



The Dibble Institute

Resources for Teaching Relationship Skills
to Teens and Young Adults

Healthy Relationship Education

can help effectively meet the

[YouthBuild Program Design and Performance Standards \(2013\)](#)

The mission of YouthBuild USA (YB) is to unleash the intelligence and positive energy of low-income young people to rebuild their communities and their lives. YB's seeks a more just society in which respect, love, responsibility, and cooperation are the dominant unifying values, and sufficient opportunities are available for all people in all communities to fulfill their own potential and contribute to the well-being of others. (From the YouthBuild USA website.)

Empowering young people to make positive relationship decisions as well as learn healthy relationship skills for personal, family, academic, and professional settings helps to achieve YB's mission, program design, and performance standards.

Many of the YB program standards and competencies can be achieved using [Love Notes](#) (LN), a 13 unit relationship skills program published by The Dibble Institute, which was specifically developed for YB organizations and members. Love Notes is especially effective with underserved communities of color, marginalized ethnic groups, and other stigmatized affinity groups.

Love Notes meets YB standards and competencies through developing members' leadership in personal relationships – with partners, co-parents, children, family members, supervisors, peers, and friends. It encourages young adults to apply the skills they learn to their daily lives, and often, YB staff see immediate impact with members. LN is especially useful during mental toughness as relationship building is often the emphasis of this make-or-break-period.

Rather than focusing on what to avoid, Love Notes builds assets and appeals to aspirations. It offers young people new conceptual frameworks for decision making, along with untapped sources of motivation.

Topics include:

- Self-knowledge, goal-setting, and personal aspirations.
- Assessing and maintaining healthy relationships.
- Recognizing unhealthy relationships and responding to dangerous relationships.
- Effective communication and conflict management at work and at home.
- Intimacy, sexual values, pacing and planning.
- How parental relationships affect children and the compelling reasons to avoid unplanned pregnancy.

Learn how you can successfully implement Love Notes to effectively meet the YouthBuild performance standards and competencies. Please contact: Kay Reed, Executive Director, at 800-695-7975 or KayReed@DibbleInstitute.org.

P.O. Box 7881
Berkeley, CA 94707-0881

SECTION III – YouthBuild Program Design Standards

2. Skills Training (page 9)

2 D: The curriculum includes transferable career-readiness skills that are broadly applicable as well as specific skills for known career opportunities.

The **Love Notes** curriculum focuses on improving relationship skills in personal, family, academic, and professional settings. The career and college readiness skills in **Love Notes** of communications, teamwork, leadership, and conflict management skills are broadly applicable for success in life.

3. Education (page 10)

3 F: The curriculum includes **life-skills training** that addresses the issues that would prevent students from succeeding if the issues are not handled. These issues are determined locally, but usually include substance abuse, legal problems, AIDS, racism, sexual harassment, **intimate relationships, violence**, loss of family members, homelessness, gangs, and **caring for children** and parents. Learning barriers such as lack of concentration and fear of failure might also be addressed.

A fundamental premise of **Love Notes** is that one’s love life is not neutral. The decisions one makes in romantic attachments can affect every other aspect of life—school and career success, physical and mental health, and **especially one’s child**. The **Love Notes** program provides the leadership and life-skills training needed to succeed at intimate relationships and relationships at work, reduce violence and aggression, and build a strong and stable family in which to nurture children.

6. Personal Counseling and Mentoring (page 15)

6 E: Staff ensure from the start that all students develop **individual life plans** that address **postsecondary education, careers, leadership skills, and personal and family responsibility**.

- In **Lesson 3, Love Notes** encourages young adults to clarify, examine, and develop their expectations for relationships and partners. Young adults also consider their expectations for the future regarding family, children, marriage, post-secondary education, and career. The lesson concludes with preliminary goal setting for one’s future education, employment, and personal life.
- In **Lesson 8**, members learn low-risk deciding approach to relationships and sexual decision-making to help reduce the chances of becoming involved in unhealthy relationships. This approach may help participants navigate their first—or next—relationship more wisely. It can also help those currently in relationships to move from a sliding to a planning mode.
- In **Lesson 13, Love Notes** continues to tap young adults’ aspirations for family, education and, career. They learn the concepts and skills for developing their own success plan both on and off the job.

6 O: Issues related to **sexuality, pregnancy and family planning, sexually transmitted diseases, healthy relationships, and intimacy are given special attention.**

Lesson 4 explores healthy relationships – what they are and how they develop. Participants explore what happens when relationships go forward too fast and on a shaky foundation. **Lesson 5** provides practical guidance for making relationship decisions. Seven principles for smart relationships - the smart and not-so-smart ways to go about relationships are introduced. In **Lesson 6**, young adults utilize a clear three-question framework to define six types of healthy and unhealthy relationships. **Lessons 9 and 10** include medically accurate reproductive health, STD, and contraceptive education. The lessons encourage young adults to cultivate their own “North Star” and set boundaries for sexuality and relationships. Young adults identify their goals, boundaries, and a context for sex that is responsible, protective of their own aspirations for life, and personally meaningful. The goal is for young adults know their limits while taking charge and making clear decisions based on what they value, rather than simply sliding when it comes to sex and blindly following current cultural scripts.

