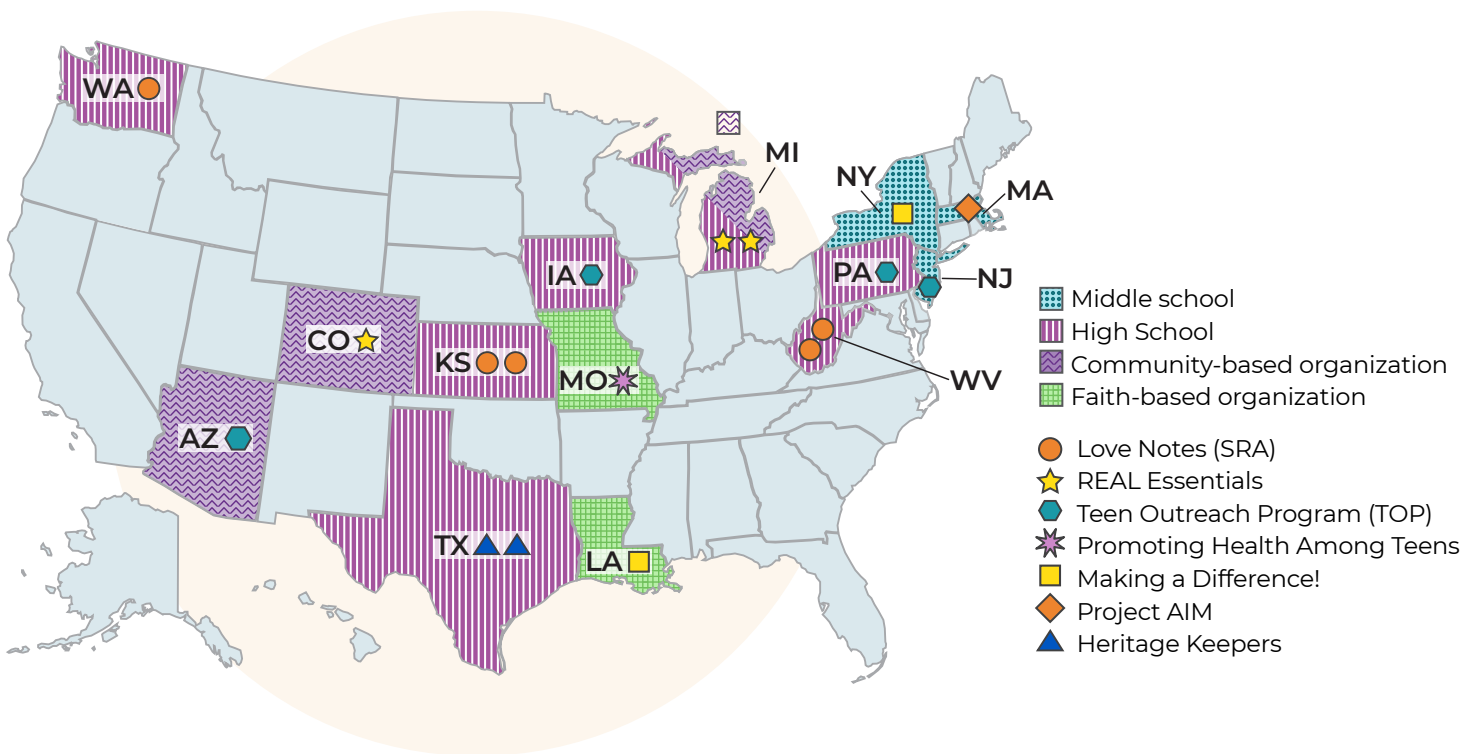


Youth Feedback on SRAE Programming

The Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE) grant program teaches youth how to voluntarily refrain from non-marital sexual activity. This brief highlights the experiences of youth that attended SRAE programs.

Who participated?

Mathematica’s Sexual Risk Avoidance Education National Evaluation (SRAENE) team recruited SRAE providers across the US to coordinate youth focus groups. The SRAENE team conducted 18 focus groups at 15 different providers from April 2023 through July 2023. This map shows each state, setting, and curricula of the participating providers.



Thank you

to participating SRAE grantees, providers, and facilitators for working with the SRAENE team at Mathematica to coordinate focus groups with youth participants in your programs.



I think it [the SRAE class] was really good. You can learn a lot from it, like the pros and cons of a relationship...and I feel like it would be a good class for lower, not just juniors and seniors, but like middle schoolers because it can prevent certain things from happening [in] the future.”

Youth were able to recall topics covered in their programs, and nearly all found the topics meaningful and applicable to their lives.

Across all focus groups, youth identified healthy and unhealthy relationships, STDs/STIs, and communication skills as the most meaningful topics covered.

Among the few topics that youth did not identify as meaningful, they noted that they were not interested in watching “boring” videos that were poorly executed or seemed outdated and discussing topics they had learned about in the past, such as cyberbullying.



I feel like this information will be useful later on in life, it's good to know now so I know for the future.”



In several focus groups, youth emphasized that they enjoyed interactive activities. The most popular activities were roleplaying scenarios about relationships and communication, discussing class content in small groups, and performing community service.

