

# Exemplary Program Evaluations

## PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

### National Outcome Area

#### ■ Child and Youth Results

- Knowledge gains
- Attitude change
- Skill gains

### Methods & Tools

- Comparison group in first 2 years
- Quantitative measures

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

State:	Arizona
Project name:	Youth, Families & Communities
Participants:	Children in grades 4-8
Number involved:	6,000 students reached
Program:	Implemented Postponing Sexual Involvement curriculum along with medically accurate reproductive health information
Where:	Gila, Yuma, Mohave, Pinal, Apache counties
When:	Six-week program received in class; repeated to different classes throughout school year over 5 years
Who:	10th-12th grade students provided the program in partnership with teachers or Extension agents

## PROGRAM GOALS and OBJECTIVES

- Children who participate will increase their knowledge of the risks of, situations that can lead to, and the influences of peers and the media on early sexual activity
- Children who participate will change their attitudes towards postponing sexual involvement and protecting themselves
- Children who participate will increase their peer refusal skills and gain alternative and delay strategies
- Teens who participate will gain leadership skills

## EVALUATION

### Methods & Tools

- A pre- and post-test survey method was used to determine if the above objectives were met. The surveys were piloted with a small group of youth and a Spanish translation was also used. Surveys were administered in class to three different groups: students in 4th-6th grades, students in 7th and 8th grades, and teen leaders who assisted in implementing the program. Depending on the age of the child, cultural needs, and whether it was a pre- or posttest, the survey contained between 32 and 65 items. Objectives 1, 2, & 3 were related to all three groups of youth. Objective 4 focused only on the teen leaders who assisted in implementing the program.

- Objective 1: Items related to this objective included: communication about sex (1 or 3 questions), ability to recognize and handle pressures (3 or 4 questions), reasons for abstaining from sexual intercourse (7-9 questions).
- Objective 2: Items related to this objective included: personal values about sexual behavior (5 or 6 questions), values about sexual behavior held by others that were important to the participant (3 questions).
- Objective 3: Items related to this objective included: ability to recognize and handle pressures (3 questions), rights in social relationships (3-5 questions), ability to avoid problems associated with sexual involvement (2-3 questions), likelihood of abstaining from sexual involvement (1 question).
- Objective 4: Items related to this objective included 5 questions focusing on confidence and comfort as a teen leader.

### Analysis

- Comparisons of pre- and post-data were done within sites. Analysis was done by grade and gender for measures of knowledge, attitude, intention and skills.
- In the first two years, delayed treatment groups were also used as comparisons. In addition, in one county, follow-up data were collected at the end of year 5 from students in grades 9 through 12. About half had participated in the program at some point, the other half had no exposure. Comparison of knowledge, attitudes and skills were done for these two groups.

## Results

### Overall:

In comparing treatment and comparison groups, in general (collapsing across sites and years), "perceived ability to postpone" (Objective 3) nearly always increased significantly from pre-test to post-test, with the treatment groups scoring better than the control groups. Additionally, "recognizing risks" (Objective 1) nearly always increased significantly, while "values" (Objective 2) and "recognizing pressures" (Objective 1) showed a marginally significant increase. In general, the program seemed to have a greater impact on females than on males.

### Comparison analysis:

In a five-year follow-up, t-test comparison of participants and non-participants revealed that the program seemed to have a lasting impact. For example, participants scored more positively than non-participants on "values" (Objective 2), "understanding rights in social relationships" (Objectives 1 and 3) and "likelihood of abstaining" (Objective 3).

- Objective 1: Comparisons of pre- and post-data within sites revealed a significant increase in participants' ability to recognize and handle pressures to have sex and their understanding of their rights to postpone sex in a social relationship. Additionally, fewer participants reported that they had "no one" to go to when they have questions about sex; in other words, participants were more likely to talk to someone when they have questions about sex after the program.
- Objective 2: Comparisons of pre- and post-data within site revealed a marginally statistically significant increase in personal values about sexual behavior.
- Objective 3: Comparisons of pre- and post-data within sites revealed a significant increase in participants' ability to recognize and handle pressures to have sex, understanding of their rights to postpone sex in a social relationship, and feeling more confident about their ability to recognize and prevent risks associated with sexual involvement. Participants also reported that they intended to abstain from sexual involvement until they were older.
- Objective 4: Both males and females reported very positive experiences as teen leaders; in other words, they felt confident in their abilities and were comfortable with their roles. Responses to the open-ended question, "What are you hoping to gain from your experience as a PSI teen leader?" fell into two broad groups: a desire to help others and a desire to learn the skills they were trained to teach their younger counterparts.

## HOW WERE RESULTS USED?

- To assess program effectiveness
- Program planning
- Documentation in grant proposal writing
- Reports to collaborators and funders
- Marketing to the community
- For support to replicate program in other places
- Reports were also summarized and presented to the community, parents, school board members, and other stakeholders.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Participant and teen leader surveys
- Sample newsletters