

# The Power of Relationship Education for School Success



Presented by  
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Author and Educator



## Webinar Information

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2. Raise your hand questions.
3. Answer the poll questions.

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# Charlie and Helen Dibble





# **The Dibble Institute**

Resources for Teaching Relationship Skills

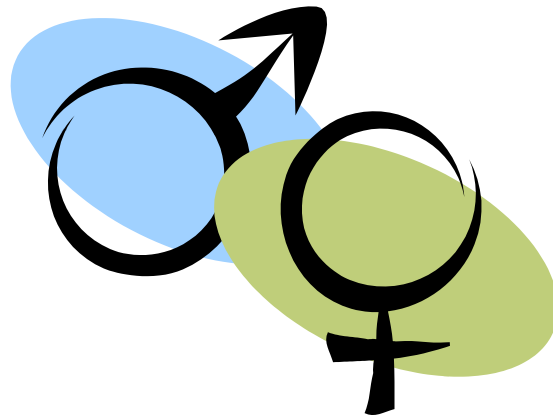
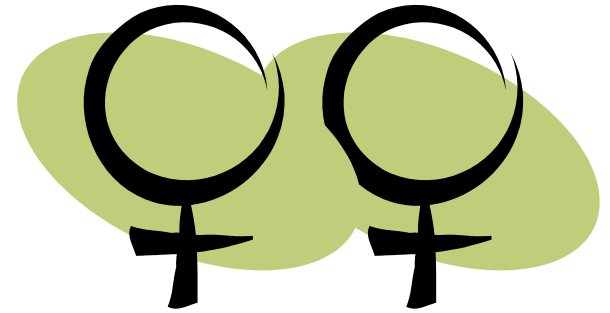
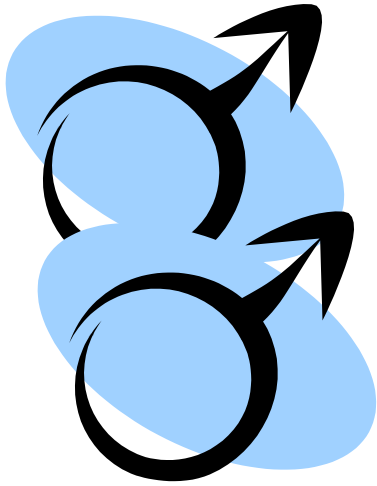
The Dibble Institute believes in research.



The Dibble Institute  
believes in stable, healthy families.



The Dibble Institute believes  
all people deserve respect.



# A Missing Piece?



- Do we underestimate the role intimate relationships play in the lives of youth?
- Rarely is healthy relationship education and skills part of the mix in helping youth.
- Yet, the love and sex choices they make can impact their current and future lives in major ways—for better or for worse.

# Relationship troubles can derail youth



# Empirical findings on relationship success and failure

- Emergence of skills-based prevention programs



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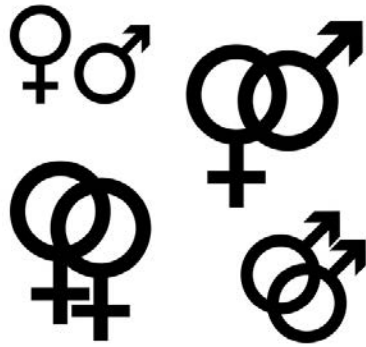
# Start with youth



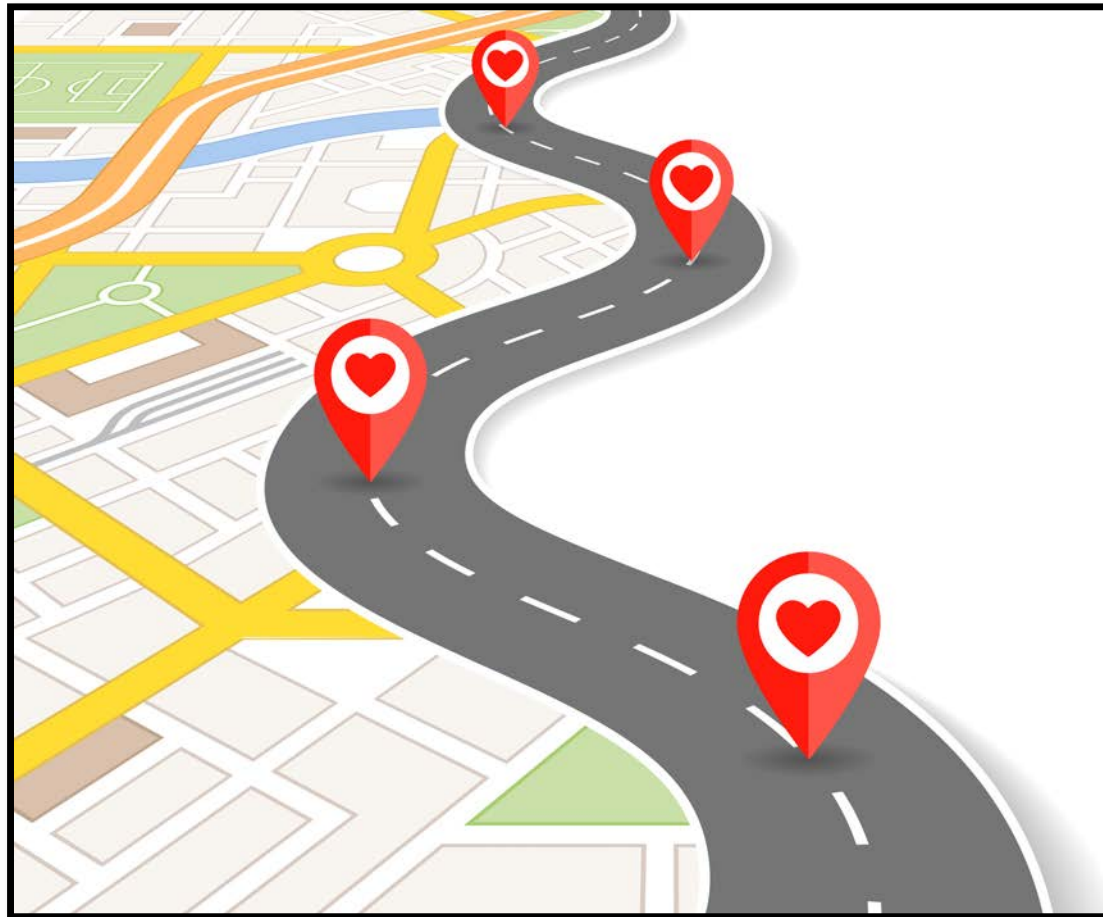
# Healthy relationship skills strengthen dating violence prevention



