“Do I really have a choice?”: Centering Reproductive Justice for Adolescents

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Disclosures

None
Today’s talk...

- Describe the principles of reproductive justice (RJ)
- Highlight the importance of centering RJ principles when providing adolescent reproductive health care
- Demonstrate how to incorporate reproductive justice standards into your clinical practice.
Poll

I am comfortable with and understand the Reproductive Justice framework?

YES

NO
Reproductive Health, Rights and Justice

The **Reproductive Health** framework (service delivery model): emphasizes the reproductive health services that people need.

The **Reproductive Rights** framework (legal and advocacy based model) to protect an individual’s legal or constitutional right to reproductive health services. Rights may vary by country or setting.

The **Reproductive Justice** framework (holistic; movement-building) asserts reproductive oppression is a result of the intersections of multiple oppressions and is inherently connected to the struggle for social justice and human rights.

Provider Perspectives on Reproductive Justice and Health Disparities. Physicians for Reproductive Health. 2020
Reproductive Justice

Termed coined in 1994

12 Black Women in Illinois

Re-frame reproductive rights to include critical social context

Intersectionality (Kimberlé Crenshaw)

Human Rights framework
Reproductive Justice
Reproductive Justice  Core Principles

Right to have a child

Right not to have a child

Right to parent in safe and healthy communities

Right to disassociate sex from reproduction
SOCIAL JUSTICE

The right to have a child
The right not to have a child
The right to parent in safe communities
The right to separate sex from reproduction

HUMAN RIGHTS

Social equity
Bodily autonomy
Equitable health services
Access
Anti-discrimination
Economic resources
Reproductive Justice Leadership

Loretta Ross
Reproductive justice uses a human rights framework to draw attention to -- and resist -- laws and public and corporate policies based on racial, gender, and class prejudices. These laws and policies deny people the right to control their bodies, interfere with their reproductive decision making and ultimately prevent many people from being able to live with dignity in safe and healthy communities.

Poll:

Do you see reproductive justice principles applied in your work with your adolescent patients/clients?

YES

NO
Why is the reproductive justice framework often not applied to adolescent reproductive health care?
Adolescent reproductive health care centered around “teen pregnancy prevention”

- Original discussions of teen sex focused on pregnancy prevention
- Adolescent mothers vilified
  - Wayward girls
  - Unwed mothers
  - Teen mothers
- 1950’s - current
  - $$$ for prevention
  - Very little for support of young mothers and families

Photos: Mississippi State Department of Public Health
Teen pregnancy prevention framework = Threat to adolescent reproductive justice

- Successful public health message to withhold support from “teen mothers”
- Used negative teen perinatal and birth outcomes to support teen pregnancy prevention narrative.
- Often coded language

Photos: Mississippi Department of Public Health, VCHD.org, NTARUPT.org
Contraception Access centered around Teen Pregnancy Prevention

**HOW CAN I ACCESS REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE?**

**Title X**

There are about 100 Title X clinics across Texas. These clinics offer reproductive healthcare services on a sliding scale and nobody is turned away for inability to pay. Teens under 18 don’t need parental consent to get birth control at a Title X clinic.

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**CALIFORNIA MINOR CONSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY LAWS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MINORS OF ANY AGE MAY CONSENT</th>
<th>LAWS &amp; DETAILS</th>
<th>MAY IUE THE HEALTH CARE PROVIDER INFORM A PARENT ABOUT THIS CARE OR DISCLOSE RELATED MEDICAL INFORMATION TO THEM?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PREGNANCY</strong></td>
<td>A minor may consent to medical care related to the prevention or treatment of pregnancy, except sterilization. (Cal. Family Code § 6225).</td>
<td>The health care provider is not permitted to inform a parent or legal guardian without the minor’s consent. The provider can only share the minor’s medical information with them with a signed authorization from the minor. (Cal. Health &amp; Safety Code §§ 12311(b)(1), 12315(b)(1), Cal. Civ. Code §§ 56.36, 56.31).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CONTRACEPTION</strong></td>
<td>A minor may receive birth control without parental consent. (Cal. Family Code § 6225).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ABORTION</strong></td>
<td>A minor may consent to an abortion without parental consent. (Cal. Family Code § 6225; American Academy of Pediatrics v. Zay排, 94 Cal.4th 907 (1999)).</td>
<td>The health care provider is not permitted to inform a parent or legal guardian without the minor’s consent. The provider can only share the minor’s medical information with them with a signed authorization from the minor. (American Academy of Pediatrics v. Zay排, 94 Cal.4th 907 (1999)).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES</strong></td>
<td>For the purposes of minor consent alone, sexual assault includes all rape, sexual battery, and other crimes of sexual abuse.</td>
<td>The health care provider must attempt to contact the minor’s parent/guardian and note in the minor’s record the day and time of the attempt(s) contact and whether it was successful. This provision does not apply if the treating professional reasonably believes that the parent/guardian committed the assault. (Cal. Family Code § 6225).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RAPE</strong> SERVICES FOR MINORS UNDER 12 YRS**</td>
<td>A minor under 12 years of age who may have been raped “may consent to medical care related to the diagnosis, treatment and the collection of medical evidence with regard to the assault.” (Cal. Family Code § 6225).</td>
<td>The health care provider must attempt to contact the minor’s parent/guardian and note in the minor’s record the day and time of the attempt(s) contact and whether it was successful. This provision does not apply if the treating professional reasonably believes that the parent/guardian committed the assault. (Cal. Penal Code § 10110 and 11167.5.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Photo: Texas Policy Evaluation Project
Adolescent sexual health education: Comprehensive? Abstinence only?

