

Name of Curriculum: PROMOTING HEALTH AMONG TEENS—ABSTINENCE-ONLY (PHAT-AO)

For more detailed information, visit the [PHAT-AO](#) page at ETR's [Program Success Center](#) website.

Part I: Planning	PHAT-AO
Time and Intensity	
1. Is the curriculum consistent with your organizational goals?	The intervention focuses entirely on knowledge, attitudes and skills that encourage and assist young people in implementing abstinence in their relationships.
2. Has the curriculum under consideration been formally evaluated and shown to have affected behavior change on some or all of the targetsevaluated?	From the evaluation data, participants who received PHAT-AO reported: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reduction in the incidence of recent sexual intercourse over the past 3 months at 3-, 6-, 12-, 18- and 24-month follow-ups. • A significant reduction in sexual initiation by the 24-month follow-up.
3. Does the curriculum use promising approaches reflecting evaluated interventions or curricular content?	PHAT-AO is an evidence-based intervention.
4. Does the curriculum demonstrate a sound model of changing knowledge, attitudes, skills, intentions, and behavior consistent with accepted behavioral and educational theories?	PHAT-AO draws upon the Social Cognitive Theory, the Theory of Reasoned Action, and its extension, The Theory of Planned Behavior. There are two major concepts included in these theories: (1) self-efficacy or perceived behavioral control beliefs, which are defined as a person's confidence in his or her ability to take part in the behavior, i.e. abstain from sex; and (2) outcome expectancies or behavioral beliefs, which are beliefs about the consequences of the behavior. The curriculum addresses each of the principles, usually in more than one activity.
5. Does the curriculum address specific steps needed to meet those goals? (Note: Consider using a logic model to assess the relationship between steps and goals.)	See the program Logic Model .
6. Does the curriculum offer adequate dosage — for example, multiple sessions per grade, and sessions for multiplegrade levels?	The curriculum has 8 hours of content divided into eight 1-hour modules. The School Edition has 9 hours of content divided into twelve 45-minute modules.
7. Do high-risk populations have an opportunity for more intensive interventions or lesson sessions?	Additional discussion and making activities even more interactive is considered a green-light adaptation.

* The Center for Relationship Education. (2010). *Systematic Method for Assessing Risk-Avoidance Tool (SMARTool)*. Denver, Colorado.

Part I: Planning	PHAT–AO
Time and Intensity (continued)	
<p>8. Does the curriculum integrate with and supplement other health or character-based education in the school or organization?</p>	<p>The curriculum includes a strong emphasis on family and community, including how HIV, other STDs and teenage pregnancy affect various communities in which young people live. The importance of protecting one’s family and community is used as a motive to change individual behavior.</p> <p>The importance of sexual responsibility and accountability is addressed through teaching participants to make responsible decisions regarding their sexual behavior, urging them to respect themselves and others, and stressing the importance of developing a positive self-image. Students learn that by being responsible and abstaining from sex they will be able to reach their goals and dreams.</p> <p>The role of pride is also key. Because adolescence is a difficult period of development, in which young people are often faced with confusion, mixed emotions and uncertainty, it is extremely important that they learn to feel good about themselves and their decision to abstain from sex. Making proud choices about abstaining from sex can actually lead teens to develop a sense of pride, self-confidence, and self-respect. The role-play exercises and other skill-building activities reinforce the many positive benefits, both psychological and physical, of practicing abstinence.</p>
Flexibility and Sustainability	
<p>9. Is the curriculum flexible enough to address learner needs across varied demographic student groups?</p>	<p>The target population is African-American, Hispanic and White adolescents, ages 12 to 18. The program was designed to be used with small groups of adolescents in an urban area but can be adapted to be used with larger numbers of participants in rural areas as well. The curriculum can be implemented in various community settings, including schools or youth-serving agencies. The School Edition was designed to be used in school settings with small groups, but can be adapted for use in a myriad of settings, including after-school programs, and can be used with larger groups as well.</p>
<p>10. Is the curriculum flexible enough to meet or complement program needs, based on coordination with existing health education requirements and timeconstraints?</p>	<p>The curriculum has 8 hours of content divided into eight 1-hour modules. The School Edition has 9 hours of content divided into twelve 45-minute modules.</p>

