

**Characteristics of
Effective Sex and STD/HIV Education Programs**

**Love Notes
Sexual Risk Avoidance Adaptation**

Category One - Development

Characteristic	Love Notes SRA
1 Involves multiple people with different backgrounds	Marline E. Pearson, M.A. developed Love Notes with the input of hundreds of diverse youth that she has taught over years. She also collaborated with experts in the fields of teen pregnancy, risk and protective factors, youth development, logic models, and instructional design.
2 Assesses relevant needs and assets of the target group	<p>Love Notes was originally written in 2007 for high-needs youth in workforce development settings. The developer worked with YouthBuild USA to assess the needs and assets of those youth. She also conducted focus groups with that target audience.</p> <p>Since then Love Notes has gone through two major revisions, which included input from youth and staff in programs working with ethnically diverse youth in urban and rural settings including schools, corrections, LGBTQ programs, and residential settings to name a few.</p> <p>Love Notes SRA was designed to empower youth to identify their sexual values and intentions in a much deeper way while acquiring the critical thinking and communication skills to navigate their romantic lives.</p> <p>Love Notes is best suited for older youth from the ages of 15 and up.</p>
3 Uses a logic model approach to develop the curriculum that specifies the health goals, behaviors affecting the health goals, risk and protective factors affecting those behaviors, and activities addressing the risk and protective factors	Love Notes was developed using a logic model to promote optimal health among youth by focusing on developing robust relationship skills to delay the onset of sexual activity, prevent teen pregnancy, and reduce intimate partner violence.
4 Designs activities consistent with community values and available resources	<p>Love Notes is comprised of 13 lessons. Some programs teach the lessons once a week, others daily for several weeks, others have successfully taught the content in two all day Saturday camp settings. What is important is that the scheduling of the classes encourage student retention.</p> <p>The classes are approximately 50-60 minutes each and can be expanded to provide additional skills practice and discussion time. Ideally classes have between 12 and 25 students with two instructors.</p>

5 Pilot-tested the project

Love Notes was pilot tested in 2007-09 in 20 YouthBuild sites around the country. Since then, the program has been implemented with thousands of youth in rural, urban, high-need, high-risk settings.

Love Notes was part of a five year, federally funded random control trial evaluation at the University of Louisville with foster, refugee, and other high needs youth.

In that study, Love Notes reduced the likelihood of teen pregnancy by 46% over the control group and also had positive outcomes for helping teens who were sexually active before the program began to decrease their frequency of sexual activity. More teens who were taught Love Notes stopped having sex and chose to remain abstinent compared to the control group.

Input from the U of L study has been incorporated into the current version of Love Notes.

Category Two - Contents

6 Curriculum focuses on clear health goals

Love Notes focuses on the goals of preventing teen pregnancy, decreasing relational violence through the lens of healthy relationship education.

Below is the Love Notes Table of Contents:

Lesson 1– **Relationships Today**

Lesson 2 - **Knowing Yourself**

Lesson 3 – **My Expectations, My Future**

Lesson 4 - **Attractions and Starting Relationship**

Lesson 5 - **Principles of Smart Relationships**

Lesson 6 - **Is it a Healthy Relationship?**

Lesson 7 - **Dangerous Love**

Lesson 8 - **Decide, Don't Slide! The Low-Risk Approach to Relationships**

Lesson 9 - **What's Communication Got to Do With It?**

Lesson 10 - **Communication Challenges and More Skills**

Lesson 11 - **Let's Talk about Sex**

Lesson 12 - **Pregnancy, STI and HIV**

Lesson 13 - **Through the Eyes of a Child**

<p>7 Focuses narrowly on specific behaviors leading to the health goals, gives clear messages about the behaviors, and addresses situations that might lead to them and how to avoid them</p>	<p>Love Notes clearly articulates the message and builds skills to motivate youth to avoid STDs and pregnancy as well as decrease relational violence.</p> <p>Love Notes research based content includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Building skills and knowledge for healthy relationships of all kinds: romantic, friendship, family, school, and work and how to safely end unhealthy ones. 2) Evidence-based communication and conflict management skills 3) Ways to assert intentions and respond to pressure situations 4) The benefits of sexual delay, changing course, and following the success sequence (education, employment, marriage, and then children) for themselves and for any future children they may have. <p>The lessons contain medically accurate information and, uniquely, build motivation by focusing on the needs of children for safe and stable family lives. Love Notes allows participants to anticipate unsafe or risky situations and practice how to avoid them.</p>
<p>8 Addresses multiple sexual psychosocial risk and protective factors affecting sexual behaviors</p>	<p>Love Notes strengthens multiple protective factors. The program is also well-grounded in multiple theoretical theories of change including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Intentionality via the Theory of Planned Behavior B. Success Sequence via Cognitive-Behavioral Theory. C. Compassion via Empathy Model of Altruism D. Intentionality via Planning E. Avoidance of Coercive Relationships via Michael Johnson’s Multidimensional Model on Intimate Partner Violence. <p>(For more details, click here)</p>
<p>9 Creates a safe social environment for youth to participate</p>	<p>Love Notes includes extensive notes and instructions to teachers about ways to create a safe and responsive classroom environment. The lessons build upon each other to optimize student comfort and safety to ease students into the content.</p>
<p>10 Includes multiple activities to change each of the selected risk and protective factors</p>	<p>Love Notes uses multiple activities and pedagogical approaches to maximize learning. It covers basic information on reproduction and risks of having sex; addresses perception of risk; helps youth identify their personal values about having sex and presents the facts of actual teen sexual activity; uses role plays to build skills and self-efficacy to avoid and reduce sexual activity; and builds connections with parents and other trusted adults through structured activities.</p>

<p>11 Employs instructionally sound teaching methods that actively involves the participants, helps them personalize the information, and are designed to change risk and protective factors</p>	<p>Love Notes teaching methods include: lecturettes, discussions, small group work, brainstorming, role plays, current videos including music videos, stories written by actual youth, competitive games, problem solving activities, poetry, spoken word, worksheets, lesson expansion activities with parents or trusted adults, and quizzes. These various teaching methods help youth personalize the information as they are actively involved in multiple modalities of learning.</p>
<p>12 Employs activities, instructional methods and behavioral messages that are appropriate to the youths' culture, developmental age, and sexual experience</p>	<p>Love Notes targets older, high needs youth, who are likely to have already become sexually active and who may be parents or live in a milieu where parenting by their peers is normal. Love Notes content, approach, and activities are crafted for this specific, culturally diverse, high needs audience.</p>
<p>13 Covers topics in a logical sequence</p>	<p>The order of the content was developed in a logical sequence to slowly draw students into the materials so they feel safe and comfortable opening up to learn.</p>
<p>Category Three - Implementation</p>	
<p>14 Secured at least minimal support from appropriate authorities</p>	<p>Hundreds of schools and community organizations across the country have successfully implemented Love Notes in their programming. Dibble can provide tips for successfully obtaining approval from local authorities based on our experience and the experience of our clients.</p>
<p>15 Selected educators with desired characteristics, trained them, and provided monitoring, supervision, and support</p>	<p>Dibble provides a 3-day training to assure that your educators are both comfortable and confident in delivering the content of Love Notes. In three days, educators go over the program three times, including a learning out loud activity where trainees start to deliver parts of the content themselves.</p>
<p>16 Implements activities to recruit and retain youth and overcome barriers to their involvement</p>	<p>Dibble can help you to brainstorm and develop effective strategies for recruiting and retaining youth based on our experience with successful programs. These include finding key partners with access to youth, innovative ways to reduce barriers to participation, and effectively using incentives to maximize retention.</p>
<p>17 Implements virtually all activities with reasonable fidelity</p>	<p>Love Notes includes PowerPoint fidelity slides for each lesson. Each slide has notes for the teacher to reference in order to teach the content with fidelity to the program. We also have fidelity checklists for co-teachers and evaluators.</p>