

Name of Curriculum: **MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

For more detailed information, visit the [Making a Difference](#) page at ETR's [Program Success Center](#) website.

| Part I: Planning | Making a Difference |
|---|--|
| Time and Intensity | |
| 1. Is the curriculum consistent with your organizational goals? | The program's goal is to empower young adolescents to change their behavior in ways that will reduce their risk of pregnancy and HIV or other STD infection. Specifically, this curriculum emphasizes that young adolescents should postpone sexual activity and that practicing abstinence is the only way to eliminate the risk for pregnancy and STDs, including HIV. |
| 2. Has the curriculum under consideration been formally evaluated and shown to have affected behavior change on some or all of the targetsevaluated? | From the evaluation data, participants who received <i>Making a Difference</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were less likely to report having sexual intercourse in the 3 months after the intervention than the control group. • Believed more strongly that practicing abstinence would prevent pregnancy and HIV and would help them achieve career goals. • Expressed less favorable attitudes toward sexual intercourse, and reported weaker intentions of having sexual intercourse over the next 3 months. |
| 3. Does the curriculum use promising approaches reflecting evaluated interventions or curricular content? | <i>Making a Difference</i> is an evidence-based intervention. |
| 4. Does the curriculum demonstrate a sound model of changing knowledge, attitudes, skills, intentions, and behavior consistent with accepted behavioral and educational theories? | <i>Making a Difference</i> draws upon the Social Cognitive Theory, the Theory of Reasoned Action, and its extension, The Theory of Planned Behavior. There are two major concepts included in these theories: (1) self-efficacy or perceived behavioral control beliefs, which are defined as a person's confidence in his or her ability to take part in the behavior, i.e. abstain from sex; and (2) outcome expectancies or behavioral beliefs, which are beliefs about the consequences of the behavior. The curriculum addresses each of the principles, usually in more than one activity. |
| 5. Does the curriculum address specific steps needed to meet those goals? (Note: Consider using a logic model to assess the relationship between steps and goals.) | See the program Logic Model . |
| 6. Does the curriculum offer adequate dosage — for example, multiple sessions per grade, and sessions for multiple grade levels? | The curriculum has 8 hours of content divided into eight 1-hour modules. The School Edition has 8 hours 40 minutes of content divided into thirteen 40-minute modules. |

* The Center for Relationship Education. (2010). *Systematic Method for Assessing Risk-Avoidance Tool (SMARTool)*. Denver, Colorado.

| Part I: Planning | Making a Difference |
|--|---|
| Time and Intensity <i>(continued)</i> | |
| 7. Do high-risk populations have an opportunity for more intensive interventions or lesson sessions? | Additional discussion and making activities even more interactive is considered a green-light adaptation. |
| 8. Does the curriculum integrate with and supplement other health or character-based education in the school or organization? | <p>The curriculum includes a strong emphasis on family and community, including how HIV, other STDs and teenage pregnancy affect various communities in which young people live. The importance of protecting one’s family and community is used as a motive to change individual behavior.</p> <p>The importance of sexual responsibility and accountability is addressed through teaching participants to make responsible decisions regarding their sexual behavior, urging them to respect themselves and others, and stressing the importance of developing a positive self-image. Students learn that by being responsible and abstaining from sex they will be able to reach their goals and dreams.</p> <p>The role of pride is also key. Because adolescents are often faced with confusion, mixed emotions and uncertainty, it is extremely important that they learn to feel good about themselves and their decision to abstain from sex. Making proud choices about abstaining from sex can actually lead teens to develop a sense of pride, self-confidence, and self-respect. The role-play exercises and other skill-building activities reinforce the many positive benefits, both psychological and physical, of practicing abstinence.</p> |
| Flexibility and Sustainability | |
| 9. Is the curriculum flexible enough to address learner needs across varied demographic student groups? | The curriculum was designed to be used with small groups ranging from 6–12 participants, but can be implemented with larger groups as well. The curriculum can be implemented in various community settings, including schools and youth-serving agencies. The School Edition was designed to be used in classroom settings. |
| 10. Is the curriculum flexible enough to meet or complement program needs, based on coordination with existing health education requirements and time constraints? | The standard curriculum can be implemented in 8 classroom sessions of 60 minutes each or in four 2-hour sessions. In community settings, it can be implemented in a 2-day format (four modules each day), 4-day format (two modules each day) or 8-day format (one module each day). The School Edition can be implemented in thirteen sessions of 40 minutes each, or in whatever format is conducive for the needs of the site. |

