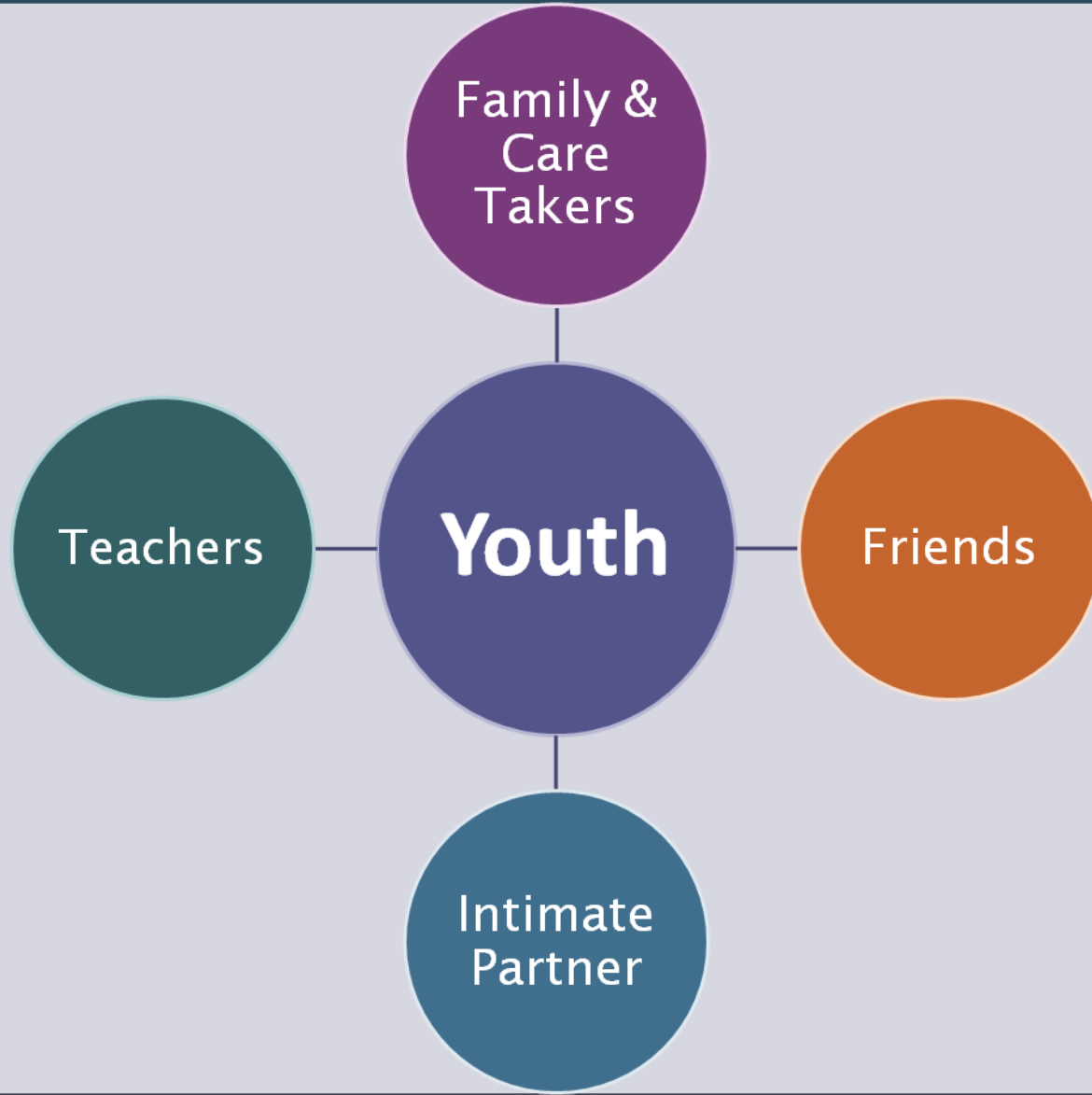


Relationships Matter

Working with Youth: Teaching Relationship Skills



Relationships with whom?



