



**USU Relationship Skills**  
**Sponsor Award ID: 18DWS0126**  
**USU Contract # 201090**  
**January 2020**



## Executive Summary

Scholars at Utah State University and elsewhere continue to document the efficacy of relationship education. See <https://healthyrelationshipsutah.org/research/research>

This report further documents the impacts of the USU Relationship Skills contract. The Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS) partners with Utah State University (USU) Cooperative Extension to offer relationship education in select DWS locations, communities, and schools. Funding was provided for programming from July 2017 to June 2020. This preliminary report covers activities and impacts from July 2019 through December 2019. Significant accomplishments are highlighted below:

### *Family Life Educators*

- Currently we have a total of 9 educators teaching in 8 counties. During this reporting period, 7 educators were employed part-time and 2 were employed full-time.

### *Trainings*

- During this reporting period, a two-day statewide training was provided for the family life educators.

### *Service Provision*

- Three research-based, healthy relationship curricula are offered. *PICK* is for singles, *LINKS* for those in committed relationships, and *Parenting the Love and Logic Way™* for parents.
- Courses are offered in eight counties in high schools, DWS offices, and community agencies.
- In this 6- month reporting period, a total of **3,939** people participated in courses across the three curricula.

### *Course Efficacy*

- As the intent of this program is to support select TANF purposes, we measure related outcomes such as healthy relationship boundaries, confidence in one's ability to form and maintain healthy relationships, and the ability to recognize warning signs in a potentially unhealthy relationship.
- Quantitative *and* qualitative analyses of survey data continue to indicate statistically significant improvement in key course concepts. The results demonstrate an increase

in protective behaviors and attitudes and a decrease in risky behaviors and attitudes that research has shown correlate with the targeted TANF purposes:

- Survey results indicate very high levels of participant satisfaction with each course.

## Program Details

### *Courses and Venues*

Courses offered include: *How to PICK a Partner* (also known as *How to Avoid Falling for a Jerk or Jerkette*; abbreviated *PICK*), *Couple LINKS* (abbreviated *LINKS*), and *Parenting the Love and Logic Way™*.

We provided relationship education courses in **8 Department of Workforce Service** sites from Logan to St. George and in **30 high schools** during health and adult roles classes.

Additionally, we offered the same relationship education courses to the **general public** in multiple counties. This is accomplished by partnering with community agencies to provide services to their clientele and the general public in their local area. To date we have partnered with **60 different community agencies**.

All courses, except those taught in high schools and in DWS sites, offer eight hours of programming and are taught primarily in four 2-hour sessions, with a few classes offered in two 4-hour sessions. Department of Workforce Service sites are taught in one 6-hour session and High school courses provide 4 hours of programming to fit with classroom schedules.

### *Program Reach*

The table below shows the number of courses offered and completed. During this reporting period, we offered 55 courses at 8 DWS work sites and 54 courses were completed. We offered 61 general community courses and 54 were completed in 8 different counties. In addition, we completed 121 high school courses in 30 different high schools across the state. In rare cases, not all courses scheduled/offered were completed due to too few participants. In such cases, participants were invited to return for the next scheduled course. A total of 3,939 people participated in courses across all three curricula during this 6-month reporting period.

## Contract Fulfillment to Date

For the period covering July 2019 to June 2020, we proposed to offer a total of 150 courses and/or serve 2,500 individuals. As detailed below, we have already exceeded our annual goals.

