



USU Relationship Skills
Sponsor Award ID: 21DWS0030
USU Contract # 202989
July 2020 - June 2021



Executive Summary

Scholars at Utah State University and elsewhere continue to document the efficacy of relationship education. See <https://extension.usu.edu/hru/additional-resources/research>

This report further documents the impacts of the USU Relationship Skills contract. The Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS) partners with Utah State University (USU) Cooperative Extension to offer relationship education in select DWS locations, communities, and schools. Funding was provided for programming from July 2020 to June 2023. This report covers activities and impacts from July 2020 through June 2021. Significant accomplishments are highlighted below:

DWS Contract

- The interagency agreement with USU was executed on October 15, 2020.

Family Life Educators

- All educators were employed part-time. Virtual delivery has allowed us to significantly expand delivery beyond our previous area of 8 counties.

Service Provision

- Three research-based, healthy relationship curricula were offered. *PICK* is for singles, *Couple LINKS* for those in committed relationships, and *Parenting the Love and Logic Way™* for parents.
- With the exception of high schools, courses were facilitated through virtual delivery formats. Virtual courses were made available to all 29 counties.
- In this 12-month reporting period, a total of 3,348 people participated in courses across the three curricula.

Course Efficacy

- As the intent of this program is to support select TANF purposes, we measure related outcomes, such as healthy relationship boundaries, confidence in one's ability to form and maintain healthy relationships, and the ability to recognize warning signs in a potentially unhealthy relationship.
- Quantitative *and* qualitative analyses of survey data continue to indicate improvement in key course concepts. The results demonstrate an increase in protective behaviors and attitudes and a decrease in risky behaviors and attitudes that research has shown correlate with the targeted TANF purposes.
- Survey results indicate very high levels of participant satisfaction with each course.

Program Details

Courses and Venues

Courses offered include: (1) *How to PICK a Partner* (also known as *How to Avoid Falling for a Jerk or Jerkette*; abbreviated *PICK*), (2) *Couple LINKS* (abbreviated *LINKS*), and (3) *Parenting the Love and Logic Way™*.

We made virtual relationship education courses available to all Department of Workforce Service centers. We also served 15 high schools during health and adult roles classes. Additionally, we offered our relationship education courses to the general public statewide.

All courses, except those taught in high schools and in DWS sites, offer eight hours of programming and are taught primarily in four, 2-hour sessions. Courses at Department of Workforce Service sites are taught in one, 6-hour session or two, 3-hour sessions. High school courses provide 4 hours of programming to fit classroom schedules.

Program Reach

The table below shows the number of courses offered and completed. Not all courses offered were completed. This occurred when there were not enough participants. During this reporting period, we offered 68 virtual courses for DWS centers; 40 were completed. We offered 80 virtual general community courses; 69 were completed. In addition, we completed 98 high school courses in 15 different high schools across the state. A total of 3,348 people participated in courses across all three curricula during this reporting period.

Contract Fulfillment to Date

For the period covering July 2020 to June 2021, we proposed to offer a total of 150 courses and to serve 1,500 individuals. As detailed below, we have substantially exceeded our annual goals.

	DWS	Community	HS	Total
Courses Offered	68	80	108	256
Courses Completed	40	69	98	207
Participants Served	285	750	2,313	3,348

The following table provides participants' demographic data.

