

HEALTHY ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIP PROJECT (HARP)

UPDATE: July, 2011

Thank you for making or facilitating referrals to DU's Healthy Adolescent Relationship Project (HARP). We're sending you this brief update to keep you posted on HARP progress and to share some **exciting preliminary data!**

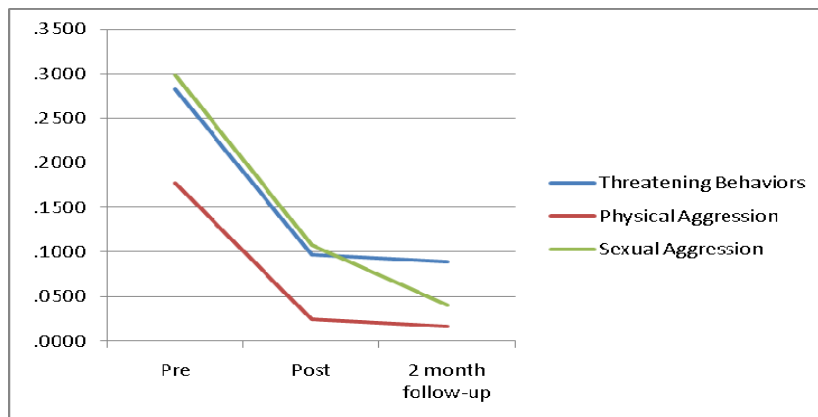
WHAT IS HARP AGAIN?

HARP tests 2 programs designed to help teen girls (ages 12-19) who have come to the attention of the child welfare system learn about healthy relationships. **Program 1** teaches teen girls about: power in relationship violence; skills to build healthy relationships; and social influences on violence (such as media messages). **Program 2** teaches teen girls about: safety in relationships, including how to recognize and respond to internal (e.g., one's own emotions) and external (e.g., other people's emotions, behaviors) safety signals; and attention regulation. Previous research suggests both groups may also help to decrease teens' experiences of symptoms, such as anxiety and depression.

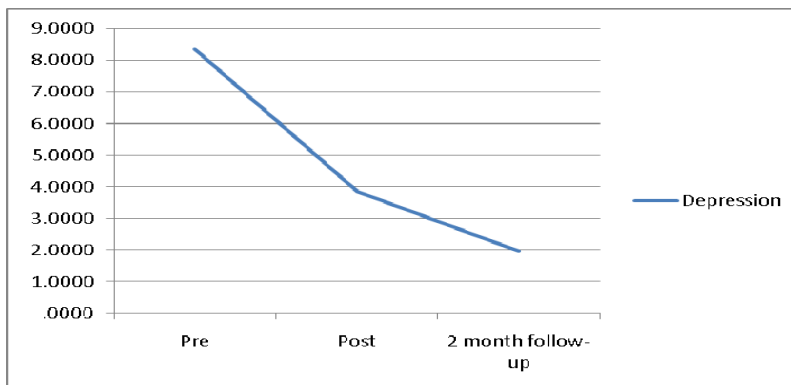
IS HARP WORKING? PRELIMINARY DATA ARE IN!

Before beginning a prevention group, teens complete a pre-assessment. After the prevention groups end, teens are asked to complete a post-assessment. Additional follow-up assessments occur 2 months and 6 months after the prevention groups, for 4 assessments total.

Looking at the first 31 teens to have completed 3 of the 4 assessments, we see significant gains across a range of measures. For example, teens report experiencing **significantly less aggression from their dating partners**, including serious forms of aggression such as threats as well as physical and sexual aggression. The figure below shows aggression scores from pre-, post-, and 2-month follow-up assessments. **Importantly, the gains seen immediately after the prevention group ends are holding two months later.**



These same teens also report declines in different forms of psychological distress, such as anger, depression, and dissociation. The figure below shows the **decline in teens' report of depression symptoms**.



WHO HAS PARTICIPATED IN HARP SO FAR?

To date, 118 adolescent girls (ages 12-19) have completed the pre-assessment. Teens' average age at the time of the pre-assessment was 15.9 ($SD=1.6$). Teens described their ethnic/racial identities as follows: 29% White/Caucasian, 29% Black/African-American, 2% Asian/Asian-American, 7% American Indian/Native Alaskan/Native American, 30% Other/Multi-race, 38% Hispanic/ Latina.

Teens reported histories of extensive trauma exposure. At the pre-assessment, teens reported the following trauma exposure: 42% physical abuse; 52% sexual abuse; 66% witnessing domestic violence; 37% emotional/psychological abuse; and 30% neglect. In addition, 48% of teens reported other forms of trauma or victimization beyond maltreatment, such as significant family illness, community violence, sibling/peer abuse, and/or parental death.

WHAT IS HARP LIKE FOR TEENS?

- Teens receive 12-sessions of a prevention group at no cost. Groups are run by graduate-level facilitators working under the supervision of licensed clinical psychologists.
- Teens receive \$10/prevention group meeting to offset transportation costs (up to \$120).
- Teens receive \$40/research interview to compensate them for the time involved in 4 interviews (up to \$160) as well as \$10/research interview to offset transportation costs (up to \$40).

WHAT ARE TEENS SAYING ABOUT HARP

We are hearing lots of positive feedback from teens! For example:

“Thanks to my group leaders... I enjoyed the class and learned a lot.”

“We would like a Part II!”

“It’s my favorite class.”

“The program will help lots of girls... the class was great and I’m really glad I participated.”

In addition to listening to their feedback during groups and assessments, we closely monitor their responses to being part of this project using a measure called the Response to Research Participation Questionnaire. This measure assesses positive aspects (such as personal benefits, being treated well overall, feeling empowered in the research process) as well as negative aspects (such as feeling negative emotions and experiencing regrets and/or negative perceptions about the research procedures) of participating in research. At each interview, teens rate the positive aspects of participating in this project as significantly higher than any negative aspects.

WHAT’S NEXT?

To meet our grant benchmarks, we need to enroll **60 new teens by the end of 2011**. Given that pace, we will start new prevention groups **during the 2nd week of every month over the next 6 months**. This means that as teens come to your attention to refer to HARP, we will be able to promptly assess teens and enroll them in groups.

THANK YOU!!

Thank you to the many people who continue to help to make this project possible, including (but not limited to):

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Third Way Center Staff Lauren Timkovich Margo Vanhaeck Susie Walton Kathryn Wells Derek Williams Edie Winters Jerry Yager

We look forward to continuing to work with you. Thank you in advance for your referrals to HARP.

Best wishes,
Anne P. DePrince, Ph.D., Project Director

Up-to-date HARP materials, including *referral and consent forms*, on our project website:

<http://mysite.du.edu/~adeprinc/harp.html>

For questions regarding HARP, please contact us at (303) 871-4103 or harp@du.edu.