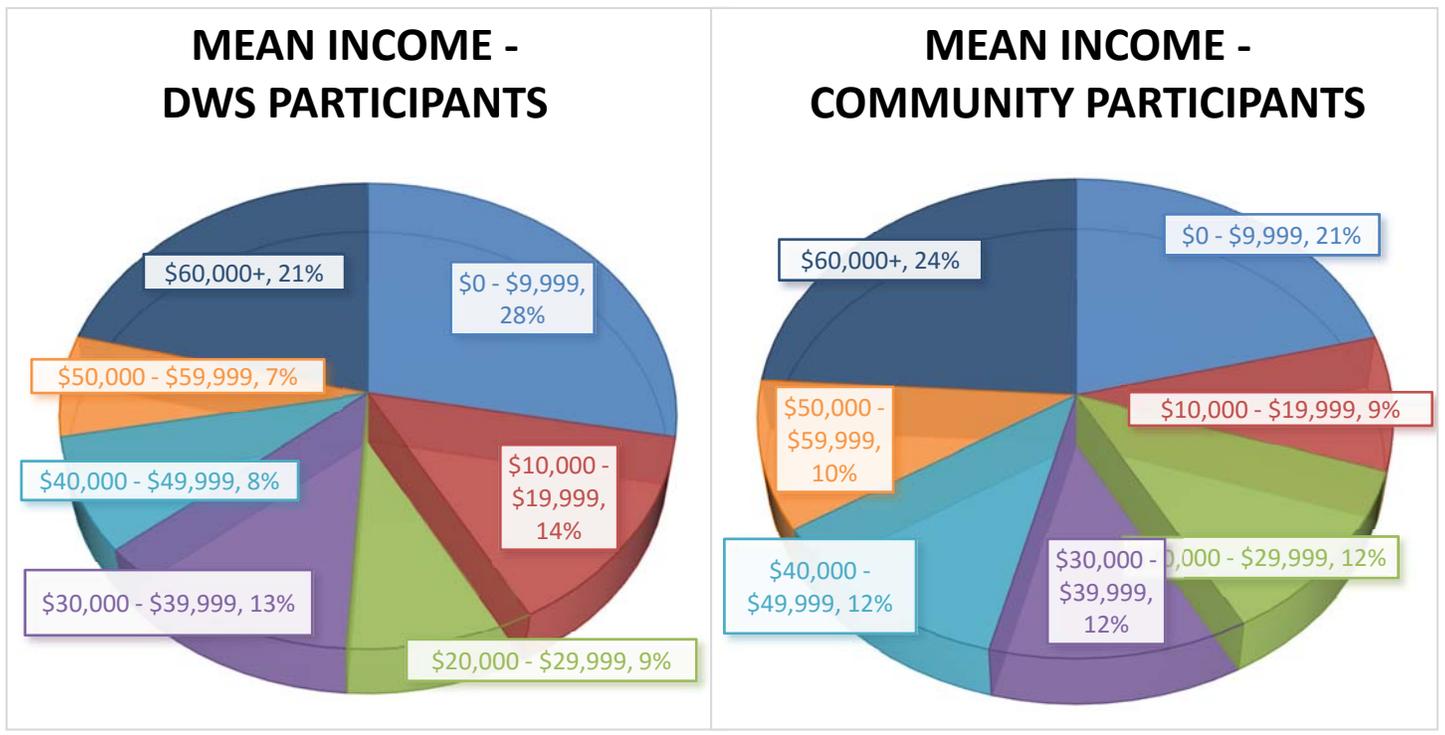
	DWS	Community	HS	Total
<b>Courses Offered</b>	55	61	122	238
<b>Courses Completed</b>	54	54	121	229
<b>Participants Served</b>	337	640	2,962	3,939

## Participant Demographics Across Service Venues

	DWS	Community	HS
<b>Total Attendance</b>	337	640	2,962
<b>Survey Participants</b>	323	605	1,961
<b>Mean Age</b>	36 years (SD=9.5)	36 years (SD=9.9)	15.4 years (SD=.71)
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	35%	32%	52%
Female	65%	68%	48%
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
Caucasian	86%	87%	83%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3%	3%	3%
African-American	3%	3%	2%
Other	8%	7%	12%
Hispanic/Latino(a)	14%	8%	23%
<b>Mean Number of Children</b>	2.44 (SD=1.53)	2.24 (SD=1.75)	N/A
<b>Relationship Status</b>			
Married	44%	59%	N/A
Single	35%	28%	69%
Dating/Engaged	11%	9%	31%
Separated	10%	4%	N/A
Widowed	<1%	<1%	N/A
<b>Education</b>			
Some High School	6%	5%	100%
High School / GED	21%	16%	
Some College	28%	19%	
College/Technical	34%	48%	
Grad Degree	11%	12%	

\* High school results based on surveys entered as of 12/30/2019.

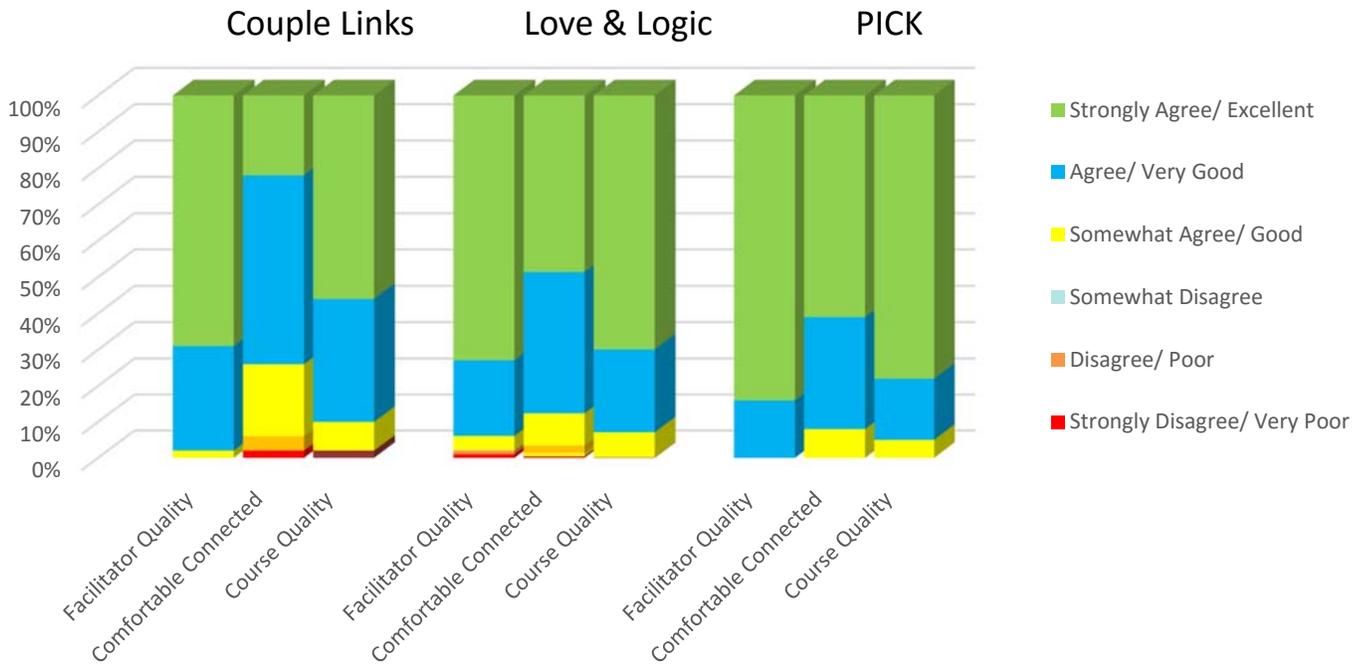
Although courses were open to everyone, participants' income and education levels differed across the venues served. There were also differences in income levels between DWS and Community class participants. Data for high school students' income was not collected. The graphs below delineate mean income levels among DWS vs. Community participants across all courses.



