



USU Relationship Skills
Sponsor Award ID: 18DWS0126
USU Contract # 201090
January 2018



Executive Summary

This report summarizes the activities and 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 report covers activities and impacts from July 2017 through December 2017. Significant accomplishments are highlighted below:

Hiring

- As we began this new Relationship Skills grant, we were able to retain eleven trained educators and add one new hire for a total of 12 educators to teach in eight counties. During this reporting period, ten educators were employed part-time and two were employed full-time.

Service Provision

- As in the previous grant, 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 **3,006** people participated in courses across the three curricula.

Course Efficacy

- Quantitative *and* qualitative analyses of survey data continue to indicate statistically significant improvement in each key course concept.
- Survey results continue to 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 **13 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 **33 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. Not all courses scheduled/offered were completed. This occurred when there were not enough participants. During this reporting period we offered 55 courses at 8 DWS work sites and 52 courses were completed. We offered 72 general community courses and 68 were completed in 8 different counties. In addition, we completed 65 high school courses in 13 different high schools across the state. **A total of 3,006 people have participated in courses across all three curricula during this reporting period.**

Contract Fulfillment to Date

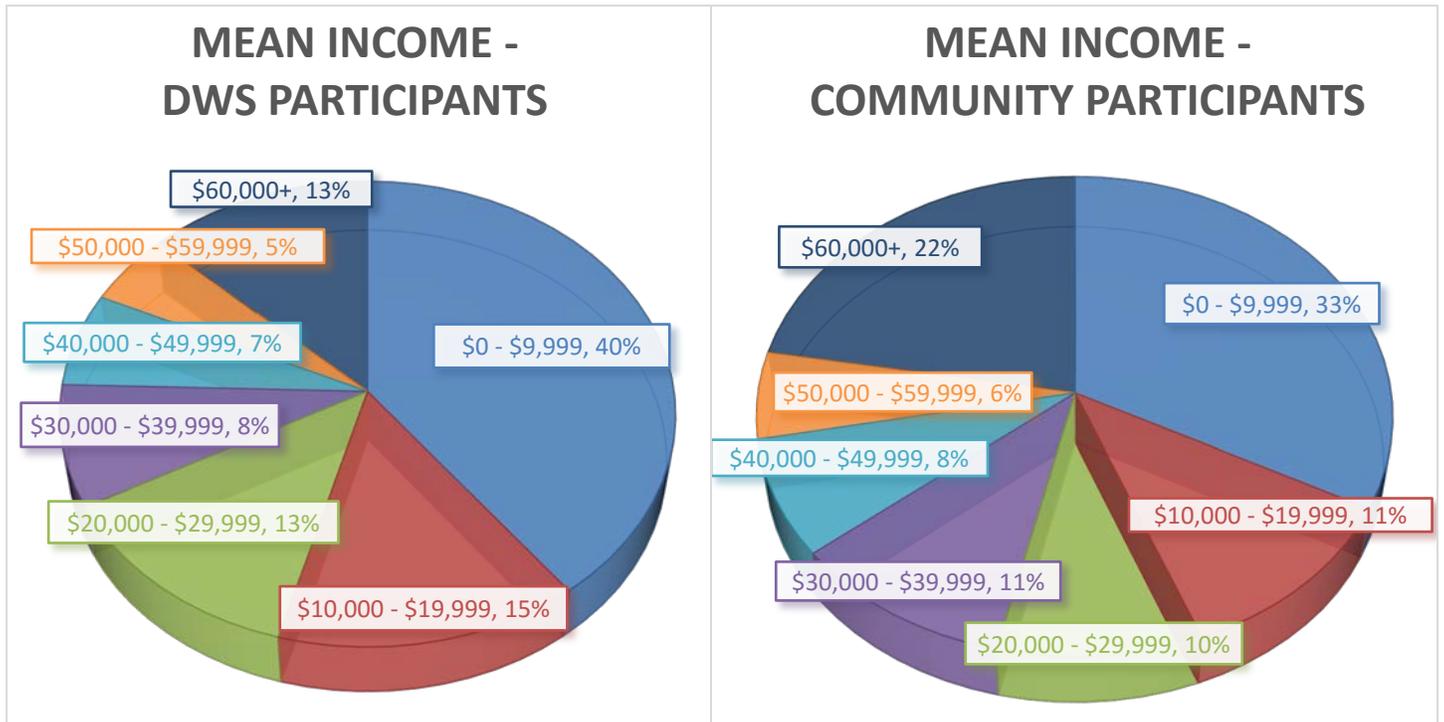
For the July 2017 to June 2018 reporting year, we proposed to offer a total of 150 courses and/or serve 1,500 individuals. As detailed below, we have already exceeded our annual goals.

