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PERCEIVED CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF PREMARITAL SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP AND TEENAGE PREGNANCY AMONG IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN ILORIN METROPOLIS, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the perceived consequences of premarital sexual relationships and teenage pregnancy among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state. The study employed the descriptive survey research design. A total of 200 respondents comprising in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state from the targeted population were used in the study. Research instruments “Consequences of Premarital Sexual Relationship Questionnaire (CPSRQ) and “Teenage Pregnancy Questionnaire” (TPQQ) were used to collect necessary data. The collected data were analyzed using frequency count, percentage, Ranking Order, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The findings revealed that the desire for love and intimacy ranked first, as a cause of premarital sexual relationship and teenage pregnancy, while loss of virginity and disruption in education are the major consequences of premarital sexual relationship and teenage pregnancy among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis. The findings also demonstrated that there is a significant difference in the consequences of teenage pregnancy based on peer influence, but no significant association in the consequences of teenage pregnancy based on attitude toward teenage pregnancy. It was suggested that parents cultivate love, affection, and open communication with their adolescent children. By raising knowledge of the risks associated with teenage pregnancy, the government can also play a significant role. Policymakers can also incorporate sexuality education into the school curriculum.

Keywords: Attitude, Peer influence, Pre-marital Sexual Relationship, Teenage Pregnancy.

Background to the Study

Pre-marital sexual relationship and teenage pregnancy continue to be major public health concerns, especially in developing countries. The prevalence of premarital sexual relationship which may increase the occurrence of teenage pregnancy among in-school adolescents has become a pressing need for educators, healthcare providers, parents and policy makers.

(Eze, 2014; Ezeugwu and Ede 2016) revealed that poverty, peer influence, exposure to pornography, curiosity, sexual experimentation, lack of sex education and desire for pleasure were some of the causes of premarital sexual relationships and ultimately teenage pregnancy among in-school adolescents. Moreover, early sexual debut is believed to lead to a range of consequences for adolescents, ranging from Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), to unintended pregnancy, halt in education, social stigma, poor academic performance, mental health related issues and sometimes death due to unsafe abortion. Although sexual behaviour in adolescents is mostly due to the effect of sexual hormones at puberty leading to being attracted to the opposite sex, yet the role of psychosocial factors such as media, peer influence, self-esteem, drugs, alcohol, and family cannot be denied (Akililu, Shiferaw, & Meaza, 2015; Ezeugwu & Ede, 2016; Aleke, Ogbuinya, Omaka-Amari, Afoke, Igwenyi, Nwafor, Okeke, & Nchita, 2021).

According to Eze (2014), rigid moral standards, cultural standards, spiritual convictions, and societal influences seemed to be the limitations on sexual behavior that was socially and culturally unacceptable in Nigerian society. These limitations and penalties fostered a culture of silence and prohibited adults and teenagers from having an open conversation about sexuality or intimate relationships with the opposite sex. This frequently leads to teenagers having sex in secret without getting the right advice, which raises the risk of STIs and becoming pregnant as adolescents (Abdullahi & Abdulquadri, 2018; Agbodo, 2017; Oyediran, 2020).

Teenagers are in a critical stage of life where they seek social acceptance and frequently feel the need to fit in with their peers; as a result, they are influenced by their peers, exhibit low self-esteem, lack sex education, and are exposed to negative media portrayals of sexuality. Peer pressure is a major factor in determining the attitudes, behaviors, and decisions of adolescents, especially when it comes to relationships and sexual activity. Eventually, this can occasionally lead to dangerous behaviours, including early sexual debut, which increases the likelihood of teenage pregnancy as posited by several researchers (Adeniyi, & Adeniyi, 2017; Makinde, & Ahimie, 2018; Eze, 2014; Folahan, 2016).

Teenage motherhood, the burden of providing for the unplanned child, lifelong unhappiness, deteriorating mental health of teenagers, increased illiteracy, overpopulation, obstructed labour, increased risk of transmission of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) like HIV/AIDS, fertility complications, unwanted teenage pregnancy, disruption or halt in education, increased abortion rate, shame or guilt, poor academic performance, economic and emotional impacts, and reduced academic performance and potential death from unsafe abortion performed by quacks are just a few of the negative consequences of premarital sexual relationships among in-school adolescents, (Anene, Ojinaka, & Ndie, 2017; Igba, Nwafor, Elom, & Mgboro, 2018).

