

Characteristics Summary Table*

Name of Curriculum: REDUCING THE RISK (RTR)

For more detailed information about this program, visit the [Reducing the Risk](#) page at ETR's [Program Success Center](#) website.

Category 1	
Characteristic	Reducing the Risk
1. Involved multiple people with different backgrounds in theory, research and sex and STD/HIV education to develop the curriculum.	Developed by Dr. Richard P. Barth and a multidisciplinary team of experts.
2. Assessed relevant needs and assets of target group.	<p>Developers assessed needs and assets of the target group during the development process, and this step is encouraged as part of planning for implementation. RTR was designed to help high school students delay initiation of sex or increase the use of protection against pregnancy and STD/HIV if they choose to have sex. The major focus is the development of attitudes and skills to help teens prevent pregnancy and the transmission of STD, including HIV.</p> <p>RTR can be implemented in both rural and urban areas. It has been used successfully with students from a range of racial/ethnic backgrounds. While designed primarily for ninth grade students, it can be used with students in other appropriate grades (e.g., 8–12) or the appropriate age (e.g., 13–18).</p>
3. Used a logic model approach to develop the curriculum that specified the health goals, the behaviors affecting those health goals, the risk and protective factors affecting those behaviors, and the activities addressing those risk and protective factors.	See the program Logic Model .
4. Designed activities consistent with community values and available resources (e.g., staff time, staff skills, facility space and supplies).	The program consists of 16 classes, conducted 2-3 times per week. The classes are designed for 45- to 60-minute periods. Most can be expanded to fill more time, or two full periods, by increasing time to practice the skills and discuss the activities. The ideal class size is between 10 and 30 youth.
5. Pilot-tested the program.	Lessons were pilot tested at five diverse schools, including alternative education, ESL and classes in suburban, rural and inner-city schools, during development. Revisions based on the pilot testing were incorporated prior to implementation.

* Kirby, D., Rolleri, L. & Wilson, M. M. (2007). *Tool to Assess the Characteristics of Effective Sex and STD/HIV Education Programs*. ETR and Healthy Teen Network.

Characteristics Summary Table

Category 2	
Characteristic	Reducing the Risk
6. Focused on clear health goals — the prevention of STD/HIV and/or pregnancy.	<p>All activities are intended to address the health goal of preventing teen pregnancy, HIV and other STDs.</p> <p>See the program Logic Model.</p>
7. Focused narrowly on specific behaviors leading to these health goals (e.g., abstaining from sex or using condoms or other contraceptives), gave clear messages about these behaviors, and addressed situations that might lead to them and how to avoid them.	<p>RTR’s research-proven approach addresses the skills of risk assessment, communication, decision making, planning, refusal strategies and delay tactics. Abstinence is presented as the best, safest and most common choice for high school students, but the curriculum also recognizes that some students are sexually active. For this reason, students are given clear guidelines and rationales for using protection during sex.</p> <p>See the program Logic Model.</p>
8. Addressed multiple sexual psychosocial risk and protective factors affecting sexual behaviors (e.g., knowledge, perceived risks, values, attitudes, perceived norms and self- efficacy).	<p><i>Reducing the Risk</i> is based upon several interrelated theoretical models. As applied to pregnancy prevention, Social Learning Theory suggests that the likelihood of an action such as using birth control is influenced by an understanding of what must be done to avoid pregnancy, a belief that the method will successfully prevent pregnancy and the anticipated benefit of the action. Social Inoculation Theory suggests that people develop resistance to social pressure when they can recognize the forms of pressure, are motivated to resist them, and are capable of doing so. Cognitive Behavior Theory suggests that young people need specific cognitive and behavioral skills to resist pressures and successfully manage interpersonal encounters. The RTR model has 3 components: activities to personalize information about sexuality, reproduction and contraception; training in decision-making and assertive communication skills; and practice in applying these skills in personally difficult situations.</p> <p>See the program Logic Model for more detail.</p>

Characteristics Summary Table

Category 2	
Characteristic	Reducing the Risk
9. Created a safe social environment for youth to participate.	Throughout the curriculum students are encouraged to express their thoughts and feelings and to respect the opinions of others. Prior to teaching the lessons, a group agreements activity establishes parameters for classroom discussions to help participants feel secure in the group setting and help facilitators provide structure.
10. Included multiple activities to change each of the targeted risk and protective factors.	<i>Reducing the Risk</i> is delivered through roleplays, skill practice, brainstorming, mini-lecture and worksheet activities. The curriculum makes use of large- and small group discussions, brainstorming, risk perception activities, roleplays and other skill-building activities that build group cohesion and enhance learning. The program Logic Model shows how the various activities relate to the targeted risk and protective factors.
11. Employed instructionally sound teaching methods that actively involved the participants, that helped participants personalize the information, and that were designed to change each group of risk and protective factors.	The sequenced lessons include activities to personalize information about sexuality, reproduction and contraception; training in decision-making and assertive communication skills; and practice in applying these skills in personally difficult situations. Roleplays are an essential and powerful part of the program. Teachers help students by encouraging them to practice their interpersonal skills in the roleplays. The more students practice effectively saying no to sex (or to unprotected sex), the more likely they'll be to use these skills in real life.
12. Employed activities, instructional methods and behavioral messages that were appropriate to the youths' culture, developmental age and sexual experience.	The interactive learning activities are designed to help students evaluate their risks and the consequences of sexual activity, recognize that abstaining or using condoms/contraception are the only ways to avoid pregnancy and HIV/STD. A major focus is the development of effective refusal and negotiation skills for remaining abstinent or avoiding unprotected sexual intercourse. Activities have been used and well received by high school youth from across the United States representing different cultural backgrounds.
13. Covered topics in a logical sequence.	See the program Logic Model

Characteristics Summary Table

Category 3	
Characteristic	Reducing the Risk
14. Secured at least minimal support from appropriate authorities such as ministries of health, school districts or community organizations.	<p>This characteristic would be addressed during program implementation by the project team.</p> <p>ETR's Program Success Center website offers a framework for successful implementation of our programs, including free tools that can help with for assessing, selecting, developing, implementing and sustaining programs.</p>
15. Selected educators with desired characteristics (whenever possible), trained them and provided monitoring, supervision and support.	<p>This characteristic would be addressed during program implementation by the project team.</p> <p>ETR offers training on all of our sexual health programs through our Professional Learning Services. For more information visit our Training and TA pages.</p>
16. If needed, implemented activities to recruit and retain youth and overcome barriers to their involvement (e.g., publicized the program, offered food or obtained consent).	<p>This characteristic would be addressed during program implementation by the project team.</p> <p>ETR's Program Success Center website offers a framework for successful implementation of our programs, including free tools that can help with for assessing, selecting, developing, implementing and sustaining programs.</p>
17. Implemented virtually all activities with reasonable fidelity.	<p>ETR offers Fidelity Logs for our programs, see the Adaptation Guidelines and Tools tab on the Reducing the Risk page.</p>