

“Finding Common Ground” Communication Planning Worksheet

HANDOUT 1—Activity Demonstration

Part 1. Communication Plan Administration	
Communication Plan Title: Enter a title that summarizes the scenario for which the communication plan is applicable.	<i>Positive Prevention PLUS</i> curriculum review
Communication Plan Date: Enter date the initial plan was completed, and revision dates thereafter.	February 1, 2021
Lead Person: Enter the name, organization, and contact information of the person responsible for maintaining the communication plan.	Mary Land
Other Persons: Enter the names, organizations, and contact information of the people with planning, implementing, or monitoring tasks of the communication plan.	Lord Baltimore, Lord Calvert, Lady Anne Arundel
Document Location: Enter the server location where the communication plan is stored and available to all potential users.	Google Drive folder name hyperlinked
Resources Location: Enter the server location where resources developed to support the communication plan are stored and available to all potential users.	Google Drive folder name hyperlinked to the following documents: Memorandum to Board of Education members; talking points for superintendent; talking points to Board of Education members; talking points to county-level system team members; talking points to youth advisory board members
Part 2. Scenario	
Scenario Description: Write a brief description of the project activity, event, or situation (scenario) for which the communication plan is being developed.	The County Board of Education has responsibility for approving curricula before they can be taught to the student population. Board of Education members vote on curricula proposals put forward by school district professional staff and presented by the school district superintendent.
Decision Makers:	Members of the County Board of Education

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Identify and record the person, people, or group(s) that you aim to influence with your messages.	
Desired Outcome: Identify and record the desired outcome for the scenario.	The County Board of Education will approve introduction of 3Ps into the school district's health education program.
Desired Messages: Craft and record up to three main messages (and any supporting sub-messages) that are likely to persuade decision makers to take action that achieves the desired outcome.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementing 3Ps is a large part of a county-wide systemic effort to help our county's young people have healthy lives by reducing the teen birth and STI rates and reducing health disparities related to teen births and STIs. 2. 3Ps is an evidence-based curriculum that aligns with the Maryland State Department of Education's Comprehensive Health Education Framework for Family Life & Sexuality Education. 3. 3Ps implementation is supported by a three-year grant from the federal Office of Population Affairs and Maryland Department of Health. All training, materials, and supplies to implement, as well as stipends for teachers to attend training, are paid for by the grant.
Desired Messengers: Identify and record the person or persons who will be responsible for delivering the messages to the decision makers. Think broadly about who will serve as the more credible messengers. Your messengers will vary by scenario.	<p>The County Superintendent of Education formally presents recommendations of the school district professional staff to the board of education.</p> <p>The superintendent may have assistance from the Health Education Supervisor and Health Education teachers to respond to questions. As needed, MOAHP project staff are also available to present to the Board of Education and answer questions about the overall project and specifically about 3Ps.</p>
Desired Message Delivery Method and Dates: Record how and when messages are disseminated to the decision makers. Be specific on the expected formats of presentation materials or presentations and due dates of such.	Board of Education members receive written agendas and supporting materials for Board of Education meetings one week in advance of the meeting. The staff lead for Board of Education operations has a template memorandum document that other school district staff follow for developing supporting materials. Also, the superintendent of education makes brief verbal remarks to introduce items on the agenda assigned to the superintendent.
Desired Messenger Preparation Method and Dates: Record how and when messengers are prepared to deliver their messages. Be specific on the expected formats of preparation materials or presentations and due dates of such.	Professional staff submit memoranda slated for distribution to the Board of Education two weeks in advance of the Board of Education meeting, to provide time for superintendent review, copy editing, and proofing. Also, professional staff verbally brief the superintendent of education on the recommended messages three business days before the Board of Education meeting.

