudes change as a result of exposure to your messaging. Target audiences may include, among others:

## Teens:

- sexually active teens
- abstinent teens
- pre-teens and young teens
- older teens
- out-of-school teens

## Adults:

- parents of teens
- others who influence teens (coaches, youth workers)
- adult volunteers
- young adult men who date younger teenage girls

## Organizations that work with teens:

- agencies that serve teens
- community service groups
- religious/faith organizations
- schools

## Potential partners or supporters:

- business leaders
- community and civic leaders
- public officials
- foundations

Similar to figuring out your goal, the more specific you can be in describing your target audience, the better. You will need to know the relative composition of the target audience so that you can develop appropriate messages and test them with all subgroups. One of the most critically important aspects of any communications strategy is crafting messages that are suited to the target audience; if you don't know your audience, you can't craft your messages.

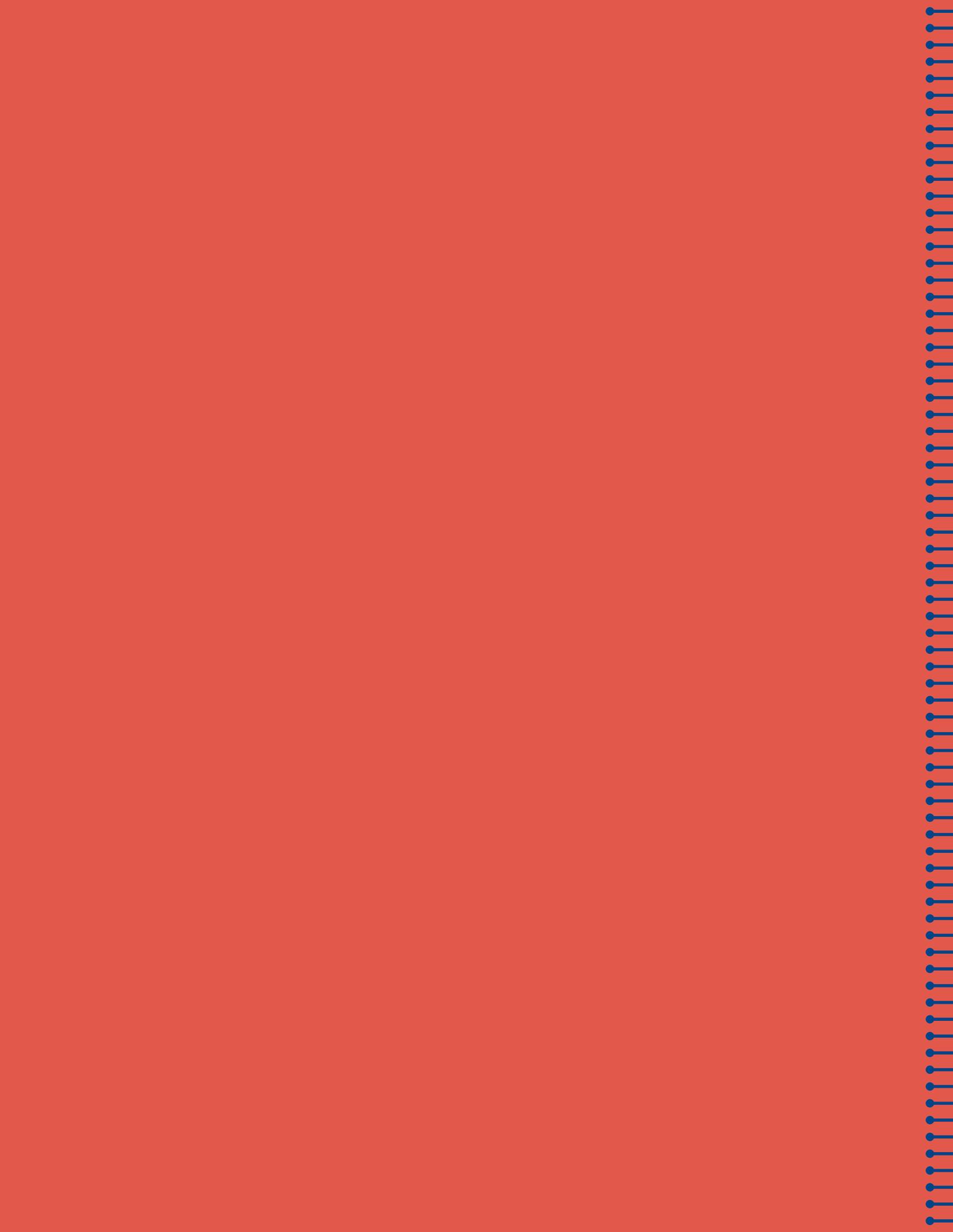
There are many ways to define and refine a general list of audiences:

**Geography.** Depending on how large your program area is, your audience may be made up of urban, suburban, and/or rural individuals. You should divide them into these segments and refine your messaging and testing procedures accordingly.

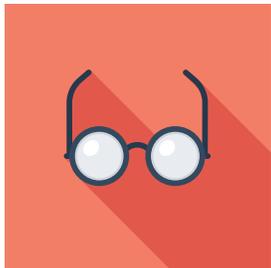
**Age.** The age of your target audience can range widely. For example, a campaign designed to encourage teens to delay sex may target a different age group than one that seeks to increase contraceptive use among older, sexually active teens. The basic message will need to be tested—and may need to be different—with each different age group. For example, messages for young teens might be focused on delaying sex; messages for older teens might focus on birth control or how to get contraceptive services.

**Gender.** Teens are not a monolithic block; boys and girls often need different messages to motivate their behavior. The choice of boys or girls—or both sexes—as your target audience depends on what will best achieve your organization's overall prevention goal.

**Cultural background.** Being knowledgeable about and sensitive to the culture of your target audience is essential. Subtle differences in the way different cultures think about family, birth control, pregnancy, education, the role of girls, male responsibility, education, careers, and planning for the future can affect how various messages are perceived. Culture can also affect what type of media a particular audience uses so it's important to be cognizant of everything from what websites your target visits, how they consume television (via the Internet or through traditional cable TV?) and music (through music streaming services, music downloads, the radio, etc), and the factors that motivate them to accept a given marketing message.



# STUDY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE



A certain amount of information about your target audience will emerge during the initial process of audience selection. At some point, though, you'll need to explore these groups in more detail. For example:

- Whom do they trust? Who would be a credible carrier of the message—a sports figure? Another teen? A community organization or leader?
- What do they already think about teen pregnancy? Boys may think, “It’s a girl thing.” Parents may think, “It’s someone else’s problem.”
- Where do they get information? Do they watch TV? Listen to the radio? Use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram (or another social media platform)? What language do they primarily use?

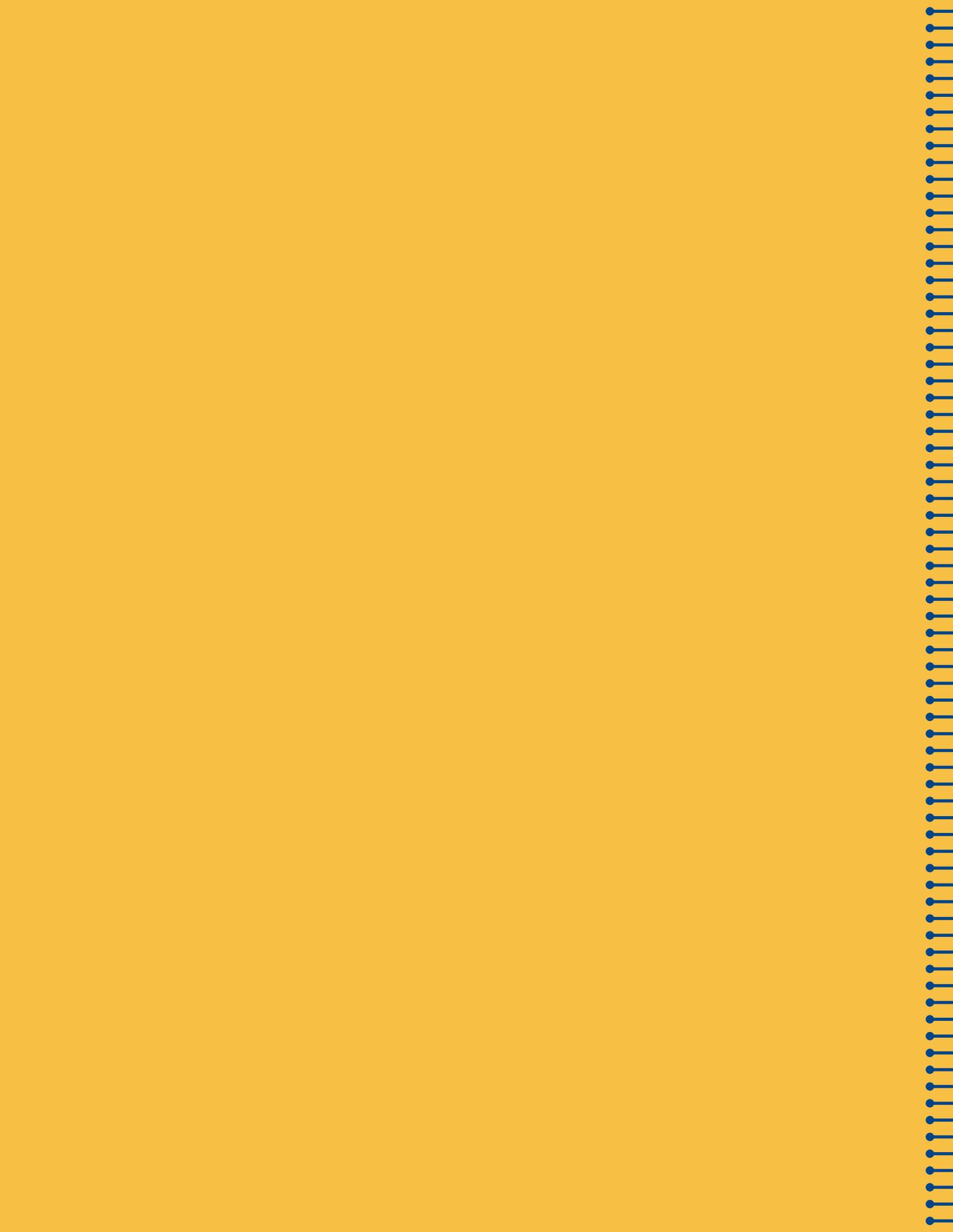
Expand your understanding of your target audience. If a program is intended to reach teens, watch the TV shows they like, visit the websites they visit, listen to the music they prefer. If parents of teens are the potential audience, you might attend a local PTA meeting, church gathering, or visit the same stores and places they do. If public officials are the target, attend a local city council meeting or consult the public affairs staff of an organization with similar interests. One way to learn more about your target audience is to include them in all elements of the communications plan, from planning and development to implementation. Other tools that can further help you study your target audience include:

**Advisory groups.** Many teen pregnancy prevention initiatives create ad hoc or permanent groups of teens, parents, or community members to advise them on all aspects of an initiative or campaign. This can be a relatively inexpensive way to learn more about your target audience and it will also draw teens into the program. Choose an advisory panel that is similar to the target audience or create more than one panel if you are hoping to reach multiple audiences. If you do not have an advisory group associated with your initiative, connect with existing community or advisory groups with similar missions.

**Surveys.** Surveys allow a program to assess the views of a representative number of the potential audience. Large-scale professional surveys or polls can be expensive, but some pollsters may be willing to add teen pregnancy questions to an already scheduled poll (some firms have so-called Omnibus surveys that allow organizations to add several questions relatively inexpensively). To get truly targeted opinion data about your audience, consider developing a simple questionnaire through a tool like Survey Monkey that you can post on your website or social media channels. This can provide you with a great deal of valuable data at a very low or no cost. If a new survey is not feasible, consider using existing survey data about the target audience. For example, The National Campaign regularly releases survey data on teens, young adults, parents, and other stakeholder groups; so too do organizations like TRU, Pew Research Center, and Gallup.

