Sustainability

Dr. Kineka Hull:	00:03	Welcome to Elevate Youth Programming, a podcast for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention programs and other youth-serving agencies. In each episode, we will discuss best practices, tips, and strategies to strengthen your programming. Each episode will cover a specific topic discussed with experts in the field. Listen along as our guests join me to discuss these relevant topics. I'm your host, Dr. Kineka Hull.
	00:32	In this episode, we sat down with Doctors Asari Offiong and Mindy Scott from Child Trends to discuss components of sustainability, concrete steps, programs staff can take to plan for sustainability and provided examples of frameworks and tools to support sustainability planning. Dr. Offiong is an adolescent health researcher with nearly a decade of experience leading youth development programs and conducting mixed methods, community-based research in various metropolitan areas across the US with nonprofits, school districts, and government agencies. Dr. Scott is an expert on fatherhood and healthy relationships who leads research and evaluation projects aimed at building the knowledge base around healthy relationship programming for youth. Welcome to the podcast, Asari and Mindy. I'm looking forward to our discussion today. How are you?
Dr. Mindy Scott:	01:29	Great, thank you.
Dr. Asari Offio...:	01:30	I'm doing well. Thank you for having us.
Dr. Kineka Hull:	01:32	I know there are a lot of questions or concerns sometimes that we get from grantees on the topic of sustainability and making sure that they're able to ensure that programming has longevity in the community and the impact that they're able to make on the optimal health of young people. And so I am excited to be able to jump in and discuss some concrete steps and tools that our programmatic staff can use to make sure that they're able to plan properly for sustainability. So before we start jumping into all of the great tips, techniques, tools, frameworks that you all have prepared today, let's operationalize some terms. So when we think about sustainability, what is a definition that we all should keep in mind?
Dr. Mindy Scott:	02:22	There are several ways to think about sustainability and different definitions. One key distinction that we wanted to discuss today is the distinction between financial sustainability and programmatic sustainability. So financial sustainability, that might be what you think about most often or kind of hear about when talking about sustainability. And that involves having established and adequate and ongoing funding sources for

delivering your program. This could include things like ongoing funding for teachers or other staff, funding for professional learning and training, and then administrative time. So really making sure that the infrastructure for our program is financially supported, that is distinct from programmatic sustainability, and that we want to really emphasize a focus on programmatic sustainability in addition to financial sustainability. For the program side, that includes typically having established reliable effective implementation infrastructure, which is more than funding. So to thinking about things that ensure continued quality implementation that could be having plans and activities for ongoing, timely and effective training or coaching, having processes in place for measuring fidelity to the program, ensuring that policies and procedures continue to support and facilitate implementation. Sort of why it's important to think about both types of sustainability.

Dr. Asari Offio...:   03:47   Yeah, many organizations may think of financial stability as a main thing to focus on, but it's not entirely true. While funding is a main component to ensure that a program can operate or function, the ultimate goal is that programs will yield short-term and long-term positive outcomes for young people, outcomes that results in healthy behaviors and overall wellbeing. And so today we really want to make sure that we're focusing on the programmatic sustainability beyond just the discussion of funding. So we just want people to think a little bit more than just the money, even though it really is important.

Dr. Kineka Hull: 04:23   Thank you for mentioning that distinction. I think a lot of the feedback that we receive from grantees with our TA request and from our site monitoring visits is how do I sustain my staff or how do I sustain my agency more so than sustainability? And so part of what we do in being proactive and making sure that we are being as impactful to young people as we can is that sometimes we may have to leave a program in place. And so are we setting that community up or that school up or that agency up where they're able to continue the programming even if your agency is not still receiving funding or being able to send in staff to do that. So I look forward to having some ways to think about that. And so that just really raises the good question. Why is sustainability often reduced to the discussions around funding? Because we know that that can present some challenges. Can you talk to us a little bit about that?

