



# Understanding Predictors of Behavior Change

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ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

**FYSB** Family & Youth  
Services Bureau

**Adolescent Pregnancy  
Prevention Program**

# Learning Objectives

- Understand the theory of planned behavior
- Understand mediating variables that predict delayed sexual initiation
- Identify relevant behavior predictors for SRAE application
- Understand how peer educators of SRAE incorporate behavior predictors into programming and facilitation
- Engage with the research to apply to your own program and curriculum

# The Goal of SRAE

- The goal of the SRAE program is not to just **impart knowledge**
- The goal of the SRAE program is to **influence behavior change**
- And to do so by **leading adolescents toward voluntarily choosing optimal health behaviors** for their personal well-being and future success

- Awareness
- Knowledge
- Understanding
- Attitude
- Belief
- Value
- Efficacy – Skills
- Commitment
- Practice
- Reinforcement



## Deeper Levels of Intervention

The facilitator has behavior change in mind while teaching.

The administrator has behavior change in mind while leading the SRAE programming.



**Understanding and internalizing the mediating variables that predict delayed sexual initiation can assist the program administrator and the facilitator to realize this goal of behavior change.**

# Understanding Behavior Predictors Can Form a Foundation for Effective SRAE Programming

1. What is the research underlying behavior predictors?

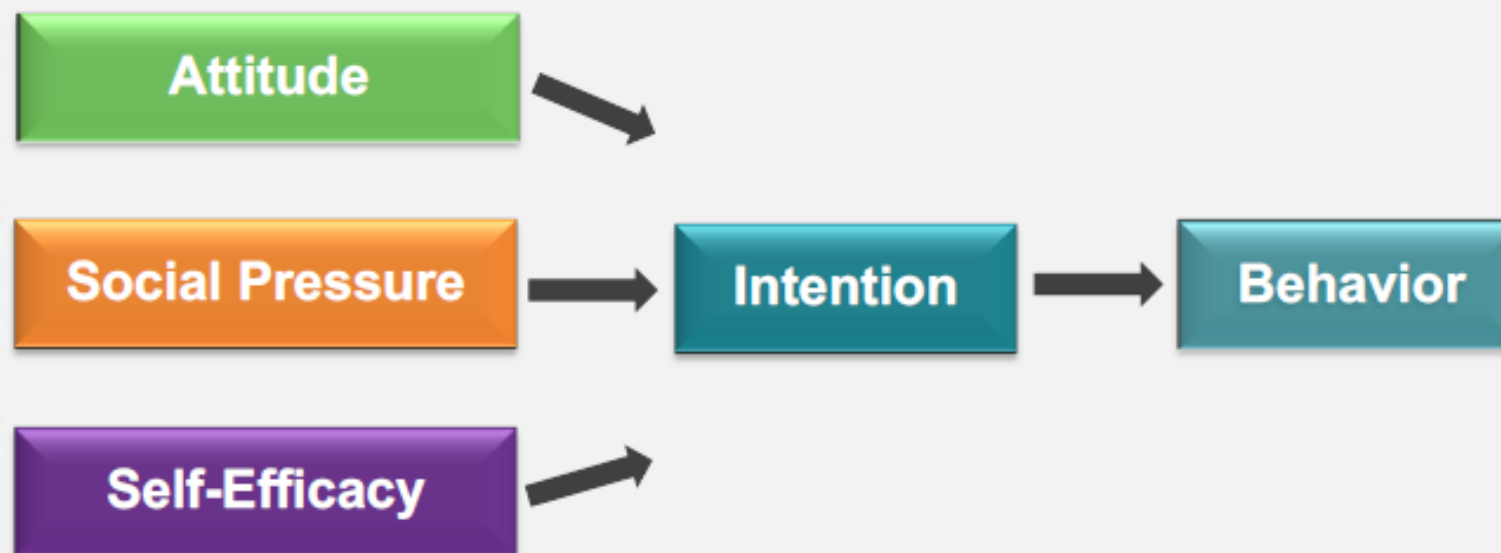
# Behavior Predictors are based in Social Learning Theory

- Social learning theory emerged during the 1960s and 1970s and emphasizes *“the reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental determinants of human behavior”* (Bandura, 1977).
- In other words, **people learn new behaviors through a combination of being taught it, watching others in a social situation, absorbing it, and then imitating that behavior.**
- SLT spawned other theories that have influenced behavior predictors such as reasoned goal theory, planned behavior theory, reasoned action theory, and social cognitive theory.

