

“Why Don’t/Do Teens Use Birth Control” Brainstorm

Goals:

- To share accurate information about birth control methods.
- To explore some of the barriers that youth face to using birth control.
- To have a discussion on the reasons youth have for using or not using birth control.
- To identify important things to think about when choosing to use birth control.

Have Ready:

- 3 separate flipcharts: “Why do teens use birth control?”, “Why don’t teens use birth control?”, “Things to think about when choosing a birth control method.”
- Markers

Instructions:

- Divide the youth into three groups.
- Give each group some markers and one of the flipcharts.
- Instruct the groups to write down as many answers as possible.
- When the groups are finished, post the lists up in the room and read them over with the whole group, adding to the lists as more suggestions are made.
- If not mentioned by the youth add the bolded points below.

Sample Flipcharts:

Why Don't Teens Use Birth Control?

- **Not having sex/not dating**
- **Gay/Lesbian** (normalize same sex relationships and make sure the youth know that even though there is no risk of pregnancy from same-sex sex, there is a risk of STI/HIV)
- **Rumours/gossip** (fear of being judged leading to not carrying condoms, or birth control)
- **Want to have a baby** (you might choose to discuss reasons why teens may want to have a baby: to keep partner, pressure from family/community, to love something and to feel loved, are ready to)
- **Drunk/High**
- Prevented from using birth control by partner or family (discuss that teens having the right to use birth control if they choose)
- Concerned about confidentiality
- Aren't comfortable using birth control
- Values/religion
- Not comfortable with their bodies
- Don't know how to use birth control
- Cost
- Afraid parents/caregivers will find it
- Side effects/allergies
- Don't know where to get it (limited access)
- Haven't talked to/afraid to talk to partner about BC

Why Do Teens Use Birth Control?

- **Don't want to get pregnant**
- **Don't want to get an STI/HIV** (condoms and sex dams will help protect against STI/HIV)
- **Trying to show respect/care about themselves and their partner**
- **Future goals/plans**

- **To regulate their period, control acne, or lessen cramps** (hormonal birth control only)
- Their friends are using birth control
- Parents/caregivers/partners/doctor pressure them to

Things to Think About When Choosing a Birth Control Method

- **Effectiveness**
- **Comfort with body and partner**
- **Allergies/side effects**
- **Availability/access** (Where to get it and how much?)
- **Concerns about anonymity**
- **What if the birth control fails?** (Normalize talking to a partner beforehand about abortion, adoption, and parenting and sharing feelings about these options. Ultimately the person who is pregnant has the right to decide as their body and life stand to be most affected.)
- Type of relationship
- Is it covered by non-insured health benefit
- Lifestyle (Drinking, forgetful, etc.)

Debrief:

- There are many reasons youth have for using or not using birth control and these are some important things to think about when choosing to use birth control.

Additional Activities:

Ideally, this activity can be followed by:

- Hormonal Birth Control Demonstrations
- Emergency Contraception Demonstration
- Condom Demo (See STI chapter.)