In some focus groups, youth identified topics they would like covered in greater depth:

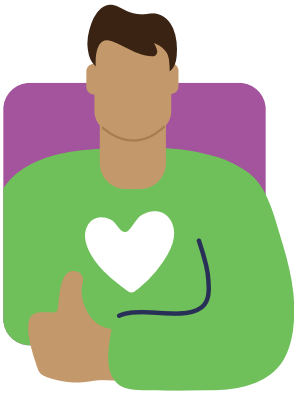
- Pregnancy prevention
- Drugs and alcohol
- Relationships
- STDs/STIs
- Appropriate age to start engaging in sexual activity

In most focus groups, youth said they have used some of the information and skills from the class in their personal lives. Youth shared that they have applied information about healthy and unhealthy relationships, communication skills, and emotional regulation in their lives.



The things we learned, we can use them in situations [that might involve], like things in a toxic relationship that we can use in the future.”

Youth reported high levels of satisfaction with both the facilitators themselves and the facilitation styles used to deliver program material.



In most focus groups, youth thought the class had a positive tone. However, one or two youth from several of the focus groups thought the tone was either negative or was a mix of positive and negative. Most youth felt that they and other youth

in the class were interested in the material, but a small number of others reported having a mixture of interest and boredom, which stemmed from the way material was presented (virtually, lecture-based with little interaction, or through videos).

Overall, across all focus groups, youth said fewer negative (than positive) things about the way their facilitators taught, but their most prevalent criticisms were about a lack of interactive, hands-on activities and the lessons being delivered too quickly.



Relatable
Open Understanding
Pleasant Cheerful Nice
Patient Friendly

Youth had positive thoughts about their facilitators' personalities.

Youth listed many qualities they liked about the way their facilitator taught the class. The most prevalent were:

- The facilitator is engaging, interesting, and/or interactive.
- The facilitator leads interesting and fun activities.
- The facilitator expresses care for the youth and is interested in hearing about their lives and opinions.
- The facilitator is interested in the content that is being taught.

Across all focus groups, youth said they felt respected by their facilitator. To illustrate this, youth shared examples such as:

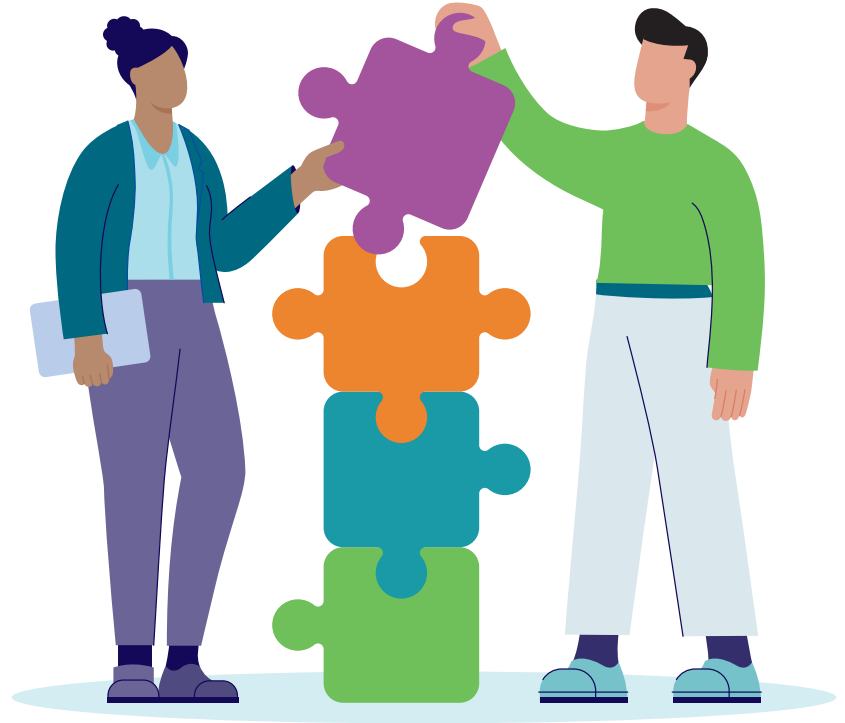
- The facilitator took time to get to know them and showed they cared.
- The facilitator respected their opinions, thoughts, and feelings.
- The facilitator made them feel welcome and comfortable in the classroom.



Every time they asked a question, they reminded us it was a judgment free zone, or they wouldn't share answers with anyone else, so it made us feel comfortable."

Throughout the focus groups, youth often said they felt they could trust their facilitator when asking questions or sharing personal experiences. However, youth in some focus groups shared that they didn't trust their facilitator, because, in general, they didn't trust or share personal feelings with many people.

In some focus groups, youth shared that their SRAE facilitator was a very positive figure in their lives. They said that it's very helpful to have an adult in their lives whom they trust and can talk to, other than their parents or other relatives. Youth reported that some SRAE facilitators went above and beyond, helping youth with academic problems or personal stress, or helping them apply to college.



Youth in one focus group emphatically said they felt their facilitator deserves to be paid more for what she does and there should be more funding for SRAE programs in schools.

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