This study examined the perceived causes and consequences of pre-marital sexual activities and teenage pregnancy among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. Researchers have focused on the high rate of teenage pregnancy and the high level of indulgence in premarital sex among adolescents in (Adeniyi, & Adeniyi, 2017; Ogbueghu, 2017; Aleke, et al., 2021), but little research has been done on how adolescents themselves perceive these issues. By examining the perspectives of adolescent girls, this study bridges the gap between observable outcomes and lived experiences, and provides contextual insights that are crucial for educational and public health interventions.

Statement of the Problem

Premarital sexual relationships and teenage pregnancy among adolescent girls pose serious social and public health issues that have a profound impact on educational attainment, and personal growth. The problem manifests in multiple dimensions that calls for attention and intervention.

Teenage pregnancy and premarital sexual relationships among school-aged adolescent girls continue to rise despite several preventative efforts; this leads to higher school dropout rates, worse academic performance, and higher absenteeism from school. Complicated relationships, a lack of sex education, limited access to reproductive health care, socioeconomic constraints, peer pressure, low self-esteem, and a lack of awareness about sexual and reproductive health are some of the characteristics that define the problem. Education disruption, health problems, higher STI and pregnancy-related problem rates, social stigmatization, financial hardships, and psychological discomfort like sadness, anxiety, and suicide thoughts are just a few of the repercussions.

Previous research has often approached the issue from an adult perspective, which may have overlooked significant facets of adolescent views that could inform more effective solutions.

However, comprehensive data on how adolescents themselves perceive the causes and consequences of teenage pregnancy and premarital sex is lacking, particularly in educational contexts. This knowledge gap hinders the development of targeted, age-appropriate, and context-specific interventions that address the lived experiences and perspectives of adolescent girls. Therefore, this study, investigated the causes and consequences of premarital sexual relationship and teenage pregnancy among in-school adolescents in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State.

Purpose of the study

Specific objectives of the study include to:

1. Investigate the factors responsible for pre-marital sexual relationships and Teenage pregnancy as perceived by in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State.
2. Examine the consequences of pre-marital sexual relationship and teenage pregnancy as perceived by in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State .
3. Investigate the influence of attitude towards teenage pregnancy on the perceived causes of pre-marital sexual relationships by in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State .
4. Identify the role of peer influence on the perceived consequences of pre-marital sexual relationship and teenage pregnancy.

Research Questions

The research investigated the following:

1. What are the causes and consequences of premarital sexual relationships as perceived by in-school adolescents?
2. What are the causes and consequence teenage pregnancy as perceived by in-school adolescents?
3. How does the attitude toward teenage pregnancy influence the perception of consequences of teenage Pregnancy?
4. In what ways does peer influence affect the perceptions of consequences premarital sexual relationships and teenage pregnancy?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

1. There is no significant difference in the perceived consequences of pre-marital sexual relationship among In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state based on attitude toward teenage pregnancy.
2. Peer influence does not significantly alter the perceived consequences of a teenage pregnancy among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state
3. There is no significant difference in the perceived consequences of pre-marital sexual relationship among In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state based on attitude toward teenage pregnancy.
4. There is no significant difference in the perceived consequences of teenage pregnancy among In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state based on peer influence.

Methodology

The research design for this study is the descriptive survey design. The population for the study consisted of 10,870 in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state. 200 in-school adolescents across the three Local Government Areas in Ilorin metropolis were selected using multi stage sampling process. Self-designed questionnaires tagged “Causes and Consequences of Pre-marital Sexual Relationship and Teenage Pregnancy Questionnaire” (CCPSRTPQ) which consisted of three sections: demographic data, perceived causes, and perceived consequences on a 4-point Likert scale, and “Peer influence and Attitude towards Teenage Pregnancy Questionnaire”(PIATTPQ) which consisted of three sections: demographic data, Peer influence, and Attitude towards Teenage Pregnancy Statements on a 4-point Likert scale were used to elicit information from respondents. The instruments were validated by three specialists in Educational Foundations and Health

Education . The test-retest approach was used to determine the instruments' reliability, yielding reliability indices of 0.86 and 0.85, respectively. The demographic information of the respondents was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages, and all researched questions were answered using Spearman Ranking Order and Analysis of Variance.

Results

Researcher Question 1 What are the causes of pre-marital sexual relationship as perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State?

