



Impact Evaluation of the True North Program in Broward County, Florida

Final Impact Evaluation Report for
Children's Harbor, Inc.

November 25, 2020

Prepared by

Dr. Leslie A. Leip, Dynamic Evaluation Corporation

Recommended Citation:

Leip, L. (2020). Evaluation of the True North Program in Broward County, Florida. Final report submitted to Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Acknowledgements:

The True North core team wants to thank Barbara Spoor for her support of the Children's Harbor True North program and her guidance throughout the grant period. The True North core team also appreciates the encouragement and inspiration provided by Robin McDonald and Seth Chamberlain. A special thank you goes to Jane Choi for all of the time and effort you put into True North and the evaluation.

The True North evaluation team appreciates the on-going support from Children's Harbor, specifically Tiffany Dhooge and the Children's Harbor Board. A very special thank you to Rachel Pires, the director of the True North program, for making the program work no matter the circumstances. The evaluation team is grateful for Sarah Alston, the True North data manager, for her hard work and commitment to the program and the evaluation. Thanks to Aleah Seenauth for her dedication to True North. The evaluation team appreciates all of the True North navigators and supervisors who gave their love and support to the young adults. All of you helped to change the world for the better.

Special thanks to the young adults who participated in this research endeavor. Many of them wanted to fully participate in the True North evaluation because they wanted to help future generations of foster care youth who are aging out of the system. Simply awe-inspiring.

Disclosure:

This publication was prepared under Grant Number 90FM0069 from the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U. S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS). The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views or policies of HHS, ACF, or OFA.

There are no conflicts of interest.

Structured Abstract: “The Evaluation of Children’s Harbor True North program in Broward County, Florida”

Objective. The objective of True North is to support and assist young adults with their transition out of foster care. True North is a multi-component intervention in which the program group participated in group workshops and individual sessions on relationship skills and financial stability, and received employment assistance and mentoring.

Study design. To assess the impact of the True North program, a randomized controlled trial (RCT) design was used. Three cohorts, with a total of 326 young adults, participated in the evaluation. The young adults were 17-23 years of age and in foster care, extended foster care, or were involved in the foster care system by receiving services in the past, and resided in Broward County at the time of enrollment into the True North program.

Results. The results of the impact evaluation showed that there were no statistically significant differences in the primary outcome measures of healthy relationships, job readiness, overall well-being, and financial stability between the program group and comparison group.

Conclusion. This evaluation augments evidence-based relationship programming research and adds value to the Office of Family Assistance and Administration (OFA) of Children and Families (ACF) learning agenda about HMRE programming because the True North program is the only multi-component program of its kind to be evaluated using a randomized controlled trial. Despite strong implementation, future research should consider using measures that ask about tangible, behavioral aspects of the outcomes, in addition to or in lieu of measures of perception, in order to more fully understand the impact of the program.

Contents

I.	INTRODUCTION	1
A.	Introduction and study overview	1
B.	Primary research question(s)	2
C.	Secondary research question(s).....	3
II.	INTERVENTION AND COUNTERFACTUAL CONDITIONS	4
A.	Description of program as intended.....	4
B.	Description of counterfactual condition as intended.....	6
C.	Research Questions about the intervention and counterfactual conditions as implemented	6
III.	STUDY DESIGN	7
A.	Research design and sample formation	7
IV.	ANALYSIS METHODS.....	14
A.	Analytic sample.....	14
B.	Outcome measures.....	16
C.	Baseline equivalence and sample characteristics.....	19
V.	FINDINGS AND ESTIMATION APPROACH	25
A.	Implementation evaluation	25
B.	Primary impact evaluation	29
C.	Sensitivity analyses.....	35
D.	Additional analyses	37
VI.	DISCUSSION.....	41
VII.	REFERENCES	43
VIII.	APPENDICES	44
A.	Logic Model for the program.....	44
B.	Data and study sample.....	45
C.	Data preparation	54
D.	Impact estimation	55

Tables

II.1.	Description of intended intervention and counterfactual components and target populations.....	8
II.2.	Staff training and development to support intervention and counterfactual components.....	10
II.3.	True North implementation research questions.	11
IV.1a.	Children's Harbor True North individual sample sizes and response rates by intervention status.	15
IV.2.	Outcome measures used to answer the True North <i>primary</i> impact analyses research questions.	17
IV.3.	Outcome measures used to answer the True North (TN) <i>secondary</i> impact analyses research questions.	18
IV.4a.	Summary statistics of key baseline measures and baseline equivalence across True North study groups, for individuals completing the post-test immediately after the intervention ended (Primary & secondary research questions.)	20
IV.4a.	Summary statistics of key baseline measures and baseline equivalence across True North study groups, for individuals completing the post-test immediately after the intervention ended (Primary & secondary research questions.)	21
IV.4b.	Summary statistics of key baseline measures and baseline equivalence across True North study groups, for individuals completing the post-test immediately after the intervention ended.(Secondary research question about partner relationships)	22
IV.4b.	Summary statistics of key baseline measures and baseline equivalence across True North study groups, for individuals in relationships at baseline who completed the post-test immediately after the intervention ended.(Secondary research question about partner relationships.)	23
IV.4b.	Summary statistics of key baseline measures and baseline equivalence across True North study groups, for individuals completing the follow-up 7-9 months after the intervention ended.(Primary & secondary research questions.)	24
V.1.	Covariates included in impact analyses.	32
V.2a.	Post-intervention estimated effects using data from immediately after the intervention ended to address the primary research questions.	33
V.2b.	Post-intervention estimated effects using data from 7-9 months after the intervention ended to address the primary research questions.	34
V.3.	Differences in means between intervention and comparison groups estimated using alternative measures.....	36

V.4a.	Post-intervention estimated effects using data from immediately after the intervention ended to address the secondary research questions.....	39
V.4b.	Post-intervention estimated effects using data from 7-9 months after the intervention ended to address the secondary research questions.....	40
B.1.	Data used to address implementation research questions.....	46
B.2.	Key features of the impact analysis data collection.....	49
B.3.	Measures for answering the implementation research questions.....	50

Figures

B.1.	CONSORT diagram for True North individual clients completing post-test and follow-up measures for primary research questions.....	52
B.2.	CONSORT diagram for True North individual clients completing post-test and follow-up measures for secondary research questions	53

Impact Evaluation of Children's Harbor's True North in Broward County, Florida

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Introduction and study overview

During the past fifteen years, Broward County, Florida, has focused on improving outcomes for young adults (age 17-23) exiting the foster care system. By using a collaborative, community-based approach, the county successfully developed an integrated system of care, and established a county-wide outcomes tracking system. Despite the efforts of the community, positive and negative outcomes for these young adults remained fairly static from 2011-2014. For example, the percentage of youth who obtained a high school diploma or General Education Diploma (GED) remained between 38% and 40% and the percentage of youth who were parents stayed at 20% (Broward County System of Care for Transitioning into Independent Living, 2014). In an effort to further identify factors that would positively impact young adults' transitions to independence, predictive analytics were used on data from this population in Broward County in 2013. The findings indicated that young adults were more likely to transition to adulthood successfully if they attained stability and/or permanency in their relationships, were employed, and/or involved in an educational program (Leip, 2015). Hence, the motivation for Children's Harbor to create the True North program was to help young adults who were aging out of foster care forge a pathway to successful adulthood by providing the opportunity to participate in a program that incorporated evidence-based marriage and relationship education, along with financial and employment education.

Children's Harbor was awarded a 2015-2020 healthy marriage and relationship education (HMRE) grant by the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to fund the new program. Specifically, True North was set up as a multi-component intervention, with marriage and relationship programming, financial and employment education, and individual mentoring sessions, supported by strengths-based case management and evidence-based motivational interviewing. The program was delivered by navigators (case managers) and workshop facilitators and supported by the True North core team, which included the program director, navigator supervisor, the data manager, and the local evaluator.

A holistic evaluation plan for True North that included program performance and implementation evaluations, and a randomized controlled trial (RCT) impact evaluation was developed in order to fully assess the impact of the intervention, to augment the evidence-based relationship programming research, and to add value to the OFA and ACF learning agenda about HMRE programming. The primary motivation of the holistic evaluation plan was to assess the effectiveness of the True North program. Once the True North core team learns what works and doesn't work, the program can be refined to help the young adults who are aging out of foster care in Broward County.

This is the first impact evaluation of the entire True North program, but the marriage and relationship education program component, Love Notes, has been previously evaluated. An evaluation of one of the first versions of Love Notes was a program delivered to youth via the public school system. The findings showed an impact on the youths' awareness of healthy versus unhealthy relationship patterns and reduction of verbal aggression (Adler-Baeder, et al., 2007). A subsequent study of the Love Notes curriculum that was delivered to at-risk youth by a community-based organization found that students enjoyed the training, significantly increased their knowledge about relationships, showed a significantly lower acceptance of violence in dating relationships, and significantly increased their communication and conflict management skills (Antle, et al., 2011). Another analysis of the Love Notes program found that youth who participated in the program were more likely to use birth control and condoms and expressed lower future intentions for sexual intercourse (Barbee et al., 2016). Cunningham, van Zyl and Borders (2016) tested the efficacy of Love Notes for the first time compared to another program. The target population was unmarried youth, ages 14-19, living in Louisville, Kentucky. At the 3-month follow-up, no effects were found on any of the primary outcomes (sex without condoms, birth control or number of sexual partners). By six months, however, youth who participated in Love Notes were more likely to use both condoms and other forms of birth control, were less likely to have ever had sexual intercourse, and were less likely to have had sex in the last three months. These effects did not hold at the 12-month follow up, however (Cunningham, et. al, 2016).

Impact evaluations about financial stability and employment programs have also been conducted, though they did not include a marriage and relationship component. Nadon (2020) analyzed data from the National Youth in Transition Database in order to examine the effect of budgeting and financial education on school enrollment and employment status. She found that youth receiving budgeting and financial education services and post-secondary education services experienced significantly improved outcomes, including reduced likelihood of homelessness and increased likelihood of employment and educational enrollment. Another RCT study examined the impact of career development services and showed a statistically significant difference between youth receiving the career development activities compared to those in the control group (Geenen, et al., 2013).

While there have been evaluations of marriage and relationship programs and evaluations of financial stability and employment programs, no evaluations of the implementation and impact of Love Notes with financial stability and employment components have been completed at this point in time. Hence, this current study adds to the ACF learning agenda.

B. Primary research question(s)

The primary research questions and hypotheses for the True North impact evaluation are:

1. What is the impact of the full True North program on the program group compared to the comparison group on their understanding of healthy relationships at the end of the intervention?

The corresponding hypothesis is: The True North program group is more likely to have improved relationships than the comparison group at the end of the True North program.

2. What is the impact of the full True North program on the program group compared to the comparison group on their understanding of job readiness at the end of the intervention?

The corresponding hypothesis is: The True North program group is more likely to have improved understanding of job readiness than the comparison group at the end of the True North program.

3. What is the impact of the full True North program on the program group compared to the comparison group on overall well-being at the time of the 7-9 month follow-up after the end of the intervention?

The corresponding hypothesis is: The True North program group is more likely to have improved wellbeing than the comparison group at the 7-9 month follow-up after the intervention.

4. What is the impact of the full True North program on the program group compared to the comparison group on financial stability at the time of the 7-9 month follow-up after the end of the intervention?

The corresponding hypothesis is: The True North program group is more likely to improved financial stability than the comparison group at the 7-9 month follow-up after the intervention.

C. Secondary research question(s)

The secondary research questions for the impact evaluation are:

1. What is the impact of the full True North program on the program group compared to the comparison group on perceptions about fighting in relationships at the end of the intervention?

The corresponding hypothesis is: The True North program group is more likely to have improved perceptions about fighting in relationships than the comparison group at the end of the True North program.

2. What is the impact of the full True North program on the program group compared to the comparison group on perceptions about partner relationships at the end of the intervention?

The corresponding hypothesis is: The True North program group is more likely to have improved perceptions about partner relationships than the comparison group at the end of the True North program.

3. What is the impact of the full True North program on the program group compared to the comparison group on employment challenges at the point of 7-9 month follow-up after the end of the intervention?

The corresponding hypothesis is: The True North program group is more likely to have fewer employment challenges than the comparison group at the 7-9 month follow-up after the intervention.

Together, these research questions provided the basis for the True North RCT impact evaluation, which was registered at ClinicalTrials.gov. In the following section, an overview of the True North program is provided. The study design and the methods used for the analyses is then presented, followed by the findings of the implementation and impact evaluations.

