



# **Welcome!**

## **Connecting the Dots: Healthy Romantic Relationships in Adolescents' Lives**

**We will begin promptly at 4 PM Eastern time.**

# Irene Varley



Director of Education  
**The Dibble Institute**

# Webinar Information

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**The Dibble Institute**

Relationship Skills for Teens and Young Adults

# CHARLIE AND HELEN DIBBLE







**The Dibble Institute**

Relationship Skills for Teens and Young Adults

# What the Dibble Institute believes ...



# Dr. Mindy Scott



Deputy Program Area  
Director and Senior Research  
Scientist, ***Child Trends***

# About Child Trends

Child Trends is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research center that improves the lives and prospects of children and youth by **conducting high-quality research** and **sharing the resulting knowledge** with practitioners and policymakers.

## We . . .

1. take a whole child approach
2. study children/youth of all ages and social groups
3. seek ways to help children flourish
4. value objectivity and rigor
5. pursue knowledge development *and* knowledge transfer
6. have expertise in diverse methodologies and broad research topics (e.g., healthy relationships, youth development, reproductive health and family formation, parenting)

[www.childtrends.org](http://www.childtrends.org)

# Outline & Objectives

- Understand the multiple dimensions of healthy adolescent romantic relationships & how they influence other areas of teen and young adult lives
- Identify commonalities among relationship education (RE) programs and other interventions for youth, including:
  - Teen pregnancy prevention
  - Teen dating violence
  - Social skills
  - College and career readiness



# Why Relationships Matter for Youth

- Relationships are important for the healthy development of children and youth

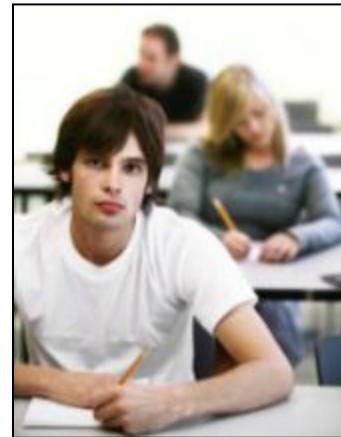
**Infancy/  
Early Childhood**



**Middle  
Childhood**



**Adolescence**



**Young  
Adulthood**



# Why *Romantic* Relationships Matter

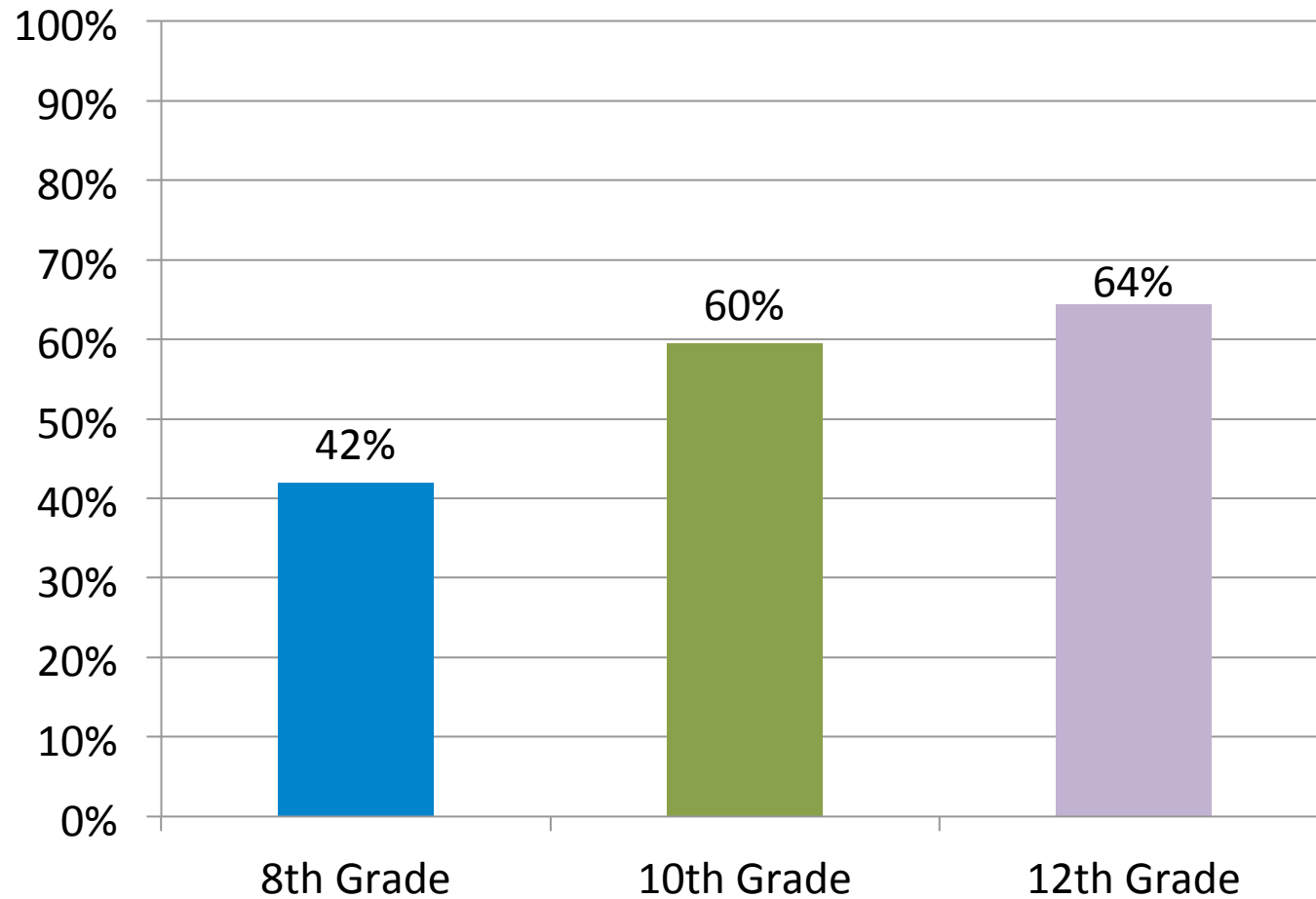
- **Romantic relationships during adolescence can set the stage for romantic relationships throughout life**
- These relationships can influence youth decisions about:
  - School
  - Employment
  - Peer relationships
  - Pregnancy prevention