# Theory of Planned Behavior

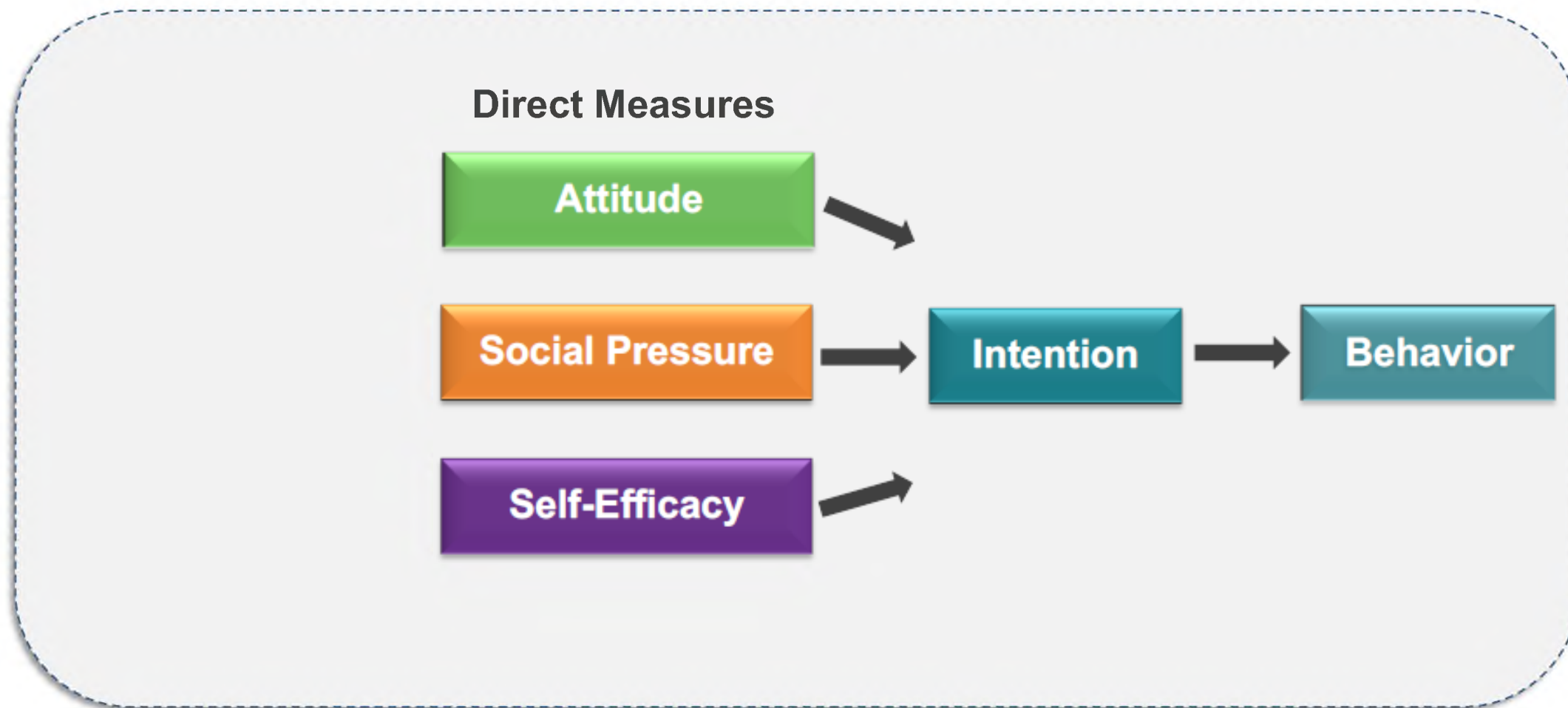
- The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991; 2012) has been widely used for the prediction and modification of human actions.
- It posits that **intention is the precursor and main determinant of behavior** and is influenced by:
  - attitude toward the behavior (**attitude**)
  - subjective norm with respect to the behavior (**social pressure**)
  - perceived control over the behavior (**self-efficacy**)
- Subjective social norm refers to the “perceived degree of social approval or disapproval for the behavior” (Jacobson, et al., 2011, p. 434).