	DWS	Community	HS	Total
Courses Offered	55	72	65	192
Courses Completed	52	68	65	185
Participants Served	373	804	1,829	3,006

Participant Demographics Across Service Venues

	DWS	Community	HS
Total Attendance	373	804	1,829
Survey Participants	330	659	1,492
Mean Age	35 years (SD=10.7)	34 years (SD=9.31)	16 years (SD=.77)
Sex			
Male	23%	36%	51%
Female	77%	64%	49%
Ethnicity			
Caucasian	83%	92%	84%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3%	2%	4%
African-American	5%	2%	2%
Other	10%	4%	10%
Hispanic/Latino(a) % "Yes"	14%	9%	16%
Mean Number of Children	2.34 (SD=1.66)	2.07 (SD=1.54)	N/A
Relationship Status			
Married	37%	61%	N/A
Single	45%	30%	67%
Dating/Engaged	6%	4%	33%
Separated	10%	4%	N/A
Widowed	2%	1%	N/A
Education			
Some High School	4%	3%	100%
High School / GED	22%	12%	
Some College	28%	25%	
College/Technical	37%	50%	
Grad Degree	10%	10%	

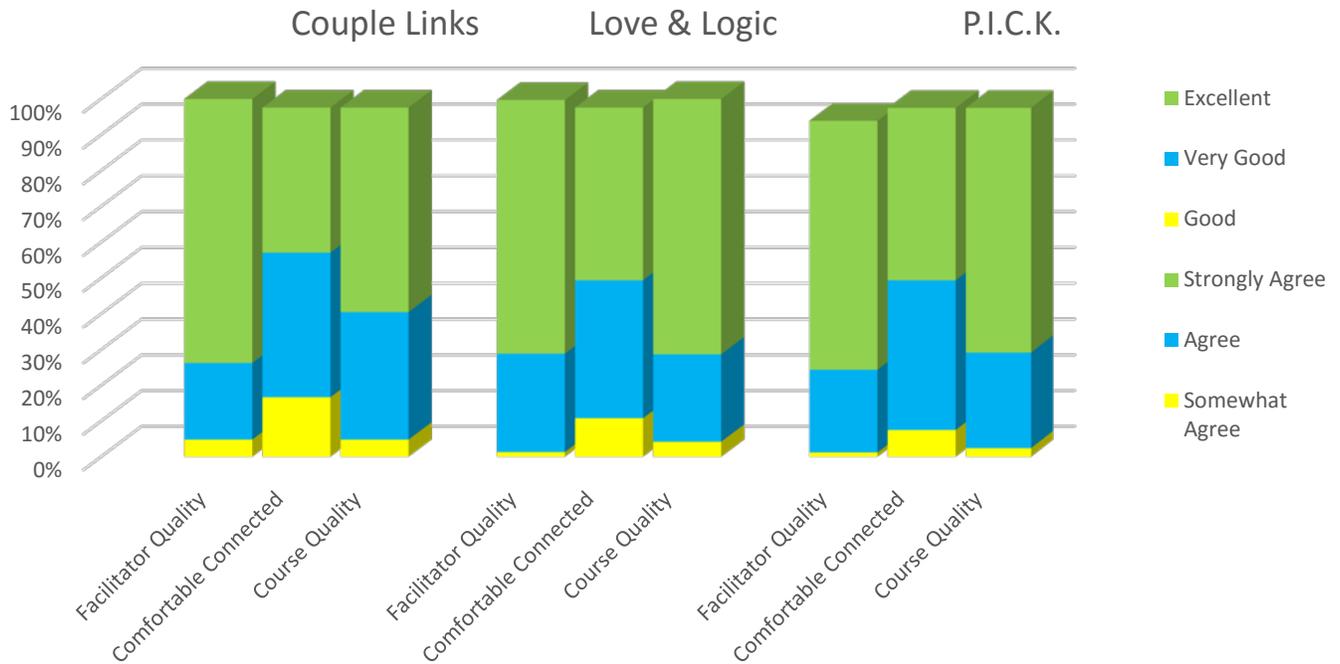
Although courses were open to everyone, participants' income and education levels differed across the venues served. There were differences in income levels between DWS and Community class participants. Data for high school students' income was not collected. The graphs below delineate mean income levels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



