



# Teen Pregnancy Prevention

## Placement Description

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- In-school programming for over 1,000 students in grades 7-12 through “Vision of You” and “Healthy Choices Presentations”.
- Prevention and education program serving Harrisonburg and Rockingham County
- Distributes educational and program materials for community learning and public awareness.
- Also provides presentations dealing with teen pregnancy issues, the local problem, and how to talk to teenagers about sex to educators, providers, youth leaders, and parents.
- Holds six coalition meetings per year to keep the community and other agencies informed about the local teen pregnancy problem and the programs available through the Office on Children and Youth and the Health Department.

## Intern or Field Placement Responsibilities/Opportunities

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- Network with other agencies, schools, and community members working towards decreasing teen pregnancy in the region.
- Facilitate discussion groups with teenagers in various settings
- Opportunity to design, implement, and facilitate lesson plans for the 10-session program “Vision of You”
- Opportunity to assist and participate in all of our interventions
- Assist with data entry and analysis
- Help design research
- Administrative tasks

## Contact Information

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**Read about students' experiences at this site below:**

*Spring 2021 – Gabriella Cangialosi*

This semester I did my field placement at JMU's Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program. Their mission is to work with local schools and community organizations to equip teens, parents, and community members with education and skills that allow young people to make the healthiest decisions for themselves when it comes to sex and relationships. By doing this their goal is to reduce the rate of teen pregnancy in the Harrisonburg and Rockingham County community. Some of the services they provide are programs that do a number of things. The Teen Outreach Program promotes positive youth development through a social-emotional learning curriculum, community service learning, and supportive relationships with adults. Through this program teens are empowered with the tools and opportunities needed to develop social-emotional skills; promote healthy relationships and community connections; develop a sense of purpose; and avoid risky behaviors. Another program is Draw the Line/Respect the Line. This program is a three-year, school-based sex education program for sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. This program was primarily designed to help you adolescents postpone having sex through a 19-session curriculum that teaches youth how to establish and maintain limits regarding sexual behavior. Lastly, there is Safer Choices. This program is a 2-year, multi-component STD, HIV, and teen pregnancy prevention program for high school students. It aims to reduce the frequency of unprotected sex by reducing the number of sexually active students and increasing condom use and other methods of pregnancy protection among students who are sexually active.

The section of the program that I interned in dealt with teaching the programs that I listed above. However, when I was there I only worked on the TOP program. When I worked on this program I taught lessons and came up with warm up activities to do before the lessons. Also, because of COVID I was teaching the lessons online through Google Hangout, which was difficult. It was hard to get the students to engage with me and I was unsure of when they were really paying attention. Luckily, the last lesson I taught was actually in person because the students started going to class in person again. I found that lesson much easier to teach because I could tell when they were engaging with me and paying attention. I also found it easier to get them to participate when we were in person.

In addition to teaching lesson, I also did some data entry and research. They take surveys pre and post the initiation of the program to determine how effective the programs actually are. I would input this data into the platform that they used to analyze it. The research that I did was on how to reach rural communities. Sex education is pretty taboo in rural areas and the program is always trying to figure out ways to reach these areas. I ended up finding research about how libraries are very important I rural communities and as a part of my contribution project I made handouts about some the programs services to put in local libraries, so that we can reach more than we were before.

Overall, I really enjoyed my time in the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program. My supervisor was very flexible when it came to my schedule and supported me a lot through my process in the program. I also thought that I had a lot of opportunities at being creative and that my opinion and input mattered. I think one thing that I did miss out on, like I mentioned before,



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is the personal connection with the students because of COVID. However, because they are starting to go back in person I think that connection can be made in the future.

I will be going to graduate school at Longwood University for Clinical Mental Health Counseling and I want to work with children. I think that by being able to work in middle schoolers and talk about some difficult and uncomfortable topics helped me prepare for when I one day counsel a child because they will most likely be telling me about some uncomfortable things. Additionally, I learned how to think on my feet a little better. Sometimes the children would get off topic or say something inappropriate and so I would have to get them back on topic or address what they said without getting the rest of the class distracted.

Overall, I really enjoyed my time in the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program, and I learned a lot about how to deal with uncomfortable situations along with how difficult it is to reach rural communities. Coming from a suburban area, I never realized some of the things that I took for granted until working in this program.