# Address sexuality in broader ways



Youth lack a roadmap for an important part of their lives



# Why urgent now? Three reasons

1. Examples, shared meanings, thoughtful conversations to guide are largely missing for many youth.
  - Many youth are ill-informed on issues surrounding big life steps:
    - Are there no differences between living together & marriage?
    - Under what circumstances is living together more risky or less risky?
    - Does it matter if baby carriage comes before marriage?
    - Where is the roadmap for fatherhood?

## 2<sup>nd</sup> The Great Divide

- Trends in relationships, marriage and family formation are reproducing privilege for some and disadvantage for others
- The stakes are especially high for those without a 4 yr. college degree



# Some trends

- Teen pregnancy has gone down 60% since 1991.
- But unplanned pregnancy has crept up the age scale.
- A majority of births to women under 30 are to unmarried parents—most unplanned pregnancies.

# Non-marital births

- Late 1960's = it was 6%
- 2017 = 40% of all babies are born to unmarried parents
  - 29% = White
  - 52% = Hispanic
  - 70% = Black (non-Hispanic)

*Source: Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics Report, at <http://www.cdc>*

# So what? Why does it matter if babies come before marriage?

- Because nonmarital births are strongly associated with:
  - greater child poverty
  - poorer child outcomes
- An important link in understanding why has to do with the parents' relationship
  - There are unmarried parents who live happily ever after and provide stable homes for their children, **but....it's not the norm.**

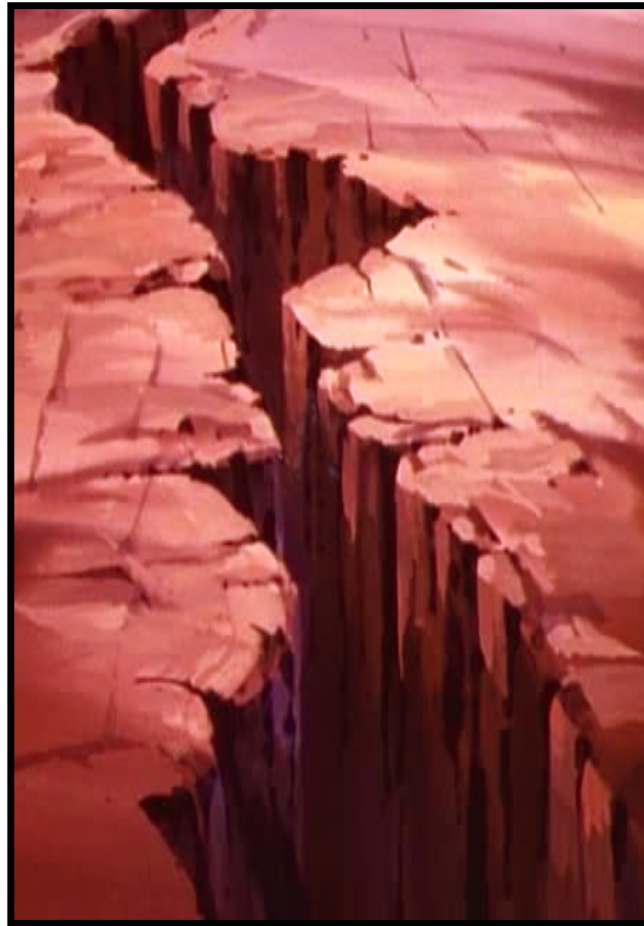
# The relationships of unmarried parents are generally fragile

- Most will fall apart and will be followed by new relationships
- Hence the term “*fragile families*”
- Relationship instability puts children at risk for poorer outcomes.