Dr. Asari Offio...:   05:26   Sustainability is often reduced to discussions around funding because the reality is, is that we need funding to manage, implement, and evaluate our programs. You need money to pay staff, like you just mentioned, Kineka, buy materials,

disseminate the data or incentivize youth to participate in our programs. So it makes sense that oftentimes sustainability becomes synonymous with funding. However, this presents challenges because when the funding is no longer available for whatever reason, organizations and programs become stifled in determining what are the next steps and what are new opportunities. They often lose momentum and the impact that they have on their target population. Focusing solely on funding as one sustainability plan limits an organization's ability to be creative, be critical and thoughtful about how their program can adapt and adjust and what other approaches that they can have in having lasting impact on their young people.

Dr. Kineka Hull:	06:24	Thank you for that. And so as we move forward with this discussion and our listeners are tuning in so that they can get some ideas on how to plan for sustainability, what feedback would you give them about how sustainability may not look the same for all programs?
Dr. Mindy Scott:	06:44	Yeah, I think it's really important to think about the fact that sustainability should look different and will look different across programs, across organizations, across communities. All agencies or programs kind of will have their own sustainability goals, but we can talk about some common components to consider and incorporate into sustainability planning because although sustainability will look different, there are some common elements to think about and incorporate into planning.
Dr. Kineka Hull:	07:11	Perfect. So let's jump in. So what are some components of a solid, effective, hopefully sustainability plan that our listeners should keep in mind?
Dr. Mindy Scott:	07:21	Yeah, I can say a little bit about that. And one thing that is helpful is there are a number of useful frameworks to help really formalize sustainability planning and that kind of walk through a common set of components. These frameworks help to support the inclusion of planning for sustainability in early stages of program development. They also though help set the stage for flexibility that's needed as plans and practices evolve and change. We will provide some information about specific frameworks and a number of other resources through this podcast, and many of those resources are on The Exchange. I wanted to mention a couple of examples though.
	07:59	One of the sustainability planning resources that's available on The Exchange describes a specific framework and that has eight different components. Also, importantly, provide some specific

strategies and approaches for how to plan around those eight components. And that components consist of things like strategic planning, funding stability, environmental supports, partnerships, organizational capacity evaluation, program adaptation, and strategic communication. So you can see that there's a lot more to sustainability beyond funding. And also that gives a sense of the different phases or steps to sustainability planning.

08:40   There is also a resource on The Exchange that describes the steps needed to create a sustainability plan, and that's important to kind of think through those different components and have a plan in place. Also thinking about key players that need to be involved. This can consist of convening a sustainability planning team, also thinking about some other key partners to building and sustaining a program that could be funders but also community partners, also young people and parents engaging them directly in sustainability planning. And so these resources kind of walk through how to think about those different components and some strategies to put them together into a formal plan.

Dr. Kineka Hull: 09:21   Perfect. So look for the links to The Exchange resources and some other great tools and frameworks that are recommended as your agency begin sustainability planning. And so as a former grantee, I remember coming to the end of my funding and having great success over the life of my program, but wanting to make sure that additional young people attending the school will still have access to services. And so what are some approaches that one can take to really think about sustainability beyond funding?

Dr. Asari Offio...:   09:56   I can jump in. So like we've been talking about, sustainability is going to look different for every program, for every organization, for every agency. And depending on where you are is where you can start to think about what those approaches are, whether it's on an intervention level, on an implementer level or an organizational level or community level. For example, you want to consider how adaptable is your intervention. Can it be adapted to a new population or setting? So maybe you've maxed out your services in one community, but maybe there's another community that you can pivot to that would welcome your services or your intervention or your program.

10:32   In terms of being on the implementer level capacity, thinking about the skills and the expertise needed to implement the program, what type of supports are needed to train and to

sustain a group of implementers? Maybe you train teachers or you train folks that work in the library or you train folks that work in your local police department. That can also serve in supporting young people. Even if your program no longer has an interest in sexual reproductive health, you can train those folks that are going to be in the community regardless.

Dr. Kineka Hull:	11:05	Absolute.