# Theory of Planned Behavior



**This is the Core of the Theory of Planned Behavior**

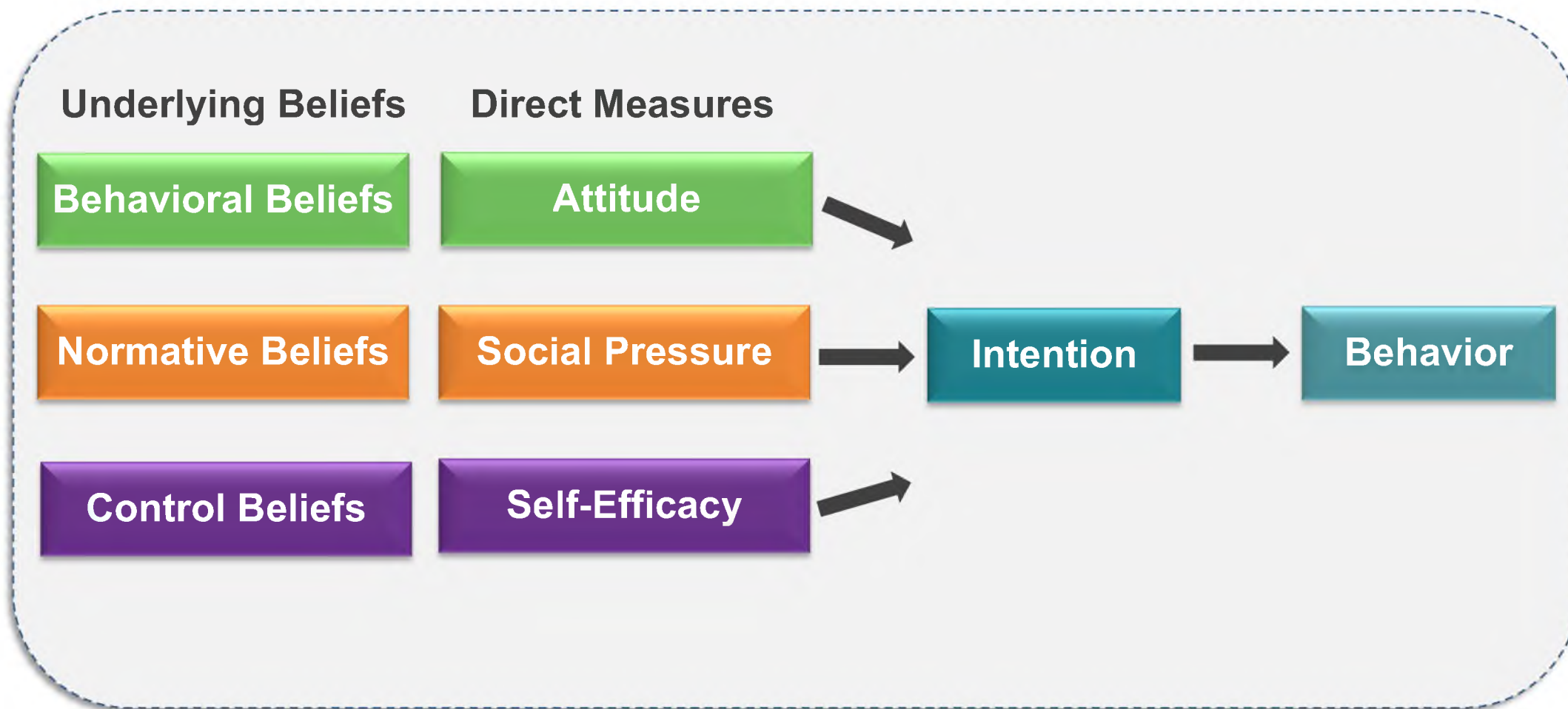
# Theory of Planned Behavior



**“Compatibility”**: Alignment between the direct measures, intention, and behavior, in terms of “exactly what it is you’re interested in.”

