

OHIO PREP 2018-2019 Evaluation



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Prepared by:
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Acknowledgments

The Ohio Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP), administered by the Ohio Department of Youth Services (ODYS), is part of a larger national initiative to decrease teen pregnancy rates and the spread of sexually transmitted infections among youth. The Ohio program, an external evaluation conducted by Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs, and hence this report are funded through a federal grant. Evaluation team members from the Voinovich School include Margaret Hutzler, MPA, Natalie Wilson, MPA, and Student Researchers Lilli Sher, Hannah Graber, and Chris Spartano.

Most importantly, we offer our sincerest appreciation to the leadership team at ODYS, which includes Tecca Thompson and Kevin Shepard, and to the dedicated Regional Coordinators, Master Trainers, and the Facilitators who plan and implement PREP with youth.

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Executive Summary

To reduce Ohio's teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection (STI) rates among youth residing in foster care and the juvenile justice systems, the Ohio Department of Youth Services (ODYS) administers the federally funded Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP). Staff in a variety of agencies throughout the state are trained in evidence-based pregnancy prevention programming and sexual health education. With the goal of providing health education and healthy lifestyle choices to youth and young adults who are at high risk for early pregnancy and high rates of STIs, Ohio PREP includes pregnancy prevention, contraception, and STI and HIV prevention, as well as selected adulthood topics including healthy relationships, career and education planning, and financial literacy. The selected curriculum for the last several years is Reducing the Risk (RTR), an evidence-based comprehensive abstinence and contraceptive education program for at-risk youth.¹ Ohio PREP is in the process of preparing to

implement another curriculum, Making Proud Choices.

Ohio PREP has also developed working teams of Regional Coordinators to revise the adulthood topics.

Lastly, in the fall of 2019, Ohio PREP went about restructuring from nine regional sub-awardees to five district sub-awardees. ODYS contracts with Ohio

University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs to be the external evaluator. Ohio PREP and Voinovich School evaluators collected a variety of data to inform this evaluation. These data include youth entry and exit survey responses, youth attendance records, visits to four of Ohio's nine regional coordinating sites and two focus groups with Facilitators, as well as youth and agency staff opinions collected on surveys. This report addresses the past program year, which was October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2019. The youth data reflects cohorts that were completed during the same time period but may have started in the prior year. During the reporting period, evaluators conducted four site visits, administered a PREP staff online survey, and analyzed youth and facilitator trainee pre and post data. Evaluators also attended two statewide meetings and a Making Proud Choices training as well as frequently participated in statewide calls with sub-awardees to stay apprised of program activities.

“Condoms are the safest way to have sex.”

Primary Evaluation Findings

- 📌 Over the past program year, **736** Ohio youth attended at least one PREP session, and the majority (73%) entered the program through the juvenile justice system.

¹ U. S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Adolescent Health. (2015, December 11). *Reducing the risk*. Retrieved from <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/grant-programs/teen-pregnancy-prevention-program-tpp/evidence-based-programs/reducing-the-risk/index.html>

- ✔ **508** youth (69%) completed 75 percent of the 15- to 16-hour PREP programming.
- ✔ Overall, Ohio youth engaged in PREP not only show increased knowledge of sexual health and prevention of pregnancy and STIs, but they also show improved intentions to use condoms and hormone-based birth control.
- ✔ Participating youth continue to have positive perceptions of PREP.
- ✔ Among the Facilitators trained to provide the intervention, Ohio PREP is increasing confidence for implementing the program.
- ✔ Ohio PREP has improved the average youth cohort length. The average length prior to 2017/2018 was 49 days,² followed by a 2017/2018 average cohort length of 39 days, to 38 days most recently. The ideal length is between 2 and 30 days. (Note: Eliminating seven cohorts with over 100 days between start and end, the average becomes 31.)

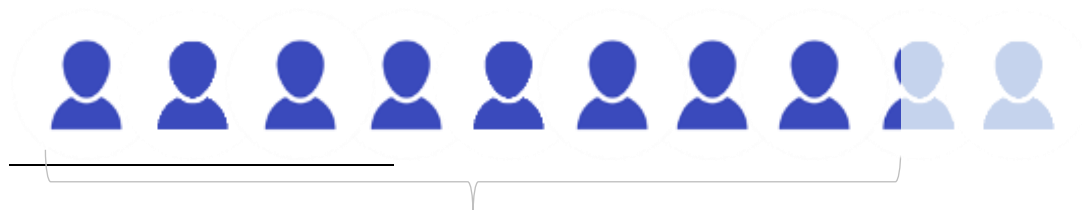
The Population Served

The majority (73%) of Ohio PREP youth participants enter the program via the juvenile justice system; they are in juvenile detention centers or court-ordered treatment centers. Some are on probation or in diversion programs that are also court ordered. Youth report their gender and age upon program entry. If no data is available, gender and/or age recorded by instructors is used.

- 72 percent of youth served are male (492) and 28 percent are female (191).
- Most youth are white (53.8%) or black (45.6%). Just over 8 percent are Hispanic.
- Youth range in age from 13 to 20. Average age is 16.
- 86.1 percent of youth self-identify as straight, 1.3 percent are gay or lesbian, 10.2 percent are bisexual, and 0.6 percent are transgender.

A very high percentage of Ohio PREP youth participants report they have had sexual intercourse (Figure 1). Of all youth participants answering the question (560), 81.5 percent report having had sexual intercourse, described as “the act that makes babies.”

Figure 1 Just over 81% of youth entering the PREP program have had sex.



² Hutzel, M., Wilson, N., & Schoen, K. (2018) *Ohio PREP evaluation*. Athens, OH: Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs.

Evaluation Results

This section provides additional detail on Ohio PREP evaluation results, including a discussion of PREP implementation and restructuring in Ohio. This section also addresses detailed results from PREP entry and exit surveys.

Implementation

New Curriculum

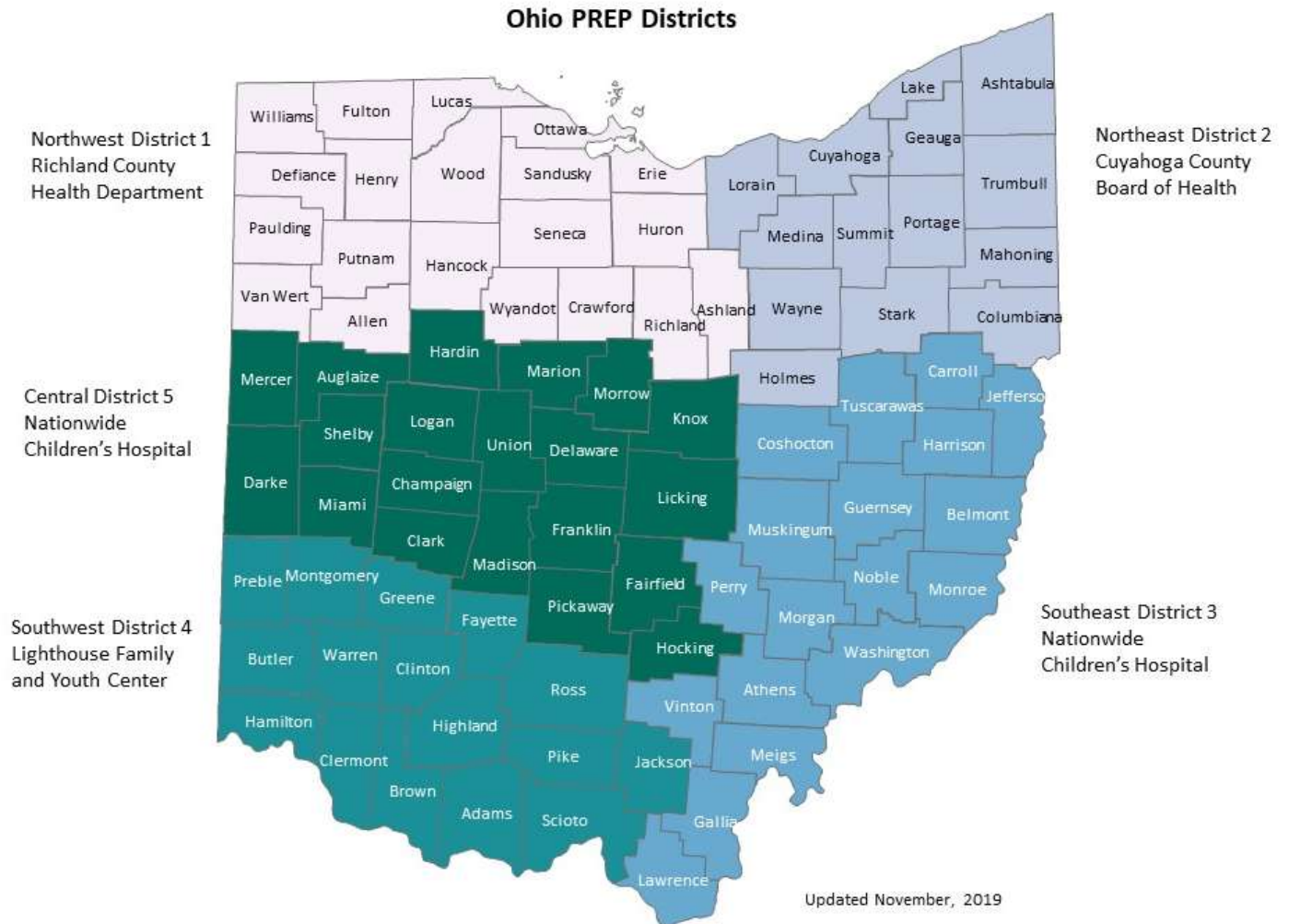
Over the past program year, ODYS selected and made training available on a newly developed curriculum, Making Proud Choices. When queried about implementing the Making Proud Choices curriculum, the majority of respondents who planned to implement it (PREP facilitators and other regional staff) agreed they felt positively about it. Given that the curriculum is shorter (13 sessions) it is hoped that additional youth can be served via Ohio PREP.

