



The Dibble Institute

Resources for Teaching Relationship Skills
to Teens and Young Adults

Evaluation Summaries Healthy Romantic Relationship Programs

The following list of current empirical research illustrates the benefits of teaching teens and young adults healthy romantic relationship skills because such programs can:

Prevent pregnancy. *Youth who completed Love Notes were significantly less likely at the 6-month follow-up to have ever had sex, have had sex in the last 3 months, have had sex without a condom in the last 3 months, or have had sex without birth control. Overall, across the first year post intervention, there were significantly fewer pregnancies in youth participating in Love Notes than in the control condition.* Anita P. Barbee, Ph.D., University of Louisville, American Journal of Public Health, September 2016.

In 2016 Love Notes was placed on the Office of Adolescent Health's Pregnancy Prevention Evidence Based Program list based on the University of Louisville research results.

Increase parental engagement and family well-being. *Preliminary results of quantitative analysis suggested that Love Notes is effective at promoting childcare contributions and parental engagement. Participants showed progress in regards to skills and knowledge associated with sexual planning and decision-making, conflict management, and healthy relationship building while also consistently reported improvements in their relationships with their co-parents and children.* Bright Sarfo, Ph.D., Columbia University, unpublished report to the Administration for Children and Families, 2014.

Decrease harmful behaviors. *The young people who participated in the Love Notes program learned the skills needed to manage conflict, hold aggression in check, be assertive, and better assess relationships, which leads to more positive beliefs around parenting.* Jennifer Kerpelman, Ph.D., Auburn University, in unpublished reports to the Youth Build USA and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2009 and 2010.

Reduce teen dating violence and abuse and increase youth's assets. *The students who participated in the Love U2 Relationship Smarts program experienced significant improvements in terms of increases in relationship knowledge, decreases in destructive verbal and physical conflict strategies, increases in reasoning strategies, and positive changes in relationship beliefs regarding healthy relationships. Furthermore, analyses indicated that RQ+ increased conflict management capabilities in teens especially minority and socioeconomically disadvantaged youth and those living in stepfamilies.* (Jennifer Kerpelman, PhD, Auburn University, et al; Family Relations (2007), Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy. April 19, 2010.)

In 2012 Relationship Smarts PLUS and Love Notes (its adaptation for young adults and young parents) were placed on the CDC-SAMHSA National Registry of Evidence Based Programs and Practices list.

Improve students' ability to resist sexual pressure and decrease negative behaviors. *The Connections: Dating and Emotions curriculum is effective as a teen pregnancy prevention curriculum by increasing teens' ability to resist sexual pressure. The curriculum also shows promise in reducing violence in relationships and negative behaviors at school and at home.* (Scott Gardner, PhD, South Dakota State University. 2005)

Decrease peer-to-peer physical violence and improve communications with parents. *The Connections: Relationships and Marriage curriculum appears to be beneficial in changing attitudes and actual behaviors in high school students from diverse racial backgrounds. It decreases the use of verbally aggressive and violent tactics in interpersonal conflicts. It tends to improve parent-child communication. The students taking this course become less favorable toward divorce, more favorable toward marriage, and more favorable toward preparing for and protecting their marriage.* (Scott Gardner, PhD, South Dakota State University. 2005.)

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