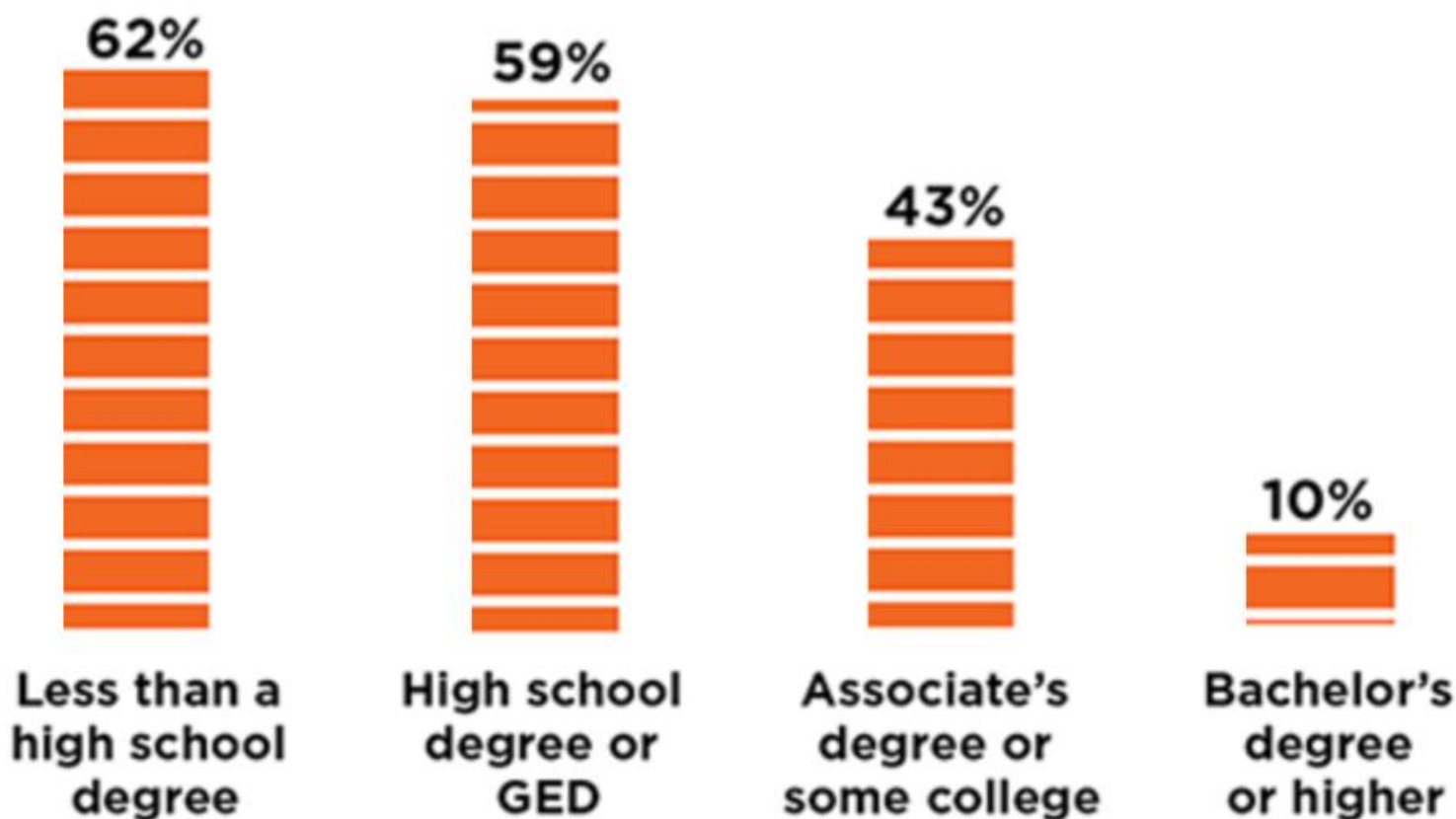
# A great divide in marriage, family formation and divorce trends

- Those with less education on one side



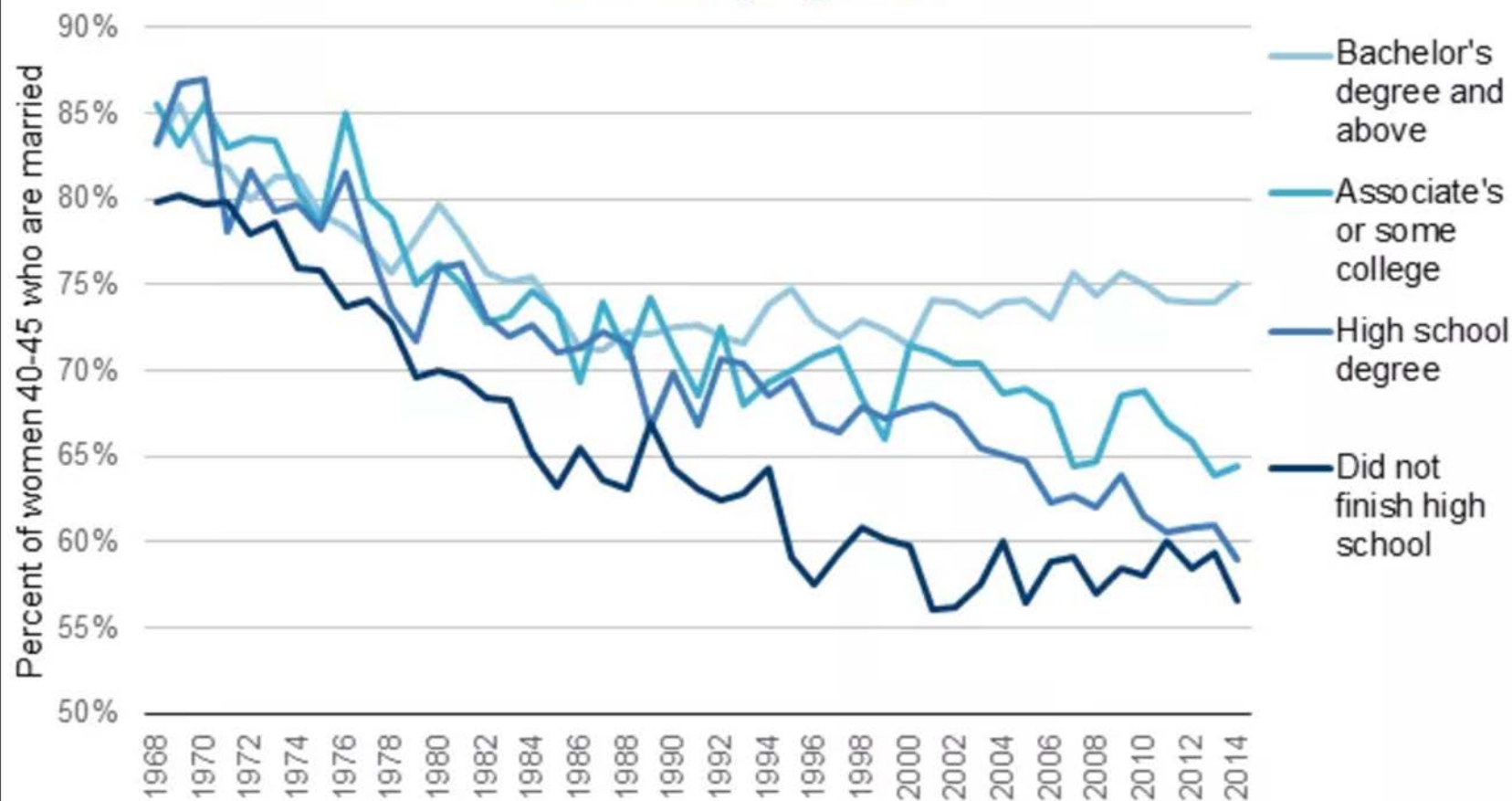
- Those with a 4 yr. college degree on the other side