Restructuring

As previously noted, Ohio has implemented PREP with nine regional sub-awardees. In late summer 2019, these sub-awardees were asked to cease programming and had the option to reapply for funding. The decision was made to select organizations to represent five Ohio districts instead of nine regions. The restructuring is significant in a number of ways, including not only the lack of programming over a four-month period but also in regard to future implementation, which is dependent upon local level relationships between youth-serving organizations and PREP regional, now district, staff. Contact lists and lists of organizations interested in implementing the programming are invaluable for the transition to new PREP district leaders.

Ohio PREP has focused on serving youth in foster care and the juvenile justice systems. With federal approval acquired, the program is now able to serve youth in alternative schools. This may lead to increased numbers of youth served.

Ohio PREP Districts Map



Staff Survey Highlights

Thirty-eight PREP staff, mostly facilitators who work directly with youth, responded to an anonymous, online survey in May 2019. Detailed results were reported by evaluators in June 2019, and therefore, only highlights of findings are addressed here.

- Just over half of facilitators participated in a facilitator training in the past year, and nearly all staff respondents participated in a training within the past six months.
- Nearly 80 percent of facilitators agree they feel prepared to implement the curriculum once they are trained.
- There is a need for updated and improved facilitator materials.
- Facilitators report PREP works well when students can be engaged through participatory activities.

Site Visit Highlights

Results of the site visits conducted in the past year were included in the June 2019 report; highlights are shared again below. Across the four Ohio PREP Regions visited, the staff of the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) shared their basic roles related to implementing PREP. It is clear that they have many tasks in order to implement the curriculum with partner agencies at the local level. Some examples follow:

- Observe and sometimes fill in for facilitators
- Organize coalition meetings
- Work with multiple grants
- Offer provider and facilitator trainings

The PREP regional staff share some similar positive experiences as well as some challenges administering the program. In terms of the similar positive elements to the program, the facilitators praised the work put in by the State Administrator, Tecca Thompson, their liaison from the ODYS. They note that she checks in frequently, offers support, and listens to their feedback about the program. One way in which they discuss feedback is through their coalition meetings. These are useful not only to give updates to their region about PREP, but also to bring in speakers and facilitate discussions about relevant topics that could aid PREP facilitators in the future. The majority of the staff in all four regions are also excited about the changes that will take place with the new Making Proud Choices curriculum, especially the shorter length and the changes to the financial literacy component of the program. According to one site visit interviewee, Making Proud Choices is “much more culturally relevant to our population, it is a true evidence-based curriculum. . . . It’s more interactive with the youth, with the videos and activities. It’s not so role play heavy.”

To summarize, some similar positive elements noted during site visits include:

- Frequent check-ins and support from the State Administrator
- Excitement about many aspects of the Making Proud Choices curriculum, such as the changed financial literacy component and the fixed timing
- Passionate staff

- Coalition meetings and provider trainings

The interviewees noted several difficulties in implementing the program. They found it difficult to consistently implement PREP at certain facilities due to the high turnover rate of staff and general staffing issues. It was also due to the difficulties communicating with senior staff at facilities and partnership agencies.

Similar challenges noted during site visits include:

- Difficulties communicating with potential partner organization supervisors and partner agencies generally
- High facilitator and staff turnover rate, staffing issues
- Need for updated and trauma-sensitive curriculum
- Room to improve facilitator trainings
- Need for consistency in implementing the program across sites
- Availability of program for people who do not meet PREP qualifications (age range, past offenses, etc.)
- Lack of consistency filling out fidelity sheets

Facilitator/Trainee Pre-Post

The PREP facilitator training includes a pre and posttest that assesses knowledge gains, confidence regarding implementation, and opinions regarding the training. Regarding knowledge gains, results this year were less positive than in the past and show no improvement. It could be that the material is so familiar to the current cadre of trainees that it is hard to show improvements. That said, there was improvement regarding confidence to implement. This section of the pre-post includes 16 items that ask trainees about their confidence level in teaching youth the various program components. For example, one item measures confidence to teach youth how to create a budget. The responses range from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Applying points of one through five with strongly disagree being one and strongly agree being five and with 16 questions, the total points possible is 80. Our analysis shows an average score of 65 on the pretest and an average score of 73 on the posttest. Participant gains of total scores range from 32 at the high end, to -12 at the low end. The average gain was 7.15, and the median gain was 6.0. Therefore, the trainees overall have increased confidence to implement the program after the training.

PREP Facilitator Trainees also respond to open response questions about the training. Following is a summary of themes from those written responses. Overall, PREP Facilitator Trainees reported appreciating the informative, relevant, and hands-on nature of the training. Though some wished for *more* hands-on activities, the activities they learned will keep the youth they serve “interested and involved” with the material. Many trainers, however, found the training “helpful in teaching how to facilitate sessions effectively” for the trainer in addition to being “relevant to the youth [they] work with.”

Curriculum

Specifically, the material covered topics that “youth might not get from parents.” The curriculum topics that participants reported enjoying included lessons in career planning, financial literacy, healthy relationships, and sexual health. Participants appreciated the presentation of statistics and facts and targeted ways to engage youth in learning curriculum topics.

Critiques of the curriculum included feelings of confusion with the mass of information and papers, not being relevant to the area they wanted (criminal behavior), and some activities (role play) being “simple” and “sometimes silly.”

Materials

Twenty-two participants said they appreciated the Prezi visual presentation of the material. They also reported liking the paper handouts, role plays, workbook, “the box,” and videos.

While the handouts and workbook were helpful at times, three participants reported wanting fewer physical materials. Additionally, eight trainers said that the orange workbook’s page numbers and organization/layout were confusing. Many trainers asked that the videos and curriculum be updated to include lessons on electronic use and social media.

