

*Building “Lasting Relationships” as
Part of the Healthy Marriage
Initiative in Oregon*

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Overview: 4 Parts

1. Introduction to “Lasting Relationships” and the Healthy Marriage Initiative
2. Testimony from a Couple
3. Important things to know about program evaluations
4. Characteristics, issues, and outcomes of the “Lasting Relationships” program in Oregon over the years

1. Introduction to “Lasting Relationships” and the Healthy Marriage Initiative

- “Lasting Relationships”

<http://www.lastingrelationships.org>

- One part of Grant No. 90FE0079

- from the Healthy Marriage Initiative

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage>

- **Awarded to Northwest Family Services**

<http://www.nwfs.org>

A Federal Program

- Funded by the United States
- DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES <http://www.hhs.gov>
- ***ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES***
<http://www.hhs.gov/open/contacts/acf.html>
- No official endorsement should be assumed.

Some of the Allowable Activities:

- Public advertising campaigns on the value of healthy marriages
- Education in high schools on healthy relationship skills
- Marriage education, marriage skills, and relationship skills programs
- Pre-marital education and marriage skills training
- Research on the benefits of healthy marriage education



2. Testimony from a Couple

3. Important things to know about program evaluations

- Two types of evaluation:
- Formative evaluation
 - To adjust program features during implementation to maximize benefits
- Summative evaluation
 - To demonstrate outcomes of program after implementation

Formative evaluation

- “Evaluation’s most important purpose is not to prove, but **to improve.**”

Stuffelbeam, 2000

Summative evaluation

- Provides information to allow decisions regarding program adoption, continuation, or expansion
- “When the cook tastes the soup, that’s formative evaluation; when the guest tastes it, that’s summative evaluation.”

Scriven, 1991

Key components of evaluation (CIPP model)

	Formative	Summative
C ontext	What needs to be done?	Were important needs addressed?
I nputs	How should it be done?	Was the effort guided by a defensible design and budget?
P rocess	Is it being done?	Was the service design executed & modified as necessary?
P roducts	Is it succeeding?	Did the effort succeed?

Context evaluation

- Assess
 - Needs
 - Problems
 - Assets
 - Opportunities
- Help define goals and priorities

Input Evaluation

- Assess
 - Action plans for implementation
 - Staffing plans
 - Resources
 - Feasibility to achieve targeted needs or goals

Process Evaluation

- *Assess*
 - Implementation of plan to help staff carry out program activities (fidelity of implementation)
 - Program's plans & budget (summative)

Product Evaluation

- Assess outcomes (intended & unintended, short-term & long-term)
- Help staff stay focused on achieving important outcomes
- Help users assess the effort's success in meeting targeted needs

“Fear” of Evaluation

- Evaluation will inhibit innovation
 - (evaluation should encourage innovation)
- Program will be terminated
 - (evaluation does not terminate, lack of implementation terminates)
- Information will be misused
 - (evaluators work with stakeholders, not against them)
- Evaluation drains program resources
 - (programs budget for evaluation activities)
- Evaluation has little impact
 - (evaluation is a key component of a program)

4. Characteristics, issues, and outcomes of the “Lasting Relationships” program in Oregon over the years

Highlights of 1st Year

- 2006-2007
- Marriage educators leading this program were trained in the *Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program* (PREP)
<http://www.smartmarriages.com/directory/29>

Collaborative Approach

- Northwest Family Services (NWFS)
- Multnomah County Health Department (MCHD)
- Catholic Charities (CC)

Spanish & English classes and surveys

INITIAL OBJECTIVES

(Ones that Maintained)

Objective 1: To implement culturally specific community campaigns

(a) public service announcements

(b) Spanish language radio

(c) website related to healthy marriage

“Lasting Relationships”

<http://www.lastingrelationships.org>

(d) presentations

Objective 2: Each year, to educate high school students

- (a) the value of marriage;
- (b) relationship skills, particularly in the areas of communication, conflict resolution, safe relationships, and commitment; and
- (c) budgeting and financial responsibility, by providing healthy marriage classes

Objective 3: To provide marriage education to non-married pregnant women and expectant fathers

- parenting skills
- financial management and career advancement
- relationship skills, particularly in the areas of communication, conflict resolution, safe relationships, and commitment to the stability of marriage

We will focus today on Objectives 4 and 5 – the marriage education programs for couples called “Lasting Relationships.”