Part 3. Challenge	
Challenge Description: Identify and record the anticipated or realized challenge that the communication plan will address.	<p>The Board of Education holds public meetings. The meetings include segments where members of the public may comment on matters on the published agenda for the meeting, or any other matter of concern to the individual. Members of the public may register in advance to speak, or they may sign up on site.</p> <p><u>Sexual health is a “socially sensitive” topic generally. The health education lead for the county school district anticipates several <u>members of the public will speak in support or opposition to 3Ps</u> being added to the district’s health education program. Members of the Board of Education will want to take those community members’ positions into consideration as they decide whether to approve inclusion of the curriculum in the district’s health education program.</u></p>
Challenge Makers: Identify and record the person, people, or group(s) that may present a challenge.	<p>Representatives of <u>Concerned Citizens of the County</u>, an organization which has in the past appeared before the County Council in <u>opposition to a proposal by the county health department to improve family planning services</u> at the county-operated health center.</p>
Challenge Outcome: Identify and record the desired outcome for the challenge.	<p>Maximally, the County Board of Education will assuage Concerned Citizens of the County of their concerns about the introduction of 3Ps into the school district’s health education program.</p> <p>Minimally, the Board of Education will cultivate an authentic sense that they have heard and are taking into consideration the position of Concerned Citizens of the County.</p>
Challenge Messages: Craft and record messages (and any supporting sub-messages) specific to the anticipated or realized conservative challenge. While the challenge is specific, it is likely to be rooted in one or more of the five conservative principles: morality and values; limited government; local control; parent involvement; and anti-abortion.	<p><u>Morality and Values</u> 3Ps curriculum does impart values, universal values that we believe all parents and community members can support including young people—like all people—deserve to be healthy and have healthy relationships. They also need accurate information to make fully informed decisions.</p> <p>There is a diversity of family structures and beliefs in our county. It’s important to the Board of Education that everything our schools do to support our children’s learning and development honors that reality. And so, the professional staff is presenting us today a health education curriculum that recognizes diversity in family structures.</p>

	<p><u>Limited Government</u> The federal and state government has not swept in telling the Board of Education what we can do and what we cannot do.</p> <p>Selecting the 3Ps curriculum for inclusion in the school district’s health education program is something that your community’s health educators, student support personnel, and students are behind. These are your neighbors and friends. Some of them are parents themselves.</p> <p><u>Local Control</u> This very action of a local Board of Education, who the public selected to represent you by electing us, is a perfect example of local control. We are the public authority chosen by community members and entrusted to serve your children and our community.</p> <p><u>Parent Involvement</u> Every lesson of the 3Ps curriculum includes “parent-child homework” that focuses on the lesson’s content.</p> <p>3Ps is part of a larger adolescent health initiative in our county. The larger initiative involves parents by having at least one be a member on the County-Level Systems Team, by providing support and tools to parents to help their child be healthy, and by offering educational programs focused on strengthening their ability to communicate about healthy relationships and sexuality with their child.</p> <p>The State of Maryland permits parents to exclude (i.e., opt out) their children from certain subjects or topics. 3Ps falls within that exclusion.</p> <p>Parents may review 3Ps by appointment.</p> <p><u>Anti-Abortion</u> The 3Ps curriculum mentions abortion, but as neutral matter. The curriculum neither promotes nor discourages abortion.</p>
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	<p>Abortion is one option that a person may choose when pregnant and is a legal medical procedure in the State of Maryland.</p> <p>Parents certainly can discuss with their children what is their position on abortion and impart whatever values they wish about the procedure to their children.</p>
<p>Challenge Messengers: Identify and record the person or persons who will be responsible for delivering the challenge messages to the challenge makers. Think broadly about who will serve as the more credible messengers. Your messengers will vary by scenario.</p>	<p>The County Board of Education has a member who is a healthcare professional. The school district health education supervisor has brought to that member's attention the potential for conservatives' reservation to introducing 3Ps into the district's health education program.</p> <p>Also, the county's MOAHP project coordinator has alerted members of the County-level Systems Team to the upcoming board of education meeting upon which 3Ps is on the agenda and requested non-public agency members of the team to register to speak in favor of the curriculum and/or to attend the meeting as supporters of the project and curriculum.</p> <p>The coordinator has also asked members of the Youth Advisory Board to register to speak in favor of 3Ps and/or attend the meeting as supporters of the project and curriculum.</p>
<p>Challenge Message Delivery Method and Dates: Record how and when messages are disseminated to the challenge makers. Be specific on the expected formats of presentation materials or presentations and due dates of such.</p>	<p>Members of the Board of Education, non-public agency members of the MOAHP County-level Systems Team, and Youth Advisory Board members will respond to comments of the Concerned Citizens of the County at the Board of Education meeting.</p>
<p>Challenge Messenger Preparation Method and Dates: Record how and when messengers are prepared to deliver their messages. Be specific on the expected formats of preparation materials or presentations and due dates of such.</p>	<p>With permission of the Superintendent of Education, the school district's health education supervisor will prepare and distribute three days in advance of the Board of Education meeting challenge messages to a Board of Education member known to be comfortable speaking on sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice generally. The member can use the talking points for shaping their verbal responses to public comments opposed to the 3Ps curriculum due to perceived misalignment with conservative principles.</p>