Participant Feedback

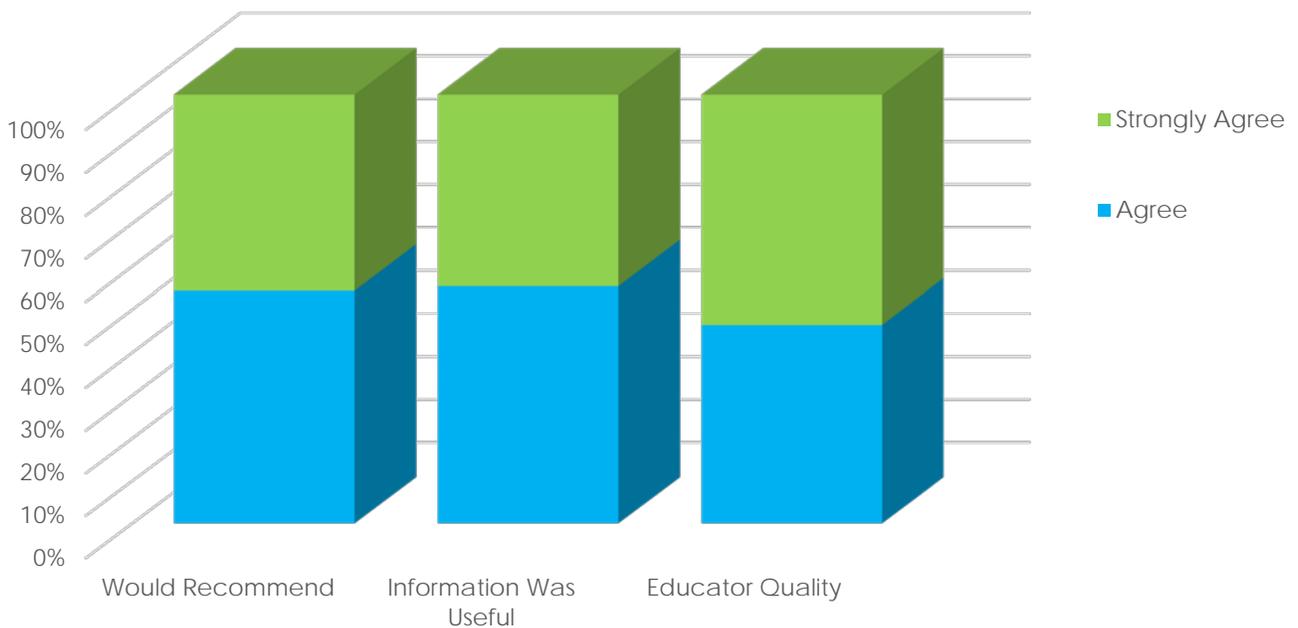
A voluntary survey was administered to participants at the beginning and end of each course. We asked (1) about the quality of the educator, (2) if participants felt comfortable attending the program and connected to their fellow participants, and (3) about the overall quality of the course. Overwhelmingly the program participants responded favorably to these questions (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, the participants' feedback on these questions was overwhelmingly favorable.