II. INTERVENTION AND COUNTERFACTUAL CONDITIONS

This section provides a summary of the True North program and a description of the program components and the intended implementation for the program and comparison groups. The three cohorts that are included in the evaluation participated in True North programming that was implemented from July 2016 to January 2020.

A. Description of program as intended

The True North program is a multi-component intervention in which the program group participated in group workshops and individual sessions on relationship skills and financial stability and received employment assistance and mentoring. The target population was young adults ages 18-23 who were in foster care, extended foster care, or were involved in the foster care system, and resided in Broward County at the time of enrollment into the True North program. The logic model for True North shows the specific activities, outputs, and outcomes for the program (see Appendix A). There are numerous outcomes listed in the True North logic model and the intermediate outcomes (improving relationships and job readiness) and long-term outcomes (improved financial stability and overall well-being) in the bold font are the primary and secondary outcomes examined in this evaluation.

1. Program Components and Content

Healthy Relationships. The program component that focuses on healthy relationships includes group workshops and individual sessions that incorporate the Love Notes V2.1 curriculum. Love Notes builds skills and knowledge for healthy and successful relationships with partners, family, friends, and co-workers. It was designed to help young people make wise relationship decisions and sexual choices by using the “success sequence,” which focuses on the importance of first achieving education goals and career goals and then marriage and children. The individual sessions with trained navigators occur once a month to accentuate the Love Notes lessons and apply the knowledge learned via the Love Notes workbook.

Financial Literacy and Job Readiness/Employment. The program components that pertain to financial literacy and job readiness include group workshops, individual sessions, and internship opportunities.¹ The first workshop focuses on banking and savings, asset building, credit, budgeting, and debt. The second workshop focuses on resume building, job coaching, mock interviewing, dressing for success, on-the-job communication strategies, and a discussion of barriers to employment. Individual sessions about financial literacy and job readiness are also offered. Individual sessions include developing a personal spending plan, budgeting, credit/credit repair, developing a resume, job hunting, applications and the process of applying for a job, interview preparation, and the hiring process. Children's Harbor has subsidized employment agreements with several community agencies in order to provide structured learning experiences

¹ Originally, a partner organization was responsible for offering the job readiness and financial literacy session. Based on numerous observations of these sessions for cohort 1 that showed low fidelity with the partner organization's implementation, the True North team decided to offer the job readiness and financial literacy sessions to the program participants in cohorts 2 and 3.

that expose True North participants to occupations in their area of interest and provide them with opportunities to practice the job readiness skills that they learn while in the True North program. If a participant is interested in an internship or job opportunity, she/he tells her/his navigator, and they work with the program supervisor to set up the internship or job opportunity. Interns receive monthly supervision and on-site job coaching services.

Mentoring. The True North program offers mentoring opportunities. Weekly case management services were provided for the program participants by the navigators. A combination of Strengths-Based Case Management (SBCM) and Motivational Interviewing (MI) are used by the navigators while interacting with their clients and creating the Individual Development Plan (IDP) with them. True North navigators assess their clients' needs, link them to supportive services, and work to reduce barriers to participation using a variety of strategies. At the end of the program, the navigator completes an aftercare plan with the participants, and provides any resources or referrals as needed. During the program phase, navigators connect with the clients in their caseload on a monthly basis to keep them engaged in the program and monitor their progress.

Program Supports and Incentives. True North provides program supports (transportation and child care) to assist participants with attending scheduled workshops. Program participants receive a gift card at the end of every group workshop to encourage program participation. Incentives are also provided to the participants for completing the pre-test, post-test, and follow-up surveys. Participants are invited to attend prosocial events to develop a sense of belonging. After the group workshops and individual sessions were completed, the navigators connected with young adults on a bi-weekly basis via phone/text/or in-person to offer support. The young adults who are in extended foster care have a ChildNet aftercare specialist who supports them with their housing and education needs.

2. Intended Implementation

In this section, the intended duration, dosage, staffing, and setting of the True North program are presented. The intended components and content, dosage and implementation schedule, and delivery are shown in Table II.1. The program components include healthy relationships, economic stability (includes financial stability and job readiness), and mentoring.

The group workshops include Love Notes, financial literacy, and job readiness. The sessions were led by two trained facilitators on a monthly basis at the FLITE center² and the Children's Harbor Lauderhill office. Workshops were offered various days and times throughout the month to meet participant scheduling needs, and each workshop lasted approximately two hours. For example, Love Notes lessons 1 & 2 were offered 4-5 times in month 1 so participants could

² The FLITE Center is responsible for coordinating the service providers within the TIL System of Care and conducting ongoing needs assessments to identify service needs, rising trends, and cultivate new resources in Broward County. Their mission is to guide those aging out of foster care and other vulnerable youth for successful transition to independence through housing, education, employment, and system of care coordination, so they are an excellent source for recruitment of clients.

attend a workshop that fit their schedule. The maximum dosage for group workshops was thirteen hours, and the acceptable minimum dosage was ten hours. Navigators met with the program participants for seven individual sessions that focused on the application of knowledge from Love Notes, and the financial and employment group workshops. In addition, the navigators offered professional mentoring when reviewing each participant's IDP, which included goal-setting. The maximum dosage for individual sessions was seven hours total. Pro-social events were offered every 4-5 months and included picnics, bowling, and Thanksgiving dinner.

The five navigators were required to have a bachelor's or master's degree in order to apply, but other staff were not required to have a college degree. All staff received training and development for the True North Program (see Table II.2 for training list). True North staff received training on the Love Notes program curriculum from the Dibble Institute. In addition, staff attended weekly supervision/team meetings, where the program supervisor provided training on program components and feedback from observations of the Love Notes workshops. Motivational interviewing training was provided by Nova Southeastern University. Strength-based case management training was provided on a yearly basis. The program navigators and financial coaches completed annual training on various Children's Harbor policies and procedures, including IDP procedures, productivity requirements, and documentation.

B. Description of counterfactual condition as intended

The young adults in the comparison group did not receive healthy relationship group workshops, financial and job readiness group workshops, or the mentoring services. The comparison group received the same system services as those in the program group (see Table II.1 below) because all are required by the HMRF grant or Broward County government. The system services included screening and assessment of basic needs, monthly contacts from True North, and the opportunity to participate in pro-social events.

C. Research Questions about the intervention and counterfactual conditions as implemented

The True North implementation research questions focused on program fidelity, dosage, quality, engagement, and context. These questions served as the foundation for our implementation analysis and are listed in Table II.3.

III. STUDY DESIGN

The first part of this section presents the research design, eligibility criteria, and a description of the sample formation. The second part of this section provides an overview of the data collection procedures used for the True North evaluation.

A. Research design and sample formation

A randomized controlled trial (RCT) design was used to test the effectiveness of True North program. The eligibility criteria for participation in the study were that participants be: 1) young adults age 17 and currently in foster care; 2) young adults ages 17-23 currently in extended foster care; 3) young adults who were involved in foster care at some point in their lives; and 4) residing in Broward County at the time of enrollment in True North.

Three cohorts of young adults in the program and comparison groups participated in the evaluation. There was a total of 326 participants. The target number for each cohort was 120 youth with equal probability of random assignment to either the program or comparison group. Cohort 1 consisted of 121 youth (61 program, 60 comparison), cohort 2 consisted of 120 youth (60 in each group), and cohort 3 had 85 youth (43 in program, 42 in comparison).³

³ The target number of youth for cohort 3 (85 of 120) was not achieved because fewer youth were aging out of the Broward County foster care system, so the target population decreased and not enough youth were available to participate in True North.

Table II.1. Description of intended intervention and counterfactual components and target populations.

Component	Curriculum and content	Dosage and schedule	Delivery	Target Population
Intervention				
Healthy Relationships				
Relationship skills group workshops	Love Notes Healthy relationships curriculum lessons 1-13: communicating effectively, healthy relationships skills, prevention of partner violence, decision-making, planning future	13 hours total, with workshops occurring monthly (13 workshops for cohort 1; 7 workshops for cohorts 2 & 3)*	Group workshops are held at FLITE Center (and Children's Harbor Lauderhill location) and led by two Love Notes trained facilitators who have a B.S.	Young adults (age 17-23) with foster care involvement
Relationship skills individual sessions	Love Notes healthy relationships curriculum workbook exercises related to lessons 1-13	7 hours of individual sessions total (every other month for cohort 1; every month for cohorts 2 & 3)**	Individual sessions are provided by Love Notes trained navigators who have a B.S.	Young adults (age 17-23) with foster care involvement
Economic Stability				
Financial literacy & Job readiness group workshops	Budgeting; personal spending plan; credit ratings; checking and savings accounts; resume preparation; interview and communication skills; appropriate work attire; answering interview questions	4 hours total (2 2-hour workshops for cohorts 1 and 2 and 7 35-minute workshops for cohort 3)***	Group workshops are provided by two trained facilitators	Young adults (age 17-23) with foster care involvement
Financial literacy & Job readiness individual sessions	Work on individual development goals related to financial literacy, career assessment, job readiness skills, and employment obstacles/challenges.	7 hours of individual sessions total (every other month for cohort 1; every month for cohorts 2 & 3)	Individual sessions are provided by a trained financial coach	Young adults (age 17-23) with foster care involvement
Job & internship opportunities	Making job & internship connections & opportunities; placement assistance	If an intern, once a month supervisory meeting and 1-4 hours of job coaching per month; Interns work 10-29 hours a month	Job & internship assistance provided by the trained financial coach & TN team, FLITE Center employment specialist	Young adults w/ foster care involvement who want job or internship
Mentoring				
Case management services	Strengths-based case management (SBCM) & Motivational Interviewing (MI)	7 hours of individual sessions total* (every other month for cohort 1; every month for cohorts 2 & 3)	SBCM & MI provided by trained navigators	Young adults (age 17-23) with foster care involvement
Screening	Intimate Partner Violence Screening and Substance Abuse Screening & Referrals	During intake process	Trained navigators	Young adults (age 17-23) with foster care involvement

Component	Curriculum and content	Dosage and schedule	Delivery	Target Population
Supportive Professional Mentoring	Following up with young adults	Call or text once a month for 6 months after program ends (1-3 hours total)	Trained navigators	Young adults (age 17-23) with foster care involvement
True North Pro-social events	Quarterly events held to build and strengthen connections	10 hours total, with 3-4 hour events occurring once every 4 months	Attended by TN Team	Young adults (age 17-23) with foster care involvement
Post-program communications	Texts about various topics	Twice a month	Trained navigators	Young adults (age 17-23) with foster care involvement
ChildNet Aftercare Specialist	Assistance with extended foster care services	Once a month in-home meeting, weekly connections	Trained ChildNet Aftercare Specialist	Young adults in extended foster care
Counterfactual				
System Services				
ChildNet Aftercare Specialist	Assistance with foster care system	Once a month in-home meetings, weekly connections	Child Net Aftercare Specialist	Young adults in extended foster care
True North Screening	Intimate Partner Violence Screening & Referral; Substance Abuse Screening & Referral	During intake process	Trained navigators	Young adults (age 17-23) with foster care involvement
True North Pro-social events	Quarterly events held to decrease attrition	10 hours possible, with 3-4 hour events occurring once every 4 months	Attended by TN Team	Young adults (age 17-23) with foster care involvement
Post-program communications	Texts about various topics to decrease attrition	Twice a month for 6 months after the program ends	Trained navigators	Young adults (age 17-23) with foster care involvement

* The Love Notes program component changed from thirteen months for cohort 1 (originally one lesson a month) to seven months for cohorts 2 and 3 (revised to two lessons a month). The exact same material was covered for all three cohorts.

** Denotes that the 7 total hours of individual sessions is a combination of Love Notes, financial literacy, and job readiness.

*** The financial literacy program component was 2 hours total. It was changed from one session for cohorts 1 and 2 to seven 35-minute sessions for cohort 3. The exact same material was covered for all three cohorts.

Table II.2. Staff training and development to support intervention and counterfactual components.

