

Promoting Healthy Futures for Youth: A Program Model for Sexual Risk Avoidance Education

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration of Children and Families (ACF)
Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB)**

Alicia Meckstroth • Elizabeth Blesson

Webinar presentation for SRAE Grant Recipients

November 21, 2022



Sponsorship

- / Development of SRAE model was prepared under contract with the Administration for Children and Families**
- / Federal project officers:**
 - OPRE: Tia Brown and Caryn Blitz
 - FYSB: Kathleen Derrick



Objectives of today's call

- / Learn about the SRAE program model and related resources**
- / Consider how grant recipients and others can use and apply the program model in their work designing and delivering SRAE programming**
- / Answer questions to support understanding and use of the program model**



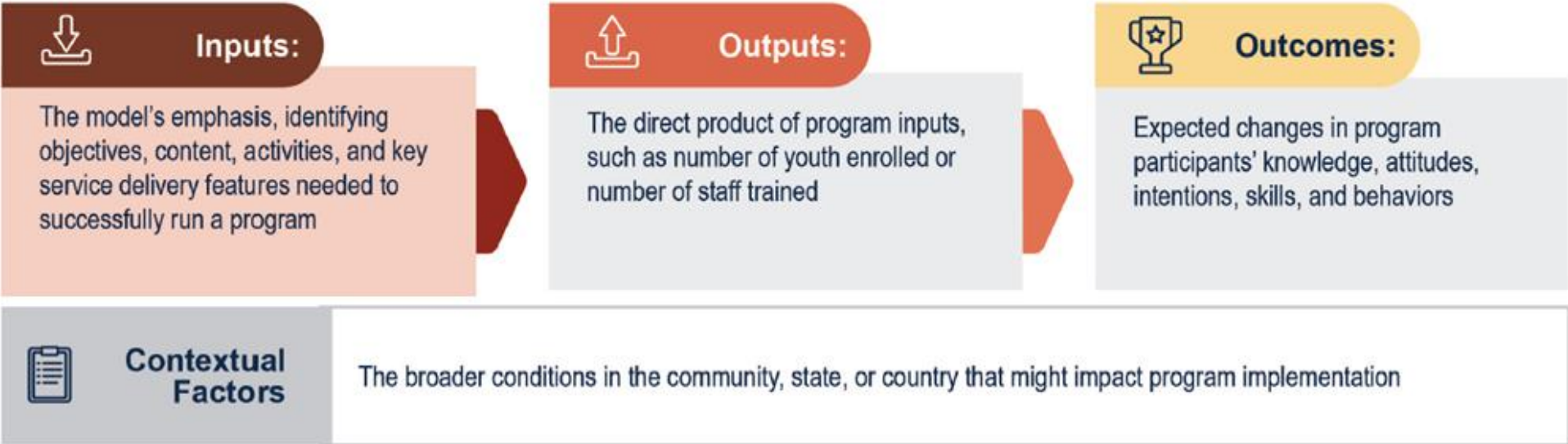
Agenda

- / Purpose and description of the SRAE program model**
- / Uses of the program model**
- / Resources related to SRAE program model**
 - Recently released brief on the program model
 - Tip sheet' on the program model (coming soon)
- / Q&A**



What is a program model?

- / A program model is a visual representation of program components that are designed to influence key outcomes of interest
- / Its purpose is to provide a framework for understanding the objectives, content, and implementation of a program, and how these components may influence outcomes





SRAE PROGRAM INPUTS

Program objectives:

Educate youth to recognize the benefits and value of avoiding sex until it is part of a healthy married relationship and empower youth to avoid sex and other risky behaviors by building skills that promote healthy decision making, self-regulation, supportive relationships, goal setting, and a focus on future well-being.