Participant Demographics Across Service Venues

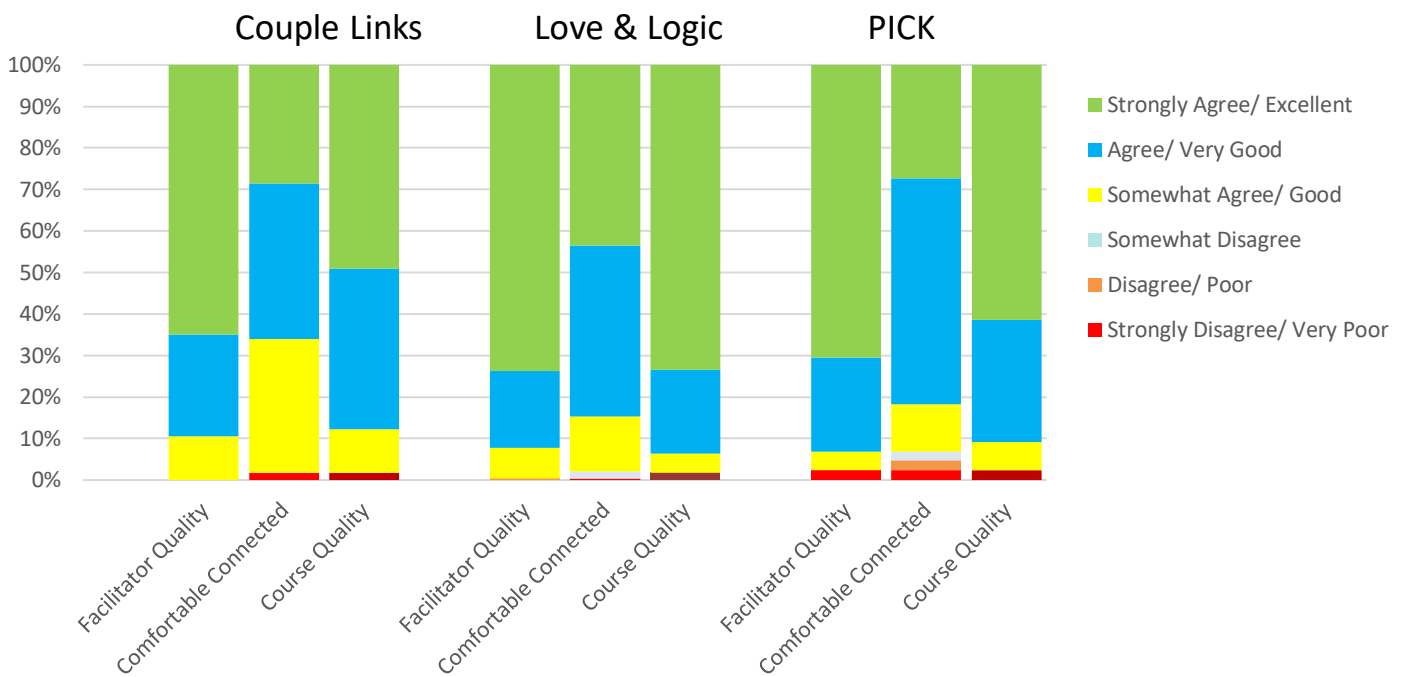
	DWS	Community	HS
Total Attendance	285	750	2,313
Survey Participants	268	690	990*
Mean Age	35 years (SD=9.7)	35 years (SD=9.4)	15.6 years (SD=.74)
Sex			
Male	33%	34%	55%
Female	67%	66%	45%
Ethnicity			
Caucasian	81%	86%	81%
Asian/Pacific Islander	6%	2%	2%
African-American	1%	1%	1%
Other	12%	11%	16%
Hispanic/Latino(a)	25%	12%	17%
Mean Number of Children	2.45 (SD=2.04)	2.30 (SD=1.65)	N/A
Relationship Status			
Married	44%	59%	N/A
Single	34%	26%	72%
Dating/Engaged	11%	8%	28%
Separated	8%	6%	N/A
Widowed	3%	1%	N/A
Education			
Some High School	8%	3%	100%
High School / GED	18%	13%	
Some College	26%	20%	
College/Technical	38%	49%	
Grad Degree	10%	15%	

* High school results based on surveys entered as of 6/15/2020.

Participant Feedback

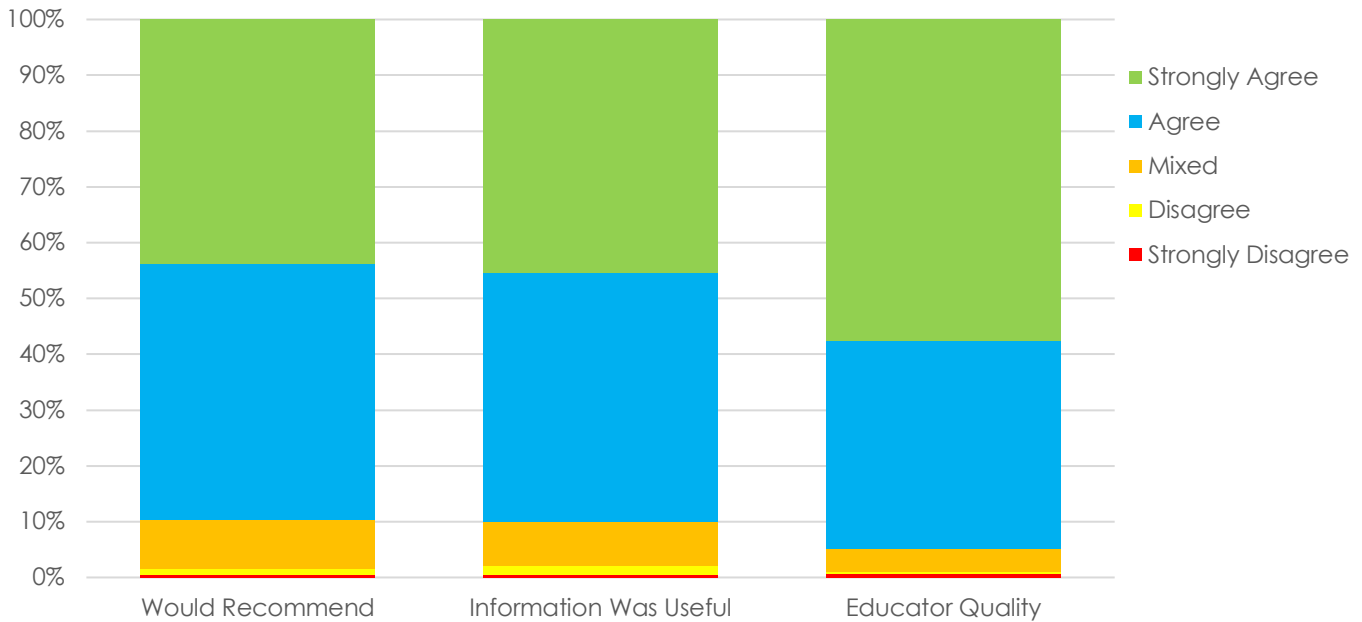
A voluntary survey was administered to participants at the beginning and end of each course. We asked about: (1) the quality of the facilitator, (2) if participants felt comfortable attending the program and connected to their fellow participants, and (3) about the overall quality of the course. Overwhelmingly, the program participants in Year 1 responded favorably to these questions, as more than 80% of participants positively rated (or agreed with) the quality of facilitation, their comfort in attending the program and connection to fellow participants, and the overall quality of the courses offered in all three programs (see the graph below).

