

Getting your faith community on board



Think About It

Take a moment to consider your role in your faith community when it comes to giving guidance on topics such as love, sex, and relationships.



Talk About It

Before young people come to you with questions about love, sex, and relationships, make sure you and the clergy team are familiar with internal and external resources that can help them make healthy and safe decisions.



Make a Plan

Discuss with members of your clergy team their thoughts and concerns about approaching topics such as love, sex, and relationships with parents and youth in your congregation. Make sure all members of your clergy team agree on a unified message in order to maintain a clear, consistent view.

About Not Right Now: Put Pregnancy on Pause

An initiative of Fact Forward, the Not Right Now campaign urges teens to think about the consequences BEFORE they have sex, make a plan for sexual health, and speak up for themselves. By giving adolescents frank information about preventing pregnancy and giving parents the tools to talk to their teens about sex, Not Right Now is demystifying teen sexuality. We are empowering young people to take control of their sexual health today, so that they can have a brighter, better future tomorrow.

What we do at Fact Forward:

We promote easy access to reproductive healthcare, from counseling to contraceptives. We train and educate people who work with young adults. We partner with a variety of organizations - public, private, school, and community-based - to promote policies and initiatives that improve reproductive health outcomes throughout the state.

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Tips for Faith Leaders

THINK ABOUT IT

TALK ABOUT IT

MAKE A PLAN



From singing in the choir to praise dancing down the aisles, young people play a positive role in the success of faith communities. A place for guidance and community connection, places of worship are not only instrumental in the spiritual success of young people, but in their decision making as well.

As a leader in your faith community, this guide offers you tools and tips to start addressing love, sex, and relationships within your congregation. This guide does not have all the answers, so we encourage you to look to other sources such as NotRightNowSC.org to build your comfort level when communicating with others in your faith community about these tough topics.



Why talk with my faith community about love, sex, and relationships? Talking to youth about love, sex and relationships within the context of faith can help provide clarity for those who have questions. As a faith leader, it is important to clearly define how these topics are viewed within the context of your faith tradition. Communicating openly can:

- Clearly define faith community values
- Build communication between parents and young people
- Help youth feel at ease about who they are and their sexuality
- Help youth cope with their feelings and deal with peer pressure
- Help youth take charge of their lives and have healthy, loving relationships
- Help protect youth from sexual abuse

10 tips to help faith communities address teen pregnancy

1. **Acknowledge.** Address the need young people have for spiritual fulfillment and offer them answers to the many challenging problems they face.
2. **Support.** Encourage parents to talk with their young people about sex and mortality within the context of their faith tradition.
3. **Clarify.** Make sure youth in your faith community understand what your faith tradition says about sex, love, and marriage in general and teen pregnancy, in particular. Use clear and easy to understand language.
4. **Observe.** Learn about contemporary youth culture—what young people are reading, listening to, and watching.
5. **Connect.** Reach out to youth who are not involved in any faith community.
6. **Welcome.** Provide an environment where sexuality, intimacy, and relationships are discussed openly and honestly with trained youth leaders.
7. **Educate.** Provide age-appropriate and accurate information about sexuality, including its spiritual dimensions, from your particular faith tradition.
8. **Embrace.** Recognize the diversity of young people in your congregations: those who are heterosexual, those who are sexual minorities, those who are abstinent, and those who have had sexual relationships, and those who have experienced abuse.
9. **Protect.** Implement policies to protect young people from abuse, harassment, exploitation, and violence, both within the congregation and in the community.
10. **Lead.** Model positive, healthy, and joyful attitudes about human sexuality and relationships.

Fact Forward offers trainings throughout the year for organizations across the state, including faith communities. Below are a couple of the trainings we offer that can help build your confidence in speaking about love, sex, and relationships with youth in your congregation.

Askable Adult: Learning How to Talk with Teens about Tough Topics

Every moment with a young person is precious. This interactive workshop is designed to help make those rare moments positive and beneficial for youth. This is an excellent opportunity for youth-serving professionals to improve their communication skills so they never miss an opportunity to support a young person in making healthy decisions.

Roots 'N Wings

Learn how to engage parents and/or grandparents in conversations with young people, and help improve their confidence in talking with youth about sex and sexuality. This program also helps parents give young people a solid foundation of knowledge to make positive decisions regarding health and relationships.

Educational Materials and Promotional Items

The SC Campaign offers a range of publications such as Tips for Parents, Teen Health Bill of Rights, and Meeting Your Needs (a guide to health centers for young people). You can also request branded promotional items such as water bottles, pens, and more. For more information, contact communications@teenpregnancysc.org.

Making the Time

Faith leaders can use the power of the pulpit to address love, sex, and relationships. Special times during the year provide an opportunity for addressing these topics.

Valentine's Day (February 14)	Mother's Day (3rd Sunday in May)
Women's History Month (March)	Father's Day (3rd Sunday in June)
Child Abuse Prevention Month (April)	Let's Talk Month (October)
Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month (May)	World AIDS Day (December 1)