Component	Education and initial training of staff	Ongoing training of staff
Intervention		
Relationship skills workshops	Facilitators can be female or male and she/he must hold at least a bachelor's degree and received Love Notes training from The Dibble Institute	Facilitators receive a day of annual refresher training in the Love Notes curriculum from the Dibble Institute
Economic stability workshops	Facilitators and financial coaches can be female or male and she/he must hold at least a bachelor's degree	Financial coaches completed self-directed training on financial and vocational tools and resources
Case Management	Staff receive strength-based case management training and Motivational Interviewing (MI) training	Annual strengths-based case management training provided by Ronick-Radlauer Group, Inc. and annual MI training provided by Dr. Sobell
ChildNet Aftercare Specialist	Facilitators are male and female and hold at least a bachelor's degree	Must meet state and county training requirements and ChildNet requirements
Counterfactual		
ChildNet Aftercare Specialist	Facilitators are male and female and hold at least a bachelor's degree	Must meet state and county training requirements and ChildNet requirements

Table II.3. True North implementation research questions.

Implementation element	Research question
Program group research questions	
Fidelity	1. Were all intended True North program components offered to the program group and for the expected duration? 2. What content was delivered? 3. What were the unplanned adaptations to key intervention components?
Dosage	4. What proportions of the True North workshops and individual sessions did the program group participate in?
Quality	5. How did the program group rate the overall quality of the True North program?
Engagement	6. How engaged in the True North program was the program group?
Context	7. What challenges affected implementation?
Comparison group research questions	
Fidelity	8. Were all intended True North program components offered to the comparison group and for the expected duration? 9. What type of comparable services did the comparison group receive from any sources other than True North during the evaluation period?
Dosage	10. How often did the comparison group participate in the True North program components offered to them, on average?
Context	11. What challenges affected implementation?

True North was continuously marketed and various recruitment methods were utilized, including phone outreach, on-site recruitment and referrals from community agencies, local colleges, social media platforms, and peer-to-peer referrals from cohort 1 and cohort 2 participants. During recruitment events, True North staff completed the intake process with interested young adults who met the eligibility requirements. If the youth didn't meet the eligibility requirements, the recruitment process ended. When the True North staff completed the intake process, they provided an overview of the True North research study, the program, and the consent form. The consent form included information about the program components, assessment procedures, and timelines as well as any physical or psychological risks involved in participating. The young adults were assured that their identifying information would remain confidential and that their participation would be voluntary.

True North staff maintained a list of the recruits, which included all contact information, the consent form, and other pertinent information. The recruitment periods lasted approximately 2-4 months, so some youth waited up to 4 months after completing the intake process before they were randomly assigned. After the required number of youth were recruited (see above for cohort totals), the final list of recruits for each cohort was given to the evaluator to use for random assignment.

Within each cohort, the evaluator randomly assigned young adults into the program group or comparison group using the random number generator function in Excel. The units of randomization were young adults, age 17 to 23, with foster care system involvement. The intended probability of random assignment into the program group was 50%.

Once the random assignment process was completed, each young adult was assigned a “case study number” as an identifier. The password-protected random assignment list was sent to the program supervisor via a secured Dropbox account. The navigators then worked with the young adults in the program and comparison groups to complete the applicant characteristics and pre-test surveys during the welcome session.

B. Data collection

This section explains the data collection tools, processes, and procedures used for the implementation and impact evaluations.

1. Implementation analysis

In order to answer the implementation research questions, qualitative and quantitative data were collected over the course of the evaluation from 2015-2020. The qualitative data were gathered via observations of group workshops, individual sessions, pro-social events, open-ended questions on the feedback forms⁴, and through interviews and focus groups conducted with True North staff and partners. The sources of the quantitative data included the federal surveys, fidelity protocol forms, engagement level assessment forms, individual development plans with time allotment forms, attendance databases, and the follow-up survey. The fidelity protocol forms for Love Notes lessons were developed by the True North core team, in conjunction with the Love Notes trainer, the workshop facilitators, and the navigators. A fidelity protocol form was created for each group workshop, and the objectives of the Love Notes lessons for each workshop were included on the form. The local evaluator used the form during monthly observations to assess whether the objectives were covered as intended in the Love Notes teaching guide. The True North core team also developed a form to use to assess participant engagement based on observations of the group workshops. The form included the participants' names and each participant was rated on their level of engagement (i.e., not engaged=1, moderately engaged=2, highly engaged=3). Those who were highly engaged consistently listened to and interacted with the facilitator and other group members, and participated in all activities. For those who were moderately engaged, some participants arrived late, some had to tend to personal business on the phone during the workshops, and some had to leave early. The local evaluator was the only one who assessed the level of engagement during the observations of the monthly group workshops (cohorts 2 & 3) by using the engagement form that was developed by the True North core team. All of the engagement ratings were aggregated for the implementation analysis. An attendance database was created to keep track of the participants' attendance at workshops and individual sessions. Table B.1 lists the data sources, the timing and frequency of each data collection effort, and the party responsible for collecting the data needed to answer the implementation research questions (see Appendix B, Table B.1).

⁴ Feedback forms were utilized with all three cohorts, and approximately 30%-35% of the young adults in each cohort completed a feedback form. The data from the feedback forms is not representative of all True North young adults.

There were a few implementation data limitations. First, the Love Notes programming for cohort 1 was delivered over 13 months, whereas the programming was delivered over 7 months for cohorts 2 and 3. Although content didn't change and the fidelity to the model was not impacted, the change in duration did limit the descriptive statistics that can be presented in the results. Second, the True North core team had to develop instruments and tools to gather data needed for the implementation evaluation, and some of the tools had to be revised in order to improve reliability. Finally, the timing structure for nFORM was based on the grant fiscal year (October to September), and the nFORM reporting for the 3 cohorts did not align with reporting that occurred in True North. As such, the use of nFORM data was limited in the implementation analysis.

2. Impact analysis

Data were collected for each cohort at three points in time – immediately before programming started, immediately after programming ended, and 7-9 months after programming ended. All participants in the three cohorts answered the survey questions on paper first and then the answers were entered in the nFORM by the participants and navigators, the federal database for HMRF grants.

Throughout the grant period, quantitative data needed to answer the impact primary and secondary research questions, which included outcomes for healthy relationships, financial stability, job readiness, and overall wellbeing, were collected. The federal applicant characteristics survey was used to collect baseline data on demographics, such as age, race, education, and gender, and employment obstacles, such as lack of transportation, no child care, lack of education, not having the right clothes, having a criminal record, and not having legal documentation. The federal youth pre-test instrument was used to collect baseline data on healthy relationships, and economic and financial stability. Questions about job readiness (e.g., know how to find and apply for a job, have interview skills) from the federal pre-test for adults were incorporated into the pre-test instrument. For our target population, it was essential to include priority constructs about non-couple relationships, so the Network of Relationships Inventory-Relationship Qualities Version (NRI-RQV) was used to measure those relationships. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SLS) is one of the most commonly used measures of well-being (Diener, et al., 1985), and it was used as the SLS one-item measure for well-being. The post-test was revised to include the additional questions described above. The program and comparison groups completed the post-test after they completed their final group workshop/individual session. The follow-up instrument included questions from the federal applicant characteristics survey, the post-test, new questions about the True North program, new questions about additional services received outside of True North, and some questions about participants' actions/behaviors since participating in the True North program. Table B.2 lists the data sources, the timing/frequency of each data collection effort, and the party responsible for collecting the data for the impact evaluation (see Appendix B, Table B.2).

IV. ANALYSIS METHODS

This section describes the construction of the samples used for the primary and secondary analyses, the outcome measures, and the baseline equivalence of the program and comparison groups.

A. Analytic sample

This section focuses on the flow of the 326 True North participants from recruitment through the follow-up data collection to create the analytic samples that are used to estimate the impacts of the intervention. Table IV.1a shows the sample sizes and response rates. The CONSORT diagrams illustrate the flow of the 326 True North youth from random assignment to the post-test and follow-up for the primary and secondary research questions (see Appendix B, Figures 1-2). The intent-to-treat approach was used for the analysis, so all the study participants who were assigned to the program and comparison groups and contributed data were part of the impact analysis, even if they did not receive the services they were assigned to receive.

The True North analytic samples consisted of individual young adults with baseline and outcome data that were aligned with our primary and secondary research questions. The analytic samples for the primary and secondary analyses of outcomes that were measured immediately after the True North program ended consisted of 279 participants: 141 young adults in the program group and 138 in the comparison group. The overall attrition rate is 14% for the exit survey, with 0% differential attrition. As shown on the CONSORT diagram, not all youth were included in the final analytic samples. For the post-test, 47 youth were not included because 10 revoked their consent, 32 were non-responsive, 1 dropped out of the program, 3 were incarcerated and could not participate, and 1 was removed from the program.

The analytic samples for the primary and secondary analyses of outcomes that were measured 7-9 months after the True North program ended consisted of 255 participants: 130 young adults in the program group and 125 in the comparison group. The overall attrition rate for the follow-up survey was 21%, with 2% differential attrition. As shown on the CONSORT diagram, not all youth were included in the final analytic samples. For the follow-up, 71 youth were not included because 10 revoked their consent, 34 were non-responsive, 1 dropped out of the program, 2 were incarcerated and could not participate, 1 was removed from the program, and 23 completed the program, but did not complete the follow-up survey.

The outcome about partner relationships has a smaller number of cases ($n = 75$ program group, $n = 69$ comparison group) because only the participants with partners were asked to answer these questions. Of the 75 youth in the program group who answered the exit survey question about partnerships, 73 of those youth reported that they also had a girlfriend/boyfriend at the beginning of the intervention. For the 69 youth in the comparison group who answered the exit survey question about partnerships, 68 of those youth reported that they also had a girlfriend/boyfriend at the beginning of the intervention. Only those youth who answered both the baseline and exit questions were included in the analysis.

Table IV.1a. Children's Harbor True North individual sample sizes and response rates by intervention status.

Number of individuals	Intervention sample size	Comparison sample size	Total sample size	Total response rate	Intervention response rate	Comparison response rate
Assigned to condition	164	162	326	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Contributed a baseline survey	159	157	316	97%	97%	97%
Contributed to first follow-up survey (Exit survey, end of program)	141	138	279	86%	86%	86%
Contributed to second follow-up survey (7-9 months after end of program)	130	125	255	78%	79%	77%

Note: The percentages in this table refer to the response rates overall. Analytic samples sizes for all outcomes vary as noted in the CONSORT diagrams.

n.a. = not applicable

B. Outcome measures

This section focuses on how the outcomes of interest in the primary and secondary research questions were measured using data from the surveys collected over the course of the evaluation. The four outcome measures used in the examination of the primary impact research questions are listed in Table IV.2.

Three of the four outcomes were measured by summing the response scores for multiple questions from the survey and one of the outcomes was measured using a single item from the survey. The first outcome, overall well-being, is a single-item measure about overall life satisfaction. The second outcome, healthy relationship, was created by summing the response scores of two questions about the importance of couples talking about key issues and feelings. The third outcome, job readiness, was constructed by summing the response scores for four questions about finding and applying for a job and feeling confident about interviewing skills. The fourth outcome, financial stability, was created by summing the response scores of four questions about finance behavior. By summing the scores for each question, the outcomes were analyzed as interval measures. All of these outcomes were measured in the post-test and follow-up surveys.

The local evaluator conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to verify the factor structure of all multi-question indices. The CFA for the healthy relationships index indicated that one of the original factors (relationship is stronger if a couple doesn't talk about problems) was not confirmed in the CFA, so it was deleted from the index. For all of the final indices, the Cronbach's alpha was equal to or greater than the required threshold of .70, which means the set of questions for each outcome have relatively high levels of internal consistency (see Table IV.2).

The three outcome measures used to answer the True North secondary impact research questions are shown in Table IV.3. For the first outcome, three questions about fighting in relationships were used to construct a summative index. The index for the partner relationship outcome measure was created by summing the response scores of three questions about the young adult's partner counting on them, talking about things that matter with their partner, and sharing thoughts and feelings with each other. The third outcome measure focused on employment challenges that the young adults face, including transportation, clothing, legal documentation, childcare, a criminal record, and not having the education for a good job. This index was constructed by summing the response scores for the six questions about these employment challenges, which created an interval measure. As noted by the Cronbach's alphas, these indices also exceeded the required .70 threshold (see Table IV.3). These outcomes were measured in the post-test and follow-up surveys.

Table IV.2. Outcome measures used to answer the True North *primary* impact analyses research questions.