**Participant Feedback**

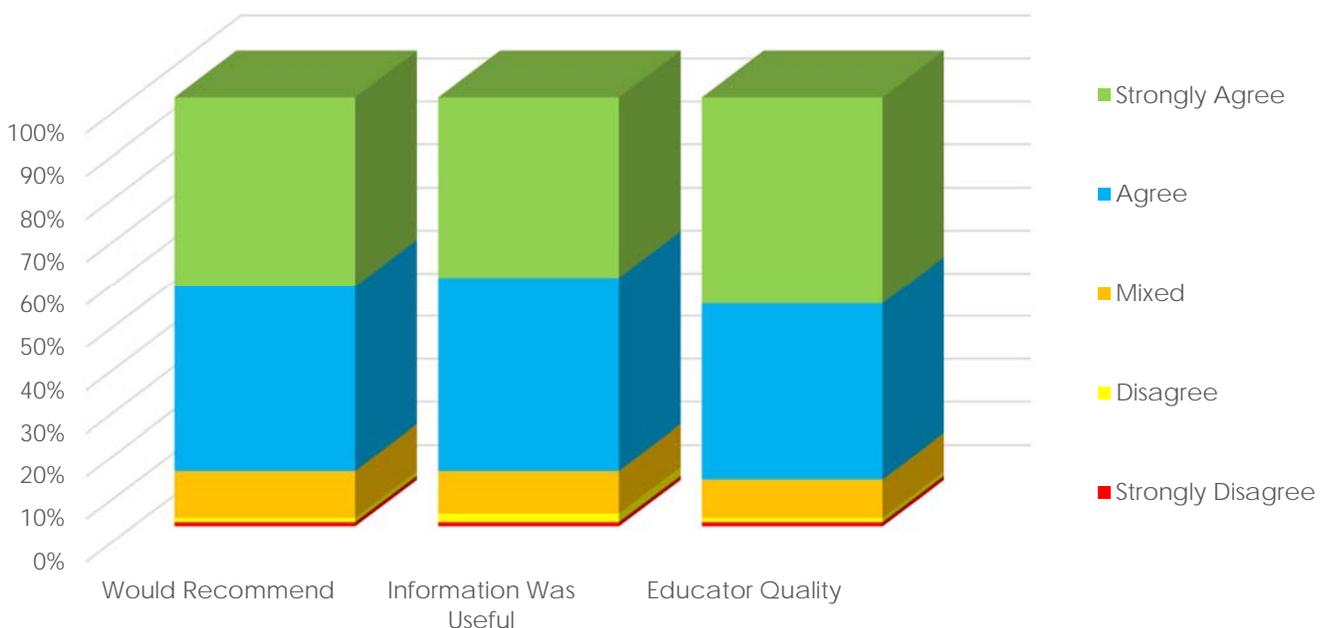
A voluntary survey was administered to participants at the beginning and end of each course. We asked (1) about the quality of the educator, (2) if participants felt comfortable attending the program and connected to their fellow participants, and (3) about the overall quality of the course. Overwhelmingly, the program participants in the first 6 months of Year 3 responded favorably to these questions, as more than 80% of participants positively rated (or agreed with) the quality of facilitation, their comfort in attending the program and connection to fellow participants, and the overall quality of the courses offered in all three programs (see the graph below).

## Community and DWS Formative Evaluation



The high school participants completed a similar evaluation which asked (1) if participants would recommend the course to others, (2) how useful the information was, and (3) their assessment of the educator. Again, participant feedback on these questions was overwhelmingly favorable, as more than 80% of high school participants expressed agreement.

