

ARYA Pilot Research – Pilot Program Results

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Program Overview

Active Relationships for Young Adults (ARYA) is one of the programs of the Active Relationships Center. ARYA is designed to enhance the relationship skills of young people. It is appropriate for youth ages 12-20.

ARYA is made up of 12 sessions. The 12 sessions may be taught with any age group of youth, including, but not limited to: junior high youth, high school youth, or pregnant teens. It may also be taught in any format, such a weekend retreat, Sunday School/youth group lessons, weekly meetings covering one or two sessions a week. The program focuses on happiness/ communication styles, money, brain physiology, assumption of goodwill, weak and power states, anger legacies, POWER thinking, changing meaning, destructive behaviors, shared meaning and coaching, understanding love, choosing wisely, virtues, values, traditions, and goal setting. Training in Active Relationships program, including ARYA, is available in many formats including on-site trainings at community organizations, military settings, churches, seminars at ARC headquarters in Dallas, Texas, and at the upcoming 2006 Smart Marriages Conference in Atlanta, Georgia.

Demographics

A total of 159 adolescents (55% male, 45% female) participated in the Active Relationships for Young Adults (ARYA) Pilot program. Adolescents in the program ranged from 10-12 years old (4%), 13-15 years old (48%), and 16-19 years old (48%). Approximately 85% of the adolescents participated in the ARYA program and 15% participated in the ARYA-Christian version. Adolescents in the program were involved in community youth programs (31%), juvenile probation programs (36%), residential programs (20%), and church youth groups (13%). The adolescents participating came from diverse backgrounds including African-American (45%), Hispanic (30%), Asian (6%), Caucasian (15%), and Other (4%). The majority of adolescents lived in single-parent households (46%). Approximately 25% of the adolescents lived in two-parent households.

Qualitative Responses

A high percentage of students (97%) reported that they believed they would get married and have a family in the future.

Program Evaluation

Overall, there was a significant difference in the outcomes in the main areas of assumption of goodwill (overcoming faulty and destructive assumptions) and recognition and management of power states (constructive, solution-oriented thought processes) between pre and post -test times. Youth identified a greater ability in themselves to attribute goodwill to a situation after attending the program. Youth also reported utilizing a greater amount of power state (solution-oriented) thinking, rather than destructive, failure oriented thoughts, by the end of the program.

General findings: Youth who reported greater self-esteem, reported a decrease in weak states (depressive, helpless, destructive) thinking. Also, youth who reported greater self esteem, reported an increase in the assumption of goodwill (attributing more positive motives to the behaviors of others). Youth who reported utilizing power states more, also reported greater attributions of goodwill (the two skills seem to be linked).

Specific findings:

- Youth who saw themselves as good problem solvers at the beginning of the program also saw themselves as good problem solvers at the end.
- Youth who thought they had good behavior control also reported greater scores in general functioning with their families by the end of the program.
- Youth who reported good behavior control prior to attending the program, reported themselves as better problem solvers after attending the program.
- Youth who reported better general family functioning reported greater behavior control by the end of the program.
- Youth reporting good behavior control also reported that they were better communicators at the end of the program.
- Youth who reported themselves as better problem solvers at the end of the program also reported that they were better communicators.
- Youth who reported using power state thinking more often, reported greater behavior control.

Conclusions

Youth learned the main concepts of assumption of goodwill and the significance of using power state thinking to choose healthy behaviors. Youth with greater self-esteem, used attributions of goodwill more and used weak states of thinking even less. Youths with strengths in the area of problem solving continued to be good problem solvers. Youth identifying stronger family connections and greater use of power states of thinking reported better control of their behavior after attending the program. After the program, approximately 90% of the adolescents reported that they communicate better with others. Approximately 85% reported that they get along much better with others, are much better in resolving conflicts with others, and would recommend ARYA to their friends.

Teacher Evaluations

"I liked the opportunity to teach these skills to our youth."

"The topics are exactly what kids need to learn."

"The topics lend themselves to wonderful discussions involving not only the youth, but the adult volunteers who attended the sessions."

"I liked the way the kids talked to their families about the program."