**Focus groups.** A focus group is a gathering of eight to 10 people who are interviewed by a trained moderator using a prepared list of questions. Focus groups are often used to test messages or actual media products, such as posters or radio spots, for acceptability and ease of comprehension. Focus group sessions can be costly, so if financing is a concern, consider using your advisory panels as a focus group; to get you started, see *Appendix A: Focus Group Discussion Guide* at the end of this toolkit for a sample focus group discussion outline.

See *Worksheet 3: Defining Your Target Audience* for a guide to help you define specific target audiences.



# DEVELOP CORE MESSAGES



Your core messages contain the most important ideas you want to convey to your audience. They should reflect the values of your organization and/or initiative and should be the seed from which your events, slogans, advertising, fundraising, and all the other elements of your teen pregnancy prevention efforts grow.

While there may be many possible core messages at this stage, try to whittle the number down to no more than three. Deciding on a few core messages does not mean that they are the only things your program stands for; they just provide a focus for your current communications efforts. You need to decide what you want to say, and then find a way to get the word out. Remember too that messages often need to be repeated frequently before they stick—think quality over quantity.

Developing your messages takes time. Start with a basic idea of what you want to say. Then, through discussion, revision, testing with potential audiences, and refining, a finished phrase or sentence emerges, couched in such a way that it resonates with the target audience. (For more information on testing your message, see the *Testing Your Message* section on page 33. In addition, see *Appendix A: Focus Group Discussion Guide* for more guidance.)

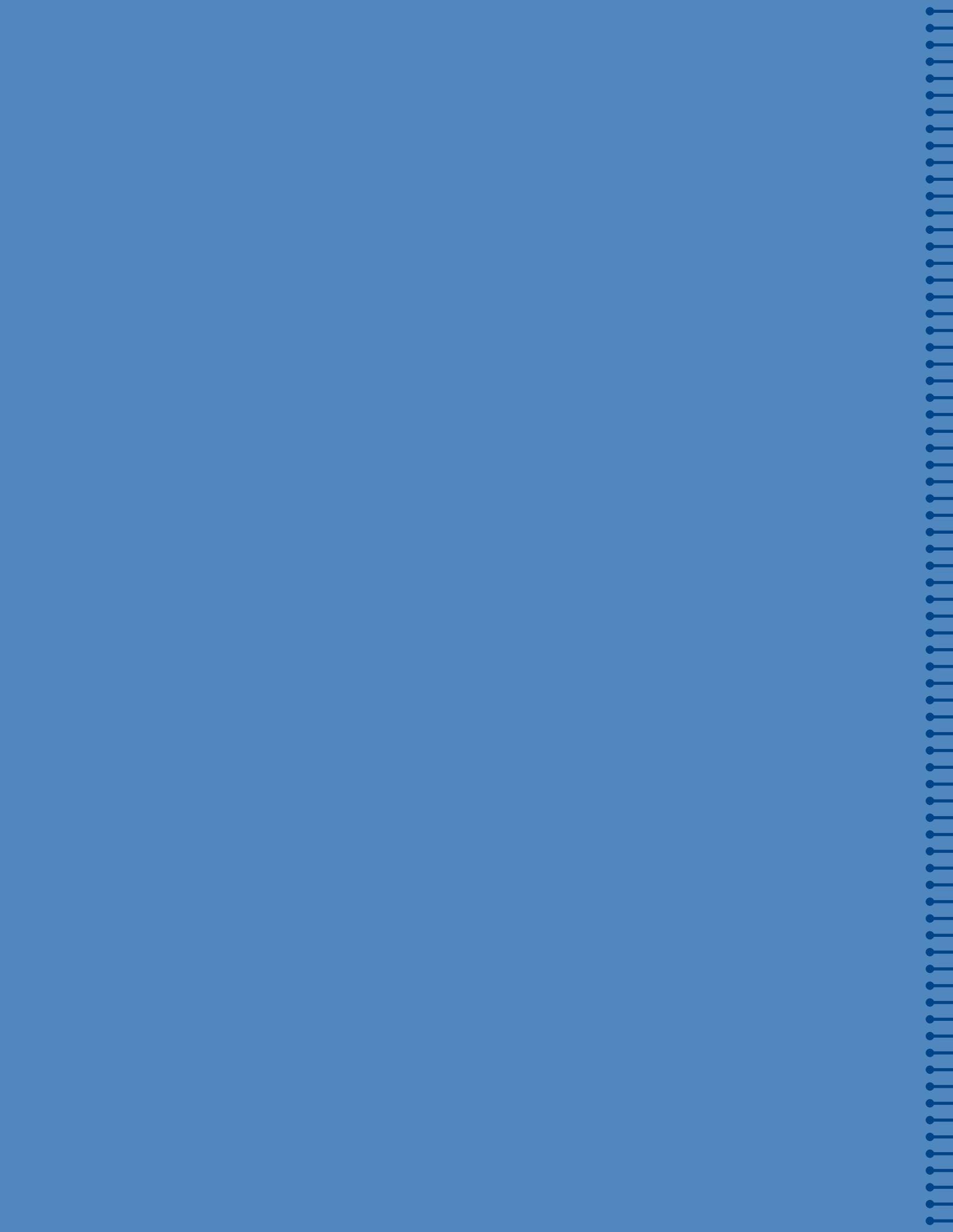
Here are a few examples of messages targeted to teens that the The National Campaign has used. Although they sound simple and straightforward, they are the result of considerable discussion, testing, and reworking.

- Sex has consequences—both physical and emotional.
- Have a plan: think about what you'll do in the moment (before you're *in* the moment).
- Not everyone is “doing it”—and if more teens knew that, they'd feel supported in waiting.
- There are a lot of myths and misconceptions out there about sex. Make sure you know the facts.
- You can always say “no,” even if you've said “yes” before.

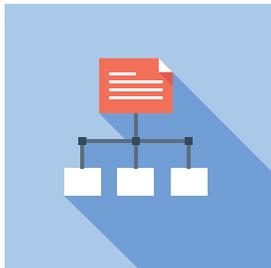
See *Worksheet 4: Developing Core Messages* for a guide to help you brainstorm core messages.

## Getting Professional Help With Media Work

If your budget allows it, a PR firm can be a lifesaver in terms of generating publicity and attention to your organization. If you plan to launch a long-term communications effort, select a firm early on and stick with it over time. Its resources, relationships, and advice can be very helpful. To make the relationship productive, however, you must be very specific about what you want from them before you begin working together. See *Appendix B: Working with a PR Firm* for more information on working with a PR firm.



# SELECT THE MOST APPROPRIATE MEDIA STRATEGY



Once you have determined your goal, clearly defined your target audience, and developed and tested your core messages, you will be ready to choose the best medium for reaching your audience. There are three different media strategies available to you—earned media, paid media, and owned media—components of which will help you craft a successful communications plan. The following is an explanation of each of the three strategies and specific examples of media channels that fall into each strategy. Based on your budget, organizational capacity, and community needs, you can choose elements from each strategy to help in crafting your communications plan. Each of the three major media strategies described here differ according to the credibility they add to a program’s message, the types of audience they reach, and the amount of control a program has in using them, but keep in mind that the best communications plan will have elements from all three strategies.

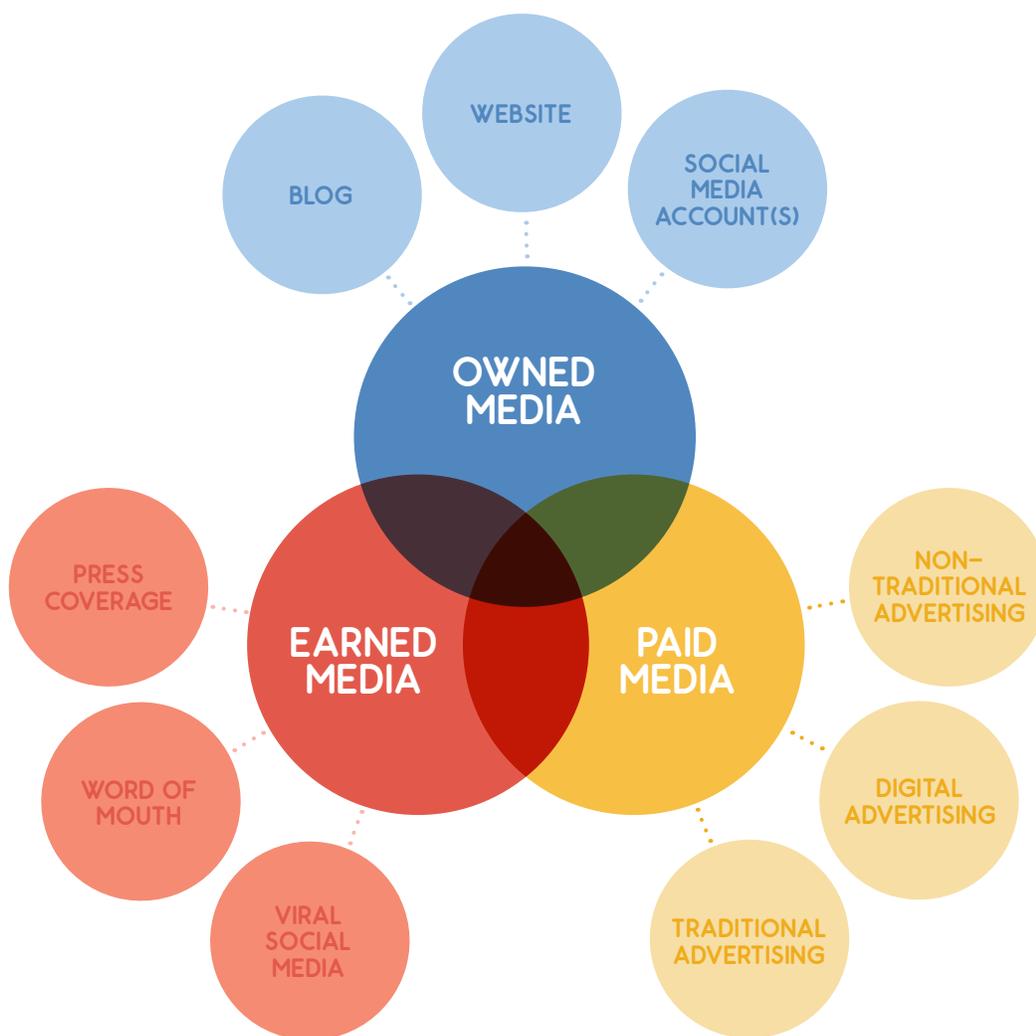


Figure 2: Media Strategies and How They Can/Should Overlap in a Communications Plan

## Earned Media

**Example:** Newspapers, blogs, viral social media messaging, television news stories.

**Pros:** Lends credibility to your organization/messaging; can help convince funders that your mission is worth supporting; long lifespan in the public eye.

**Cons:** Very little control over messaging; can result in negative spin on your issue; difficult to track and measure impact; difficult to plan for and anticipate.

Earned media occurs when people outside of your organization—community partners, the press or media, stakeholders—share your content through word-of-mouth (in other words, mentions of your brand or mission are “earned”). This may be the result of carefully cultivated relationships between you and a reporter or a luck-of-the-draw piece of social media that goes viral. Earned media requires equal parts work and luck, but the only cost attached is your time and effort. You don’t, however, generally have a lot of control over your messaging—when, how, or with what frequency it appears.

One of the most effective earned media channels is news media. If you can develop strong and lasting relationships with local and/or national reporters who cover your issue, you will find a goldmine of publicity for your organization and issue.

### Working With the Press

One extremely efficient way to reach the general public is through news media: newspapers, radio, blogs, and television. News coverage has high credibility (it is written by independent reporters) and a broad reach (TV, newspapers, radio, and blogs reach large audiences at the same time). The tradeoff is that you have little control over how your message gets through to the audience. Earned media in general, and news media in particular, should not be expensive, but it sometimes takes long-term, consistent work to pay off. Reporters and editors—especially on the local level—are always looking for stories to fill their pages and newscasts, and teen pregnancy prevention initiatives often have important stories to tell. Seeking news coverage, however, should not be a one-shot deal; to get the most out of this strategy, you must develop relationships with reporters and keep your work prominent in their minds.

