

# Enriching the Medical Curriculum: Empowering Women through Health, Education and Wellness

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eliminating racism  
empowering women  
**ywca**  
Central Massachusetts



## Young Parents Program (YPP)

### Background Information on Pregnancy in Adolescents:

According to the CDC, 273,105 babies were born to women ages 15-19 in 2013

### Medical Consequences:

- Children of teen moms score lower than children of older parents in assessments of health, cognitive ability and behavior.<sup>3</sup>
- Maternal Health: poor maternal weight gain, anemia and pregnancy-induced hypertension.<sup>8</sup>

### Socioeconomic Consequences:

- 50% of teenage mothers receive a high school diploma by 22 years of age compared to 90% of women who have not given birth as a young adult.<sup>7</sup>
- Increased likelihood of single living arrangements and welfare dependency.<sup>8</sup>

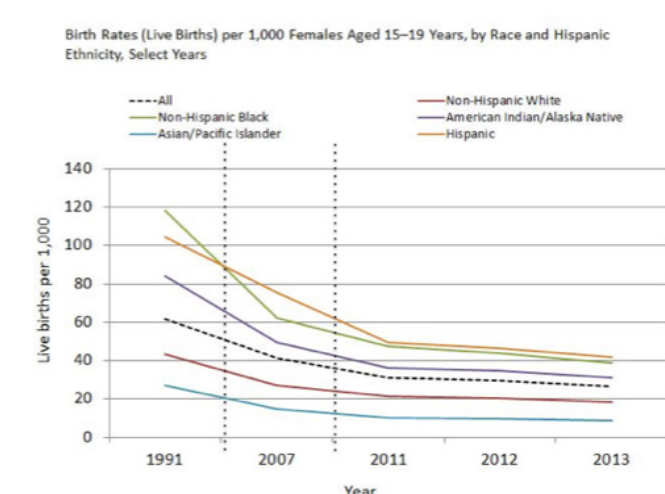


Figure 1: Martin J, Osterman B, Births: Final Data for 2013



The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy

### Current Medical Approaches: Prevention and Equitable Care

- Prevention: Current medical practices emphasize contraception and safe sex practices. However, there remain *significant health care disparities* regarding the care of teenager mothers.
- Teenage mothers often feel stigmatized, subject to societal surveillance and disrespected by the medical community. They are often fearful of asking questions and advocating for care because their motherhood capabilities may be subject to doubt.

### Future Directions:

- YWCA Programming
- Forming a longitudinal relationship between young mothers in the YPP program and medical students.
  - Medical students serve as advocates, mentors and healthcare navigators for teenage mothers while gaining a deeper understanding of the social determinants of health and learning how to deliver equitable care to all their patients.

## Domestic Violence as a Diagnosis

### Why do we need to improve the curriculum?

“Eclipsed only by war, domestic violence has remained at the forefront of violence-related human morbidity and mortality.”<sup>1</sup>

Domestic Violence is common:

- 13-30% estimated lifetime prevalence in women.<sup>6</sup>

Domestic violence is often missed:

- 6% of internists routinely screen new patients for domestic violence.<sup>6</sup>

### Medical Interview:

- Use a funnel technique: Broad → Specific
- To assess history of domestic violence:
  - “Have you ever been in a relationship in which your partner frightened you or hurt you?”
- To assess current domestic violence:
  - “Do you feel safe in your current relationship?”
  - “Is there anyone from a previous relationship who is making you feel unsafe now?”

### Signs and Symptoms:

- General Symptoms: description of frequent and vague symptoms, anxiety or depression, missed appointments, social isolation.
- Presentation: repeated injury; multiple injury sites; injury during pregnancy; delay in seeking care
- Behavior: Patient describes partner as jealous, controlling, angry. Partner attends appointments, controls discussion, cancels appointments.<sup>4</sup>

### Treatment:

Support your patients

1. Use care not to blame the victim
2. Tell the patient he or she does not deserve to be abused
3. Offer resources and referrals
4. Leave the *ultimate decision to the patient*<sup>6</sup>

### Resources:

- YWCA 24 hr. Hotline: 508-755-9030
- Safeplan Worcester: 508-831-2168
- Massachusetts DV Hotline: 508-799-7233(SAFE)
- New Hope Hotline: 800-323-4673(HOPE)
- Worcester DA office DV unit: 508-755-8601

## ENCOREplus®

A Working Model for Empowering Women With Breast Cancer through Emotional & Physical Support and Education

**Physical Support:** weekly 30-minute aquatic exercises designed to increase upper body strength and range of motion

**Emotional Support:** weekly, hourly group sessions  
Average attendance: 10-12 women

### Participant Overview

- Age range: 39 to 80
- Varying stages of breast cancer
- >90% white



### Lessons for a Medical Trainee

1. Cancer support groups are more than a forum for emotional support. Participants serve as each other’s caretakers, educators and companions.

1. The decision to join a support group can be difficult and takes time. However, active participants did not report a delay in buy-in once they joined the group.

1. Minority women may require different forms or variation of the standard ENCOREplus® model for support during their cancer treatment and recovery.

Wild Geese  
By Mary Oliver

*You do not have to be good.  
You do not have to walk on your knees  
for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.  
You only have to let the soft animal of your body  
love what it loves.  
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.  
Meanwhile the world goes on.  
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain  
are moving across the landscapes,  
over the prairies and the deep trees,  
the mountains and the rivers.  
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,  
are heading home again.  
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,  
the world offers itself to your imagination,  
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting –  
over and over announcing your place  
in the family of things.*

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