

Washington PREP and
Woodland School District

Partnering to Decrease
Teen Pregnancy and STIs

Background

In 2014, Woodland School District (SD) joined the Washington State Personal Responsibility Education Program (WA PREP) as part of its commitment to providing an evidence-based, sexual health education curriculum to all high school students. WA PREP is a program funded by the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, and Family and Youth Service Bureau, through the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010. The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) received funding to implement WA PREP in 2011. The State PREP Team includes DOH, Cardea, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Washington State Department of Social and Health Services.

As a WA PREP partner, Woodland SD selected the *Reducing the Risk (RtR)* curriculum for use with its diverse high school population, living in a rural community. *RtR* is a 16-unit curriculum designed to encourage youth to delay the initiation of sex or increase the use of contraception if they choose to have sex. *RtR* works to achieve this goal through experiential activities designed to build skills in refusal, negotiation, risk assessment, planning, and communication. In December 2014, Cardea trained Woodland High School teachers and counselors in core principles of adolescent sexual health and *RtR*, with an emphasis on trauma-informed instruction and how to be inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth. Woodland High School staff also received training in WA PREP's three adulthood preparation topics: 1) healthy relationships, 2) healthy life skills, and 3) parent-child communication. Cardea provides ongoing technical assistance to support Woodland SD with *RtR*.

As a WA PREP partner, Woodland SD collected standardized entry and exit surveys from youth who participated in *RtR* and also collected staff perception surveys that contributed to the national PREP program evaluation. This brief report highlights Woodland SD's participant responses to survey questions.

Participant Demographics

From January-June 2015, Woodland High School implemented *RtR* with 95 students in three health classes. Sixty-five (65) youth completed entry surveys, while 67 youth completed exit surveys.¹ Of those who completed entry surveys, nearly two-thirds (65%) identified as female. Respondents ranged in age from 14 to 18 years, with a median age of 15 years. Eighty-three percent (83%) identified as non-Hispanic white, and 12% identified as Hispanic/Latino. More than three-quarters (77%) were in the 9th or 10th grades (**Table 1**). When asked about sexual orientation, 10% of respondents identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or other.

¹ Survey participation was voluntary and some students chose to opt out of the surveys. As a result, the number of entry surveys differed from the number of exit surveys.

Table 1. Participant Demographics at Entry (N=65)

Characteristic	N	%
Gender		
Female	42	65
Male	23	35
Age		
14 years	18	28
15 years	25	39
16 years	10	15
17 or 18 years	12	18
Race/Ethnicity²		
American Indian or Alaska Native	<5	--
Asian	<5	--
Black or African American	<5	--
Hispanic/Latino	8	12
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<5	--
Non-Hispanic White	54	83
Education Level		
9 th grade	38	58
10 th grade	12	19
11 th grade	6	9
12 th grade	9	14

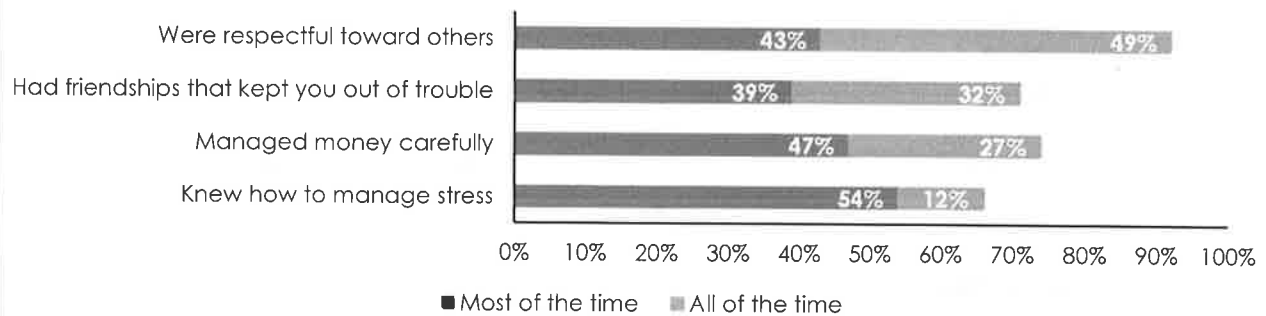
Youth Attitudes and Behavioral Intentions Prior to *RtR*

In addition to demographic information, youth were asked about their sexual activity and intention to be sexually active in entry surveys. Nearly one-quarter (23%) reported ever being sexually active, and less than one-third (29%) intended to have sex in the next six months. Among those who responded affirmatively to having sex within the past three months, all reported using a condom or other form of birth control "most" or "all" of the time.