| Part I: Planning | Making a Difference |
|---|---|
| Staff Selection and Training | |
| 11. Does the curriculum provide guidance for identifying teaching staff who are comfortable with and supportive of the sexual risk avoidance message? | This curriculum is designed to be taught by classroom teachers or family life educators. Educators interested in implementing this program should be skilled in using interactive teaching methods and guiding group discussions, and should be comfortable with the program content. |
| 12. Does the curriculum developer provide teacher training through workshops, conferences, or other venues to improve knowledge and skills? | ETR offers training on all of our sexual health programs through our Professional Learning Services. For more information visit our Training and TA pages. |
| 13. Are materials available to provide in-service training for all organization personnel | In addition to Training of Educators, ETR also offers Training of Trainers sessions, which certify participants to conduct trainings for other program staff on the curriculum. For more information visit our Training and TA pages. |
| 14. Are content updates and curricular experts available to assure continuous improvement? | <i>Making a Difference</i> was updated to a fifth edition in 2016. ETR reviews all of programs on a regular basis to ensure they are up to date and accurate. |
| 15. Are teacher materials, supplemental resources, and lesson plans easy to use and appropriate for effective lessons? | <p>The curriculum includes a series of fun and interactive learning experiences designed to increase participation and help young adolescents understand the faulty reasoning and decision making that puts them at risk for HIV/STDs and pregnancy. Activities are designed to increase comfort with practicing abstinence, address concerns about practicing abstinence, and provide strategies for overcoming concerns and obstacles to practicing abstinence.</p> <p>The activities incorporate social cognitive-behavioral skill-building strategies (i.e., presentation, modeling, and the practice of abstinence negotiation skills). The curriculum involves culturally sensitive video clips, games, brainstorming, role-playing, skill-building activities and small-group discussions that build group cohesion and enhance learning. Each activity lasts a brief time, and most are active exercises in which the adolescents get out of their seats and interact with each other. In this way, it is possible to maintain interest and attention that might fade during a lecture or lengthy group discussion.</p> |

| Part II: Curriculum | Making a Difference |
|--|---|
| Target #1: Enhance the knowledge of (a) physical development, sexual risks, and (b) healthy relationships | |
| 1. Does the curriculum address appropriate topics for the age group and target population? | The curriculum is intended for use with youth ages 12 to 14; the School Edition is intended for Middle School classrooms. It includes instruction on puberty and adolescent sexuality, attitudes and beliefs about abstinence, consequences of sex, and refusal and negotiation skills, all with an emphasis on the benefits of abstinence. |
| 2. Does the material presented maintain a clear and consistent risk avoidance approach regarding sexual involvement and other risks? | The <i>Making a Difference</i> curriculum is designed to reduce STD/HIV and pregnancy risk-related behaviors, by giving young adolescents knowledge and perception of personal vulnerability, positive attitudes and beliefs regarding abstinence, abstinence negotiation skills, and confidence in their ability to abstain from sex. The program’s goal is to empower young adolescents to change their behavior in ways that will reduce their risk of pregnancy and HIV or other STD infection. Specifically, this curriculum emphasizes that young adolescents should postpone sexual activity and that practicing abstinence is the only way to eliminate the risk for pregnancy and STDs, including HIV. |
| 3. Do the content areas of the proposed curriculum address the requirements of funding or regulatory agencies? | Local agencies and schools will have to assess this based on their funding or regulatory requirements. This curriculum emphasizes that young adolescents should postpone sexual activity and that practicing abstinence is the only way to eliminate the risk for pregnancy and STDs, including HIV. |
| 4. Does the curriculum meet state and/or local health education standards? | Local agencies and schools will have to assess this based on their funding or regulatory requirements. This curriculum emphasizes that young adolescents should postpone sexual activity and that practicing abstinence is the only way to eliminate the risk for pregnancy and STDs, including HIV. |
| 5. Does the curriculum personalize the potential negative impacts of sexual involvement (such as pregnancy, STIs, emotional, social, or relationship problems, etc.)? | Participants have numerous opportunities to consider potential consequences of sexual activity. Three of the modules focus specifically on the consequences of sex, with an emphasis on risks for STDs, HIV and pregnancy. |
| 6. Are sources of scientific, medical, social science, and health information either commonly available in multiple books and texts (i.e., anatomy, established physiology, development) or documented by site of original research or source? | The curriculum was thoroughly reviewed for medical accuracy when the fifth edition of <i>Making a Difference</i> was published by ETR in 2016. |