## High School PICK Formative Evaluation



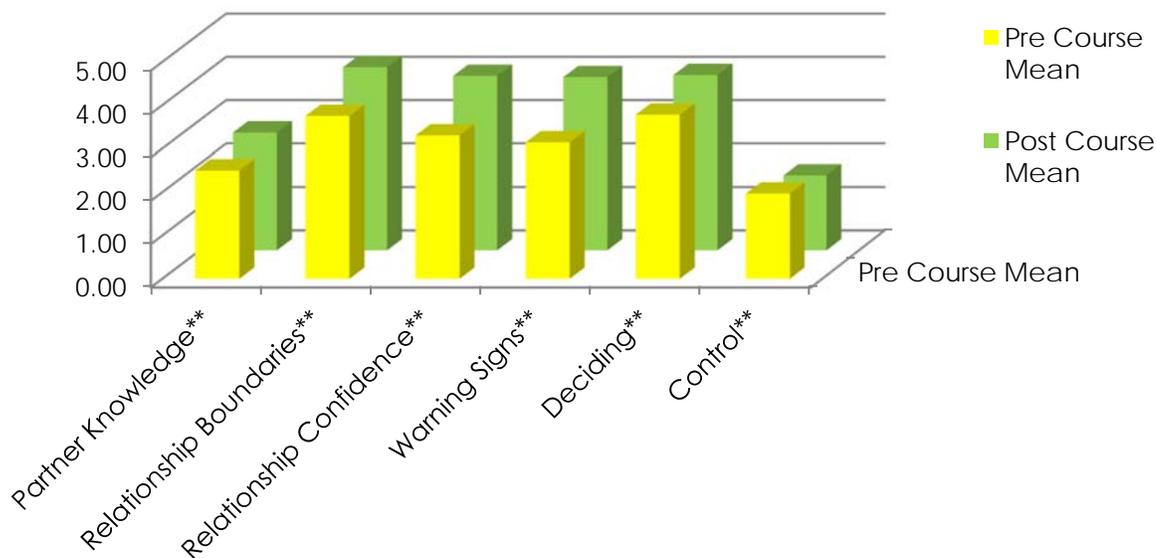
## Course Impact

To examine program outcomes, we collected numerical (quantitative) data, and written (qualitative) data. We statistically compared responses to questions before and after the courses to see how participation led to changes in attitudes, beliefs, and understanding of key course concepts. We also gathered written statements from participants about their experiences. We begin with a brief description of the objectives for each course, then we provide quantitative and qualitative data for key course concepts based on data available at the time of this report.

### *How to PICK a Partner – Combined Community and DWS Sites*

- This is a program for single adults of all ages. Participants learn the steps to build a high-quality long-lasting relationship. Measured outcomes include the importance of knowing about a potential partner (“Partner Knowledge”), healthy relationship boundaries (“Boundaries”), confidence in one’s ability to form and maintain healthy relationships (“Relationship Confidence”), ability to recognize warning signs in a potentially unhealthy relationship (“Warning Signs”), conscientious decision making within relationships (“Deciding”), and awareness of and resistance to controlling behaviors within the relationship (“Control”). From “Pre” to “Post,” we observed statistically significant improvement in all six outcomes measured.

## PICK Program Outcomes Combined Community and DWS Sites July 2019-December 2019



Statistically significant findings are noted at the following levels: \*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $p < .001$

## Representative Comments from Participants

### PICK

#### What was the most important concept you learned from this course?

*"This was a great course and helped me recognize my own trust issues."*

*"The RAM was very informative! Loved that we could take one home to share with my teens and single friends."*

*"To chart my relationships. That will show me whether they are in balance or out of balance, and which area to focus on."*

*"How important time and knowledge really are in a relationship."*

#### What did you like most about the course?

*"That most of the info was research based."*

*"It was group-interactive."*

*"I liked the light heartedness, but also the willingness to tackle difficult information."*

*"How involved the instructor was."*

#### What did you like least about the course?

*"We couldn't cover all material in class that required responses."*

*"Realizing I was a major part of my dating problems."*

*"I think it could have been longer."*

*"The timing, because of work."*

#### Describe how this program helped you with a relationship problem or concern.

*"I thought the class was good for self-evaluation and recognizing strengths and weaknesses."*

*"This course has helped me understand how to interpret my thoughts about a relationship so that I can make healthy decisions for myself."*

