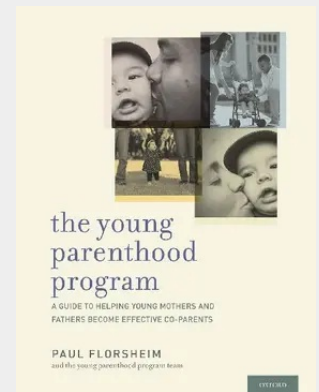


Young Parenthood Program

A Guide to Helping Young Mothers and Fathers Become Effective Co-Parents

The rate of young unwed couples and teens having children is increasing, and many of these couples choose to "co-parent" children, rather than to marry and remain in a relationship. Young parents are at risk for engaging in dysfunctional parenting practices and intimate partner violence, and face additional challenges on top of their own developmental struggles. Social workers and other mental health services providers can play a role in this process by supporting the interpersonal development of young couples who are at-risk for intimate partner violence, child abuse/neglect, and paternal disengagement. Unfortunately, many professionals lack formalized training in this area and there are few programs available to give the necessary support. The Young Parenthood Program (YPP) was designed and launched in order to meet this need. YPP is a brief program (12-14 sessions), initiated prior to childbirth when both parents are more willing and able to participate in co-parent counseling. The program is intended to teach the young couple a basic set of interpersonal communication and problem solving skills to provide a foundation for a co-parenting model for raising their child. Clinical trials have indicated that couples who participated in YPP demonstrated better relationship skills, lower rates of intimate partner violence (IPV), less paternal disengagement, and more positive parenting behavior among young fathers. The importance and challenges of working with young fathers who are reluctant to engage and participate is emphasized throughout this proposed guide. The guide is designed to help social workers and practitioners by offering a solution-oriented approach to the challenges of co-parenting among adolescents and young adults. This practitioner's guide would expand the training materials that Florsheim and his colleagues have developed. In addition to the manual itself, the authors are developing a CEU module, to be hosted by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, to try to reach into practitioner markets and encourage the use of the program.



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