



Prevent Child Abuse Vermont's Sexual Abuse Free Environments for Teens™ (SAFE-T) Program Evaluation

Third Party Evaluations

A scientific study conducted by the University of New Hampshire's Family Research Lab concerning SAFE-T's effectiveness. The study was conducted over a six year time span and with a total population of approximately 400 youth. Results indicated that students participating in the SAFE-T program evidenced statistically significant differences in the following outcomes,

- Greater gains in knowledge associated with concepts addressed in the program
- Increase in knowledge on sexual risk behaviors which was also retained long-term
- Knowledge of areas related to sexual myths and sexual harassment at follow-up
- Lower rates of observing and perpetrating harassment

(Kaufman Kantor, 2007)

The Connecticut Youth Violence Prevention Initiative also conducted an evaluation of SAFE-T as implemented specifically with at-risk, inner city girls in Hartford Connecticut. The findings of this evaluation were largely consistent with the Kaufman Kantor (2007) outcomes. Though it had a fairly small sample size (n = 11), the evaluation showed,

- Reduction in risk factors for violence, including substance use, dating violence perpetration, sexual victimization, and acceptance of couple violence
- Increase in protective factors, including perceived school support and knowledge of sexual risk behaviors

(Story, 2007)

PCAV Quantitative Evaluation

In response to the 2010-2011 pre- and post-assessment measures, students made substantial improvements in multiple areas:

- *Consent*: When presented with the statement, "If I am not sure how to behave sexually with another person, I will ask them" agreement increased from 44% to 55.6%
- *Knowledge of sexual abuse dynamics*: When presented with the statement, "Most people who sexually abuse kids are strangers" disagreement increased from 65.5% to 77.8%
- *Support*: When presented with the statement, "I know about resources and agencies in my community that will help me if I need support" agreement increased from 59.4% to 67.8%
- *Self Awareness and Empathy*: When presented with the statements, "When I need to make a difficult decision, I take time to think things through before I decide what to do" and "I consider how other people feel before I act" agreement rose from 83.5% to 88.6% and 77.8% to 84.2%, respectively.

PCAV Qualitative Evaluations

In interviews with SAFE-T instructors revealed the following comments:

- “The curriculum has been extremely valuable...students speak more respectfully with each other and appear to be more direct, talking openly about such issues as trust.”
- “Students didn’t want to end class—the bell would ring and they didn’t want to leave...really enjoyed it.”
- “This is a great curriculum, and it really made sense to the kids”
- *Impact on students and families:*
 - Students in general – gains in understanding of what it means to have empathy and the importance of empathy in healthy sexual relations.
 - **Vulnerable students** – **students who have been bullied feel very supported in the class.**
 - Vulnerable families – positive impact on one student’s family with known domestic violence issues, where mother and daughter had previously felt that abusive behavior was the norm.
- *Impact on school climate:*
 - Reduced harassment, resulting in greater student retention and improved school climate.
 - SAFE-T had an immediate positive impact on student-to student relations, particularly within the class; students were very close with one another and with those teaching by the end of the program.

Additionally, focus groups and student evaluations conducted in 2011 yielded the following comments from students concerning benefits of the SAFE-T program:

- I talked to my mom and had a real conversation about something personal for the first time.
- My favorite thing about SAFE-T was about how they made people feel confident about talking about things in front of their peers. I also liked how everybody was involved in everything.
- It has made my friendships better because I can trust my friends more and I hope they trust me more. My friendships grew stronger.
- SAFE-T changed the relationship I have with my parents. I think it made us closer and feel more comfortable talking about certain topics.
- I never knew how many people there were that I could ask for help.
- I understand challenging situations and how to handle them.
- We got skills we can use when we are older and in college on how to have mature conversation with boyfriends, girlfriends, and parents.
- Learned good bystander skills – how to intervene when you see someone cross a boundary.

References:

- Story, J. (2007) *CT youth violence prevention initiative final report*. Hartford, CT: Youth Violence Prevention Initiative.
- Kaufman Kantor, G. (2007) *Evaluation of Prevent Child Abuse Vermont SAFE-T program*. Durham, NH: Family Research Laboratory, University of New Hampshire