***Spring 2020 – Lola Beste***

The mission of the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program is to help teenagers make healthy choices and avoid risky behaviors with special emphasis on teen sexual activity and drug and alcohol use. The purpose of the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program is to help reduce the rates of teen pregnancy by educating and informing teens, adolescents and their families about important topics such as consent, safe sex, birth control, LGBTQ+, and provide other important resources. The goals of the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program are to facilitate healthy and open conversations about sexual health, provide teens and adolescents with accurate and truthful information about sexual health, and to provide teens and adolescents with proper resources about sexual health. Some of the services provided by the Teen Pregnancy Prevention program are: Draw The Line/Respect The Line, Safer Choices, Wyman's Teen Outreach Program, Consent, Safe sex and birth control, LGBTQ+, and Emergency and other resources.

Draw the Line/Respect the Line is a three-year, school-based sex education program for sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. This program was primarily designed to help young adolescents postpone having sex. The program uses a 19-session curriculum that teaches youth how to establish and maintain limits regarding sexual behavior. Safer Choices is a 2-year, multi-component STD, HIV, and teen pregnancy prevention program for high school students. The program aims to reduce the frequency of unprotected sex by reducing the number of sexually active students and increasing condom use and other methods of pregnancy protection among students who are sexually active. The Wyman's Teen Outreach Program promotes the positive development of adolescents through curriculum-guided, interactive group discussions; positive adult guidance and support; and community service learning. The Wyman's Teen Outreach Program is focused on key topics related to adolescent health and development, including healthy relationships, communication, influence, goal-setting, decision making, values clarification, community service learning, and adolescent development and sexuality.

My main experience at my site before the class becoming online-only was helping to teach the Draw the Line/Respect the Line Program at Skyline Middle School. I assisted two different teachers, one named Becca Vazquez and another named Emily Moss. They both taught me how to answer questions effectively, maintain control of the classroom, and become familiar



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with the content of the Draw the Line/Respect the Line program. There were many times in which I had a student ask me questions that I either did not know how to correctly answer or, they had asked me personal questions to which I did not know if I was allowed to respond. Both teachers helped me to answer questions effectively and with sensitivity to the subject. I also had the opportunity to help my supervisor Kati with a grant for the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program. I was able to learn about some of the processes that went into writing a grant as well as learning how to research effectively and efficiently. my other task that I had in office was to enter survey data. For all of the programs that the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program teaches there is a pre and post test given. Since the schools do not have access to enough computers or tablets for all of the students, each survey needs to be hand entered back in the Teen Pregnancy Prevention office. I spent a lot of time in the office entering data when I was not in the classroom. This data entry was incredibly important because this information is used to determine not only the effectiveness of the programs but also determines if the Teen Pregnancy Prevention will continue to receive funding for each of the programs.

Some of the advantages I found of working at the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program were that it was a very close commute, the structure of the program provided me with a lot of opportunity to share my opinion and grow, and also it allowed for very flexible scheduling and hours. The close commute was nice because I know a lot of other field placement sites were located much farther away and require a lot of travel time which can be hard to add into an already busy schedule. All of my supervisors at the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program also always encouraged me to share my thoughts and opinions about any project or task I was working on. I never felt afraid to speak up and try and suggest new ideas to make anything better. They also allowed me to work very flexible hours with my schedule which helped me to stay on task with all of my other schoolwork and classes. Some disadvantages and limitations were that the programs did not allow for changes to be because the program is so rigid and planned from the federal level. I found that there were a few short comings that I would have loved to suggest changes for however, those changes were not able to be implemented.

I learned a lot about how under-funded so many public schools are and how desperately they need money and resources. I have always loved working with children, and I have been a teaching assistant before in other classroom settings before, so this helped add to my knowledge and skills. I honestly am still very confused about what I want my career path to be. I know I want to help people and there are a lot of areas and fields I am passionate about. The Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program helped me to realize that I am passionate about education and helping those in need.

***Spring 2020 – Sofi Portillo***

The mission statement of Teen Pregnancy Prevention is to work “in collaboration with local schools and community organizations to equip teens, parents, and community members with education and skills that allow young people to make the healthiest decisions for themselves when it comes to sex and relationships.” The services provided by TPP include evidence-based programs such as Wyman’s Teen Outreach Program (TOP), Draw the Line/Respect the Line,



Safer Choices, and Project AIM. In some way, all these programs teach skills that decrease the chances of participating in risky behavior and initiate personal understanding within students.

Since I mainly assisted with TOP and Project AIM, the types of experiences and opportunities I had included facilitation assistance and paperwork. On Mondays, I would help prep and assist facilitation for TOP at Thomas Harrison Middle School: Great Oak Academy. This TOP group was in an alternative school within a middle school. We would have a lesson or activity planned for the day that related to safe sex and personal health. Some activities included self-esteem worksheets, sex ed matching games, and discussion of motivational videos. Thus, prep would include gathering writing materials, making paper copies of worksheets, and overall accommodating to the activity materials for the day. Since this is TOP group takes place in a non-traditional learning environment, I am usually instructed to observe facilitation to better understand working with alternative school students. When the students work on the activity with other students or by themselves, I go around the room to check progress, answer any questions, and validate work.