	Also, the MOAHP project coordinator will prepare and disseminate at least three days before the Board of Education meeting desired messages in support of the 3Ps curriculum to County-level Systems Team and Youth Advisory Board members who may attend the meeting.
Part 4. Communication Plan Monitoring	
Desired Outcome Achieved? Record the decision made by the decision makers in the scenario for this communication plan. Did they choose the desired outcome? Did they reject the desired outcome? Did they decide an alternative outcome?	The County Board of Education approved the inclusion of the 3Ps curriculum into the school district's health education program. Recognizing however that some community members hold reservations about the curriculum, the Board of Education requested the superintendent of education to identify opportunities for a representative of Concerned Citizens of the County to engage in school district activities, and suggested that the MOAHP County-level Systems Team invite a member of the organization onto the team.
Message and Messenger Successes: Reflect and record what messages seemed to be more effective in persuading decision makers and assuaging challenge makers. Reflect and record which messengers seemed to be more effective in communicating the messages.	I noticed Board of Education members all seemed to nod their head in agreement when the superintendent explained to them that the 3Ps curriculum uplifts universal values that all families and community members can agree are the best values to impart to our community's children. Also, I found it very compelling when Rev. Michaels spoke in support of the curriculum during the public comment period. They are so well respected by people in the county. Their speaking up on behalf of the MOAHP project really quieted the room.
Message and Messenger Opportunities for Improvement: Reflect and record what messages seemed to be less effective in persuading decision makers and assuaging challenge makers. Reflect and record which messengers were less effective in communicating the messages.	I wish we had better aided the superintendent in presenting key messages during their introduction of the curriculum to the Board of Education. They went too deep into sub-messages, and it led, I feel, to board members feeling greater anxiety about their decision than was necessary.
Communication Plan Process Successes: Reflect and record what went well in planning and delivering the communication plan.	I am so glad we asked T.J. from the local public relations agency and Gina from Healthy Teen Network to provide us an advice session on crafting messages. That advice really elevated the strength of our messages.
Communication Plan Process Opportunities for Improvement: Reflect and record what could be improved in planning and delivering the communication plan.	I felt like we duplicated some effort in that both Teddy and Sam were writing for different messengers, but really the messages were the same. Maybe just Sam could

	have done that work for both messengers' groups, and then Teddy could have spent time on other activities.
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“Finding Common Ground” Communication Planning Worksheet

HANDOUT 2—ACTIVITY PRACTICE

The goal of this worksheet is to assist organizations to **plan, implement, and monitor their communications** about the project to various audiences, whether those be school district personnel, teachers, parents, community members, or others.

Users may complete the worksheet either **proactively** to plan their communications about project activities in advance of the activities taking place (complete Parts 1 through 4), or **reactively** to plan communication responses to situations that arise that merit a communications response (complete Parts 1, 3, and 4).

Additionally, this worksheet anticipates that organizations may encounter reservations or resistance to some project components from individuals and organizations holding conservative ways of viewing the world. Accordingly, the challenges part (part 3) assists users in **crafting messages for conservative audiences** by addressing one or more of the five principles of conservatism held by such audiences. The **five principles of conservatism** are described in the Healthy Teen Network issue brief, [Finding Common Ground: An Overview on Key Conservative Principles to Support Shared Goals for Adolescent Sexual & Reproductive Health](#).

Users may find the worksheet, as well as sample plans and a presentation on the Healthy Teen Network website [here](#).

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Other Persons: Enter the names, organizations, and contact information of the people with planning, implementing, or monitoring tasks of the communication plan.	
Document Location:	

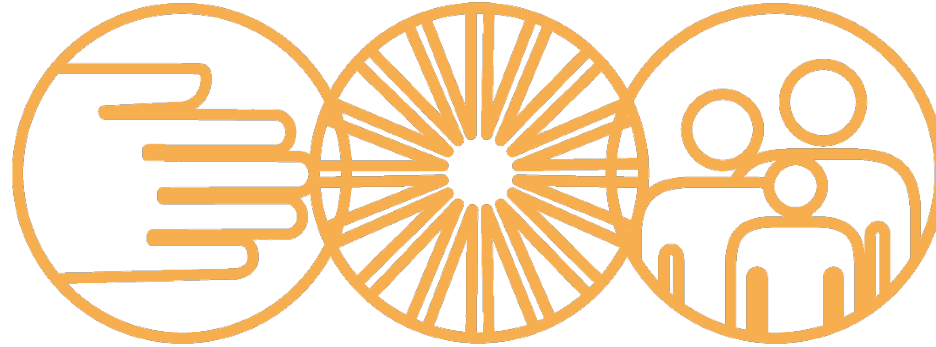
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Desired Messenger Preparation Method and Dates:	