# Teen Relationships

- Most teens would say they are single
- Casual dating peaks around age 16-17
- By 18 or 19, more teens who are dating are in serious relationships

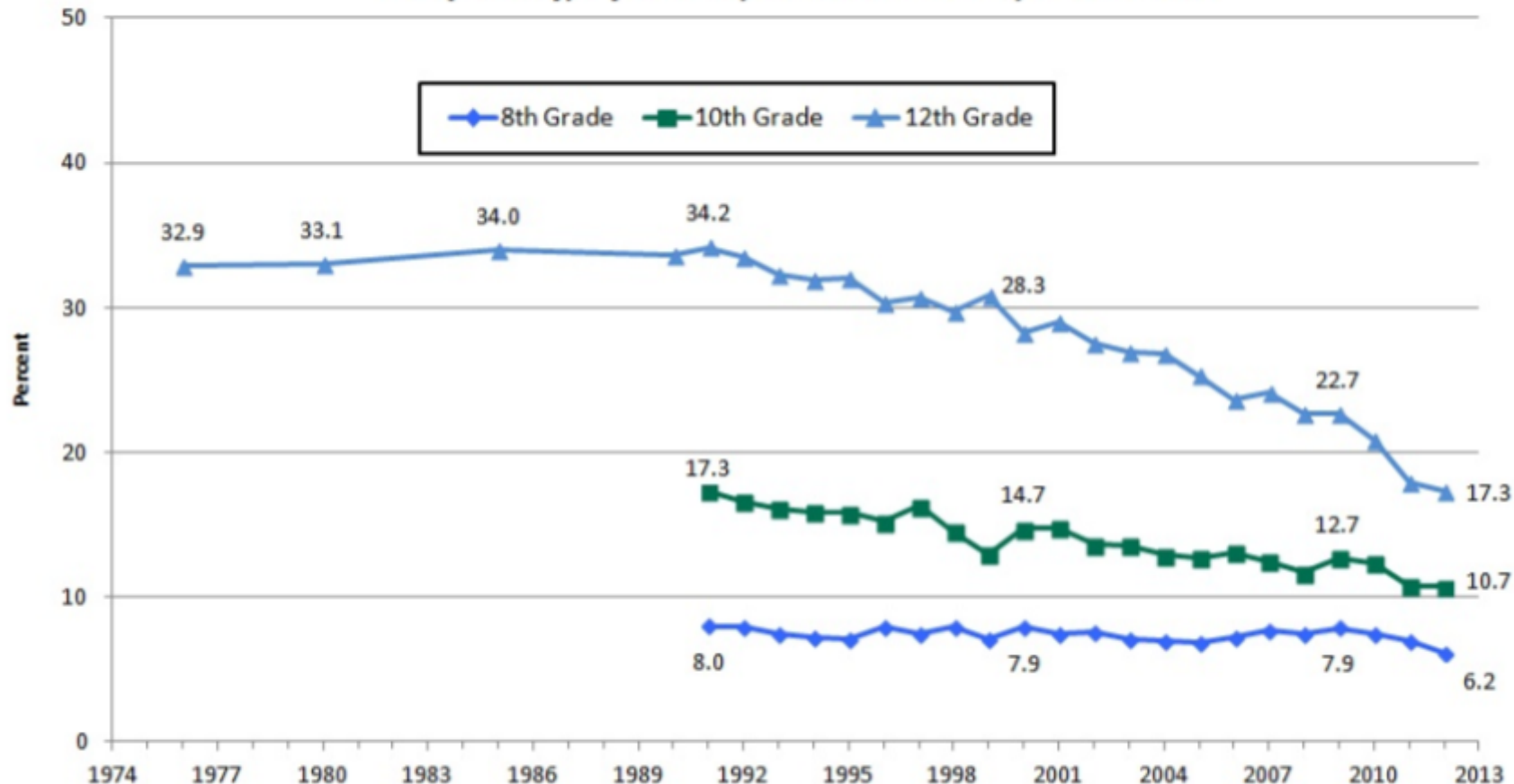


## Percent of Students Who Ever Date, 2012



Source: Child Trends analysis of Monitoring the Future Data, 2012

## Percentage of 8th-, 10th-, and 12th-Grade Students Who Date Frequently, by Grade, Selected Years, 1976-2012



Note: Frequent dating is used here to describe youth who report going out on more than one date a week

Source: Child Trends analysis of Monitoring the Future Data, Selected Years, 1976-2012

Child Trends  
**DATABANK**

# Healthy Teen Relationships

- Dating is part of normal adolescent development
- Receiving support and affection from a partner can contribute to self-esteem and promote communication and conflict management





# Unhealthy Teen Relationships

- Having multiple, very short-term relationships and being in relationships with high levels of aggression have been linked to:
  - Alcohol and drug use
  - Poor academic performance
  - Low self-esteem
  - Teen pregnancy and STDs



# A Focus on Social Skills

- Children with positive social skills are more likely to:
  - Have high self-esteem
  - Have positive relationships with peers
  - Achieve in school
- Deficits in social skills are associated with more aggressive behaviors, including:
  - Bullying
  - Fighting
  - Delinquency

# Teen Dating Violence



- Four in ten teens report experiencing dating violence
  - 9% of teens report committing an act of sexual assault; half blame their victim
- Both genders are equally likely to report dating violence perpetration and victimization
  - This is true for both LGBTQ and heterosexual teens
    - Although the type and severity of abuse varies across males and females

# Negative Effects of Dating Violence

- Teens who experience dating violence are more likely to be involved in abusive relationships as adults
- Other long-term effects of dating violence include:
  - Poor academic performance
  - Low self-esteem
  - Eating disorders
  - Depression
  - Suicidal behavior
  - Sexually transmitted diseases
  - Pregnancy



# Teen Perspectives on Healthy Romantic Relationships among Racial/Ethnic Minorities



Lina Guzman, PhD  
Erum Ikramullah  
Jennifer Manlove, PhD  
Kristen Peterson

•This research was funded by the Office of Population Affairs through grant APRPA006012-01-01

# Research Questions

- What are the different types of teen romantic relationships and what characteristics distinguish them?
- What are the critical dimensions of healthy adolescent romantic relationships as defined by teens?
- Are the critical dimensions of healthy adolescent romantic relationships comparable to those of adults?



