

FACT SHEET

Teen Council Peer Education Program



Program Overview

Since 1988, Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest and the Hawaiian Islands (PPGNHI) has trained and mentored peer educators through the Teen Council program. This evidence-informed program's curriculum aligns with the National Sexuality Education Standards. Rooted in the Program Strength and Connectedness Model, all components of Teen Council focus on engaging youth through high warmth, high structure, and high expectations. This philosophy of youth development draws from the Search Institute's Developmental Assets framework, which identifies qualities that influence young people's development, helping them become caring, responsible, and productive adults.

Here are the benefits of Teen Council membership that lead to empowered, sexually healthy youth:



Presentation & Advocacy Skills



Confidence in their ability to educate peers



Knowledge of sexual health topics & resources



Skills to communicate effectively with parents, partners, and peers



Accepting attitudes & beliefs about sexuality.



Belief they can make a difference in the world



Utilization of health care resources



Safer sexual practices

Over the years, the Teen Council program has grown to include 38 active Teen Councils across the country, with up to 18 members each. As the Teen Council program has grown it has strengthened its focus on empowering youth, increasing social competencies, and encouraging youth to view the world through a social justice lens.

Why Peer Education?

Studies show that teens who have access to medically accurate, comprehensive sex education and information are less likely to experience pregnancy, STDs, and unhealthy relationships. And, when students see confident, knowledgeable teens presenting information about topics that are rarely discussed, they are more likely to listen and apply the information they have learned.

Teen council empowered me to find my voice, discover my passion and give me the confidence to be an influential figure in my community. I am proud of the impact I made as a Teen Council member.

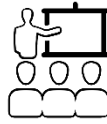
-Teen Council member

What do Teen Council members do?

Following an application and interview process, accepted Teen Council members begin the program during the summer prior to their 10th, 11th, or 12th grade year in school. Youth can remain on Teen Council through the end of their high school career.



Weekly trainings to become volunteer educators and leaders in their community.



Provide educational presentations on pregnancy prevention, STDs, consent and other sexual health topics to peers.



Answer peers questions, dispel sexual health myths, and direct peers to community resources.



Participate in an annual lobby day and speak to elected official about issues that matter to them.

Impact

Evaluation results have shown consistent, positive, and promising outcomes. Teen Council members are more likely than their peers to make healthy choices about their sexual health, be more empathetic and inclusive, and are more committed to taking action to change the world. Specifically, Teen Council members are significantly more likely than peers not in Teen Council to have:

- Higher use of multiple effective pregnancy prevention methods
- Greater confidence in their peer education skills
- More positive attitudes towards the LGBTQ community
- More conviction in the value of civic action, including a belief they can make a difference in their communities and that they can express their views with knowledge and confidence in front of a group

Teen council is a gem and is the most valuable resource for sexual health education in my state. We have really enjoyed our relationship with Planned Parenthood and look forward to many more years.

- Teacher

Teen Council has helped me to open up communication not only with my son, the participant, but also with my 14-year old daughter.

- Parent

Teen Council members make a positive ripple in their communities impacting their peers, schools, and families. Evaluation efforts show:

- Friends of Teen Council members are more likely to seek clear consent if they were to have sex, are more comfortable talking to their partners, and are more likely to use protection because of what they learned from their friend on Teen Council
- Classroom participants reported learning something new about where to access sexual healthcare and resources from Teen Council presentations
- Teen Council members and their parents are talking more frequently and with greater comfort about sexuality and birth control.