| Part II: Curriculum | Making a Difference |
|--|--|
| Target #1: Enhance the knowledge of (a) physical development, sexual risks, and (b) healthy relationships (continued) | |
| 7. Are further sources of information provided for teachers to obtain additional reliable data, if appropriate? | Appendixes provide educators with additional background information about HIV, STDs, contraceptive methods and the effect of various drugs on sexual decision making. |
| 8. Is the presentation of facts balanced and objective? | <i>Making a Difference</i> presents facts and provides opportunities for youth to consider their attitudes, behaviors and decisions around sexual activity in a nonjudgmental and value-neutral way. |
| Target #2: Support personal attitudes and beliefs that value sexual risk avoidance | |
| 1. Does the curriculum include exercises that help students recognize attitudes in their school, home, community, and media? | Yes, in particular Module 1 examines reasons teens may have or not have sex, and Module 4 helps students consider attitudes around abstinence. |
| 2. Does the curriculum present information in a relevant and compelling manner that has the potential to change attitudes and beliefs? | The fun and interactive learning experiences are designed to increase participation and help young adolescents understand the kind of faulty reasoning and decision making that can lead to HIV, other STDs and pregnancy. Activities are designed to help students feel comfortable practicing abstinence, address their concerns about practicing abstinence, and provide strategies for overcoming obstacles to this practice. |
| 3. Does the curriculum use fear of negative outcomes in an appropriate manner to equip students to avoid risks? | Participants have numerous opportunities to consider potential consequences of sexual activity. Three of the modules focus specifically on the consequences of sex, with an emphasis on risks for HIV, other STDs and pregnancy. |
| 4. Does the curriculum develop and display character traits that are consistent with universal values (i.e., trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, caring, courage, etc.)? | The curriculum incorporates the “Make a Difference! Be Proud! Be Responsible!” theme that encourages the participants to make a difference and abstain from sex, to be proud of themselves, their family and their community, and to behave responsibly for the sake of themselves, their family and their community. The roleplay scenarios are designed to provide participants with the confidence and skills to negotiate abstinence and delay sexual involvement. The importance of sexual responsibility and accountability is addressed throughout. Participants are urged to make responsible decisions, respect themselves and others, and develop a positive self-image. Students learn that by being responsible and abstaining from sex they will be able to reach their goals and dreams. |

| Part II: Curriculum | Making a Difference |
|---|---|
| Target #2: Support personal attitudes and beliefs that value sexual risk avoidance (continued) | |
| 5. Does the curriculum help students value the avoidance of adolescent sexual involvement? | Making proud choices about abstaining from sex can lead teens to develop a sense of pride, self-confidence, and self-respect. The roleplay exercises and other skill-building activities reinforce the many positive benefits, both psychological and physical, of practicing abstinence. |
| 6. Does the curriculum help students increase their value of commitment, marriage, and future family formation? | Marriage and future family formation can easily be addressed in the Goals and Dreams Timeline activity in Module 1. |
| 7. Does the curriculum provide a basis for students to identify and/or communicate their core beliefs regarding the meaning of sex in their personal, family, cultural and spiritual lives? | The curriculum emphasizes the idea of making a difference through proud and responsible choices. The importance of sexual responsibility and accountability is stressed throughout, and participants are encouraged to make responsible decisions, respect themselves and others, and develop a positive self-image. Students learn that by being responsible and abstaining they will be able to reach their goals and dreams. |
| 8. Does the curriculum provide an opportunity for students to recognize any cognitive dissonance between core values and personal attitudes? | Beginning in Module 1, students examine reasons teens do and do not have sex, look at obstacles sexual activity can pose to achieving goals and dreams and suggest how to avoid these obstacles. The theme of being proud and responsible and abstaining from sexual activity is revisited numerous times throughout the curriculum, allowing students to continue to evaluate their behaviors and values around abstinence. |
| Target #3: Acknowledge and address common rationalizations for sexual involvement | |
| 1. Does the curriculum help learners recognize common rationalizations that teens use to become sexually involved? | In Module 1 students brainstorm reasons teens have or don't have sex. In Module 7, they examine the effects of peer pressure on sexual choices, including analyzing scenarios. |
| 2. Do learning exercises or scenarios help students recognize that justifications for sexual involvement fail to reduce potential adverse consequences? | Consequences of sexual activity are covered extensively in Modules 3, 5 and 6. |
| 3. Does the curriculum help students develop and practice skills to respond to common rationalizations for teensex? | The last two modules focus on building the limit-setting, negotiation and refusal skills that will support abstinence. Students are given extensive practice through roleplays. |
| 4. Does the curriculum assist sexually experienced youth to understand the reasons and develop skills to avoid continued sexual involvement? | All of the learning activities can apply to youth who are already sexually experienced. Abstinence is presented as something a person can choose at any time and for any reason. Youth are not shamed for previous sexual choices, but are encouraged and given skills to help abstinence be a viable choice for them now. |