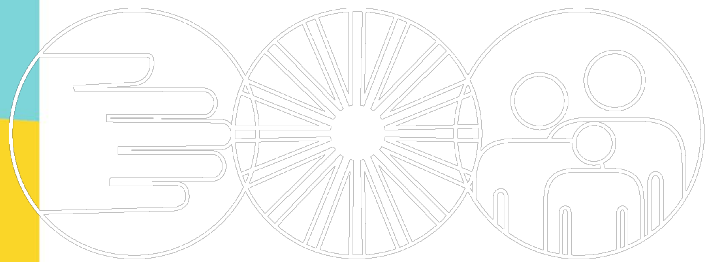
Record how and when messengers are prepared to deliver their messages. Be specific on the expected formats of preparation materials or presentations and due dates of such.	
Part 3. Challenge	
Challenge Description: Identify and record the anticipated or realized challenge that the communication plan will address.	<p>A high school student is having dinner with their family. Their parent asks their child how their school day was, and what they learned. The student replies, “In sex ed class today, we talked about abortion.”</p> <p>Their parent is surprised that abortion came up as a topic and feels unprepared to ask about the context in which abortion came up or any specific information about the lesson until they work on their Positive Prevention PLUS homework together.</p> <p>Later that evening, after doing their 3Ps parent-student homework, the parent logs into the Concerned Citizens of the County Facebook group and posts a public message: “Did you know that our schools are teaching our children about abortion? I am really concerned about that. Our family is pro-life. Who’s with me?”</p>
Challenge Makers: Identify and record the person, people, or group(s) that may present a challenge to the desired outcome.	
Challenge Outcome: Identify and record the desired outcome for the challenge.	
Challenge Messages: Craft and record messages (and any supporting sub-messages) specific to the anticipated or realized conservative challenge. While the challenge is specific, it is likely to be rooted in one or more of the five conservative principles: morality and values; limited government; local control; parent involvement; and anti-abortion.	
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Part 4. Communication Plan Monitoring	
Desired Outcome Achieved? Record the decision made by the decision makers in the scenario for this communication plan. Did they choose the desired outcome? Did they reject the desired outcome? Did they decide an alternative outcome?	
Message and Messenger Successes: Reflect and record what messages seemed to be more effective in persuading decision makers and assuaging challenge makers. Reflect and record which messengers seemed to be more effective in communicating the messages.	
Message and Messenger Opportunities for Improvement: Reflect and record what messages seemed to be less effective in persuading decision makers and assuaging challenge makers. Reflect and record which messengers were less effective in communicating the messages.	
Communication Plan Process Successes: Reflect and record what went well in planning and delivering the communication plan.	

<p>Communication Plan Process Opportunities for Improvement:</p> <p>Reflect and record what could be improved in planning and delivering the communication plan.</p>	
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COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING
TO REACH
PUBLIC POLICY COMMON GROUND ON ADOLESCENT
SEXUAL HEALTH



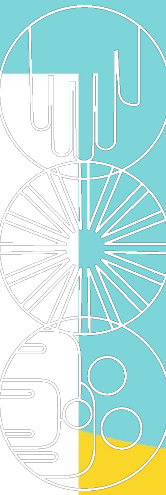
#HealthyTeen21 Annual Conference

Healthy Teen Network

FUNDING ACKNOWLEDGMENT & DISCLAIMER

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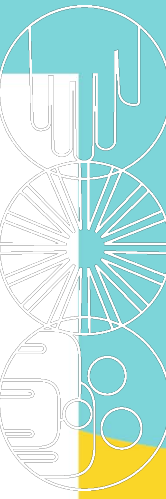




SESSION DESCRIPTION

Let's face it. No matter where you live or what you or your organization does in the sexual health space, when it comes to working with youth, there is always somebody or somebodies who have concerns...about what you are "promoting," how much say do parents have, and so it goes.

Sometimes those concerns are raised by people and groups who have a conservative perspective. Let's be proactive and prepare to make our case for positive youth sexual health education and services, in the event of potential reservations.