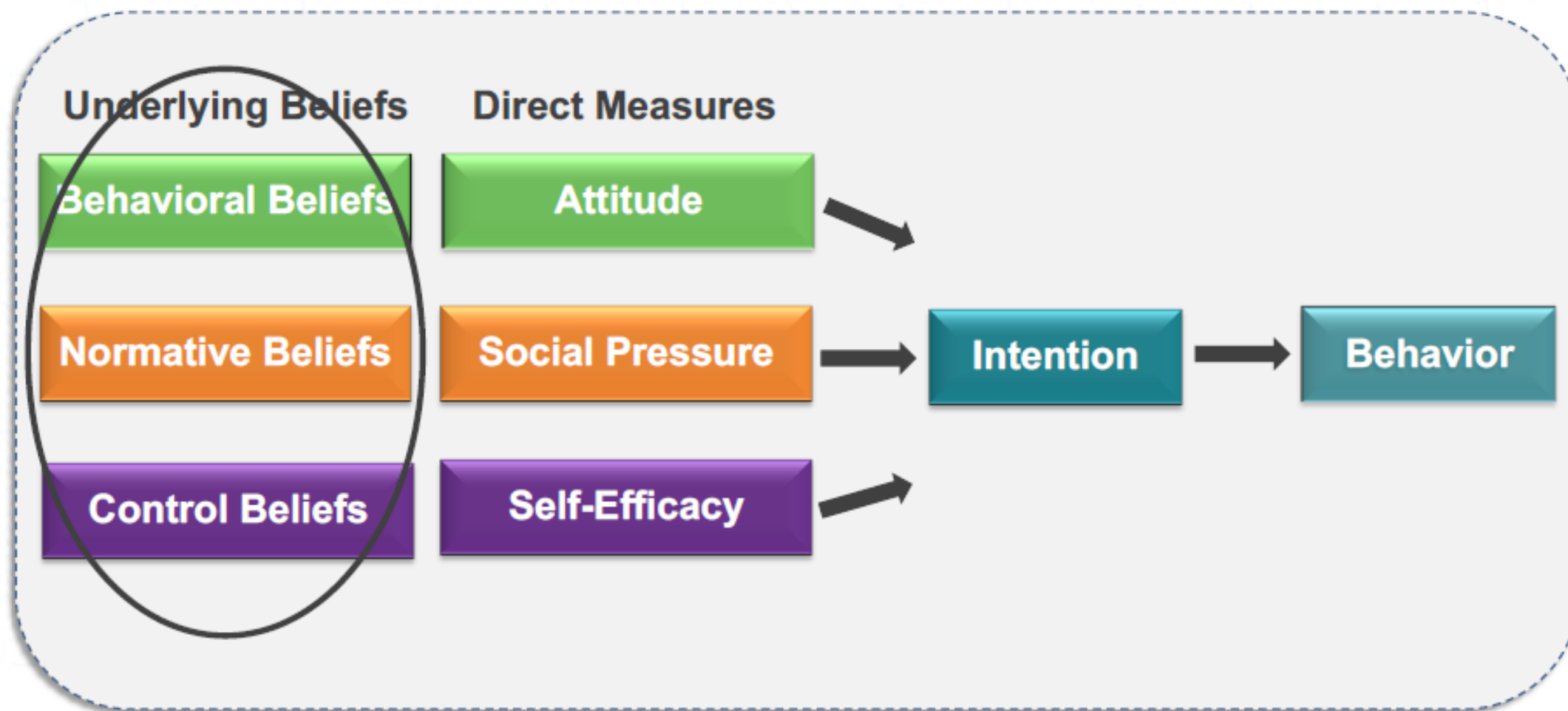


# Theory of Planned Behavior



**Underlying Beliefs:** Ajzen calls them simply “Beliefs”

# Theory of Planned Behavior



These are the factors to focus on.



# Behavior Predictors are related to Psychosocial Cognitive Constructs

- Out of these theories have come common constructs like **behavioral intention, self-efficacy, outcome expectancies, attitudes, and social norms** (Armitage & Conner, 2000; Floyd, Prentice-Dunn, & Rogers, 2000; Bandura, 2004).
- These and similar constructs have been shown to be significantly related to adolescent sexual behavior (Plotnik, 1992; Resnick, et al., 1997; Kirby, et al., 2007).
- They also provide an important focus in the study of behavior change because they are strong mediators of behavior (Armitage & Conner, 2000; Floyd, et al., 2000; Godin & Kok, 1996; Strecher, et al., 1986).

# Behavior Predictors in the Literature

- Three meta analyses (Kirby, 2007; Sullentrop, 2010; Weed, 2008) of the sex education research literature since 1990 relied on the same standards and methodology for study quality.
- Out of 20 comprehensive sex education studies, two found delayed sexual debut for at least 12 months, and of the 16 qualifying abstinence education studies, five found delayed sexual initiation for at least 12 months.
- These studies established significant links from the program to the mediators and from the mediators to the behavior outcomes (Weed, et al., 2005; Weed, et al., 2008; Weed, Anderson, et al., 2008; Zimmerman, 2008).