Dr. Asari Offio...:	11:06	And on organizational level, you can think about things like leadership support and operational capacity. And at the community level, you can look at factors like the funding environment, community support, other partnerships that you can leverage or establish. So there is a lot more to consider just outside of funding, but how can you leverage the assets that are around you even when that funding has ended or when that program has come to an end.
	11:33	There are a lot of toolkits out there that help programs develop a sustainability plan, but we have a few considerations that will help someone to think about these different factors related to sustainability beyond funding.
	11:45	First, each program needs to develop a project or program specific definition of what sustainability looks like for them and for their organization. This can be done by conducting internal or external assessments or internal focus groups, asking questions like: What is our vision for this program? What would it take to achieve and sustain that vision? Who needs to be engaged? Answering these questions will help to set up priorities and a goal to work towards.
	12:16	Other things that are really important in terms of creating a sustainability plan that's beyond funding is understanding that sustainability is not at the end of the grant conversation, but it's definitely something that should be spoken about from the onset of your program. I know grants require folks to write sustainability plans to get the grant, but we want to think about that plan from the beginning and ongoing through the life of your program, through your grant or through your project. And the earlier you have those conversations, the better because then of course you can plan for them. It allows you to brainstorm with your partners. It allows you to develop those partnerships and authentically develop those partnerships throughout the duration of your program so that in the event that you do lose your funding in three to five years, you've already got a system working or set up to help you move forward and create the sustainability that you envisioned.

13:06   Your program may not always have the funds, but the sooner that you begin to think about leverage and invest in your community assets, your program has a greater likelihood of being sustainable and successful. There's a saying that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, which means combining efforts and shared resources tend to have a greater impact. I think and I think we can all agree that it's important to think about other people, organizations, entities that align with and/or compliment your programming and can aid in supporting your work and the work that you do with young people. It's also important to think if your organization were to shift priorities, who in the community will still be there and committed to this population? Those are the ones that you really want to build rapport with from the beginning and maintain those partnerships throughout your program.

Dr. Kineka Hull: 13:59   So I will say that I like the saying, "The whole is greater than the sum of the parts," and it takes a village. And so when we're thinking about sustainability, especially when it comes to programming and we're thinking about good partners... And so we actually have a separate episode that talks about making sure you have good partners and many people in the table. When you're able to combine efforts or lean on your partners or find a way to deliver multiple services at one location, that helps with sustainability because like you said, funding when it comes to administrations with shifting priorities, when it comes with funding and the competition that we all have to go through when we're writing a grant, funding is not something that's going to always be eternal. We hope that it is, but it's a possibility that it's not. So like you said, planning from the inception of your funding how you're going to proceed is great.

14:54   And so I've heard some really interesting things that grantees have done. So I know there's one grantee that actually when they are doing their call for funding, their sub-recipients, not only do they have them write a sustainability plan, they tell them upfront that funding is limited. And so they'll say, "If your organization is eligible to receive funding for two funding cycles," which may be one, three years, whichever cycle they're on. "After that, your organization is no longer eligible to receive funding. So you need to tell us upfront how you're going to sustain this once funding stops."

15:34   And so you want to make sure that you can impact as many youth as possible. And so you want to move that money around the state to different counties or different agencies to make sure that you're having the biggest impact. And so I thought that was a very smart way to say, hey, how can we make this

work in the limitations or the constraints that we have, but also give everybody an opportunity to impact youth and have a seat at the table because that's one thing we hear from grantees. "I don't apply for certain funding because agency so-and-so always gets it and I'll never get an opportunity to apply for that funding." And we know that that would probably be a good agency due to the youth that they serve. And so that gives someone else an opportunity to cycle in, get some of the funding, make an impact, and then rotate that out into the next agency.

16:25   But I think sometimes when we think about sustainability, our minds start having all of these thoughts about how to handle this and it can be a little overwhelming. So what kind of feedback or suggestions would you give to help individuals not feel overwhelmed and panicked when they start thinking about their sustainability plan?

Dr. Asari Offio...:   16:47   Yeah, I mean I think you can think about sustainability in smaller pieces. And this was actually some advice that we got from a grantee when we had discussions around sustainability. They were saying, yes, you may not be able to sustain the whole program, but maybe parts of it and thinking about what are the core components of your program that you want to put more emphasis on or more time around because it just may not be feasible. And so I think it goes back to goal setting. What is our purpose? What is our vision? Where do we find our greatest impact? And really centering that when you're thinking about your sustainability plan.

