

Journal of Applied Research on Children: Informing Policy for Children at Risk

Volume 2
Issue 2 *Teen Pregnancy*

Article 18

2011

Review: Reducing Adolescent Sexual Risk: A Theoretical Guide for Developing and Adapting Curriculum-Based Programs

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Recommended Citation

DiClemente, Ralph J. (2011) "Review: Reducing Adolescent Sexual Risk: A Theoretical Guide for Developing and Adapting Curriculum-Based Programs," *Journal of Applied Research on Children: Informing Policy for Children at Risk*: Vol. 2: Iss. 2, Article 18.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58464/2155-5834.1052>

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/childrenatrisk/vol2/iss2/18>

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Title: *Reducing Adolescent Sexual Risk:*

A Theoretical Guide for Developing and Adapting Curriculum-Based Programs

Authors: Douglas Kirby, Karin Coyle, Lori Roller, Forrest Alton, Leah Robin

Published: ETR Associates, 2011

ISBN: 978-1-56071-704-1 (Soft cover)

Reducing Adolescent Sexual Risk by Douglas Kirby and his colleagues is a tour de force for anyone interested in developing or adapting sexual health curricula. This book represents the cumulative experience, expertise, and practice of some of the leading sexual health researchers and practitioners in the United States. As might be expected from such a stellar and talented team, the book is a well-researched and clearly articulated work of scholarship. It is a 'must have' on any bookshelf; indispensable for researchers, practitioners, and students.

Reducing Adolescent Sexual Risk is not a curriculum itself. Instead, it is designed to help sexual and reproductive health professionals, educators, curricula selection committees and others design or adapt curricula so that they focus on risk and protective factors that are related to sexual risk behavior and use instructional principles most likely to improve the targeted factors. It is divided into 10 chapters. To facilitate understanding of a broad base of information, chapters are formatted in a consistent manner. Thus, each chapter follows a format that describes key sexual risk and protective factors, such as: knowledge, risk perceptions, attitudes, values and beliefs, peer norms, self-efficacy, and intentions, and parent-child communication about sex. Each chapter synthesizes and summarizes the evidence for the importance of each factor in promoting protective behavior or enhancing sexual risk behaviors, provides theoretical underpinnings for each factor, describes measures/items/scales useful in assessing each factor, delineates strategies to modify them, and discusses the relative effectiveness of different strategies designed to modify these factors. In addition, Kirby and colleagues also provide a chapter on creating Logic Models and Learning Objectives – critical for understanding the complex relationship between key factors that are hypothesized to influence sexual risk and protective behavior and for systematically designing interventions to modify sexual behavior.

While this book has many positive attributes, certainly the wealth of information and data presented, equally important is its pedagogical design. Each chapter is replete with activity boxes, illustrated with easy-

to-read tables, and clear figures. In addition, there is a helpful glossary of terms and online addresses for accessing, free-of-charge, three important resources (1) information to identify science-based programs and curricula to prevent unintended pregnancy, HIV, and other STDs; (2) data on adolescent reproductive health; and (3) education tools to provide effective health education programs and curricula.

Reducing Adolescent Sexual Risk is a comprehensive overview that is meticulously researched and documented. It is a valuable resource for the lay person, the curriculum/program designer, or the seasoned sexual health researcher interested in promoting adolescent sexual and reproductive health. The book can serve as a scholarly introduction or a quick reference guide to a field in which data, while often plentiful, can be confusing, inconsistent and, at times, contradictory. Making sense of the data, in a palatable and eminently readable format, *Reducing Adolescent Sexual Risk* is a valuable and much needed volume that will undoubtedly become a cornerstone in the field of adolescent sexual and reproductive health.