## Program Inputs

- Content/Focus/Emphasis
- Process/Pedagogy
- Teacher Factors
- Dosage

## Program Impact

Mediator Change  
Mediator Maintenance

## Program Outcomes

Behavior Change  
Sexual Risk Avoidance  
Future Effect



# Behavior Predictors in the Literature

- Research that employs such methods **to examine the empirical linkage between the program, the mediators, and adolescent sexual behavior** can help to identify the causal pathways influencing teen delay of sexual debut (delay).
- And can contribute to the goal of developing programs that effectively change behavior
- This is an evaluation approach worth considering for SRAE.

# Understanding Behavior Predictors Can Form a Foundation for Effective SRAE Programming

1. What is the research underlying behavior predictors?
2. How are behavior predictors relevant to the SRAE program (for facilitators and administrators)?

# Relevance to SRAE

## Key Predictor/Mediating Factors

**Based on the research and the premise that key factors are operating in an adolescent's life, we know that they:**

- Have a direct and strong impact on their risk behavior
- Are amenable to intervention and influence
- Can be specifically targeted by the intervention
- Can be reliably measured

# Relevance to SRAE

## Key Questions to Consider

1. What are these factors that are operating in adolescents?
2. What are the mediating variables that predict sexual initiation and sexual delay?
3. How are students affected by the intervention?



# Understanding Behavior Predictors Can Form a Foundation for Effective SRAE Programming

1. What is the research underlying behavior predictors?
2. How are behavior predictors relevant to SRAE?
3. What are the predictors? And how are they applied to SRAE?



## Behavior Predictor Constructs for SRAE

- Rationalization, called *Justification for Sex*
- Self-efficacy, called *Abstinence Efficacy*
- Outcome expectancies, called *Future Impact of Sex*
- Attitudes/values, called *Abstinence Values*
- Conviction, called *Independence from Peer Influence*
- Pre-behavior decision, called *Behavioral Intention* (and viewed as the most influential variable)

# Description of Behavior Predictors

**Justification for Sex:** Agreement with the rationalizing and justifying that students often engage in to legitimize their initiation into sexual activity

**Abstinence Efficacy:** Confidence in ability to engage in refusal skills and avoid situations that could lead to sex

**Future Impact of Sex:** Perception that sex could interfere with goals regarding education, careers, marriage, and family life

# Description of Behavior Predictors

**Abstinence Values:** Importance of refraining from sexual activity outside of marriage and its inclusion in their moral value system

**Independence from Peer Influence:** Ability to follow own value system and personal goals, and ability to communicate standards and values

**Behavioral Intentions for Sex:** Level of intent and commitment to refrain from non-marital sexual activity

# **Integrating Behavior Predictors Into THE SRAE Program Model**

**Tammy Bryant, Lateca McClary, & Li'a Seui,**  
Peer Educators/Facilitators/Trainers, will lead this section  
and relate how they have incorporated behavior predictors  
into their SRAE program model.

# Integrating Behavior Predictors Into THE SRAE Program Model

The facilitator/educator can effectively integrate predictors into program implementation through the following process:

# The Process

1. Study the key predictors and how they present themselves at each level of intervention.
2. Match predictors to each content section of your curriculum.
3. Create (and write) a discussion question or statement that intentionally targets the predictors relative to the content section of your curriculum.
4. Implement with your students.
5. Use your observation to gauge responses from students relative to the predictors.
6. Determine follow-up statements or questions that will move the students to a deeper level of intervention on the predictor (which will then impact behavior).

# **1. Study the key predictors and how they present themselves at each level of intervention.**

**Imbed them in your mind so they are in the background as you teach.**



- Awareness
- Knowledge
- Understanding
- Attitude
- Belief
- Value
- Efficacy – Skills
- Commitment
- Practice
- Reinforcement



## Example: Future Impacts of Sex

**Awareness:** Students recognize that sexual activity now could impact their future.

**Knowledge:** Students can discuss how sexual activity now could impact their future.

**Understanding:** Students can calculate how sexual activity now could impact their future.

**Attitude:** Students demonstrate positive attitude about how avoiding sexual activity now could benefit their future.

**Belief:** Students demonstrate beliefs that avoiding sexual activity now could benefit their future.



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## Example: Future Impacts of Sex

**Value:** Students value the behavior of avoiding sexual activity as a means to benefiting their future.

**Efficacy:** Students are confident and have the skills to avoid sexual activity now to benefit their future.

**Commitment:** Students make a commitment to their future and to avoiding sexual activity as a means of benefiting their future.

