



 NC Department of Health and Human Services
**Reproductive Life Planning:
Deciding If Or When to Have
Children**

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What is This Training About?

This training is meant to provide information to local health department staff to help you better prepare individuals to:

- identify their own personal goals about becoming pregnant and
- facilitate their own reproductive health needs.

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Specific Goals and Learning Objectives

1. Increase knowledge about the key components of reproductive life planning
2. Increase awareness about the importance of counseling all individuals of childbearing age about reproductive life planning
3. Improve reproductive life planning counseling skills

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Additional Training on Reproductive Life Planning

Putting the QFP into Practice Series: How to Begin—Determining the Client’s Need for Services Webinar
<https://www.fpnctc.org/resources/putting-qfp-practice-series-how-begin-determining-clients-need-services-webinar>

Putting the QFP into Practice Series: Integrating Reproductive Life Planning into Your Family Planning Session Webinar
<https://www.fpnctc.org/resources/putting-qfp-practice-series-integrating-reproductive-life-planning-your-family-planning>

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What is a Reproductive Life Plan?

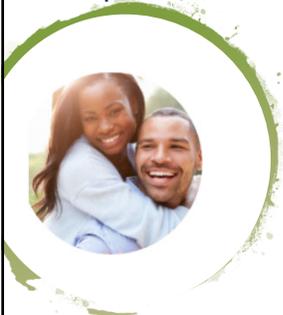
A Reproductive Life Plan (RLP) is a set of goals that people make about childbearing. It takes into account the who, what, when, where, why, and even “if” of family planning. It is not set in stone but is a fluid document that can change.



Source: <https://everywomannc.org/health-care-providers/rfp/>

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The Expected Benefits of Reproductive Life Planning



- Increased preconception planning
- Improved reproductive health
- Improved birth outcomes
- Improved health-related knowledge
- Increased healthy behaviors

Source: What Works for Health. Reproductive Life Plans <http://whatworksforhealth.wisc.edu/program.php?11+22&2+15&3+133&4+567>

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Definition: Unintended Pregnancy

An unintended pregnancy is a pregnancy not desired now or in the next two years.

—American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists



Source: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Increasing Access to Contraceptive Implants and Intrauterine Devices to Reduce Unintended Pregnancy. Committee Opinion 642. December 2009. Reaffirmed 2018. <https://www.acog.org/Clinical-Guidance-and-Publications/Committee-Opinion/Committee-Opinion-642-Increasing-Access-to-Contraceptive-Implants-and-Intrauterine-Devices-to-Reduce-Unintended-Pregnancy>

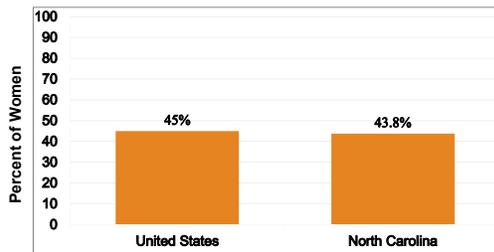
Reducing Unintended Pregnancies Can Prevent:

- Infant morbidity and mortality including preterm birth, low birth weight, and birth defects
- Abortion
- Child abuse and neglect
- Physical abuse for mothers
- Poorer health status for women
- Higher Medicaid costs



Source: Every Woman North Carolina 2017 <https://everywomannc.org/health-care-providership/>

Unintended Pregnancy Rates



NC Data is from 2017: <https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/data/prams/2017/intent3.html>
US Data is from 2011: <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMsa1506575>

How to Start the Conversation

At the beginning and throughout the conversation

- ⦿ Warmly greet the patient
- ⦿ Introduce yourself
- ⦿ Explain that the conversation is confidential
- ⦿ Discuss the reason for the Family Planning: Deciding If or When to Have Children brochure
- ⦿ Explain that a reproductive life plan can help people better plan whether or not to have children, and the number, spacing and timing of children within the context of other life goals



Family Planning:
Deciding If or When
To Have Children




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My Plan

- Respectfully ask patient's history
- Ask the patient's thoughts and desires regarding wanting a child in the next year.
- Ask, "Would you like to become pregnant in the next year?"

MY PLAN

Today's Date: _____

Do you already have a child or children? Yes No

If yes, did you/partner give birth in the last year? Yes No

Do you want a child in the next year?

