



THE INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH

THE THREE-GENERATION STRATEGY FOR ADOLESCENT HEALTH (ADGEN3):

Supporting Adolescents Through Intergenerational Connections

Problem Statement:

Parents are essential to the physical, emotional, and social health of their children. The stability, support, and guidance that parents provide predict many academic and relationship outcomes. Many parents want to be better prepared to talk to their children about values, decisions, and relationships, but lack the skills and confidence to do so. Engaged and loving parents become models for their children as they enter adulthood, marriages, and future parenting.

Over the past 50 years, some health and social organizations have actively excluded parents from child and adolescent interventions and undermined parental engagement in health and school settings. These health and educational approaches were not founded on research and data; they were based on ideologic concepts of adolescent independence that normalized risky behaviors.

However, research that has emerged in the past 25 years has demonstrated two important findings: 1) the value of parental engagement, parental instruction, and parent/adolescent “connectedness”, and 2) the gradual maturity of the adolescent brain through age 25. Despite the clear research findings, current models of clinical and educational interventions have been slow to recognize and use the robust data associated with parental involvement as well as brain development.

Consequently, the existing models of adolescent interventions must be modified or replaced to actively engage and equip parents to strengthen parent/adolescent relationships, and to support the maturation patterns of brain development. A caring and connected parent prepares teens to parent their own children in the future, a genuinely intergenerational bonus!

Goal of Supporting Parent/Teen Involvement:

The Institute for Women’s Health (IWH) recognizes that optimal health across the lifespan is best achieved through a “Three-Generation Strategy” that supports adolescents by strengthening their connections and communication with caring parents while preparing them for success in future careers, relationships, and families.

Components of the Strategy:

- Based on current, reputable, and consistent research that recognizes the importance of parent/teen connectedness
- Equips health and community service providers to encourage parental engagement in clinical, school, faith, and community activities
- Provides resources and training to parents to build confidence in their ability to teach, share values, monitor, and support their youth
- Promotes the personal, societal, and relationship benefits of avoiding health risks such as drugs, violence, alcohol, tobacco, adolescent sex, bullying, and coercion
- Prepares youth, through family and community support, to develop vision and skills for future careers, adult friendships, marriage, and parenting

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