Outcome measure	Description of the outcome measure	Source	Timing of measure
Overall well-being	How satisfied are you with your life overall? 1 = very dissatisfied, 2 = dissatisfied, 3 = satisfied, 4 = very satisfied	True North follow-up	7-9 months after intervention ends
Healthy relationships index	Summative index of 2 ordinal healthy relationship questions: 1. In a healthy relationship, it is essential for couples to talk about things that are important to them; and 2. Even in a good relationship, couples will occasionally have trouble talking about their feelings. 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree* Cronbach's alpha: .70	Federal post-test	Immediately after intervention ends
Job readiness index	Summative index of 4 ordinal job readiness questions: 1. You know where to find job openings; 2. You feel confident in your ability to conduct a job search for the job you want; 3. You know how to apply for a job; and 4. You feel confident in your interviewing skills. 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree Cronbach's alpha: .94	Federal post-test	Immediately after intervention ends
Financial stability index	Summative index of 4 nominal finance behavior questions: 1. Do you currently have enough income to cover your regular expenses; 2. Do you currently have a checking account at a bank or credit union; 3. Do you currently have a savings account at a bank or credit union; and 4. Do you currently have money saved for an emergency? 1 = no, 2 = yes Cronbach's alpha: .71	True North follow-up	7-9 months after intervention ends

* The agreement scales in the original federal post-test were coded as 1=strongly agree to 4=strongly disagree. For this analysis, the coding was reversed, but the original wording of the questions was retained. For the question "Even in a good relationship, couples will occasionally have trouble talking about their feelings," the desired answer is strongly agree because the Love Notes program explains that every couple occasionally has trouble talking about their feelings.

Table IV.3. Outcome measures used to answer the True North (TN) *secondary* impact analyses research questions.

Outcome measure	Description of outcome measure	Source	Timing of measure
Fighting relationships index	<p>Summative index of 3 agreement questions about fighting in relationships:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In a healthy relationship, how important is it for couples to not call each other names? 2. In a healthy relationship, how important is it for couples to not threaten each other? 3. In a healthy relationship, how important is it for couples to not push, shove, hit, slap or grab each other? <p>1 = not important, 2 = pretty important, 3 = very important Cronbach's alpha: .81</p>	Federal post-test	Immediately after intervention ends
Partner relationships index	<p>Summative index of 3 partner relationship questions:</p> <p>How often do the following things happen with your partner/significant other?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. My partner can count on me to be there when he/she needs me; 2. My partner and I talk about things that really matter; and 3. I am comfortable sharing thoughts and feelings with my partner. <p>1 = none of the time, 2 = some of the time, 3 = half of the time, 4 = most of the time, 5 = all of the time Cronbach's alpha: .91</p>	Federal post-test	Immediately after intervention ends
Employment challenges	<p>Summative index of 6 questions about employment challenges:</p> <p>How much does each of the following make it hard for you to find or keep a job?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do not have reliable transportation; 2. Do not have right clothes for a job (including uniforms); 3. Do not have documentation for legal employment; 4. Do not have good child care or family help with childcare; 5. Have a criminal record; and 6. Do not have the education for good jobs. <p>1 = not at all, 2 = a little, 3 = a lot Cronbach's alpha: .73</p>	True North follow-up	7-9 months after intervention ends

C. Baseline equivalence and sample characteristics

The local evaluator compared the demographic characteristics and key outcomes to examine whether any significant differences existed between the program and comparison groups prior to the start of the study. The evaluator conducted Levene's test for equality of means for the analytic samples with low attrition as a confirmation that the random assignment created groups that were similar at the onset of the study. The race and education variables were consolidated for the Levene's test. The analytic sample on partner outcomes had high attrition and so tests to check for differences between the groups at baseline are required to ensure that the groups are similar at baseline across demographic characteristics. The summary statistics of key baseline measures and baseline equivalence for individuals completing the post-test immediately after the intervention ended (primary and secondary outcome measures) are shown in Table IV.4a. For these analytic samples, the majority of young adults in both groups were Black females, age 18-20, with some college courses (but no college degree yet). Using a $p < 0.05$ statistical significance threshold, the mean differences for the demographic variables and baseline indices were not statistically significant, indicating that the program group and comparison group were similar and not significantly different at the point the baseline data were collected.

The summary statistics of key baseline measures and baseline equivalence for individuals completing the follow-up 7-9 months after the intervention ended (primary and secondary outcome measures) are shown in Table IV.4b. Using a $p < 0.05$ statistical significance threshold, the mean differences for the demographic variables and baseline indices were not statistically significant, so the program group and comparison group were similar and not significantly different at the point the baseline data were collected.

There are relatively large means for both groups for the primary baseline indices. The healthy relationship index ranges from 2 (strongly disagree that it is important for couples to talk about issues & feelings) to 8 (strongly agree that it is important). The mean for both groups was approximately 6.5, signifying that they agree at the baseline about the importance of couples talking. The job readiness index ranges from 4 to 16, with the lower scores indicating less job readiness (find job openings, apply, interview) and higher scores representing more job readiness. Both groups had job readiness baseline means of 13, which indicates that before the program started, the young adults agreed that they have relatively high levels of job readiness. The same holds true for the baseline measure for overall well-being; both groups have mean scores of 3.2, between satisfied with their life (3) and very satisfied (4). The only primary index that doesn't have high baseline mean scores is the financial stability index, with 5.7–5.9 mean scores (4 is no financial stability and 8 is solid financial stability).

Table IV.4a. Summary statistics of key baseline measures and baseline equivalence across True North study groups, for individuals completing the post-test immediately after the intervention ended. (Primary & secondary research questions.)

Baseline measure	Intervention mean (standard deviation)	Comparison mean (standard deviation)	Intervention versus comparison equality of means* (p-value)
Gender (%)			.021 (.715)
Female	70	68	
Male	29	31	
Gender nonconforming	1	1	
Race (%)			.013 (.921)
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	1	
Asian	1	0	
Black	76	77	
Hawaiian or PI	0	1	
White	13	11	
Other (18 of 25 listed Hispanic)	7	8	
Two or more races	2	2	
Age (%)			.029 (.707)
17 & younger	20	20	
18-20	59	61	
21-24	21	19	
Education (%)			.018 (.932)
No degree earned	7	7	
Still in high school	16	17	
GED	17	15	
High school diploma	18	19	
Vocational/tech certificate	1	2	
College, but no degree yet	38	38	
Associate degree	2	2	
Bachelor degree	1	0	
Sample size	141	138	Not applicable

* Levene's t-test for equality of means was used.

Table IV.4a. (Continued). Summary statistics of key baseline measures and baseline equivalence across True North study groups, for individuals completing the post-test immediately after the intervention ended. (Primary & secondary research questions.)

Baseline measure	Intervention mean (standard deviation)	Comparison mean (standard deviation)	Intervention versus comparison equality of means (p-value)
Baseline healthy relationships index (summative range: 2 to 8)	6.52 (1.28)	6.45 (1.44)	.068 (.676)
Baseline job readiness index (summative range: 4 to 16)	13.37 (2.64)	13.46 (2.51)	-.088 (.777)
Baseline fighting relationships index (summative range: 3 to 9)	8.41 (1.05)	8.28 (1.40)	.129 (.386)
Sample size	141	138	Not applicable

Table IV.4b. Summary statistics of key baseline measures and baseline equivalence across True North study groups, for individuals completing the post-test immediately after the intervention ended. (Secondary research question about partner relationships)

Baseline measure	Intervention mean (standard deviation)	Comparison mean (standard deviation)	Intervention versus comparison equality of means* (p-value)
Gender (%)			.060 (.406)
Female	78	76	
Male	20	24	
Gender nonconforming			
Race (%)			0.54 (.787)
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0	
Asian	1	0	
Black	72	74	
Hawaiian or PI	0	0	
White	12	13	
Other (18 of 25 listed Hispanic)	11	13	
Two or more races	4	0	
Age (%)			-.016 (.885)
17 & younger	19	20	
18-20	61	57	
21-24	20	23	
Education (%)			.230 (.450)
No degree earned	8	10	
Still in high school	13	15	
GED	19	19	
High school diploma	17	15	
Vocational/tech certificate	1	4	
College, but no degree yet	38	36	
Associate degree	1	1	
Bachelor degree	1	0	
Sample size	73	68	Not applicable

* Levene's t-test for equality of means was used.

Table IV.4b. (Continued). Summary statistics of key baseline measures and baseline equivalence across True North study groups, for individuals in relationships at baseline who completed the post-test immediately after the intervention ended. (Secondary research question about partner relationships.)

Baseline measure	Intervention mean (standard deviation)	Comparison mean (standard deviation)	Intervention versus comparison equality of means (p-value)
Baseline partner relationships index (summative range: 1 to 15)	13.85 (1.77)	13.65 (2.15)	.204 (.551)
Sample size	73	68	Not applicable

Table IV.4b. Summary statistics of key baseline measures and baseline equivalence across True North study groups, for individuals completing the follow-up 7-9 months after the intervention ended. (Primary & secondary research questions.)

Baseline measure	Intervention mean (standard deviation)	Comparison mean (standard deviation)	Intervention versus comparison equality of means* (p-value)
Gender (%)			.042 (.470)
Female	72	68	
Male	27	31	
Gender nonconforming	1	1	
Race (%)			.038 (.789)
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	1	
Asian	0	0	
Black	77	78	
Hawaiian or PI	0	1	
White	12	9	
Other (18 of 25 listed Hispanic)	8	9	
Two or more races	2	2	
Age (%)			.016 (.836)
17 & younger	20	21	
18-20	61	61	
21-24	19	18	
Education (%)			-.034 (.877)
No degree earned	6	7	
Still in high school	14	13	
GED	17	15	
High school diploma	20	22	
Vocational/tech certificate	2	2	
College, but no degree yet	38	38	
Associate degree	2	3	
Bachelor degree	1		
Baseline overall well-being (range: 1 to 4)	3.22 (.77)	3.27 (.78)	-.046 (.642)
Baseline financial stability index (summative range: 4 to 8)	5.75 (1.25)	5.92 (1.38)	-.166 (.316)
Baseline employment challenges index (summative range: 6 to 18)	9.01 (2.71)	8.48 (2.64)	.532 (.071)
Sample size	130	125	Not applicable

V. FINDINGS AND ESTIMATION APPROACH

In this section, the estimation approaches and the results of the implementation and primary impact analyses, the sensitivity analysis, and the secondary impact analysis are presented.

A. Implementation evaluation

The section focuses on the implementation evaluation and includes an overview of the data and the results for each of the research questions posed.. The key findings are listed below.

True North included three program components offered in group workshops and individual sessions, as well as support services: (1) programming on marriage and relationship education (Love Notes); (2) finances; and (3) job readiness. Table B.3 lists the implementation research questions and measures.

Key Findings:

Overall, the True North program was implemented with a high level of fidelity. The majority of the program group (86%) attended the required number of workshops in order to graduate from the True North program. Sixty-six percent of the program group completed 100% of all the workshops. In addition, 78% of the program group met with their navigator for the required seven individual sessions and each was one hour or more. Eighty-nine percent of the program group rated the quality of True North as excellent.

1. Fidelity

The first program component, marriage and relationship education, incorporated 13 lessons of the Love Notes V2.1 curriculum.⁵ Group workshops were held at various days and times throughout the month, and the same Love Notes lessons were offered throughout each month.⁶ A total of 27 Love Notes group workshops were delivered during the grant period. The Love Notes portion of the group workshops ranged from 1 hour (cohort 1) to 2 hours (cohorts 2 & 3). The second program component, financial literacy, was delivered to the program participants via group workshops.⁷ A total of 9 financial stability group workshops were delivered. The third program component, job readiness, was offered in a group workshop format to the program participants.⁸ A total of 9 job readiness group workshops were delivered. Youth were required to participate in 80% of the group workshops.

⁵ The Love Notes program component changed from thirteen months for cohort 1 (originally one lesson a month) to seven months for cohorts 2 and 3 (revised to two lessons a month).

⁶ If a program participant did not attend a group session, she/he had the opportunity to attend either a group make-up session or an individual session to cover the material.

⁷ The financial literacy program component was 2 hours total. It was changed from one session for cohorts 1 and 2 to seven 35-minute sessions for cohort 3.

⁸ The job readiness program component was 2 hours total. It was changed from one session for cohorts 1 and 2 to seven 35-minute sessions for cohort 3.

The three program components discussed above were reinforced during monthly individual sessions, when the navigators met with the program participants for at least one hour. At the end of each individual session for cohorts 2 and 3, the navigators noted the number of minutes/hours spent on each program component (relationships, finance, employment) during each one-hour individual session. For the 7 total hours of individual sessions, the program participants spent, on average, 3.5 hours on Love Notes, 1.5 hours on financial education, and 2 hours on job readiness.