17:23   Also, like we mentioned before too, thinking about untapped settings and populations. I think a strong sustainability plan is one that is creative, one that is really thoughtful. And it takes time to develop, which goes back to it's not something you do in quarter four of year three at the end of your grant because it takes time. So asking your team, "Who else can benefit from our program? Who is underserved, underrepresented?" Again, if you're mostly in urban areas, maybe you shift to a rural community if you have those partnerships or relationships. Or maybe if schools are oversaturated with programming, is there a juvenile detention center? Is there a community center that can really benefit from your programming? It may require you to tweak it a little bit for the setting, but then that also creates a new opportunity for you to expand your skillset, expertise of your staff, and just the range of your program.

Dr. Mindy Scott: 18:19   Which I think ties in so nicely to the discussion around diversifying who receives funding in your state and really

thinking about far-reaching access for the programs for young people across the state and communities.

Dr. Asari Offio...:   18:31   And I'll just also add too, I think the goal is not that we would do teen pregnancy prevention work forever. The goal is that we would get this funding, we'll do great work, we'll really impact young people, their behaviors, and then they would then implement those skills. It will trickle down to the next generation and the next generation. So I think a lot of times people are scared of sustainability because it's like, "Oh, we're not going to be here anymore." And that's okay because that means you're doing the good work, you're really making impact, and we can shift to the next issue we're challenged that needs us to rally around that. And so I think when people think about sustainability as actually our success plan and how we're thriving and making impact, long-term impact that outweighs me or outweighs my program or out ways our organization, then I think folks can be more welcoming and receptive to the work.

Dr. Kineka Hull: 19:30   I think that you're right, but I think a lot of the times we are so focused on sustainability from the financial piece and looking at agency sustainability and job security, which is very important, but the hallmark of public health that we always do is to leave the community in better shape. If we have to leave, then we found it. And so that's kind of leading into my next question. So when you're thinking about this planning, it can be a little frustrating and challenging because like you said, you're managing multiple priorities. Yes, you're thinking about the financial piece and agency success and sustainability, but you're also thinking about the programming piece. And so as a former grantee at the end of my last funding cycle, I knew that I didn't have the capacity to reapply for funding. And so I spent a lot of time that last year training the teachers, not only training the teachers, but actually having a teacher who became a trainer so that they would be able to train new teachers in the school district on the evidence-based curriculum that we had.

                              20:36   I spent a lot of time sitting down with the superintendent and the school board and the teacher facilitator coaches, I think that's what they call them, mapping out how this particular curriculum matched with some of the educational outcomes for the state and for their school district and embedding it into a class. And so some of that meant that my program was no longer funded. I moved on to other research. I had to let my staff move on to bigger and greater things, but the program remained intact. I was very proud of that project. Over the span of our four years, we were able to touch every sixth through

ninth grader in the county and helped lower that county's teen pregnancy rate from 10th in the state to third. And so I was very excited and I followed back up with them periodically, "Are you still implementing? Do you have questions? Do you need refresher trainer?" Things are still running smoothly and making great impact to that area. And so I think that's something that we have to keep in mind. The goal is agency success, but the bigger impact or goal is youth impact and success.

21:48   Are there any other examples of innovative ways that you know that programs have been able to sustain their outcomes after funding has ended?

Dr. Mindy Scott: 21:56   Yes, we've definitely learned about some really good strategies and examples from PREP grantees in terms of approaches they've taken to plan for sustainability and achieve sustainability through our discussions and trainings with grantees over the years. Grantees as an example, who attended a previous training on sustainability, talked about several necessary factors for sustainability, and that included things like political support, for example from state governor or tribal council or school board. I know those are very important conversations happening, especially now. Having an established training infrastructure with trained facilitators and a training program. So you could kind of do ongoing training of new facilitators. Diversifying funding has been really helpful so that if one funding source goes away, there is continued funding through more diverse sources. And then also just really building community's involvement and support from young people, from parents, from community members, just to highlight the importance of the program and its success for improving young people's experiences.

23:02   And then also thinking about really data-driven approaches, having processes as we mentioned for monitoring fidelity, conducting evaluation and demonstrating through changes in participant outcomes, just really using information and data to tell a story about your program. Whether that is through survey data, but also rich qualitative data to just again, highlight the impact that a program can have on a community and help get buy-in from different partners.