**Practice:** Students have avenues for demonstrating their commitment and their skills needed for protecting their future and avoiding sexual activity now

**Reinforcement:** Students have people around them that support and reinforce their commitment for avoiding sexual activity now as a means of benefiting their future.

## **2. Match Key Predictors to Each Section of the Curriculum you are Using**

**Ensure all predictors are utilized.**

**All predictors must be effectively addressed to achieve the desired behavioral outcomes.**

### **3. Create a discussion question or statement that intentionally targets the predictors relative to the content section of your curriculum**

**It's best to write it out.**

**Practice effectively delivering every question/statement in all sections prior to implementing with students.**

**Get feedback for improvement from program managers and peers.**

**Practice until confident.**

# Practical Exercise

Using the following information that may be similar to something you have in your curriculum, consider which predictor(s) could be integrated into discussion.

***“Herpes can be transmitted from mother to child during vaginal delivery.”***

**Using the predictor Future Impacts of Sex:**

- What discussion question(s) or statement(s) could you use to connect this knowledge-based information to impacting the predictor?
- Share your question(s) or statement(s) in the Chat Box.
- Demonstration from Lateca McClary

## **4. How to Implement with Students**

**Be intentional about targeting the predictors.**

## **5. Use your observation to gauge responses from students relative to the predictors.**

**Actively listen for predictors when students speak, carefully observing their responses and body language.**

**During the discussions, use your observations to gauge where the student is in choosing to avoid sexual risks.**

**Your internal gauge is a Likert Scale of 1-5 with 5 being the desirable best outcome.**

# Practical Application

If your student made the following statement, what predictor are you “hearing?” And where do you think the student would score on a Likert scale for that predictor?



***“You’ve convinced me of the benefits of avoiding sexual risks, but I’m just not sure that I can actually abstain from sex.”***

### **Poll: What predictor did you hear?**

- **Justification for Sex:** Agreement with the rationalizing and justifying that students often engage in to legitimize their initiation into sexual activity
- **Abstinence Efficacy:** Confidence in ability to engage in refusal skills and avoid situations that could lead to sex
- **Future Impact of Sex:** Perception that sex could interfere with goals regarding education, careers, marriage, and family life
- **Abstinence Values:** Importance of refraining from sexual activity outside of marriage and its inclusion in their moral value system
- **Independence from Peer Influence:** Ability to follow own value system and personal goals, and ability to communicate standards and values
- **Behavioral Intentions:** Level of intent and commitment to refrain from non-marital sexual activity

***“You’ve convinced me of the benefits of avoiding sexual risks, but I’m just not sure that I can actually abstain from sex.”***

**Poll: We hear “Abstinence Efficacy.” What do you think this student would score on a Likert scale on Abstinence Efficacy?**

- a) 1-2 (Strongly Disagree, Disagree)
- b) 3 (somewhere between agreeing and disagreeing)
- c) 4-5 (Agree, Strongly Agree)

## **6. Determine follow-up statements or questions that will move the students to a deeper level of intervention on the predictor**

**Guide the discussion towards improvement specifically on the focused predictor.**

**There will be various levels in every class, so flexibility is important.**

# Practical Exercise

Based on the previous statement, and it's scoring of a 1-2 on the Likert scale, what follow-up statements, questions, or activities could you do to strengthen that predictor towards a 4-5?

***“You’ve convinced me of the benefits of avoiding sexual risks, but I’m just not sure that I can actually abstain from sex.”***

**Share your ideas in the Chat Box.**      Demonstration from Li’a Seui

# How Administrators Can Integrate Predictors into the SRA Process and Program Model

1. Interviewing/hiring process
2. Training of facilitators
3. Implementation of the curriculum
4. Monitoring and feedback
5. Research of program effectiveness

# ***Heritage Keepers Experience***

- Uses highly valid and reliable questions to monitor students' levels on key predictors before and immediately after program implementation
- Monitors the outcomes for each educator, which are then shared with them for the purpose of ongoing improvement
- Has discovered that by focusing on effectively applying scientifically derived predictors of teen sex to sexual risk avoidance programs, the probability of strong and long-lasting protective behavioral outcomes is significantly increased!





**QUESTIONS?**



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PRESENTED BY



# SRAETTA

Sexual Risk Avoidance Education  
Training and Technical Assistance



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