

MYTH-INFORMATION GAME: BIRTH CONTROL

Purpose: To have participants differentiate between facts and myths about methods of birth control.

Materials: Small prizes; Kit of birth control methods; Optional LCD projector and laptop; PowerPoint Presentation: *Methods of Birth Control*; Facilitator Resources: *Myth/Fact Statements* and *Facilitator's Guide to Birth Control*; Handouts: *Birth Control Facts* and *Birth Control Methods PPT*

Time: 45 minutes

Facilitator Notes:

1. This session builds on the previous session, *Planning for Children I*. Ideally, there are no couples attending this session who did not attend the earlier session. However, stuff happens, so you may end up with a couple who missed the earlier session. If that happens, please briefly review the following points with those “new” couples.
 - Last week we started a brief program that we’re calling *Planning for Children*. The goal is to help you take charge of timing any future pregnancies so you can reach your goals and become stable as a family.
 - We are not pushing any point of view and recognize that you have the right to have as many children as you want, whenever you want.
 - Our goal is to help you decide **what you want**; to consider what your current and any future children need from you; and to get on the same page as a couple so you can have a shared vision and plan for your family in advance of any surprises.
 - We’re going to start where you are... so don’t worry... wherever you are, that’s where we’re going to meet you.
2. Do some research to identify the Title X family planning health centers in your community. You can find Planned Parenthood clinics by calling 1-800-230-PLAN or go to the National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association website: http://nfprha.org/main/about_us.cfm?Category=Member_Clinic_Directory&Section=Main to get a listing of Title X family planning health centers. Call some of the clinics to inquire about their services for low-income women and men. Find out if Medicaid recipients have access to all the methods of birth control or if there are limitations. Also, find out if the health center has any pamphlets, charts, or birth control kits that you can borrow. It’s nice (but not mandatory) to have a birth control kit containing samples of the various methods for the session.
3. The *Birth Control Facts* handout was developed by ETR Associates. You can order copies of this low-cost pamphlet from their website: <http://pub.etr.org/ProductDetails.aspx?ProdID=137>.
4. Read the facilitator resource material thoroughly to get comfortable with the information. It’s great if you are knowledgeable enough to give the explanations for each myth/fact statement without reading. However, it’s better to read the explanation than to give an inaccurate or unclear message about the statement you’re discussing.
5. The *Myth-Information Game* is a fun way to dispel myths and give additional information about birth control. Your goal is to listen to participants, confront myths, and make sure that they have overall knowledge of birth control methods, especially those that are long-acting and most effective. At the end of the game, be sure to show the slide that compares the effectiveness of all of the methods.

6. Obtain some small prizes for the winners of the *Myth-Information Game*, for example, picture frames or small photo albums from the dollar store.
7. We have included a PowerPoint presentation that accompanies the *Myth-Information Game* to provide visuals of the various birth control methods you will be discussing. We strongly encourage you to use the PowerPoint if at all possible. If you are using the PowerPoint, set up the LCD projector and make sure everything is working properly. There are slides that correspond with some of the myth/fact statements and you will see those references noted on the facilitator resource: *Myth/Fact Statements*. Review the myth/fact statements and the slides carefully to see how they need to be tied together. If you don't have access to an LCD projector, you must make copies of the PowerPoint handouts. If you don't have either the PowerPoint presentation or handouts, participants will not be able to actually see diagrams of the methods you're discussing and the activity will be less effective.
8. When conducting this entire session, keep in mind that some of the couples might already be using a method fairly consistently, some may be using a method inconsistently, some may be trying to get pregnant, and some may be very open to finding a method that could work for them.

Procedure:

1. **Check-in and Energizer (15 minutes):** Welcome participants to the second session, *Planning for Children II*. (Note: If you have any "new" couples who didn't attend the previous session, do some stage setting with them as outlined in Planning Note #1. Ask some of the couples who were present last session to describe what they did to the "new" couples.) Do a brief check in:

- Ask if any couples talked about planning for children after they left the session or during the week. If so, what kinds of things did they discuss?