Youth were also asked questions about frequency of specific behaviors related to healthy life skills (i.e., doing well in school or managing stress) and healthy relationships (i.e., being respectful of others or having friends who keep you out of trouble), within the three months prior to starting *RtR*. Nearly all respondents (92%) reported being respectful toward others "most" or "all" of the time, while nearly two-thirds (66%) reported knowing how to manage stress (**Figure 1**).

² According to DOH guidelines, the true count and percent of participants who belong to any group cannot be reported when the number is less than five. This practice protects participant confidentiality.

Figure 1. Reported Frequency of Behavioral Patterns, 3 Months Prior to RtR (N=65)



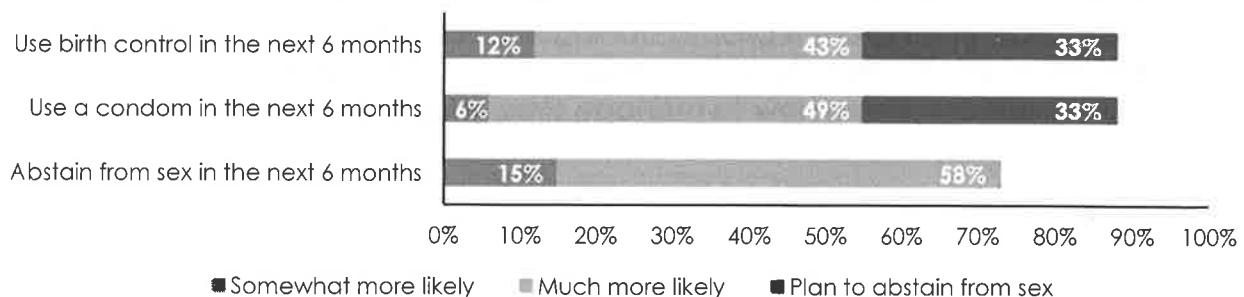
Youth Attitudes and Behavioral Intentions After RtR

Overall, youth exit surveys indicated a positive response to RtR. They were asked whether participating in WA PREP programming made them "more likely," "about the same," or "less likely" to engage in certain behaviors. Respondents could also select the option, "I plan to abstain from sexual intercourse in the next 6 months" for questions focusing specifically on sexual behavior.

Respondents reported encouraging outcomes for contraceptive use and abstaining from sexual intercourse. When asked about program impact on their intentions to be sexually active, three out of five reported that RtR made them "somewhat" or "much less" likely to have sex in the next six months.

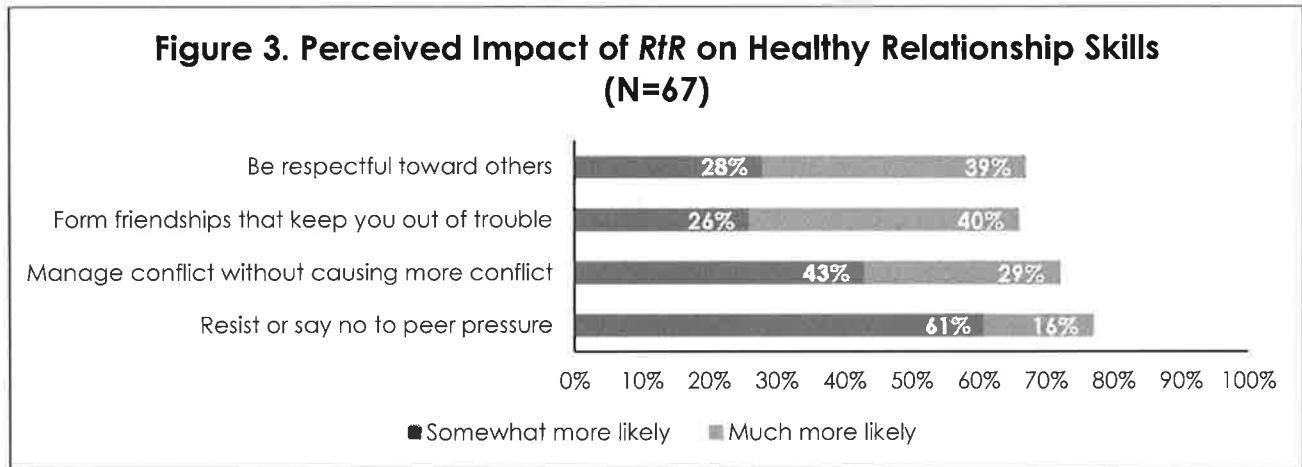
Respondents were also asked about plans for contraceptive use over the next six months. While one-third planned to abstain from sex, more than half (55%) reported that the program made them "somewhat" or "much more" likely to use a condom or birth control when having sex. In a separate question, participants were asked specifically about their plans to abstain from sex and nearly three-quarters of respondents (73%) said that participating in WA PREP made them "somewhat" or "much more" likely to abstain from sex in the next six months (**Figure 2**).