### What is news?

To generate coverage, a program must create a news “hook”—that is, a reason for a reporter to tell a story. Reporters look for:

- New information (statistics or trends);
- Conflict (disagreement and controversy);
- Compelling personal stories (reporters tell stories through the lives of individuals);
- Local angles to national stories;
- Counterintuitive information (“teens want to hear from their parents about sex”);
- Trends; and/or
- Quotable people.

### Creating a press list.

The first step in creating successful, ongoing relationships with the news media is to identify and develop the right media contacts. In some communities, the local library will stock a media guide with detailed information about newspapers and broadcast stations and their personnel. Another way to identify likely reporters is by reading local papers and magazines and finding out who covers youth, education, health, and social policy issues. If your budget allows, there are also several online database



tools that will help you craft a press list based on any number of qualifications—location, beat, outlet type, etc. That said, don't underestimate the power of a simple Google search—you'll be amazed at the amount of information that is freely available on the Internet; make use of it.

Potential sources of names for a press list:

- Newspapers (from major dailies to suburban weeklies)—city, health, and editorial page editors; health, education, lifestyle, and political reporters.
- Television—news assignment editors; news directors; health, education, lifestyle, and political reporters; segment and show producers.
- Radio—news directors, talk show producers, radio personalities.
- Blogs—either those that are solely dedicated to your issue or ones that report occasionally on your topic; local and national blogs.
- Wire services—bureau chiefs, daybook editors (the daybook lists events taking place each day in the community), reporters.
- Online press databases—Vocus, Meltwater, and Cision will help you quickly and easily search for reporters by beat, location, and media outlet (but these databases can be costly).
- Other news outlets—community and faith-based publications, high school or college newspapers, and special interest and professional newsletters.

You may also want to develop a list of non-media individuals and groups whom it may be useful to inform or influence. These might include funders, policymakers, community leaders, and collaborating agencies and institutions.

#### **Making contact with local reporters.**

Your goal should be to become the first person a reporter or editor thinks to call when doing a story on teen pregnancy—to be seen as a resource first and an advocate second. Some ideas for becoming a credible source for local news media include:

- Introducing yourself, your organizations, and your issue to the producer of a local talk radio or TV show.
- Sending reports, updates, and notice of upcoming events or publications; always send items to a specific person, not to a title (John Jones, not “News Editor”).
- Offering to do a briefing for the editorial board of your local paper.
- Getting to know the community affairs liaisons for local news media outlets whose job is to stay abreast of community issues and concerns.
- Giving reporters a local angle to work with when national stories break about teen pregnancy—offer data, a statement, visuals, or access to a successful local program, if possible.
- Offering a reporter additional information that would enhance or provide context for the story related to teen pregnancy.
- Developing a group of credible spokespeople who can discuss different aspects of teen pregnancy with reporters, including school teachers, parents of teens, teens themselves, and health officials.

#### **Using the tools of the trade.**

Reporters expect story ideas and messages to be packaged in particular ways. Each of these tools has particular uses:

**Press releases.** A short description of the story you want to tell, a press or news release describes the who, what, when, where, how, and why of the potential story right up front. Never more than one double-sided sheet of paper, a press release uses simple, non-jargon language, short sentences, and short paragraphs. It should be written in a news style so that it can be printed in smaller papers as is. Press or news releases follow a standard format. See *Appendix C: Sample Press Release*.

**Media advisories.** Similar to a news release, a media advisory announces the particulars of a press event in bullet form. It is often sent a few weeks before an event so that it can be added to reporter's coverage schedules; in contrast, a press release appears on a reporter's desk much closer to the actual event. See *Appendix D: Sample Media Advisory*.

**Press conferences and media briefings.** Press conferences and briefings offer a visual event around which to organize a news story you are pitching. It is essential, however, that you have something newsworthy to announce and an effective spokesperson to announce it. Here are a few guidelines to a good press conference:

- **Choose a convenient site for the media.** Get a room that will just accommodate the number of people you expect (or even a few less) so that the event will not look under-attended.
- **Make sure you have the necessary equipment.** Microphones, podium, chairs for reporters, a banner or poster for a backdrop.
- **Time your event carefully.** Give reporters time to attend your event, do additional reporting, and file their stories before deadlines—10 or 11 a.m. is often ideal. Connect your event to a related hook—like National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month in May or Let's Talk Month in October.

**Press kits.** For distribution to reporters at a press event, a press kit usually includes a press release, an event agenda, a fact sheet about your organization, brief biographies of event participants, and supporting documents (reports, statistics, lists of story ideas, and expert contacts).

**Opinion pieces (op-eds) and letters to the editor.** Op-eds are usually written by experts in their field—like you!—or by prominent people in the community. Most op-eds are between 500 and 1,000 words long. Check with your local paper about how to submit an opinion piece. Send your op-ed to the opinion page editor at least two weeks before any related event. Letters to the editor, which are much shorter (less than 200 words), must usually be written in response to something that has already appeared in the paper. Submit them as soon as possible following the original article.



### Working with reporters.

The following tips will help you to work well with reporters. The bottom line is that when you are working with reporters, you will always have different agendas: you are selling, the reporter is buying. Make sure reporters feel as though they are getting value for their time and effort. Some advice from the experts:

- **Respond immediately.** Return reporters' phone calls or emails right away; they are likely to be on a deadline. If you cannot talk, tell them when you can or suggest others who are available. If you promise to get them more information, deliver it on time. If you are helpful, reporters will call you again and again.
- **Anticipate questions.** Prepare talking points so that you are not caught off guard.
- **Be concise.** Choose three main points you want to get across in your press event, press release, or interview, and then repeat them. For television, focus on only one or two simple points.
- **Do not raise subjects with the press unless you have answers.** If you say there's a teen pregnancy problem in your community, be prepared to offer simple numbers and solutions, or explain why they are hard to find.
- **Personalize the story.** Make statistics come alive with examples of real people, preferably people the reporter can interview.
- **Stay on message.** Do not let a reporter get you to say something you did not want to say.
- **Do not go "off the record."** Do not say anything you would not want quoted. You cannot control what reporters write or air, only what you say to them.
- **Do not be pushy.** Make your best pitch and let reporters make their own decision. If you make them an enemy, they will not be likely to cover future stories for you.

### Making the most of your success.

The value of news coverage is hard to measure precisely, though collecting news clips and video highlights is one good way to keep track of your success. Professional clipping services are available (for a price), but consider signing up for one (or several) free Google Alerts (<http://www.Google.com/alerts>). Simply determine the keywords you want to track (your organization's name, your spokesperson's name, a general search term like "teen pregnancy in North Carolina") and receive customized emails daily, weekly, or as the news breaks. A stack of positive newspaper clippings can be very influential with funders, politicians, and other groups that you are trying to impress.

It is not quite true that "any coverage is good coverage," so make sure your public image is what you want it to be. Change your tactics if it is not.

## Paid Media

**Example:** Traditional and non-traditional advertising, paid search, sponsorships.

**Pros:** Control over your content—how, what, when; immediate results; broad reach.

**Cons:** Cost; lack of credibility.

Paid Media is just what its name suggests—it is the kind of media that you pay for. This includes paid advertising, product placements, promotions, or anything that leverages a third-party channel for exposure to your messaging. You have a good bit of control over this kind of media because you, as the client, are paying for its broadcast. It can be expensive but can be quite targeted and wide-reaching.

In order to capitalize on the money you spend think carefully about the Paid Media channel that you use to distribute your messaging. Consider a number of factors, including the type of message (Does it lend itself to visual expression?), the audience's preferences (Do they listen to a lot of radio? Will they see the billboards?), the resources available (Has a graphic designer offered free services?), and cost (Can you afford a sustained TV campaign?). Each medium has its advantages and its limitations.

There are a number of different types of advertising opportunities that range from the traditional (television commercials) to the non-traditional (bus wraps or movie theater ads) and can cost as little as nothing at all to upwards of tens of thousands of dollars. This section provides an overview of traditional, digital, and non-traditional advertising options.

### **Traditional advertising: TV, radio, print**

Traditional advertising has been around for as long as television and radio and used to be the industry standard for getting the word out about a product or service. Getting your messaging accepted involves negotiating free or reduced rates with those people who decide what to print or air. As business people, local broadcasters are often skittish about airing spots that have to do with sex, contraception, or pregnancy. They like advertisements with a tie-in to a community institution or event. Many of them welcome the opportunity to contribute to the development of the campaign messages and related products and events. Consider asking one station in your area to sponsor your campaign. That way your message will be assured good airtime, and the station will reap the benefit of community recognition.

Television is excellent for expressing clear, uncomplicated, and visual messages. A well-placed ad can reach a large audience quickly, however, it can be expensive to produce messaging for these mediums and even more expensive to secure quality air time. Broadcasters often offer free time at odd hours of the day (and night) but charge high rates for prime spots.

Radio audiences are often highly segmented by age, race, culture, and geography, which can be a benefit if you want to reach a very specific group. You lose the visual aspect when going with radio, so messages must be even more concise and simple.

Print advertising (posters, flyers) are better suited for delivering more complicated and detailed messages because they allow your audience to read and reflect on your messages. Although these options may cost money to produce, they can often be distributed through Earned Media channels, thus somewhat mitigating their overall cost.

### **Digital advertising: Google AdWords, Facebook post boosting, social media advertising**

The Internet has brought about a new form of advertising—digital advertising—that has already become a marketing mainstay. Depending on the messaging you want to use, a digital ad can be executed in a number of different ways: text-only, text + image,

video. And because so many digital advertising options are low cost/high return, many organizations rely on this strategy as their primary Paid Media program. For example, many websites popular with younger teens (and adults) offer paid advertising placements so investigate where your target goes online and explore whether spending a bit of money in that arena generates favorable traffic for your campaign.

Google offers advertising grants for its wildly popular Ad Words program allowing non-profit groups a certain amount of free, high value advertising on Google results pages (<http://www.Google.com/grants/>). Ad Words are also available for purchase at a variety of cost-per-click levels.

In 2014, Facebook adjusted the algorithm that calculates which posts appear in a person's newsfeed; this new algorithm reduced the number of posts from organizations and increased the number of personal posts. As a result, many organizations now "boost" some of their Facebook posts in order to ensure that the most important messages are seen by their fans. Boosting a post is a low cost way of getting specific content into more newsfeeds. You have two options when you elect to boost a post: you can either share a post with people who already like your page + those people's friends (this option ensures that your marketing is reaching people who want to see it and may reach a segment of people who are interested in it) or you can choose to target your post. Targeted posts allow you to reach a group that you have targeted by country, age, and gender; these are people who have not liked your page—in other words, you are reaching a completely new group of people. There are pros and cons to both options and it's worth exploring which—if either—work for your messaging. Facebook also offers targeted advertising options outside of the boosting program; these advertisements are significantly more expensive than simple boosts but reach users beyond those who already like your page.

All of these programs—as with any Paid Media strategy—have rules and restrictions about what is acceptable to post, so be conscious of that before using these options.

#### **Non-traditional advertising: Movie theater ads, Pandora ads, Paid webisodes/placed content**

Many advertising strategies have found other creative and cost-efficient venues. Billboards, bus wraps, advertisements on media streaming services like Pandora or Spotify, electronic and print newsletter placements, promotional items, and movie theater pre-show marketing are among the many other ways to get a message out. Paid placed content is a more expensive option where an organization partners with an established (or up and coming) television or web show and creates content that compliments both the organization's mission and the show concept. Depending on the popularity of the show, this option can give the organization a great deal of reach and caché. Conversely, working with a trusted organization lends credibility and authority to the show. Content like this can be pricey to create, however, and successful relationships take time and effort to build.

#### **Public Service Announcements (PSAs)**

All types of Paid Media rely on one thing: content. In order to have a successful Paid Media strategy, you must first create content that is attractive to your target. One of the most common types of Paid Media advertising that non-profit organizations use is public service announcements or PSAs.