Part I: Planning	PHAT-AO
Staff Selection and Training	
11. Does the curriculum provide guidance for identifying teaching staff who are comfortable with and supportive of the sexual risk avoidance message?	Educators interested in implementing this program should be skilled in using interactive teaching methods and guiding group discussions, and should be comfortable with the program content.
12. Does the curriculum developer provide teacher training through workshops, conferences, or other venues to improve knowledge and skills?	ETR offers training on all of our sexual health programs through our Professional Learning Services. For more information visit our Training and TA pages.
13. Are materials available to provide in-service training for all organization personnel	In addition to Training of Educators, ETR also offers Training of Trainers sessions, which certify participants to conduct trainings for other program staff on the curriculum. For more information visit our Training and TA pages.
14. Are content updates and curricular experts available to assure continuous improvement?	PHAT-AO was updated to a second edition in 2016. ETR reviews all of programs on a regular basis to ensure they are up to date and accurate.
15. Are teacher materials, supplemental resources, and lesson plans easy to use and appropriate for effective lessons?	PHAT-AO is a lively, interactive and student-centric curriculum that includes talking circles, brainstorming, roleplays, DVDs, exercises and games that make learning enjoyable. Each activity is brief, and most are active exercises that maintain student interest and attention. The Facilitator’s Guide offers clear, detailed and easy-to-follow teaching steps.

Part II: Curriculum	PHAT–AO
Target #1: Enhance the knowledge of (a) physical development, sexual risks, and (b) healthy relationships	
1. Does the curriculum address appropriate topics for the age group and target population?	The curriculum is intended for use with youth ages 12 to 14; the School Edition is intended for Middle School classrooms. It includes instruction on puberty and adolescent sexuality, consequences of sex, decision making, refusal and negotiation skills, all with an emphasis on the benefits of abstinence.
2. Does the material presented maintain a clear and consistent risk avoidance approach regarding sexual involvement and other risks?	The intervention focuses entirely on knowledge, attitudes and skills that encourage and assist young people in implementing abstinence in their relationships, and does not include condom use instruction.
3. Do the content areas of the proposed curriculum address the requirements of funding or regulatory agencies?	Local agencies and schools will have to assess this based on their funding or regulatory requirements. The intervention focuses entirely on knowledge, attitudes and skills that encourage and assist young people in implementing abstinence in their relationships, and does not include condom use instruction.
4. Does the curriculum meet state and/or local health education standards?	Local agencies and schools will have to assess this based on their funding or regulatory requirements. The intervention focuses entirely on knowledge, attitudes and skills that encourage and assist young people in implementing abstinence in their relationships, and does not include condom use instruction.
5. Does the curriculum personalize the potential negative impacts of sexual involvement (such as pregnancy, STIs, emotional, social, or relationship problems, etc.)?	Participants have numerous opportunities to consider potential consequences of sexual activity. Three of the modules focus specifically on the consequences of sex, with an emphasis on risks for STDs, HIV and pregnancy.
6. Are sources of scientific, medical, social science, and health information either commonly available in multiple books and texts (i.e., anatomy, established physiology, development) or documented by site of original research or source?	The curriculum was thoroughly reviewed for medical accuracy when the second edition of PHAT–AO was published by ETR in 2016.
7. Are further sources of information provided for teachers to obtain additional reliable data, if appropriate?	Appendixes provide educators with additional background information about HIV, STDs, contraceptive methods and the effect of various drugs on sexual decision making.
8. Is the presentation of facts balanced and objective?	PHAT–AO presents facts and provides opportunities for youth to consider their attitudes, behaviors and decisions around sexual activity in a nonjudgmental and value-neutral way.