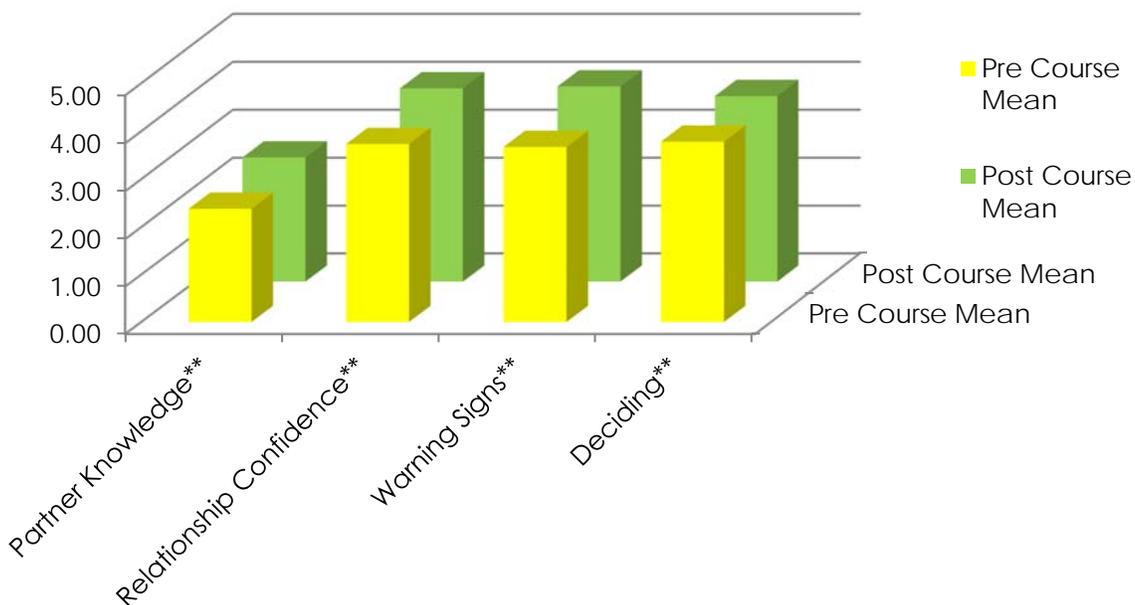
*"Trusting after failed relationships has been hard but the definition and discussion in this class helped."*

*"It reminds me how often I fall into patterns of being attracted to weak people, instead of those who will challenge me."*

## How to PICK a Partner – High School Sites

- A youth version of the PICK curriculum was used with high school students. Just as in the community and DWS courses, participants in this course learn the steps to build a high-quality, long-lasting relationship. Measured outcomes include the importance of knowing about a potential partner (“Partner Knowledge”), confidence in one’s ability to form and maintain healthy relationships (“Relationship Confidence”), ability to recognize warning signs in a potentially unhealthy relationship (“Warning Signs”), and conscientious decision making within relationships (“Deciding”). From “Pre” to “Post,” statistically significant improvement occurred in all four outcomes measured.

## PICK Program Outcomes High School Sites July 2019-December 2019



Statistically significant findings are noted at the following levels: \*\*  $p < .001$

## Representative Comments from Participants

### PICK - HS

#### What did you like most about the course?

*"Learning about different red flags and how important it is not to commit too soon."*

*"Everything! It's very informative and I learn something every time."*

*"I liked using the RAM the most."*

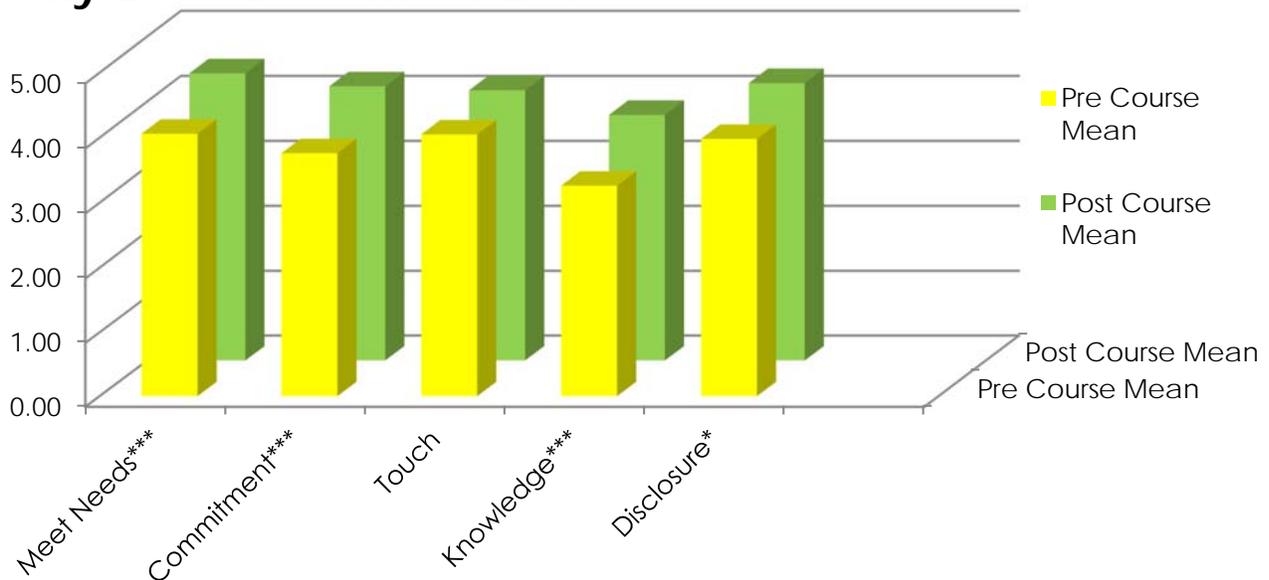
*"Learning what others think is right in a relationship and getting insight."*

*"It made me think about different points of view in relationships."*

### **Couple LINKS**

- Couple LINKS is an educational program designed for couples in committed relationships. This program helps partners understand one another's differences, how to increase trust and dependability, and develop a deeper commitment. Measured outcomes include the perceived importance of recognizing and meeting a partner's needs ("Meet Needs"), commitment to a partner and relationship ("Commitment"), openness about physical intimacy with partner ("Touch"), knowledge and understanding of healthy relationships ("Knowledge"), and openness in communication with partner ("Disclosure"). From "Pre" to "Post," statistically significant improvement occurred in four of the five measured outcomes.