- Fluctuating priorities dependent on administration
- Send confusing and conflicting messages to youth
- Most not include impact of structural inequities on sexual health
- Both still with focus on teen pregnancy prevention

Photo: www.teentalk.ca
Contraceptive Counseling Recommendations for Adolescents: Tiered-based counseling

- Prioritizes optimal pregnancy prevention based on method efficacy
- Discuss contraceptive methods from “most effective” to “least effective”
- Based on population data
- Does not take into account youth participation with their method
- Does not assess youth desires nor preferences in a method
How can the aforementioned frameworks and policies threaten reproductive justice for adolescents?
Reproductive Justice Matters to Youth
Reproductive Justice

Access to reproductive health care is non-negotiable and must include both family planning and abortion care. As young people, we refuse to work with anyone who bargains away our rights to bodily autonomy and ultimately our health.

Working at the intersections

Young people know that the fight for reproductive and sexual health, rights, and justice includes fighting for an end to racism and structural oppression.
Racial Justice and Intersectionality

Young people are leading the movement toward just and safe communities for all. We are on the front lines of those working for the rights of Black, Latina/o/x, Asian and Pacific Islander, Native American, Muslim, immigrant, and refugee youth.

Fighting together for all us

Young people understand that reproductive and sexual health and rights go hand in hand with ending racism, Islamophobia, ableism, and all forms of structural oppression.
Youth Voice: Reproductive Justice

Health System Equity

“Well, is our reproductive system equal? No, it's not, because I think - I feel like if you [go] where money is, you can decide on what you want to do. Like if you can't have a baby, but you've got money, they like try to make you have a baby. Like you feel me?”

Abortion Access and Poverty

“Youth want free access to reproductive health care...can't afford it … But I think it's like abortions and how some people can't afford abortions, and...why they can't afford them. The p-word...yeah poverty.”

Ratcliff and Mays 2018 (unpublished data)
POLL:

In which ways have you witnessed an adolescent’s reproductive justice threatened?

A. Pregnancy options
B. Contraceptive choice
C. Sexual activity / behavior choices
D. Gender inclusive care
E. Reproductive care for vulnerable youth (foster care, unsheltered, juvenile hall, pregnant or parenting, sex trafficked)
Centering Reproductive Justice for Adolescents
What does RJ mean for us as adolescent medicine providers?

1. How does this approach make us as providers uncomfortable?

2. How does this framework alter how we do our work?
How do we prioritize Reproductive Justice when providing reproductive health care for youth?

- Goes beyond reproductive choice and reproductive rights
- **Positive Youth Development Framework**
  - Youth have autonomy over their lives
  - Providers are facilitators
- Ask what youth want!
- Assess what they need!
- **Listen to them and let them take the lead.**
Positive Youth Development

- Focus on building positive outcomes
- Youth voice and engagement
- Long-term involvement
- Developmentally appropriate
- Universal/Inclusive
- Community-based/Collaborative

Photo: Fenwayfocus.org

Dotterweich J. Act For Youth. Positive Youth Development. 2020
Shared Decision Making over Tiered Based Contraceptive Counseling

A collaborative process that allows patients and their providers to make health care decisions together, taking into account the best scientific evidence available, as well as the patient’s values and preferences. This process provides patients with the support they need to make the best individualized care decisions.

-Informed Medical Decisions Foundation

Source: graphic adapted from Dehlendorf, Contraceptive Counseling and LARC uptake, 2014
Provide Comprehensive Reproductive Healthcare Services

- High quality health care services
- Gender inclusive care
- Non-discriminatory
- Incorporate social support
  - Housing, transportation, employment, education, social service navigation
- Linguistic equity
- Holistic FP services: abstinence, contraception, pregnancy, parenting, and planning
- Youth-Led
Dream Youth Clinic Young Mothers Group: Young Mothers Rising

- Parenting support
- Health education for pregnant, parenting and planning adolescents
- Community guest speakers
- Young mother peer community
- Parenting resources - diaper program, formula, baby clothes closet, Dream Community Fund, transportation support
Young Mothers Rising

DREAM YOUTH CLINIC'S
YOUNG MOMS GROUP

TIPS ON HEALTHY EATING:
• Offer a range variety of healthy foods so children can feel as though they have a choice in what they eat
• Emphasize fruits, vegetables, whole grains, non-dairy nut or oat milk, and yogurts without added sugars
• Include lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, grains, and nuts
• A well balanced diet is mostly plant-based and low in saturated carbs, trans fats, cholesterol, salt, and sugars
• Also, stay hydrated and drink a lot of water daily

THE BENEFITS:
• Healthy diets are abundant in fruits and vegetables can reduce the risk of cancer & other chronic diseases
• Fruits and vegetables also provide essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber that are important for good health
• Most fruits and vegetables are naturally filling and low in calories

• Covid = all virtual platform
• Health Navigator
  ○ Provide individualized support
  ○ Social services navigation
  ○ Employment, education, housing support
  ○ **Consistent** ongoing support
• Behavioral Health services
In summary...

One of the tenets of reproductive justice is recognizing that the main reproductive challenge facing young and poor women of color is not unintended pregnancy by itself, but rather socio-economic and cultural inequalities that provide some people with easier access to self-determination and bodily autonomy than others.

Higgins JA. 2014

There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.

Audre Lorde
Beyond Efficacy: Applying a Reproductive Justice Framework to Contraceptive Counseling for Young People

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Resources and Readings
Thank You!

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