

PICK a Partner (Pre-marital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge) Authored by John Van Epp, Ph.D.

Description: The PICK Program is a five-session *non-religious* curriculum that certified instructors can teach. Each session is based on a forty-three minute teaching timeframe, but is designed to be adapted to many different timeframes and group settings. The program is an elaboration of the Relationship Attachment Model (RAM) and can easily be divided into two major sections: the head and the heart. Session 1 is an overview of the RAM that explains the importance of building safe relationships while knowing what to look for in a dating partner. Session 2 and 3 develop the five key areas to explore in a partner in order to have an accurate understanding of what that person would be like in a long-term relationship. This is referred to as “head knowledge” in the RAM. The last two sessions, 4 and 5, explain the “heart knowledge” of the RAM- the dynamics of trust, reliance, commitment and sexual touch. This program was presented in an unmodified manner by the Michigan Healthy Marriage Coalition Partners' trained facilitators. *Participation in PICK is voluntary in both prison and community settings.*

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- Session One: A Birds Eye View of Dating—This session presents an overview of the model of the dynamic, bonding processes involved in a growing relationship and how this model can be used for making a marital choice.
- Session Two: You Can't Marry Jethro Without Getting' The Clampetts—In this session you will learn what you need to know about the hidden and often unexplored areas of your prospective partner.
- Session Three: The Ingredients for the Recipe of a Lasting Relationship—In this session you will learn how a healthy trust can be developed from what you know about your prospective partner, and how to grow in this trust and reliance while minimizing your vulnerabilities.
- Session Four: Why is it that Expectations Lead to Disappointment? — In this session you will learn how a healthy trust can be developed from what you know about your prospective partner, and how to grow in this trust and reliance while minimizing your vulnerabilities.
- Session Five: Putting the Cart Before the Horse—In this session you will discover the important role of commitment and the protective sexual boundaries for the growing relationship with your prospective partner.

Partnerships: Describe any collaborative partners involved in implementing the pre-marital education program and their role(s) in helping the program reach its goals.

An early partner, Michigan Family Forum, organized training seminars wherein dozens of community members were trained in the federally approved curricula PICK a Partner, PREP, and Smart Steps.

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Marriages That Work in Lenawee County is recognized nationally for partnering with the Michigan Department of Corrections to offer ME in a variety of incarceration sites. Judge James Sheridan (Founder and Board Chairman of MTW), and our primary prison facilitator, Kelly Sigler, presented workshops on this subject at the SmartMarriages Conference for several years.

The Marriage Resource Center in Wayne County is highly committed to outreach into their multicultural TANF population through numerous and creative partnerships with human service agencies and faith-based organizations, particularly African-American churches. Nearly every workshop they offer is through a partnership with another organization.

Outputs: In the chart below, please list activities you implemented related to pre-marital education, the number of individuals your program served through each activity during each budget period, and the total number of individuals served through each activity during the entire duration of the grant.

Allowable Activity Area	Activity	Number served in FY 2007 ¹ (Nov. 1, 2006- Oct. 31, 2007)	Number served in FY 2008 ¹ (Nov. 1, 2007- Oct. 31, 2008)	Number served in FY 2009 ¹ (Nov. 1, 2008- Oct. 31, 2009)	Number served in FY 2010 ¹ (Nov. 1, 2009- Oct. 31, 2010)	Number served in FY 2011 ¹ (Nov. 1, 2010- Oct. 31, 2011)	Number served since award date ^{III}
4 (Pre-marital education)	Deliver healthy relationship education curriculum	492 individuals	1539 individuals	2760 individuals	2196 individuals	N/A	6987 individuals

Note: Unlike Semiannual Reports, numbers served are not broken down by Community and Incarcerated