Objective 4:

Each year, to provide pre-marital education for engaged people and other single persons interested in marriage

Objective 5: Each year, to provide Marriage enhancement and marriage skills training programs for married couples.

An anonymous, retrospective pre- and post-intervention survey was valuable for the evaluation of changes.

To encourage voluntary participation (lessons learned!)

- Explain the purpose of the evaluation
- Protect confidentiality
- Keep it short

Succeeded in establishing the programs
and activities needed to meet objectives in
1st year

- Positive pre- to post-intervention changes
- Gains were highly statistically significant ($p < .001$) for many items
- Commitment, Conflict resolution, and Confidence

Highlights of 2nd Year

- 2007-2008
- 663 individuals' anonymous retrospective pre- and post-intervention questionnaires were received for "Lasting Relationships"

Examples of items of great improvement in Year 2:

- I know warning signs of danger in relationships.
- I can speak assertively about my own needs without being inconsiderate of my partner's needs.
- Everything considered, I am happy in my present relationship.
- When disagreements arise, usually we come to an agreement by mutual give and take.

Best Practices Follow-Up Survey

Follow up surveys were mailed in November, 2008, to individuals who attended classes for couples.

Those who responded by December 12, 2008, were mailed a gift certificate worth five dollars.

Asked questions to identify any positive changes in relationships after taking the classes.

Examples of items with positive changes:

- I want this relationship to stay strong no matter what rough times we may encounter.
- I feel good about making sacrifices or doing things for my partner.

Highlights of 3rd Year

- 2008-2009
- A year of changes!

5 new “performance measures”

– How many improve in these areas?

1. *Communication skills* (ability to listen to and speak with another person with whom one has a close relationship).
2. *Conflict resolution skills* (ability to problem solve with another person with whom one has a close relationship).

3. *Abuse prevention skills* (ability to prevent physical or emotional abuse).
4. *Budgeting / financial skills* (ability to handle money wisely).
5. *Attitudes toward marriage* -- more favorable (marriage in general and/or feelings about own situation).