Required program elements:

- Unambiguous messaging across required topics (below) that emphasizes the avoidance of non-marital sexual activity as an optimal health behavior
- Content that is medically accurate and complete; age-appropriate; based on adolescent learning and developmental theories; and culturally appropriate and sensitive to youths' diverse experiences

Required program topics:¹

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- Avoidance of risk-taking behaviors like drug and alcohol use
- Prevention of and support related to sexual coercion and dating violence

Key program features and delivery system:

- Curricula and supporting materials that address all SRAE program elements and topics
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OTHER INPUTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

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IMPLEMENTATION OUTPUTS

Staff facilitation

- Staff commitment to SRAE vision and goals
- Positive facilitator: youth interactions
- Skilled delivery of program
- Ongoing supervision and support to staff

Service delivery

- Program delivered at intended dosage
- Program delivered with fidelity to curriculum and SRAE legislation

Youth and family engagement

- Youth attendance and participation
- Youth satisfaction with program
- Individual needs addressed
- Parent engagement in program

EXPECTED SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

Improved protective factors

- Healthy individual functioning and well-being
 - Self-determination (feels control over what happens to self)
 - Emotion regulation
 - Positive emotional state
- Future aspirations and intentions
 - Intention to avoid sex until marriage
 - Belief in the value of avoiding sex until marriage
 - Academic and career aspirations
- Healthy relationships and communications
 - Healthy secure attachment to parent/caregiver
 - Connectedness to parents
 - Communication with parents about sexuality
 - Parental oversight/monitoring
 - Positive peer role models
 - Sexual refusal skills and techniques

Reduced risk factors

- Risky peer behavior and permissive peer sexual norms
- Romantic partner expectations and intentions to have sex
- Prevalence of age difference in romantic partners
- Opportunities to have sex
- Drug and alcohol use
- Exposure or use of sexually explicit media or internet porn
- Depressive symptoms and anxiety



EXPECTED INTERMEDIATE-TERM OUTCOMES

Improved outcomes related to sexual risk avoidance:

- Avoidance of sexual activity and intercourse
- Reduction in sexually transmitted infections
- Reduction in teen pregnancy

Improved non-sexual outcomes related to:

- Academic achievement
- Mental health
- Alcohol/drug use
- Delinquency
- Relationship quality

POTENTIAL LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

- Overall health, happiness, and well-being
- Economic self-sufficiency
- Healthy relationships
- Avoidance of sex outside marriage
- Healthy and supportive marriages
- Formation of stable, healthy families
- Positive outcomes for children of the next generation

CONTEXT

Contextual factors that may influence how youth experience a program: community norms and values related to adolescent sexual behavior; socioeconomic traits (for example, teen birth and STI rates, safety, and economic conditions); relevant national, state, or local policies; and availability and accessibility of community services.

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Who is the SRAE program model for?

- / **Practitioners:** Guide program planning, monitor implementation, inform ongoing program improvement, and design an evaluation
- / **Program or curriculum developers:** Ensure that content and programming aligns with the program model's "road map"
- / **Policymakers:** Guide development of future grant programs and funding opportunities
- / **Researchers:** Use as a conceptual framework to guide research and program evaluation efforts



Data sources and methods

- / **Input from SRAE experts (Spring/Summer 2020):** Interviews with more than 30 individuals, including federal staff, curriculum developers, practitioners, and TA providers
- / **Conceptual model for sexual risk avoidance (Inanc et al. 2020):** Protective and risk factors associated with youth sexual activity are included as short-term outcomes in the SRAE program model
- / **Literature review:** Synthesis of more than 20 background documents to inform the program model and its components

Program model for Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE)



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SRAE program inputs

/ SRAE program inputs include:

- Program objectives
- Required program elements
- Required program topics (A-F)
- Key program features and delivery system

/ Other inputs and considerations are also described in the program model

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Implementation outputs

/ **Key SRAE program outputs:**

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Short-term outcomes targeted by SRAE

/ Informed by the sexual risk avoidance conceptual model (Inanc et. al. 2020)

- Modifiable, research-based factors that may be influenced by SRAE programming

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Intermediate- and long-term outcomes

/ Longer term outcomes include improved outcomes related to sexual risk-avoidance, as well as other aspects of overall health and well being

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- Alcohol/drug use
- Delinquency
- Relationship quality

POTENTIAL LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

- Overall health, happiness, and well-being
- Economic self-sufficiency
- Healthy relationships
- Avoidance of sex outside marriage
- Healthy and supportive marriages
- Formation of stable, healthy families
- Positive outcomes for children of the next generation

CONTEXT

Contextual factors that may influence how youth experience a program: community norms and values related to adolescent sexual behavior; socioeconomic traits (for example, teen birth and STI rates, safety, and economic conditions); relevant national, state, or local policies; and availability and accessibility of community services.