| Part II: Curriculum | Making a Difference |
|--|--|
| Target #4: Improve perception of and independence from negative peer and social norms | |
| 1. Does the curriculum provide activities for students to consider positive and negative peer perceptions regarding sexual and other risk behaviors? | Attitudes about abstinence, both positive and negative, and pressures youth face around sexual activity are emphasized throughout. |
| 2. Does the curriculum provide an opportunity for students to consider positive and negative media depictions regarding sexual and other risk behaviors? | Media influences are considered within the discussions of reasons teens have sex and pressures around sexual activity. |
| 3. Does the curriculum illustrate positive peernorms? | Throughout the learning activities, students are encouraged to share positive perceptions and benefits of abstinence. They advocate for abstinence by responding to a series of letters with questions from teens; and observe and offer feedback to peers' roleplays on effective refusal and negotiation skills. |
| 4. Does the curriculum promote the confidence and skill to resist negative pressure from peers? | Students are given extensive practice in refusal and negotiation skills to defend an abstinence choice. |
| 5. Does the curriculum teach, demonstrate, and practice the skills of independent decision-making related to avoiding sexual involvement? | Module 5 includes decision-making practice using the STOP-THINK-ACT problem-solving model that will help them think clearly and maintain an abstinence choice when faced with pressure situations. |
| Target #5: Build personal competencies and self-efficacy to avoid sexual activity | |
| 1. Does the curriculum contain messages and activities that encourage self-protective competencies when confronted with sexual and other risks? | Because adolescence is a difficult period of development, in which young people are often faced with confusion, mixed emotions and uncertainty, it is extremely important that they learn to feel good about themselves and their decision to abstain from sex. Activities are designed to help students feel comfortable practicing abstinence, address their concerns about practicing abstinence, and provide strategies for overcoming obstacles to this practice. |
| 2. Does the curriculum promote critical thinking and decision-making skills that protect themselves and others physically, emotionally, and mentally? | Decision-making and problem-solving practice is a key element of Module 5. Throughout the curriculum, students are encouraged to make proud and responsible choices to protect themselves and others through abstinence. |
| 3. Are learners given multiple opportunities to observe and practice negotiation and risk refusal skills? | Skills and self-efficacy are a major component of the curriculum, including negotiation-refusal skills. The roleplays in Module 8 provide time for practice, reinforcement and support of the skills students are learning. |
| 4. Does the curriculum provide opportunities for learners to explain and defend their personal choices? | The roleplay exercises and other skill-building activities reinforce the many positive benefits, both psychological and physical, of practicing abstinence. |

| Part II: Curriculum | Making a Difference |
|--|---|
| Target #5: Build personal competencies and self-efficacy to avoid sexual activity (continued) | |
| 5. Are support systems such as parents, personal and family rules, schools, faith groups and/or community organizations recognized as contributory to self-efficacy? | There is a strong emphasis on family and community, including how these systems can support students in avoiding HIV, other STDs and pregnancy through abstinence. The importance of protecting one's family and community is also used as a motive to change individual behavior. |
| 6. Are sexually experienced youth provided with appropriate information, skills, and support to avoid future or continued sexual involvement? | All of the information and skills practice in the curriculum applies to sexually experienced youth as well. Abstinence is presented as something that is always a choice. Youth have an opportunity to examine reasons for sexual involvement and the risks it can pose. The activity in Module 2 on how to express feelings of attraction and affection without having sex can be particularly relevant to youth who wish to return to abstinence. |
| 7. Are previously sexually coerced/abused individuals provided with appropriate information and support to avoid sexual involvement and seek assistance as needed? | The fifth edition of <i>Making a Difference</i> has been reviewed to be more trauma-informed in its approach. An appendix is provided for facilitators with further information about how to support a trauma-informed approach to sexuality education. |
| Target #6: Strengthen personal intention and commitment to avoid sexual involvement | |
| 1. Does the curriculum assist the learner in developing and/or strengthening intentions to wait for sexual involvement? | Activities encourage students to personalize the benefits of abstinence and link it to achievement of their goals and dreams. In particular, Modules 1 and 4 address this area. |
| 2. Does the curriculum provide examples of the benefits of a strong personal commitment to avoid adolescent sex? | Benefits of abstinence are discussed in detail in Module 2 and reinforced throughout the program. |
| 3. Does the curriculum promote and practice skills to act on personal intentions to delay sex? | Students identify strategies for negotiating abstinence and solving problems related to sexual pressures in Module 5. They discuss and practice setting personal limits and how to get out of pressure situations in Module 7. They participate in roleplay practice of refusal and negotiation skills in Module 8. |
| 4. Does the curriculum encourage a private and/or public commitment to avoid sexual involvement? | There is not an activity with this objective. However, as a closing activity, student participate in a Talking Circle to share what they have learned in the program. |
| 5. Does the curriculum help learners identify possible challenges or threats to their intentions and identify personal strategies for resisting those threats? | Obstacles to abstinence and ways to overcome them are discussed in Module 2. Students also learn and practice how to address challenges to personal limits in Module 7, and practice negotiation/refusal skills in Modules 7 and 8. |

