

Me & You Too: Utilizing Technology to Deliver Sexual Risk Avoidance Education

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Objective

The aim of this presentation is to evaluate the use of computer-based programming in sexual risk avoidance education for healthy relationships in 6th-grade students.

Program Overview

Me & You Too is a multi-level SRAE program designed for middle school students to help them make healthy decisions, set goals, build healthy relationship skills, and avoid risky behaviors. The program addresses adolescent risky behaviors through eight computer-based lessons, two guardian take-home activities, and a community resource guide for healthcare and social services.

The eight computer-based lesson topics included:

	Homework	Complete?
Lesson 1 Introduction to Me & You Too		<input type="checkbox"/>
Lesson 2 Playing by Your Rules		<input type="checkbox"/>
Lesson 3 Protecting Your Rules		<input type="checkbox"/>
Lesson 4 Thoughts and Emotions Link		<input type="checkbox"/>
Lesson 5 Communication for Healthy Dating Relationships		<input type="checkbox"/>
Lesson 6 Unhealthy Dating Relationships		<input type="checkbox"/>
Lesson 7 Keeping it Real...About Marriage		<input type="checkbox"/>
Lesson 8 Keeping Your Relationships Healthy		<input type="checkbox"/>

Methods

Seven middle schools participated in the MYToo web-based healthy relationship curriculum. Single-group entry and exit surveys were conducted with students in 6th grade (n = 175) to measure the program's influence.

Entry (n=196) and exit (n=175) survey questions included items addressing healthy boundaries and healthy relationship skills, as well as items regarding students' perceptions of curriculum implementation.

Results

Participants were 50% female, 42% Hispanic or Latino, 70% were 12 years of age, and 30% were 11 years of age. After receiving MYToo, participants reported short-term psychosocial outcomes in healthy relationships and resisting peer pressure, dating relationship knowledge and behavioral change; 53% of participants reported understanding what makes a relationship healthy, and 77% would be able to say no to someone if they pressured them to participate in sexual acts.

After completing the program, students reported an increase in healthy relationship skills after the program. Participants (40%) also noted that the program has made them much more likely to talk with parents, guardians, or caregivers about sex.

While MYToo's participants reported an increased understanding of healthy relationships and being able to resist peer pressure, participants also reported a lack of support during computer-based activities. When asked how often they had the opportunity to ask questions about topics or issues that came up in the program, 26% reported all the time. Participants did report that the curriculum was clear, and that discussions or activities facilitated understanding.

Example of Lesson Activities

LESSON 7 - KEEPING IT REAL...ABOUT MARRIAGE		
	1. Directory	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PLAY
	2. Marriage 101	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PLAY
	3. Intro to Consequences	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PLAY
	4. Consequences of Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PLAY
	5. Reasons to Wait & Eval Questions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PLAY
	6. Wrap Up	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PLAY

Table 1. Healthy Relationship Skills

	Much or Somewhat less likely		About the same		Somewhat or Much more likely	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Resist or say no to peer pressure	19	10.7%	33	18.6%	125	70.6%
Manage your emotions in healthy ways	20	11.3%	55	31.1%	102	57.6%
Think about the consequences before making decisions.	20	11.3%	38	21.5%	119	67.2%
Talk with my parent, guardian, or caregiver about sex.	40	22.6%	66	37.3%	71	40.1%

Curriculum Example

a. Description: Youth will watch an animation that will provide information regarding the consequences of having sex. The youth will decide whether these consequences are emotional, physical, or social.

3. Choosing to Wait (4:00 min)

a. Description: Youth will play a "drag and drop" game that helps them clarify their reasons for waiting until marriage to have sex and reinforces these decisions.

Take-Home Activity Reaching My Goals (3 pages)

a. Description: This fillable PDF will have questions that help to start a conversation between youth and parents/guardians about waiting to have sex until marriage and reaching their goals. Youth can then type their answers in the space provided.

b. Questions:

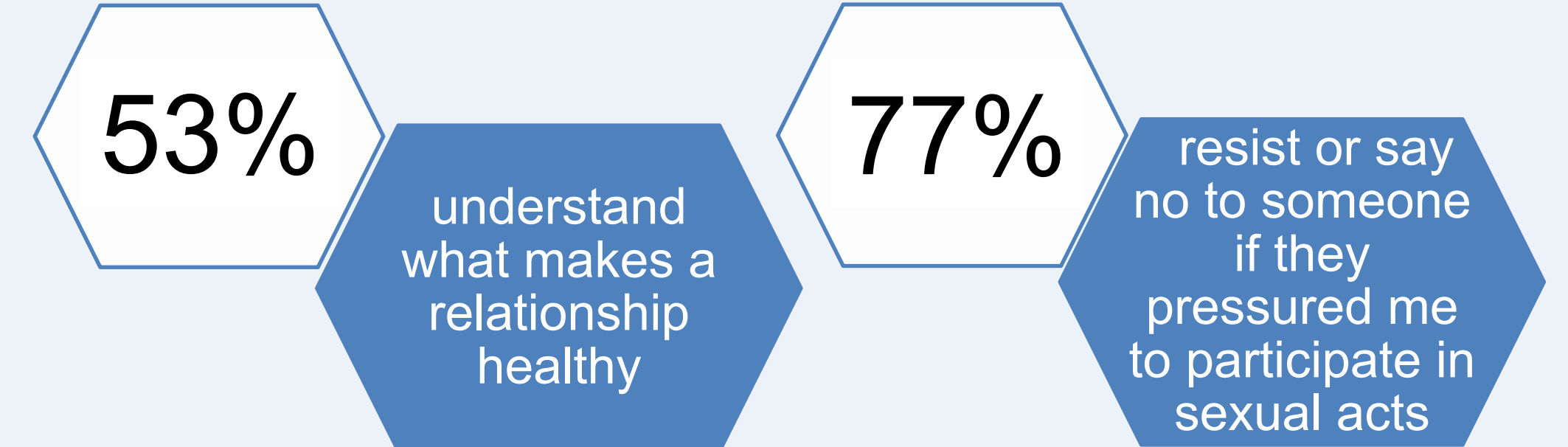
- Tell your parent (or trusted adult) some of the goals that you have for your life. List your goals below.
- Ask your parent (or trusted adult), "What are some goals or things you'd like to see me do with my life?"
- Ask your parent (or trusted adult), "How can you help me reach my goals?"
- Ask your parent (or trusted adult), "How can waiting to have sex until marriage help me reach my goals?"

Post-Lesson Discussion
Reserve 10 minutes to review the lesson topic with youth, and invite them to ask questions or share their favorite/least favorite activities. You can use your fidelity log for discussion questions, and please record responses in the log.
Think of the following to guide your discussion:
In what ways were the lessons or activities adapted to better meet the youth's experiences (e.g., name, culture, gender, etc.)?

Students reported the computer-guided lessons:

- The material presented was clear (34.3%)
- Discussions or activities helped me learn program lessons (34.5%)
- Provided an opportunity to ask questions about topics or issues that came up in the program (26.2%)

After completing the program, students reported being confident to:



Conclusions

MYToo results indicated that using a computer-based curriculum delivery increased students' knowledge and skills for healthy relationships and sexual risk avoidance.

Although participants' responses suggest an increase in psychosocial outcomes, additional participants' feedback identifies potential areas for improvement or modification when being delivered. Computer-based programming has the advantage of delivering sexual risk avoidance education; however, future studies should increase instructor or teacher involvement.

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