Community and DWS Formative Evaluation



The high school participants completed a similar evaluation, which asked: (1) if participants would recommend the course to others, (2) how useful the information was, and (3) their assessment of the educator. Again, participant feedback on these questions was overwhelmingly favorable, as at least 90% of high school participants expressed agreement with all three formative evaluation measures.

High School PICK Formative Evaluation



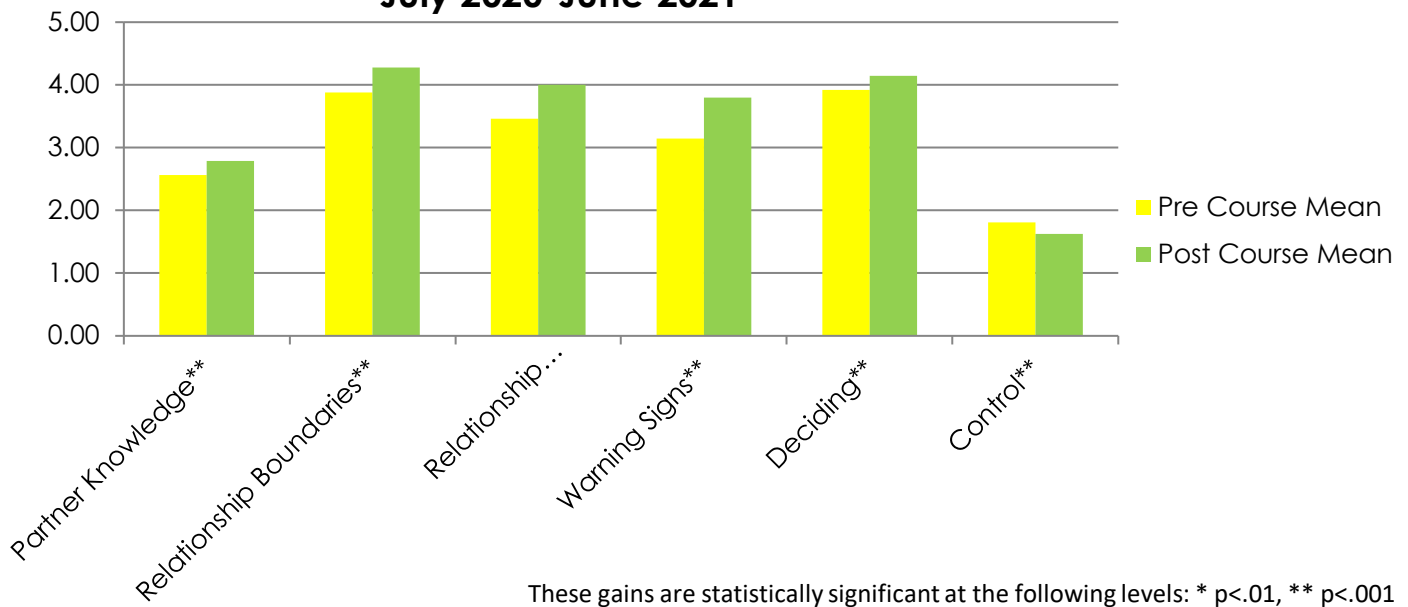
Course Impact

To examine program outcomes, we collected numerical (quantitative) data, and written (qualitative) data. We statistically compared quantitative responses to questions before and after the courses to see how participation led to changes in attitudes, beliefs, and understanding of key course concepts. We also gathered written statements from participants about their experiences. We begin with a brief description of the objectives for each course, then we provide quantitative and qualitative data for key course concepts based on data available at the time of this report.