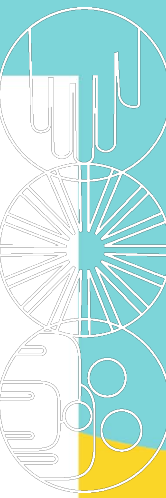


WHY ARE WE HERE?

- Introduce True You Maryland
- Introduce guiding principles of conservatism
- Introduce Finding Common Ground Communication Planning Worksheet
- Demonstrate an application of worksheet
- Allow time for rapid practice on use of worksheet

TRUE YOU MARYLAND PROJECT GOAL

- Decrease teen birth and STI rates and health disparities among youth in six rural Maryland counties using a systems-thinking approach—including *parents/caregivers/trusted adults and youth*—optimal health model, and evidence-based intervention.
- Funded by Office of Population Affairs, Teen Pregnancy Prevention Tier 1 grant, as administered by the Maryland Department of Health.





ISSUE BRIEF

FINDING COMMON GROUND

AN OVERVIEW ON KEY CONSERVATIVE PRINCIPLES
TO SUPPORT SHARED GOALS FOR ADOLESCENT
SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH



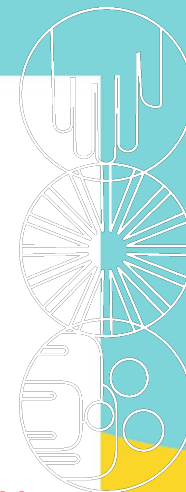
Healthy Teen Network

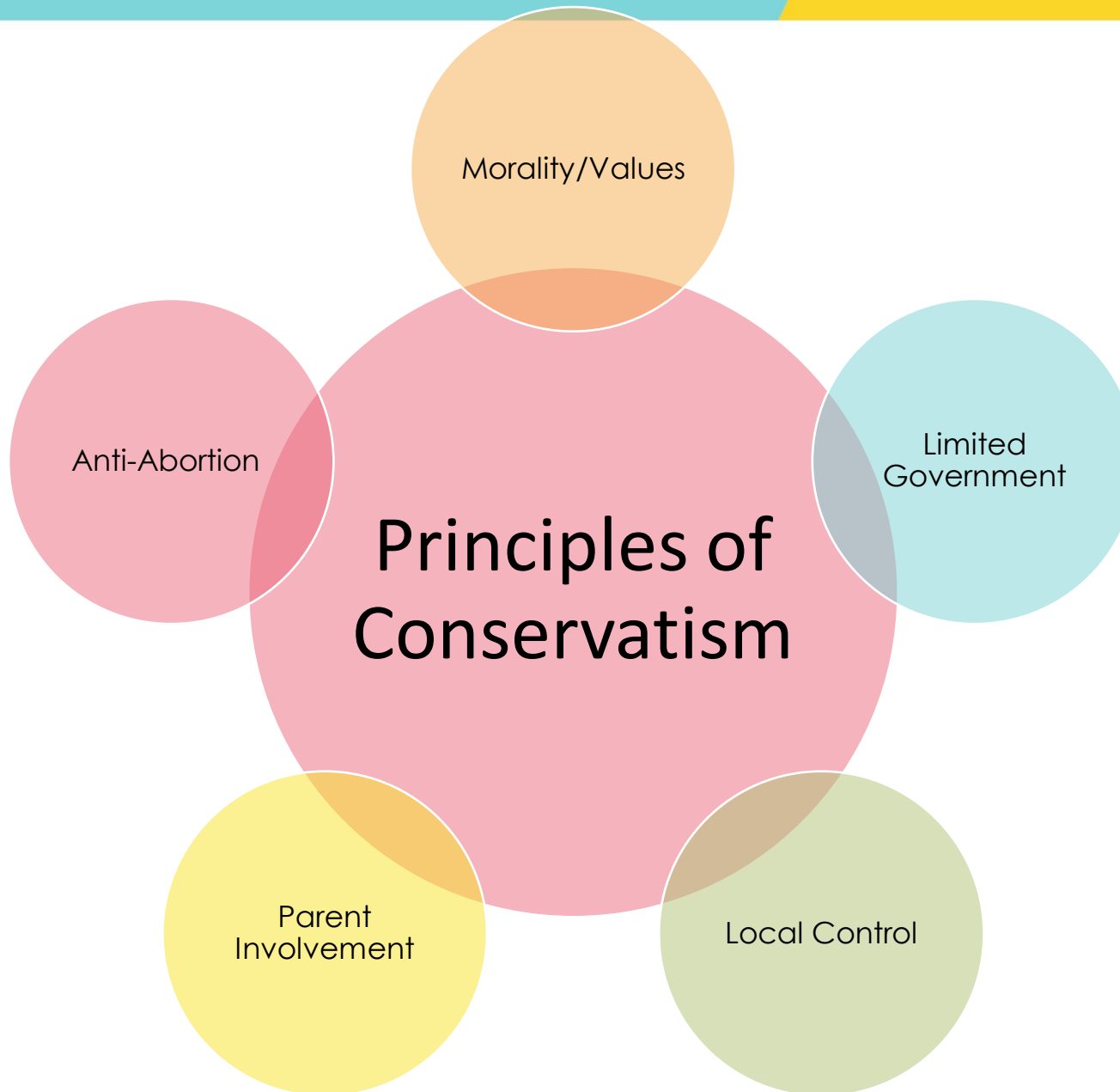
Issue Brief:

<https://www.healthyteennetwork.org/resources/finding-common-ground/>

Webinar Series:

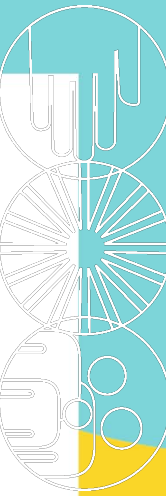
<https://www.healthyteennetwork.org/resources/navigating-politics-public-health/>



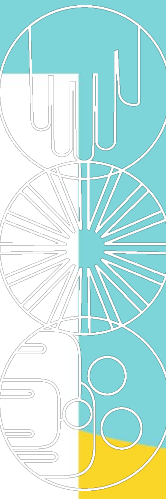


MORALITY/VALUES

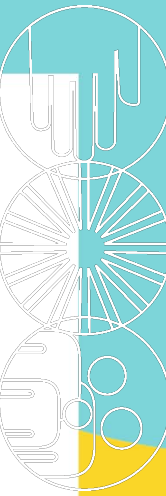
- Traditional family values and morals as a guiding principle
- Regularly attend church; foundation of their life
- Natural Law Theory – supersedes human law; fundamental to Christian teaching; St. Thomas Aquinas



COMMON GROUND ON MORALITY/VALUES



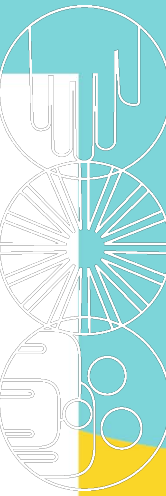
- **Age-Appropriate**: focus on curriculum or service and its age-appropriate content
- **Proven Effective**: Comprehensive sexuality education does not lead to more sexual behavior
- **Voter Support**: majority of voters – across the political spectrum – support comprehensive sex education



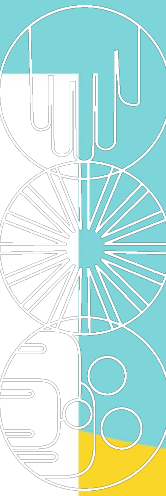
LIMITED GOVERNMENT

- Rights come from God, not Government
- 10th Amendment Focus – federalism
- Wary of federal power/overreach
- Focus on local government, not distant federal government
 - Fiscally, a more limited gov't requires less funding
 - Big government = less freedom, higher taxes, and crowds out the private sector
- Personal responsibility

COMMON GROUND ON LIMITED GOV'T



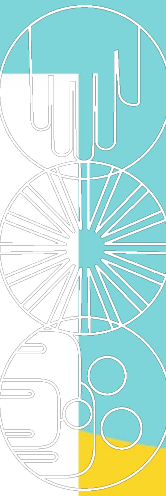
- **Fiscal Impact:** focus on opportunities to save taxpayer funds
- **Credible Messengers:** partner with more conservative-leaning organizations or individuals when possible
- **Personal Responsibility:** by educating young adults, we're preparing them to be personally responsible



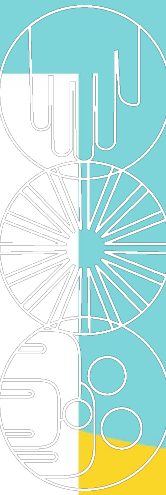
LOCAL CONTROL

- Conservatives prefer local control to state/federal involvement
- Local government is closer to the people they represent and therefore better able to serve them
- Local government should not be able to reduce freedom or violate fundamental rights
- Easier to hold locally-elected officials accountable than far-away lawmakers in Washington