# Nonmarital childbearing by education 2016



Source: Vital Statistics birth data 2016

## The growing marriage gap: Less-educated women are marrying less

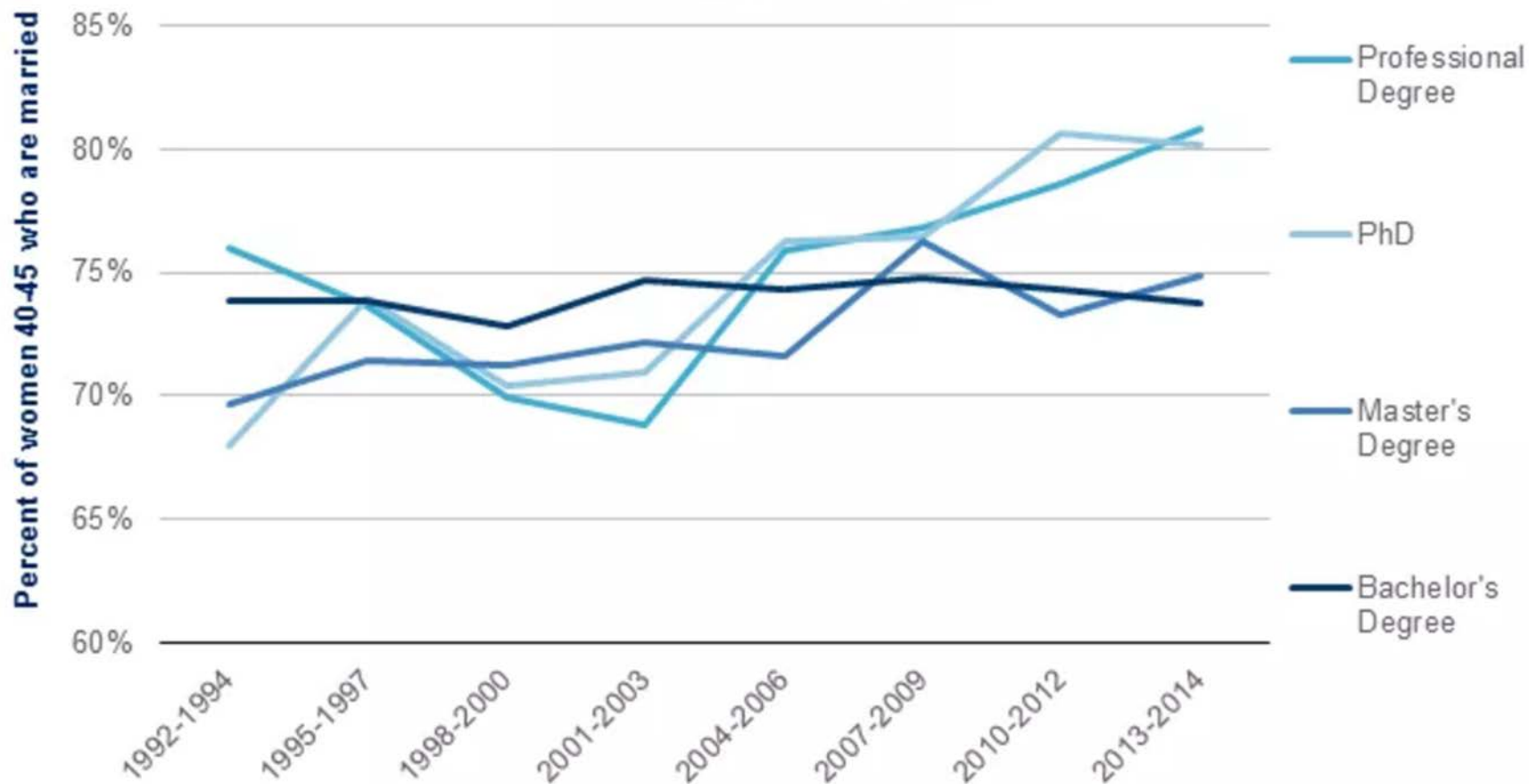


Source: Current Population Survey 2015

Note: Excludes women living in group quarters

BROOKINGS

## Marriage rates are highest amongst the most-educated women



Source: Current Population Survey 2015

Note: Excludes women living in group quarters. Examples of professional degrees include, but are not limited to, degrees in law, medicine, pharmacy, education, and other areas of medicine.

BROOKINGS

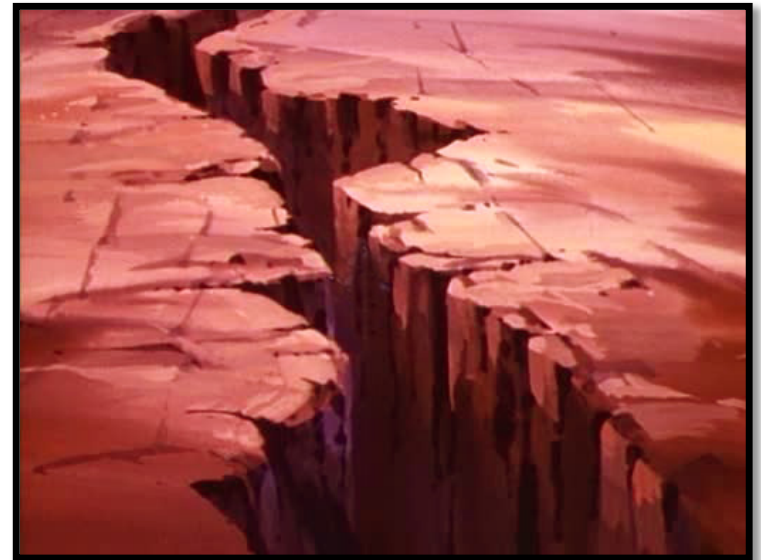
# Divorce rates falling, but...



