

PARTNER CONVERSATIONS: MAKING A PLAN

Purpose: To have couples create a plan for spacing any future pregnancies in order to reach family goals and achieve family stability.

Materials: Handouts: *Our Family Plan* and *Planning for Children Post-Survey*

Time: 40 minutes

Procedure:

1. **Introduction (2 minutes):** Tell participants that the *Planning for Children* module is nearing an end. Make these points:
 - We hope we've demonstrated to you that taking charge and spacing any future pregnancies can help you:
 - Reduce health problems related to reproduction.
 - Reduce financial pressures and give you time to create the kind of home that you want for your family.
 - Reduce the pressures on you as a couple.
 - Give you time to invest in the children you already have.
 - This is the last time in the program that you will sit together to map out your plan for timing any additional children you decide together that you want to have in a way that will help you reach family goals.
 - Hopefully, this will become a regular topic of conversation in your relationship.

Distribute the handout, *Our Family Plan* and review it by reading the questions aloud. Give these instructions:

- Sit together as a couple facing each other, knee to knee.
 - Take turns sharing your responses to each question on the handout.
 - When your partner is talking, use your listening skills to make sure you are really hearing what they are saying.
 - We're going to be checking in with each couple to see how the conversation is going and provide any support that you might want.
2. **Partner Conversations (20 minutes):** Float around observing the couples. After about 8 minutes, start checking in with each of the couples. Plan to sit down with each couple for a couple of minutes to hear what they are thinking and support them in their planning process.
 3. **Processing (10 minutes):** Reconvene the group. Find out how things went for the couples. Ask a few volunteers to share their plan. If time allows and couples are willing, have them all share their plans briefly. If the couples are working with case managers, encourage them to share their plans with their case manager. Discuss the activity with these questions:
 - How easy or challenging was it to make this plan together?

- What are some things that might come up that could throw a monkey wrench in your plans? (Encourage the couples to check in with each other every few months—or more often—to make sure they are on track.)
 - How can you bounce back when a plan gets off-track?
4. **Evaluation and Closure (8 minutes):** Distribute the post-surveys and review them. Tell participants that these are very similar to the forms they completed at the beginning of the last session. Explain that by comparing answers you will be able to get a sense of how the session affected them. Collect the surveys and thank participants for completing them.

Spend the final few minutes asking the group to reflect on the *Planning for Children* sessions. Ask:

- What was most helpful to you about the sessions?
- How will you actually use anything from the sessions?
- What was not so helpful? What suggestions or recommendations do you have for improving these sessions?

Write their responses on a chart and retain them for evaluation purposes. Note: After the program, you can compare the pre- and post-surveys to see if there are any differences in participants' responses at the end of the module.