Part II: Curriculum	PHAT–AO
Target #2: Support personal attitudes and beliefs that value sexual risk avoidance	
1. Does the curriculum include exercises that help students recognize attitudes in their school, home, community, and media?	Yes, in particular Module 3: Making Abstinence Work for Me helps students consider attitudes around abstinence.
2. Does the curriculum present information in a relevant and compelling manner that has the potential to change attitudes and beliefs?	The fun and interactive learning experiences are designed to increase participation and help young adolescents understand the kind of faulty reasoning and decision making that can lead to HIV, other STDs and pregnancy. Activities are designed to help students feel comfortable practicing abstinence, address their concerns about practicing abstinence, and provide strategies for overcoming obstacles to this practice.
3. Does the curriculum use fear of negative outcomes in an appropriate manner to equip students to avoid risks?	Participants have numerous opportunities to consider potential consequences of sexual activity. Three of the modules focus specifically on the consequences of sex, with an emphasis on risks for STDs, HIV and pregnancy.
4. Does the curriculum develop and display character traits that are consistent with universal values (i.e., trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, caring, courage, etc.)?	<p>There is a strong emphasis on family and community, including how HIV, other STDs and teenage pregnancy affect various communities in which young people live. The importance of protecting one’s family and community is used as a motive to change individual behavior.</p> <p>The importance of sexual responsibility and accountability is addressed through teaching participants to make responsible decisions regarding their sexual behavior, urging them to respect themselves and others, and stressing the importance of developing a positive self-image. Students learn that by being responsible and abstaining from sex they will be able to reach their goals and dreams.</p>
5. Does the curriculum help students value the avoidance of adolescent sexual involvement?	Making proud choices about abstaining from sex can lead teens to develop a sense of pride, self-confidence, and self-respect. The role-play exercises and other skill-building activities reinforce the many positive benefits, both psychological and physical, of practicing abstinence.
6. Does the curriculum help students increase their value of commitment, marriage, and future family formation?	Marriage and future family formation can easily be addressed in the Goals and Dreams Timeline activity in Module 1.

Part II: Curriculum	PHAT–AO
Target #2: Support personal attitudes and beliefs that value sexual risk avoidance (continued)	
7. Does the curriculum provide a basis for students to identify and/or communicate their core beliefs regarding the meaning of sex in their personal, family, cultural and spiritual lives?	The curriculum emphasizes the idea of making proud and responsible choices. The importance of sexual responsibility and accountability is stressed throughout, and participants are encouraged to make responsible decisions regarding sexual behavior, to respect themselves and others, and to develop a positive self-image. Students learn that by being responsible and abstaining from sex they will be able to reach their goals and dreams.
8. Does the curriculum provide an opportunity for students to recognize any cognitive dissonance between core values and personal attitudes?	Beginning in Module 1, students examine reasons teens do and do not have sex, look at obstacles sexual activity can pose to achieving goals and dreams and suggest how to avoid these obstacles. The theme of being proud and responsible and abstaining from sexual activity is revisited numerous times in discussions throughout the curriculum, allowing students to continue to evaluate their behaviors and values around abstinence.
Target #3: Acknowledge and address common rationalizations for sexual involvement	
1. Does the curriculum help learners recognize common rationalizations that teens use to become sexually involved?	In Module 1 students brainstorm reasons teens have or don't have sex. In Module 7, they examine the effects of peer pressure on sexual choices, including analyzing a case study about a teen relationship.
2. Do learning exercises or scenarios help students recognize that justifications for sexual involvement fail to reduce potential adverse consequences?	Consequences of sexual activity are covered extensively in Modules 4, 5 and 6.
3. Does the curriculum help students develop and practice skills to respond to common rationalizations for teen sex?	The last two modules focus on building the limit-setting, negotiation and refusal skills that will support abstinence. Students are given extensive practice through roleplays and advocacy activities.
4. Does the curriculum assist sexually experienced youth to understand the reasons and develop skills to avoid continued sexual involvement?	All of the learning activities can apply to youth who are already sexually experienced. Abstinence is presented as something a person can choose at any time and for any reason. Youth are not shamed for previous sexual choices, but are encouraged and given skills to help abstinence be a viable choice for them now.