A public service advertising strategy is high-profile, often expensive, and involves developing print, radio, and/or video-based advertisements, to carry a prevention message. Messages conveyed through such advertising are typically short (a headline, a :15- or :30-second radio spot, a slogan). If you buy airtime or ad space, you can use an advertising strategy to target a precise audience. With donated space, the audience reach is questionable (your TV spot may

be free but it may also run at 2 a.m.). Because the messages are clearly from an organization with a point of view, credibility is only as good as your organization's reputation.

Do not try to convey complex messages using PSAs. If you cannot reduce your message to a slogan or a :15- or :30-second sound bite (the average length of a commercial) that you can use over a long period of time, a PSA is not the right strategy.

### **Make a long-term commitment.**

You and your funders must be willing and able to make a long-term commitment—measured over several years—to the PSA strategy. One PSA, no matter how good, is not worth the expense. Instead, think in terms of a years-long *strategy* that will gain traction over time and, ultimately, name recognition and a reputation for your organization.

### **Coordinate your PSA campaign with other prevention activities.**

Your PSA campaign should be part of a larger, integrated initiative. Campaigns are most effective when they are combined with other programs at the local level. If you want your PSAs to motivate your audience to do something, you must offer them opportunities, support, or more information if they are to take the next step.

### **Invest in audience research and test your messages.**

Although you've already put considerable effort into learning about your target audience and identifying the messages and strategies that will resonate with them, testing specific messages is a critical piece of a successful communications plan. Although professional focus group testing can be expensive and time consuming, if you have the funding to do it, you will receive invaluable feedback from your target. If you are like many organizations and lack the money for this large-scale testing, remember that free online survey tools and your existing advisory panels can provide important and useful advice (see *Study Your Target Audience* on page 15 for more information on this topic).

### **Craft a persuasive message.**

A PSA campaign is like any other ad campaign: you are selling something. However, selling a change in behavior (social marketing) is much harder than getting someone to change his or her brand of toothpaste (commercial marketing). Social marketing has the great challenge of changing deeply ingrained attitudes and behaviors. Behavior related to teen pregnancy are influenced by many factors, too many to be greatly affected by media messages alone. If your goal is to change your audience's long-term behavior, consider the advice from social marketing experts DeJong and Winsten:

- Highlight the seriousness of the problem and get the audience to reevaluate their own risk. For example, make it clear to lawmakers that the high teen pregnancy rate contributes to a variety of social problems, like poverty (especially child poverty), child abuse and neglect, school failure, and poor preparation for the workforce.
- Anticipate the audience's resistance to the message and present the advantages of the changed behavior. Tell boys that being sexually responsible is what makes them men.
- Teach behavior skills. It is not enough to tell teens to "say no." Show them behaviors to emulate.
- Build the audience's self-confidence about being able to make the change. Convince teens that talking to their partners about condoms is not too embarrassing.
- Show them that their peers are adopting the behavior. Use teen voices or actors or cite survey results.
- Create a buzz. Use complementary strategies (focus groups, previews, T-shirts, etc.) to stimulate conversation among your target audience so that your message will find a larger audience.

## Owned Media

**Examples:** Website, blog, social media—anything you create.

**Pros:** Complete control over messaging; versatile content; can be tailored to reach a very targeted audience; success is measurable (if you set goals/metrics).

**Cons:** No guarantees that your target will find you; no immediate return on investment (long-term strategy vs. short-term gain); relies on you to create and share the content (if capacity is an issue, this could prove difficult in the long-term).

Owned Media is the kind that you leverage and control; it is your property and includes things like your organizational website, blog, or social media channel(s). This type of media is an extension of your communications plan and gives your target more opportunities to engage with your messages. At the same time, keeping things fresh, interesting, and worth following (by your target) can be a challenge, particularly for smaller organizations with fewer resources.

If you are regularly creating content on a website and/or blog, a natural fit for distributing that content is through social media. Developing a social media strategy takes time and thought, so consider the following if you choose this option.

### Social Media

A well-crafted social media strategy—whether Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, another channel, or all of the above—allows you the opportunity not only to meet your target where they are but to also actively engage with them and have a bit of back and forth. It allows you to talk *with* your target instead of just at them and is an invaluable tool in your communication arsenal. This section will walk you through some of the most popular social media platforms currently available, who is using them, and how you can employ them in your communications strategy. Note that, more than any other communications tool, social media is constantly changing; while the following information is current right now, it will continue to evolve.

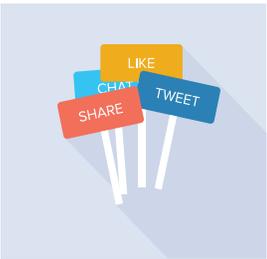
#### What is social media?

Social media is an interactive, two-way method of reaching your target; it's not meant to replace traditional communications, but to be used in conjunction to build on and enhance your more traditional communications efforts. Platforms allow users to connect and share content with others based on common interests, backgrounds, or activities and channels include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, Pinterest, Vine, YouTube, SnapChat...the list of available options goes on and on—and seems to grow exponentially every year.

#### Who is using social media and what channels are they using?

Although social media started as strictly a young person's purview, it has been widely adopted by people of all ages. In fact, nearly all people who are regularly online use at least one social media platform. So what channels are they regularly using and—therefore—which channel or channels should you spend the most time cultivating?

Because there are hundreds of options available to you—and more becoming available each day—it's important to take a high-level view of just what's out there. Keep in mind that this information changes constantly; there is a good chance that something new will come along that isn't included in this section. But for now, here is an overview of four of the most popular social media channels that may be of the most value to your social media strategy.



**Facebook.** Facebook is a social networking service that helps you connect with people—“friends”—in your hometown or across the world; you can post text updates, video, images, links, and more on your profile and read others’ posts on your “wall.”

- **Why it’s of value to you:** Every demographic group is represented on Facebook in large numbers, meaning that the likelihood that your target spends at least a little of their day on this channel is quite high. Therefore if you have time for only one social media channel, this one is it. Use it for public and private communication, community-building, marketing, engagement, etc.



**Twitter.** Twitter is an online social networking and microblogging service that enables users to send and read “tweets,” which are text-based messages limited to 140 characters. Users may also add images or video to their tweets and can also link to other resources, events, etc.

- **Why it’s of value to you:** Twitter is a great way to reach adults in the field although it is growing in popularity with young people as well, so don’t underestimate the value of a channel directed to teens. Use it for quick bites of fun, interesting information; keeping engagement up in your community or among your target; and delivering targeted messages.

**Instagram.** Instagram is an image and video-based social media channel that allows users to snap a photo or shoot short videos with their mobile phone, then choose a filter to transform the image; users can then caption, hashtag, and share their creations via their Instagram account.

- **Why it’s of value to you:** Instagram is a completely visual medium; at least where social media is concerned, a picture really is worth a thousand words and a well-curated Instagram account can absolutely be worth the time and energy it takes to create. Instagram is great for sharing your activities and events, creating a visual scrapbook of your work, and building interest; it is also a fantastic channel for reaching older teens and twentysomethings.

**Pinterest.** Pinterest is a pinboard-style photo-sharing website that allows users to create and manage theme-based image collections centered on such things as events, interests, and hobbies.

- **Why it’s of value to you:** Are you trying to reach women? Then Pinterest is worth a second look as it is one of the few social media channels that is overwhelmingly used by females (most others are generally used by men and women equally). Although twentysomethings are the primary users, other age groups are taking notice and joining in greater numbers. Use Pinterest for contests and creative community building.

### **Is social media right for my organization?**

It’s possible...social media has become such a pervasive and integral part of communications that it is generally not even a question of whether most organizations will employ at least one channel. However, social media is not free—the staff time it takes to grow and maintain a channel is not trivial. A successful social media strategy begins with a clear understanding of goals. What are you trying to accomplish with this channel? Why *this* channel and not one of the others?

Can you sustain multiple channels or is it better to stick to one (at least for now)? Who will run the social media program and is it a part time responsibility that can be added to an existing staff member's plate or do we need to hire someone full time? All of these questions should shape your decision about whether or not to start a social media program.

Think for a moment about your organization and its mission. What are one or two or 10 things you are trying to accomplish organizationally? How can those goals be supported by a social media strategy? The answers to these questions will inform how you develop and shape your social media campaign.

### **Choosing a social media channel.**

Having spent some time considering your overall communications goals, you should have a good idea about who you are trying to reach. Knowing your audience is a key step to informing which social media channel(s) you should consider investing in because different audiences use different channels. A word of caution: consider beginning with *one* social media channel (instead of starting multiple channels). The temptation to use several social networks at once is very strong. But to be successful on social media, you must actively post; if you don't have the capacity—the staff time or the content—to make multiple channels interesting, then it's better to simply stick to one. Doing one channel very well is far better than doing multiple channels poorly.

Consider the four most popular social media channels: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest; all four reach specific demographic groups and, based on your target audience, one or more will likely stand out as a good place to start your social media program.

### **Do's and don'ts.**

Now that you've assessed which channel is right for you, it's time to think about getting online and actually posting content. When you begin a social media channel (or channels) you have undertaken a commitment to regularly provide content to your followers. There is a great deal of nuance to perfecting your content posting schedule so consider the following:

**DO: Post consistently.** Your goal should be a relatively consistent posting schedule—once per day, three times per week, etc—and a relatively consistent posting frequency. It is jarring for a user who has come to expect your once-per-day posts to suddenly be inundated with two dozen posts per day.

**DON'T: Forget about nights and weekends.** Consider using scheduling tools to post content during non-work hours. Most Twitter and Instagram third-party applications (like Hootsuite and Tweetdeck, or Latergram and ScheduGram) can schedule your tweets and Instagram posts. Facebook and Pinterest have scheduling tool, built right in.

**DO: Capitalize on opportunities.** When new data are released, a big event takes place (the Oscars, a Presidential Inauguration, the Super Bowl), or other noteworthy things occur, consider using those seminal moments in your social media campaign (assuming that they are relevant to your audience). There's nothing wrong with jumping on a trending topic—assuming that it is done in a sensitive, thoughtful way; avoid forcing your issue on a trending topic that isn't a reasonably good fit or that capitalizes on a death, a disaster, or an otherwise negative or unhappy event.

**DON'T: Be afraid to course correct.** Spend time examining which posts generate the most traffic and determine how that engagement happened—was it the link/media included in the post? The tone you used? The time of day that the post was sent?

**DO: Remember that a picture is worth a thousand words.** Images and video tend to be shared and viewed in far greater numbers than simple text updates so instead of sharing a link to your latest report, share some of the graphics or charts *with* a link; instead of a text update about your latest community event, share pictures or short videos of the activities and attendees. Visual media are powerful and adding this variety to your channel(s) will increase participation and interest.

**DON'T: Use the wrong tone in your posts.** Teens do not want to feel talked down to and adults do not want to feel like they stumbled into a secret young person's club. You gain trust by using the correct tone; just as you would not speak to your boss the same way you would speak to your friends, you would not use a tone in social media that does not match your audience.

**DO: Rely on others.** Do not reinvent the wheel. Spend some time curating who you follow on other social media channels. Be strategic about who you follow; choose organizations or people whose mission aligns with your own and then pay attention to what they post. Odds are their content will be of value to *your* audience. Sharing what other organizations in the field are sharing can create community and take a load off your content creation schedule. This means following people whose tone, content, and posting styles match your mission.

**DON'T: Be afraid to throw in the towel.** Sometimes, no matter what you do, a particular channel, strategy, or tactic just will not work. If you've tried something several times—and made an effort to course correct and figure out why your messaging isn't working—don't be afraid to call it a loss and move on to the next thing. It's important to keep experimenting and trying new tactics.

#### **Consider an editorial calendar.**

While many organizations have strict approval processes for social media posts—rendering a calendar nearly impossible to use—those with less rigid rules may benefit from planning their social media posts. Start with a blank calendar; note popular holidays, audience-appropriate odd holidays (for example: Talk Like a Pirate Day), etc. Then backfill the empty days with additional content like blog posts, organizational news and advertisements, and posts from other organizations (always keeping in mind that your scheduled content may need to take a backseat if something occurs to which your organization must respond. An editorial calendar should be flexible not set in stone). Shoot to post something to your channel(s) at least once per day but not more than twice daily on Facebook or six times per day on Twitter, Pinterest, or Instagram.