The young adults in the program group received important screening to determine if they needed support and/or professional help to address substance abuse or intimate partner violence (IPV) problems. All of the program group participants (100%) received both types of screening, and 17 received a professional referral for IPV.

Social media and text communications were also used in a supportive way during the programming period and up to 6-9 months after the program ended. On average, the navigators communicated with everyone in their caseload at least two times a month, for a total of 26 messages/conversations for each young adult while they were in the program and 6-9 months after the program ended.

During the programming period, pro-social events were also used to engage and retain young adults in the True North program. Fourteen pro-social events were held from April 2016 to February 2020, which included 3 graduation ceremonies. On average, 15-25 program participants attended these events.

The local evaluator observed at least one Love Notes workshop per month for the entire grant period in order to ensure that the marriage and relationship education programming was being delivered and to check for fidelity to the Love Notes model. To assess fidelity to the Love Notes model, a form was developed by the True North core team and it was used by the local evaluator. All Love Notes lessons were delivered with a high level of fidelity (95% - 100%), and the level of fidelity continued to increase over time. The local evaluator observed at least one financial literacy workshop per cohort and 100% of lessons and objectives were covered. The local evaluator observed at least one job readiness literacy workshop per cohort and 100% of lessons and objectives were covered.

There were some unplanned adaptations to the True North program. The location for the group workshops changed from the FLITE center to the Children's Harbor office in Lauderhill. The new office was in a better location because it was centrally situated in the county, which helped with transporting the youth to group workshops. For cohort 1, the program lasted 13 months, and it was reduced to 7 months to meet the scheduling needs of the youth and to improve retention. The Love Notes program component changed from thirteen months for cohort 1 (originally one lesson a month) to seven months for cohorts 2 and 3 (revised to two lessons a month). The financial literacy and job readiness program components changed from one 2-hour session for cohorts 1 and 2 to seven 35-minute sessions for cohort 3, but the exact same material was covered for all cohorts.

2. Dosage

Youth were required to complete 80% of the group workshops in order to graduate from the True North program. Overall, 86% of the youth who participated in the True North program graduated. Sixty-six percent of the program group completed 100% of all the workshops.

Individual sessions to further assist the program participants in reaching their relationship, financial, and employment goals were an important part of the True North program. The navigators were supposed to meet with each young adult in their program group caseload at least once a month for at least one hour. Overall, 78% of the program participants met with their navigator for the required seven individual sessions, which ran for one hour or longer.

4. Quality of Program

The quality of the True North program was assessed through the exit and follow-up surveys and feedback forms. Based on the survey results, 89% of the program participants rated the quality of True North as excellent, 10% rated it as average quality, and 1% rated the quality as poor. Program participants were asked to provide comments about the True North program on the surveys and the feedback forms (30%-35% response rate), and although not representative of all participants, the vast majority (99%) of the comments were positive. Thirty percent of the comments were about the information provided through True North. For example, one participant stated that “this program helped shine a light on topics that haven't been discussed in other programs” and another wrote “very informational and makes me look at some things from a different perspective.” Twenty-seven percent of the comments, such as “you can talk to your navigator about anything you need, and they'll be right there to help you with anything,” focused on the relationships with the navigators. Another category of comments (23%) focused on providing a safe space to talk about important issues.

5. Engagement

The True North core team and navigators consistently worked on ensuring that the program participants were engaged. Overall, the results from the observations of group workshops showed that most participants were highly engaged (92%) or moderately engaged (8%) in the group workshops. Those who were highly engaged consistently listened to and interacted with the facilitator and other group members, and participated in all activities. For those who were moderately engaged, some participants arrived late, some had to tend to personal business on the phone during the workshops, and some had to leave early. On average, the program participants scored a 2.97 out of 3.00 (highly engaged) on their engagement rating.

6. Context of True North

This section presents the challenges that affected implementation of the True North program during the grant period. As would be expected, many of the implementation issues changed over time and most were addressed and corrected once the issues were identified.

The first challenge was that the programming for the financial and job readiness program components that was implemented by a partner agency did not meet the standards of Children's Harbor. This determination was based on numerous observations of the financial and job readiness workshops by the evaluator, the navigators, and the program supervisor. ACF provided permission to offer this programming in-house, rather than continue to have the partner agency implement these components. The navigators then assumed the facilitator role for all programming, but the workload was too much, so an in-house professional facilitator was hired.

The second challenge was scheduling of the True North program. The timing of programming had to be changed in order to better accommodate the participants' schedules and to maintain high levels of retention. Many of the youth attended school and their schedules changed every semester, and some attended school during the day and others at night. As such, day and evening workshops were offered. In addition, the True North team realized during cohort 1 programming that thirteen months was too long based on attendance data, so the program was shortened to seven months.

Another challenge was that many of the images that were provided in the Love Notes presentations were not representative of our target population because the images were of older people who were mostly white, so the facilitator and navigators worked on including additional images and videos of young black people into the group workshop presentations at the beginning of the grant.

A challenge emerged when the navigators reached out to participants by phone and email and the contact information for participants changed. Program retention was sometimes hindered because navigators had incorrect contact information. To address this, at the beginning of the grant the navigators started to gather all social media contact information from the young adults during the recruitment phase and they used social media to make contact (i.e., Messenger). They also reached out to ChildNet to see if they had updated contact information.

The fifth challenge was securing and managing transportation to group and individual sessions for many of the program participants. Unfortunately, the public transportation system in Broward County is poor, so it was not a viable option for participants. To address this challenge, Lyft was used for transportation. For every session, at least one navigator had to spend all of her time managing the transportation pickups/drop-offs. The process did get easier over time, but it remained a challenge throughout the grant period.

Overall, the challenges the True North team faced were addressed in a timely manner, which allowed for the True North program to be fully implemented.

7. Implementation Evaluation Findings for Comparison Group

The comparison group only received system-wide extended foster care services (aftercare specialist that assists youth with foster care services) and the True North support services (screening, pro-social events, and communications).

Screening. The navigators delivered the system and support services to the comparison group with fidelity. During the enrollment period, the navigators offered the comparison group participants essential screening to determine if they needed professional help to address substance abuse or intimate partner violence (IPV) problems. All of the comparison group participants received both types of screening, and 5 received a professional referral for IPV.

Pro-social events. The navigators delivered the pro-social events to the comparison group with fidelity as all comparison group participants were invited to attend all pro-social events. Dosage results indicated participation was low (insert percentages) and on average, 15-25 of the 125 comparison group members attended these events.

Communication. Social media and text communications were also used in a supportive way during the programming period and up to 6-9 months after the program ended. The navigators implemented the communication to the comparison group with fidelity. On average, the navigators communicated with everyone in their caseload at least two times a month, for a total of 26 messages/conversations for each young adult while they were in the program and 6-9 months after the program ended.

Comparable services outside of True North. In order to assess any other comparable type of services that the comparison group participants received during the evaluation period, questions about receiving relationship, financial, and employment services were included on the exit and follow-up surveys. Based on the survey responses, 0% of the comparison group received comparable services during the evaluation period, but 3% indicated that they did get financial services from ChildNet (but it was about receiving their ChildNet check, which is expected, and is not financial literacy content). In addition, 1% (3 young adults) indicated that they received job application assistance from their Life Coach (all were about documentation, not job readiness content). Finally, 2 young adults participated in a professional therapy session about relationships. There are no other Love Notes programs or comparable financial literacy programs offered in the Broward County area, but job resources are available. However, according to these results, the comparison group did not receive enough of these services to suggest they received similar services as the program group.

8. Key Limitations of the Implementation Data

There were some key limitations of the implementation data. First, the True North team had to create some tools (i.e., fidelity checklist) to use for the implementation evaluation, and as a result, these tools have not been tested for reliability. The second key limitation came from changing the number of group workshops because then the numbers didn't align between cohort 1 and cohorts 2 and 3. All three cohorts received the same programming content, but cohort 1 programming was spread out over time.

B. Primary impact evaluation

This section presents the impact results for the primary research questions and describes the methods used to estimate the program's effectiveness. The sensitivity analysis and secondary

analysis follow. In order to answer all of the research questions, effect sizes of True North were estimated and regression analyses were conducted. Covariates for the impact models included demographic variables and baseline indices that were used in the regression analyses for the primary and secondary research question (see Table V.1.).

Key Findings:

The regression analyses used to assess the impact of the full True North program showed no statistically significant results for any of the outcome measures used to answer our primary research questions. The effects of the full True North program on the outcome measures of healthy relationships, financial stability, job readiness, and overall well-being used in this evaluation were not statistically significant at conventional levels.

Primary research question #1

What is the impact of the full True North program on the program group compared to the comparison group on the understanding of healthy relationships at the end of the intervention?

The healthy relationship index from the exit survey was used as the dependent variable in an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model, which included the demographic variables, the baseline healthy relationship index (listed in Table V.1), and the treatment variable (comparison group = 0, program group = 1) as independent variables. There was no statistically significant difference between program and comparison groups at the end of the intervention on the healthy relationship outcome.

A paired t-test was used to examine the difference of mean scores of the healthy relationship outcome measure at post-test. The findings from these analyses and the effect sizes are shown in Table V.2a. The estimated effect of the full True North program on the healthy relationship index was 0.14, but was not statistically significant.

Primary research question #2

What is the impact of the full True North program on the program group compared to the comparison group on job readiness at the end of the intervention?

The job readiness index was also analyzed as the dependent variable in an OLS regression model. The demographic variables and treatment variable were included in the model as independent variables, along with the baseline job readiness index. The treatment variable was not statistically significant, so for this OLS regression analysis, no statistically significant difference between program group and comparison group was detected.

A paired t-test was used to examine the difference of mean scores of the healthy relationship outcome measure at post-test. The findings for the job readiness outcome measure show that the estimated effect of the full True North program on the job readiness index was .08, but was not statistically significant at the .05 level (see Table V.2a).

Primary research question #3

What is the impact of the full True North program on the program group compared to the comparison group on the overall well-being at the time of the 7-9 month follow-up?

Ordered logit regression was used to analyze the overall well-being outcome measure, and the demographic variables and treatment variable were included in the model as independent variables, along with the baseline well-being measure. The treatment variable was not statistically significant, which means a significant difference between program group and comparison group for this overall well-being outcome measure was not detected.

A paired t-test was used to examine the difference of mean scores of the healthy relationship outcome measure at follow-up. The results in Table V.2b show that the effect size of the full True North program on the overall well-being outcome measure was .01 and was not statistically significant at the .05 level.

Primary research question #4

What is the impact of the full True North program on the program group compared to the comparison group on the financial stability at the time of the 7-9 month follow-up?

The financial stability index from the follow-up survey was analyzed as the dependent variable in an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model, which included the demographic variables, the baseline financial stability index, and the treatment variable as independent variables. Three variables were statistically significant ($p < .05$) – age, education level, and the baseline financial stability index, indicating a positive association between age and financial stability and between education and financial stability. The treatment variable was not statistically significant.

A paired t-test was used to examine the difference of mean scores of the healthy relationship outcome measure at follow-up. The findings for the financial stability outcome measure show that the effect of the full True North program on the financial stability .10 and not statistically significant at the .05 level (see Table V.2b).

Table V.1. Covariates included in impact analyses.

Covariate	Description of the covariate
Baseline age	Nominal age as of time of baseline data collection (17 and under = 1, 18-20 = 2, 21-24 = 3)
Gender	Gender (male = 1, female = 2, nonconforming = 3)
Race	Race (other = 0, Black = 1)
Baseline education	Ordinal education (no degree earned = 1, GED = 2, high school = 3, vocational certificate = 4, college, but no degree = 5, associate degree = 6, bachelor degree = 7)
Baseline overall well-being	How satisfied are you with your life overall? (1=very dissatisfied to 4=very satisfied)
Baseline healthy relationships index*	Interval index of the sum of scores from 2 ordinal healthy relationship questions: Essential for couples to talk, couples may have problems talking about feelings. (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree)
Baseline job readiness index ^a	Interval index of the sum of scores from 4 ordinal job readiness questions: Know where to find job openings, conduct a job search, apply for a job, and interviewing skills. (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree)
Baseline financial stability ^a index	Interval index of the sum of scores from 4 nominal finance behavior questions: Enough income to cover expenses, have checking account, have savings account, have money saved for an emergency. (1 = no, 2 = yes)
Baseline employment challenges index ^b	Interval index of the sum of scores from 6 ordinal questions about employment challenges: Did not have reliable transportation, did not have right clothes, did not have legal documentation, did not have good health care or family help, criminal record, lack of education/skills. (1 = not at all, 2 = a little, 3 = a lot)
Baseline fighting in relationships index ^b	Interval index of the sum of scores from 3 ordinal agreement questions about fighting in relationships: How important to not call each other names, how important not to threaten each other, how important to not push, shove, hit, slap or grab each other. (1 = not important, 2 = pretty important, 3 = very important)
Baseline partner relationships index ^b	Interval index of the sum of scores from 3 ordinal partner relationship questions: Partner can count on me to be there, talk about things that really matter, comfortable sharing thoughts with partner. (1 = none of the time, 2 = some of the time, 3 = half of the time, 4 = most of the time, 5 = all of the time)

Notes: Demographic covariates are used in primary and secondary analysis.