High School PICK Formative Evaluation



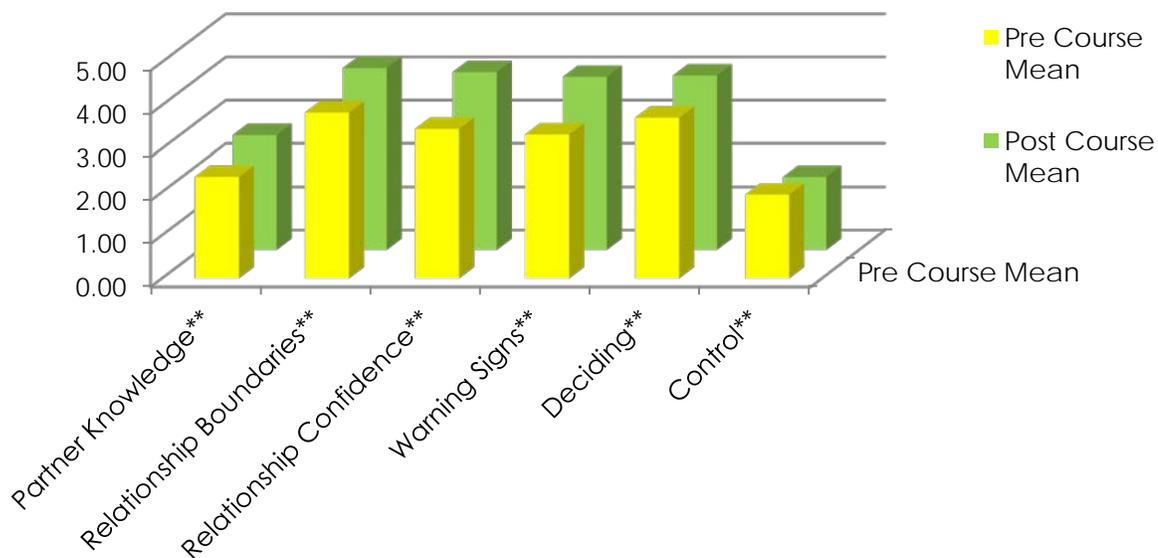
Course Impact

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 representative 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 - Dec 2017



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

Representative Comments from Participants

PICK

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

"What to consider when taking the next step in a relationship and how to keep yourself in mind first in the relationship."

"I learned how to think clearly when making decisions about dating and relationships."

"That I made the right decision to leave an abusive husband of 17 years."

"I loved the affirmations and ability to analyze relationships without letting emotion control everything."

What did you like most about the course?

"Good teacher! Good workbook! I just loved learning all this stuff and that it was backed by research."

"I loved the energy. It felt like we were coming together as a class to make more healthy relationship decisions."

"The instructor and her passion for the concepts that she was teaching."

"I liked that the class is designed for discussion and activities instead of having an instructor talk the whole time. I also liked that it is free."

What did you like least about the course?

"There was nothing that I didn't like about the course. I think it is an amazing and everyone should take the class."

"I honestly can't think of anything besides maybe having a few more people in the class."

"Didn't seem like enough time to always dive deep into the topics with personal experience."

"[The course] moved so fast it was hard to soak it all in initially and explore it more in depth. But I can do it with the manual at home."

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

"I have not dated since my divorce but this course gave me interesting, informative materials to help me when I decide to start dating."

"I felt like I learned the importance and skills to take a step back, hit a pause button, and assess whether or not this is a healthy relationship or not."

"It helped me to focus on what to look for in others as well as myself. I have to make sure I'm not a jerk."

"It explained where issues come from, how and why they are developed, and how to resolve these issues."