Part II: Curriculum	PHAT–AO
Target #4: Improve perception of and independence from negative peer and social norms	
1. Does the curriculum provide activities for students to consider positive and negative peer perceptions regarding sexual and other risk behaviors?	Attitudes about abstinence, both positive and negative, and pressures youth face around sexual activity are emphasized throughout.
2. Does the curriculum provide an opportunity for students to consider positive and negative media depictions regarding sexual and other risk behaviors?	Media influences are considered within the discussions of reasons teens have sex and pressures around sexual activity.
3. Does the curriculum illustrate positive peer norms?	Throughout the learning activities, students are encouraged to share positive perceptions and benefits of abstinence. They advocate for abstinence by responding to a series of letters with questions from teens; and observe and offer feedback to peers' roleplays on effective refusal and negotiation skills.
4. Does the curriculum promote the confidence and skill to resist negative pressure from peers?	Students are given extensive practice in refusal and negotiation skills to defend an abstinence choice.
5. Does the curriculum teach, demonstrate, and practice the skills of independent decision-making related to avoiding sexual involvement?	Module 3 includes decision-making practice using the STOP-THINK-ACT problem-solving model that will help them think clearly and maintain an abstinence choice when faced with pressure situations.
Target #5: Build personal competencies and self-efficacy to avoid sexual activity	
1. Does the curriculum contain messages and activities that encourage self-protective competencies when confronted with sexual and other risks?	Because adolescence is a difficult period of development, in which young people are often faced with confusion, mixed emotions and uncertainty, it is extremely important that they learn to feel good about themselves and their decision to abstain from sex. Activities are designed to help students feel comfortable practicing abstinence, address their concerns about practicing abstinence, and provide strategies for overcoming obstacles to this practice.
2. Does the curriculum promote critical thinking and decision-making skills that protect themselves and others physically, emotionally, and mentally?	Decision-making and problem-solving practice is a key element of Module 3. Throughout the curriculum, students are encouraged to make proud and responsible choices to protect themselves and others through abstinence.
3. Are learners given multiple opportunities to observe and practice negotiation and risk refusal skills?	Skills and self-efficacy are a major component of the curriculum, including negotiation-refusal skills. The roleplays in Module 8 provide time for practice, reinforcement and support of the skills students are learning.
4. Does the curriculum provide opportunities for learners to explain and defend their personal choices?	The roleplay exercises and other skill-building activities reinforce the many positive benefits, both psychological and physical, of practicing abstinence.

Part II: Curriculum	PHAT–AO
Target #5: Build personal competencies and self-efficacy to avoid sexual activity (continued)	
5. Are support systems such as parents, personal and family rules, schools, faith groups and/or community organizations recognized as contributory to self-efficacy?	There is a strong emphasis on family and community, including how these systems can support students in avoiding HIV, other STDs and pregnancy through abstinence. The importance of protecting one’s family and community is also used as a motive to change individual behavior.
6. Are sexually experienced youth provided with appropriate information, skills, and support to avoid future or continued sexual involvement?	All of the information and skills practice in the curriculum applies to sexually experienced youth as well. Abstinence is presented as something that is always a choice. Youth have an opportunity to examine reasons for sexual involvement and the risks it can pose. The activity in Module 2 on how to express feelings of attraction and affection without having sex can be particularly relevant to youth who wish to return to abstinence.
7. Are previously sexually coerced/abused individuals provided with appropriate information and support to avoid sexual involvement and seek assistance as needed?	The second edition of PHAT–AO has been reviewed to be more trauma-informed in its approach. An appendix is provided for facilitators with further information about how to support a trauma-informed approach to sexuality education.
Target #6: Strengthen personal intention and commitment to avoid sexual involvement	
1. Does the curriculum assist the learner in developing and/or strengthening intentions to wait for sexual involvement?	Activities encourage students to personalize the benefits of abstinence and link it to achievement of their goals and dreams. In particular, Modules 1 and 3 address this area.
2. Does the curriculum provide examples of the benefits of a strong personal commitment to avoid adolescent sex?	Benefits of abstinence are discussed in detail in Module 2 and reinforced throughout the program.
3. Does the curriculum promote and practice skills to act on personal intentions to delay sex?	Students identify strategies for negotiating abstinence and solving problems related to sexual pressures in Module 3. They discuss and practice setting personal limits and how to get out of risky situations in Module 7. They participate in roleplay practice of refusal and negotiation skills in Module 8.
4. Does the curriculum encourage a private and/or public commitment to avoid sexual involvement?	As a closing activity, student write a “Letter to Myself” that summarizes their reasons and the actions they will take to abstain from sex.
5. Does the curriculum help learners identify possible challenges or threats to their intentions and identify personal strategies for resisting those threats?	Obstacles to abstinence and ways to overcome them are discussed in Module 2. Students also learn and practice how to address challenges to personal limits in Module 7, and practice negotiation and refusal skills in Module 8.