Table 1 Mean and Rank Order of the causes of pre-marital sexual relationship as perceived by in-school adolescents

S/N	Causes of Pre-marital Sexual Relationship as Perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state, Ilorin, Nigeria.	Mean	Rank
5.	Desire for love and intimacy	3.15	1 st
4.	Exposure to Pornography	3.15	1 st
1.	Negative Peer influence	3.10	3 rd
2.	Social media Influence	2.90	4 th
3.	Curiosity and sexual exploration	2.80	5 th
8.	Lack of sex education	2.75	6 th
9.	Moral Values Decadence	2.60	7 th
7.	Poor parental supervision	2.55	8 th
6.	Poor provision of adequate sexuality education materials	2.53	9 th
10.	Poverty	2.52	10 th

Table 1, revealed that all the 10 items identified by the researcher are mostly the causes of teenage pre-marital sexual relationship as perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state. However, the causes of premarital sexual relationships were

placed first, third, and fourth, respectively, for items 5 and 4 (both having the same mean score of 3.15), 1 (mean score of 3.10), and 2 (mean score of 3.05). The following is the order of the items: Desire for love and intimacy, exposure to pornography, social media influence, curiosity and sexual exploration, lack of sex education, Moral values decadence, poverty etc. Teenage premarital sexual relationships are caused by a number of the previously mentioned variables as well as others.

Research Question 2 What are the causes of teenage pregnancy as perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state?

Table 2 Mean and Rank Order of the causes of Teenage Pregnancy as Perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state

S/N	Factors responsible for Teenage Pregnancy as Perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state, Ilorin, Nigeria.	Mean	Rank
	Desire for love and intimacy	4.15	1 st
	Influx of pornography	4.15	1 st
	Increase in sexual urge as a result of Physiological changes at puberty	4.10	3 rd
	Moral Laxity	3.90	4 th
	No information about sex education	3.80	5 th
	Low self -esteem	3.75	6 th
	Lack of Information about how the body works	3.60	7 th
	Lack of adequate sexuality education	3.55	8 th
	Early Sexual Initiation	3.53	9 th
	Ignorance about sexual knowledge	3.52	10 th

Table 2 revealed that all the 10 items identified by the researcher are mostly on factors responsible for teenage pregnancy as perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state. However, items 4 and 3 (with same mean score of 4.15), 5 (with mean score of 4.10) and 4 (with mean score of 3.90) which were ranked 1st, 3rd and 4th are the causes of teenage pregnancy. The items indicated in the following order: desire for love and intimacy, influx of pornography, increase in sexual urge as a result of Physiological changes at puberty lack of information about how the body works, moral laxity, no information about sex education among others.

Research Question 3 What are the Consequences of Pre-marital Sexual Relationship as perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state?’

Table 3: Mean and Rank Order of the Consequences of Pre-marital Sexual Relationship as Perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state

S/N	Consequences of Pre-marital Sexual Relationship as Perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state, Ilorin, Kwara State	Mean	Rank
	Loss of Virginity	4.45	1 st
	Susceptibility to Sexually Transmitted Infections	4.30	2 nd
	Risk of Unintended/Unwanted Pregnancy	4.10	3 rd
	Social stigma/Shame	3.90	4 th
	Relationship Strain /Lack of Trust by future partner	3.80	5 th
	Poor Academic Performance	3.75	6 th
	Abortion	3.60	7 th
	Clash with parents/Parental disapproval	3.55	8 th
	Possible Death from unsafe abortion	3.53	9 th
	Promiscuous Behaviour	3.52	10 th

Table 3 revealed that all the 10 items identified by the researcher as mostly the consequences of teenage pregnancy as perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state. In terms of consequences of teenage pregnancy, items 4 (with a mean score of 4.45), 2 (with a mean score of 4.30) and 1 (with a mean score of 4.10) were ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively. The following is the order of the items: Loss of virginity, susceptibility to Sexually Transmitted Infections, Risk of unintended/unwanted pregnancy, social stigma, Relationship strain etc. Adolescents are sometimes involved in pre-marital sexual relationship with little or no knowledge of the several consequences.

Research Question 4 What are the Consequences of Teenage Pregnancy as perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state?