| Part II: Curriculum | Making a Difference |
|--|--|
| Target #7: Identify and reduce the opportunities for sexual involvement | |
| 1. Does the curriculum teach the learner to recognize and avoid high-risk situations (such as early and frequent dating, unsupervised parties, coercion, or exploitation by older individuals)? | In Module 7, students analyze situations that involve sexual pressure situations, identify personal limits and then roleplay effective ways to resist partner pressures. |
| 2. Does the curriculum encourage support systems and guidelines (such as family rules, parent involvement, structured activities, volunteer and faith activities, etc.) to minimize opportunities associated with adolescent sexual involvement? | Students discuss the limits their parents/guardians would want them to set around abstinence. Several of the videos show supportive relationships between parents and their teens. An optional activity in the appendix can be included to help students examine the messages they get about sex from family members and others. |
| 3. Does the curriculum identify and reduce the opportunity for sexual involvement by promoting the avoidance of drugs, alcohol, coercive behaviors, and violence? | The theme of being proud and responsible woven throughout the program includes not using drugs and respecting oneself and others. Specific mention of how alcohol and other drug use can affect decision making and be an obstacle to abstinence is included in some discussions. |
| 4. Does the curriculum provide scenarios, examples, or skills to assist learners in recognizing and refusing sexually vulnerable situations? | Peer pressure, problem-solving and roleplay scenarios present situations teens may face around sexual decisions. The curriculum also presents several case studies as a basis for small-group and individual work, as well as advice-seeking “letters” from teens for analysis. |
| Target #8: Strengthen future goals and opportunities | |
| 1. Does the curriculum provide exercises to allow the learner to describe his or her future life? | The two Goals and Dreams activities at the end of Module 1 help students envision how abstinence can support a healthy future. |
| 2. Are there lessons that reinforce the potential for positive future opportunities (such as personal health, career opportunities, supporting friendships, strong family ties, and/or fulfilling marriage, etc.)? | The Goals and Dreams Timeline activity includes these factors. |
| 3. Does the curriculum help learners create connections between sexual risks and future outcomes? | Discussions continue to reference the Module 1 Goals and Dreams activity to help students personalize the consequences and risks of sexual activity. |
| 4. Is the learner encouraged to identify personal attributes they may desire for themselves and/or a future spouse or partner? | This can be included in the Goals and Dreams Timeline activity. |

| Part II: Curriculum | Making a Difference |
|--|--|
| Target #9: Partner with parents | |
| 1. Does the curriculum recognize the role that parents, family, and caregivers play in a student’s attitudes, beliefs and behaviors? | The influence of parents, family and other trusted adults is acknowledged in activities in which students brainstorm motivations for and benefits of abstinence, messages they receive about sex, and attitudes toward abstinence. |
| 2. Does the curriculum provide or identify resources to equip parents to talk with their children about important topics pertinent to relationships, sex, and substance use? | Although students are encouraged to turn to trusted adults for support, there is no specific homework assignment in the curriculum. |
| 3. Does the curriculum provide materials or resources to offer a parent workshop or information session? | The importance of this is discussed in the introduction to the curriculum, however no specific materials are provided. |
| 4. Does the curriculum provide homework assignments that can be completed through collaboration between the parent and child? | Although students are encouraged to turn to trusted adults for support, there is no specific homework assignment in the curriculum. |

| Part III: Quality Improvement | Making a Difference |
|---|--|
| 1. Does the curriculum include valid and reliable pre- and post-testing instruments? | Pre- and post-test used in the original study can be found under the Adaptation Guidelines and Tools tab on the Promoting Health Among Teens–Abstinence Only page |
| 2. Are additional sources of data suggested in order to support program monitoring of important outcomes? | ETR has a long history of conducting rigorous evaluations in the field of sexual and reproductive health. For more information on how ETR can help with evaluation efforts visit our Evaluation Services page. |