"This course helped me realize that I was putting touch, commit, rely and trust before getting to really know the person."

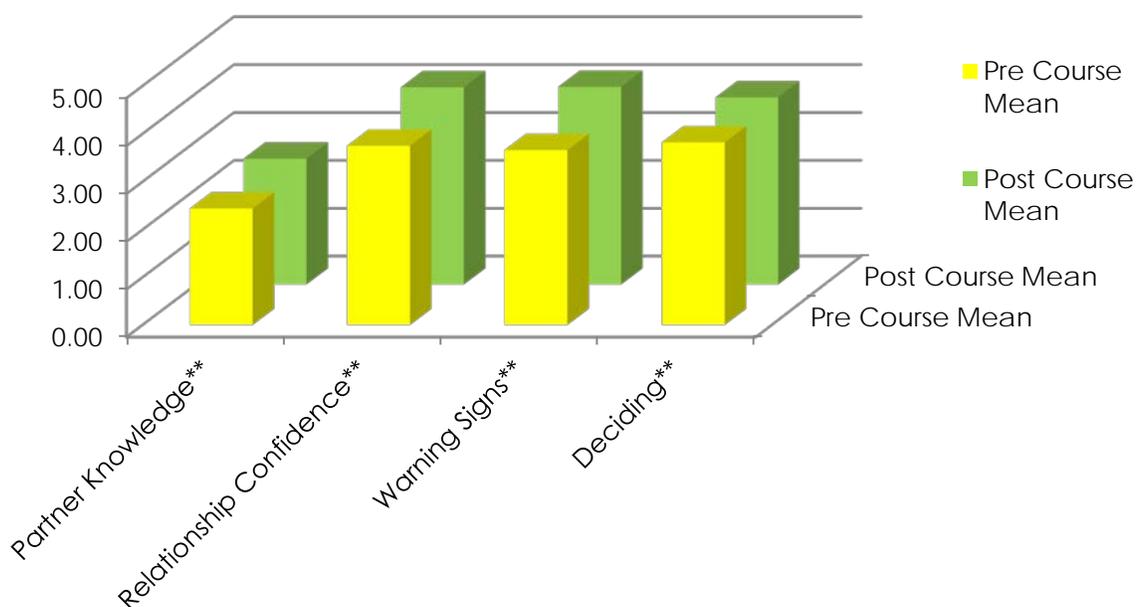
"It gave me tools and research to have better relationships."

"I really liked the RAM relationship model. It makes great sense and brings needed clarity to relationship building and a great way to assess current relationships."

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 classes, 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," we observed statistically significant improvement in all four outcomes measured.