Love Notes contains a strong planning message for young parents and young singles alike— it takes real planning to stick to one’s sexual boundaries and desired pacing of physical intimacy and it takes real planning to be a “stickler” on birth control to prevent an unintended pregnancy.

Love Notes is being evaluated at the University of Louisville as an innovative pregnancy prevention strategy for at-risk young adults. Federally funded, the study is testing Love Notes’ innovative approach against traditional health/body based methods. Preliminary results show much promise.

6 P: Issues related to **parenting are given special attention** and support in finding good child care is provided.

Love Notes focuses on unplanned pregnancy and relationship turbulence through the eyes of a child. Young adults are encouraged to step outside themselves to look more deeply at the consequences of unplanned pregnancy for children. By placing the child at center stage in the activities, participants see the consequences of sliding into unplanned pregnancy (a first or a second), and the “relationship turbulence” that often accompanies it, through the eyes of a child.

Examining how an unplanned pregnancy can disadvantage or hurt a child may tap a more powerful source of motivation to more consciously plan to prevent a first or second unintended pregnancy. It helps bring home to young adults why it really, really matters to avoid unintended pregnancy, or to wait on having a second child until other things are in place like an education and a healthy, committed relationship.

Finally, attention is devoted to the positive contributions of fathers in their children’s lives both emotionally and financially.

SECTION IV - YouthBuild Program Performance Standards

Individual Leadership: Personal Responsibility and Group Membership (page 34)

Love Notes, a relationship-focused leadership program, helps members:

- **Take care of their children** – by focusing on how their relationships with past, current, or future partners impact their current or future children.
- **Improve their family relationships** – by identifying family patterns they want to keep or leave behind; by developing the skills necessary for a respectful, healthy relationship with a partner or co-parent.
- **Learn how to resolve conflicts peaceably** – through learning the four Danger Signs that harm relationships; how anger impacts the brain, practice the skills necessary to resolve conflict, and how to regulate strong emotions.
- **Express their opinions fully and respectfully** – Young adults learn the “Speaker/Listener Technique” which ensures that both people are heard and validated by the other and counters four dangerous communication patterns.

SECTION VIII – Appendices

Leadership Development, Workplace, and Postsecondary Readiness Competencies

Personal Leadership Skills and Knowledge (pages 43-45)

with Love Notes lesson objectives

Goal setting:

Sets and makes progress towards **personal development goals**. Understands value of long-term goals and deferred gratification. Can use self-evaluation and feedback from others to evaluate progress toward goals.

Lesson 1 - Relationships Today

- Defines a personal vision for relationships and future goals

Lesson 3 – My Expectations – My Future

- Identifies goals for education or training, employment, and personal life

Lesson 8 – Decide - Don’t Slide!

- Teaches a low-risk deciding approach to handle attractions, develop relationships, and make interpersonal goals

Lesson 13 - Through the Eyes of a Child

- Explores the benefits of deliberate planning to avoid pregnancy until one is older, has acquired education/training, and has formed a healthy union.
- Applies concepts and skills for developing a success plan.

<p>Emotional control: Handles own anger, frustration, disappointments, and reactions to personal or societal disrespect and mistreatment in a constructive way.</p>	<p>Lesson 7 – Dangerous Love</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides practice in setting boundaries and applying them at the first signs of disrespectful behavior • Increases motivation to learn communication and conflict management skills to deal with arguments and frustrations <p>Lesson 11 – What’s Communication Got to Do with It?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raises awareness of the role communication and the ability to handle anger and frustration plays in relationship success or failure – relationships of all kinds • Builds a set of skills to counter negative patterns including the <i>Time Out Skill</i> <p>Lesson 12 – Communication Challenges and More Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzes hidden issues that cause conflict and problems • Practices a simple problem-solving model
<p>Personal values: Can articulate how own personal values and beliefs affect his or her decision.</p>	<p>Lesson 2 – Knowing Yourself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaches that good relationships start with you – knowing yourself and attending to your own development <p>Lesson 3 – My Expectations – My Future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies and analyzes qualities that are important when considering partner choices
<p>Support network: Seeks and takes advantage of a positive support network and has someone to turn to during times of need.</p>	<p>Every lesson of Love Notes contains an engaging Trusted Adult Connection piece. YouthBuild programs may use this component with case workers or with a mentors as conversation starters, which convey core concepts and offer talking points. It adds a powerful protective factor when young adults can dialogue with a caring, wise adult on these very important issues.</p>
<p>Listening: Listens well to others in class, in meetings, and on the work site.</p>	<p>Lesson 11 – What’s Communication Got to Do with It?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds a set of skills to build relationships of all kinds including the <i>Speaker/Listener Technique</i> <p>Lesson 12 – Communication Challenges and More Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates good communication skills by using a proven approach to constructively hear complaints and issues

(Sections in blue refer to the 2013 [YouthBuild Program Design and Performance Standards](#). Sections in white refer to how [Love Notes](#) effectively addresses the YB Standards