# Couple LINKS Program Outcomes Combined Community and DWS Sites July 2019-December 2019



Statistically significant findings are noted at the following levels: † $p < .10$ , \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

## Representative Comments from Participants

### Couple LINKS

#### What was the most important concept you learned from this course?

*"Learning & recognizing the red flags. I would've avoided my first ex."*

*"Use the RAM to move through a relationship to build it in a solid way!"*

*"I learned to be more careful with myself and set firm. The time factor is also a very important concept to follow."*

#### What did you like most about the course?

*"Seeing & hearing from others in the class & knowing I'm not alone in all of this."*

*"The knowledge of the instructor."*

*"Learning about the apps related to the course. Was very helpful to learn the 5 love languages."*

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### What did you like least about the course?

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*"In order to cover it all it needs to be a couple weeks longer."*

*"Reminders were sent late in the afternoon of the class."*

*"Slides didn't really enhance the booklet. More participation from the class would have been nice."*

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### Describe how this program helped you with a relationship problem or concern.

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*"Made me realize I need to communicate more."*

*"It helped with teaching both my partner and spouse the skills in order to work at a relationship. It broke it down for us in ways that seemed too complex in the heat of the moment."*

*"Steps to becoming better connected."*

*"Reinforced the idea that a marriage is a "we" process and not an "I" process. Work is always necessary to have a successful relationship."*

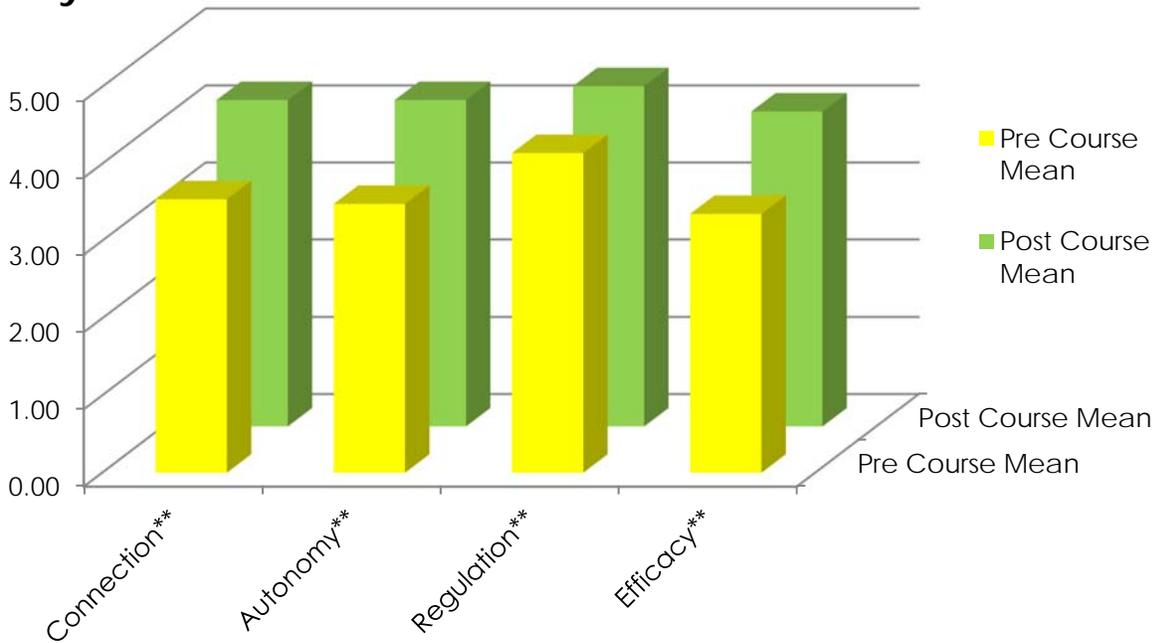
*"It allowed me to see things from another perspective. Allowed me to feel validated when others were experiencing similar problems. Overall I think it was great."*

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### ***Parenting the Love and Logic Way™ – Combined Community and DWS Sites***

- Love and Logic is a well-known parenting program that teaches parents how to raise responsible children and have fun in their parenting role. Topics include ending power struggles and teaching responsibility, setting limits and preventing arguments, problem solving and completing chores without conflict. We measured the participants' perceptions of their abilities to connect with their children ("Connection"), to encourage appropriate psychological autonomy in their children ("Autonomy"), to help regulate their children's behaviors ("Regulation"), and their own level of parenting efficacy ("Efficacy"). From "Pre" to "Post," statistically significant improvement occurred in all four outcomes measured.