On Wednesdays, I would create documentations for Project AIM. This program is an elective for at-risk middle school students at Page County High School to build individualized career plans for themselves. Class sessions involved the students researching careers, learning about education programs for certain career paths, participating in mock interviews, drawing business cards, and building resumes. At the end of the school year, each student receives a portfolio made by the facilitators to see all the hard work come to life. Due to the number of students participating in Project AIM, I was assigned to help build these portfolios. This includes writing mock letters of recommendation based on the mock interviews and digitally designing individual businesses cards based the drawn-up ones through the graphic design website known as Canva. Once enough progress was made for the day, I would either digitally or physically store these documents for the facilitator of Project AIM to obtain.

On Thursdays, I would help prep and assist facilitation for TOP: Harrisonburg-Rockingham County Youth Council. This is essentially the same program I help with on Mondays, but the differences are that it takes place within my site's building, it has more diverse members (home-schooled teens and student of a few different local high schools), and it has more advanced content since the members are older teenagers. While my supervisors on Thursdays were picking up the students from school or from home to provide a way for them to get to the meeting, I stayed at IHHHS to prep. My process usually involved being explained the facilitator's agenda for the day, creating a PowerPoint based on the agenda and activities for the day, and setting up the meeting room with materials needed for the activities. Once all the students arrive with my supervisors, the meeting starts.

Our meetings usually involved student discussion guided by facilitators. Topics we covered include relationship expectations, reasons people do/don't participate in sex, and relationship norms in different cultures. I helped facilitate the meeting when needed, such as



jumping in to help further discussion. We then moved on to the activity which can either be furthering discussion by working in groups or individual worksheets to build and discover personal sexual/relationship health. When the activity for the day occurred, I went around the room, asked if any of the students need help, checked progress, and validated the students' approach to the activity, similar to how I helped with Monday's TOP group.

I mostly have positive impressions about TPP. I loved working with a variety of teenagers, learning the purpose behind each program and activity, making portfolio materials, and being mentored by passionate facilitators. What I didn't enjoy is that sometimes my work was limited due to not being "qualified" since I haven't had the trainings my supervisors have. But that didn't stop me from putting my skills to good use and learning new ones through my assigned duties.

Something I learned at my site is how insightful and impressive it is to work with teenagers. The experiences I had allowed me to truly listen and take in the information the students were vocalizing. It has allowed me to learn more about their mindsets, realize their needs, and how to treat them in an equal manner. I feel as though other jobs that involve working with youth only make one talk down on them and nothing more. For example, I have worked with younger people in the past in unpleasant ways that involve strict discipline or lecturing. Although I enjoyed serving them, the moments where I had to be "the adult" both decreased my enjoyment and diminished the positive relationships I had built with them. Therefore, I enjoyed the facilitation, guiding, and mentoring set-up within TPP's programs that allowed me to work with teenagers in a better, educational, more productive and validating manner. I truly feel like I have changed their lives for the better and that I have learned from them as much as they have learned from me. TPP has only made me want to continue working with youth services even more.

### ***Spring 2017 – Rachel Garcia***

#### *Mission and Services*

The mission of the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program (TPP) is to educate the Harrisonburg and Rockingham community, lower the teen pregnancy rate, and ensure that the youth in the community become healthier. There is a need for this program because although the teen pregnancy rate has decreased, the rate is still high in Harrisonburg compared to that of Virginia. In order to fulfill their mission, TPP offers a variety of services.

The first service they offer is the Draw the Line/Respect the Line curriculum (DTL). Teachers from the program teach this curriculum to 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. The curriculum differs based on the grade level. DTL is an evidence-based sexual education program which teaches middle school students how to set their limits and hold to them by arming them with important information about how to have safe sex and how to stand up to peer pressure. The next service TPP offers is Safer Choices which is taught in the high schools. Safer Choices is also a



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sexual education program that aims to inform students on safe sex practices and making smart behavioral choices. In addition to teaching, TPP has also been a part of the Teen Health Fair. The fair is held at different high schools every year and the goal is to educate students on healthy relationships, health, sex, and good communication. Lastly, TPP offers the Teen Outreach Program Clubs (TOP). These clubs help promote community service and allow teens to discuss issues they are facing, healthy relationships, and other topics.