C. Strengths: List factors that helped support the implementation of your pre-marital education activities.

Marriages That Work in Lenawee County found its' greatest success in working with the prison population. Inmates who are served through our Allowable Area 4 workshops learn to control their anger, deal with childhood issues and to communicate effectively. In partnership with the Michigan Department of Corrections, MTW has adapted our curricula for the incarcerated population. In addition inmates confront rigid social or gender roles that contribute to conflict and abuse. Services are gender specific, with female inmates being taught how to identify and avoid domestic violence issues. Inmates who have these skills leave prison better prepared to manage the stresses of the outside world and as a result are less likely to re-offend. The MHMC has taken steps to cut down on recidivism through its Incarcerated Initiative with the Michigan Department of Corrections. Since 2006 we have provided relationship education services to inmates in Lenawee, Jackson and Washtenaw counties as part of their cognitive restructuring process. As a result, more than 5,319 prisoners have learned how to better communicate and manage conflict. Similar programs in other states have been shown to reduce recidivism by up to 30%.

D. Challenges/barriers:

- List challenges that you encountered in implementing your program's pre-marital education activities.
- Were you able to overcome or adapt to these challenges? Explain why or why not.

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MHMC was creative in increasing the effectiveness of Pre-Marital Marriage Education workshops and reaching our target goals. Early in Yr 3, the MHMC Project Director identified six models of workshops offered by our Core Partners across our three counties.

- 1) Workshops hosted within the offices of the HMI
- 2) Workshops held on the premises of another partnering human service agency, in an effort to reach their clientele (usually TANF or at-risk population)
- 3) Workshops held in a community setting such as a coffee-house or restaurant, attracting the general public because it has the appeal of a "date night"
- 4) Workshops held in partnership with a Faith-based organization in an effort to reach their constituency
- 5) Workshops presented in a one or two day retreat format and setting, which draws good attendance and presents a higher percentage of graduating participants.
- 6) Workshops held in jails, prisons, and "boot-camps" for incarcerated populations

The MHMC Director devised guidelines for the Core Partners to follow in the planning of workshops. Utilizing the Workshop Planning Worksheet, these guidelines helped workshop planners to estimate the proposed cost outlay for a workshop, and divide the projected cost against the estimated number of graduates for that workshop. The MHMC Project Director's goal was to minimize the number of ineffective workshops graduating one to three people, and encourage the use of workshop models and funding that multiplies our effectiveness in reaching Allowable Activity Target numbers.

Using these guidelines, below is the average number of graduates (8+ hours of programming), and a roughly estimated per graduate cost (not including materials) for the six types of workshops over the Yr 2 2nd reporting period that was analyzed by the Project Director:

Model (Type) of Workshop	Number of such Workshops (6 mo)	Number of Graduates	Average Grads per Workshop	Est. Average Cost per Graduate
HMI workshops held "in house"	15	30	2	\$60
Workshops "on premises" of partnering service agency	21	151	7.1	\$66
Community site "date night" workshops	3	48	16	\$56.25
Workshops partnering with FBOs (incl. prev. 6 mo)	2	48	24	\$25
Retreat format workshops	3	61	20.3	\$83
Workshops for incarcerated populations	60	1,136	18.9	\$9

E. Contextual Events:

- Contextual events or community changes influencing the success or challenges related to your program's pre-marital education activities.
- Describe how the community/program participants reacted to your pre-marital education program. Were they supportive or unsupportive? Were there any concerns? Was there any resistance or reluctance to participate?

At the outset of our Healthy Marriage Initiative Demonstration Project in 2006, major media outlets were already describing Michigan as experiencing "a one-state

recession". As national economic indicators have fallen in the last four years, Michigan has unfortunately continued to lead ahead of this dubious curve.