How to PICK a Partner – Combined Community and DWS Sites

- This is a program for single adults of all ages. Participants learn the steps to build a high-quality, long-lasting relationship. Measured outcomes include the importance of knowing about a potential partner (“Partner Knowledge”), healthy relationship boundaries (“Boundaries”), confidence in one’s ability to form and maintain healthy relationships (“Relationship Confidence”), ability to recognize warning signs in a potentially unhealthy relationship (“Warning Signs”), conscientious decision making within relationships (“Deciding”), and awareness of and resistance to controlling behaviors within the relationship (“Control”). Higher scores indicated higher levels of agreement or perceived importance, with the exception of “Control,” where lower scores indicated less supportive attitudes toward controlling behaviors. From “Pre” to “Post,” we observed statistically significant improvement for all six measured outcomes.

**PICK Program Outcomes
Combined Community and DWS Sites
July 2020-June 2021**



Representative Comments from Participants

PICK

What was the most important concept you learned from this course?

- *"The RAM model is a useful way to evaluate a relationship as it progresses."*
- *"The most important concept I learned was the importance of active listening."*
- *"It takes time for you to get to know a romantic partner."*

What did you like most about the course?

- *"Having it be a set schedule (a weekly scheduled event) meant that I took the time to engage with the content, which I might not have done on my own."*
- *"I liked the scientific studies that the course material is based on."*
- *"I loved how organized it was. Made learning really easy."*

What did you like least about the course?

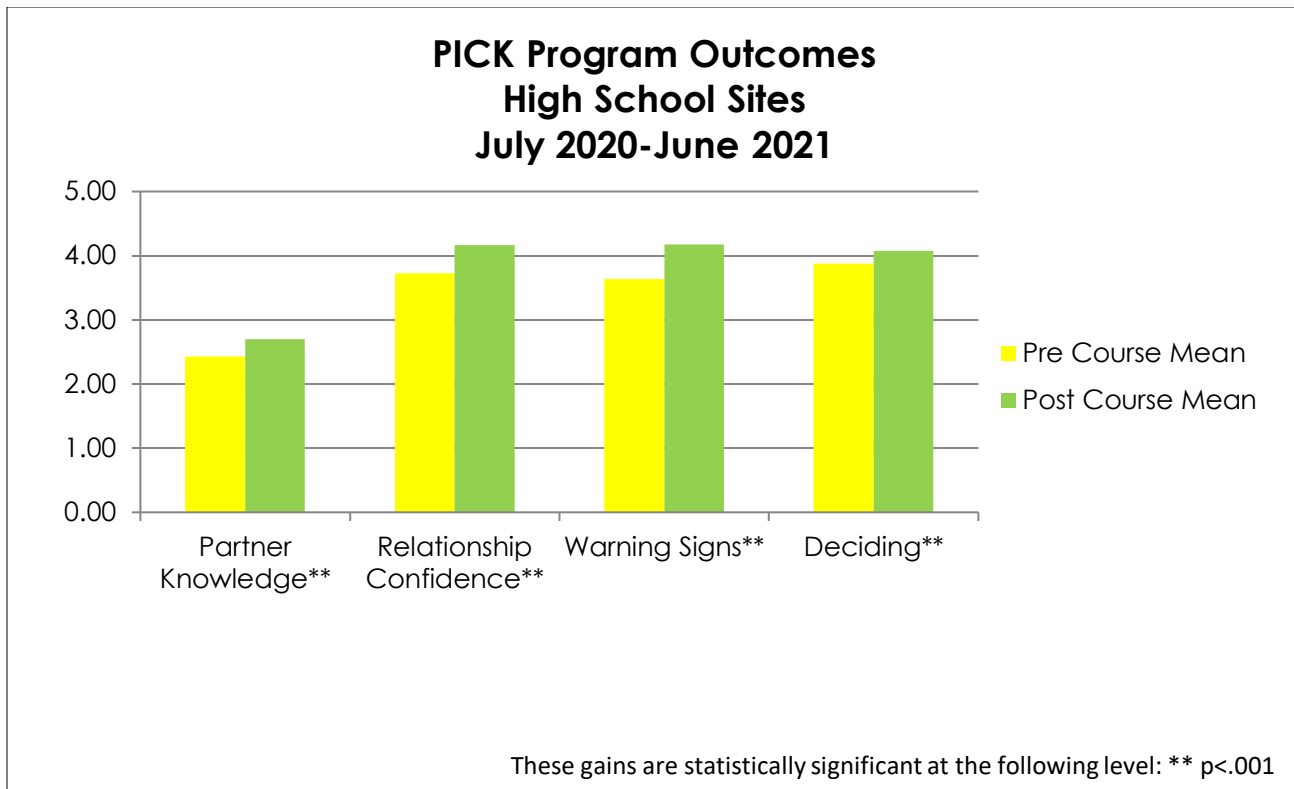
- *"The fact that it was Friday night."*
- *"Not enough time to write things in the book during the meeting."*
- *"Length was a little long but okay."*

Describe how this program helped you with a relationship problem or concern.