23:29   Other strategies taken by grantees to address those necessary factors include what we've talked about, expanding programs to new populations of young people to help create more opportunities for implementation, but also opportunities to reach more diverse groups of young people. Also, I think especially for PREP programming, making connections between

the content of PREP, including sexual and reproductive health topics and adult preparation, connecting that to things like substance use, violence prevention, mental health, family programs, workforce development. There's so many connections with PREP and so much relevance for those types of topics and PREP programming-

Dr. Kineka Hull: 24:08   Absolutely.

Dr. Mindy Scott: 24:08   ... and all really important factors linked to sexual and reproductive health outcomes. So finding those partners to integrate those other topics into your programming or integrate your programming into those other topics is a really effective way to diversify funding and continue programming. Also making connections with others that have similar interests and vision as you. Find those like-minded organizations and groups in your community and work together to build better programming.

Dr. Kineka Hull: 24:40   I agree. I think that sometimes we don't capitalize on some of the partners that we have who are like-minded or reaching the same youth population that we are working with or that we desire to work with. I used to always roll my eyes when I would hear someone say, "Work smarter, not harder." But that's true. A lot of youth-serving agencies and providers all have the same mission or goal. And so if you're able to combine resources or share resources or piggyback off of the delivery of some other things, I know recruitment and retention is always something that comes up as a TA topic. So making sure that you are really leaning into the strength of the communities that will help with that feet and your sustainability. So are you partnering with Boys & Girls Clubs? The YMCA?

                          25:35   A lot of times you can save money or budget. That was one thing that I was always looking for a way. I'm very fiscally responsible. I like to think. And so trying to find ways that I could save my program funding by combining resources or joint efforts with other places and say, "Hey, I bring the facilitator, you apply the building." Or you're already having this meeting and the parents, the young people will be there, "Can I come in and do some other things?" And so people start shifting their view and their expectations or services that are provided because they know when I come to this one space, I'm able to get this service, that service and the other. And so they start looking for that and relying on your program and your program becomes a trusted service for that community. And that helps also with your sustainability because you may meet someone who might be able to offer diversify your funding. You may

meet someone that says, "Hey, if you do half of a facilitator position, I can do the other half of the facilitator position." So thinking about ways to be smart about what it is that you're proposing and doing.

Dr. Asari Offio...:   26:42   It also allows you to embrace your expertise like when you have those coordinated supports or systems. If I'm an SRH person and I partner with a substance user behavioral program or another youth development program, it allows me to be the SRH expert. And then when young people come to me with let's say a mental health or behavioral issue, I can easily do a warm handoff. I don't have to be the end all be all of everything. And so that also helps you to be more sustainable too, because then you're working and maximizing your skillset and your team skillset and your organization's expertise level. So I think it's important to think about it that way as well, that it is more sustainable when we come together versus everybody trying to be everything. And we're doing that for eight kids, and we can be doing that for 800 kids if we learn how to leverage those partnerships on those community assets.

Dr. Kineka Hull: 27:36   So in addition to leveraging those partnerships, the epidemiologist in me loves data, data, data. And so as we are leveraging these partnerships and these experiences, what are some things that can help us strengthen our partnerships or diversify some of our options?

Dr. Asari Offio...:   27:56   This comes from another grantee that I thought was so, so, so, so great. They have implemented a fee-for-service model. And while they may not, or you may not be able to implement your own programming because of limited funding, you can use the expertise to train others. So apply those strategies or implement the program in their respective communities. If you don't have the capacity to go beyond let's say Michigan or Maryland, you can train others to do that. And so that's a way of actually creating funding for yourself as well, but also expanding your reach to other spaces. And then for building organizational capacity, some strategies include developing data tracking systems, conducting like environmental assessments to assess community support and determine if and how programs can be adapted to a new setting using data and other evaluation activities to support sustainability efforts. So for example, collecting and analyzing feedback from young people, from parents, community members and facilitators, you can use that to inform continuous quality improvement efforts, which then inherently as to the sustainability of your program.

