

**Executive Summary:
East Texas Abstinence Program (ETAP) Evaluation Reports
from 2001 to 2008**

The East Texas Abstinence Program (ETAP) started in the 2001-2002 academic school year with support from the Longview Wellness Center and the Texas Department of Health. During the 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 school years, ETAP was a Special Project of Regional and National Significance (SPRANS) grant recipient. During the 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007, and 2007-2008 school years, ETAP was a Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE) program under the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the federal Department of Health and Human Services.

ETAP seeks to prevent premarital teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease while helping youth to make decisions that are physical, mentally, and emotionally healthy. Methods used included (a) the classes in public schools; (b) programs, activities, and special events in communities and alternative schools; (c) meetings of a supportive coalition of youth and adults; and (d) a multimedia campaign using a range of methods of outreach, including radio, television, posters, billboards, car bumper stickers, and a Web site, <http://virginityrules.com> now called www.esteemjourney.com. With head quarters in Longview, Texas, abstinence education classes were provided to schools in multiple counties in the eastern part of Texas (e.g., Camp County, Gregg, Harrison, Marian, Panola, Rusk, Smith, and Upshur). The total number of students for whom linked pre- and post-intervention questionnaires were statistically analyzed over the course of this seven year study was 16,502. Of these, 11,121 were in middle or high school and 5,381 were younger. Annual evaluation reports were used to guide program development over the years.

Three important characteristics make ETAP stand out from many other abstinence education programs around the country: (a) provision of age-appropriate support across multiple grade levels, (b) development of sustainable community-based programs, and (c) an understanding of the relationship of abstinence education to other educational efforts that prepare youth to achieve life time personal and professional goals. ETAP offered programs suitable for upper elementary, middle school, and high school students. In addition to seeking out materials developed elsewhere designed to be especially helpful for public elementary, middle, and high school students and their parents (i.e., the FACTS curriculum, see <http://www.nwfs.org/abcatalog.asp>) and materials for alternative school students (i.e., *Choosing the Best* materials, see <http://www.choosingthebest.org>), ETAP worked with local schools and communities to develop their own sustainable and culturally relevant materials, such as *ESTEEM: An Abstinence Based Curriculum for Grades 6 – 9*, see <http://www.virginityrules.com> and community coalitions. Typically, pre- to post-intervention changes were statistically significant ($p < .01$). Specific post-intervention results for students in Grades 7 through 12, on key performance measures over the years, are listed below:

Proportion of adolescents who understand that abstinence from sexual activity is the only certain way to avoid out-of-wedlock pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease. The list below shows the combined percentage of youth, after the ETAP program, who “Agree” or “Strongly agree” with the following statement: "The best way for teenagers to avoid unintended pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) is to wait until they are married before having sex."

2001-2002: 76%; 2002-2003: 78%; 2003-2004: 84% in Grades 7 and 8, 78% of high school students; 2004-2005: 83%; 2005-2006: 78%; 2006-2007: 83%; **2007-2008: 90%**.

Proportion of adolescents who indicate an understanding of the social, psychological and health gains to be realized by abstaining from premarital sexual activity. The "Future Orientation" scale is made up of the questions asking if sexual "abstinence as a teen-ager would make it easier" to (a) get a good education, (b) have a good marriage, and (c) have a good job or successful career in the future, all of which are relevant to this measure. Responses offered varied on a 3-point scale from "a lot easier" to "wouldn't make any difference." Participants increased their awareness of the combined future benefits of abstinence in a similar way in all of these areas.

The following lists show the overall improvement on the Future Orientation scale or the percentage of students who responded, after the intervention, that abstinence would make it "a lot easier" to have a good marriage, depending on how results were reported that year:

2001-2002: not reported for marriage specifically but over all improvement on the Future Orientation Scale for females; 2002-2003: not reported for marriage specifically but over all improvement on the Future Orientation Scale, especially for males; 2003-2004: not reported for marriage specifically but over all improvement on the Future Orientation Scale; 2004-2005: 53%; 2005-2006: 59%; 2006-2007: 61%; **2007-2008: 63%**.

Proportion of participants who report they have the refusal or assertiveness skills necessary to resist sexual urges and advances. The list below shows the combined percentage of youth, after the ETAP program, who "Agree" or "Strongly agree" with the following statement: "If someone tries to get me to have sex, I feel confident I can say no."

2001-2002: 64%; 2002-2003: 77%; 2003-2004: 70%; 2004-2005: 76%; 2005-2006: 77%; 2006-2007: 78%; **2007-2008: 77%**.

Proportion of youth who commit to abstain from sexual activity until marriage. The list below shows the combined percentage of youth, after the ETAP program, who responded "Yes" to the following question: "Whether or not you have ever had sex, in the future do you plan to wait until marriage?"

2001-2002: 59%; 2002-2003: 59%; 2003-2004: 56%; 2004-2005: 67%; 2005-2006: 64%; 2006-2007: 65%; **2007-2008: 64%**.

Proportion of participants who intend to avoid situations and risk behaviors, such as drug use and alcohol consumption, which make them more vulnerable to sexual advances and urges. The list below shows the combined percentage of youth, after the ETAP program, who "Agree" or "Strongly agree" with the following statement: "My friends and I can have fun without sex, drugs, or alcohol."

2001-2002: 75%; 2002-2003: 84%; 2003-2004: 80%; 2004-2005: 84%; 2005-2006: 84%; 2006-2007: 84%; **2007-2008: 85%**.

For more information about the East Texas Abstinence Program, contact Tonya Waite or send e-mail to tonya@esteemjourney.com or call 903-758-2762. For more information about this evaluation summary, contact Tary Tobin, Ph.D., 1235 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-1235, send e-mail to ttobin@uoregon.edu or call 541-346-1423.