*Experiences and Opportunities*

My experience at TPP consisted of a variety of responsibilities. At the beginning of the semester, I was going three days a week, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. However, by the end I was going 4 days a week Tuesday-Friday. Typically, I would spend 4 hours a day with TPP, except for Wednesdays, which was 2 hours.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, I spent my time in the office. On these days, I would input demographic data, assist with projects, sit in on conference calls, sit in on office wide meetings, or help the teachers prepare for their classes or clubs. My Tuesdays and Thursdays differed, unless I was working on a longer project. Toward the end of my semester with TPP, I was working on a research project that required a lot of time, thus, most of my office days were spent working on that. My office days were interesting because I had different responsibilities. It was also nice to see the backbone of the program and all the research, time, and meetings required to keep the program going. On Wednesdays, I would go to one of the TOP clubs with a teacher from TPP and help facilitate. I would help with a variety of activities, facilitate communication with the group of girls we worked with, and assist with anything else. The TOP club was my favorite because I was able to form a bond with the group of girls that were in the club. They got to know me and opened up to me which I found was really rewarding. The club was super fun because each week was different and it was evident the girls enjoyed being there every week.

Lastly, my Fridays were spent at the middle schools observing the teachers teach the DTL curriculum. I would also assist them with handing out papers, collecting papers, administering the pre and post surveys, answering questions, and making sure the students stayed on task. Usually, the teachers taught multiple lessons in a day so I would follow them to each class. I also had the opportunity to participate in the teen health fair, I had the opportunity to directly speak to high school students about healthy relationships and answer any questions they had. Finally, since I worked with the TOP club the whole semester, and was able to observe some of the problems TPP encountered, I was able to create a parent newsletter. This newsletter was meant to inform parents about activities and lessons their kids were a part of during the TOP clubs. I made the newsletter in both English and Spanish since many of the kids were Hispanic. My goal with the newsletter was to foster communication between the students, the teachers/club facilitators, and the parents. I also wanted to make sure parents had a tool to use when discussing difficult topics with their kids, so I included a hands on activity that required parent-child communication.

I found that one of the benefits when working with TPP was the flexibility with scheduling. Because my class schedule was mixed with morning and afternoon classes, I had to find a way to make my schedule work. TPP was flexible in that the mornings I did have free I could spend in the office, and those afternoons I had free, I could spend with the TOP club. In addition, since I had no Friday classes I had mornings free and was able to go to DTL classes. Another advantage TPP has is the variety that comes with the program. Since TPP offers various



services, I was able to partake in many of them and get a whole sense of the program. I learned a lot in each opportunity I had, and I was able to interact with a variety of people. The downside to this, however, is that while you are in the office, you do not get to interact with many of the teachers because the teaching schedules vary. Office time can get a bit lonely; however, there are other interns to talk to.

A disadvantage I found was that I was not able to teach any of the DTL lessons because I was not in the classes consistently. My supervisor felt this would make it hard on the students because there would be a lack of consistency in teachers and teaching style. Since I was not always able to go to the schools, I did not get a complete sense of the progress students made from lesson to lesson. Furthermore, I feel that this internship is best suited for those who are able to take initiative, complete tasks on their own, have strong communication skills, have an interest in health education, and are flexible.

#### *What I learned*

Before starting my internship with TPP, my goal was to become a Licensed Professional Counselor. I have a strong interest in Health Psychology and I wanted to work with adults and help them live a healthy, holistic life. I also knew I had a strong interest in research and that I wanted to conduct research myself. This internship gave me insight as to what it takes to run an evidence-based program, the research it takes, the work in communicating with the grant providers, and the trial and error involved. I also learned about health education and how to communicate with adolescents about sensitive topics. I realized that I do have a passion for health education, and this internship solidified my plans for my future. I still want to pursue licensure as a professional counselor, but I may want to change the population from adults to adolescents and kids. This internship provided me with many opportunities in which I became more confident in my communication skills, my ability to work on my own, and realized how important it is to educate youth about health related topics.

### ***Fall 2014 – Christiana McGuigan***

#### *Mission and Services*

The mission statement of Teen Pregnancy Prevention is “to provide information and skills to help teenagers make healthy choices and avoid risky behaviors, such as sexual activity and drug and alcohol use by presenting quality school- and community-based prevention services. TPP strives to see a reduction in teen pregnancy, ensuring that teens in our community grow into happy, healthy adults.” Currently, Harrisonburg’s pregnancy rate is 3x state rate. 68.4% of Harrisonburg youth claim to be abstinent. Of those being sexually active, only 54.8% use condoms.