Training Structure

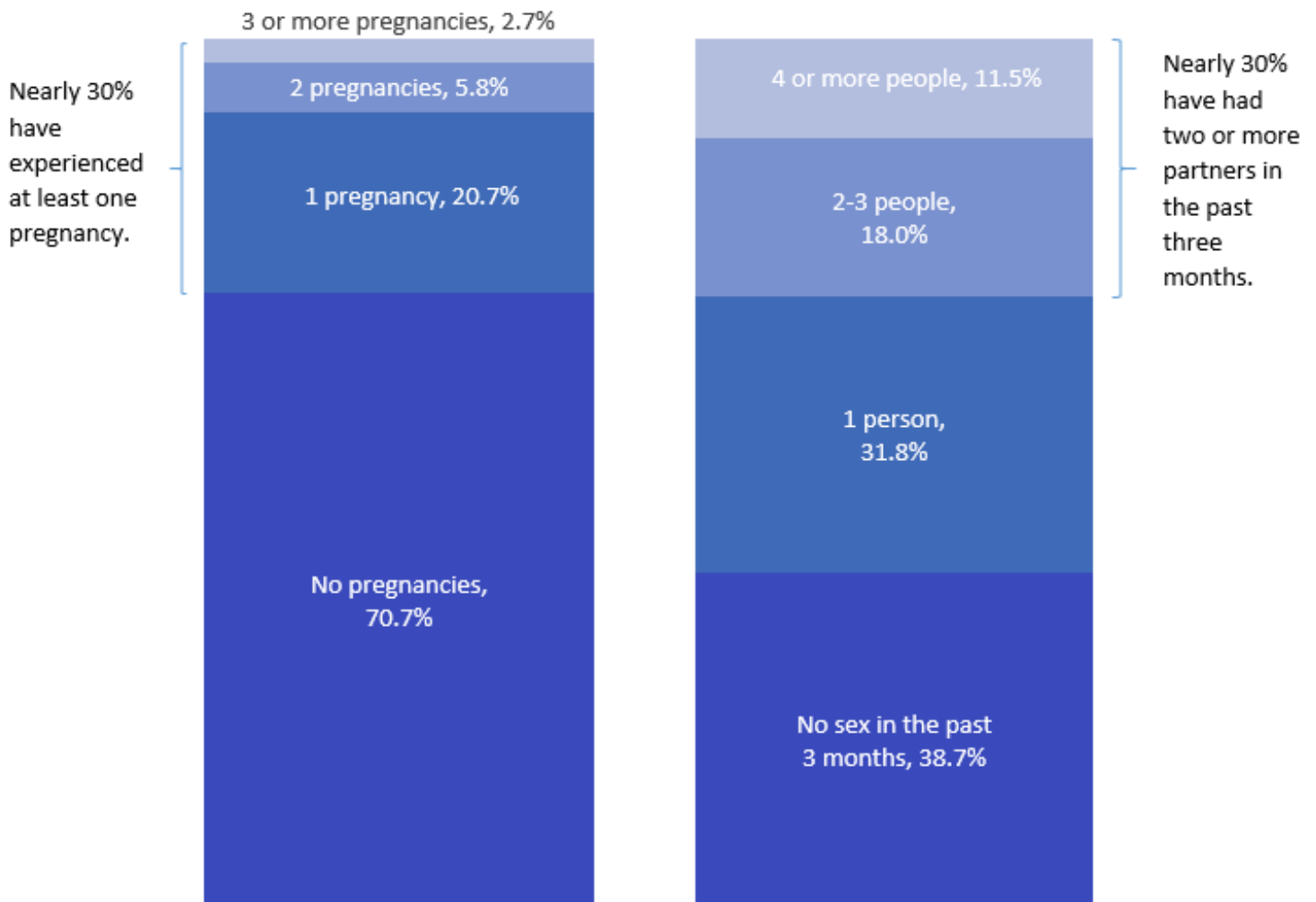
Generally, critiques on the structure of the training were logistical. Participants reported wanting more time to work on activities and prepare, “modeling the curriculum” before breaking into group, more interactive, shorter training sessions, a colder room, and more trainees. One trainer reported that the training was “not very fluid.”

In terms of positive thoughts on the training structure, it was easy to follow and engaging. The consensus among participants was that the trainers were engaging, knowledgeable, thorough and effective in their teaching methods. There were no negative comments about the trainers in the data. The participants liked their use of storytelling to demonstrate concepts, “energetic and enthusiastic presentation,” preparation and knowledge base in the curriculum, and “clear and efficient” explanations.

Youth Entry-Exit Data

The results on this page represent the 560 youth with an entry survey who report they have had sex, 81.5 percent of those responding. Sexual intercourse is defined as “the act that makes babies.” The respondents are asked, to the best of their knowledge, how many times they have been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant, to which 536 responded. Nearly 30 percent of respondents have experienced at least one pregnancy (Figure 2). Youth are also asked how many partners they have had, to which 532 responded. Nearly 39 percent have not had sex in the past three months (Figure 2).

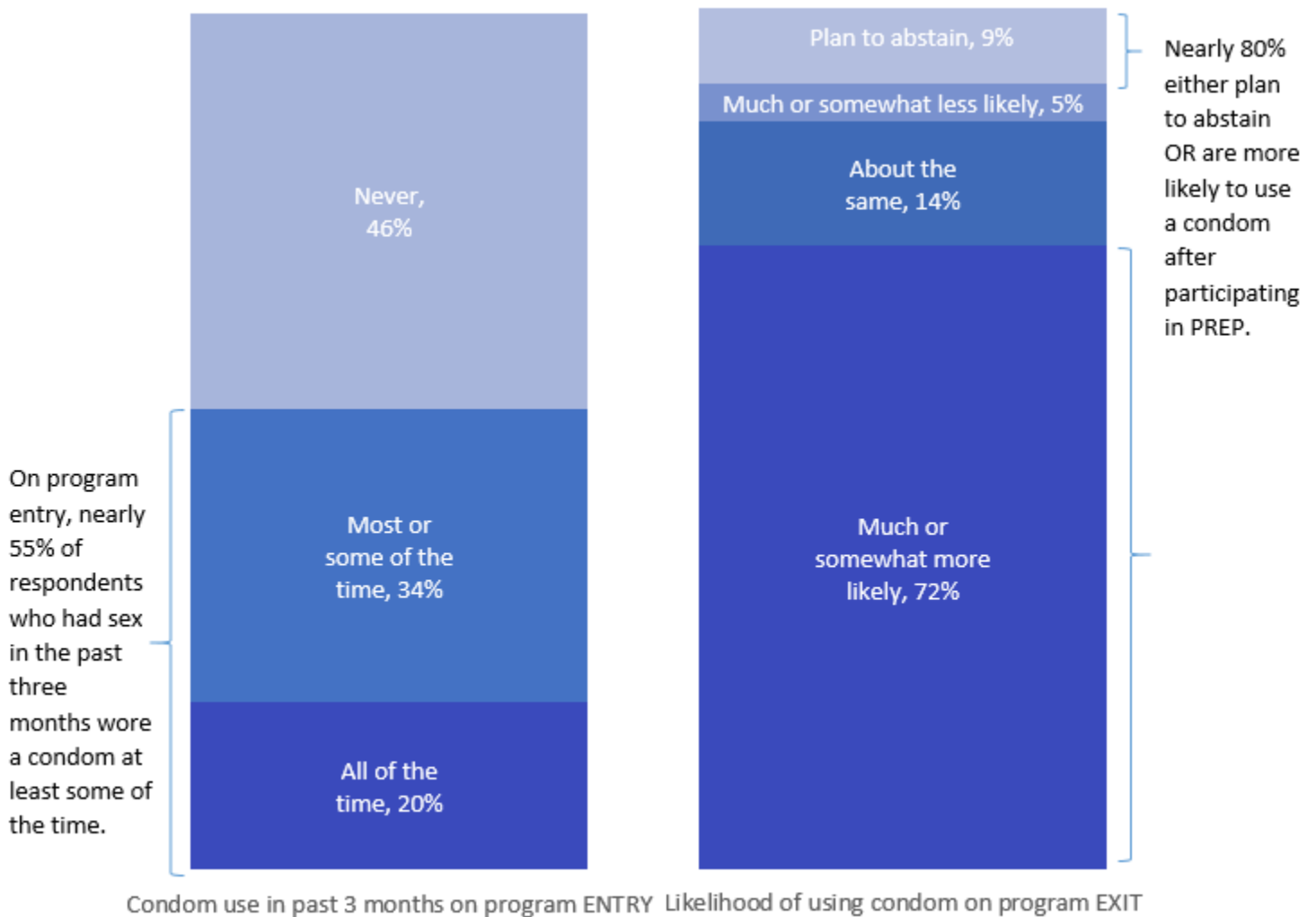
Figure 2. Number of pregnancies and partners among PREP youth who have had sex upon entering the program.



Condom Use among Youth

A key component of the Reducing the Risk curriculum is teaching youth how to protect themselves and their partner from pregnancy or STI transmission. Figure 3 represents youth with matched entry and exit surveys who completed 75 percent of the program and reported having sex in the last three months (219 responding at entry and 306 responding at exit).