- *"To understand myself."*
- *"Setting boundaries."*
- *"Provided me with the tools to make good choices for a healthy relationship in the future."*

How to PICK a Partner – High School Sites

- A youth version of the PICK curriculum was delivered to high school students. Just as in the adult courses, youth participants learn the steps to build a high-quality, long-lasting relationship. Measured outcomes include the importance of knowing about a potential partner (“Partner Knowledge”), confidence in one’s ability to form and maintain healthy relationships (“Relationship Confidence”), ability to recognize warning signs in a potentially unhealthy relationship (“Warning Signs”), and conscientious decision making within relationships (“Deciding”). Higher scores indicated higher levels of agreement or perceived importance. From “Pre” to “Post,” statistically significant improvement occurred for all four outcomes.



Representative Comments from Participants

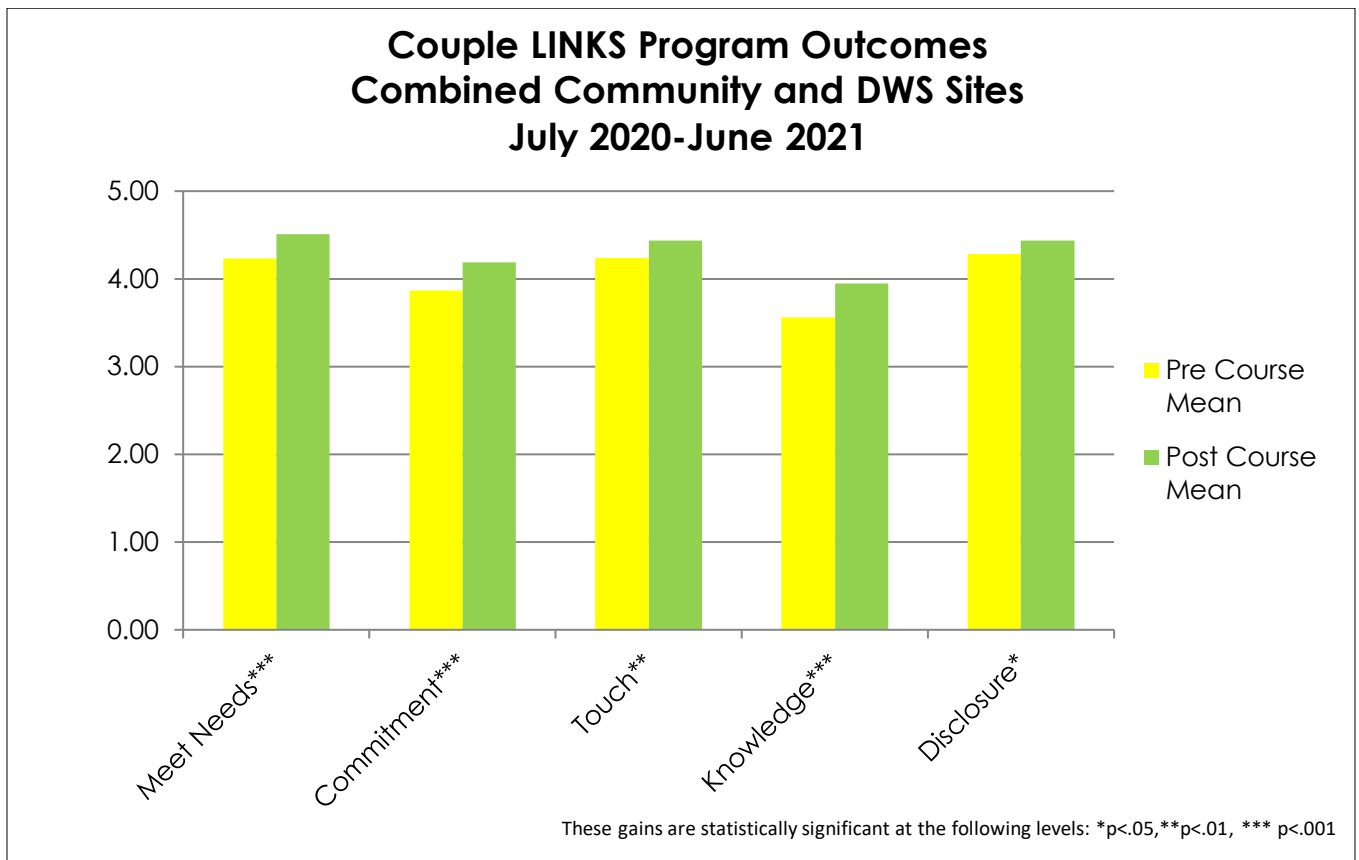
PICK - HS

What did you like most about the course?

