

PICK with At-Risk Young Adults

Evaluation Summary (N=150)

The PICK a Partner program, also titled How to Avoid Falling for a Jerk(ette), was taught to singles around the metro-Atlanta area. The goal of the PICK course is to teach singles to be more intentional in their dating relationships with what they get to know about a partner as well as how to pace a developing relationship in a safe way.

The PICK course was taught from March of 2012 and, as of June 2015, a total of 687 individuals have been served and completed the pre and post test questionnaires. Due to an increased desire to provide services to high-risk young adults, the current data was analyzed using only those participants who would be categorized as high-risk young adults. This examination will allow for a better understanding of whether or not the PICK program successfully impacted the young adults who would be considered at high-risk for certain life and relationship outcomes. Given the current data collected on this sample, the criteria used for a participant to be considered high-risk was as follows:

- Age 24 or younger
- A participant in a class that was DFCS or a class that was comprised of high-risk young adults
- A participant who was pregnant or had a partner that was pregnant
- A participant that has a child/children
- A participant between the ages of 19-24 with less than a high school education
- A participant that was referred through WIC, Foodstamps, Medicaid, Shelter, or a Group Home.

Based on the above criteria, a total of 150 young adults were classified as high-risk. Overall, the Jerk(ette) course was well received by this population of young adults.

- 92% agreed that they learned new information from the class
- 92% agreed that the class was personally helpful
- 92% agreed that they planned to use the information they learned from the class in their dating relationships
- 91% agreed that as a result of the class, they will have healthier relationships
- 89% agreed that they feel more prepared for seeking out a committed relationship
- 92% agreed that as a result of the class, they will carefully evaluate their choice of a partner
- 93% agreed that the instructor clearly explained the material in the class
- 91% agreed that they would recommend the class to others
- 92% reported being very satisfied with the Jerk(ette) class

The demographics and pre and post-test results are reported on the remaining pages.

Table 1: Demographics

Overall N = 150	
Current Age (M, SD, range = 15-24)	17.9 (2.36)
Sex (% female)	65.8
What is your race/ethnicity (% , may select more than one)	
Hispanic/Latino	8.6
Caucasian	9.9
African American	86.0
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2.0
American Indian	0.7
Highest Grade Completed (%)	
No formal schooling	2.0
8th Grade or Less	1.4
Some High School	72.3
High School Diploma/GED	16.9
Some College or 2 Year Degree	4.1
Technical or Trade School	2.0
Bachelor's Degree	0.1
Graduate or Professional School	0.1
Are you currently pregnant? Or is your partner currently pregnant? (% yes)	20.2
Does this young-adult have children living with them or not living with them? (% yes)	13.5
If you are in a committed relationship, are you currently living with your partner?	10.9 (n = 12)

Table 2: Pre-Post Test N=150

How important is it to you that you get to know the following about your partner before you agree to marry or become seriously committed?	Before (Mean,SD)	After (Mean, SD)	T-value
How my partner fights when angry	3.99 (1.32)	4.36 (1.05)	3.52*
What my partner learned from his/her family when growing up	4.09 (1.13)	4.32 (1.01)	2.28*
How my partner reacts when my feelings are hurt	4.45 (0.93)	4.90 (0.98)	0.41
What my partner has been like in past dating relationships	4.09 (1.09)	4.26 (1.08)	1.76
What my partner believes about right and wrong	4.40 (1.07)	4.45 (1.05)	0.54
How well my partner gets along with their parent(s)	4.02 (1.18)	4.30 (1.07)	2.77*
What my partner's friendships have been like	4.27 (1.01)	3.92 (1.06)	3.61*

Note: 1= very unimportant 2 = unimportant; 3= neutral; 4= important; 5= very important; * items significant at the $p < .05$ - $p < .001$ level

The participants were asked to rate on a likert-type scale ranging from 1 = very unimportant to 5 = very important how important it was for them to get to know different areas about a dating partner. The participants were asked to do this before the PICK class and then after the PICK class. The results are summarized below in Table 2.

The results indicated that after taking the PICK course, the participants rated that it was more important to get to know the areas the program deems important. More specifically, four of the seven items showed a significant program impact (see Table 2). The items that were not statistically significant still showed improvement in the expected direction. It is likely that the nonsignificant items were due to the participants rating the before items as very important, not leaving much room for improvement. Overall, the results suggest that improvement occurred in the predicted direction for all items, meaning greater importance was placed on these items after the completion of the PICK class.

Table 3: Pre-Post Test N=150

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements	Before (Mean, SD)	After (Mean, SD)	T-value
I feel confident that I know how to choose the right person for me	4.58 (1.29)	5.09 (1.11)	4.34*
I feel confident that I know how to have a healthy dating relationship	4.68 (1.26)	5.07 (1.19)	3.30*
I can identify the things that are important to get to know about a partner	5.00 (1.04)	5.24 (1.03)	2.31*
I know how to pace a dating relationship in a safe way	4.53 (1.29)	5.06 (1.16)	4.62*
I know how to choose a healthy partner	4.58 (1.28)	5.10 (1.11)	4.38*
I feel confident that I can spot warning signs in dating partners	4.86 (1.24)	5.22 (1.11)	2.79*
I know how to identify the signs of an abusive relationship	5.34 (0.96)	5.38 (1.16)	0.32
I know the skills necessary to be an effective communicator	4.85 (1.19)	5.16 (1.18)	2.47*
I understand healthy versus unhealthy ways to resolve conflict in my relationships	4.94 (1.15)	5.63 (5.64)	1.36

Note: 1= strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3= slightly disagree; 4= slightly agree; 5= agree; 6= strongly agree; * items significant at the $p < .01$ level; all t-values were in the negative direction

Pre and post test questions were also asked about the participant’s knowledge about and confidence in their ability to choose the right partner and have a healthy relationship. All but two of these pre and post test items were found to be statistically significant at the $p < .01$ level. These findings suggest that attending the PICK class had a significant and positive impact on the level of confidence participants felt in their ability to build a healthy relationship and their knowledge in how to choose a healthy partner. The results are presented below in Table 3.

NOTE: It should be noted that the PICK program contains a supplement specifically addressing emotional and physical abuse that was not used in these classes, therefore the non-significant findings are based on any extra information provided by the instructor of the course. It is also likely that this particular population, being high-risk, has had previous exposure to abusive relationships giving them a heightened awareness of how to identify these abusive relationships which may have resulted in higher ratings on the pre-test items.

Summary

Overall, participation in the PICK course resulted in significant and positive changes in high-risk young adult’s awareness of what to get to know about a dating partner and confidence and knowledge of how to safely choose a partner and build a healthy relationship. Participants in the course also reported high levels of satisfaction with the class, high beliefs that they will have healthier relationships because of the class, and high rates of intention to use the information learned in the course in their relationships.