¹ These topics align with the required "A-F" topics specified in the SRAE legislation, Title V, Section 010. The first bullet aligns with Topic A; the second with Topics B and C; the third with Topic B; the fourth with Topic E; and the fifth with Topic F.

Resources to support use of the SRAE program model



Background: Feedback from APP session in June

- / Presentation of model and discussion about its use with 9 individuals from SRAE grantee organizations**
- / Mix of state and non-state grantees**
- / Geographic diversity in grantee participants**
 - Arizona, Florida, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, Mississippi, West Virginia, and Wyoming

Feedback on how grantees might use the program model

“Great tool to serve as a framework to programming”

“To expose gaps in programming”

“Explaining monitoring guidelines to sub-recipients”

“Different audiences will use different aspects of the model. I like that it is versatile and can be used for a variety of audiences.”

“Onboarding new staff”

“School-board presentations”

“Cross walking with curriculum to adhere to A-F”

“Summary of suggested content to meet each of the required SRAE topics. This document is helpful as it provides examples of the topics/subtopics.”



Program model resources

- / **Brief on the SRAE program model (released September 2022)**
- / **Recording of today’s webinar (to be circulated in December 2022)**
- / **2-page SRAE program model “tip sheet” for practitioners (to be released in December 2022)**
- / **Related sources**
 - / **Practitioner’s guide to using program models (to be released December 2022)**
 - / **Brief on conceptual models for sexual risk avoidance and cessation (released December 2020)**



Promoting Healthy Futures for Youth: A Program Model for Sexual Risk Avoidance Education

September 2022

OPRE Report Number 2022-170

The avoidance of sexual activity among youth ensures the prevention of unplanned teen pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). It can also promote healthy outcomes and contribute positively to the development of youth. Sexual risk avoidance education (SRAE) is a primary prevention approach that educates youth about the benefits of avoiding non-marital sexual activity and other risky behaviors. Beyond the avoidance of these risks, SRAE also emphasizes the importance of building life skills that promote healthy decision making, personal responsibility, self-regulation, healthy relationships, and goal setting. This brief describes a program model for implementing sexual risk avoidance programming for youth that is research-based and also informed by the legislation authorizing SRAE grants. The program model was developed as part of a portfolio of youth-focused projects on sexual risk avoidance funded by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and supported by ACF’s Family and Youth Services Bureau and Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation.

The SRAE program model identifies key content, strategies, and resources to design and implement SRAE programs, and the expected outputs of implementation related to staff facilitation, curriculum delivery, and youth engagement. It also presents expected short- and longer-term outcomes for youth, along with contextual factors that might influence program implementation. The program model clarifies key elements of SRAE for grant recipients, to ensure their programs align with legislative and program requirements. The model can be used by a variety of audiences to refine curricular products, guide ongoing program improvements and research, and inform future grant opportunities.

The SRAE program model described in this brief was informed by a previously developed conceptual model that identified research-based protective and risk factors associated with the avoidance of sexual activity among youth (Inanc et al. 2020; see also Appendix Table A.2 below). Many of these factors can potentially be modified by program interventions. The SRAE program model specifies the content and other components designed to target and influence the modifiable protective and risk factors, which are included as short-term outcomes in the program model. By influencing these factors, programs may in turn influence the avoidance of sexual activity among youth and also promote other outcomes that reflect youth’s overall health and well-being.

Introduction

In recent years, federal policymaking related to adolescent pregnancy prevention has focused on outcomes related to overall health, strategies to support successful transition to adulthood, and avoidance of sexual risks. Grant programs have increasingly emphasized the social, psychological, and biological factors that can eliminate sexual risk and encourage healthy behaviors. To support this approach, in 2016, Congress authorized the General Departmental Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE) discretionary grant program. Then, in 2018, Congress authorized and funded the Title V State and Competitive SRAE programs.

