



Alignment with the *SMARTool for Assessing Potential Effectiveness for Sexual Risk Avoidance Curricula and Programs*

Purpose: This document illustrates how PYP aligns with Parts II and III of the *SMARTool* (Center for Relationship Education, 2010). This alignment document is intended to be used as a resource to help assess whether PYP is a fit for the needs of your community and the requirements of your funding sources. Full alignment with the *SMARTool* may require additional programming beyond the Possessing Your Power Program. Possessing Your Power recommends that any additional programming is consistent with high quality adult facilitation and strengths based and positive youth development approach.

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Overview: Possessing Your Power (PYP) is an evidence-based, positive youth development program with over 15 years of implementation nationwide. PYP promotes the healthy development of adolescents in grades 6-12 through a unique combination of weekly peer group meetings, engaging curriculum and community service learning, facilitated by caring, responsive and knowledgeable adults. PYP fosters protective factors and prevents risk among participating youth with opportunities to learn new knowledge and skills and to practice them in an emotionally safe and supportive environment. PYP has been implemented variety of settings, including rural, urban, in-school, after-school, through community organizations and in systems and institutional settings.

Possessing Your Power provides supports for over 20 partners, nation-wide and state-wide, implementing PYP. Partner staff work with organizations considering PYP to help determine PYP's fit with the organization and community. When an organization joins the Partnership, they receive training, as well as ongoing technical assistance, and support to implement PYP with fidelity and quality.

The PYP Curriculum was revised in 2017. The revision was informed by research in adolescent development and best practices in positive youth development and incorporated learning from 15 years of Possessing Your Power's direct program delivery, replication, and an extensive feedback process specific to the curriculum revision. Given what we know about how to develop teens' competencies and pave the way for a successful transition into adulthood, the curriculum focuses on three core content areas that work together to build protective factors, reduce the impact of risk and promote healthy development: skill building, developing a positive sense of self and strengthening connections to others. The PYP Curriculum includes lessons on Decision-Making, Problem Solving, Emotion Management, Goal-Setting, Communication, Empathy, Relationships, Community, Self-Understanding, Social Identity and Health & Wellness. The PYP Curriculum uses a holistic, positive youth development approach to sexual health education, including comprehensive, up-to-date and medically accurate sexual health information. PYP facilitators have the flexibility to select lessons that meet the needs and interests of the teens they serve.

Alignment: Part II – CURRICULUM: The "What and How" Targets for Sexual Risk-Avoidance Programs

Target	How PYP Aligns
1. Enhance knowledge of a) physical development and sexual risks and b) personal relationships	<p>The PYP Curriculum enhances knowledge of physical development, sexual risks, and healthy personal relationships.</p> <p>Possessing Your Power’s curriculum development team working on the 2017 revision was comprised of staff with a range of educational backgrounds, including four masters-level social workers and two doctoral-level developmental psychologists, with expertise across healthy relationships, adolescent sexual behavior, risk and protective factors, instructional design, cultural norms and evaluation. Health information was reviewed by a physician for scientific and medical accuracy, and sources are listed within lessons.</p> <p>PYP Curriculum lessons are developmentally appropriate for adolescents of varied ages and grades, beginning at grade 6 and extending through high school. The curriculum includes three developmental levels- Foundational, Intermediate and Advanced- which progress in content and structure. Facilitators select lessons that are most appropriate for participants and can incorporate lessons from across developmental levels.</p> <p>The PYP Curriculum is consistent with common themes from the health and science education standards listed on p. 17 of the SMARTool. The following topics are included, with universal topics bolded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STIs and HIV/AIDS • Other adolescent risk behaviors • Decision making • Refusal and negotiation skills • Media and Internet influences • Goal setting • Connection to parents (relationships, influence, and support) • Connection to peers (relationships, influence, and support) • Effective communication • Sexual exploitation, coercion, and assault • Pubertal development and reproductive anatomy • Conception and pregnancy • Values, beliefs and attitudes • Healthy and unhealthy relationships • Effective communication • Sexual harassment, personal violence, and date rape prevention
2. Support personal attitudes and beliefs that	<p>In the PYP Curriculum, sexual health lessons are woven into a larger asset based model that supports exploration and clarification of personal attitudes and beliefs, as well as increased self-efficacy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants develop skills across a variety of areas, including navigating various types of influence, recognizing media messages, responding to pressure, decision making, goal setting, healthy relationships, communication,

