

Promoting Healthy Futures for Youth: Tips for Using the Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE) Program Model

What is SRAE?

Sexual risk avoidance education (SRAE) is a primary prevention approach that promotes the development of life skills related to healthy relationships, decision making, goal setting, and self-regulation, as well as the benefits of avoiding sexual activity and other risky behaviors. SRAE is intended to be inclusive of all youth, regardless of socioeconomic status, background, prior sexual experience, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

What is the SRAE Program Model?

The SRAE program model, described in this [brief](#), and shown graphically on the next page, provides a framework for designing and implementing SRAE programs in a manner consistent with the Title V SRAE legislation and informed by research. The model shows how the components of SRAE programs are designed to influence key outcomes. This tip sheet provides examples of ways SRAE grant recipients can use the program model to focus and enhance their efforts to improve youth outcomes.



Who should use the SRAE program model, and how?

Various audiences, including program practitioners, curriculum developers, local evaluators, and policymakers, can use the model. For example, grant recipients can use it to help describe SRAE to schools, community members, and new staff members. Grant recipients can also crosswalk the model with their logic model, curriculum, and program to ensure alignment with the model's SRAE inputs and identify gaps and opportunities for enhancement. Additional tips and examples for using the program model are presented below.

Refer to the Program Inputs to:

- Ensure the curriculum covers all required content and consider how it aligns with [recommended subtopics](#)
- Identify if external partnerships or services may be helpful to deliver or supplement the program

Use Implementation Outputs as a guide to:

- Engage youth using tips on high-quality [facilitation](#)
- Review potential [output and outcome measures](#) and consider how to use them to monitor performance, assess implementation fidelity, and track changes over time

Review the Expected Outcomes to:

- Assess how well the program targets the [protective and risk factors](#) (short-term outcomes) that [research shows](#) are associated with the avoidance of sexual activity among youth

Where can SRAE grantees find more information?

For more information on the model and related documents, please see the [SRAE Program Model Brief](#). For general guidance on how to use a program model, see the [Practitioners Guide to Program Models](#).

Citation: Blesson, Elizabeth, Alicia Meckstroth, and Heather Zaveri. (2023). "Promoting Healthy Futures for Youth: Tips for Using the Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE) Program Model." OPRE Report Number 2023-013. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Disclaimer: The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, the Administration for Children and Families, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Promoting healthy futures for youth: A program model for sexual risk avoidance education (SRAE)

SRAE PROGRAM INPUTS

Program objectives:

Educate youth to recognize the benefits and value of avoiding sex until it is part of a healthy married relationship and empower youth to avoid sex and other risky behaviors by building skills that promote healthy decision making, self-regulation, supportive relationships, goal-setting, and a focus on future well-being.

Required program elements:

- Unambiguous messaging across required topics (below) that emphasizes the avoidance of non-marital sexual activity as an optimal health behavior
- Content that is medically accurate and complete; age-appropriate; based on adolescent learning and developmental theories; and culturally appropriate and sensitive to youths' diverse experiences

Required program topics:¹

- Life skill building to support future goals and well-being
- Advantages of refraining from non-marital sexual activity in order to improve future outcomes, enhance overall health, and avoid poverty
- The importance of healthy relationships, and their influence on the formation of friendships, romantic relationships, healthy marriages, and safe and stable families.
- Avoidance of risk-taking behaviors like drug and alcohol use
- Prevention of and support related to sexual coercion and dating violence

Key program features and delivery system:

- Curricula and supporting materials that address all SRAE program elements and topics
- Facilitators carefully selected, trained, and supported and who are committed to the SRAE message and working with youth
- Facilitation strategies that are based on sound educational theory and use active and reflective learning techniques and a mix of group and individual activities

OTHER INPUTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- While adhering to the required SRAE elements and topics, programs may tailor the mode of delivery, dosage, and youth engagement strategies for the target population and setting.
- Programs may refer youth to outside services as needed (such as mental health), as well as opportunities for involvement in school and community activities (although SRAE grant funding cannot be used to pay for these outside services and activities).
- Programs should establish data systems and processes to monitor implementation fidelity and support evaluation efforts.

IMPLEMENTATION OUTPUTS

Staff facilitation

- Staff commitment to SRAE vision and goals
- Positive facilitator: youth interactions
- Skilled delivery of program
- Ongoing supervision and support to staff

Service delivery

- Program delivered at intended dosage
- Program delivered with fidelity to curriculum and SRAE legislation

Youth and family engagement

- Youth attendance and participation
- Youth satisfaction with program
- Individual needs addressed
- Parent engagement in program

EXPECTED SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

Improved protective factors

- Healthy individual functioning and well-being
 - Self-determination (feels control over what happens to self)
 - Emotion regulation
 - Positive emotional state
- Future aspirations and intentions
 - Intention to avoid sex until marriage
 - Belief in the value of avoiding sex until marriage
 - Academic and career aspirations
- Healthy relationships and communications
 - Healthy secure attachment to parent/caregiver
 - Connectedness to parents
 - Communication with parents about sexuality
 - Parental oversight/monitoring
 - Positive peer role models
 - Sexual refusal skills and techniques

Reduced risk factors

- Risky peer behavior and permissive peer sexual norms
- Romantic partner expectations and intentions to have sex
- Prevalence of age difference in romantic partners
- Opportunities to have sex
- Drug and alcohol use
- Exposure or use of sexually explicit media or internet porn
- Depressive symptoms and anxiety



EXPECTED INTERMEDIATE-TERM OUTCOMES

Improved outcomes related to sexual risk avoidance:

- Avoidance of sexual activity and intercourse
- Reduction in sexually transmitted infections
- Reduction in teen pregnancy

Improved non-sexual outcomes related to:

- Academic achievement
- Mental health
- Alcohol/drug use
- Delinquency
- Relationship quality

POTENTIAL LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

- Overall health, happiness, and well-being
- Economic self-sufficiency
- Healthy relationships
- Avoidance of sex outside marriage
- Healthy and supportive marriages
- Formation of stable, healthy families
- Positive outcomes for children of the next generation

CONTEXT

Contextual factors that may influence how youth experience a program: community norms and values related to adolescent sexual behavior; socioeconomic traits (for example, teen birth and STI rates, safety, and economic conditions); relevant national, state, or local policies; and availability and accessibility of community services.

¹ These topics align with the required "A-F" topics specified in the SRAE legislation, Title V, Section 510. The first bullet aligns with Topic A, the second with Topics B and C, the third with Topic D, the fourth with Topic E, and the fifth with Topic F.