# Methods and Sample

- Focus groups (N=7)
- Total males N=16; Total females N=36
- Age distribution:
  - N=33: 12 to 14-year-olds
  - N=19: 15 to 17-year-olds
- Largely African-American (79%)
- Only 31% lived with 2 biological or adoptive parents
- 73% ever in a relationship that was more than just friends

# Major Themes

- Teens have a rich and complex language to describe romantic relationships
- Teens have a clear definition of a healthy teen romantic relationship
- Teen relationships fall short of their own standards



# Implications for HMRE Programs

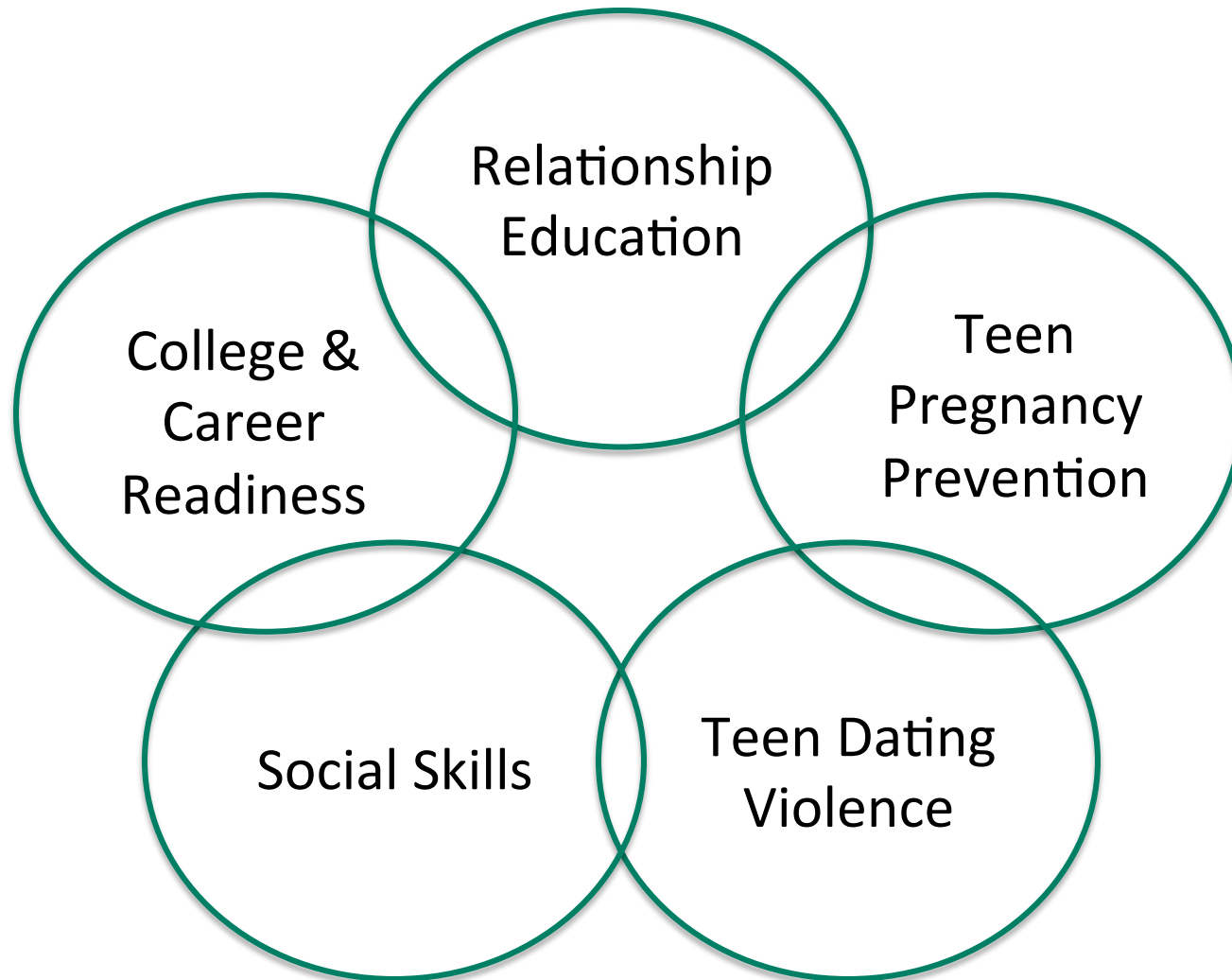
- Low-intensity, “go-slow” approach to relationships
- Building blocks of positive relationships
- Effective communication
- Conflict management
- Handling pressures of sex
- How to choose partners
- Exploring diverse
- Populations of youth



# Questions?



# Connecting the Dots - Linkages between Relationship Education Programs and Other Youth Needs and Interventions



# Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education Models and Measures (3M)

