

Teen Pregnancy Prevention By Begaeta Nukic

When I am trying to explain to some of my peers that shows such as Jerry Springer are not real and not a good source to learn from, they start arguing the opposite. When I am trying to explain the difference between the real man and man portrayed on TV, it's hard for them to distinguish the difference. When I am trying to explain the consequences of having sex, many are fast to reply that their parents would take care if they get pregnant or get someone else pregnant. Now is it the media to blame? Is it the parents who don't educate their kids enough? Is it something that schools are doing wrong so the teenagers are following the wrong thing? Is it society? Whatever it is, the fact is that there are just too many babies having babies, and that needs to stop!

As a PSI teen leader, I do everything in my ability to help the youth of Hartford to get on a straight path. I am a teenager myself, and I have the same needs as all other teenagers on this planet. I want to be loved, respected, and cared for, popular, cherished, appreciated, and trendy. These are some of the things that all teenagers want and very often it is more likely than not to confuse these needs with having sex. Sometimes in hope to achieve these needs, we think that having sex would put us on the front page. Well, this kind of belief is wrong.

"In life there are drivers and there are passengers." When someone drives the car, they are in charge of taking others where they want. If you don't want to follow along, get in charge yourself. Don't let others lead you the way they want, because it is your life that we are talking about here and no one else's. Others may be having sex, but you don't have to! Perhaps those people that are having sex are not informed about the consequences of having sex. And trust me, there are just too many. Possibility of pregnancy, chances of getting a sexually transmitted disease, trouble with parents, moral beliefs, religious beliefs, and not being ready are just a few of reasons why teenagers should postpone sexual involvement. There are too many consequences which are not worth taking risk.

If we look far back into American history, teenagers couldn't even speak about sex. Some of the duties that teenagers had, for instance during Puritan times, were learning about religion, obeying parents, personal responsibility, and how to be "good" and useful members of society. Times did change, so did the people, but unfortunately in a wrong way. But we can still change this trend that has been going on for quiet some time now.

Having sex is not as "fun" as many teenagers think. According to many statistics, it is proven that kids born to teenage moms are worse off than those who have both parents. Those statistics state that children born to teen moms are more likely to die in infancy, to be poor, to drop out of high school, to have children themselves as teenagers, to smoke, to suffer unemployment, and to be on welfare. All these consequences tell us that those kids born to teenage moms are not like the kids who have both parents.

Additionally, the statistics show that teenage moms are in danger as well. There are serious health risks for adolescents who have babies. Common medical problems among

teenager mothers include poor weight gain, pregnancy-induced hypertension, anemia, sexual transmitted diseases (STDs), and cephalopvic disproportion. Later in life, adolescent mothers tend to be at greater risk for obesity and hypertension than women who were not teenagers when they had their first child. Single mothers are five times more likely to give birth to premature babies. Babies born too soon face increased risk of newborn health problems and even death, as well as lasting disabilities. Many teen moms don't have anyone to support them, and they have to do everything themselves. Some drop out of school, some have another baby. Many times the baby's father does not stay involved. This creates a cycle that is really hard to break, but it can be done if people really want it to be so.

My question is why anyone in their teen years would take these chances, when we all can be teenagers and enjoy our teen years. I know that we are faced by peer-pressure and media, but that doesn't mean that we have to give in. We have to learn how to stand up for our beliefs and to make wise choices. It's easy to make a mistake, but it takes a long time to fix it, so please don't make it in a first place. However, if some teenagers are already sexually involved it is never too late to say "no more". All humans make mistakes, but it takes character to say no to it again. It's possible, so I encourage all teenagers to consider practicing abstinence, because it is without a doubt the safest way to avoid unexpected consequences.