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value sexual risk avoidance.	<p>and personal values. These skills, combined with knowledge from sexual health lessons, support participants' ability to engage in sexual risk avoidance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PYP Curriculum lessons are written in an engaging, relevant, and compelling manner that encourages critical thinking, peer discussion, and personal reflection. • Lessons on goal-setting and self-understanding help participants clarify their own values and goals, and lessons on decision-making, problem-solving, communication, and emotion management help them develop skills to pursue their values and goals. • Being engaged in PYP offers teens relationships with trained facilitators with high expectations. • Being engaged in PYP offers teens a positive, supportive peer group that supports positive universal values, such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, caring, courage, etc.
3. Acknowledge and address common rationalizations for sexual activity	<p>PYP Curriculum lessons prompt discussions about the reasons people engage in sexual activity, as well as the physical, mental and emotional risks of sexual activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons consistently reinforce abstinence as the safest way to avoid pregnancy and STDs. • Lessons on abstinence include the point that even if someone has already been sexually active, they can begin practicing abstinence.
4. Improve perception of and independence from negative peer and social norms.	<p>PYP/ Yes!Dare2Dream are positive peer groups, facilitated by trained, knowledgeable adults, in which participants learn together and provide social support and encouragement to one another.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons include discussions of peer pressures, influences, and media messages and the impact these can have on behavior. • Lessons on decision-making and communication increase participants' skill in resisting negative peer pressure.
5. Build personal competence and self-efficacy to avoid sexual activity	<p>PYP builds personal competence and self-efficacy by supporting skill development, a positive sense of self, and connections to others who are a supportive influence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons promote critical thinking and decision-making skills. • Lessons support participants in clarifying their goals and values. • Lessons support participants in communicating assertively. • Lessons on abstinence include the point that even if someone has already been sexually active, they can begin practicing abstinence. • PYP participants engage in Community Service Learning, which reinforces lesson content and further supports skill development as youth plan, participate in and reflect on service learning projects designed to make a difference in their community, thereby increasing their sense of self-efficacy. • With regard to previously sexually coerced/abused individuals, the PYP Curriculum and training prompts facilitators to be aware of both mandated reporting responsibilities and applicable resources.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitators receive information on facilitating with trauma awareness, and the curriculum includes prompts for facilitators to consider how lessons may affect youth who have experienced, or are experiencing, trauma.
6. Strengthen personal intention and commitment to avoid sexual activity.	<p>PYP promotes the development of skills to act on personal intentions to delay sex.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PYP includes discussion of the reasons people are abstinent and the physical, mental and emotional risks of sexual activity. PYP includes discussion of pressure and communication strategies for responding to pressure, including pressure to engage in sexual activity. PYP is a positive peer group, facilitated by trained, knowledgeable adults, where participants can share their values, beliefs and intentions and receive encouragement and social support from peers.
7. Identify and reduce the opportunities for sexual activity.	<p>The PYP Curriculum encourages the development of critical thinking and increases participants' ability to avoid and/or navigate risk situations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The curriculum specifically increases understanding of the relationship between substance use and sexual activity. Lessons on teen dating violence increase participant awareness and understanding of unhealthy and abusive behaviors, including sexual pressure, coercion and violence. Across lessons, the curriculum encourages participants to identify adults they could talk to if they needed support. A lesson entitled "Choices, Decisions, & Consequences" engages participants in identifying their social support system.
8. Strengthen future goals and opportunities	<p>PYP creates opportunities for participants to identify viable, attractive options in their future plans and relationships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The curriculum includes activities where participants envision a positive future and identify goals for themselves. Additionally, participants have opportunities to share their vision and goals with their PYP facilitator and peers and receive encouragement and positive reinforcement. Lessons explore and reinforce the potential for positive future opportunities, such as promoting one's general health, identifying qualities desirable in friendships and romantic relationships, and identifying qualities desirable in a future partner. In the "ENEMIES of full potential -Sex Before Marriage" lesson, teens explore how becoming a teen parent would impact their life.
9. Partner with parents	<p>The PYP Curriculum does not have materials specific to parent engagement; however, the PYP approach is supportive of partnership with parents and empowering parents and youth to discuss sexuality and related topics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across lessons, the curriculum encourages participants to identify adults they could talk to; this often includes parents, adult family members and other caregivers. A program or series of activities to engage parents could be implemented alongside PYP.

Alignment: Part III- Quality Improvement: The "What's Working?" Assessment

Questions	How PYP Aligns
Monitor Program Implementation: Has the program been implemented as designed?	The PYP logic model clearly specifies the fidelity criteria for implementation of PYP, and there are multiple touchpoints between Partner staff and prospective and current Partners to review expectations for implementing PYP with fidelity and quality (E.g., Possessing Your Power's Masters Training Certification and Training of Facilitators). Partners develop Quality Assurance Plans at the beginning of each program year to indicate how they will regularly monitor fidelity and quality of PYP implementation. Partners use Possessing Your Power proprietary online data management system, to enter, view and use real-time implementation data in support of their continuous quality improvement efforts. Annually, Possessing Your Power Partner team engages members in a certification review which includes using data to assess fidelity and to highlight areas in need of improvement.
Monitor Learners: Did the students change knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors after the program?	Possessing Your Power requires use of the PYP Teen Pre and Post Surveys which are youth self-report surveys that support Partners' understanding of changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. The surveys measure social and emotional learning, academic risk behavior, sexual risk behavior, and teens' perceptions of their program experiences. Data is entered into a collection system and pre-post change is summarized in reports accessible to Partners for their use in reporting and continuous quality improvement efforts. Partners may augment the PYP surveys with additional items or scales to support their funding reporting requirements.
Program Review & Quality Improvement: What improvements should be made in the program?	Partners develop Quality Assurance Plans at the beginning of each program year to indicate how they will regularly monitor fidelity and quality of their PYP implementation. Possessing Your Power view and use data to understand their successes as well as areas in need of improvement. Possessing Your Power Partner staff support Partners in using their data to improve fidelity and quality and to enhance outcomes for the youth they serve.