Give an overview of today's session:

- We're going to play a myth/fact game. You say you're already very knowledgeable about birth control, so this will be a good test of your knowledge.
 - We're also going to discuss and possibly role-play some challenging situations (related to using and being consistent with birth control) that couples might find themselves in.
 - Finally, we'll have you sit down and put a plan together for how you'll plan and space any future pregnancies in order to accomplish family goals.
2. Conduct a brief energizer called "Values Voting" that will get group members up out of their seats and talking about their attitudes about birth control. Give these instructions:
 - I will read a statement. Decide whether you agree or disagree with it.
 - If you agree, you will come stand here (point to a position in the room); if you disagree, you will stand here (point to a different position a little distance away). There is no unsure position, so decide which way you're leaning.
 - When everyone has chosen a position, you take turns telling us why you chose this position.

Read the statement: "Postponing having children in order to accomplish your personal or financial goals is selfish." (Note: An alternative statement to read would be: "It's OK for a couple to actively plan to have another baby even though they are struggling to support the child(ren) they already have.")

Have participants get up and vote on whether they agree or disagree with the statement. Ask them to

go with their gut and not to worry about where anyone else is standing. Ask each individual to give a very short explanation of their position on the statement. Have participants return to their seats and discuss their reactions:

- How did your views compare with your partner's and how do you feel about that?
- How have your beliefs and opinions about this issue affected your behavior?

Note: As an alternative to the “Values Voting” process, you might just do a temperature check with the group by reading the statement and asking each person in the group to say if they agree or disagree and why.

3. **Myth-Information Game (30 minutes):** Explain how the *Myth-Information Game* will work:

- I'm going to put you in teams to see who knows the most about birth control. (Note: you can choose teams however you want: have each couple join another couple to make teams of four people; or just form two or three teams randomly.)
- Each team will choose a spokesperson.
- I will read some statements about birth control. Put your heads together and decide as a team if you think the statement is a fact or a myth and why.
- Teams will take turns giving answers. When you give your answer, you have to say why the statement is a fact or a myth.
- After about 30 seconds, I'll ask the spokesperson for your answer.
- If it's your turn and you're right, your team gets a point. The team with the most points wins a small prize.

Form the teams and begin reading statements. Be sure to fully discuss the explanations for each statement and the facts behind any myths. Also refer to PowerPoint slides either on the screen or on handouts as directed in the facilitator resource. If you have actual methods, show them as you discuss the various statements. Encourage participants' comments and feedback during the game.

4. At the end of the game, you will be showing PowerPoint slide #14 which compares the different methods of birth control in order of effectiveness and slide #15 which lists priorities for choosing a method. Ask: What would you be most concerned about (priorities) when deciding which of these methods to use? Expect responses such as: a) how hard is it to use? b) are there any health risks? c) will it really prevent pregnancy? Weave some of these points into the discussion as appropriate:
- If your biggest concern is not getting pregnant, you would want to use a highly effective method such as the implant, IUD, shot, pill, ring, or patch.
 - If you need something really easy without much to remember, then the longer-acting methods like the implant, IUD, or shot are good options.
 - If you're concerned about birth control methods making you fat, weigh that against the kind of weight gain that can come along with pregnancy.
 - If you have concerns about hormones, the ParaGard Copper T IUD doesn't have hormones and is effective for up to 10 years. The long-acting methods are really great for busy parents and they are easily reversed!

- If you don't have Medicaid or other insurance, then birth control can be expensive. Some clinics provide contraception on a sliding scale. Compare the cost of using contraception with the cost of having and raising a child.
 - If you're a man who wants to take on more responsibility for preventing pregnancy, you could make sure you use a condom every time you have sex, or be very precise about using withdrawal, or, if you're ready for something permanent, get a vasectomy.
 - If you're concerned about preventing STIs/HIV, remember condoms protect against disease. The other methods only work to prevent pregnancy. So use condoms and another method of contraception.
 - If none of the methods seem like good options and it's not important to be able to have children in the future, then permanent methods might be the best choice.
5. After all the statements have been discussed, determine which team won the game and give the prizes. Ask the questions below.

Discussion Questions:

1. What methods would you consider using at this point? (Note: If anyone is already using a method successfully, ask them to talk about their experience.)
2. What do you want to talk with your partner about when it comes to birth control?