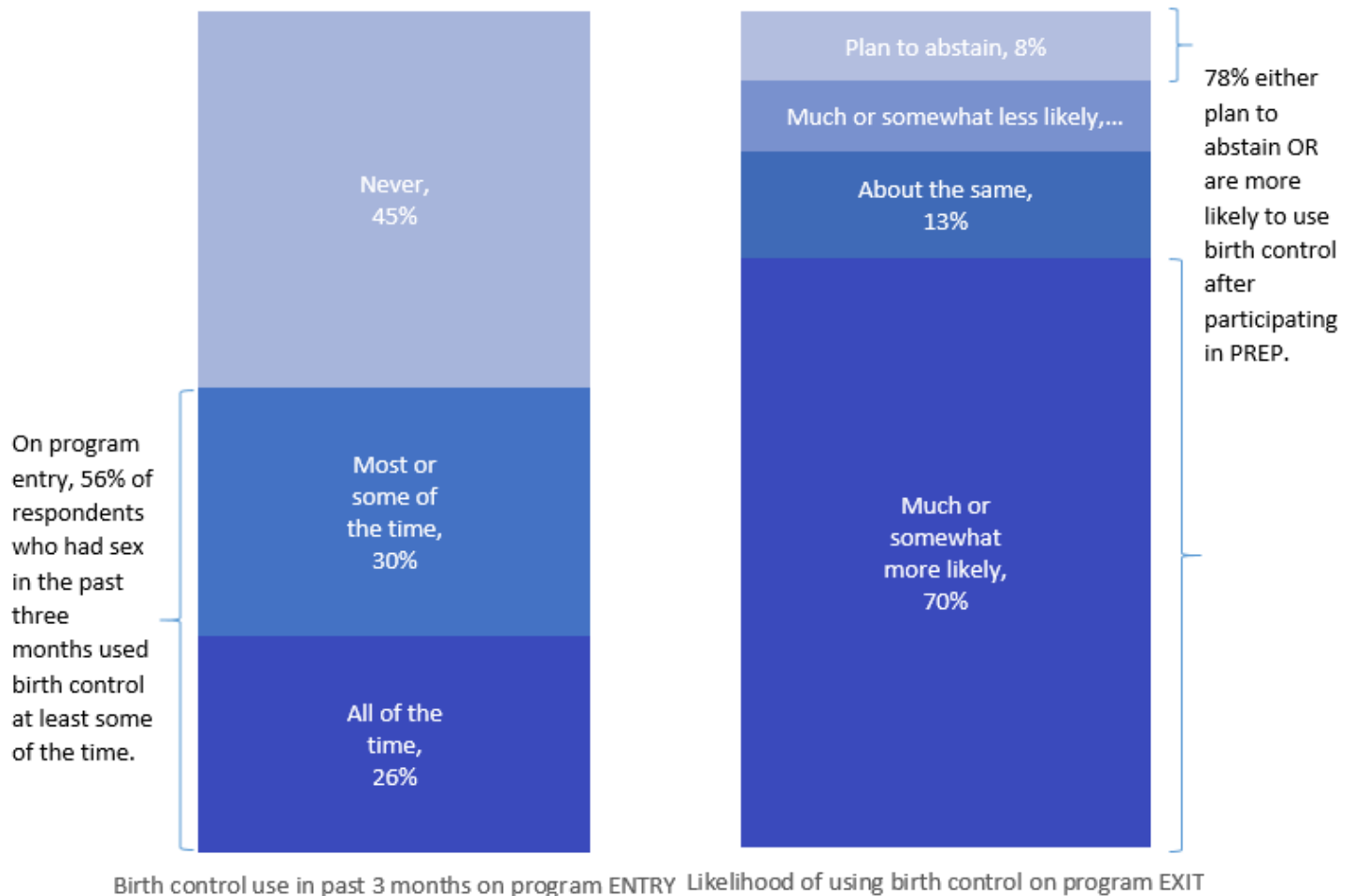
Figure 3. Condom use among PREP youth who have had sex in the past three months before and after the program.



Birth Control Use among Youth

Figure 4 represents youth with matched entry and exit surveys who completed 75 percent of the program and reported having sex in the last three months (219 responding at entry and 307 at exit). Similar to condom use, just over half of youth used birth control at least some of the time before the program. Birth control is defined as pills, condoms, the shot, the patch, the ring, IUD, or an implant. After PREP, 70 percent of youth are somewhat or much more likely to use birth control, and 8 percent will abstain.

Figure 4. Birth control use among PREP youth who have had sex in the past three months before and after the program.



Youth Intentions and Perceptions

Youth are asked how sure they are that they could engage in six safe sexual behaviors. The four-point scale is as follows: *I'm sure I could NOT*, *I probably could not*, *I probably could*, or *I'm sure I could*. Figure 5 represents *I probably could* and *I'm sure I could*. Over 90 percent of youth could buy a condom at both entry and exit. The most improvement is seen in the percentage of youth who could keep from having sex if neither partner had any form of birth control.

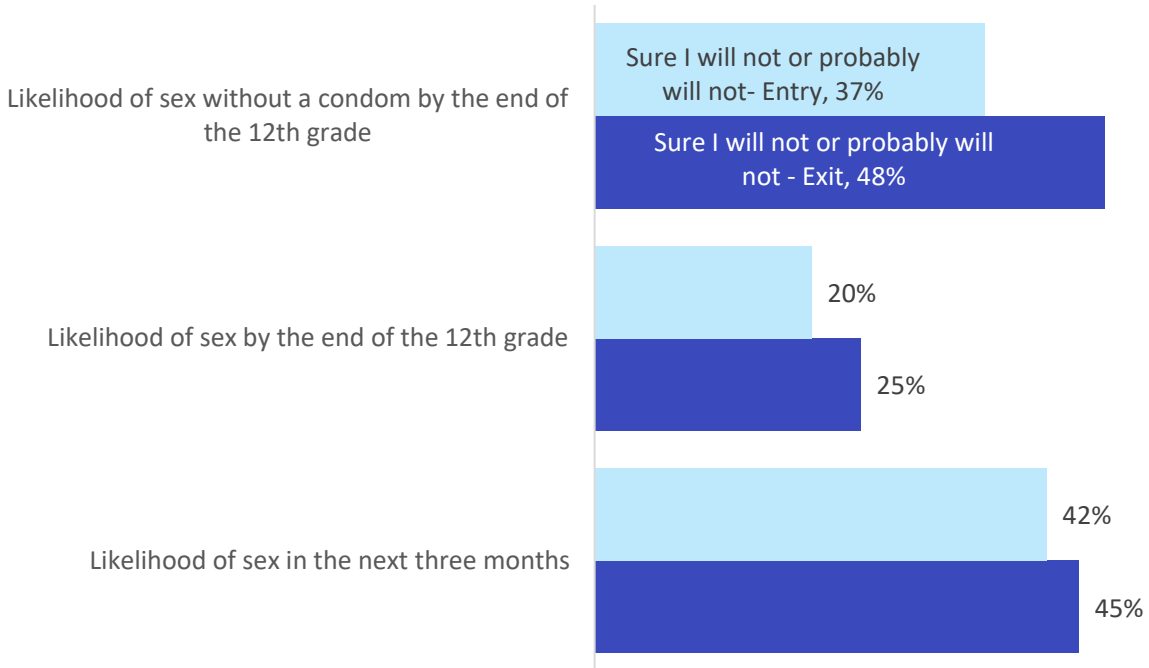
Figure 5. Intentions to engage in safe sexual behavior **before PREP** and **after PREP**.



“It teaches not only safe sex but budgeting and other things I would need to know for the future.”

Youth are asked how likely they are to engage in sexual activity before and after PREP. Little change is seen in the likelihood they will have sex by the end of the 12th grade or in the next three months (Figure 6). The percentage of youth reporting they will not or probably not engage in sex without condoms by the end of the 12th grade improved 11 percentage points from entry to exit.