## Love & Logic Program Outcomes Combined Community and DWS Sites July 2019-December 2019



Statistically significant findings are noted at the following levels: \* $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .001$

### Representative Comments from Participants

#### Parenting the Love & Logic Way

#### What was the most important concept you learned from this course?

*"Helping me grow in finding insights and understanding with my child and finding healthy ways to go about discipline."*

*"Staying calm, providing choices, and enforceable statements. These three things have helped my parenting immensely. I am grateful for this course and continue to parent the love and logic way."*

*"5 steps to problem solving."*

*"Teaching the children to problem solve when they are young, is crucial to cultivate responsibility as adults."*

### **What did you like most about the course?**

*"The concepts and examples taught and ideas shared by the facilitator and by other classmates."*

*"Having a support group."*

*"Great information offered for free to the community."*

*"The stories that were shared that made it more relatable."*

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### **What did you like least about the course?**

*"I thought we could have had a few more breaks to get up and stretch our legs. I had a few moments when I was really struggling to stay awake after sitting in one spot for so long."*

*"Not enough time to cover topics."*

*"Maybe a feeling of being rushed. I feel may be too fast for others to fully understand the curriculum."*

*"There isn't a lot of material on setting age appropriate expectations for children under age 3."*

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### **Describe how this program helped you with a relationship problem or concern.**

*"This course helped me to become stronger as a parent and helped with so many ideas on being an understanding parent."*

*"Gave me reinforced standards and ideas that I had already put into practice and also helped me to correct areas I needed to work on."*

*"Helped me with setting appropriate consequences when using discipline."*

*"I feel like this course taught me to see things with a new perspective as far as other parents and their parenting ideals go."*

*"Helped make parenting a little more fun."*

## Program Outcomes Measures

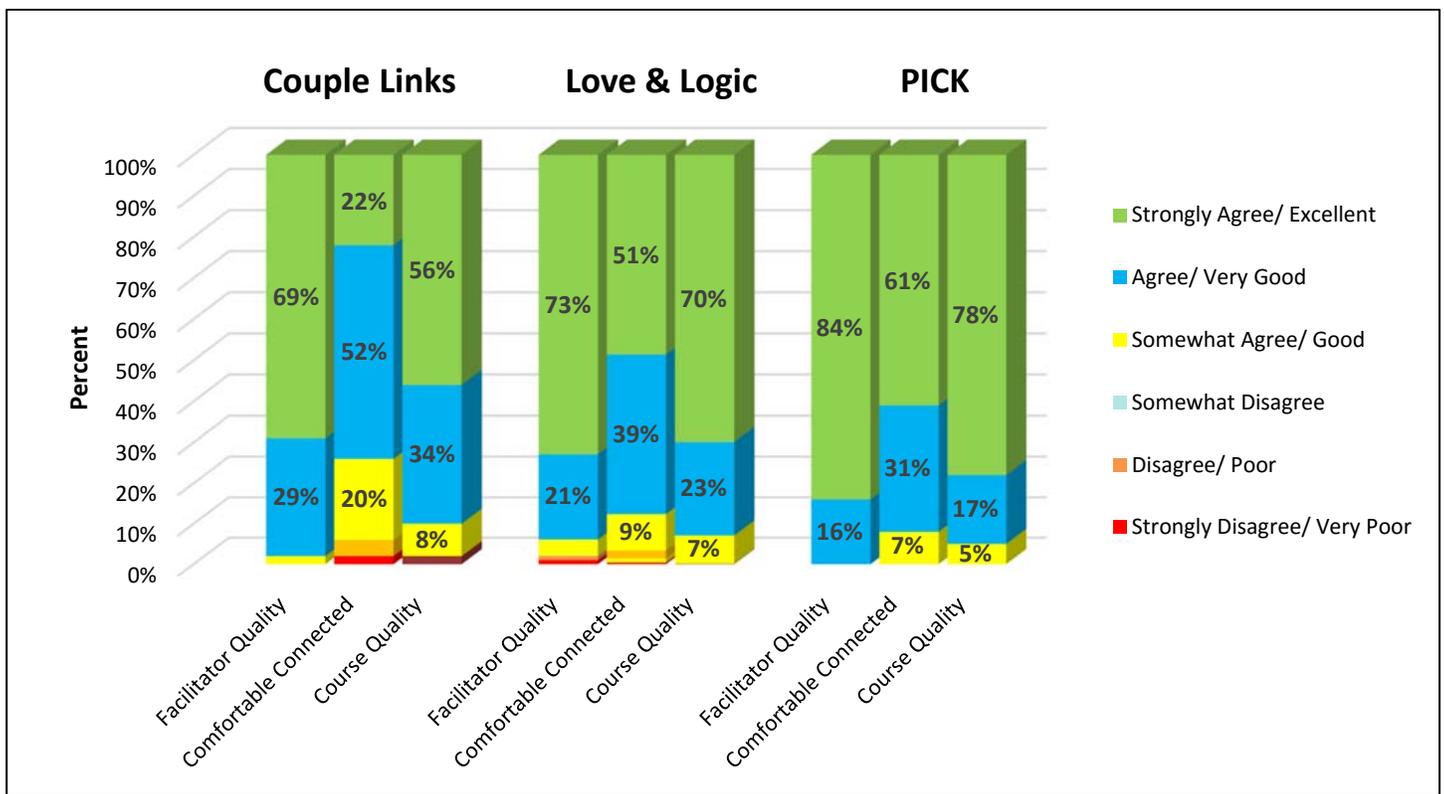
### I. How Much Did We Do?