Yes. Talk to your healthcare provider about preparing for a healthy pregnancy.

No. Talk about Family Planning options.

I don't know. Talk about Family Planning options and preparing for a healthy pregnancy.

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If Your Patient Answers, "Yes"

- Affirm patient's response.
- Describe positive effects a healthy pregnancy can have on health outcomes:
 - It can improve the chances of getting pregnant, having a healthy pregnancy, and a healthy baby
 - Reduce maternal and infant mortality
 - Prevent stillbirths, preterm births, and low birth weight babies
 - Prevent congenital disabilities
 - Prevent mother to child transmission of HIV/STIs

Source: Office on Women's Health, Preconception health. 2018 <https://www.womenshealth.gov/pregnancy/you-get-pregnant/preconception-health>

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If Your Patient Answers, “Yes” continued

- **As their health care provider you can then talk to them about preparing for a healthy pregnancy**
 - Review their medical history
 - Review birth spacing recommendations and previous pregnancy health
 - Develop a plan for a healthy pregnancy
 - Prescribe folic acid

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Healthy Relationships

Discuss how a shared decision-making approach with a partner about preparing for pregnancy can be supportive and encouraging:

- You can make the decision about pregnancy together.
- Screening for STIs for partners can help make sure infections are not passed to you.
- Partners can avoid alcohol, stop smoking tobacco or using e-cigarettes, as well as stop misusing substances to support you in being healthy.
- If your partner continues to smoke/use e-cigarettes, ask them not to smoke around you to avoid the harmful effects of secondhand smoke.
- Partner can also make healthy food choices and reduce stress.

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If Your Patient Answers, “No”

- **Affirm patient’s response.**
- **Ask open-ended questions, actively listen, and continue to affirm patient’s responses.**
- **Examples of questions:**
 - How important is it to you to prevent pregnancy?
 - What do you know about birth control?
 - What is important to you in a birth control method?
- **Respectfully explore factors that may influence method preference**
 - Past experiences
 - Beliefs
 - Cultural and religious considerations
 - Feelings about the methods

Source: http://www.carbaservices.org/documents/Observational_Contraceptive_Counseling_Checklist.pdf
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My Next Steps

- Encourage the patient to write down the contact information of their provider and the date and time of their appointment.
- Help the patient to think about how they will get to their appointment.
- Help the patient to think about the support they might need to get to their appointment.
- Encourage patients to write down what to do if they can't make their appointment.



MY NEXT STEPS

Provider (department or address): _____
 Date: _____ Time: _____
 Provider: _____
 Phone: _____
 Phone #: _____

How will I get there? (circle)

a) Drive myself
 b) Have a friend or family member drive me
 c) Public transportation
 d) Other _____

What support might I need to get to my appointment? (circle)

a) Transportation
 b) Childcare
 c) Work
 d) Other _____

What if I can't make my appointment? _____

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If Your Patient Answers, "I don't know"

- Affirm patient's response
- Talk about family planning options
- Talk about preparing for a healthy pregnancy

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Resources

- Point out the information on the back of the *Family Planning: Deciding If Or When to Have Children* brochure.
- Summarize the key points of the patient's reproductive life action plan.
- End with a friendly close.

RESOURCES

- Find a local health provider in your area: <https://opa-fpclinicb.hhs.gov/>
- Find a health center: <https://ncchca.site-ym.com/page/FindCHC>
- NC Free Clinics: <http://ncafc.org/>
- For more information about birth control methods (including emergency contraception) and other sexual health topics, visit: www.bedsider.org or www.fpntc.org
- For more information about Preconception Health visit: <https://everywomanc.org/> or call 919-781-2481
- Department of Health and Human Services Customer Service Center can assist in finding programs and people to help you. Call 1-800-662-7030

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Summary of Key Points about a Reproductive Life Action Plan

- Utilize the **pamphlet** to guide the discussion.
- Ask **open-ended questions, actively listen, and affirm** patient's responses.
- **Be honest when you do not know the answer** to their questions. **Share resources you do have and be willing to find an answer and get back to them.**
- Let them know that it is **ok if they do not know how they feel or what they want to do. Provide information and set up a time to follow-up** with them if they would like.
- **Practice.** It may seem awkward at first to have this conversation. Practice **with a co-worker** to help ease some anxieties.

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Questions?



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