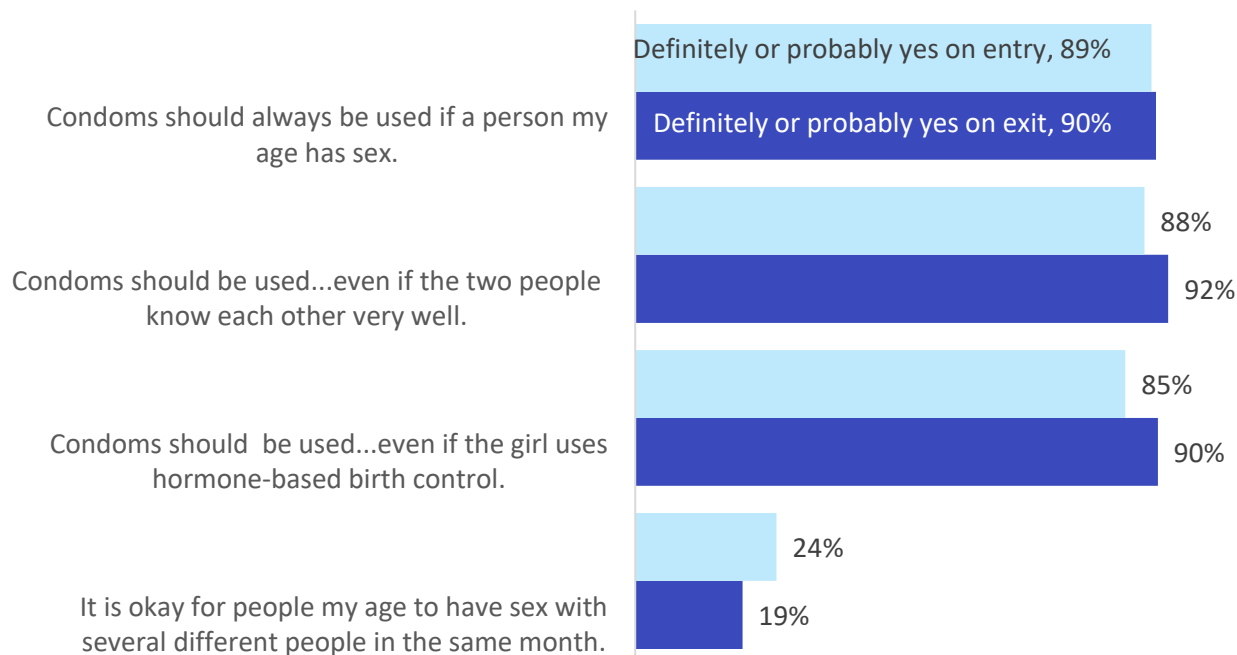
Figure 6. From **Entry** to **Exit**, youth reporting they will not have sex without a condom by the end of 12th grade improved 11 percentage points.



“I liked how the program helped me learn how to stay abstinent.”

Youth are asked their opinions on sex and condom use before and after PREP. Unlike changes in intention to use condoms, there is very little change in beliefs about condoms, although the slight movements are in a healthy direction (Figure 7). Also, slightly fewer youth believe it is okay for people their age to have sex with several people in the same month after PREP.

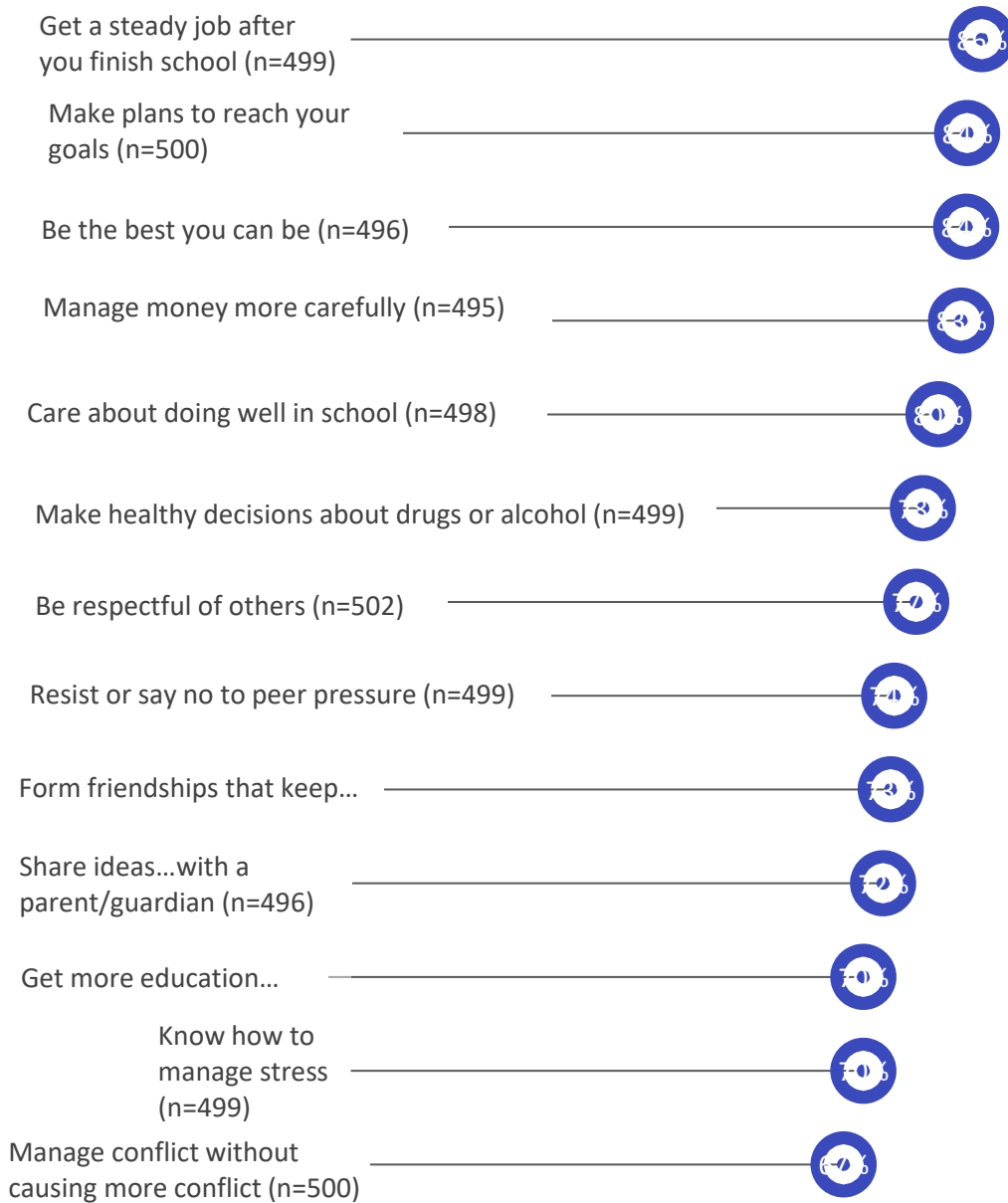
Figure 7. Little change in youth beliefs on sex and condom use is seen after PREP.



“Delay tactics and effective refusal tactics.”

Youth are asked if being in the program has made them more likely, about the same, or less likely to make a range of healthy decisions, even if the program didn't cover a particular topic. All youth who answered the question on the exit survey are included. Responses of “much more likely” and “somewhat more likely” are represented below (Figure 8). Nearly 70 percent of students are more likely to engage in each of the 13 actions or behaviors.

