

TeenSTAR presentation from Dr. Elizabeth Heyne, Dallas, Texas, 2014

Dr. Heyne gave a powerpoint presentation of her research with 60 adolescent mothers, under the age of eighteen years, in a randomized control trial. The intervention consisted of the Postpartum TeenSTAR Program. One third of both groups at one month post delivery of a very low birth weight infant, requiring the neonatal intensive care unit, exhibited signs of depression. At one year post delivery the control group depression rate remained the same while the intervention group rate of depression had dropped to 18%. Although not statistically significant ($p=0.08$), the numbers were small but a trend in the right direction was encouraging. Interesting for the TeenSTAR exit questionnaire, almost forty percent of the mothers had been sexually assaulted as defined by law; however, only one of the teen mothers recognized and reported the assault to legal authorities. The majority of the teen mothers had not recognized sexual assault and for this reason had not reported the event(s). There was an association among those mothers with depression at one year post-delivery, sexual assault, and suspected abuse or neglect of the infant requiring a report to the Child Protection Services. Although the study did not determine the order of events, Dr. Heyne explained the well known Adverse Childhood Experience Studies (ACE) that strongly suggested sexual assault preceding depression and subsequent high risk behavior in adults.

From the Dallas TeenSTAR sites three salient features were presented:

- 1) The charting method with paper and stickers was outdated and the majority of the eight grade girls had free apps loaded on their cell phones that were inaccurate. Dr. Heyne suggested the need for a free TeenSTAR app for the international program.
- 2) During the sessions in the past two years, the parents of the eight grade students and college students taking the Holistic Sexuality course expressed the urgency of the need to include the topic of pornography in the TeenSTAR program. This past year Dr. Heyne included in the end of year TeenSTAR questionnaires this subject. The results showed that 100% of the students had been exposed to pornography, primarily on the internet while doing homework research. However, a good proportion had been deliberately exposed by older family members. Although most consider boys to be the gender involved in pornography, it has been shown that on-line chat rooms are the drawing magnets for girls. This can lead to pornographic chatting and encounters, including sex trafficking. Dr. Heyne suggest the TeenSTAR curriculum include the reference to the Covenant Eyes materials and a discussion of sex trafficking, including the signs of the latter with tattoos and the wheel of power and emotional abuse.
- 3) The topic of music has been part of TeenSTAR curriculum when discussing the media. However, Dr. Heyne demonstrated a random list of songs one student had listed and explained that all the eight grade students were aware of the four major themes of popular music: sex, drugs, violence and the demonic. One reference that has been helpful is Phil Chalmers, "Music to Die For." Also popular with the students for the past several years is giving alternatives to popular music.

Techniques include bringing into a TeenSTAR class a band member who plays the alternative music and swap out the objectionable CD's with alternative CD's.

During the conference, Dallas TeenSTAR had a table with updated materials to supplement the TeenSTAR curriculum.

Dr. Heyne thanks Dr. Hanna Klaus for the TeenSTAR program and the opportunity to attend and present at the 8th International Conference. A very special thank you to the German TeenSTAR hosts for a magnificent venue and conference! Danke.