#### **When to have a social media policy.**

Social media use is so pervasive that it has prompted many organizations to implement company-wide policies governing the use of social media channels both on a personal and a professional level. In other words, many organizations define the rules of their employees social media use, whether that employee is on the clock or not. That being said, having a social media policy is by no means



a no brainer. It is worth exploring whether your organization would benefit from a social media policy and, if so, how strict that policy should be. Consider some of the following questions:

- Will this policy apply to all employees or just those who manage our corporate social media channels?
- Will this policy apply to personal social media accounts or just those social media updates that are relevant to our organizational mission?
- Will this policy be complex (attempting to cover any and all contingencies) or be simple (a short series of maxims meant to guide behavior)?
- Is it necessary to have a legal team examine and vet this policy?

A good social media policy should educate and guide employees about behavior and expectations; set constructive, clear boundaries and penalties for abusing those boundaries; and complement your existing organizational handbook. There are several excellent templates available online to help guide you if you choose to create a social media policy (search "sample social media policy" for ideas).



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# TESTING AND MONITORING YOUR MESSAGES



## Testing Your Messaging

Before you roll out your messaging, you need to be sure the audience is ready to listen. For example, a mother who is already concerned about her daughter's wellbeing will be receptive to a message about talking to her teen about sex. On the other hand, a message about the long-term consequences of unprotected sex might not be the right way to reach teen boys because many may only be focused on short-term consequences.

You also need to be sure that the message can be expressed in simple, clear, layperson's language, particularly if TV or radio are involved.

Finally, you need to make sure the message is worded and framed in just the right way to touch your audience. A message may sound good to you, but you must let the target audience's opinion guide your final decision about its suitability and power.

Message testing will help you reach all these objectives. Testing provides a crucial opportunity to refine your messages and make them more memorable, attention-getting, and motivating.

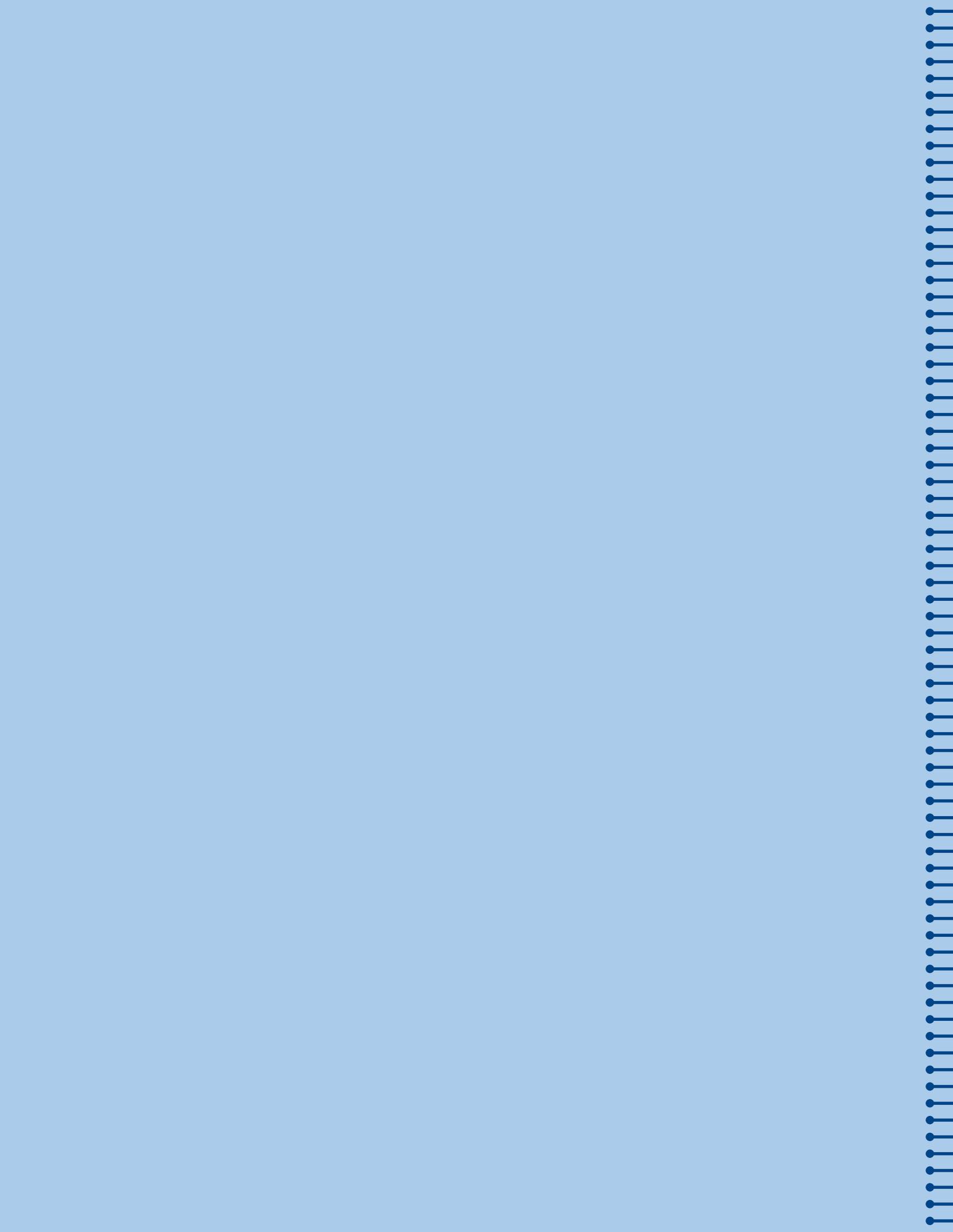
Testing can also help you figure out how to reach multiple target audiences with variants on the same core message. For example, your goals may be to reduce teen sexual activity. You can target different audiences to help support this goal. For example, you can target messages for parents about talking to their teens about sex. At the same time, you can target messages to teens encouraging them to wait to have sex.

Some campaigns use focus groups to test messages. Participants give immediate feedback on potential messages, offer suggestions for changes, and even suggest where to run it or who would make a good spokesperson. Other programs use surveys, which can be more expensive. Still others have ongoing advisors. Commercial marketers know that people remember messages that meet their needs or support their values.

## Monitoring Your Messaging

Successful communications initiatives include ways to track progress and evaluate whether messages have successfully reached their target. Formal evaluation of communications campaigns can be very challenging, especially if you want to measure behavior change, but there are less expensive ways to track how your efforts are being received, including:

- Collecting press clips, listing the number of attendees at presentations, and keeping track of the number of times a PSA has run and where;
- Tracking the number of hits, time spent on site, or page views on a website;
- Tracking appropriate metrics on social media channels (eg: clicks, shares, and retweets on Twitter and/or clicks or likes on Facebook); tracking the open rate, opt in numbers, and click through rates of electronic newsletters;
- Continuously testing the validity of messages with teen advisory panels (or other panels depending on your target audience); and
- Conducting audience surveys to measure how far the message has reached, or whether, for example, parents are talking with their children about sex more since the campaign began.



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# USING STORYTELLING TO ACHIEVE YOUR FUNDRAISING GOAL\*



Financial stability within your organization ensures continued success and continuity in the work that you do; therefore, one reason to develop a communications plan is to raise funds. As you engage individuals, foundations, or civic groups to raise money for your organization or program, it is important to tell a compelling story that elicits emotion and ultimately makes the funder care enough to give a donation. To get a potential donor to consider funding your organization, you need to get them to *feel*—they must connect on an emotional level to your organization’s mission and the work that you do. This can be done through storytelling; a good story has five core elements.

**A small story related to a significant saga.** Develop a short story that relates to a significant saga (i.e. teen pregnancy). For example, tell the story of a teen father—being a young parent, the things he sacrificed for his child, what he may have done differently, and how hard he worked to achieve his goals. While teen pregnancy is the significant saga, the small story of the teen father makes the message relatable and introduces emotion. Be sure the story is specific and allows the donor to visualize the story.

**A cast of relatable characters.** A relatable character is not your organization but a person or people to whom your audience can relate; they may have overcome obstacles, had to make tough decisions, are good at what they do, and/or are treated unfairly. The person/people could be proactive, funny, and/or mysterious.

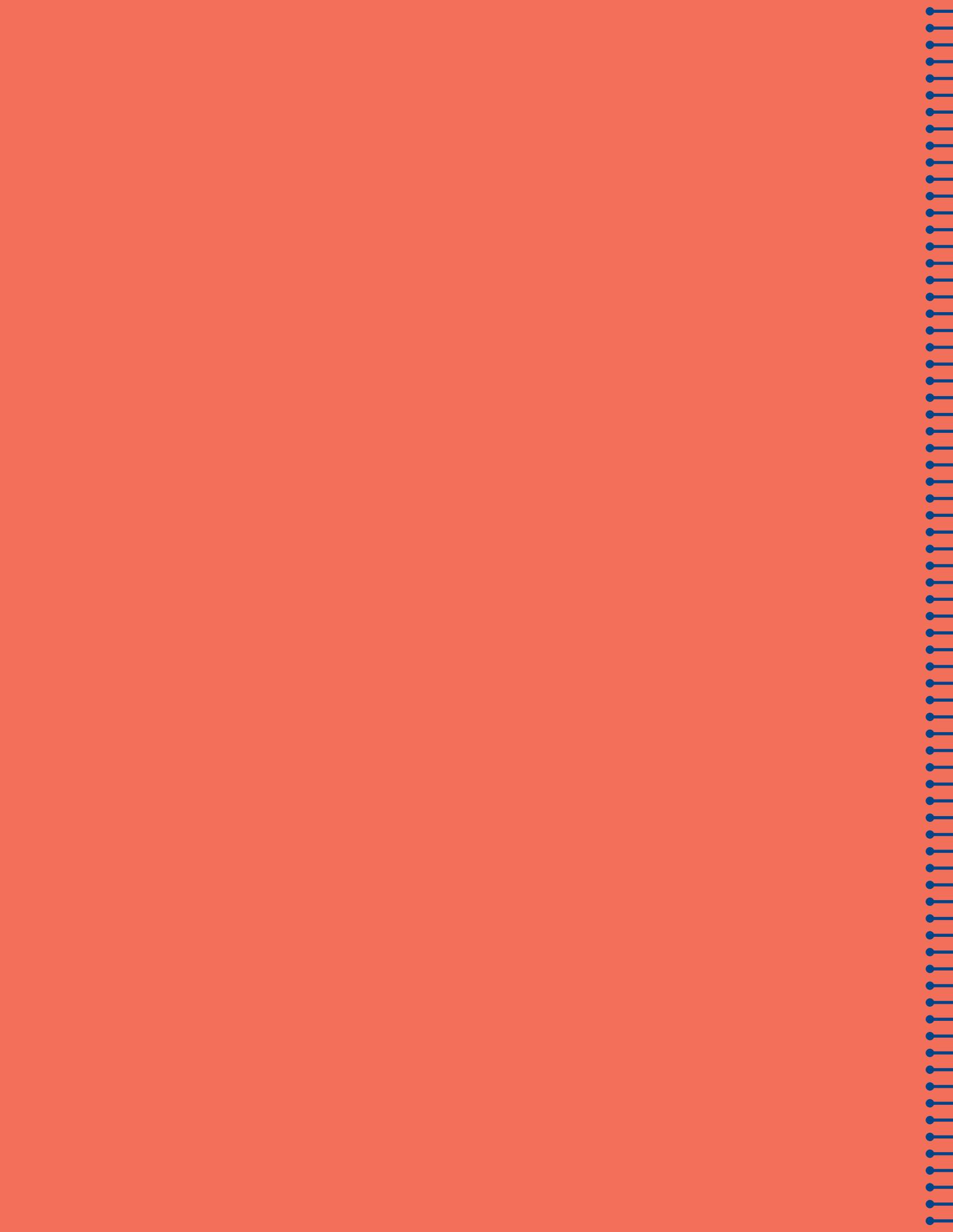
**A single goal or desire.** The relatable character also needs to have a single goal or desire—something simple and easy to understand—that will spark interest in or sympathy for your story. For example, the broad goal of attaining health care coverage could be narrowed down to how your character made and attended a doctor’s appointment at a local family planning clinic.