Dr. Kineka Hull:	29:09	I love feedback. I remember after implementing a session, the students would either go home in the car ride line or they would get on school buses. A parent came up and hugged me at the end of the session. It was like, "You know my child really opened up and told me some things." I wasn't quite ready for the conversation, but I appreciated that we had been opening those lines of communication. So whenever the time came, they felt comfortable coming to me for assistance and asking me questions and asking help. And so not only are we collecting and analyzing feedback, we have to make sure that we are spreading awareness of our PREP programs. Do you have any recommendations for agencies on how they can get the word out about their programs, whether it be to parents, youth, or just the community in general?
Dr. Mindy Scott:	29:58	We have heard of organizations being really intentional about working with and training different people from the community to be champions of the programming and champions of supporting youth. And so this approach kind of want to think about caring adults who are real staples of the community and that come into contact with youth for various reasons. Sorry, I mentioned a couple examples, like librarians or pastors, corrections officers, custodial staff at school, teachers, grandparents, and other older adults. These are all people that you could think about who could train in the program and help provide services to young people. They're already engaging with the young people, already have some established relationships, and that can help really extend the capacity and reach of programming and the longevity of the programming, which means it's really embedded in the community even when some specific funding is no longer available.
Dr. Asari Offio...:	30:53	I was going to say, I think too, you can also communicate the value of the program through just community initiatives and marketing and branding tools. So whether it's through printed materials such as newsletters, if there's like a community newsletter or neighborhood newsletter, direct email messages, text messages, if there's... And a lot of communities have Facebook groups. So there's ways to market the value of this program on this young people, whether it's live events such as local health fairs, conferences, town hall meetings, or actually creating those meetings with partners to inform them of the value of your program and some of the effects or the impacts that it's having on young people.
	31:33	Knowing if your curriculum or program fulfills state or district standards for health education credits in schools can be another way to really leverage and maximize that and share with people

like, this is a way that we can fulfill this requirement for our young people for health or for community service, whatever that may be. And that's a great way, one, to meet a need of another partner, but also make the connection on the value of this program. Yes, we want to address sexual health, but at the end of the day, we're trying to address optimal health and wellbeing for young people.

Dr. Kineka Hull:	32:06	Exactly.

Dr. Asari Offio...:	32:06	So when you market that program, you have to connect it to the values of folks who are in your community through different modalities and making those connections for them.

Dr. Kineka Hull:	32:17	Great point Asari. You talked about messaging and branding and so listeners, please look in the linked resources. We've had several webinars and other products that talked about how to tackle the messaging and the branding and the promotion and the success storytelling of your programs in varying ways and varying budgets. And so look for that link on the resource card for this podcast. All of this information and other great resources are on The Exchange. And so as we think about how to do things in a way that's comfortable for varying size agencies, I know you said that sustainability should not look the same for every organization. What are some ways or processes that grantees should use to think about tackling sustainability?

Dr. Asari Offio...:	33:15	If anything, because I know folks... I think it was on a call that we had maybe a like CA meeting, [inaudible 00:33:20] if you remember, where grantees were just like, "I'm not a health department, so I don't have a communications person. I don't have people that can help me to do all of this stuff. I'm a small CBO that's everything. Our team, our facilitators... And we don't have time essentially to think about sustainability." And so I think being able to just really encourage people to shift it from being this big thing that they have to accomplish, but really helping folks to think about if you were to leave to today, what would happen with this program? And really using that as that statement, what would happen? Who would need to take this on? Or who would be capable if they had the right supports in the training? And so I think if people can continually think that way, it would help them to not feel like, oh, they don't have anything that they can do or that there are no resources around them that they can leverage to really sustain their programs.

Dr. Kineka Hull:	34:14	I recall back to my implementation days starting out in a county that's actually an hour and a half from where I live and work, so a new face and a rural place and having a lot of pushback. So

we've had a lot of conversations and tip sheets and webinars recently on misinformation. And so it was who is this person who we don't know coming from the "city", coming in, talking to our young people about these topics?

34:47 And so the first year we met our goals but needed to improve, but it was partnerships. And so by partnering with the health department whose goal was reducing teen pregnancy prevention, same mission, I was able to partner with them on billboards and have CEUs for the nurses or the health educators or staff. We were able to make table tents and put in some of the local restaurants, but for QR code that linked to our website. On the website, we were able to put tools and tips and things for parents and say, "Hey, parents are our first line of defense when talking to young people. Here are some talking points. So some information that you can review by yourself to make sure that you're brushed up on some of the topics and things that you want to talk about. And then here are some things that you can share with your young people."