PICK Program Outcomes - High School Sites July - Dec 2017



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

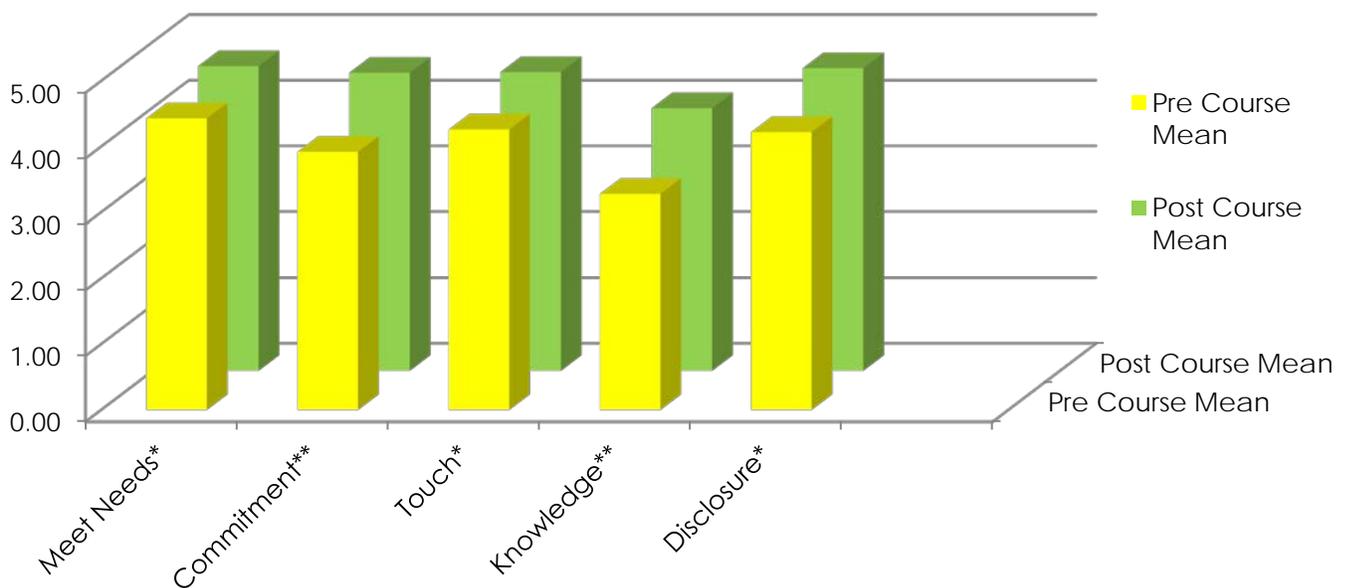
Representative Comments from Participants

PICK - HS
What did you like most about the course?
<i>"I learned how to learn more about my partner before taking the next step."</i>
<i>"Learning about the best ways to stay safe while dating & how to keep a marriage together once that time comes for me."</i>
<i>"The concept of pacing a relationship because it is something I have struggled with."</i>
<i>"The importance of commitment and looking at the way to person treats others because I feel that those are helpful skills."</i>
<i>"I just learned what a healthy relationship should look like and to help me avoid the bad ones."</i>

Couple LINKS

- Couple LINKS is an educational program designed for couples in committed relationships. This program helps partners understand one another's differences, 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," we observed statistically significant improvement in all five of the outcomes measured.

Couple LINKS Program Outcomes



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

Representative Comments from Participants

Couple LINKS

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

"I like the concept of the huddle and think it will be helpful in improving our relationship."

"We've changed our patterns in the way we communicate and work together."

"I have learned how to effectively communicate with my spouse. I loved how the class taught me so much!"

What did you like most about the course?

"Just the fact that we could openly talk about our relationship and learn how happy couples interact and handle stress."

"The 'assignments' we got at the end of each lesson. The ideas this class provided on ways to improve my relationship with my spouse."

"Getting to spend time with my wife and talking as we drove home about what we learned."

"[The] group setting with people in the same stage of life all wanting to improve or care about their marriage."

What did you like least about the course?

"It is hard for me to express my feelings in front of the group."

"It was all great, [the facilitator] was awesome, and I loved every minute of it."

"I honestly can't say there was anything I didn't like. Some things were not pertinent to me, but it was all good to learn and refresh."

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

"We've changed our patterns in the way we communicate and work together."

"New insights and ways to handle potential problems. Helpful communication tips."

"We didn't necessarily have any glaring problems, but just being taught good tools on how to strengthen our relationship has helped us communicate and love each other better."

"We have sat down and identified specific area we need improvement in and ways to change."

