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Teen Health Briefing

Perspectives from the YWCA NCA's
Empowergirlz Mentoring Program
Tamara Smith, CEO
YWCA National Capital Area

Alliance for Health Reform
Monday, December 15, 2014

Factors Impacting Teen Health

- Perceptions of Self
- Self Esteem
- Self Confidence
- Ability to Self Advocate
- Healthy Relationships

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Components of YWCA NCA's Empowergirlz Program

- School Year Academic Skills Building

- 1:1 Near Peer Mentor Matching

- Baseline Assessment

- Educational Sessions on:

  - Healthy Relationships

  - Anti-Bullying and Cybersecurity

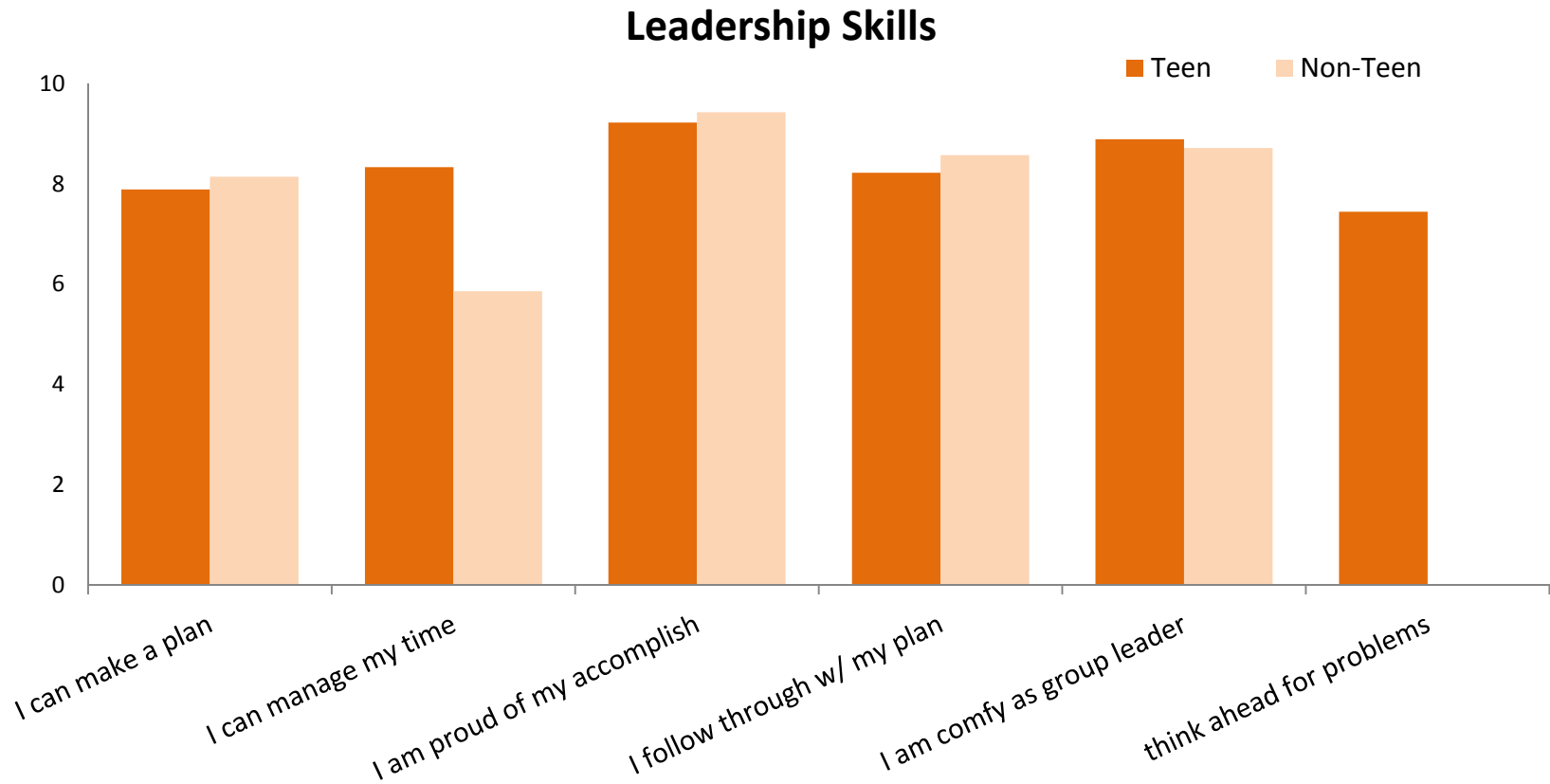 - Career Exploration

  - Self Advocacy and Social Justice

Baseline Data – Relationships
Teens vs. Non-Teens
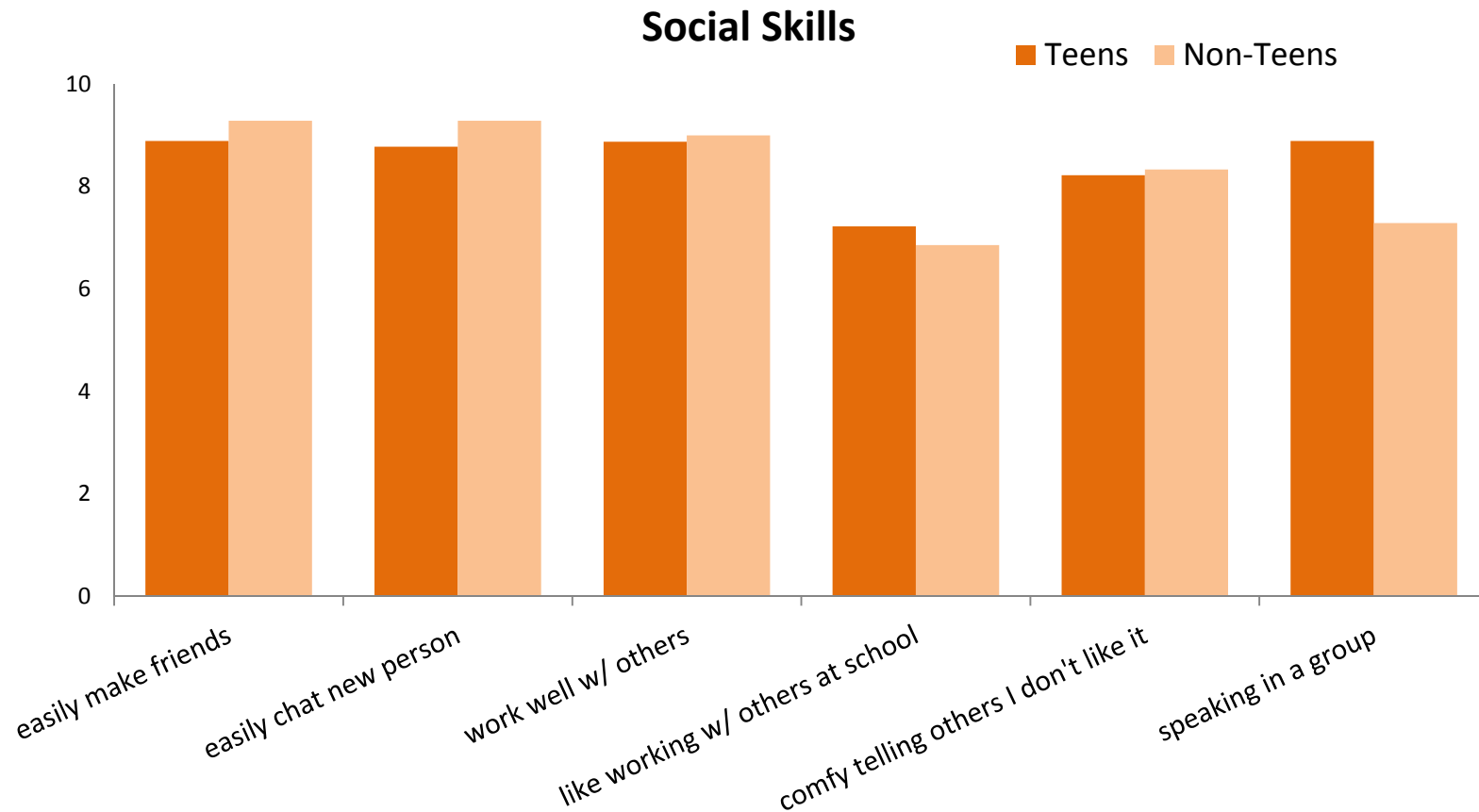
Baseline Data – Self Confidence Teens vs. Non-Teens

Self Esteem

Baseline Data – Planning/Problem Solving
Teen vs. Non-Teen

Major Behavioral Health Issues

- ## Unhealthy and Violent Relationships
    - Poor self esteem and lack of understanding of what is "healthy"
    - 1 in 3 teens a victim of physical, emotional or verbal abuse
    - Abused teens more likely to become pregnant
    - Teen victims of dating violence more likely to smoke, use drugs, engage in unhealthy diet behaviors, engage in risky sexual behaviors and attempt suicide

Empowergirlz Program Outcomes

- All High School Seniors have graduated and gone on to college

- No school drop outs or pregnancies

- Teenage girls educated and aware:
  - What defines a healthy relationship
  - How to self – advocate and peer educate
  - How to better communicate with adults and build support systems

Strategic Partnerships and Collaborations

- United Methodist Women – "Fighting Back - A Peer Education Youth-Focused, Anti-Sexual Exploitation Program"

- Children's National Medical Center – Integrating Health Information and Peer Education

- Women and Cyberjutsu, US Department of Energy – Role Models and Career Exploration

- Peer Health Exchange, City Year, College Success Foundation, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, other youth serving organizations.

Policy Implications and Support Systems Needed

- Programs that provide: Mentors, Role Models
- School and Community-Based Curricula that teach healthy relationships and Self Advocacy
- Legislative and Policy Initiatives that prevent violence and sexual exploitation of youth
- Better integration of health care service delivery systems
- 2-Gen Approach: Teen & Parent