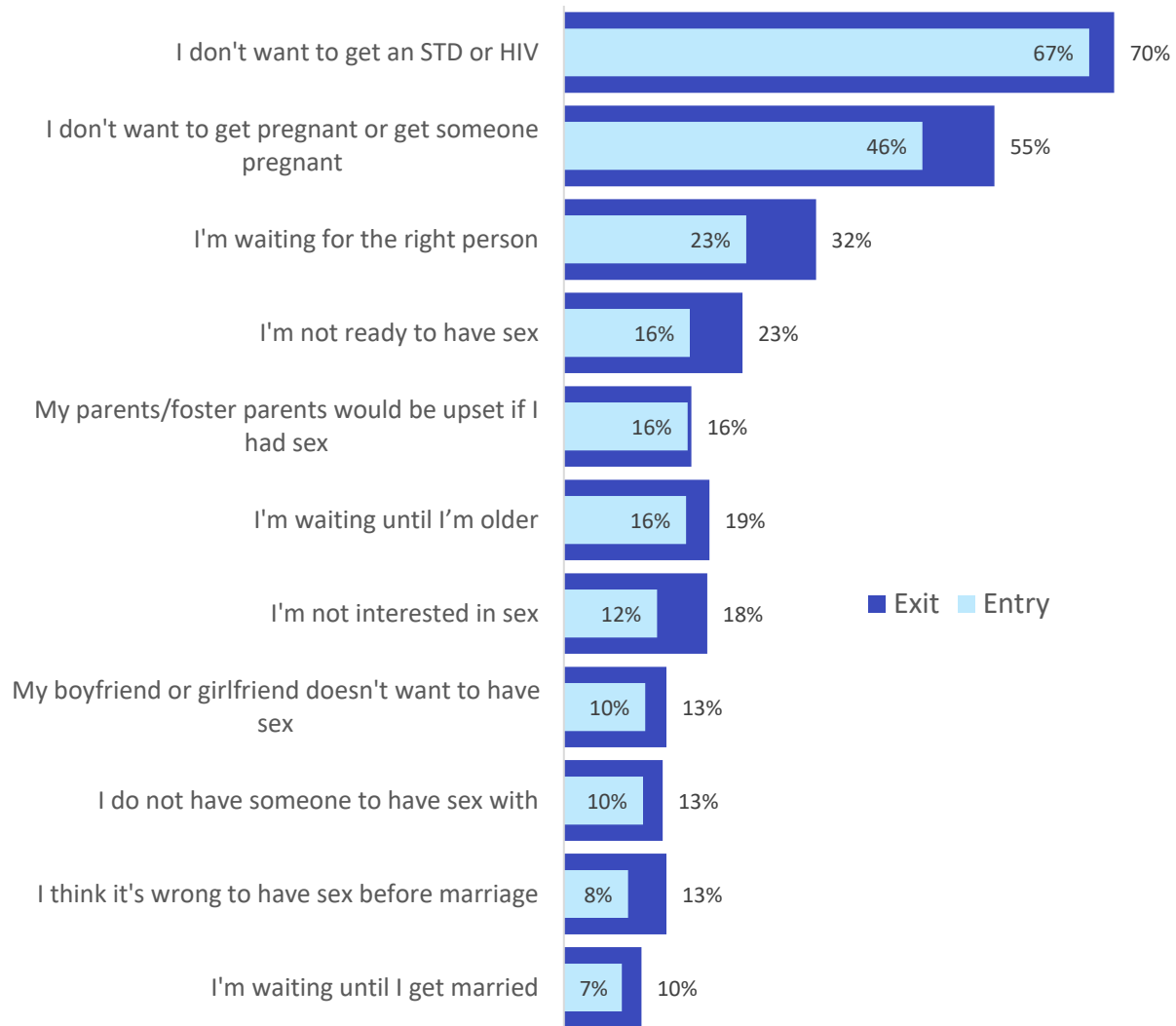
Figure 8. Youth are much more likely or somewhat more likely to engage in these positive behaviors after PREP.



Reasons for Not Having Sex

Youth are asked to indicate reasons for not having sex on both the entry and exit surveys. Not wanting to “get an STD or HIV” is indicated by close to 70 percent of the youth on both the entry and exit form (Figure 9). The statements with the most change are, “not wanting to get pregnant or get someone pregnant” and “I’m waiting for the right person.”

Figure 9. When asked to select reasons they would not have sex, more participants chose each of the following reasons after the program than before.

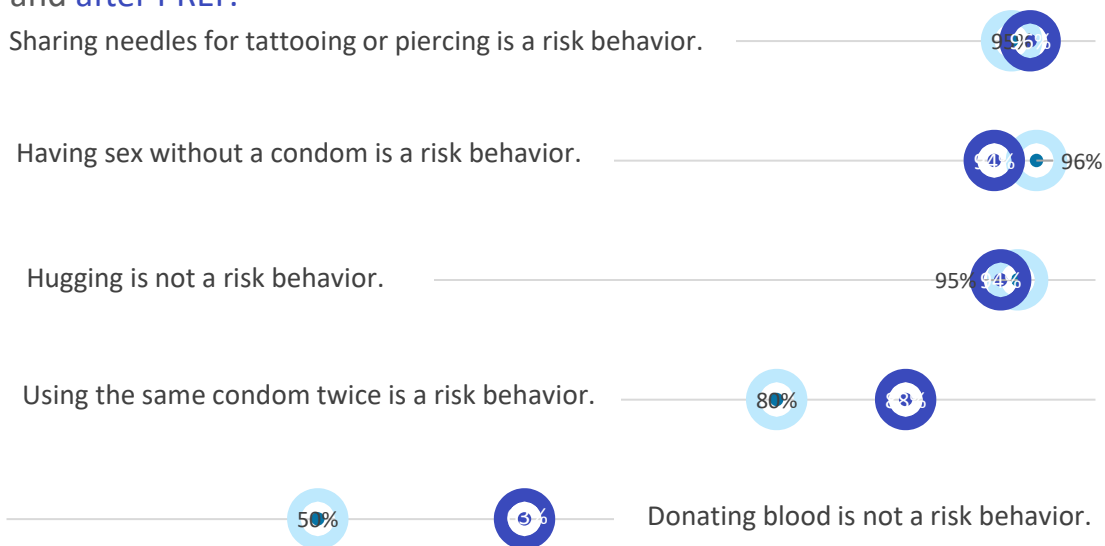


Knowledge Gains after PREP

The following section represents youth who completed 75 percent of the curriculum and have a matching entry and exit survey (range of 255 to 395 answering the questions). Youth could choose “not sure” for some questions. Those responses are counted as missing data, so only youth choosing to answer the question are counted.

The first set of questions focuses on knowledge of HIV risk behaviors. Knowledge that donating blood is not a risk behavior shows the most improved correct responses from before to after PREP (Figure 10). Knowledge that sex without a condom is a risk behavior and that hugging is not went down from before to after PREP, but the percentage of correct responses at both response times is so high that improvement would be difficult to achieve.

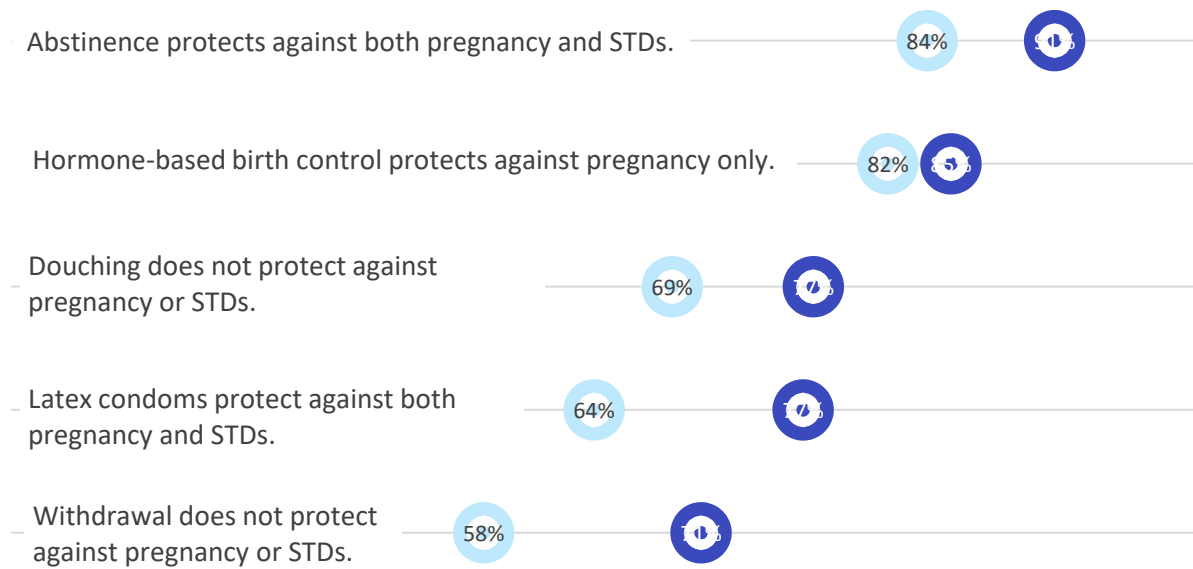
Figure 10. Knowledge of HIV risk behaviors before PREP and after PREP.