COMMON GROUND ON LOCAL CONTROL

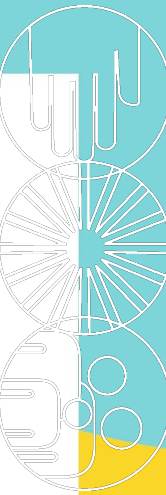


- **Engaging in the Community:** provide opportunities for community leaders to engage in your work
- **Transparency:** allow anyone to see first-hand the work that you're doing to impact teen lives
- **Provide Examples of Local Partnerships:** systems teams, youth advisory boards, etc.
- **Personal Stories/Testimonials**



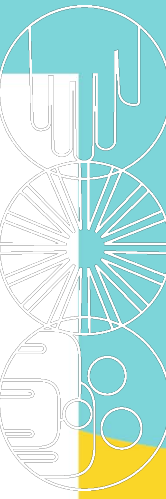
PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- Conservatives fear the encroachment of government into their lives
- Parents should be the ultimate decision-makers in their child's life with little to no government intervention
- Parents should be able to educate/influence their children on religious/moral ideas
- Age of consent/access – parents need to be involved before the age of 18 and should have the right to remove their child from sexual health courses



COMMON GROUND ON PARENT INVOLVEMENT

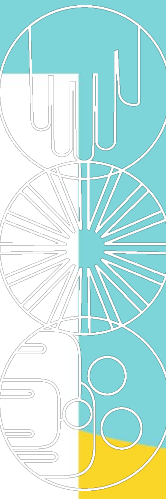
- **Support Parent Involvement:** emphasize the desire to have parents involved
- **Health Benefits of Curriculum:** provide factual and complete information
- **Empower Parents:** identify areas for empowering parents with information/resources to feel more comfortable engaging with their teen



ANTI-ABORTION

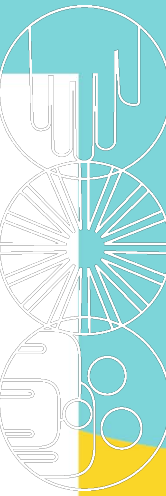
- One of the most distinguishing characteristics of conservatives is their anti-abortion stance
- Over 65% of conservatives are anti-abortion
- Belief that life begins at conception
- Moral/legal considerations relating to abortion
- Religious perspectives

COMMON GROUND ON ABORTION



- **Full Options Counseling Includes Adoption:** emphasize partnerships with adoption agencies
- **Focus on Prevention:** emphasize access to condoms, birth control, and information for teens
- **Data Talk:** focus on the national drop in teen pregnancies in relation to increased access to sexual and reproductive health services

COMMON GROUND COMMUNICATION PLANNING WORKSHEET



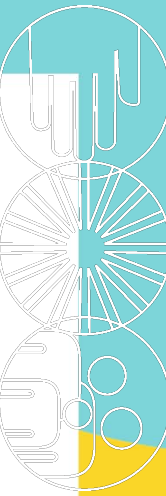
Resource to help organizations:

- Plan, implement, and monitor communications about adolescent sexual health to various audiences
- Plan proactive or reactive communications
- Applicable to communicating with all audiences
- Assists organizations in crafting messages to conservative audiences

DEMONSTRATION: COMMUNICATION PLANNING

- Present sample challenge
- Present sample communication plan
- Follow along:

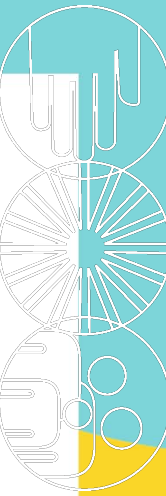
[Download Handout 1 from the Conference Hub](#)



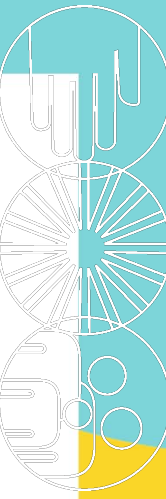
CHALLENGE DESCRIPTION

The Board of Education holds public meetings. The meetings include segments where members of the public may comment on matters on the published agenda for the meeting, or any other matter of concern to the individual. Members of the public may register in advance to speak, or they may sign up on site.