- The 18% drop from 2008 to 2016 is almost **exclusively** driven by college educated millennials
- They are marrying and their marriages are lasting
- They tend to marry before having children

# On the other side of the divide:

- Non-marital births, serial cohabitation and children with multiple partners
- And it's strongly associated with increased instability and poverty for children and poorer child outcomes.



# Help youth succeed in education and in love



It's about helping youth achieve aspirations

And to do so we must think dualistically

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Teens online lives are uncharted territory



# Serious Questions

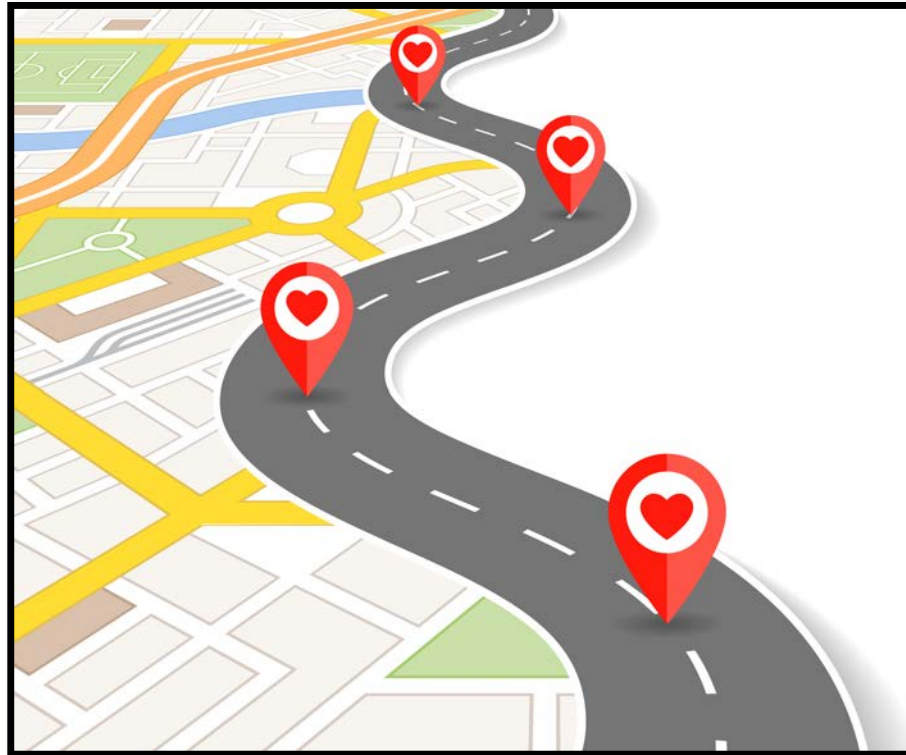
- Is it fueling a retreat from real relationships?
- How is it affecting our mental health?
- What does it mean for social and emotional development?



# Is Porn becoming the new sex ed?



Many youth are unprepared for  
caring, lasting romantic lives and  
eventually healthy sexual lives



# Healthy relationships start with the individual



# All About Healthy Relationships



# Communication & Conflict Management Skills



Address the good, the bad, the ugly of our hyper-connected lives



# Sexual Decision-making & Pregnancy Prevention

- **Heart:** Define a meaningful context and timing for sex
- **Health:** Medically-accurate info, skill practice; planning for choices
- **New pregnancy prevention messages—Through the Eyes of a Child**



# The Success Sequence



1. Finish high school; get as much college or training as possible
2. Be employed full time by 25 (or in college/training)
3. Be married before having a child



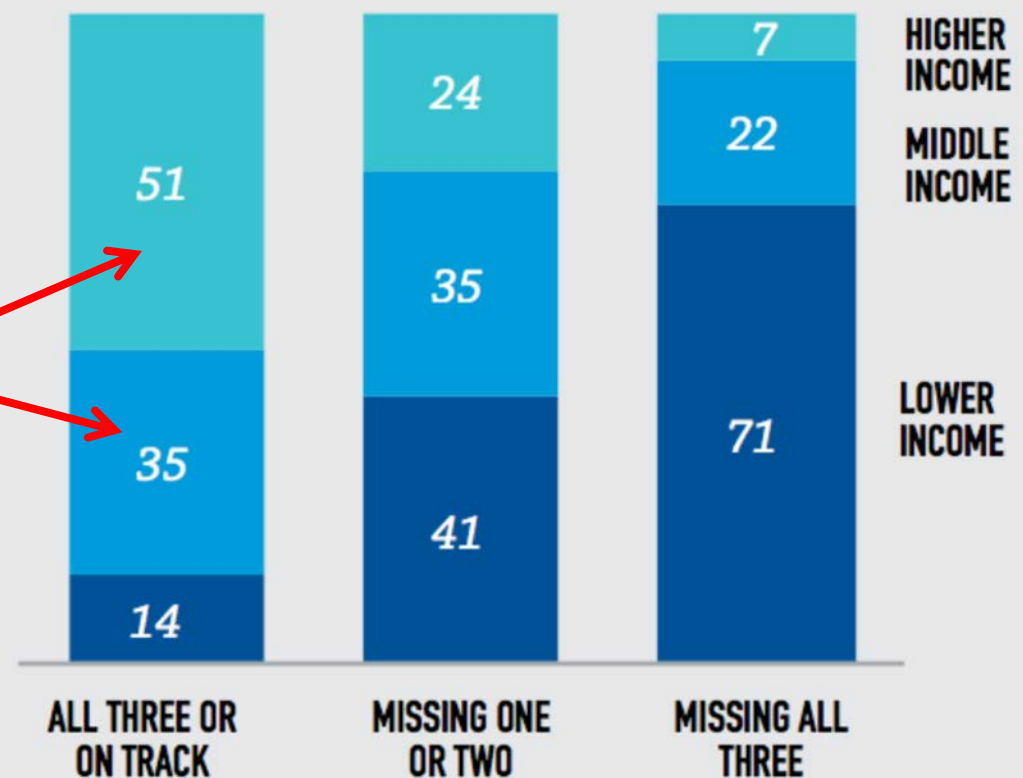
## Or be “on track”

1. Education and employment by 25
2. No unplanned pregnancy

86% of young adults who followed the success sequence or are “on track” are in the middle to upper income group.

