

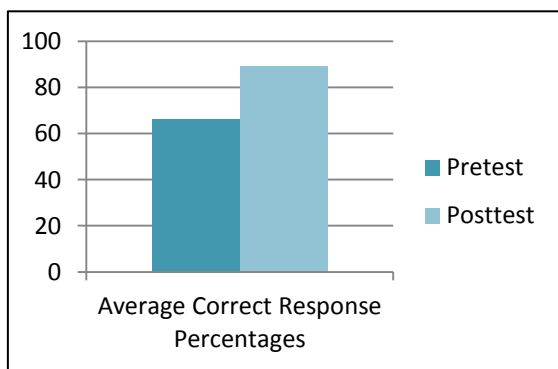
## Executive Summary: An Evaluation of the *Reducing the Risk* Curriculum

### Background

Teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STD) continue to be of concern in Chatham County. While there has been a decrease in the teen pregnancy rate, there were still 49 pregnancies among 15-19 year olds in 2012. There has also been an increase in chlamydia and gonorrhea cases. In order to continue the downward trend in teen pregnancies as well as reduce the current number of STD cases, it is important that adolescent sexual health education remain a priority. Evidence-based curriculums have been proven to reduce teen pregnancy and STD rates. In collaboration with the Chatham County Public Health Department, an evaluation of the evidence-based *Reducing the Risk* (RTR) curriculum at Northwood High School was conducted during the 2014 spring semester. Northwood is currently the only high school in the county that utilizes an evidence-based sexual health curriculum in their Healthful Living courses. RTR aims to build skills to prevent pregnancy, STDs, and HIV. To demonstrate its effectiveness with Chatham County students, an evaluation was developed and implemented with 139 students of Ms. Lyn Smith's Healthful Living courses. The quantitative evaluation included a pretest and posttest. The qualitative evaluation included open-ended questions, a teacher interview, and a focus group discussion with former RTR students to learn about the longer term impact of the RTR curriculum.

### Quantitative Results

Students' knowledge, perceptions, and skills were evaluated and the majority of students improved their scores. The average number of correct responses increased 23 percentage points, from **66%** to **89%**. Positive results demonstrated that students learned the necessary skills to properly utilize a condom and where to go in the community for resources. It also showed that the RTR course helped correct misperceptions about the effectiveness of certain types of birth control methods and norms around high school sexual activity. Additionally, the majority of students stated that the RTR curriculum made them more or much more likely to use or have their partner use birth control or a condom. It also made them less or much less likely to have sexual intercourse in the next year.



### Qualitative Results

The qualitative evaluation assessed students' ability to recall items learned from the course. Their comments reinforced the importance of the curriculum and highlighted the need for a standardized sexual health course throughout the county. Students stated that they learned the following from RTR:

- Importance of abstinence
- Different types of contraception
- Importance of condoms for all sexual activity
- Difference between STD and pregnancy prevention
- Public Health Department resources
- Specific skills (condom use, STD testing)

Students emphasized that they enjoy and value the RTR curriculum because they are able to:

- Practice role plays and learn refusal strategies
- Have opportunities to see first-hand different types of contraception and condoms
- Learn how to properly use a condom

Overall, students stressed the benefits and importance of the RTR curriculum for all students. ***"If it (RTR) were gone, people would get the wrong or partially wrong information."***

### Recommendations

Evaluation results indicate that the *Reducing the Risk* curriculum is highly effective. The Chatham County Public Health Department recommends implementation of the RTR course throughout all three high schools for all 9<sup>th</sup> grade Healthful Living students. Partnering with the school district to provide training and support for teachers, as well as continued monitoring and evaluation, will lead to a reduction in STDs and teen pregnancies and create a healthier next generation.

For a copy of the complete evaluation report, please contact Anna Stormzand, Adolescent Health Promotion Coordinator, at 919-545-8445 or [anna.stormzand@chathamnc.org](mailto:anna.stormzand@chathamnc.org).



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