Relationships Matter



- Romantic relationships are an important part of life for teens and young adults
- Patterns and habits formed in adolescents can affect later adult relationships

Relationships Matter to Young People



- 7 in 10 teens say that most of their friends are in romantic relationships
- Teens can describe a healthy relationship; but many don't think they have a chance of experiencing that type of relationship
- Have few examples of healthy adult relationships

“Our findings also suggest that existing programs and efforts related to teen dating, teen sexual behavior, and preventing teen pregnancy and STIs may benefit from incorporating strategies aimed at building healthy romantic relationships”

– Child Trends, 2009

Telling It Like It Is: Teen Perspectives on Romantic Relationships

**RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION IS A
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

Relationship
education equips
young people with
skills and
knowledge to
lead healthy
romantic lives now
and in the future.



What is relationship education?



- Most often delivered as a curriculum through an experiential learning model
- Relationships addressed in terms of self-efficacy, interpersonal communications, problem solving skills, and safety

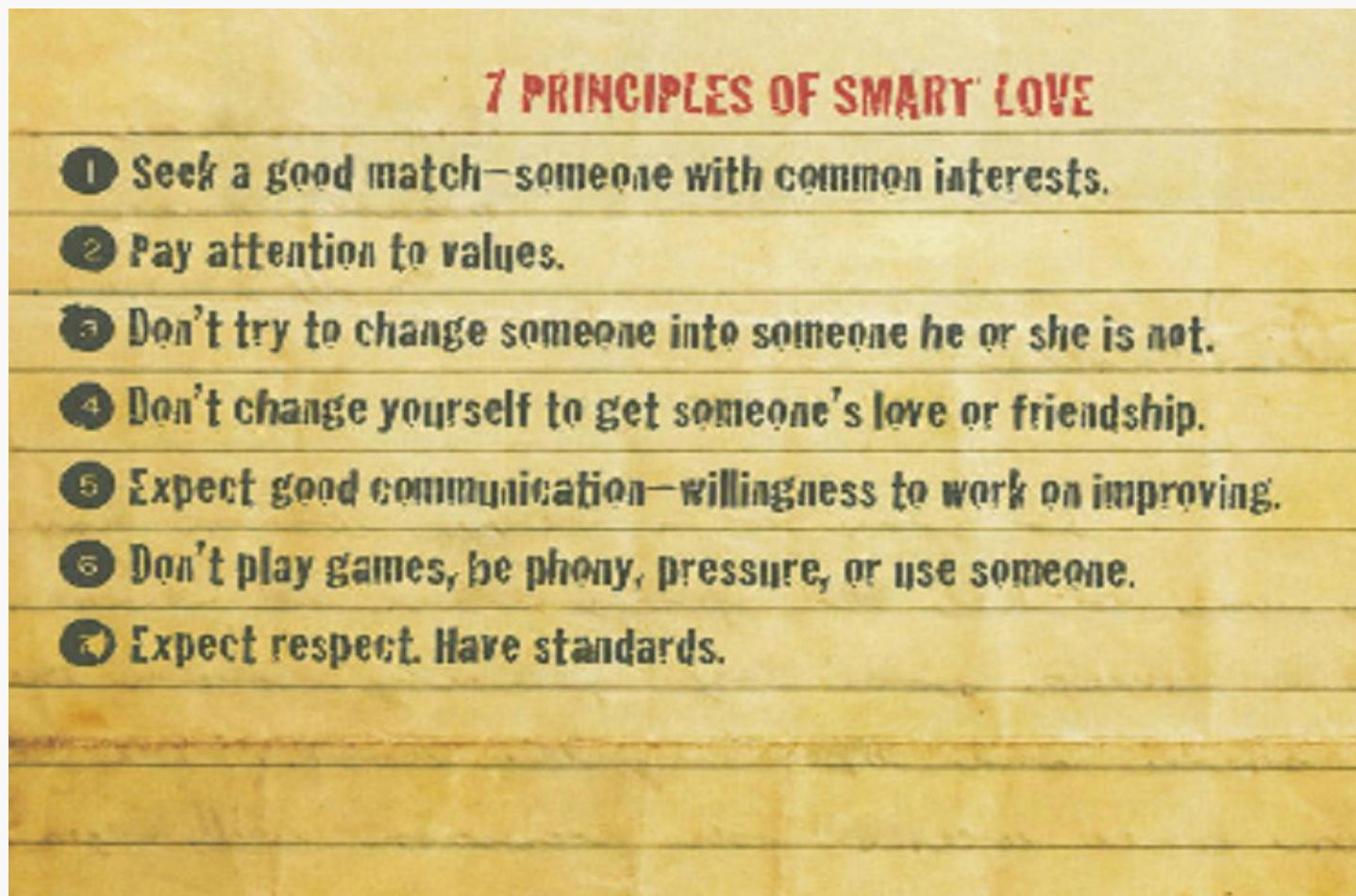
Curricula content may include concepts and skills related to:

- Self knowledge
- Handling crisis
- Characteristics of healthy relationships
- Getting to know someone
- Communication
- Conflict resolution
- Mate selection
- Breaking up
- Evaluating your relationship
- How sex impacts a relationship
- Expectations



- Commitment
- Relationship safety
- How relationships grow, develop, and change over time

Curriculum Example



Curriculum Example

The Speaker Listener Technique



Curriculum Example

X, Y, Z Statements

When you do/did X,

Describe the specific behavior. What was the one thing that he/she did?

In situation Y,

Describe the specific situation or circumstances

I feel/felt Z.

Tell how you felt or were affected. Own your feelings without blaming

From Young People:

“... I learned how and where to break up with him... I am with someone new now that treats me right, but if I ever start seeing some of the red flags or warning signs, I will leave him immediately.”

- Female teen from Pennsylvania

“I wish I could have used this information when I was in high school.” - 26-year old pregnant mom in Wichita

"The workshops are preparing me for the real world and I'm learning skills that I use every day." - Male, high school student in Memphis

QUESTIONS?

Does it Work?



- Emerging evaluation/ research
 - Increase in self esteem
 - Decrease in dating violence
 - Increased ability to identify unhealthy relationship patterns
 - Reduce impulsive behaviors
 - Reduce health-compromising behaviors





Where and when can we offer relationship education?

State of the Field



“When do we pursue relationships as the focal work, and when do relationships need to be embedded in other kinds of accomplishments?”-

*Martha Moorehouse, US
Department of Health and Human
Services, Office of the Assistant
Secretary for Planning &
Evaluation*

A HOLISTIC UNDERSTANDING OF RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION: BENEFITS & CHALLENGES



“Relationship education is a big umbrella. It’s the idea of giving young people these skills – however, wherever we’re working – so that... after they leave us they can go on and thrive in their lives.” – Michael Piraino, National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association

OPPORTUNITIES

- *Young people desire the information*
- *Can be taught/ reinforced in multiple settings*
- *Skills are transferable*
- *Can reduce violence in teen relationships, unintended pregnancy*
- *Can meet young people where they are*



Key Themes

1. Relationship skills are essential to our young people's success – research and young people acknowledge this
2. Relationship education is a development strategy
3. Relationship education is an emerging field with promising practices for implementation and emerging evidence about its effectiveness
4. The benefits & challenges of delivering relationships education include service delivery and frameworks for implementation
5. There are many opportunities to improve young people's ability to successfully manage their intimate partner relationships

Additional Resources

National Healthy Marriage Resource Center

- Youth & Healthy Relationships Collection by Topic
- *Relationships Matter: Strengthening Vulnerable Youth* (Proceedings Paper, 2009)
- *Relationships Matter: Partnering to Prevent Unplanned Pregnancy* (Proceedings Paper, 2010)
- Tip Sheets & How-to-Guides

Available at: healthymarriageinfo.org

Wendy Wheeler

President

**Innovation Center for
Community & Youth
Development**

6930 Carroll Avenue, Suite 502
Takoma Park, MD 20912

www.theinnovationcenter.org
wwheeler@theinnovationcenter.org

301.270.1700



Courtney Harrison, Director,
Policy and Program Development

Leah Rubio, Project Manager

Public Strategies, Inc.

1121 Grant Street, Suite 1-B
Denver, CO 80203

www.publicstrategies.com
courtney.harrison@publicstrategies.com
leah.rubio@publicstrategies.com

303.830.0400