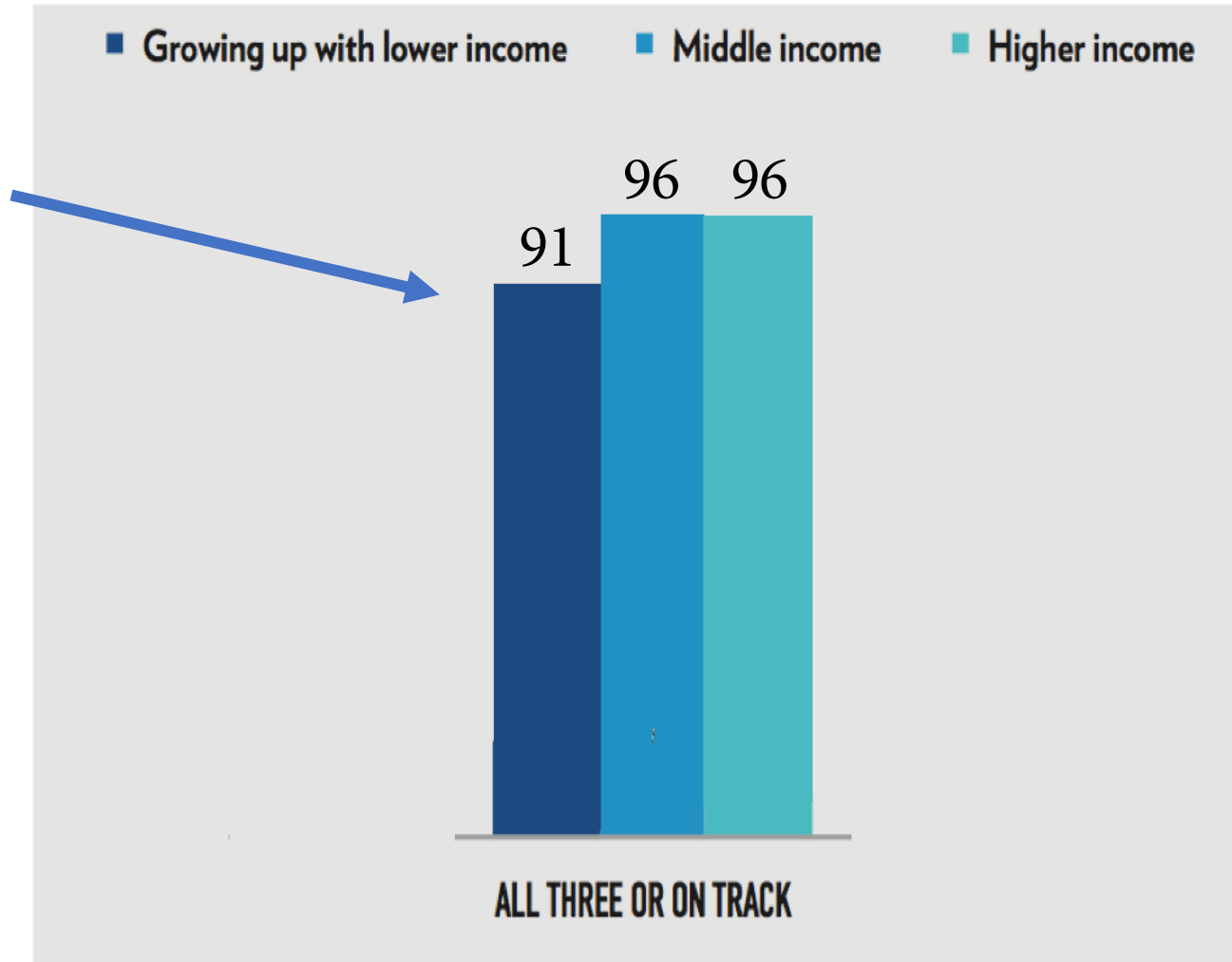
**More than 8 in 10 Millennials who followed the “success sequence” or are “on track” are in the middle or higher income group**

% of adults ages 28-34 in each income bracket



# Succeeding with Sequence

91% of young adults who grew up in low-income families and followed the sequence or stayed on track are in the middle or higher income level by age 28-34.



# Avoiding an unplanned pregnancy is possible



- One can decide not to have sex now; avoid risky situations; strengthen assertiveness skills.
- One can pace one's involvement more slowly and make real decisions vs. sliding.
- One can use contraception and condoms consistently if one is sexually active.