**A conflict.** In all good stories, a conflict or obstacle helps to draw the reader or viewer into the story and the same thing applies here. For example, maybe the conflict is an overbearing, strict parent who does not talk to their teen about sex. This lack of communication is a barrier to a teen who needs the information and skills to make informed decisions about sex.

**A magical element.** And finally, a good story needs the magical element that draws the listener in, and compels them to feel something, relate to the story on an emotional level, and ultimately do something (i.e. donate money).

Once you have developed a story, test it with your board, key stakeholders, target audience, or those experienced in fundraising to get their feedback. For a guide to writing your own story, see *Worksheet 5: Developing a Compelling Story*.

\* Mark Rovner and Alia McKee, *Effective Storytelling Training*, Sea Change Strategies.



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# HANDLING A CRISIS



Even the best laid communications plans cannot anticipate a crisis—the very nature of a crisis is that it takes place with no warning. So any good communicator will instead prepare themselves for the inevitable—something bad is eventually going to happen and it is how you handle it that sets your organization apart.

Although it's true that you can't anticipate everything that may come your way, there are certain times—releasing a new advertising campaign, encouraging comprehensive sex education in an abstinence-only community, signing on to a politically charged bill—that you know controversy may strike. So, as much as possible, be prepared for the possibility that you may be expected to deal with a controversy.

The following tips will help you consider how to deal with a crisis.

**Get the facts straight.** The first step towards handling a crisis effectively is to understand the details of the crisis. If you don't have an accurate understanding of the situation, you can't hope to handle it in a clear, effective manner. Before you do anything, be sure to speak to all parties involved and ensure that you have a complete picture of exactly what occurred.

**Assess the damage.** Is this a major, organization-ending crisis? Or something more minor? Assess the severity of the crisis at hand and tailor your response as necessary—not every crisis rises to the level of a national emergency and it is your job to determine when, if, and how to address the situation. A proper assessment of a crisis may require that you take a step back from the situation and analyze things from an unemotional place; consider consulting your CEO, members of your board, or other trusted resources who may be able to give you a relatively unbiased perspective.

**Do what you can.** If you have a burst pipe in your home, the first step you take is to shut off the main water supply to keep the damage from getting worse. Likewise, in a crisis affecting your organization if there is anything you can do *right now* that will counteract the effects of the crisis, do it. Whether it's deleting an errant tweet, speaking to an angry board member, or addressing a misspelled word on printed marketing materials, if there is anything you can do to minimize and mitigate the damage, do it as soon as you can.

**Craft a response or statement.** Now that you understand the details of the crisis, have made a reasoned assessment of the situation, and have taken any steps you can to mitigate the damage—possibly along with your CEO, board, funders, or other stakeholders—you can craft a response. Your response should explain the crisis, explain how/why it occurred, and state how your organization has addressed it. If possible, also express what steps you have taken to ensure that the situation will not be repeated. Depending on the significance of the crisis, your response may simply be a “party line” to which your staff adheres when community members call about the issue. In serious cases, it may rise to the level of a press release, live media announcement, or op-ed/published article.

**Speak with one voice.** If a crisis does hit your organization, identify one or two people as your spokespeople and make sure they are fully educated and prepared to speak on your organization and the issues at hand. Let them handle interviews and instruct everyone else in the organization to direct press inquiries to them. Too many voices will only lead to confusion, mixed messages, and, ultimately, more controversy. If you have staff who regularly speak on behalf of your organization at conferences or events, be sure to educate them on specific talking points so that they can properly answer any questions that may come from people they encounter on the road.

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**Lean on your advocates.** If your organization has advocates—whether in the community or farther afield—lean on them for support. Allowing others to speak for you and all the good work you do lends a sense of credibility and trust to your organization and tempers the negative commentary that occurs during a controversy.

**Keep communicating.** Even when the dust seems to have settled a bit, you are not off the hook. Continue publicizing your good works via social media or other channels; having your name in the public eye is not necessarily a bad thing, so consider how you might refocus negative attention on your organization into positive attention.

**Learn from your mistakes.** After things have calmed down, look back on the storm you've endured. What did you do well? What could be handled better next time? Pay attention to how things were done and course correct so that, if there is a next time, you are even more prepared to handle things.

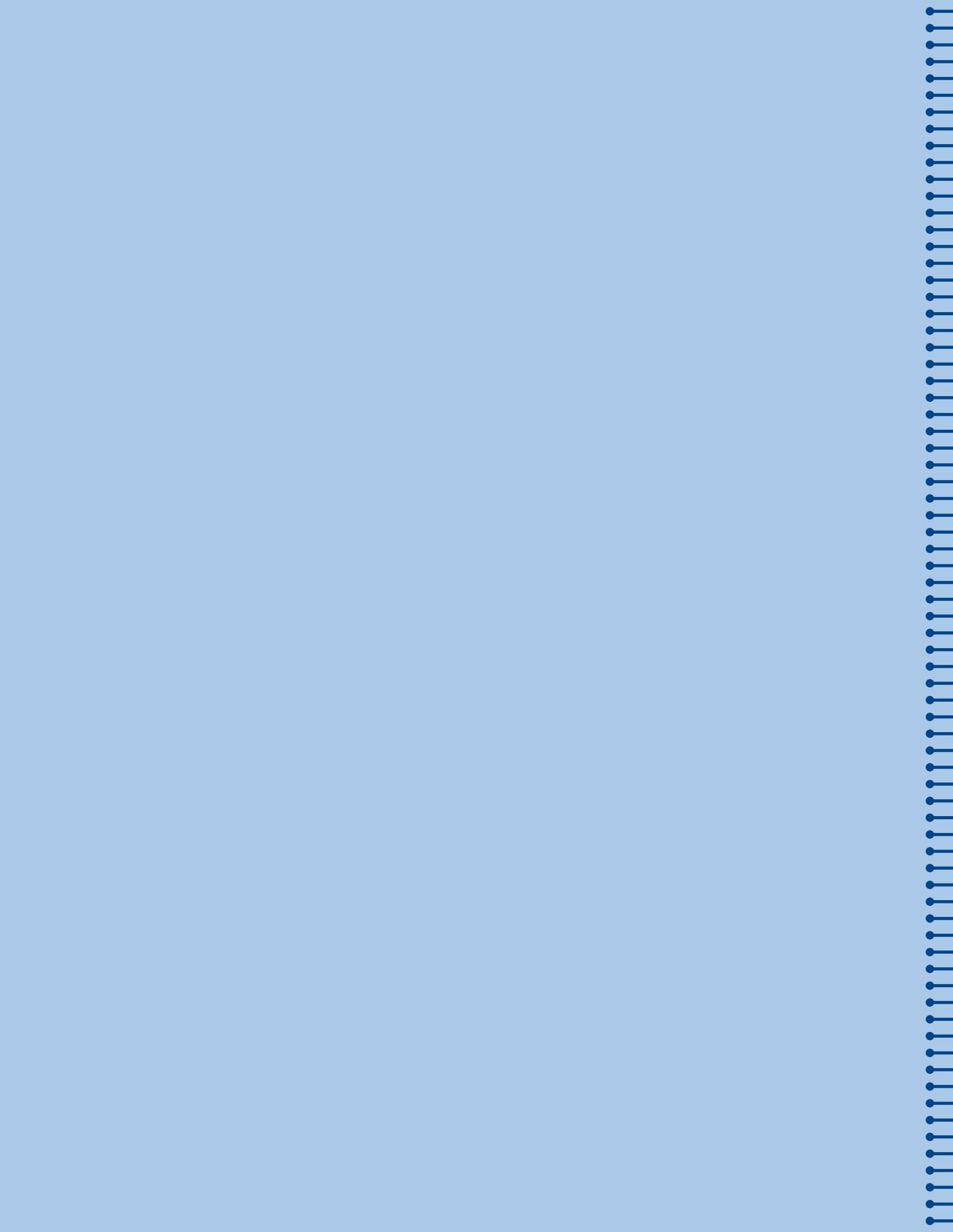
**Practice your strategy.** While you can't practice how you will respond to a crisis that hasn't happened, you can certainly think about potential pitfalls and develop strategies for common problems. See *Appendix E: Sample Crisis Communications Plan* and *Worksheet 6: Sample Crisis Scenarios* for help developing a crisis communications strategy; keep in mind that there are no perfect responses to these scenarios. Instead, your goal is to consider how you might handle them *if* they occur.

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## CONCLUSION



Communications campaigns require a long-term commitment: Cutting the smoking rate in half among adults took nearly 40 years of intense media and non-media work and the fight is by no means won. Your work can keep a teen pregnancy prevention message in the air and on the minds of teens and adults, and, over time, help make a difference in your community's teen pregnancy rate.



# APPENDIX

## Appendix A: Focus Group Discussion Guide



### I. Introductions, Explanation, Ground Rules (5 minutes)

- a. Moderator introduces her/himself and explains project's purpose. *We are working with an organization in Washington, D.C., and some folks there are interested in hearing your thoughts and opinions about some issues that teenagers face, deal with, or are concerned about.* More of the topic will unfold.
- b. Explain focus group process. *A research method for collecting data similar to surveys, except that rather than asking and answering questions on a one-on-one basis, questions are posed to the whole group and all are asked to respond and talk to each other.* Ask respondents to explain why they are here and what is expected; define "opinion:" it's what you think or feel.
- c. Explain ground rules:
  - i. Explain if the session will be recorded in any way and, if necessary, obtain consent. If a two-way mirror is in use or others not in the room are watching/listening, explain this to participants.
  - ii. Assure confidentiality and stress the importance of honest opinions.
  - iii. Control the pace of discussion. Gradually move from topics, and allow all an opportunity to speak.
  - iv. Reiterate that this is not school and we are not teachers. There are no rules about appropriate language and participants do not need to raise hands, but need to speak loudly, clearly, and one at a time.
  - v. Reassure participants that there are no right or wrong answers; all opinions and thoughts are welcome.
- d. Respondent introductions. Names, grades/ages, school attending, what they enjoy doing for fun, and icebreaker as appropriate.

### II. Saliency of Teen Pregnancy as a Problem (Group Formation) (10 minutes)

- a. What types of things are important to you in your life right now—things that you think a lot about or are concerned about?
  - i. LISTEN FOR: school/education, drugs, family problems, poverty, violence, finances.
  - ii. PROBE: Try and think of what the number-one issue that you most worry about is.
  - iii. PROBE FOR: sexual pressures and associated problems, i.e., pregnancy, STDs, AIDS.
- b. [IF IT EMERGES IN DISCUSSION:] Some people mentioned thinking about or worrying about sex or things related to sex, like pregnancy or AIDS. What worries you about sex? How much does it worry you—a lot, somewhat, or just a little? Why?
  - i. PROBE FOR: getting pregnant, doing it because someone wants you to, not doing it and feeling left out, getting STDs/AIDS, getting a reputation.

### III. Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behaviors about Preventing Teen Pregnancy (15 minutes)

- a. So... [IF MENTIONED] some of you consider teen pregnancy something that is pretty important—something that concerns you or that you worry about. I am curious... How much of a "problem" is teen pregnancy in your school? ...in your family? ...in your life?
  - i. PROBE: Does anyone have friends who have babies?
  - ii. PROBE: Do you know anyone around your age who has a baby?

