

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TAKEN FROM *A PROMISING FUTURE: AN EVALUATION REPORT OF THE REVISED CURRICULUM*

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This report summarizes the results of an evaluation that tested a revised curriculum designed to improve attitudes of on the part of high-school students regarding their quality of life, reduce high-risk behaviors and increase self-efficacy. Improving student attitudes about their quality of life and providing them with knowledge and skills to control their own lives can positively impact their behaviors, now and later in life.

The A Promising Future (APF) curriculum is a success and relationship development workshop series that provides valuable information, skills and resources to help emerging adults discover the psycho-social keys to whole-person health and building a successful future. Adolescents and young adults between the ages of 15 and 25 are among the least served and highest risk populations in the nation. Known as “emerging adults,” this population faces rapid changes in responsibility levels, social resources, relationships, education, and career development. They are also most likely to be involved in life-altering, high-risk behaviors.

This curriculum is specifically designed to reach the most disenfranchised populations, including those with limited educational attainment. The literacy levels have been adjusted ensuring ease of comprehension and participation. The content, teaching modalities and curriculum design are based on the psycho-social development of the middle adolescent to emerging young adult. The curriculum is written using a psycho-social science methodology, the framework of which is detailed below. All sessions are developed around the whole-person approach that includes discussion about the way in which the subject impacts an individual physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually/morally. Predominantly, the curriculum works on developing participant's internal assets to increase self-efficacy and likelihood of success, with strategies that can be implemented to improve external assets.

High-school students from five different schools participated in the study; student classes were randomly placed into two study groups, a control group and a curriculum-involved group (referred to as the experimental group). The sample sizes for the two groups were statistically adequate, and the students involved represented a wide array of high school types and environments. The study's randomization process for assigning student classes to a specific study group revealed no significant differences in demographic profiles, learning styles, self-deception or baseline attitudes regarding quality of life.

The selected and/or developed instrumentation for data collection provided valuable insights into the: (a) fidelity of implementation of the curriculum; (b) student satisfaction with the curriculum; (c) instructor effectiveness; (d) student classroom experiences; (e) content retention; and, (f) student attitude changes regarding quality of life. Student attitudes were measured through the use of the Youth Quality of Life Research version (YQOL-R) developed by the School of Public Health at the University of Washington.

A thorough review of fidelity by trained observers and comments from students revealed that instructors were highly rated and that students were satisfied with their classroom experiences. Additionally, observers found that instructors adhered very closely to the implementation standards specified in the teacher's manual. The student satisfaction with the ten curriculum sessions, instructor skills and knowledge, and the classroom environment significantly improved student engagement and their retention of session materials. These findings illustrated that the curriculum involved students had, with

few exceptions, very high levels of content retention. This high level of content retention was significantly related to improving attitudes about their quality of life.

A comparison of pre- and post-curriculum attitudes found statistically significant improvement in the “Self” domain and the total perceptual score in the YQOL-R instrument used to measure student attitude change. Additionally, marked improvement was observed in all domains of the instrument.

While differences in attitude change between the curriculum-involved group members and the control group members were not statistically significant overall, the experimental group demonstrated greater improvement on all domains of the YQOL-R than did the control group. However, if the experimental group was restricted based on attendance and engagement, significantly greater improvement was seen in the self and relationship domains as well as the total perceptual score (domains particularly targeted by the curriculum).

Effective instructor training, fidelity to the curriculum’s implementation, and positive classroom experiences improved student satisfaction with curriculum sessions. A combination of these factors is responsible for significantly improved quality of life attitudes among the students. Further, follow-up survey results of the experimental study group members strongly suggest that not only attitudes, but behaviors were positively impacted by participation in this curriculum.

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