SRAE programs emphasize overall health and well-being and risk avoidance in preparing youth for the

future. They focus on goal setting, decision making, and healthy relationships to encourage youth to voluntarily refrain from non-marital sexual activity and other risky behaviors. In 2020, over 700 SRAE programs served more than 650,000 youth in school and community-based settings.¹ These SRAE programs are administered by 110 organizations receiving grants and delivered by 350 organizations. Most grant recipients work with middle or high school youth in schools; about half include youth in foster care, adjudicated youth, and youth with emotional or behavioral health needs as part of the population they serve. SRAE programming is typically delivered via group lessons taught by professional health educators or trained facilitators but may also be delivered through individualized mentoring sessions, or a combination of the two.

¹ These data were collected from a survey of all SRAE grantees operating in summer 2020, conducted as part of the Sexual Risk Avoidance Education National Evaluation.





SRAE program model tip sheet (*Draft*)

Promoting Healthy Futures for Youth: Tips for Using the Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE) Program Model

What is SRAE?

Sexual risk avoidance education (SRAE) is a type of program for youth that promotes the development of life skills related to healthy relationships, decision making, goal setting, and self-regulation, as well as the benefits of avoiding sexual activity and other risky behaviors.

What is the SRAE Program Model?

The SRAE program model, described in this [brief](#), and shown graphically on the next page, provides a framework for designing and implementing SRAE programs in a manner consistent with the Title V SRAE legislation and informed by research. The model shows how the components of SRAE programs are designed to influence key outcomes. This tip sheet provides examples of ways SRAE grant recipients can use the program model to focus and enhance their efforts to improve youth outcomes.



Who should use the SRAE program model and how?

Various audiences, including program practitioners, curriculum developers, local evaluators, and policymakers, can use the model. For example, grant recipients can use it to help describe SRAE to schools, community members, and new staff members. Grant recipients can also crosswalk the model with their logic model, curriculum, and program to ensure alignment with the model's SRAE inputs and identify gaps and opportunities for enhancement. Additional tips and examples for using the program model are presented below.

Refer to the Program Inputs to:

- Ensure the curriculum covers all required content and consider how it aligns with [recommended subtopics](#)
- Identify if external partnerships or services may be helpful to deliver or supplement the program

Use Implementation Outputs as a guide to:

- Engage youth using tips on high-quality [facilitation](#)
- Review [measures](#) and consider how to use them to monitor performance, assess implementation fidelity, and track changes over time

Review the Expected Outcomes to:

- Assess how well the program targets the [protective and risk factors](#) (short-term outcomes) that [research shows](#) are associated with the avoidance of sexual activity among youth

Where can SRAE grantees find more information?

For more information on the model and related documents, please see the [SRAE Program Model Brief](#). For general guidance on how to use a program model, see the [Practitioners Guide to Program Models](#).

SRAE and the SRAE program model are designed to be inclusive of all youth, regardless of socioeconomic status, background, prior sexual experience, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

- / **2-page resource**
 - Tips on first page to accompany the program model figure on second page
 - Usable online or via hard copy
- / **Highlights the objectives, audiences, and components of the program model**
- / **Explains and offers tips on how grantees can use different components of the model in the design and delivery of SRAE programming**
- / **Provides links to other resources**



Ways to use the SRAE program model (examples)

- / Describe SRAE to schools, community members, and new staff**
- / Crosswalk the model and its suggested subtopics with your logic model, curriculum, and program to identify gaps or opportunities for enhancement**
- / Review and apply tips on promoting high-quality facilitation**
- / Review the research-based protective and risk factors and assess how your program targets them (or could target them)**
- / Use program outputs and short-term outcomes as measures to monitor performance, assess fidelity, and track changes over time**



Q & A





Thank you!

/ **SRAE program model brief**

[Promoting Healthy Futures for Youth: A Program Model for Sexual Risk Avoidance Education | The Administration for Children and Families \(hhs.gov\)](#)

/ **For questions**

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