“That I learned so many things I didn’t learn in the past.”

Youth are asked whether five sexual behaviors protect against pregnancy and STD/HIV, pregnancy only, or neither. Figure 11 shows the percentage answering correctly (among the three response options) before and after PREP. The percentage of correct responses to all behaviors improves after PREP, but knowledge that withdrawal does not protect against pregnancy or STDs shows the most improvement, followed closely that latex condoms protect against both pregnancy and STDs.

Figure 11. Knowledge of pregnancy and STD risk behaviors before PREP and after PREP.

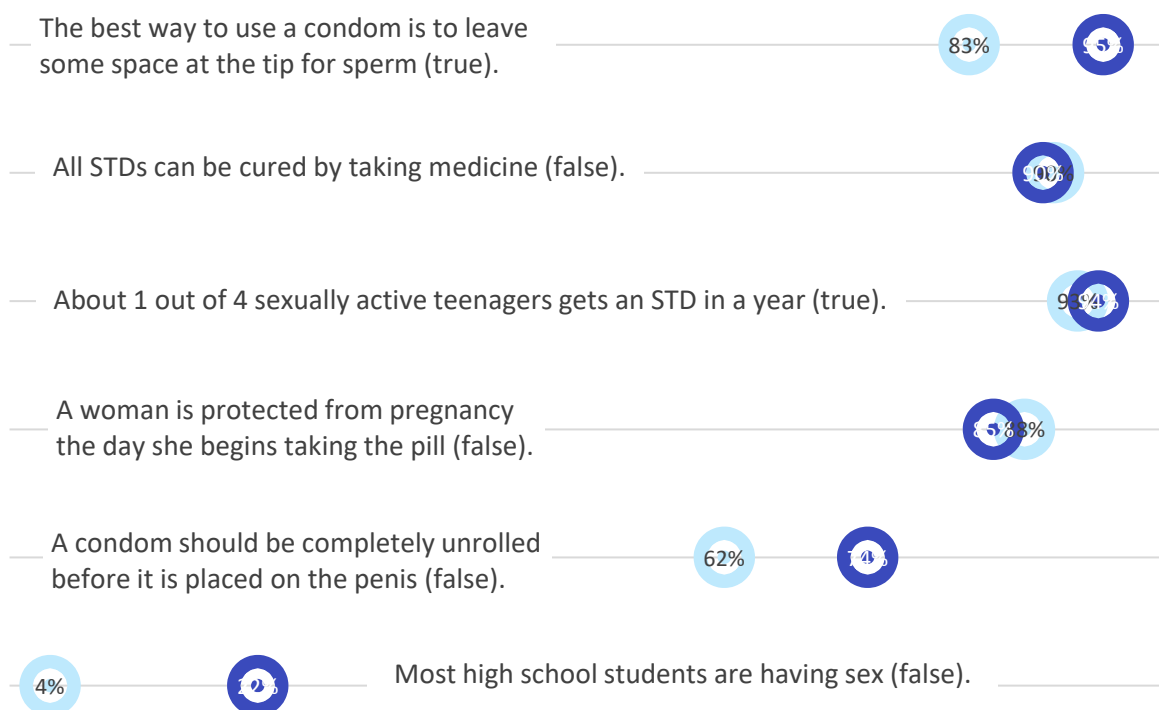


“How important it is that I don’t get pregnant at my age.”

“How to prevent getting STDs.”

Six true or false questions focus on knowledge of sexual health. The percentage of youth answering correctly improved for four questions, and correct answers for the remaining two questions accounted for 90 percent of responses or more at each point. The highest improvement is knowledge that most high school students are not having sex (Figure 12). Even considering the improvement, this question shows the fewest youth answering correctly. At exit, the highest percentage of youth answered correctly about the best way to use a condom.

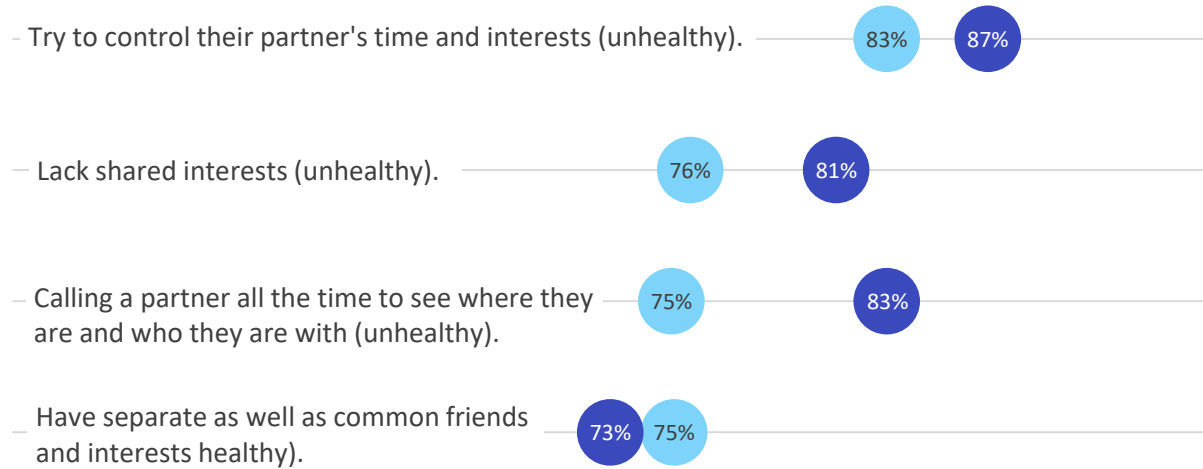
Figure 12. Knowledge gain on condom use and STDs **before PREP** and **after PREP**.



“You could get a girl pregnant if you don’t use a condom.”

Four questions focus on unhealthy and healthy relationships. Very high percentages of youth correctly indicate whether the behaviors are healthy or unhealthy at both entry and exit and the greatest improvement is seen in the question on calling a partner “all the time to see where they are and who they are with” (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Knowledge of healthy relationship behaviors **before PREP** and **after PREP**.



“I learned a whole lot more about girls’ bodies and birth control.”

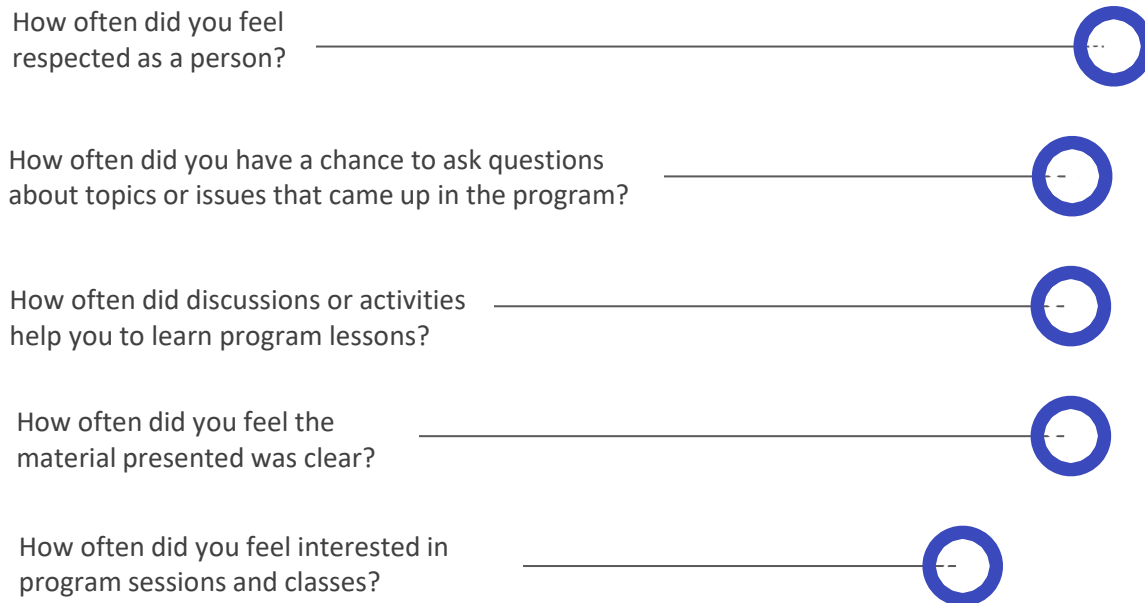
“I liked that I learned about a lot of stuff I did not know. It got me prepared.”