In the first 6 months of Year 3, services have been delivered to 3,939 participants.

### II. How Well Did We Do It?

Results from the first 6 months of Year 3 show that, for all three curricula, the vast majority of participants (more than 80%) indicated agreement with (1) the quality of facilitation, (2) whether participants felt comfortable attending the program and connected to fellow participants, and (3) the overall quality of the course.

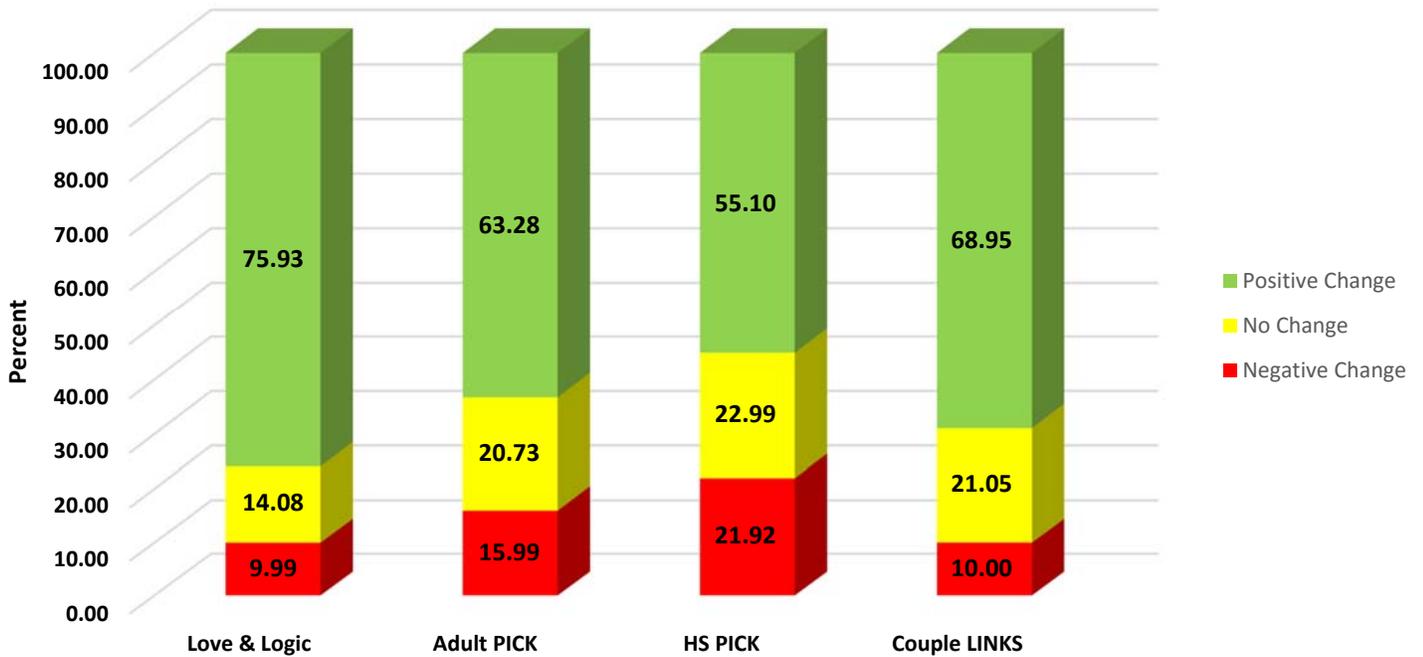
#### Formative Evaluation (July-December 2019)



### III. Is Anyone Better Off?

Changes in participant skills and attitudes exceeded projected levels in Year 3, as well over 50% of respondents showed improvement from pre- to post-test on targeted outcomes across all curricula.

## DWS Program Composite Scores: July 2019-December 2019



### Conclusion

The data presented in this six-month report show positive impacts for participants. Participants overwhelmingly reported positive outcomes and satisfaction with the courses offered via this Utah Department of Workforce Services and Utah State University collaboration.

Our healthy relationship curricula are based on sound social science research and the data in this report show participants are learning important skills and knowledge. Specifically, participants demonstrate an increase in protective behaviors and attitudes and a decrease in risky behaviors and attitudes that research has shown correlate with the targeted TANF purposes:

- Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies (TANF purpose 3).
- Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families (TANF purpose 4).

### Project Contract Fulfillment to Date.

	DWS	Community	HS	Total
<i>July 2017 – Dec. 2019</i>				
<b>Courses Completed</b>	301	337	535	1,173
<b>Participants Served</b>	2,001	4,203	14,965	21,169