- 
- b. Why do you think some teens get pregnant? What are the reasons they might give? Do you think there are some teenagers who *want* to get pregnant? Why is that do you think? What are the reasons to *not* get pregnant as a teenager?
  - c. How concerned are you about *teen pregnancy* compared with some of the other issues people mentioned? How much does it worry you—a lot, somewhat, or just a little? Why? How do you think pregnancy is related to or similar to these other issues? How is it different from the other issues?
  - d. Where do you go, or whom do you talk to, about some of these things you have mentioned—some of the things that are related to sex and pregnancy?
    - i. LISTEN FOR: friends, parents, siblings, teachers, coaches, etc.
    - ii. PROBE: How do teens talk about teen pregnancy? What kinds of words do you use? What kinds of things do you say?
    - iii. PROBE: Whom do you listen to about this issue? Who influences your attitudes or your opinions? ...Peers? ...Parents? ...Teachers? ...Other adults? ...Music and media?
  - e. Has anyone heard or read about a recent study that found teen pregnancy is down in the United States—that it has fallen to the lowest levels in 20 years? If so, what do you remember thinking about that? Do you think it's true? Why or why not?
  - f. Would you agree or disagree that teen pregnancy is something that can be *prevented*? If so, how? Why do you believe that? What do you think can be done about it? How would you go about trying to stop it? What do you think it will take to solve the problem of teen pregnancy?

#### IV. Barriers to and Motivations for Preventing Teen Pregnancy (20 minutes)

- a. What are the most common ways teenagers can prevent teen pregnancy? Which are most effective?
  - i. LISTEN FOR: contraceptive methods and abstinence.
  - ii. PROBE: What words do you use to describe contraceptive methods and abstinence?
- b. [FOR CONTRACEPTIVES:] Some of you mentioned various kinds of pregnancy prevention methods that people use. What are some of the most popular contraceptives, do you think? Why do you think some teenagers use contraceptives? Why do you think some teenagers do not use contraceptives?
- c. [FOR ABSTINENCE:] Some of you mentioned not having sex as a way to prevent pregnancy. Why do you think some teens choose to not have sex? Why do some teens choose to have sex? Do you think this is an easy choice to make? Why or why not?

#### FOR SEXUALLY-EXPERIENCED GROUPS:

- d. Do you know if many of your friends are having sex? How do you know that they are having sex? How do you feel about that?
- e. We know that at your age, some teenagers choose to have sex and others choose to not have sex. Without necessarily telling your personal story here today, could you tell me why teens like you have sex? For example, what reasons would your friends give?
- f. Do you think a typical teenager who has sex *always* uses birth control like [NAME A VARIETY OF BIRTH CONTROL METHODS]? What do you think can get in the way for someone who *wants* to use birth control, but doesn't always? Have you ever used any of these methods of birth control? If so, why did you use it? If not, why didn't you use it?

FOR SEXUALLY-INEXPERIENCED GROUPS:

- g. Do you think most of our friends are currently having sex or not having sex? Why do you think that? How do you feel about that? What age do you feel most teenagers first have sex?
- h. We know that at your age, some teenagers choose to have sex and others choose to not have sex. Without necessarily telling your personal story here today, could you tell me some reasons why teens have chosen to not have sex?
- i. Which do you think is an easier decision to make—to have sex or to postpone sex? Why? What kinds of things do you think can make it difficult for someone who has made a decision—either way—to stick with it?

FOR MIXED SEXUALLY-EXPERIENCED GROUPS:

- j. Do you think most of our friends are currently having sex or not having sex? Why do you think that? How do you feel about that? What age do you feel most teens first have sex?
- k. We know that at your age, some teenagers choose to have sex and others choose to not have sex. If you feel comfortable talking about it, can you talk a little bit about that? Try and explain what some of the reasons are why you have chosen to either have sex or not have sex. What do you think about why some teens choose to have sex? And, why do others choose not to have sex?
- l. Which do you think is an easier decision to make—to have sex or to postpone sex? Why? What kinds of things do you think can make it difficult for someone who has made a decision—either way—to stick with it?

**V. Ten Things about Teen Pregnancy (15 minutes)**

[ASK ONLY IF NOT ELICITED WELL ENOUGH THROUGHOUT INTERVIEW]

- a. Imagine that you are talking to a group of other teenagers who are around your age. What is the one most important thing you would want to say to them about teen pregnancy and teen pregnancy prevention?
  - i. ACTION: Go around the room and ask each participant to respond.
- b. OK. Now imagine that you are talking to a group of adults—parents, teachers, and other adults you interact with. What is the one most important thing you would want to say to them about teen pregnancy and teen pregnancy prevention?
  - i. ACTION: Go around the room and ask each participant to respond.

**VI. Acknowledgements and Conclusions**

- a. Conclude session, thank participants, provide them with additional information if relevant, and assist them in leaving.

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## Appendix B: Working with a PR Firm

Before signing a contract with a public relationship firm, consider the following:

1. Write down exactly what you need before you talk with a public relations firm. This can be formal (a 'Request for Proposal' or RFP) or an informal memo. Include:
  - Your goals for public relations and media work;
  - Your target audience
  - The amount of money you have available to spend;
  - Your desire to have donated creative services and a discount on production costs;
  - The time frame in which you want the work to be done;
  - The person at your organization who will be the liaison with the firm; and
  - Key deadlines that are non-negotiable.
2. Take your RFP or lists of needs to two or three firms and see what they can offer you. Ask to see samples of past work done for both paying and pro bono (non-paying) clients. Vet the firm by asking previous clients about their experience with the firm.
3. Ask the firms to send you a brief proposal of what they would be able to do for you. Be sure it responds to the needs you have identified.
4. Ask to meet with several firms in their offices to get a feel for the way they work and their mix of clients. Consider the following to help you know which firm is right for you.
  - Do you like the style that they have used with other clients?
  - Do you trust that the people you have met understand your message and your goals?
  - Did they seem eager to win your business?
  - What benefit might they draw from working with you (i.e., added exposure, creative challenge)? It's better to work with a firm that might get something out of the relationship, too.
  - Small firms may be more eager to get exposure and make a name for themselves, so they may view working for you as a chance to make a splash on a compelling issue. However, small firms need to pay the bills, so you may end up as a lower priority at deadline time.
  - Larger firms may have more staff to devote to your work, and might assign a junior person to take charge of your account. This can benefit you because they may bring added enthusiasm and rigor to the work. Larger firms also have access to databases, clip services, and a host of other resources that they can tap for your project. However, pro bono projects can get lost at larger firms, so be sure to invest time in staying on top of the work.
5. Ask other nonprofits in your community about their experience with local firms, and get suggestions from them on other things to watch out for.
6. Once you select a firm, work together on a plan that will meet your needs. Specifics may change over time, as the firm comes up with new ideas for you.
7. Be open to new ideas, but be vigilant about your budget. If you cannot afford a great idea, perhaps the firm can help you find ways to cover costs, or other funders may be willing to support the idea.
8. Most firms can donate "creative"—ideas, slogans, artwork—but they must charge for the cost of paper, printing, mailing, and other deliverables. To save money, ask them for a list of reporters and ideas for what to send, then do the mailing yourself.
9. Think of this work as starting a long-term relationship. Over time, the firm can get to know your organization and your goals, and can continue think of creative public relations strategies beyond the limits of a single campaign or project.

## Appendix C: Sample Press Release

### CONTACT INFORMATION

DATE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
May 6, 2014

CONTACT:  
John Smith  
202-555-5555  
jsmith@thenc.org

RELEASE TITLE

**New Survey: 4 in 10 Teens Have Never Thought  
About Teen Pregnancy**  
**May 7 is the National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy**

DATELINE CITY

(Washington, DC) Fully 39% of teens say they have never thought about what their life would be like if they were to get pregnant or cause a pregnancy, according to a new national survey released in anticipation of the annual National Day and sponsored by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. In addition, 79% of adults believe that more efforts to prevent teen pregnancy are needed in their community.

Hundreds of thousands of teens nationwide are expected to participate in the 13th annual National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy taking place on May 7, 2014. The purpose of the National Day is to focus the attention of teens on the importance of avoiding too-early pregnancy and parenthood through an interactive online quiz.

On the National Day, teens nationwide are asked to go to [www.StayTeen.org](http://www.StayTeen.org) and take the National Day Quiz, which challenges them to think carefully about what they might do "in the moment" though a series of interactive scenarios. Teens are able to insert themselves and their friends directly into the quiz by creating personalized avatars (a graphical representation of the user).

The nation's teen pregnancy rate has declined 44% and the teen birth rate has declined 52% since the early 1990s. There have been impressive declines in all 50 states and among all racial/ethnic groups.

"Thanks to teens themselves, the nation's rates of teen pregnancy and childbearing are at historic lows," said Sarah Brown, CEO of The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, organizer of the National Day. "Even so, nearly three in 10 girls get pregnant by age 20 and rates of teen pregnancy in the U.S. far outpace those of other nations."

BODY COPY

BOILERPLATE LANGUAGE

**About The National Campaign:** The National Campaign is a private, non-profit organization that seeks to improve the lives and future prospects of children and families by preventing teen and unplanned pregnancy. More than 1,000 adults and 500 teens participated in the national telephone survey.

INDICATION OF NO ADDITIONAL COPY

###

## Appendix D: Sample Media Advisory

### CONTACT INFORMATION

DATE

May 6, 2014

CONTACT:  
John Smith  
202-555-5555  
jsmith@thenc.org

### SEX AND TEENS: ARE PEERS GETTING A BAD RAP?

EVENT TITLE

New research, polling data, and advice for teens and parents to be released

EVENT SUBTITLE(S)

Winners of Teen People Public Service Campaign Contest Also Announced

**What:** New research and polling data—released by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy—on the surprising ways peers affect adolescent sexual debut and pregnancy will be discussed at a press conference to kick off May as National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month. New analysis of peer-led and peer-support groups will also be discussed.

New national and state-by-state teen pregnancy and birth data—released the same day by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Alan Guttmacher Institute, an independent research organization—will also be discussed.

Two new consumer pamphlets—ten things teens want parents to know and ten things teens want other teens to know about teen pregnancy—will be released.

Winning entries will be unveiled in the “Take a Stand Against Teen Pregnancy” contest, which challenged teens to create their own teen pregnancy prevention media ads.

EVENT CONTENT

**When:** 10:30 am, Wednesday, May 7, 2014

**Where:** 2222 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC

#### Speakers:

- Reps. Michael Castle (R-DE) and Nita Lowey (D-NY), Co-Chairs of The National Campaign’s House Advisory Panel.
- National Campaign Chairman, and former New Jersey Governor, Tom Kean.
- National Campaign President Isabel Sawhill.
- National Campaign Chief Executive Officer Sarah Brown.
- Researchers Peter Bearman, Ph.D., Susan Philliber, Ph.D., and B. Bradford Brown, Ph.D.

**About The National Campaign:** The National Campaign is a private, non-profit organization that seeks to improve the lives and future prospects of children and families by preventing teen and unplanned pregnancy. More than 1,000 adults and 500 teens participated in the national telephone survey.

BOILERPLATE LANGUAGE

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## Appendix E: Sample Crisis Communications Plan



Although it's true that you can't anticipate everything that may come your way, there are certain times that you know controversy may strike. So, as much as possible, be prepared for the possibility that you may be expected to deal with a controversy. Below is a sample crisis scenario and communications plan.

**Scenario:** You are the Director of Communications at a local non-profit. Your organization has three social media brands: one that targets teens, one that targets twentysomethings, and one that targets your corporate audience; all three brands are managed by your Senior Manager of Social Media. You know from target research that your teen channel actually skews a bit young—generally you reach young people between the ages of 11 and 14. In a rush to schedule and post a great deal of content before the weekend, your Senior Manager accidentally schedules a tweet meant for your twentysomething audience to go out via your teen channel; the tweet goes out on Friday night and no one at the organization sees it until Monday morning. The tweet includes a suggestive picture of a bed with rumpled sheets and reads: “Fridays are the best—stay up all night getting frisky and spend the next day in bed (getting frisky).” Several parents and community members who follow all of your channels see this and flood your office with angry calls and emails.

How can you address this crisis?