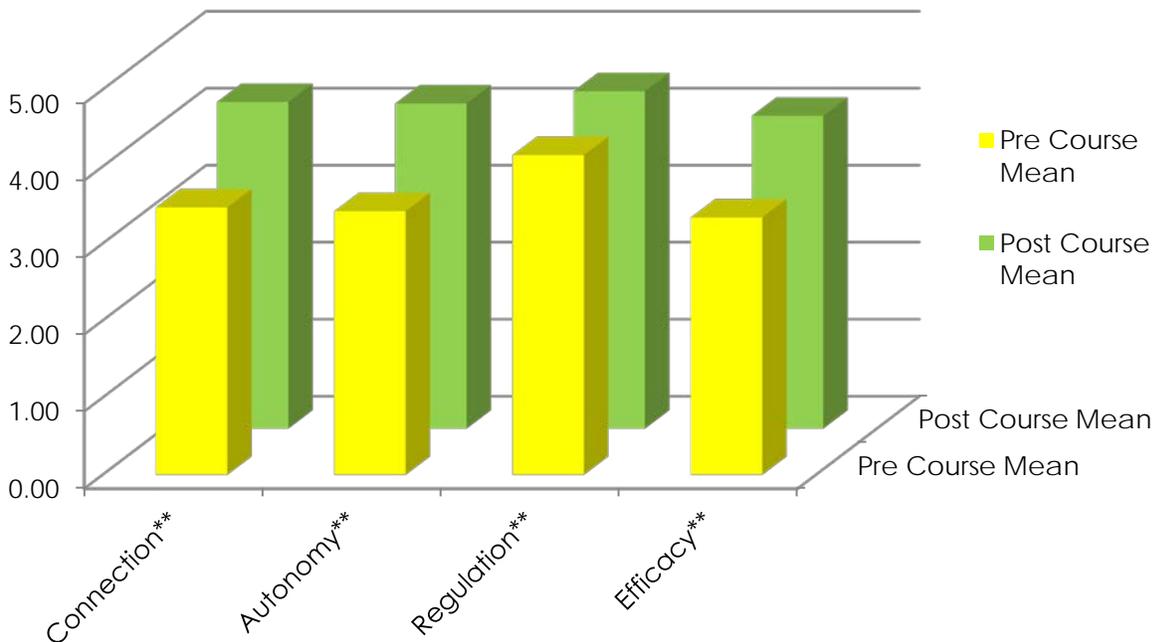
"This course changed the way we communicate needs in or marriage. Tons of "ah ha" moments!"

"We were able to talk about what our emotional needs, which gave me more of a clue into my wife's mind."

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," we observed statistically significant improvement in all four outcomes.

Love & Logic Program Outcomes



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?

"Empathy: using empathy and one liner responses instead of arguing and yelling and telling them what to do."

"Neutralizing arguments, controlling temper, and helping child solve problems."

"Taking my emotions out of the equation. Letting the behavior be the bad guy. Setting realistic limits and consequences."

"Learning to avoid power struggles and give natural and logical consequences."

What did you like most about the course?

"Loved the curriculum and the materials (manual) provided so I can continue to refer to them."

"The emphasis placed on the point that parenting takes time, and experimentation. There is no such thing as perfection."

"I liked hearing the stories of other parents and knowing I am not alone."

"I loved that I left every class feeling like I had so many more ideas to use for future issues."

What did you like least about the course?

"I wished it was LONGER!!!! I could do more and more sessions!!"

"The course is a little repetitive and the videos are long winded at times. But the basis of the class is amazing and helpful."

"Too rushed. Not enough time to learn everything. I will go through the manual I was given to refresh my memory and help me in the future."

"I really can't think of anything for this. The entire course was like gold. Thank you."

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

"This course gave me so many valuable tools to enable me to give appropriate logical consequences to my child."

"I always struggle with how to enforce consequences and I'm a yeller. I have only yelled at my kids twice in the month that I have been taking this class. That is huge for me!"

"My stress levels have gone down significantly and I am better able to enjoy my children and our time together."

"It's helped me learn that I need to let go of some control in order to gain some back. I also need to increase my patience and empathy."

"In a short 3 weeks my husband both agreed that we are yelling less, and have almost completely eliminated it. We are still trying to figure out a lot of it, but we feel that is a huge success already!"

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. The healthy relationship curricula are based on sound social science research and the data in this report show participants are learning key information relevant to forming and sustaining healthy and stable relationships.

Project Contract Fulfillment to Date.

	DWS	Community	HS	Total
<i>July - Dec 2017</i>				
Courses Completed	52	68	65	185
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