Table 4: Mean and Rank Order of the Consequences of Teenage Pregnancy as Perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state

Consequences of Teenage pregnancy as Perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state, Ilorin, Kwara State	Mean	Rank
Disruption in Education	4.55	1 st
Complications in pregnancy	4.30	2 nd
Emotional stress	4.10	3 rd
Social stigma/Shame	3.90	4 th
Increased rate of single-parenthood	3.80	5 th
Increased rate of circle of poverty	3.75	6 th
Abortion/Possible Death from unsafe abortion	3.60	7 th
Clash with parents/Parental disapproval	3.55	8 th
Limited Job opportunities	3.53	9 th
Strained relationship with Parents	3.52	10 th

Table 4 revealed that all the 10 items identified by the researcher are mostly on the consequences of teenage pregnancy as perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state. Among the consequences of teenage pregnancy, items 2 (with a mean score of 4.55), 4 (with a mean score of 4.30) and 1 (with a mean score of 4.10) which were ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively. The items indicated in the following order: Disruption in education, risk of sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancy, school dropout, abortion, clash with parents, are the items listed sequentially. Adolescents need to be educated about the adverse consequences of teenage pregnancy.

Testing of Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the consequences of premarital sexual relationship as perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state based on attitude toward teenage pregnancy.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the consequences of premarital sexual relationship as perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state based on attitude toward teenage pregnancy

Teenage Pregnancy	Sum of Squares	df	Mean squares	Calculated f-ratio	Critical f-ratio
Between Groups	450.250	2	150.083		
Within Groups	14300.750	197	72.614	3.12	2.60
Total	14751.000	199			

Table 5 shows that at 0.05 level of significance, the calculated f-ratio of 3.12 is greater than the critical f-ratio of 2.60. A significant difference in the perceived consequences of

premarital sexual relationships based on attitude toward teenage pregnancy is thus indicated by the rejection of hypothesis one, which claims that there is no significant difference in the consequences of premarital sexual relationships as perceived by in-school adolescents in Ilorin, Kwara state.

Hypothesis II: There is no significant difference in the consequences of teenage pregnancy as perceived by in-school adolescents based on attitude toward teenage pregnancy.

Table 6: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the consequences of teenage pregnancy as perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state the basis of attitude toward teenage pregnancy.

Teenage Pregnancy	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	Cal. F-val.	Crit. F-val.	Remark
Between Group	458.908	2	152.969			Not
Within Group	84699.087	197	108.728	1.41	3.04	Rejected
Total	85157.995	199				

Table 6 shows that at 0.05 level of significance the calculated F-value of 1.41 is less than the critical F-value of 3.04. This indicates no significant difference; hence, the hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there was no significant difference in the consequences of teenage pregnancy as perceived by in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropoli, Kwara State on the basis of attitude towards teenage pregnancy.

Hypothesis III: There is no significant difference in the consequences of premarital sexual relationship as perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state based on peer influence.

Table 7: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the consequences of premarital sexual relationship as perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state the basis of peer influence.

Peer Influence	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	Cal. F-val.	Crit. F-val.	Remark
Between Group	380.40	2	190.200	2.85	2.60	Not
Within Group	13210.60	197	67.080			Accepted
Total	13591.60	199				

Table 7 demonstrates, at the 0.05 level of significance, the calculated F-value of 2.85 is higher than the critical F-value of 2.60 at 0.05 alpha level. This indicates a significant difference; hence, the hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the consequences of teenage pregnancy as perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state based on peer influence.

Hypothesis IV: There is no significant difference in the consequences of teenage pregnancy as perceived by in-school adolescents based on peer influence.

Table 8: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the consequences of teenage pregnancy as perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state based on peer influence

Peer Influence	Sum of Squares	df	Mean squares	Calculated f-ratio	Critical f-ratio
Between Groups	214.25	2	71.42		
Within Groups	14432.71	197	73.64	0.970	2.60
Total	14646.96	199			

Table 8 shows that at the 0.05 level of significance, the calculated f-ratio of 0.970 is less than the critical f-ratio of 2.60. Therefore, hypotheses three which states that there is no significant difference in the consequences of premarital sexual relationship as perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state on the basis of peer influence is therefore accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The findings on research Question 1, on the causes of premarital sexual relationship by in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State revealed that the desire for love and affection, exposure to pornography, negative peer influence among others, push some adolescents to engage in pre-marital sexual relationship. Adolescence is a time of curiosity and exploration, hence adolescents sometimes engage in pre-marital sexual relationships in response to love and affection from partners, while others as a result being aroused from watching pornography movies are not able to manage their feelings, so they may try out sexual activity with any available partner.

Findings in the study revealed that moral laxity, lack of sex education, influx of pornography, lack of information about how the body works, low self-esteem, as agree to the findings of Upreti and Achaya (2020) were factors responsible for teenagers' pregnancy and pre-marital sexual relationships.