Part II: Curriculum	PHAT–AO
Target #7: Identify and reduce the opportunities for sexual involvement	
1. Does the curriculum teach the learner to recognize and avoid high-risk situations (such as early and frequent dating, unsupervised parties, coercion, or exploitation by older individuals)?	In Module 3, students examine barriers to abstinence, apply problem-solving techniques to a case study involving a risky situation, and roleplay ways to resist partner pressures. Module 7 includes an activity in which students identify risky sexual situations that can challenge their limits and come up with solutions.
2. Does the curriculum encourage support systems and guidelines (such as family rules, parent involvement, structured activities, volunteer and faith activities, etc.) to minimize opportunities associated with adolescent sexual involvement?	Support from family and others are one of the “abstinence necessities” discussed in Module 3. The curriculum also includes a homework assignment that allows students to discuss abstinence with their parents/guardians or other family members.
3. Does the curriculum identify and reduce the opportunity for sexual involvement by promoting the avoidance of drugs, alcohol, coercive behaviors, and violence?	The theme of being proud and responsible woven throughout the program includes not using drugs and respecting oneself and others. Specific mention of how alcohol and other drug use can affect decision making and be an obstacle to abstinence are included in discussions.
4. Does the curriculum provide scenarios, examples, or skills to assist learners in recognizing and refusing sexually vulnerable situations?	Peer pressure, problem-solving and roleplay scenarios present situations teens may face around sexual decisions. The curriculum also presents several case studies as a basis for small-group and individual work, as well as advice-seeking “letters” from teens for analysis.
Target #8: Strengthen future goals and opportunities	
1. Does the curriculum provide exercises to allow the learner to describe his or her future life?	The two Goals and Dreams activities at the end of Module 1 help students envision how abstinence can support a healthy future.
2. Are there lessons that reinforce the potential for positive future opportunities (such as personal health, career opportunities, supporting friendships, strong family ties, and/or fulfilling marriage, etc.)?	The Goals and Dreams Timeline activity includes these factors.
3. Does the curriculum help learners create connections between sexual risks and future outcomes?	Discussions continue to reference the Module 1 Goals and Dreams activity to help students personalize the consequences and risks of sexual activity.
4. Is the learner encouraged to identify personal attributes they may desire for themselves and/or a future spouse or partner?	This can be included in the Goals and Dreams Timeline activity.

SMARTool

Part II: Curriculum	PHAT–AO
Target #9: Partner with parents	
1. Does the curriculum recognize the role that parents, family, and caregivers play in a student’s attitudes, beliefs and behaviors?	The influence of parents, family and other trusted adults is acknowledged in all activities in which students brainstorm motivations for and benefits of abstinence, messages they receive about sex, and attitudes toward abstinence.
2. Does the curriculum provide or identify resources to equip parents to talk with their children about important topics pertinent to relationships, sex, and substance use?	The detailed Homework assignment in Module 4 helps students share what they are learning in the program and offers parents/guardians a chance to share their thoughts and concerns.
3. Does the curriculum provide materials or resources to offer a parent workshop or information session?	The importance of this is discussed in the introduction to the curriculum, however no specific materials are provided.
4. Does the curriculum provide homework assignments that can be completed through collaboration between the parent and child?	Module 4 includes a detailed homework assignment for parents and students to complete together.

Part III: Quality Improvement	PHAT–AO
1. Does the curriculum include valid and reliable pre- and post-testing instruments?	Pre- and post-test used in the original study can be found under the Adaptation Guidelines and Tools tab on the Promoting Health Among Teens–Abstinence Only page
2. Are additional sources of data suggested in order to support program monitoring of important outcomes?	ETR has a long history of conducting rigorous evaluations in the field of sexual and reproductive health. For more information on how ETR can help with evaluation efforts visit our Evaluation Services page .