Probable Negative Impact on our Project:

- Increased stress on marriages and families
- Less ability to "invest" time/money into marriage
- Arrangements to attend Healthy Marriage activities, babysitting, gas money, etc., more difficult
- Cost of offering Healthy Marriage activities increases because vendors/partners are less able to offer free/reduced cost for their services
- Many couples have intention of marriage, but wait until they become more financially and professionally secure- now a more difficult objective

Probable Positive Impact on our Project:

- Some couples are more reluctant to incur costs of divorce and supporting two households, and become more willing to seek a goal of reconciliation
- Some couples under increased stress seek out assistance

F. Lessons learned:

- What did you learn about how to deal with challenges regarding these activities?
- What did you learn about the strengths and supports that were available to help facilitate these activities?
- How successful would you say that this type of program was in educating individuals about healthy marriage in general?

Each of our Core Partner HMI's among the MHMC has demonstrated strength in certain type(s) of workshop models:

- Marriages That Work in Lenawee County is recognized nationally for partnering with the Michigan Department of Corrections to offer ME in a variety of incarceration sites. Judge James Sheridan (Founder and Board Chairman of MTW), and our primary prison facilitator, Kelly Sigler, have presented a workshop on this subject at the SmartMarriages Conference for several years in a row.
- The Marriage Resource Center in Wayne County is highly committed to outreach into their multicultural TANF population through numerous and creative partnerships with human service agencies and faith-based organizations, particularly African-American churches. Nearly every workshop they offered was through a partnership with another organization.
- Marriage Matters Jackson in Jackson County has found success reaching their community by organizing workshops held at appealing sites such as coffee houses and reception halls. They have reached a good number of people by marketing their workshops as something that looks and feels more like a fun "date night", than like a self-improvement class. MMJ has also led the way for the MHMC in organizing effective and productive retreat-format workshops.

The Project Director worked to identify various types of workshop models, evaluate their effectiveness, and find ways to improve each type of workshop. In years 3 and 4, the Project Director coached our Core Partners to stretch beyond their comfort zone

and try new types of workshops and partnerships in a greater effort to reach and surpass Allowable Activity target numbers.

2. Overview of the Evaluation *(Note: This section only to be completed if applicable)*

If your program used an evaluation design to measure change or impact, describe the data collection procedures, problems encountered in the implementation of the evaluation plan, and evaluation findings. We have provided questions under each heading to help guide you in providing relevant information for this section.

Data Collection

- **Outputs:** *Describe outputs measured in your program (see logic model, if applicable). *Note: An output is the product or service your organization provided or produced.*
- **Outcomes:** *Describe outcomes measured in your program (see logic model, if applicable). *Note: An outcome is the effect or change in your target population resulting from the outputs you provided.*

Tools and Instruments *(if applicable): This includes surveys, scales, focus groups, intake forms used to collect information for evaluation purposes. Describe how these tools were used to measure your outcomes. Include the following information:*

- **Name of the tool/instrument:** *Give the official name of the tool/instrument used*
- **Purpose of the tool/instrument:** *What does it measure?*
- **When used:** *When were intake forms completed?; At what point in the program were focus groups administered?; When were follow-up surveys conducted?*
- **How often:** *How often were surveys administered?; How often did you collect follow-up data?*
- **By whom:** *Who was responsible for administering surveys?; Who conducted focus groups?*

**Michigan Healthy Marriage Evaluation
Complete Grant Report**

Written by evaluator: EPPC Global Management, Inc., Dr. Stephen Rollin, Ed.D.

The Michigan Healthy Marriage Coalition covers three counties in Michigan that include Jackson, Lenawee and Wayne. The participants who have received the services include both incarcerated and non-incarcerated individuals and couples. Pre and Post test data is available for three of the five programs that were used. Those programs are: Links, PICK, and PREP. No testing data is available for Connections and Third Option Curriculum because of the open format in which they are taught and therefore not amenable to a pre post test format.

For this grant, the numbers for “reached” reflects those who attended at least one class while “served” reflects those who attended eight hours or more and the number for “completed” attended eight hours and completed 75% or more of the class.