- Recommends measures for assessing HMRE program outcomes for adolescents
- Outcome measures developed through a process that included:
  - A review of research and evaluation literature
  - A review of existing measures in HMRE research
  - Input from HMRE experts
  - Cognitive interviews with adolescents



# HMRE Outcome Domains for Adolescents

- 12 recommended outcome domains:
  - Healthy relationship knowledge, expectations, and attitudes
  - Perceived program effects
  - Fidelity
  - Emotional and personal support
  - Shared interactions and activities
  - Sexual interaction and pregnancy prevention
  - Partner communication
  - Conflict management/conflict
  - Reduced violence
  - Social skills
  - Individual well-being
  - Career and college readiness

# Relationship Education Programs – Goals and Approaches

- RE programs for adolescents aim to foster healthy relationships throughout adolescence and promote healthy relationships in young adulthood
- Support adolescents' development of:
  - Knowledge to recognize the characteristics of healthy (and unhealthy) relationships
  - Belief that they can create healthy relationships and avoid unhealthy relationships
  - Skills to form healthy relationships and avoid unhealthy relationships
  - Budgeting and financial literacy components
- School and non-school based
- Relevant for adolescents who are and are not in current romantic relationships

# Dating Violence Programs – Goals and Approaches

- Main objective is to reduce rates of intimate partner violence perpetration and victimization among adolescents
- Program components include:
  - Healthy relationships
  - Conflict management
  - Dating attitudes and behaviors
  - Dating violence norms
  - Victim supportiveness
  - Psychological, physical, and sexual dating perpetration

# Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP)

## Programs – Goals and Approaches

- Main objective is to promote positive adolescent development through reducing unintended teen pregnancy
- Program components include:
  - Healthy relationships
  - Risk avoidance
  - Communication skills
  - Contraception use
  - Identity development



# Social Skills Programs – Goals and Approaches

- Main objective is to promote positive social skills among adolescents
- Program components include:
  - Getting along with others
  - Communication skills
  - Expressing empathy
  - Conflict resolution skills
  - Emotional and behavioral regulation



# Career and College Readiness Programs – Goals and Approaches

- The main objective of these programs is to support adolescent development to prepare for completing college coursework or competing in the labor market
- Program components include:
  - Goal setting
  - Academic preparation
  - Employer-desired skills
  - Personal resources
  - Developmental maturity
  - Relationships (with mentors, peers, family, etc.)





# Intervention Comparisons: Main Components

## RE

- Healthy relationship attitudes/ behaviors
- Emotional and personal support
- Communication
- Conflict management
- Dating violence
- Risk avoidance
- Budgeting

## TDV

- Healthy relationships
- Conflict management
- Dating attitudes/ behaviors
- Dating violence norms
- Victim supportiveness
- Psychological, physical, and sexual dating perpetration

## TPP

- Risk avoidance
- Communication skills
- Contraception use
- Healthy relationships
- Identity development

# Intervention Comparisons: Main Components

## RE

- Healthy relationship attitudes/ behaviors
- Emotional and personal support
- Communication
- Conflict Management
- Dating violence
- Risk avoidance
- Budgeting

## Social Skills

- Getting along with others
- Communication skills
- Expressing empathy
- Conflict resolution skills
- Emotion and behavior regulation

## Career/College

- Goal setting
- Academic preparation
- Employer-desired skills
- Personal resources
- Developmental maturity
- Relationships (mentors, peers, family)

# Conclusion

- Romantic relationships during adolescence are important
- The goals and approaches used in RE programming for adolescents overlap in important ways with other interventions
  - Providing adolescents with the tools to create and sustain healthy relationships can contribute to overall positive development in multiple domains of life
- Across interventions, integrated approaches that address healthy relationships along with other intervention-specific goals and outcomes may be beneficial

## Love Notes: Making Relationships Work v2.0

### Relationship Smarts PLUS

### Connections: Dating & Emotions

### Connections: Relationships and Marriage

### Healthy Choices, Healthy Relationships

### Money Habitudes® for Teens and Young Adults: How to be rich in life and love

### Money Habitudes 2® for at-risk youth: What money means, and why it matters.



# Questions?





- **Contact information:**

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# July 2015 Webinar

July 8, 2015

## Building Brighter Futures – Relationship Education with Non-Custodial Parents

***Presenters:*** Kay Reed, Executive Director, The Dibble Institute

**Vera Ashley-Potter**, Supervising Child Support Officer, Los Angeles County  
Child Support Services Department