- *“Tons of information, backed with studies and tests.”*
- *“To be able to be open and talk about this subject and learn how to have a healthy relationship.”*
- *“The teacher was very open to everyone and made it easy to understand pros and cons in a relationship.”*
- *“The RAM helped me better visualize what they were talking about.”*
- *“The fact that it will help me later on in a relationship.”*

Couple LINKS

- Couple LINKS is an educational program designed for couples in committed relationships. This program helps partners understand one another's differences, how to increase trust and dependability, and develop a deeper commitment. Measured outcomes include the perceived importance of recognizing and meeting a partner's needs ("Meet Needs"), commitment to a partner and relationship ("Commitment"), openness about physical intimacy ("Touch"), knowledge and understanding of healthy relationships ("Knowledge"), and openness in communication with partner ("Disclosure"). Higher scores indicated higher levels of agreement or perceived importance. From "Pre" to "Post," statistically significant improvement occurred in all five measured outcomes.



Representative Comments from Participants

Couple LINKS

What was the most important concept you learned from this course?

- *"The RAM was very helpful in expressing our relationship concerns with one another."*
- *"The topics drove discussion outside of class that helped identify problem areas we are now working on."*
- *"The importance of checking in and having conversations with your partner."*

What did you like most about the course?

- *"Videos, examples, class participation."*
- *"They gave us chances/time to apply what we learned and gave meaningful examples."*
- *"The teacher's positive attitude and vibrant energy."*

What did you like least about the course?

- *"Went through the book fast."*
- *"The length, maybe 1 hour sessions, it was just the first session that went long."*
- *"It was difficult to connect with other participants because it was virtual."*

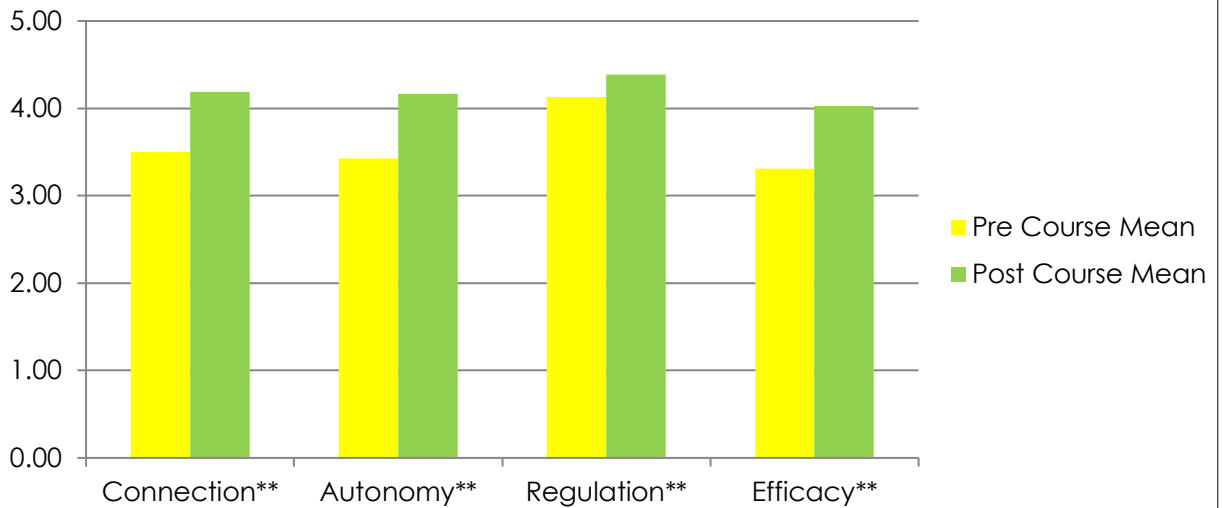
Describe how this program helped you with a relationship problem or concern.

- *"Understanding that forgiveness takes time and not something you can overcome instantly."*
- *"This course has helped me learn to communicate my needs."*
- *"Made me aware of my spouse and his needs."*

Parenting the Love and Logic Way™ – Combined Community and DWS Sites

- Love and Logic is a well-known parenting program that teaches parents how to raise responsible children and have fun in their parenting role. Topics include ending power struggles and teaching responsibility, setting limits and preventing arguments, problem solving and completing chores without conflict. We measured the participants' perceptions of their abilities to connect with their children ("Connection"), to encourage appropriate psychological autonomy in their children ("Autonomy"), to help regulate their children's behaviors ("Regulation"), and their own level of parenting efficacy ("Efficacy"). Higher scores indicated higher levels of agreement or perceived importance. From "Pre" to "Post," statistically significant improvement occurred in all four outcomes.

**Love & Logic Program Outcomes
Combined Community and DWS Sites
July 2020-June 2021**



These gains are statistically significant at the following levels: ** p<.001

Representative Comments from Participants

Parenting the Love & Logic Way

What was the most important concept you learned from this course?

- *“Understanding who owns the problem and not to give my child the answer.”*
- *“To let children experience the natural consequences.”*
- *“The discipline tools helped me a lot.”*

What did you like most about the course?