Highlights of 4th Year

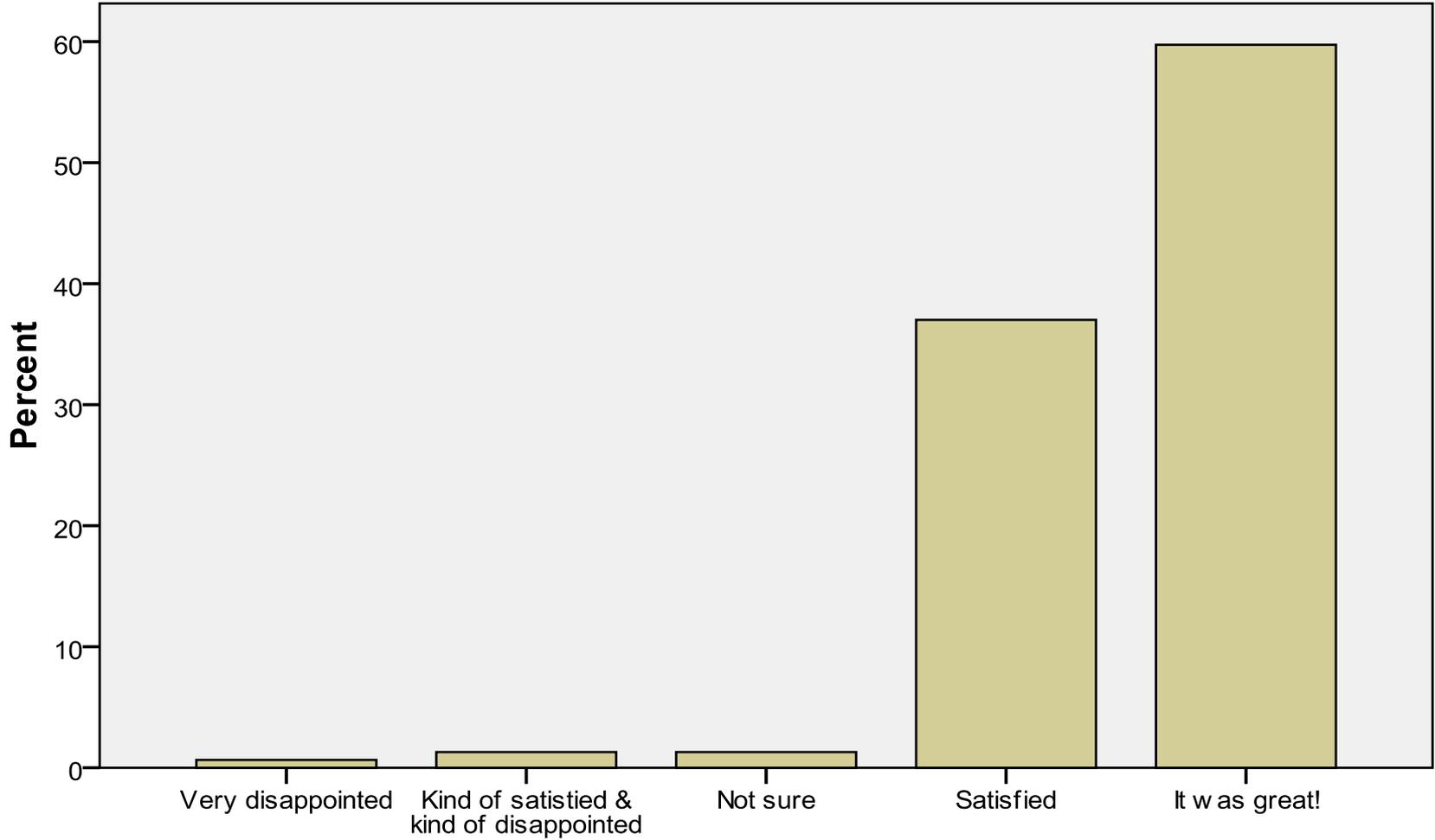
- 2009-2010
- A great year!
- Over 4,000 individuals improved on at least one performance measure – see hand out.

1st and 2nd Semi Annual HMI-PDX Reports for Performance Measures in Year 4

Number Improved:

Time Period	Allowable Activity (AA)	Communication Skills	Conflict Resolution Skills	Abuse Prevention	Budget & Financial Skills	Attitude Marriage	At Least 1 Measure Improved
2nd Semi-Annual	AA2	1013	976	974	562	819	1139
1st Semi-Annual	(High School)	1175	1131	1128	659	907	1368
Full Year		2188	2107	2102	1221	1726	2507
2nd Semi-Annual	AA3	43	42	42	40	40	45
1st Semi-Annual	(Pregnant)	66	66	65	58	61	72
Full Year		109	108	107	98	101	117
2nd Semi-Annual	AA4	399	400	380	297	324	410
1st Semi-Annual	(Engaged, Single)	126	126	126	107	110	130
Full Year		525	526	506	404	434	540
2nd Semi-Annual	AA5	304	289	271	216	280	316
1st Semi-Annual	(Married)	576	555	536	450	546	590
Full Year		880	844	807	666	826	906
2nd Semi-Annual	Total	1759	1707	1667	1115	1463	1910
1st Semi-Annual		1943	1878	1855	1274	1624	2160
Full Year		3702	3585	3522	2389	3087	4070

Satisfied 5



Satisfied 5



Highlights of 5th Year

- 2010-2011
- Gathering data now for the first semi-annual report – due next month
- Considering options for the future



Questions?



QUESTIONS?