TIP SHEET

Implementing a Sexual Risk Avoidance Education Program at the Local Level

November 2021

INTRODUCTION:

To facilitate the effective implementation of a Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE) program, it is crucial to assess various aspects of the community, school, or other venues where the implementation will occur. Understanding the needs of the target population(s), existing programs, and specific concerns of the institutions and/or agencies involved can help build a successful program that resonates with parents, schools, and other stakeholders.

1 **Research rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS, in the targeted community.**

Access county and/or state health departments for information. If data appears to be unavailable on local and/or state websites, the information should be available upon direct request. Get started here: https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/healthdirectories/index.html

Review the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Survey for state information: https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm

Identify and partner with other community agencies that may be able to share relevant data and information regarding high-risk behaviors among youth in your community.

Why is this important?

Identifying teen pregnancy and STI rates can help you assess the greatest area of need and emphasis when providing curriculum instruction on optimal health outcomes. This information can help as you connect or network with parents, school administrators, and community stakeholders to illustrate why the knowledge and skills in your SRAE program are needed and can help to ensure that risk-avoidance empowerment is offered to all teens in the targeted population.

2 Investigate what is currently being used to teach sexual risk avoidance education in area schools and youth programs.

Consider the quality, capacity, and scope of any existing sex education programs. For a guide to SRAE Standards for Optimal Sexual Development, visit: https://newsexedstandards.org

Determine if current programs are meeting state requirements for sex education instruction. For access to your state laws for sex education, visit: https://weascend.org/state-laws/

Identify other community partners that are delivering SRAE or other sex education curricula.

Why is this important?

There are specific implementation factors such as facilitator and facilitation, group characteristics, family involvement, and fidelity to curriculum and requirements that predict positive outcomes in a community-based intervention program (García-Poole et al., 2019). Therefore, examine current programs to assess whether the existing approach is providing the positive outcomes that parents, schools, and community stakeholders have indicated they support. This information can help identify any age groups that are not being reached that could benefit from instruction. This will provide an opportunity to review the level and intensity of the current programs' curricula, age-appropriateness of content, and whether information is medically accurate and complete. This assessment can help inform how your program may be able to serve unmet needs or underserved populations. You may also be able to offer supplemental materials to close existing program gaps and ensure overall compliance with state standards.

3 Learn as much as possible about the students and community you wish to serve.

Interview school gatekeepers, including teachers, to discover broader school protocols impacting SRAE programming.]

Conduct specifically selected focus groups (youth, parents, teachers, etc.) to discover the level of engagement, interest, and attitudes regarding sex education instruction in various groups.

- Does the school permit outside presenters to provide sexual risk avoidance education instruction?

- Is there an active parent group engaged in school and student activities?

- Are parents given the opportunity to examine curricula and meet with facilitators before instruction begins?

- What is the cultural and socioeconomic makeup of the students to be served (poverty level, two-parent/one-parent households, ethnicity, graduation rate, etc.)? Access your specific location data here: https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#USA/1/16/17,18,19,20,22,21,2720/char/0

Why is this important?

School and community collaboration models allow for sustainable, strategic partnerships to flourish (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2010). Thus, collaborating with the school and understanding the school culture is very important to the successful correlation of your SRAE program with the school's educational goals toward positive youth development.

Understanding the culture, values, and traditions of the community will increase overall program effectiveness and help SRAE facilitators resonate with students, parents, and school personnel.

4 Consider partnering with other youth-serving agencies in the community.

Identify youth-serving and related agencies dedicated to supporting the health and well-being of youth in the community.

Meet personally with agency directors to discover possible shared missions and goals.

Become familiar with the services that community agencies offer to youth to promote optimal health outcomes.

Share and market your program by providing partner agencies with material such as fact sheets, program outcome information, and social media access.

Why is this important?

Building relationships with community partners who have similar goals can strengthen and reinforce the healthy decision-making skills you are teaching. Community partners can provide necessary services to youth who may be out of your program's capacity to provide. In addition, collaborative community partnerships build trust and goodwill for your program within the broader community.

References

- Anderson-Butcher, D., Lawson, H. A., Iachini, A., Flaspohler, P., Bean, J., & Wade-Mdivanian, R. (2010). Emergent evidence in support of a community collaboration model for school improvement. *Children & Schools, 32*(3), 160-171. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/cs/32.3.160

- García-Poole, C., Byrne, S., & Rodrigo, M. J. (2019). Implementation factors that predict positive outcomes in a community-based intervention program for at-risk adolescents. *Psychosocial Intervention, 28*(2), 57-65. https://doi.org/10.5093/pi2019a4

Additional Resources

- Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool is an assessment tool developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in partnership with health education experts from state and local education agencies, schools, colleges and universities, and national organizations.

- SMARTool is a resource to be used by schools, communities, youth-serving agencies, and other organizations interested in presenting risk-avoidance education to youth.

- Strategies for Expanding SRAE Programs at the Local Level is a topical training session developed by Public Strategies where panelists share successful strategies in expanding programs into schools, youth-serving agencies, and other community venues.

Suggested Citation

FYSB Family & Youth Services Bureau
Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program