- *“The videos were relatable.”*
- *“The facilitator and how she explained the topics.”*
- *“The concepts are all about building relationships while teaching kids life skills.”*

What did you like least about the course?

- *“The time. 6-8 is super tricky with ending work and feeding kids.”*
- *“That it had to end. I really wanted it to continue so I could learn more.”*
- *“I would have liked to take the class in person over a few weeks to go deeper in the issues. But it was great to have this resource online too.”*

Describe how this program helped you with a relationship problem or concern.

- *“To show empathy and learn how to deal with stubborn kids.”*
- *“This course taught me some new methods to help raise my kids better.”*
- *“This course help me with connecting with my kids on their level.”*

Program Outcomes Measures

I. How Much Did We Do?

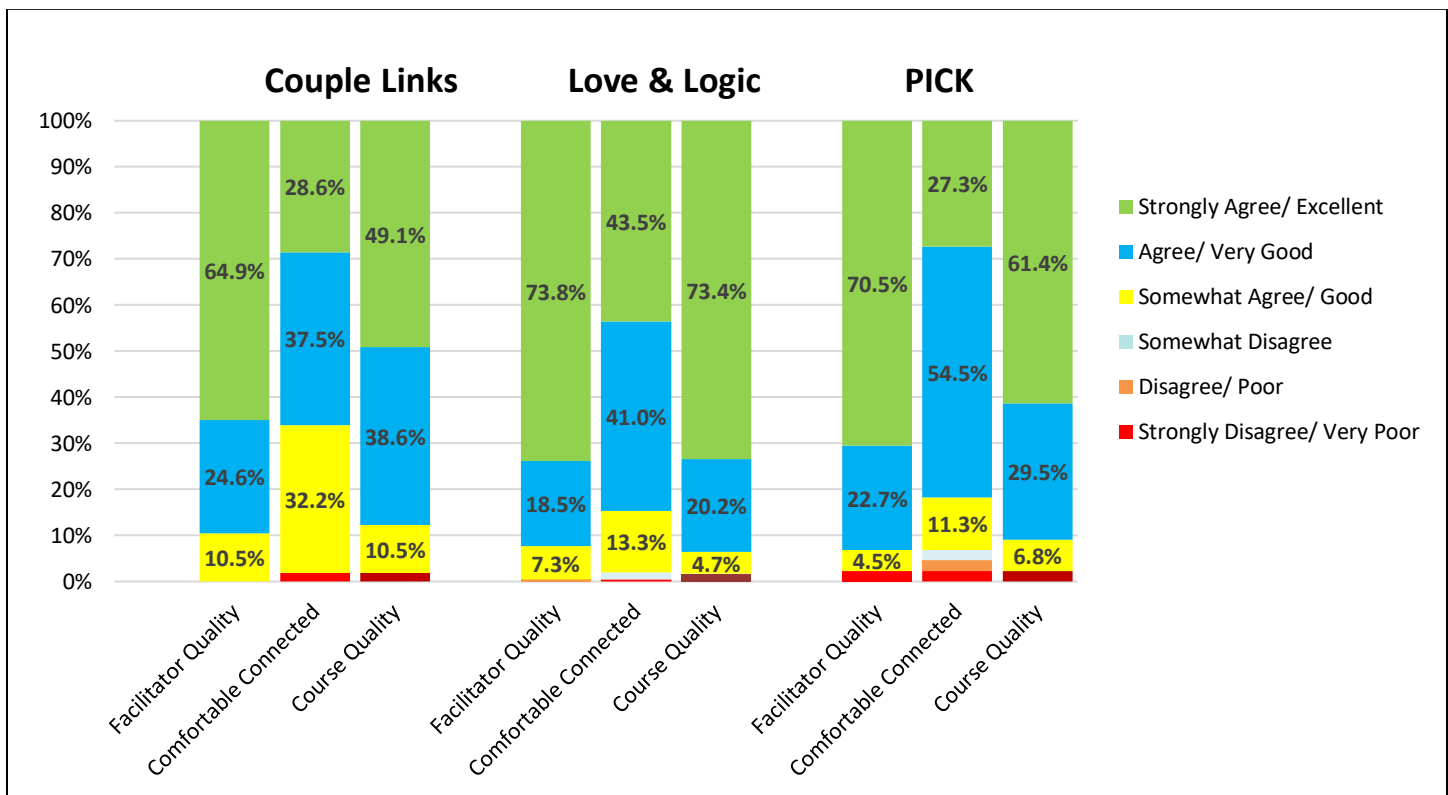
Our annual goal is 150 courses and 1,500 participants served. In Year 1, services have been delivered to 3,348 participants.

<i>Contract Fulfillment to Date:</i>	DWS	Community	HS	Total
July 2020 – June 2021				
Courses Offered	68	80	108	256
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II. How Well Did We Do It?