^aDenotes covariates for primary analysis

^bDenotes covariates for secondary analysis

Table V.2a. Post-intervention estimated effects using data from immediately after the intervention ended to address the primary research questions.

Outcome measure	Intervention mean (standard deviation)	Comparison mean (standard deviation)	Intervention compared to comparison mean difference (p-value of difference)	Effect size Cohen's <i>d</i>
Healthy relationships index 1. In a healthy relationship, it is essential for couples to talk about things that are important to them; and 2) Even in a good relationship, couples will occasionally have trouble talking about their feelings.	6.64 (1.46)	6.43 (1.58)	.211 (.249)	.14
Job readiness index 1. Know where to find job openings, 2) Know how to conduct a job search, 3) Know how to apply for a job, and 4) Have good interviewing skills.	13.96 (2.26)	13.78 (2.53)	.182 (.527)	.08
Sample Size	141	138		

Source: True North exit survey, administered immediately after the intervention ended.

**/*/+ Differences are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10 levels, respectively.

Table V.2b. Post-intervention estimated effects using data from 7-9 months after the intervention ended to address the primary research questions.

Outcome measure	Intervention mean (standard deviation)	Comparison mean (standard deviation)	Intervention compared to comparison mean difference (p-value of difference)	Effect size Cohen's <i>d</i>
Overall well-being	3.22 (.790)	3.23 (.824)	.009 (.930)	.01
Financial stability index 1. have enough income to cover expenses, 2) have checking account, 3) have savings account, 4) have money saved for an emergency.	6.18 (1.45)	6.03 (1.44)	.145 (.423)	.10
Sample Size	130	125		

Source: True North follow-up survey, administered 7-9 months after the intervention ended.

**/*/+ Differences are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10 levels, respectively.

C. Sensitivity analyses

This section briefly describes the sensitivity analyses conducted to test the robustness of the impact results to alternative assumptions and researcher decisions.

Key Findings:

For the sensitivity analysis, OLS regression and ordered logit regression were used to test the primary outcome models using various covariate groupings (i.e., gender, age, and race included, but not education). The sensitivity analyses showed that removing the covariates one at a time from the multiple regression analyses did not change the results of the primary analyses for the outcomes of healthy relationships, job readiness, overall well-being, and financial stability. In addition, removing all of the covariates from the primary outcome models did not change the regression results.

Table V.3. Differences in means between intervention and comparison groups estimated using alternative measures

Measure	Intervention mean (standard deviation)	Comparison mean (standard deviation)	Intervention compared to comparison mean difference (p-value of difference)	Effect size
Primary research question: What is the impact of the full True North program on the program group compared to the comparison group on the understanding of healthy relationships at the end of the intervention?				
Baseline outcome measures: (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly agree) At my age right now, it is okay to have sexual intercourse if I use protection	3.07 (.792)	3.20 (.862)	-.129 (.199)	n/a
Two people in love don't need to use protection	1.65 (.729)	1.64 (.717)	.010 (.907)	n/a
Exit outcome measures: (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly agree) At my age right now, it is okay to have sexual intercourse if I use protection	3.06 (.923)	3.16 (.921)	-.091 (.413)	.10
Two people in love don't need to use protection	1.66 (.676)	1.74 (.855)	-.084 (.368)	.11
Sample Size	140	135		

Source: True North follow-up survey, administered 7-9 months after the intervention ended.

**/*/+ Differences are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10 levels, respectively.

n/a denotes not applicable

D. Additional analyses

In this section, the impact results for the secondary research questions are presented. Regression analyses that included demographic variables and baseline indices as covariates were used to answer the secondary research questions (see Table V.1.).

Key Findings:

The regression analyses of the secondary outcome measures showed no statistically significant ($p < .05$) results. The effect of the full True North program on the partner relationship and employment challenges outcome measures used in this evaluation was not significant. There were no statistically significant mean differences between the program and comparison groups for these outcomes.

Secondary research question #1

What is the impact of the full True North program on the program group compared to the comparison group on perceptions about fighting in relationships at the end of the intervention?

OLS regression was used to analyze the fighting in relationships index, and the demographic variables and treatment variable were included in the model as independent variables, along with the baseline index. For this model the education variable was statistically significant ($p < .05$), and indicates that as the education level increases, perceptions of fighting in relationships decreases. Since the treatment variable was not statistically significant, these findings confirmed that there was no statistically significant difference between program group and comparison group for this outcome measure of perceptions about fighting in relationships.

A paired t-test was used to examine the difference of mean scores of the healthy relationship outcome measure at the end of the intervention. These results indicate that the comparison group has a higher mean score on the importance of not fighting in relationships, than the program group with an effect size of 0.20, but the result is not statistically significant ($p = .10$)(See Table V.4a.).

Secondary research question #2

What is the impact of the full True North program on the program group compared to the comparison group on perceptions about partner relationships at the end of the intervention?

The partnership relationship index from the exit survey was also analyzed as the dependent variable in an ordinary least squares regression model, which also included the demographic variables, the baseline partnership relationship index, and the treatment variable as independent variables. The treatment variable was not statistically significant, so the results confirmed that there was no significant difference between program and comparison groups for this outcome measure.

A paired t-test was used to examine the difference of mean scores of the healthy relationship outcome measure at the end of the intervention. The difference between the program and

comparison groups' means for the partnership relationship index showed an effect size of 0.05, but the result was not statistically significant at the .05 level. (see Table V.4a).

Secondary research question #3

What is the impact of the full True North program on the program group compared to the comparison group on employment challenges at the point of 7-9 month follow-up?

The employment challenges index from the follow-up survey was analyzed as the dependent variable in an OLS regression model, which included the demographic variables, the baseline employment challenges index, and the treatment variable as independent variables. The treatment variable was not statistically significant, so for this OLS regression analysis, no statistically significant difference for employment challenges between program group and comparison group was found.

A paired t-test was used to examine the difference of mean scores of the healthy relationship outcome measure at the point of follow-up. The difference between the program group mean for the employment challenges index and the comparison group index mean showed an effect size of 0.10, but the results was not statistically significant at the .05 level (see Table V.4b).

Table V.4a. Post-intervention estimated effects using data from immediately after the intervention ended to address the secondary research questions.

Outcome measure	Intervention mean (standard deviation)	Comparison mean (standard deviation)	Intervention compared to comparison mean difference (p-value of difference)	Effect size Cohen's <i>d</i>
Fighting in relationships index 1. In a healthy relationship, how important is it for couples to not call each other names? 2) In a healthy relationship, how important is it for couples to not threaten each other? 3) In a healthy relationship, how important is it for couples to not push, shove, hit, slap or grab each other?	11.35 (1.47)	11.61 (1.05)	-.261 (.09)+	.20
Sample Size	130	125		
Partner relationships index 1. My partner can count on me to be there when he/she needs me; 2) My partner and I talk about things that really matter; and 3) I am comfortable sharing thoughts and feelings with my partner.	13.75 (2.37)	13.61 (2.85)	.138 (.752)	.05
Sample Size	73	68		

Source: True North exit survey, administered immediately after the intervention ended.

**/*/+ Differences are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10 levels, respectively.

Table V.4b. Post-intervention estimated effects using data from 7-9 months after the intervention ended to address the secondary research questions.

Outcome measure	Intervention mean (standard deviation)	Comparison mean (standard deviation)	Intervention compared to comparison mean difference (p-value of difference)	Effect size Cohen's <i>d</i>
Employment challenges index 1. Do not have reliable transportation; 2) Do not have right clothes for a job; 3) Do not have documentation; 4) Do not have good child care or family help with childcare; 5) Have a criminal record; and 6) Do not have the education for good jobs.	8.88 (2.70)	8.61 (2.67)	.269 (.424)	.10
Sample Size	130	125		

Source: True North exit survey, administered 7-9 months after the intervention ended.

**/*/+ Differences are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10 levels, respectively.

VI. DISCUSSION

Implementation evaluation. Overall, the implementation findings showed that the quality of the implementation of the True North program was very high, all of the group workshops and individual sessions were delivered, and Love Notes was delivered with fidelity. However, there were some programming changes that may have had an impact on the effectiveness of the True North program. First, Love Notes programming for cohort 1 was a different duration than programming for cohorts 2 and 3, and the financial literacy and job readiness sessions were delivered by a partner organization to cohort 1 and by True North to cohorts 2 and 3. Programming changes such as these are to be expected with new programs, but the 60 young adults in cohort 1 program group may have had a different experience than those in the other cohorts.

The results from the implementation evaluation showed that once the young adults were engaged in the program, they usually remained engaged, and completed the requirements. Unfortunately, due to a delay between early recruitment efforts and the start of programming, 10 young adults who were enrolled revoked their consent before the program started. An additional 32 young adults were non-responsive early in the process, so no relationships were established, and not engaging these young adults was a missed opportunity.

Impact evaluation. Overall, the results of the impact evaluation showed that there were no statistically significant differences in the primary outcome measures between the program group and comparison group. The young adults in both the program and comparison groups indicated that they had good job readiness skills before the program started, so the mean scores for this outcome were already at the higher end of the scale (13 on a scale from 4-16), which may have left little room for significant improvement for the program group. For the healthy relationships model, no covariates were statistically significant. For the financial stability model, three variables were statistically significant ($p < .05$) – age, education level, and the baseline financial stability index, indicating a positive association between age and financial stability and between education and financial stability. For the overall well-being outcome model, the education variable was statistically significant ($p < .05$), which indicates an association between well-being and education level. For the job readiness model, the only variable that was statistically significant ($p < .05$) was the baseline index for job readiness. For this age group, it was expected that there would be improvement in all of the young adults' level of job readiness because they are finally at the time in their lives that they can work. It may be that the measures that were used did not capture some of the key behaviors, and as a result, future measures should focus on behaviors, not perceptions.

For the secondary analysis of the outcome measure about fighting in relationships, the Levene's test between the program group and comparison group was not statistically significant. The treatment variable was not statistically significant in the regression analysis of this outcome measure. For this model, the education variable was statistically significant ($p < .05$), and indicates that as the education level increases, perceptions on fighting in relationships might

decrease. For the partnership relationship model, two variables, race and education, were statistically significant ($p < .05$) in this OLS model. For the employment challenges model, the education variable was statistically significant ($p < .05$) and had a negative standardized beta, which indicates that as the education level increases, employment challenges decrease.