**But it takes a lot of motivation**

# Offer youth better access to all three:

1. Education

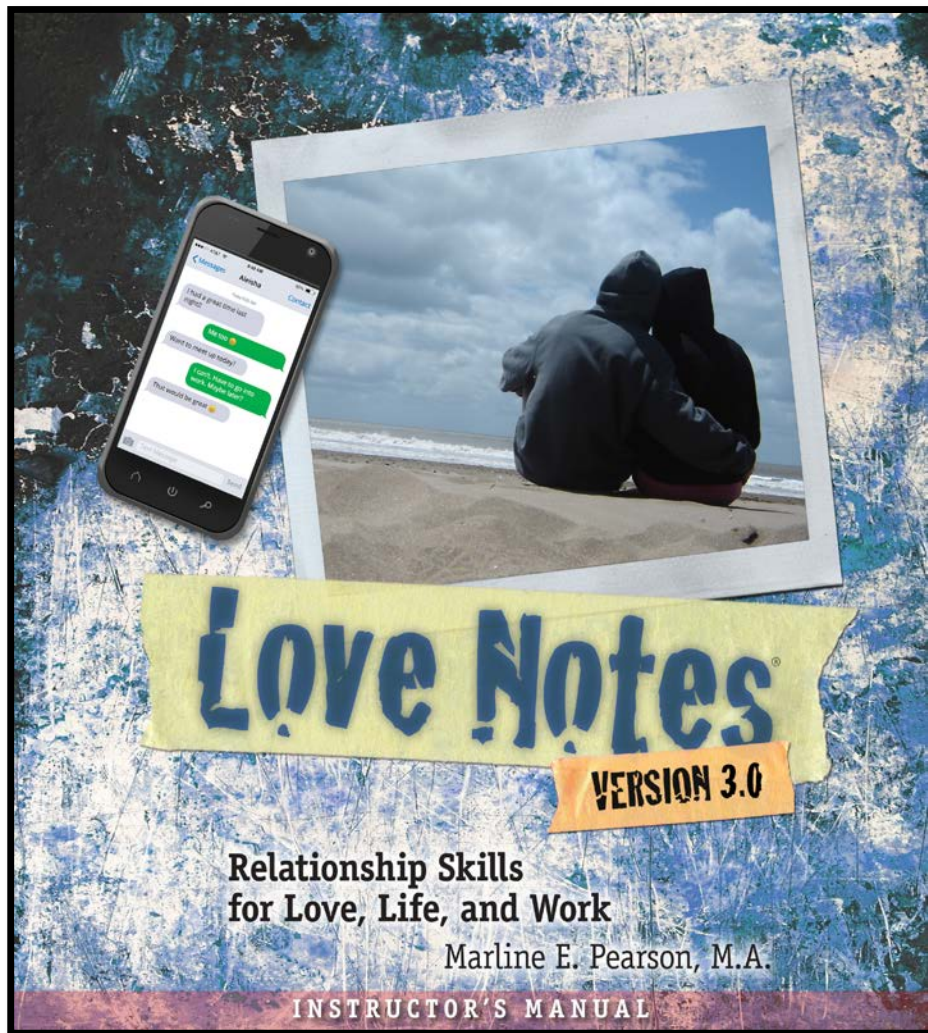


2. Employment



3. Healthy relationships and healthy marriages





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**Love Notes**

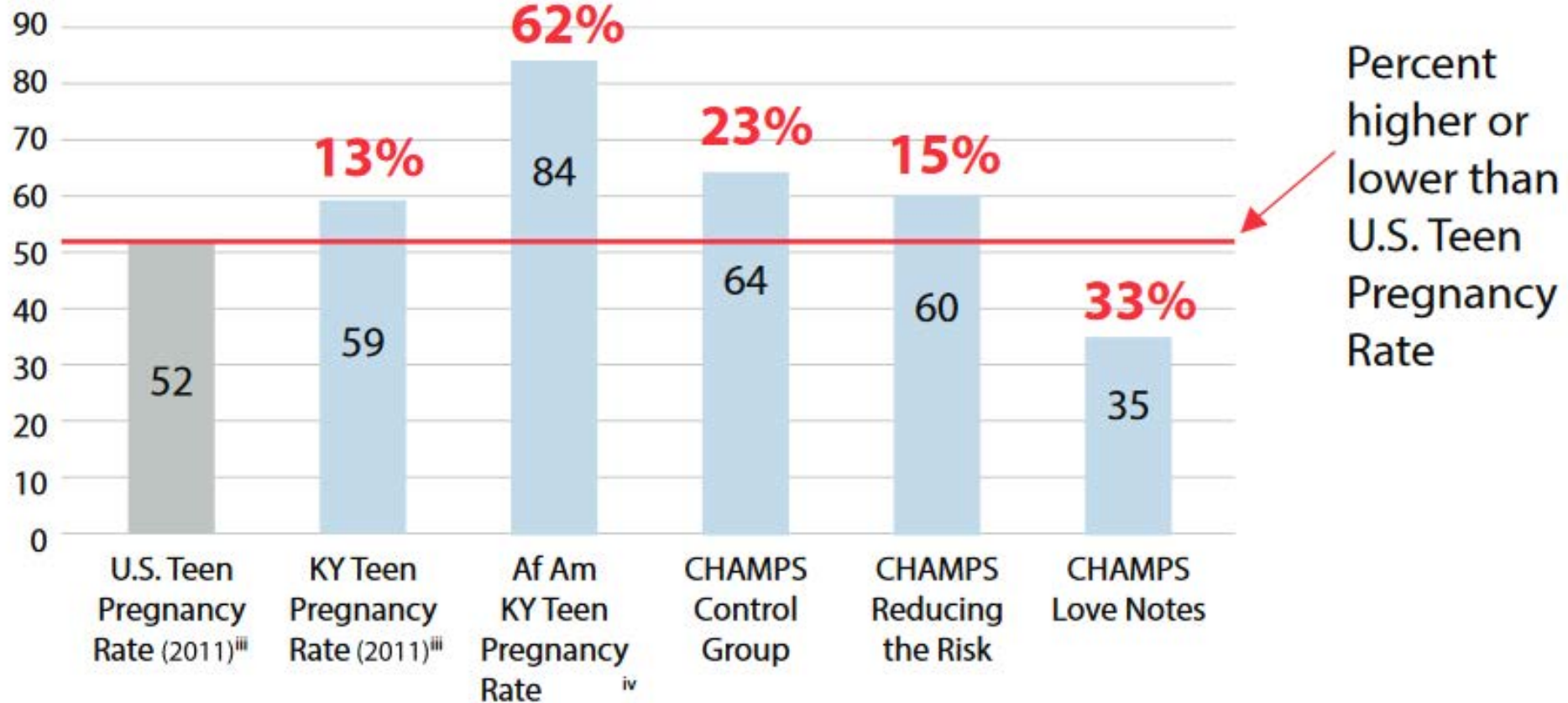
# Evidence-Based Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs at a Glance\*