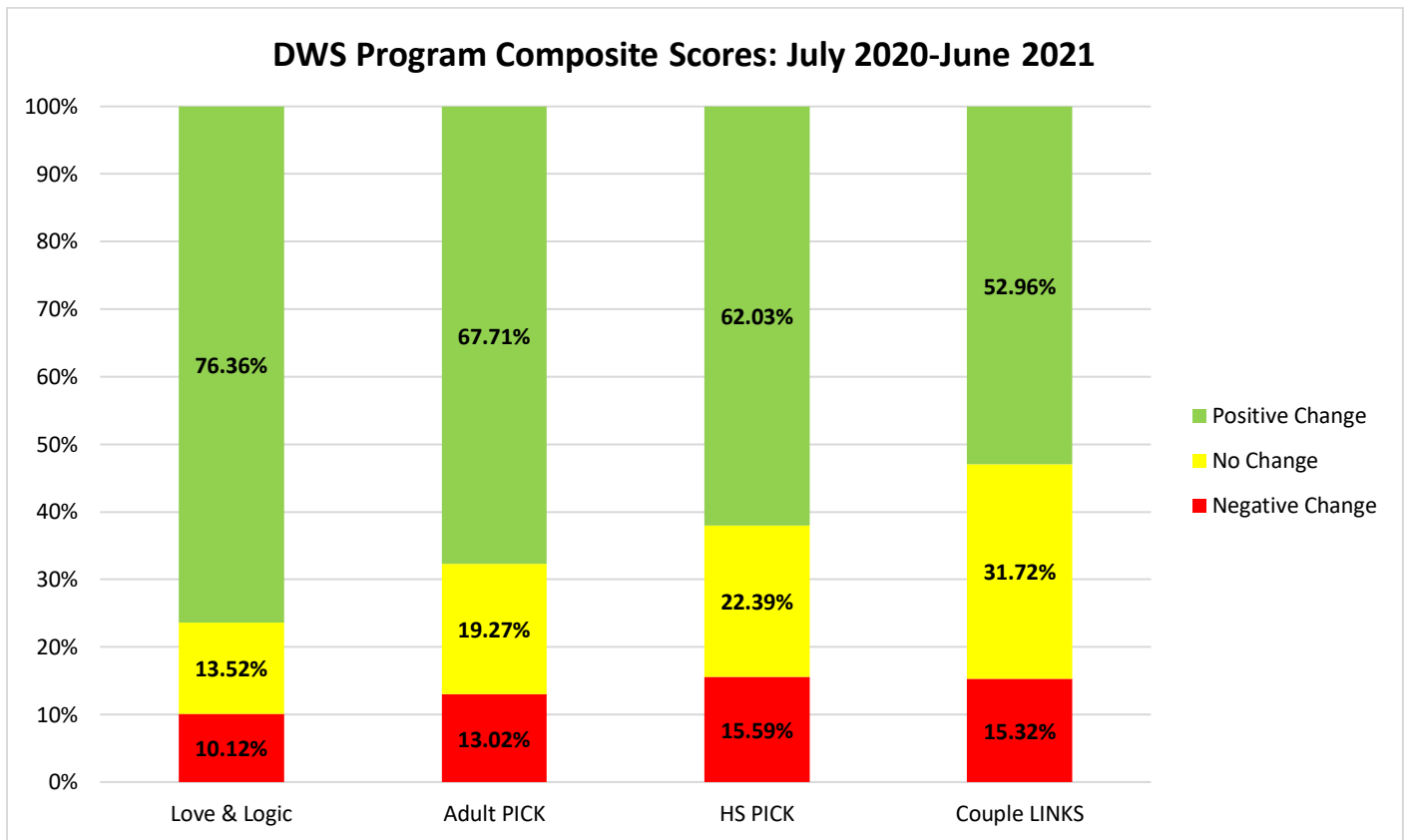
Results from Year 1 show that, for all three curricula, the vast majority of participants (more than 80%) indicated agreement with: (1) the quality of facilitation, (2) whether participants felt comfortable attending the program and connected to fellow participants, and (3) the overall quality of the course.

Formative Evaluation (July 2020-June 2021)



III. Is Anyone Better Off?

Pre- to post-test changes in participant skills and attitudes exceeded projected levels. For Love & Logic, 89.88% improved or maintained on targeted outcomes; 86.98% for PICK (Adults), 84.42% for PICK (High School), and 84.68% Couple LINKS.



Conclusion

The data presented in this annual report show positive impacts for participants. Participants overwhelmingly reported positive outcomes and satisfaction with the courses offered via this Utah Department of Workforce Services and Utah State University collaboration.

Our healthy relationship curricula are based on sound social science research and the data in this report show participants are learning important skills and knowledge. Specifically, participants demonstrate an increase in protective behaviors and attitudes and a decrease in risky behaviors and attitudes that research has shown correlate with the targeted TANF purposes:

- Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies (TANF purpose 3).
- Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families (TANF purpose 4).