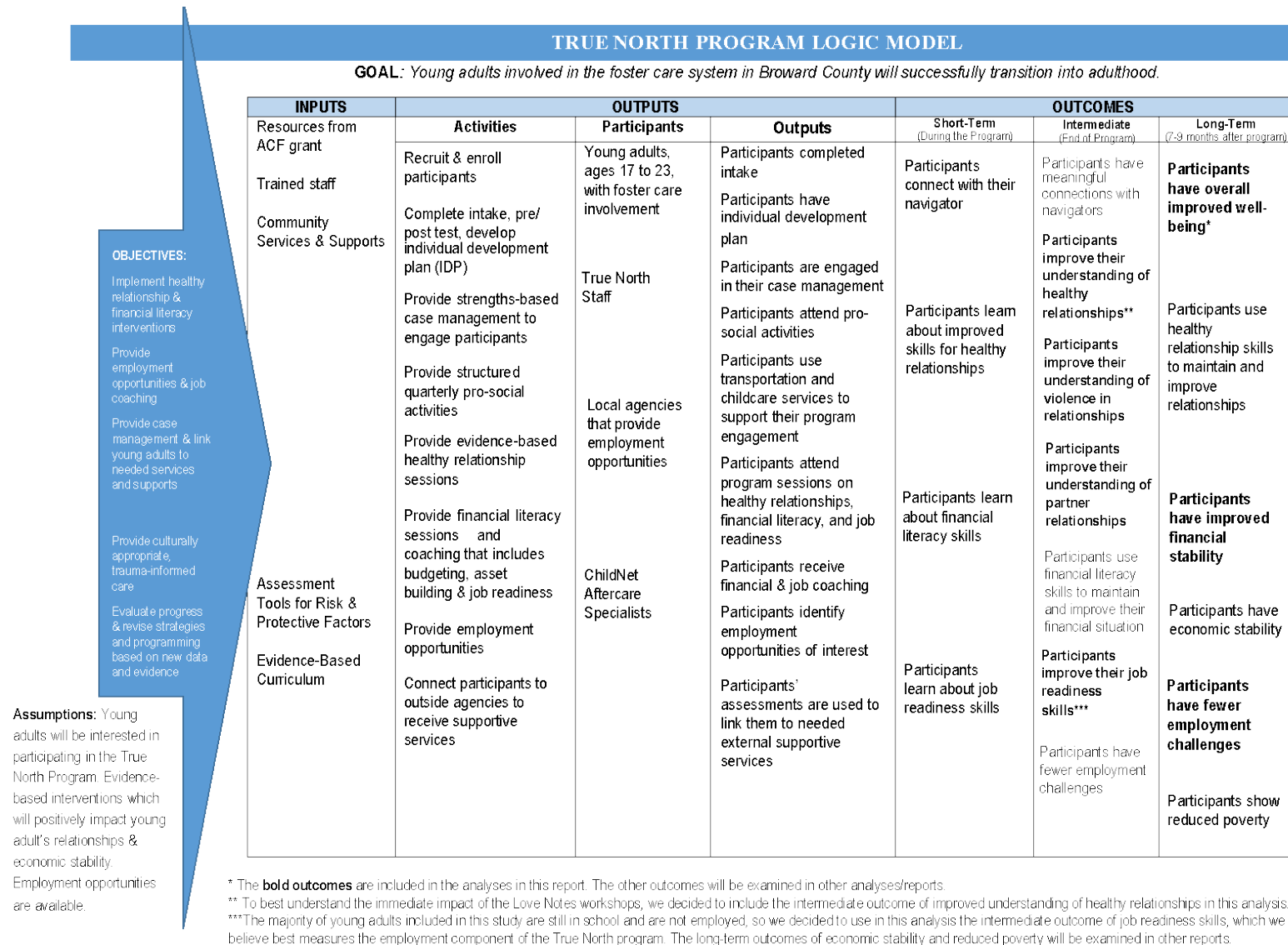
The evaluation of True North adds to the ACF HM learning research agenda, but future research is necessary in order to fully understand the various impacts of the True North program components on primary outcome measures. Specifically, future research should consider using measures that ask about tangible, behavioral aspects of the outcomes, in addition to or in lieu of measures of perception.

VII. REFERENCES

- Adler-Baeder F, Kerpelman J, Higginbotham B, Schramm D, Paulk A. (2007). The impact of relationship education on adolescents from diverse backgrounds. *Family Relations*, 56(3), 291-303.
- Antle, B. F., Sullivan, D. J., Dryden, A., Karam, E. A., & Barbee, A. P. (2011). Healthy relationship education for dating violence prevention among high-risk youth. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33(1), 173-179.
- Barbee, A. P., Cunningham, M. R., van Zyl, M. A., Antle, B. F., & Langley, C. N. (2016). Impact of two adolescent pregnancy prevention interventions on risky sexual behavior: A three-arm cluster randomized control trial. *American Journal of Public Health*, 106(S1), S85-S90.
- Best, J. I., & Blakeslee, J. E. (2020). Perspectives of youth aging out of foster care on relationship strength and closeness in their support networks. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 108, 1-8.
- Broward County. (2014). System of Care for Transitioning into Independent Living Report.
- Cunningham, M. R., van Zyl, M. A., & Borders, K. W. (2016). Evaluation of Love Notes and Reducing the Risk in Louisville, Kentucky. Final Evaluation Report to the University of Louisville Research Foundation, Louisville, KY.
- Diener, E. D., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of personality assessment*, 49(1), 71-75.
- Geenen, S., Powers, L. E., Powers, J., Cunningham, M., McMahon, L., Nelson, M., Dalton, L., Swank, P., Fullerton, A. & Research Consortium to Increase the Success of Youth in Foster Care. (2013). Experimental study of a self-determination intervention for youth in foster care. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 36(2), 84-95.
- Greeson, J. K., Garcia, A. R., Tan, F., Chacon, A., & Ortiz, A. J. (2020). Interventions for youth aging out of foster care: A state of the science review. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 113, 1-8.
- Leip, L. (2015). Predictive Analytic Approach to Achieving Youth Stability. Report submitted to ChildNet, Broward County.
- Nadon, M. L. (2020). Making the Transition: How Asset Building Services Can Promote Positive Adult Outcomes for Foster Youth. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 115, 1-15.

VIII. APPENDICES

A. Logic Model for the program



B. Data and study sample

Data and Methods for Implementation Evaluation

During the grant period, the qualitative and quantitative data that were necessary to answer the implementation research questions about fidelity, dosage, quality, engagement, and context were collected. Table B.1 lists the data sources, the timing and frequency of each data collection effort, and the party responsible for collecting the data.

The sources of the quantitative data include nFORM, individual files, fidelity protocol forms, feedback cards, and attendance databases. The data from the individual files includes the timesheets used to gather the amount of time spent on various topics during individual sessions and the individual development plan (IDP) that includes case management activities. The True North core team developed the timesheets and the IDP. The fidelity protocol forms were also developed by the True North core team, in conjunction with the Love Notes trainer, the workshop facilitators, and the navigators. A facilitator feedback form was used to rapidly respond to unplanned adaptations of the group workshops. A form to use for participant engagement in the Love Notes workshops was developed by the core team. The True North data manager entered the attendance data from the workshop sign-in sheets and the navigators' records of individual sessions into the attendance database. The True North core team reviewed the attendance each month at our core team meeting and the local evaluator regularly analyzed the attendance data.

A variety of qualitative data collection procedures were utilized, including observations of group workshops and individual sessions, interviews, and focus groups. Throughout the grant period, the local evaluator was responsible for observing at least one group workshop a month and periodic individual sessions between the program participants and their navigator. At the beginning of the grant period, only the local evaluator observed the group workshops - no other True North staff observed group workshops or individual sessions. The local evaluator conducted all of the interviews/focus groups with the navigators.

Descriptive statistics were used in the analysis of the quantitative implementation data described above and listed in Table B.1. SPSS and Excel were used to calculate frequencies, means, standard deviations, and crosstabulations of the quantitative implementation data. For example, to examine individual sessions, the time spent during the session on financial stability topics, job readiness topics, Love Notes, and individual development was described by the mean number of hours spent in each area.

The information gathered from interviews and focus groups was analyzed by identifying themes/categories in the responses and examining patterns over time. Some of the qualitative data was changed into quantitative data for the analysis.

Table B.1. Data used to address implementation research questions.

Implementation element	Research question	Data source	Timing/frequency of data collection	Party responsible for data collection
Program Group				
Fidelity	What content was delivered?	Fidelity protocol forms; Workshop and individual session observations; Individuals' files	Bi-monthly group workshop observations; quarterly individual session observations	True North evaluator and supervisory
Fidelity	Were all intended True North program components offered to the program group & for the expected duration?	Workshop sessions in nFORM, individuals' files	Weekly for nForm; Bi-monthly observations	True North evaluator and staff
Fidelity	What were the unplanned adaptations to key True North components?	Rapid response notes; progress reports; interviews; focus groups	Monthly and quarterly	True North staff and evaluator
Dosage	What proportions of the True North workshops and individual sessions did the program group participate in?	Workshop sessions and individual service contacts in nFORM; attendance logs	Weekly and monthly	True North staff
Quality	How did the program group rate the overall quality of the True North program?	Graduation feedback form and follow-up survey	Graduation feedback 2 times Quality rating on survey	True North evaluator
Engagement	How engaged in the True North program was the program group?	Engagement ratings and observations	Monthly	True North evaluator
Context	What challenges affected implementation?	Interviews/communications with True North team and partners	Quarterly	True North evaluation team and supervisory staff
Comparison Group				
Fidelity	Were all intended True North program components offered to the comparison group & for the expected duration?	nForm data and individuals' files	Weekly for nForm	True North staff
Fidelity	What type of comparable services did the comparison group receive from any sources other than True North during the evaluation period?	Survey items on follow-up survey	Follow-up	True North evaluation team
Dosage	How often did the comparison group participate in True North pro-social events?	Pro-social event attendance	Quarterly	True North evaluation team and supervisory staff
Context	What challenges affected implementation?	Interviews/communications with True North team and partners	Quarterly	True North evaluation team and supervisory staff

Data and Methods for Impact Evaluation

This section describes the data sources for the impact analyses, the data collection process, and the instruments used. Table B.2 shows the key features of the data collection for True North. The federal applicant characteristics survey was used to collect baseline data on usage of public assistance, monthly incomes, and employment obstacles. The federal youth pre-test instrument was used to collect baseline data on healthy relationships, economic and financial stability, and poverty. Other questions were added to the baseline instruments to ensure that all necessary data were collected to answer our primary and secondary research questions. Questions about job readiness from the federal pre-test for adults were incorporated into pre-test instrument because the federal youth pre-test has limited measures of attitudes/behaviors for non-couple relationships, permanent connections, and financial stability.

For the target population, it was essential to include priority constructs about non-couple relationships because many of the young adults are not currently in a couple relationship. The Network of Relationships Inventory-Relationship Qualities Version (NRI-RQV) was used. Constructs for individual well-being and permanent connections were used. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) is one of the most commonly used measures of well-being, and this one-item measure for well-being was used. In order to measure permanent connection construct, relational permanence was used, which is defined as youth having lifelong connections to caring adults, including at least one adult who will provide a permanent, parent-like connection for that youth. The navigators worked with the young adults in the program and comparison groups to complete the applicant characteristics and pre-test during the welcome session (after the consent form was signed) and the responses were entered into nFORM. If the applicant characteristics and pre-test weren't completed during the welcome session, the navigators setup another meeting with the young adults in order for them to complete the applicant characteristics and pre-test. All program group participants completed all of the baseline instruments before they started their group workshops and individual sessions. The federal post-test was revised to include the additional questions that were included in the pre-test. The program group completed the post-test after they completed their final group workshop/individual session and the comparison group completed it during the same time. The follow-up instrument included questions from the federal applicant characteristics survey, the post-test, new questions about the program, new questions about additional services received outside of True North, and questions about their actions/behaviors since participating in the program. The follow-up instrument was transferred to an online format. All of the implementation data measures are listed in Table B.3.

Once all data were collected, a variety of methods were used to analyze the data. First, overall and differential attrition rates were calculated using the guidance from the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse. Second, confirmatory factor analysis and reliability analysis was used to examine measurement scales, to improve existing scales, and to evaluate the reliability of scales. Only scales with a Cronbach's alpha of .70 or greater were used in the analysis. Effect sizes and independent sample t-tests were conducted using SPSS. Regression

analysis was used to examine the outcome measures. The responses for the outcomes of overall well-being has meaningful order and more than two categories, so ordered logit regression was the appropriate statistical technique to utilize. Ordinary least squares regression models were used for the healthy relationship, job readiness, and financial stability indices.

Table B.2. Key features of the impact analysis data collection.

	Data source	Timing of data collection	Mode of data collection	Party responsible for data collection	Start and end date of data collection
Intervention	Program group participants	Baseline (after consent)	In-person applicant characteristics and pre-test (nFORM)	Program staff	Cohort 1: 8/16 Cohort 2: 12/17 Cohort 3: 5/19
	Program group participants	Exit (after the final group workshop)	In-person applicant characteristics and post-test (nFORM)	Program staff	Cohort 1: 10-11/17 Cohort 2: 10-11/18 Cohort 3: 1/20
	Program group participants	Follow-up (7-9 months after final group workshop)	Online follow-up survey	Evaluation and Program staff	Cohort 1: 7-8/18 Cohort 2: 7-8/19 Cohort 3: 7-8/20
Counterfactual	Comparison group participants	Baseline (after consent)	In-person applicant characteristics and pre-test (nFORM)	Program staff	Cohort 1: 8/16 Cohort 2: 11/17 Cohort 3: 5/19
	Comparison group participants	Exit (after the final group workshop)	In-person applicant characteristics and post-test (nFORM)	Program staff	Cohort 1: 10/17 Cohort 2: 10/18 Cohort 3: 1/20
	Comparison group participants	Follow-up (7-9 months after final group workshop)	Online follow-up survey	Evaluation and Program staff	Cohort 1: 7-8/18 Cohort 2: 7-8/19 Cohort 3: 7-8/20

Table B.3. Measures for answering the implementation research questions.