TPP offers Teen Outreach Program (TOP) Clubs which facilitate service work, discuss its importance in the community, and educate/allow for communication about teen issues. These



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exist as afterschool programs in some middle schools and high schools, but have recently been developing as neighborhood clubs for residential areas with a high volume of teenagers. TPP also teaches Draw the Line/Respect the Line (DTL), a middle school sexual education and anti-peer-pressure program. It focuses on teaching middle schoolers about safe sex and setting/maintaining sexual limits based on long term goals. TPP's third main program is Choosing the Best (CTB) which is a class that encourages middle schoolers to make healthy choices and endorses youth abstinence. Lastly, and most recently, TPP has been involved in health fairs to spread our message and encourage/facilitate the education of youth when it comes to health, sex, relationships and communication.

### *Experiences and Opportunities*

My Time at TPP was split: 60% was spent in the field and 40% in the office. Many positions at TPP had a balance of field work and office work so this was a realistic taste of what someone in this field would be responsible for. I personally worked Thursdays and Fridays from 9am to 3pm.

A typical Thursday involved me driving to the school to meet with the head teachers of Draw the Line/Respect the Line (a class on healthy choices and sexual education). There, I would assist the DTL teachers with their responsibilities. This usually included writing information on the board, answering questions, collecting and distributing papers, and aiding students when they were having difficulties or needed encouragement to stay on task. The DTL program teaches 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. The curriculum was designed to best fit the student's informational needs at their particular age. The majority of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade program focuses on how to identify and avoid peer pressure and how to open communication with parents. 7<sup>th</sup> grade moves on to more specific pressures like sexual activities, drinking and poor conduct. This is the grade where they begin to discuss ramifications of sex and how to decide what they're comfortable with now/how to say 'no' before they are in a pressure-filled situation. Finally, in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, the program really focuses on sexual education. There is a condom demonstration (which the school needs to approve before it can be shown), as well as sections dedicated to learning about STD's, pregnancy, and emotional consequences of sex. This is also where students are taught how to say 'no' in tougher situations (ex. if they are getting enjoyment out of the action, if their partner is not happy with their 'no', etc.). In the final year of this program, students develop and discuss life goals as well as the variables (like pregnancy) that would delay or complicate these goals. For a DTL teacher, multiple classes are often taught in a day, sometimes there are gaps but often these classes are back-to-back. I often spent the entire Thursday at a given school, and the head teachers returned to that school for many days following to complete the class curriculum. This was unfortunate because I could never start and stay with an individual class so I lacked the chance to see them develop and demonstrate their learning. It also made me unaware of who would need the extra assistance during the class. Also, it prevented me from being able to teach any of the lessons because it would have lessened the students' comfort to have an unfamiliar teacher jump-in when they were used to the original head teachers. However, I did get



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to see a larger variety of classes than I would have under different circumstances. Also, having the full day in the classrooms helped my office work feel more relevant.

A typical Friday consisted of office work. I was responsible for inputting attendance, and amount of service hours, for our Teen Outreach Program clubs into our excel files and then filing the sheets into the filing cabinets. After, I would check in with my supervisor who would aid me in starting a project, continuing an existing one, or assisting another worker or intern in their work. I was encouraged to pursue my interests related to the program. In my time with this organization I researched, designed and finalized a pamphlet for parents to use as a resource when discussing sexual health with their LGBTQ teens. I also researched, designed and built an extensive display/activity for a school health fair which I was able to present to students directly. When I no longer had projects to complete and no one needed assistance I was able to study the DTL materials so I could be prepared for the classes I would later assist. In the middle of my time with TPP, the opportunity arose for me to assist a Choosing the Best class (an abstinence education class) which took place every Friday afternoon. So for many weeks, I traveled to the middle school to assist the same 7<sup>th</sup> grade class. This gave me the opportunity to get to know students, anticipate problem behavior, be seen as a consistent teaching authority, and see their progress.

This internship would be ideal for anyone looking to pursue teaching, community health, health counseling, or general work with youths. The program requires people with initiative who are good communicators. Also, the value of health education is a must.

*Influences and Areas of Learning*

Through this internship, I have learned my passion for health education. My previous goals had been exceedingly general. I wanted to become a counselor for children and teens. After participating in TPP I realized the importance of getting information to youths, especially about topics that most adults aren't comfortable discussing. I have since tailored my goals to be more involved in the field of sexual health and hope to be a counselor for youth who have experienced sexual abuse and LGBTQ teens and their families. I have learned a lot about communication with youth and how to best approach sensitive issues. I am leaving this internship with more patience, a realization of how important sexual education is, experience with administrative work, skills for communication with youth and more confidence in myself as a health professional.