**Get the facts straight.** Speak to the Senior Manager of Communications and ask him/her to walk you through exactly how the tweet scheduling process works. Have him/her show you—step-by-step—how they scheduled the batch of tweets and what went wrong; was it carelessness? A bug in the third-party system they were using? Create a plan for ensuring that this doesn't happen again, whether it's a promise to be more careful, a plan to stay away from batch scheduling, or an upgrade/change in the third-party scheduling system. Then find out why the Senior Manager didn't realize the tweet was public throughout the weekend; presumably, part of his/her job is to maintain control of the accounts, even during off hours, so he/she should have realized their mistake more quickly and deleted the tweet immediately. Understand how and why the tweet was overlooked for so long and create a plan for ensuring that this does not happen again.

**Assess the damage.** A rogue tweet, while never a good thing—particularly when it's been live for so long—isn't the worst thing that can or will happen to your organization. Be prepared to address the flood of angry messages from the community but also realize that this situation will resolve itself quickly.

**Address what you can.** Delete the tweet immediately and send out an “oops, our bad” message. It should be lighthearted and written to the audience—young teens—so nothing serious or heavy. You don't want to make a bigger deal of this than you need to or draw additional attention to the original tweet. If anyone replied to the tweet, respond to them with the same “oops” messaging.

**Craft a response or statement.** Because of the relatively minor nature of this crisis—it is bad, but it certainly won't shut your organization down—simply create a “party line” that everyone on staff is aware of. You will be the primary spokesperson, but it's important for your staff—particularly anyone who speaks publicly on behalf of your organization and may get questions about this issue—be made aware of what the organization is saying about this issue. The party line should include:

- 
- 1. An apology.** You realize that each audience you reach is different and must be treated with care and respect, particularly with regard to issues of sex. Your organization apologizes for the inappropriate nature of the tweet.
  - 2. An explanation.** There was an issue with the way you sent out bulk tweets that has been discovered and remedied. While your organization has never had a misplaced tweet, you recognize that this is not acceptable and have taken steps to ensure that it will never happen again.
  - 3. A plan.** You have changed the third-party Twitter client that you use and made sure that your social media brands have more of a buffer between them. You have also ensured that *all* social media will be monitored regularly, whether during work hours or after hours.

**Speak with one voice.** As the Director of Communications, you will be the organization's representative on this issue and will speak to angry community members if they call. You will also educate those staff who speak on behalf of your organization and prep them to answer any questions that may come up during their travels.

**Lean on your advocates.** In this case, your advocates are those people who have active social media channels with messaging similar to your own. Continue to tweet and retweet their messages so as to show to your followers that you have advocates and like-minded people in the community.

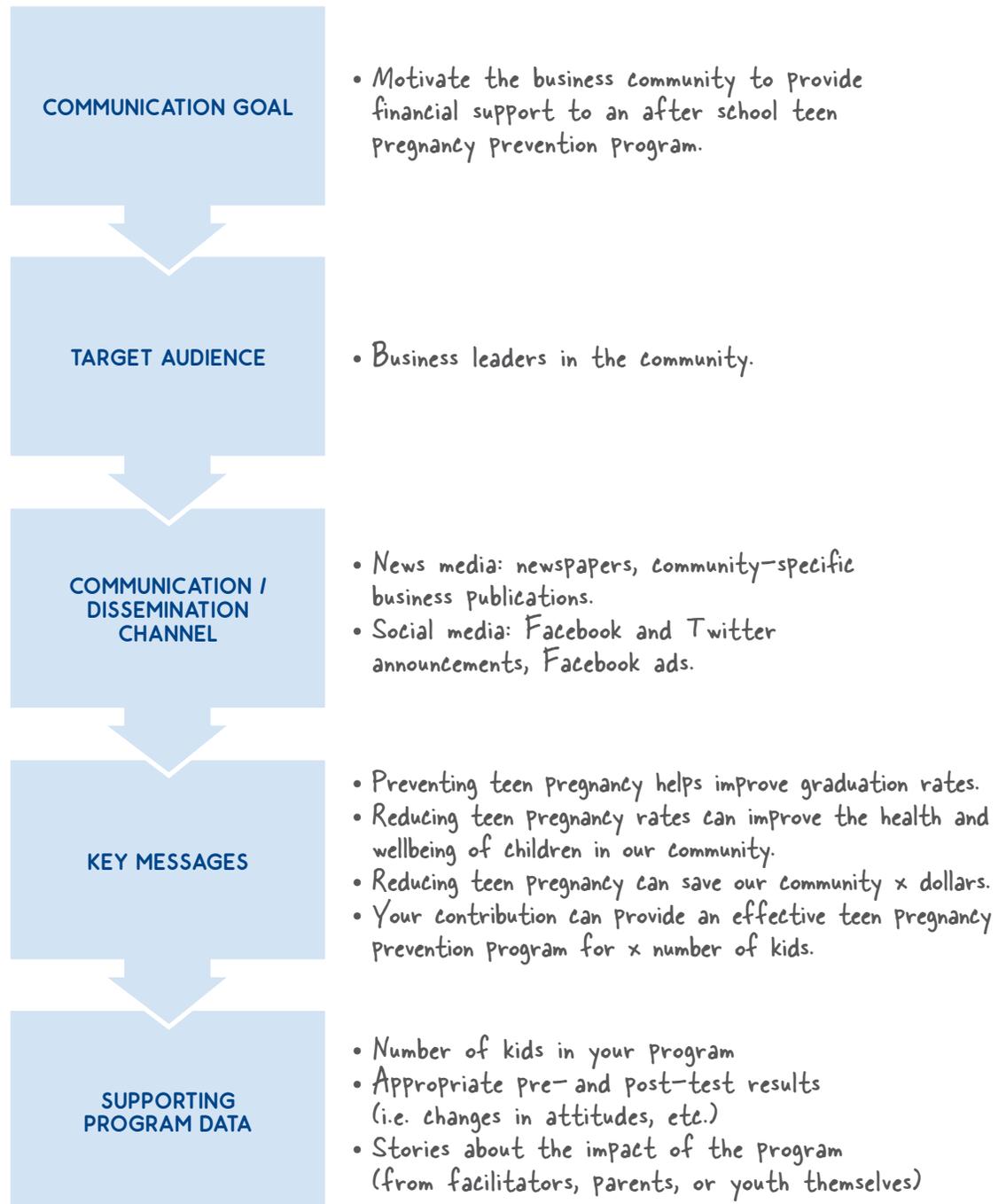
**Keep communicating.** Your social media presence cannot and should not close up shop because of this crisis. You've already deleted the errant tweet and sent out an apology tweet; the rest of your social media messaging should continue in a business-as-usual fashion.

**Learn from your mistakes.** You have already made some changes to your internal social media policy...that's very important. This crisis was completely avoidable and, hopefully because of the changes you've enacted (and the stern conversation you've had with your Senior Manager) this mistake won't be repeated.

# WORKSHEETS AND TEMPLATES

## Worksheet 1: Creating a Communications Plan—Sample

Project Goal: Provide an evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention program to 2,000 youth in the community.



**Worksheet 1: Creating a Communications Plan**



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**Worksheet 2: Determining Your Communications Goal(s)—Sample**

GENERAL GOAL	SPECIFIC ACTION OR AWARENESS DESIRED
Promote a specific program.	Motivate the business community to support expansion of after-school programs in inner-city neighborhoods.
Increasing community awareness of teen pregnancy as a problem.	
Changing the behavior of individual teens or adults.	
Promoting a particular service or program.	
Promoting change on an issue.	
Raising funds for a teen pregnancy prevention program or organization.	
Other.	

**Worksheet 2: Determining Your Communications Goal(s)**

**GENERAL GOAL**

Sample: Promote a specific program.

**SPECIFIC ACTION  
OR AWARENESS DESIRED**

Sample: Motivate the business community to support expansion of after-school programs in inner-city neighborhoods.

Handwriting practice area consisting of two columns of horizontal dotted lines for writing.

**Worksheet 3: Defining Your Target Audience—Sample**

POTENTIAL TARGET AUDIENCE	AGE, GENDER, CULTURE, LOCATIONS	OTHER IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS
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Parents of Teen Boys

33–35 years old, many single parents, most working, inner city

What they read, listen to, watch; what form of transportation they use; how they access the Internet; who their community leaders are.



**Worksheet 4: Developing Core Messages—Sample**

DESIRED RESULT	SPECIFIC CORE MESSAGE
Increase community awareness of teen pregnancy.	Most people don't know that one out of every two girls in this city will be pregnant by the time she is 19.
Increase community awareness of teen pregnancy.	
Promote a higher profile of a particular prevention program.	
Change the behavior of teens or parents.	
Promote youth-oriented public policy.	
Other	

DESIRED RESULT

Sample: Increase community awareness of teen pregnancy.

SPECIFIC CORE MESSAGE

Sample: Most people don't know that one out of every two girls in this city will be pregnant by the time she is 19.

## Worksheet 5: Developing a Compelling Story\*

Remember that the elements of a good story are: A small story related to a significant saga; a cast of relatable characters; a single goal or desire; a conflict; and a magical element. The worksheet below will help lead you through these elements and help you develop content you can use for successful fundraising efforts.

1. My main character is .....

What is interesting about this character is .....

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.....

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2. My character's goal is .....

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3. Standing in the way of my character's achieving his/her goal is/are .....

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.....

4. My character attempts to overcome these obstacles by .....

.....

.....

5. What happens in the end? .....

.....

.....

6. What do we learn (the "significant saga")? .....

.....

.....

\* Mark Rovner and Alia McKee, *Effective Storytelling Training*, Sea Change Strategies.

**Worksheet 5: Developing a Compelling Story–Notes**

Handwriting practice area consisting of 25 horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.





## Worksheet 6: Sample Crisis Scenarios—Continued

**Scenario 4:** In your community, your organization has been implementing an evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention program both in schools and after school for several years. The program is federally funded and in general seems to be supported by adults and others in the community. The program is one of several operating around the state and is funded by the same funding stream. A recently elected state legislator found out about a similar program being implemented in his district and has started a Facebook group to “expose” the program and stop any funding for it across the state. At first, you do not pay much attention to the group, but you notice that they seem to be picking up support on their Facebook page.

- How might your organization educate the community about the content of the evidence-based program and the positive results the program has had in changing teen behavior?
- How will you use social media to address the situation, if at all?

Using the questions here and the tips in the *Handling a Crisis* section, craft a crisis communications plan for your organization.

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**Scenario 5:** Your agency spearheads a social marketing campaign that uses print ads to raise awareness about preventing teen pregnancy. You tested a few of the messages with teens, but had a fairly short timeframe to spend the funding and needed to make decisions quickly about what the campaign would look like. You got a relatively favorable response, but there was some pushback—primarily through social media—suggesting that your messages shame teen parents.

- How might your agency respond to the criticism that has been raised?
- How will you use social media to respond, if at all?

Using the questions here and the tips in the *Handling a Crisis* section, craft a crisis communications plan for your organization.

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**Worksheet 6: Sample Crisis Scenarios–Notes**

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes, spanning the width of the page.



## OUR MISSION

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy seeks to improve the lives and future prospects of children and families and, in particular, to help ensure that children are born into stable, two-parent families who are committed to and ready for the demanding task of raising the next generation. Our specific strategy is to prevent teen pregnancy and unplanned pregnancy among single, young adults. We support a combination of responsible values and behavior by both men and women and responsible policies in both the public and private sectors.

If we are successful, child and family wellbeing will improve. There will be less poverty, more opportunities for young men and women to complete their education or achieve other life goals, fewer abortions, and a stronger nation.





Mobile Conversations



Research



Creativity



Information Gathering



Marketing Tools

[WWW.THENATIONALCAMPAIGN.ORG](http://WWW.THENATIONALCAMPAIGN.ORG)



Balance



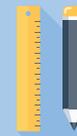
Getting Noticed



Successful Messaging



Sympathy



Measuring Success



Planning

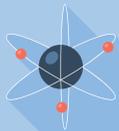


Reporting



Partnerships

[WWW.BEDSIDER.ORG](http://WWW.BEDSIDER.ORG)



Market Research



Communications



Strategic Planning



Goal Setting



Starting the Conversation



Fundraising



Opportunities



Attractive Stories

[WWW.STAYTEEN.ORG](http://WWW.STAYTEEN.ORG)



Announcements



Photography



Presentations