Figure 2. Reported Impact of RtR on Planned Behaviors (N=67)

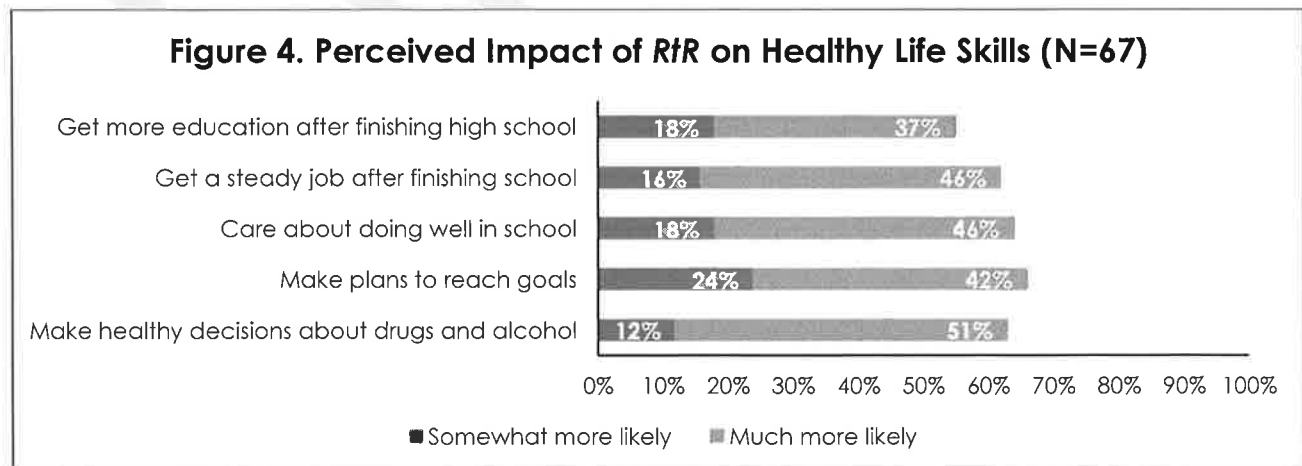


Youth also answered questions about *RtR*'s impact on specific adulthood preparation subjects. Overall, respondents perceived positive impacts on their ability to practice healthy relationship skills and engage in healthy life skills.

About three-quarters (72%) of respondents indicated that they were "somewhat" or "much more" likely to manage conflict without causing more conflict, as a result of *RtR*. In addition, 77% of respondents said that *RtR* made them "somewhat" or "much more" likely to resist or say no to peer pressure (**Figure 3**).



Findings were also positive for healthy life skills. On every measure, at least half of respondents indicated that *RtR* made them "somewhat" or "much more" likely to engage in specific healthy life skills behaviors, such as getting more education, getting a steady job, caring about doing well in school, making plans to reach goals, and making healthy decisions about drug and alcohol use (**Figure 4**).



Youth Views of Program Quality

Youth views of program quality were overwhelmingly positive. Most respondents indicated that they felt interested, welcomed, and respected during “most” or “all” of the *RtR* sessions. Nearly three-quarters (74%) expressed that the discussions and activities in *RtR* helped them learn, and 85% felt the material was clear “most” or “all” of the time. In addition, more than 80% of respondents indicated that none of their peers were picked on, teased, or bullied because of their sexuality or ethnic background.

School Staff Perceived a Positive Impact on Youth

School staff who taught *RtR* during the 2014-2015 academic year reported that the curriculum was very user-friendly for facilitators and that the material was age-appropriate for their youth. Generally, they agreed that youth were fully engaged during program sessions. Given that implementation occurred during school hours, it was relatively easy for staff to get youth to attend regularly and have full exposure to the curriculum.

Conclusion

Youth from Woodland High School who participated in WA PREP benefited from *RtR*. Active participation in WA PREP supported youth in making healthy and informed decisions about relationships, sex, and preparing for adulthood.

Next Steps

To ensure that students continue to benefit from the program, Woodland High School plans to adopt *RtR* as part of the school's core curriculum and will teach *RtR* in all health classes. For the 2015-2016 academic year, seven classes will receive *RtR*. Going forward, the goal is for all Woodland High School students to participate in this sexuality education program before graduation.

For more information on WA PREP, please visit www.waprepforhealthyyouth.org.