All In all, the Coalition reached 10,400 individuals and served 10382 with 693 total classes offered. Of these participants, 561 were reached in more than one curriculum leaving 9839 unduplicated reached participants. There were 1079 unduplicated

couples reached and 7681 individuals who attended a class without a partner. Of this group, 4614 (47%) came from the prison population and the remaining 53% were drawn from a population of non-incarcerated individuals and couples. There were 51 prisoner couples who were granted special permission for the spouse to attend a PREP or LINKS class with their incarcerated partner.

Overall, Jackson reached 2246 (23%) participants, Lenawee reached 4911 (50%), and Wayne reached 2682 (27%) of the unduplicated participant base. Of these, Jackson served only community-based participants while 89% of Lenawee's and 11% of Wayne's participant were incarcerated.

Demographic Data—

Gender for the Coalition is as follows: 6583 (67%) were male with 3225 (33%) females. Of these, 4397 of the males were prisoners with 214 of the females being either a prisoner or spouse of a prisoner. There were 3555 (42%) African Americans with 1878 being prisoners, 3965 (47%) Caucasian participants with 1958 prisoners and 347 (4%) were Hispanic participants with 238 prisoners. The remainder known 8% participants was American Indian, Asian, and Bi-racial or Other.

Age was determined for a participant at the time of their initial enrollment. Age was known for 7849 participants. There were 1862 (24%) for ages 13-19, 3634 (46%) for the 20-35 age group, 2002 (26%) for ages 36-56 with 351 (4%) 56 years or older.

There were a total of 2731 (51%) TANF eligible participants from the known TANF data, including 1723 TANF eligible participants from the prison population. There were 3368 (38%) participants who stated they were single of which 2056 were incarcerated, while 1267 (14%) indicated they were dating which represented 831 who were prisoners. One thousand and forty-three (11%) of the participants stated they were either engaged or cohabitating with 741 of these being prisoners. Three-hundred and eighty-two of the 2496 (28%) married participants were prisoners while 362 of the 736 (8%) who were divorced or separated individuals were prisoners. One percent of the known marital status stated "Other" as their status.

Overview of the Evaluation—

The logic model used to evaluate this program focused on the measurement of the percentage of change from pre to post. Data was collected by facilitators or staff at the beginning of each activity and immediately at the end of each program workshop. The outputs for the program included the acquisition of knowledge derived from the individual training units, client satisfaction with the program, and marketing outreach. The outcomes focused on a positive increase in knowledge pre to post, positive satisfaction with the program including the quality of the information, the quality of the presentation and the applicability of the program to their lives and finally the number of individuals reached through an extensive marketing campaign.

Tools and instruments—

The names of the instruments used are as follows: PICK, PREP, and LINKS pre and post tests. The same test was given prior to and after the completion of a class and the difference from pre to post was measured. Pre and post testing was not an option for Connections and 3rd Option because of the open format in which the curriculum was delivered. These instruments measured the gain or loss in

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knowledge for each curricula offering. The client satisfaction survey was developed by the evaluators and was based on traditional surveys featured in satisfaction survey literature. This instrument measured the recipient's satisfaction with the workshop. The workshop pre-test tools were given at the beginning of the program along with registration forms. The post test was given at the conclusion of the training session along with the client satisfaction form, and in years three and four, an Immediate Outcomes survey. Typically, the instructor of each class was responsible for the administration of all workshop surveys. In years three and four, follow up Intermediate Outcome surveys were given to community participants 6-12 months after being served. Staff would administrate the Intermediate Outcome follow up surveys through dinner/reunion events, email, and phone. Focus groups were not held during the life of this grant.

Individual Impact—

The attached charts clearly suggest that there was a significant change in the desired direction in attitudes and knowledge of the recipients in nearly all categories. One always needs to be aware of issues around ceiling effect particularly when it relates to measures of attitudes. One can only infer from the data that there were positive changes in behaviors. Direct observations of behavioral changes were not made by the evaluator.