Implementation element	Research question	Measures
Program Group		
Fidelity	Were all intended True North program components offered to the program group & for the expected duration?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of Love Notes group workshops delivered • Average amount of Love Notes group workshop time/duration • Total number of financial stability group workshops delivered • Total number of job readiness group workshops delivered • Total number of individual sessions delivered • Average individual session duration • Time spent on financial stability topics during individual sessions • Time spent on job readiness topics during individual sessions • Total number of screenings • Type and number of communications • Total number of pro-social events
Fidelity	What content was delivered?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent of Love Notes lessons/objectives/activities covered with fidelity
Fidelity	What were the unplanned adaptations to key True North components?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List and explanation of unplanned adaptations
Dosage	What proportions of the workshops and individual sessions did the program group participate in?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of the young adults attending group workshops • Percentage of young adults attending individual sessions
Quality	How did the program group rate the overall quality of True North program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent of program participants in the quality rating categories (poor, average, excellent)
Engagement	How engaged in the True North program was the program group?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of group workshops with moderate participant engagement, calculated as the percentage of sessions in which the evaluation team scored participants' engagement as "moderately engaged" or higher
Context	What challenges affected implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative explanation of challenges
Comparison Group		
Fidelity	Were all intended True North program components offered to the comparison group & for the expected duration?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of screenings • Type of communications • Total number of pro-social events

Implementation element	Research question	Measures
Fidelity	What type of comparable services did the comparison group receive from any sources other than True North during the evaluation period?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent of comparison group that received comparable services during the evaluation period • Types of services received
Dosage	How often did the comparison group participate in True North pro-social events?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent of comparison group that received intake screening • Percent of comparison group that attended pro-social events
Context	What challenges affected implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative explanation of challenges

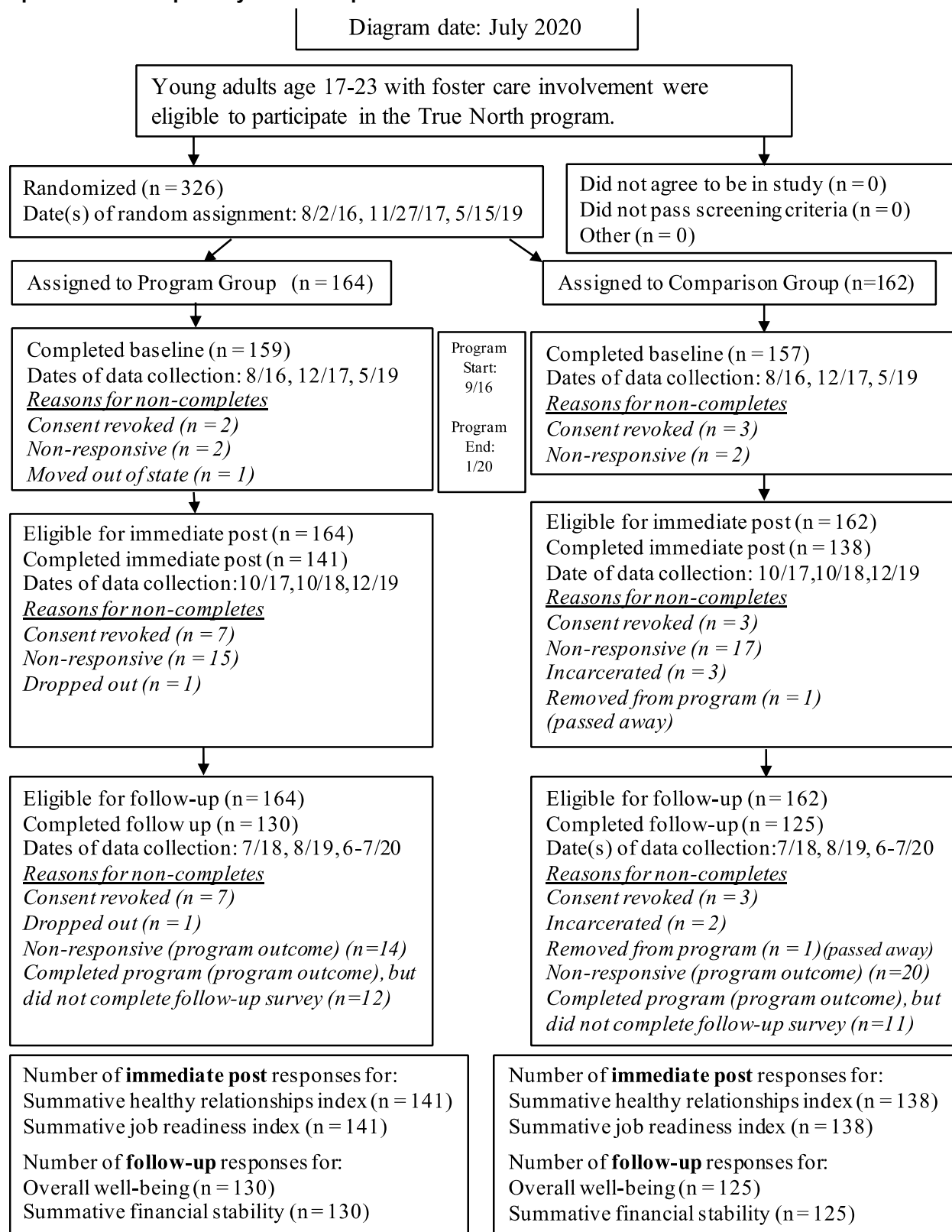
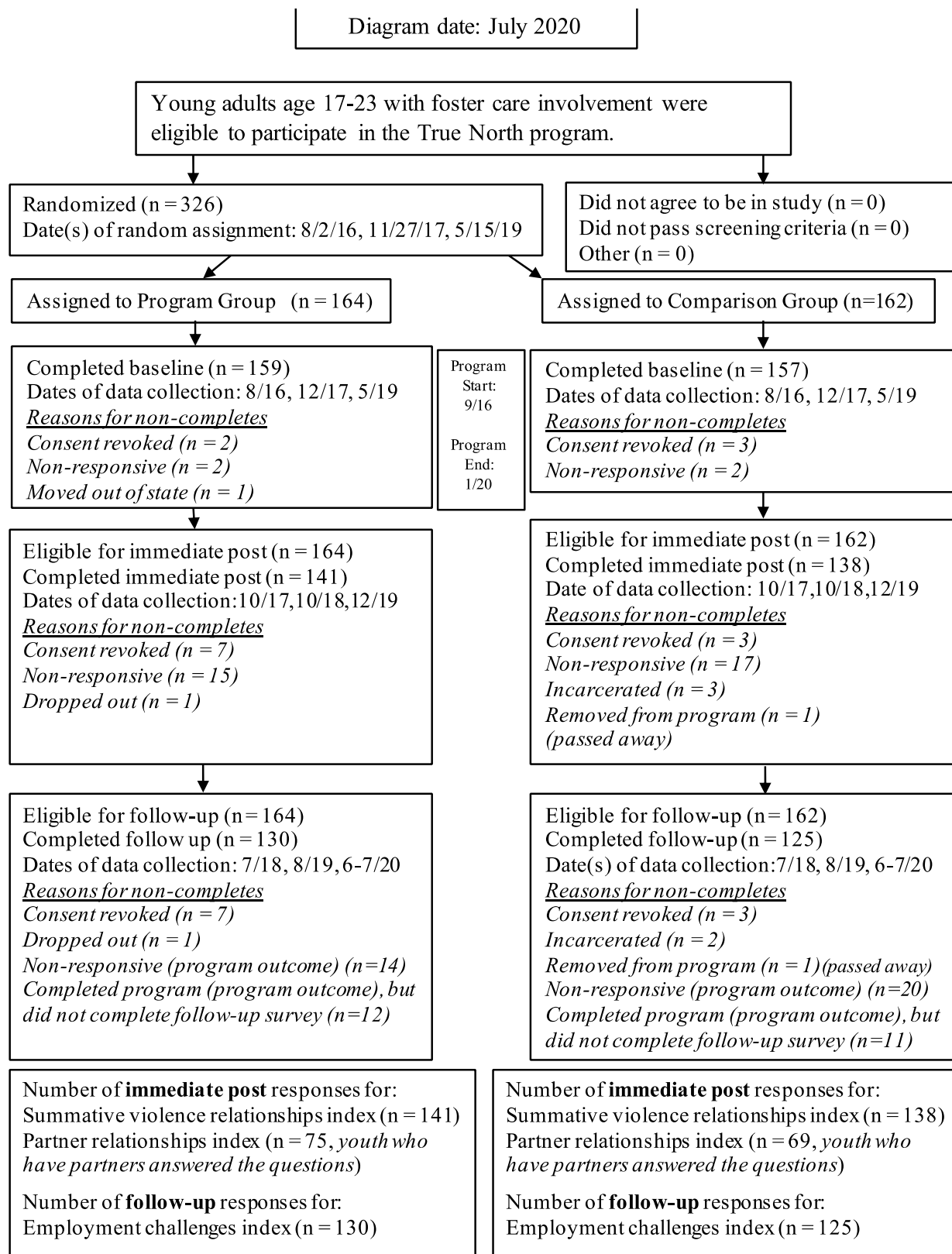
Figure B.1. CONSORT diagram for True North individual clients completing post-test and follow-up measures for primary research questions

Figure B.2. CONSORT diagram for True North individual clients completing post-test and follow-up measures for secondary research questions

C. Data preparation

The local evaluator developed a SPSS database using the pre-test survey as the basis for the SPSS variables/labels/values. Once the baseline nFORM data were entered for each entire cohort, the nFORM Excel database was manually transferred into the SPSS database. This data transfer process consisted of several steps to ensure accuracy. First, the Excel data dictionary provided to grantees was examined to ensure that the SPSS variables/labels/values perfectly aligned with the Excel variables/labels/values. Second, once all Excel baseline data were verified, descriptive statistics were run in Excel to check for minimum and maximum values, which allowed for ensuring that all data were in the acceptable ranges. Third, the local evaluator aligned the cases in Excel with the cases in SPSS by using the nFORM number, the random assignment number, and the first/last names before manually transferring each column of data from Excel to SPSS. Once the nFORM data were verified, the responses from the additional questions (i.e., questions about non-partner relationships) that were included in the pre-test were then manually entered into the SPSS database. If there was missing data, the local evaluator contacted the project director, supervisor, and navigator to have them get the information.

The local evaluator further developed the SPSS database by using the exit and follow-up surveys as the basis for additional SPSS variables/labels/values. The follow-up survey data were downloaded in SPSS format from Survey Monkey. Each the Survey Monkey follow-up question had to be answered in order to advance to the next question and to complete the survey, so there was no missing data for the majority of youth (97%) who completed it on their first attempt. If the survey was not complete, the local evaluator informed the project director to ask the youth to finish it in order to receive their incentive, and they all completed it on their second attempt. The same verification process as mentioned above was used to check for accuracy in the exit and follow-up data.

D. Impact estimation

The independent samples t-test was used to test for baseline equivalence (equal variance was not assumed), where:

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{s_1^2}{N_1} + \frac{s_2^2}{N_2}}}$$

t = test statistic

δ = mean score of the program group;

\bar{x}_2 = mean score of the comparison group;

s_1 = standard deviation of the program group;

s_2 = standard deviation of the comparison group;

N_1 = analytic sample size of the program group;

N_2 = analytic sample size of the comparison group;

The model specification for the regression analyses of the primary and secondary outcomes is summarized in this equation, where:

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta X_i + \delta T_i + \varepsilon_i$$

Y_i is the primary outcome measure for young adult i (see Table IV.2 for primary outcomes and Table IV.3 for secondary outcomes);

x_i is a vector of demographic controls and the baseline score of the outcome;

T_i is the binary variable for treatment status, indicating whether young adult i received the True North program;\

ε_i is the random error term;

β and δ are parameters or vectors of parameters to be estimated in the regression analyses, and δ represents the impact of the True North program.