Youth Program Perceptions

Youth participants generally have positive perceptions of the PREP sessions and climate, and they are comfortable engaging in the program. Not only do they indicate this in response to specific questions (Figures 14 and 15), as discussed on the subsequent pages, they also predominantly write “no” or “nothing” when specifically asked for suggestions to improve the program, and some go as far as writing “no, it’s good as it is.”

All youth with an exit survey responding “all of the time” or “most of the time” to the positive statements about PREP are shown below. This is a range of 491 to 499 responding youth.

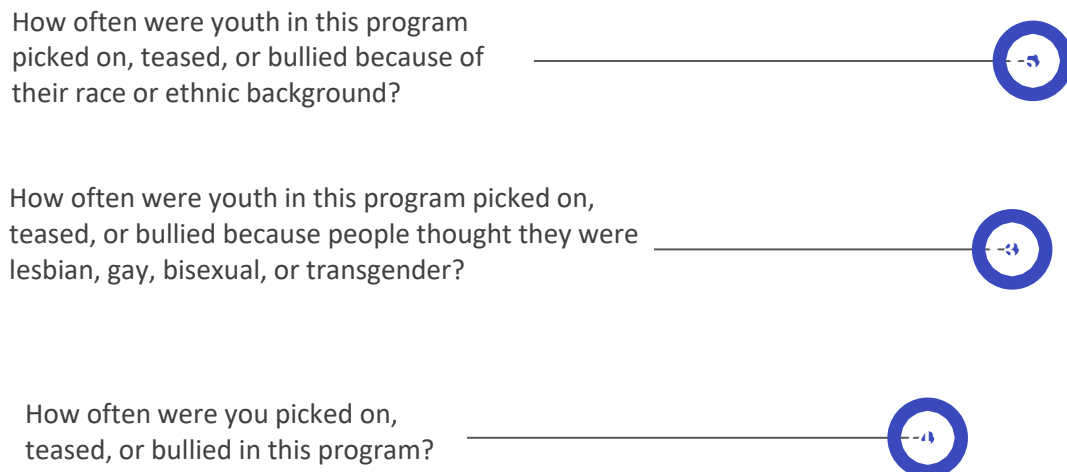
Figure 14. Most PREP youth respond "most of the time" or "all of the time" to positive statements about their experience.



“Everyone being so open; everyone’s nice and we got food.”

Among the same group of youth as above, nearly three quarters report that they were never bullied during the program.

Figure 15. The majority of youth selected "never" to three questions on bullying.



Youth Open Response Statements

The Ohio Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) seeks to reduce teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection (STI) rates for at-risk teens in the foster care and juvenile justice systems. Through education, PREP aims to promote safe sex practices by providing information **about contraception and the dangers associated with STI's**. In addition to sexual health, PREP covers topics such as basic financial literacy and healthy relationships. The following summaries come from open response data collected by participants following completion of PREP.

On the exit form, students were asked to record three things that they learned, what they liked best, what they liked least, what they wanted to learn, and any suggestions that they had for the PREP program. Evaluators analyzed a sample of 300 youth responses to the questions.

Things Learned

The strongest theme seen in the responses is an emphasis on safe sex practices. This includes topics such as pregnancy prevention, STD/STI prevention, sexual health, and abstinence. The most common answer to the most important points outlined in the exit survey was the importance of using a condom or some other form of protection to prevent pregnancy and STD/STI's. Using

protection (especially condoms) to prevent STD's and STI's was the most common response under the safe sex node, signaling that PREP was useful in conveying safe sex practices to an audience that may not have known to do so otherwise. Overall, responses that focus on preventing pregnancy and STD/STI's by either using some form of protection or staying abstinent were the biggest themes from the safe sex node. Other common aspects noted for "things learned" were financial and career development and healthy relationships.

Liked Best

Overall, the "Liked Best" portion of the survey represents a wide variety of responses that highlight different aspects of the program. Learning about sex education and sexual health are common answers, as learning about different forms of protection to guard against pregnancy and STI's coincides neatly with the goals of PREP itself. There is an appreciation in the responses that sex and sex education was talked about openly. Additionally, a notable number of responses were centered around the financial literacy aspect of PREP, stating that check writing, budgeting, and banking information were all useful. Lastly, some respondents reported they like the staff the best and enjoyed the people who were going through the program with them.

Liked Least

Out of the 300 responses analyzed, 70 students responded "nothing" to what they liked least about PREP. Other common responses were the time or length of the program, saying it was too long or too early, the financial education section, or sexual education. Twelve respondents said they did not like learning about condoms nor about STIs – as one respondent said, "[i]t's uncomfortable, but it was necessary."

Wanted to Learn

One hundred and three respondents said there was nothing else they wanted to learn from the PREP program, and an additional 45 students said they learned everything or learned a lot. Some students expressed that they would have liked to learn more about STIs, financial education, and life skills from the PREP curriculum. Some students said they would have liked to learn more about self-care, such as "[h]ow to manage time and treat myself better" as well as about the housing market.

Suggestions

While 180 students said the program was good as is or that they otherwise did not have suggestions, some students suggested that there should be more breaks during the sessions, or that the program should be shorter or start later. One student suggested to "[n]ot make it an all day thing. Maybe a couple hours and more important things to learn about rather than things we already learned in school or life." Another student wrote "I don't like that the same things were repeated in multiple sessions."

Conclusion and Recommendations

Ohio PREP continues to successfully provide much-needed sex education to at-risk youth, many of whom have had sex. In the past year, over 700 youth received the programming. The youth show increased knowledge and improved intentions regarding safe sex practices. They also report very positively about their experiences in Ohio PREP, not only to the closed response questions such as “did you feel respected?”, but they also report positively to the open response questions, such as, “what did you like most?”.

Ohio PREP has restructured from regions to large districts and is poised to train new staff and potentially serve more youth in the current target populations of youth in foster care and the juvenile justice systems as well as the newly added, target population of youth in alternative schools.

Recommendations:

Continue to support outreach to organizations within each district to identify and partner with more youth-serving organizations.

Encourage implementation of the Making Proud Choices curriculum in order to elicit more responses from potential providers.

Encourage the large multi-county districts to monitor implementation and potentially subcontract with other providers.

“Learn how to save and use the stock market.”

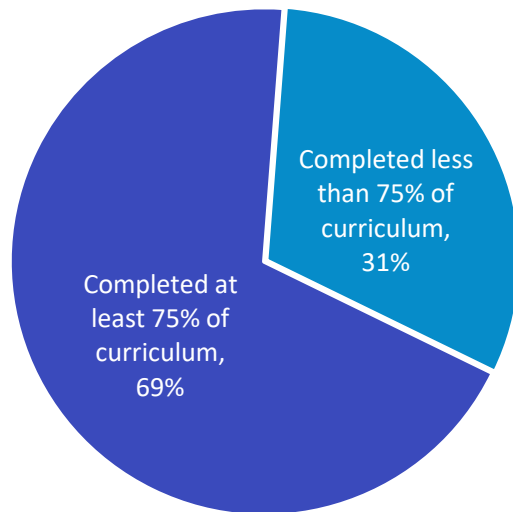
“How to present myself in an interview.”

Appendix

Demographics

Instructors tracked attendance for 736 youth in 98 sessions. All youth attended at least one session, and 69 percent completed three quarters of the curriculum.

Of 736 youth tracked by instructors, 69% completed 75% of the PREP curriculum.



On the entry and exit surveys, instructors record the setting of the sessions. Numbers from the entry surveys are shown below.

Setting	#	%
Juvenile Justice	307	42.8%
Residential Facility	91	12.7%
Foster	79	11.0%
Other	73	10.2%
Group Home	33	4.6%
Unknown	134	18.7%
Total	717	100.0%

Most youth report black or white race and straight orientation on the entry survey.

Race	#	%
White	386	53.8%
Black	327	45.6%
American Indian/Alaska Native	55	7.7%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	7	1.0%
Asian	7	1.0%
Sexual Orientation	#	%
Straight	617	86.1%
Bisexual	73	10.2%
Gay or Lesbian	9	1.3%
Transgender	4	0.6%
Undecided	10	1.4%



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