Based on Research Question 2, the research affirmed that some of the consequence of pre-marital sexual relationship are abortion, susceptibility to sexually transmitted infections, loss of virginity, risk of unwanted/unwanted pregnancy among others. In research question four, it is revealed that disruption in education, complication in pregnancy, emotional stress, increased rate of single-hood are consequences of teenage pregnancy. It implies that when teenagers engage in pre-marital sex, she is likely to lose her virginity, become susceptible to STIs, experience disruption in education. This finding is in agreement with that of who affirmed Teferra, Erena and Kebede (2015) that teenagers who engage in pre-marital sex are likely to have multiple sex partners.

Based on Research Question 3, the study established that based on attitude towards teenage pregnancy, there was no significant difference in the consequences of premarital sexual relationship as perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state. According to the findings of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), the null hypothesis was rejected. This supports the findings of Ugoji (2014), Adegboyega and Jacob (2017) on the consequences of premarital sexual relationship in secondary schools.

According to research hypothesis 2, which states that there is no significant difference in the consequences of teenage pregnancy as perceived by in-school adolescents on the basis of attitude towards teenage pregnancy. This suggests that attitude towards teenage pregnancy did not influence the perception of In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis on the consequences of teenage pregnancy. This supports the finding of Ajaegbu (2015) that literate

adults in two selected cities in Ghana have similar perception towards the consequences of teenage pregnancy in relation to their attitude towards teenage pregnancy.

Based on Research Question 4, the study revealed that on the basis of peer influence, there is no significant difference in the consequences of premarital sexual relationship as perceived by In-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state. The null hypothesis was however rejected, since the result of the Analysis of Variance ANOVA used revealed that adolescents who reported high levels of negative peer influence were significantly more likely to engage in pre-marital sexual relationships. The research hypothesis 4, stated that there is no significant difference in the consequences of teenage pregnancy as perceived by in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state on the basis of peer influence. Hence the hypothesis was accepted since no significant difference was found.

This indicates that in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, were of the opinion that teenage pregnancy has high consequences on the adolescent girl's mental development. The conclusion of this is that in-school adolescents perceive that consequences of teenage pregnancy are not affected by peer influence. The findings however, contradict the study of Chiazor, Ozoya, Idowu, Udume and Osagide (2017) which revealed that peer influence affected adolescents' perception of the consequences of teenage pregnancy.

Conclusion

Teenage pregnancy has intense consequences on the psychosocial and physical well-being of adolescent girls. When teenage girls become pregnant, they are frequently forced to change their life plans, sometimes abandoning their educational and personal goals. Numerous adverse consequences, such as school dropout, maternal mortality, infertility, abortion, and child abandonment, may result from this unplanned motherhood. Teenage mothers also deal with a lot of health issues, low self-esteem, abuse, and neglect, all of which have an impact on their psychosocial development and that of their children. Teenage pregnancy is caused

by a number of factors, such as lack of knowledge about sex and sexuality, moral laxity, desire for wealth, and unrealistic expectations. Teenagers must be equipped with life skills and thorough education on relationships, sex, and reproductive health in order to lessen these challenges and navigate through adolescence seamlessly. Sexuality education can empower teenagers to make informed decisions about their bodies, health, and future.

Recommendations

From the accomplishments and results of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parent should foster open communication, love, and affection with their children through regular quality time, active listening, and positive reinforcement.
2. Policymakers should integrate age-appropriate sex education into school curricula to empower informed decision-making.
3. A supportive family dynamic should be established by promoting kindness, self-esteem, and individuality through shared meals, skill-building activities, and constructive feedback.

Implications for Counselling

1. **Education and awareness:** Counselling sessions can provide in-school adolescents with accurate information about the consequences of pre-marital sexual relationships. This can help them make informed decisions and understand the risks involved in getting pregnant as an adolescent.
2. **Talks on risk assessment:** Counsellors can give talks on the assembly ground or during special school programmes with adolescents to assess the potential risks of engaging in pre-marital sexual relationships. They can then help them develop strategies to mitigate these risks and make healthy choices.

3. **Emotional support:** Adolescents who are coping with the fallout from the consequences of pre-marital sexual relationships, may feel anxious, ashamed, or guilty. Through counseling, they can analyze their experiences, express their feelings, and create preventative plans in a secure environment.

4. **Relationship guidance:** In-school adolescents may benefit from counselling to navigate their relationships with the opposite sex, parents, and peers in the context of pre-marital sexual relationships and teenage pregnancy. Counsellors can help them communicate effectively, set boundaries, and make decisions that are in their best interest.

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