Sexual health is a “socially sensitive” topic generally. The health education supervisor for the school district anticipates several members of the public will speak in opposition to Positive Prevention PLUS (3Ps) being added to the district’s health education program. Members of the Board of Education will want to respond to those community members’ positions as they deliberate whether to approve inclusion of 3Ps in the district’s health education program.



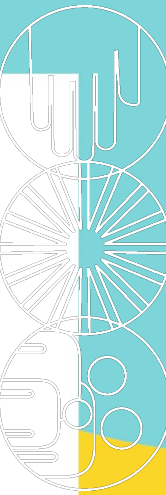
COMMUNICATION PLAN ADMINISTRATION



- Communication Plan Title
- Communication Plan Date
- Lead Person
- Team Members
- Document Location
- Plan Resources Location

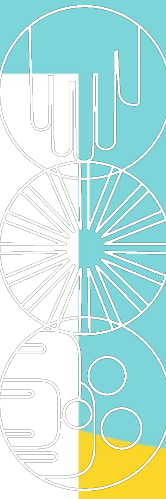
COMMUNICATION SCENARIO

- Scenario Description
- Decision Makers
- Desired Outcome
- Desired Messages
- Desired Messengers
- Desired Message Delivery Method/Dates
- Desired Messenger Preparation Method/Dates

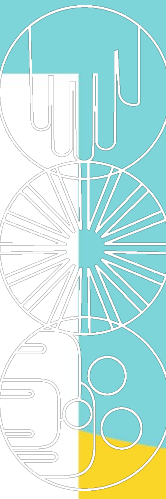


CHALLENGE SCENARIO

- Challenge Description
- Challenge Makers
- Challenge Outcome
- Challenge Messages
- Challenge Messengers
- Challenge Message Delivery Method/Dates
- Challenge Messenger Preparation Method/Dates



COMMUNICATION PLAN MONITORING



- Desired Outcome Achieved?
- Message and Messenger Successes
- Message and Messenger Opportunities for Improvement
- Communication Plan Process Successes
- Communication Plan Process Opportunities for Improvement

ACTIVITY: RAPID COMMUNICATION PLAN



- Presenter will present challenge scenario
- Attendees will use private time to sketch a communication plan responsive to the challenge
- Concentrate on crafting “challenge messages”
- Apply five principles of conservatism to crafting challenge messages
- Time allotted: 10 Minutes

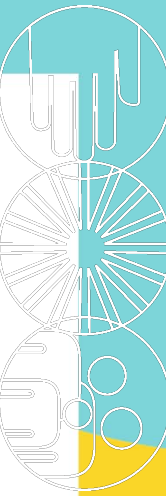
[Download Handout 2 from the Conference Hub](#)

CHALLENGE DESCRIPTION

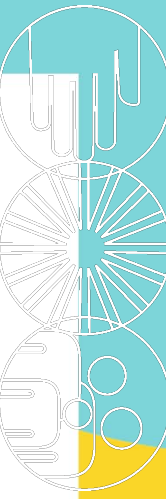
A high school student is having dinner with their family. Their parent asks their child how their school day was, and what they learned. The student replies, “In sex ed class today, we talked about abortion.”

Their parent is surprised that abortion came up as a topic and feels unprepared to ask about the context in which abortion came up or any specific information about the lesson until they work on their Positive Prevention PLUS homework together.

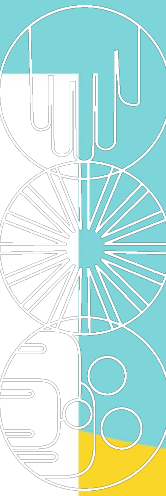
Later that evening, after doing their 3Ps parent-student homework, the parent logs into the Concerned Citizens of the County Facebook group and posts a public message: “Did you know that our schools are teaching our children about abortion? I am really concerned about that. Our family is pro-life. Who’s with me?”



REPORT OUT



- When developing challenge messages:
 - Did you apply some of the principles of conservatism?
 - How helpful did you find those principles to crafting your messages?
- How helpful did you find the communication planning worksheet?
- How likely are you to use it as a resource?



RESOURCES

- Common Ground Communication Planning Worksheet, sample scenarios and plans, and presentation:
<https://www.healthyteennetwork.org/resources/finding-common-ground>
- Finding Common Ground Issue Brief:
<https://www.healthyteennetwork.org/resources/finding-common-ground>
- Finding Common Ground webinar series:
<https://www.healthyteennetwork.org/resources/navigating-politics-public-health/>