What is Core of Life?
Core of Life identifies birth as being central to all cultures and families. Core of Life education is aimed at 12-17 year old teenage males and females attending school or within a community based setting. It is presented to give youth a better, more wholistic understanding about the ‘real’ journey to becoming a parent.

Many young people hold unrealistic and ‘romantic’ ideas about having a baby and have not accessed factual information. Core of Life is currently being implemented throughout many communities across Australia. To this point more than 200,000 youth and 240 high schools and community groups have been part of a Core of Life session.

Core of Life is not religiously, politically or morally affiliated with any organisation. This information sharing is critical in empowering Indigenous youth, in particular those at risk groups of youth within any given community, to make informed, responsible decisions regarding becoming a parent.

A Positive Impact
Core of Life is constantly being evaluated. Past research conducted shows teenagers who attend a Core of Life training session feel better about making informed decisions about their future. Core of Life endorses breastfeeding and the continuing of secondary and tertiary education for young parents.

Feedback on the program includes:

Youth

“It was good ‘cause it showed the real facts and gave a better understanding of how much a big deal it is”

“It will make us think about the most important decision of our lives more carefully...” “we need to know if we do get pregnant who can help us.”

Parents

“It can only assist adolescents in taking a positive and mature attitude to parenthood.”

Locally Responsive Information
• Core Of Life consults and collaborates with Indigenous organisations and communities to provide individualised, specifically designed education resources that are relevant and respectful.
• Core of Life can present the program to local youth and invite their feedback on any necessary modifications/ improvments.
• Core of Life encourages community ownership in providing training for staff that are trusted and respected by the community, who will then either team up with each other or work alongside other service providers working within their community. During a training workshop each participant receives a complete, ‘user friendly’ packaged program, including a CD and facilitator manual which is ready to be presented to youth.

Collaboration and Sustainability
Core of Life always has at least two presenters. Local health, youth and education workers join together to increase linkages within the region and increase awareness of local resources. Through encouraging this ‘joined up’ effort, Core of Life can assist each group to successfully launch a community based action. This will support vulnerable groups of youth and families in improving their health status and reducing any inequality.

Essentially Core of Life aims to...
Introduce teenagers to the reality of becoming a parent.
Encourage
• Informed choice.
• Personal responsibility.
• Responsible and safe decision making.
Alleviate unplanned teen pregnancy rates.
Reduce the isolation, alienation and victimisation of young parents.
Promote community awareness and confidence in accessing local services.
Establish partnerships to
• Build social capital and increase community connectedness.
• Strengthen available community education resources.
• Maintain evidence/research-based content and locally driven responsive education material.
Increase the knowledge and support for breastfeeding.

Teenage pregnancy risk factors
• Australia has high numbers of teenage pregnancies with Indigenous women having four times greater numbers than non Indigenous.
• One in two Indigenous women smoke.
• Teen mothers are less likely to access early antenatal care with increased risks of prematurity, obstetric complications, Post Natal Depression and Low Birth Weight babies.

Hands on Learning
Core of Life presentations are designed specifically to help young people learn. The different teaching styles fit well with recommendations on how to share information with Indigenous communities in using highly visual materials and role-play in a facilitated group setting.

Major Supporters of Core of Life
YFER P/L relies on government/benevolent/corporate funding and donations to continue to provide Core of Life Facilitator Training nationwide.

Currently major supporters are:
• Australian Government
• Community/local business sponsors
• Northern Territory Government
• Birth International

To have a greater impact nationally and continue to meet the need for updating resources, Core of Life requires additional funding. For further information, please contact the managers.

For more information
If you would like to access more information about training opportunities, or other Core of Life activities, please visit the website www.coreoflife.org.au or contact us using the details below.

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