Program Name	Outcomes							# of Sessions	Program Duration	Age Program/(Eval)
	Recent Sexual Activity	# of Sexual Partners	Frequency of Sexual Activity	Contraceptive User/Consistency	Sexual Initiation & Abstinence	Pregnancy or Birth	STDs (Including HIV)			
Love Notes	●		●	●	●	●		13	2 days to 3 months	15-24 (14-19)

\* Accessed from: <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/sites/default/files/ebp-table.pdf> June 10, 2017

1. Recent Sexual Activity
2. Frequency of Sexual Activity
3. Contraceptive Use/Consistency
4. Sexual Initiation & Abstinence
5. Pregnancy or Birth

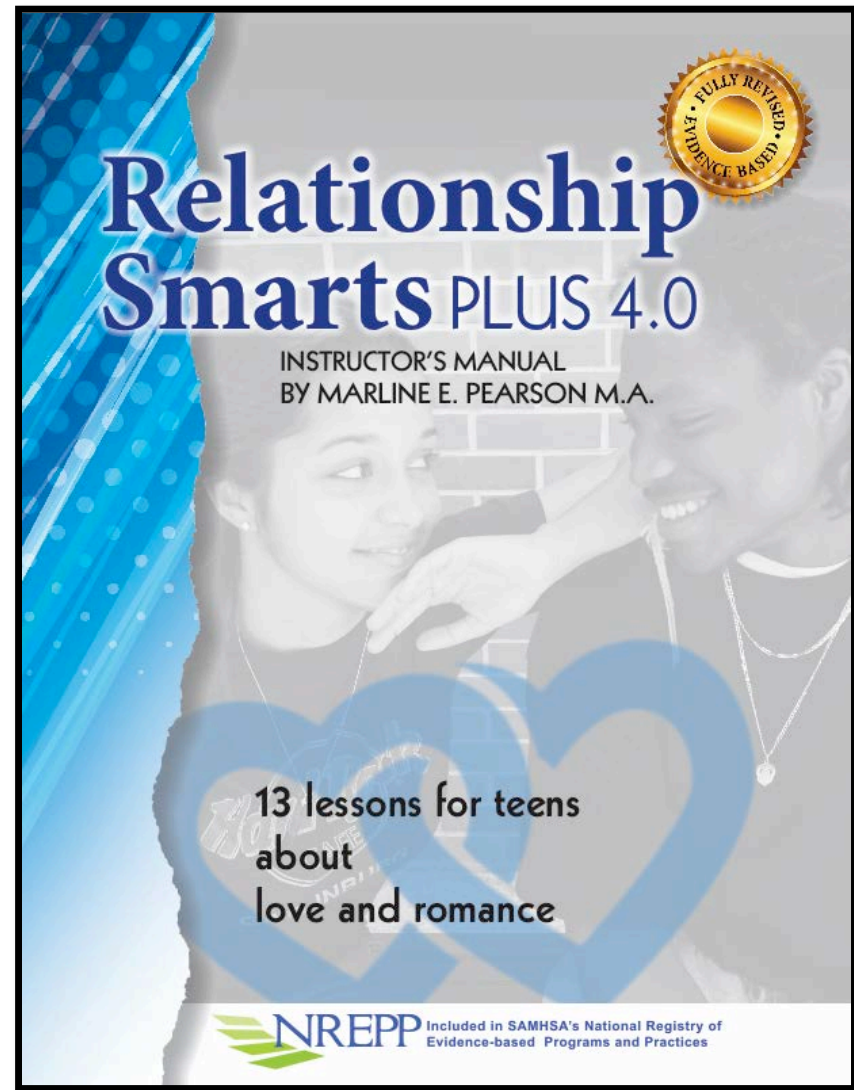
CHAMPS Teen Pregnancy Rates\*: 12-month Impact Comparison  
(\*Ages 15-19, per 1,000, average from 2012-2015)



46% Decrease in the Teen Pregnancy Rate  
Compared to the Control Group

5 year study of *Relationship Smarts* by researchers at **Auburn University** with over 9,000 diverse teens in Alabama found:

- declines in aggression;
- less acceptance of aggression in relationships;
- lowered faulty relationship beliefs



# Also significant improvements in these areas:

## **Individual Functioning Measures**

- Lower level of stress
- Increase in self-care skills
- Increase in conflict management skills
- Increase in help seeking skills
- Greater dating violence awareness
- Lower depressive symptoms
- 

## **Dating Relationship Functioning Measures**

- Increased understanding of significant other
- Increase in caring behaviors toward significant others
- Increase in communication skills
- Greater commitment to healthy relationship

## **Parent-Child Relationship and Peer Relationship Functioning Measures**

- Increase in understanding of parent, and of peers
- Increase in caring behaviors toward parent, and of peers
- Increase in commitment to healthy relationship with parents and peers



# Where?

- There are many places to reach youth—schools, community-based programs, and all kinds of settings that service youth—secular and religious.
  - But this part of teens' lives need greater recognition
- The **health class** has the most universal reach and that is where most sex education resides.
- Can we **rethink health education and remake sex education?**

# Helping youth succeed

- Helping young people increase their relationship smarts matters.
- Let's help them be deciders—planners-- in school, in career preparation, and in love.
- And, it's not just for them—but for the next generation—their children.



**The Dibble Institute**

Relationship Skills for Teens and Young Adults

# QUESTIONS??





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**<http://www.dibbleinstitute.org/webinar-archives/>**

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# Second Wednesday Webinar

March 13, 2019

**Rural Vs. Urban Youth: Are They  
Really That Different?**

Presenters:

- **Torri Childs, MA**, Field Research Associate who has worked with AMTC and Associates since 2008.
- **Crystal Agnew**, Deputy Director of Trinity Church, Peacemakers Family Center
- **Melissa Ballard**, Program Director for the Mission West Virginia SRAE Program