35:40 And we went from reaching 35 or 40 young people a semester to every sixth through ninth grader by the end of our contract because we were able to build that trusted partnership with multiple agencies. I know when we first started, we just had school district on board as a partner. At the end of our funding, we had 13 youth-serving agencies in that county coming together, having a continuum of services, trying to make sure every young person was reached. And I think some of that just comes with the old school press the flesh, which is kind of hard now that we are doing things with COVID. So look back to season the one where we have an excellent podcast that talks about virtual implementation and additional partnerships, especially working with schools which are especially challenging in the current climate.

36:36 Before we move to our key takeaways, is there any other information that you would like to share with listeners?

Dr. Asari Offio...: 36:43 Well, the only thing I'll say is because I know folks are dealing with limited capacity and staff and being pulled in a lot of ways. And so this can sound like, "Oh, I don't have the supports to do a website, a billboard, posters and implement and manage all the other pieces." But I think it's really important to just remember that sustainability can be approached in those smaller pieces that we mentioned before and thinking about what is the one component that you really want to focus on or the one piece that you really want to put your energy in? If it's around creating a network or collaborative, putting your

attention there so that that marketing piece of the value of your program is not just on you, is not just a burden for your program, but can be shared amongst that collaborative. And you don't have to do it alone. And they may have social media folks or branding folks that can really help you to leverage and amplify your work.

37:38   And so the intention is not to be overwhelming with this information, but for folks to be able to identify what pieces make sense for them and where they are on the spectrum and what's feasible for them. But everybody should be thinking about sustainability no matter how small that is from the beginning and have a plan that's going to be flexible and one that allows you to pivot. Because that's the great thing about a sustainability plan. It's not set in stone, it's just a plan with flexibility and room to adjust as needed.

Dr. Mindy Scott: 38:08   And I would add to that, really thinking about who in your community can help along the way, should help with that burden too. So already leveraging relationships that young people have in the community, relationships that you and your organizations have in the community. And yeah, I think being comfortable that there are different scales of sustainability. So it might start small, it might start slow, but starting I think is really important and making the most of those relationships and champions in the community to help along the way.

Dr. Kineka Hull: 38:37   Thank you. This has all been very valuable information. So if you had to leave one thing with listeners to think about as a wrap up, what would it be?

Dr. Asari Offio...:   38:49   I think the one thing that comes to mind for me, I know we've said a lot of things today, but if you can think about sustainability as your creative plan and your vision board of where you want to go, where you want your program to go, where you want young people to go, if you can think about it in that way, then it allows you to then create a plan around that. So if you start your program with your vision board and are altering that vision board, sustainability planning would just feel more tangible and something more actionable that you can actually work towards. So I would say to think about it that way and keep at it and make it a priority for you and your team.

Dr. Mindy Scott: 39:27   And I would bring us back to right where we started that sustainability and the planning related is more than identifying and maintaining funding. So funding is an important element of course, but I hope that we've sort of helped think about programmatic sustainability in a much broader way and given

some ideas of the different aspects of that and how much there is to kind of think about and to help with your sustainability planning beyond the funding piece.

Dr. Kineka Hull: 39:53 When tackling sustainability, please keep in mind that two things need to be considered. Of course, we typically immediately think about financial sustainability, which is important because you do need funds to implement programming. But as mentioned earlier, the hallmark of public health is leaving a community in a way to help themselves and in better shape. So programmatic sustainability is going to be key. That may look different for varied agencies, different timelines, different budgets, different capacities, and different capabilities. So figure out what works best for your agency and take baby steps to make sure that you get it done.

40:38 We hope this episode enhances your ability to make a positive impact for you. Thank you for listening.

40:45 If you enjoyed today's conversation, be sure to like and follow Elevate Youth Programming on your podcast platform of choice. For information on today's topic and resources in adolescent pregnancy prevention, visit The Exchange atteenpregnancy.acf.hhs.gov.

41:06 The Elevate Youth Programming podcast is funded by the Family and Youth Services Bureau. The content in each episode is not the opinion of FYSB, nor is training and technical assistance contractors. I'm Kineka Hull, and this has been another episode of Elevate Youth Programming.